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MPs urge new PM to start new era, fight corruption

New premier pledges to safeguard democracy, constitution

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers have warmly welcomed the appointment of Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah as a new prime minister and urged him to start a new era in the country and fight corruption, as he pledged to HH the Amir, he would safeguard democracy and the constitution.

An Amiri order was issued yesterday naming the 66-year old Sheikh Ahmad, the son of HH Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to replace the outgoing premier Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah who resigned more than three months ago following a

grilling by opposition MPs. In a letter sent to the Amir yesterday, Sheikh Ahmad pledged to safeguard "the constitution, democracy and the state of institutions established by our ancestors". He also vowed to exert all efforts to achieve comprehensive development.

MPs expressed optimism that Sheikh Ahmad will be able to take Kuwait out of ongoing political disputes that stalled reforms and development and vowed to lend him all cooperation needed. Opposition MPs, who were at loggerheads with the outgoing prime minister, were overjoyed by the appointment of Sheikh Ahmad, seen as close to the opposition.

MP Ahmad Al-Azmi said the new premier has inherited a heavy legacy by a sequence of previous cabinets which strongly harmed Kuwait. MP Saud Al-Mutairi expressed the hope that the new head of government will succeed in averting the mistakes of the previous governments to "build a new Kuwait". MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah considered that the public support to the premier should form a launching pad for a new agenda of national action and comprehensive reforms.

MP Muhammad Al-Sayer said he was looking for an end to an era of sponsoring corruption and political blackmail and the start of another where citizens will

be true partners. MP Muhalhal Al-Mudhaf called for achieving political and economic reforms, safeguarding public funds and seriously holding corrupt people to account.

MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf called for adopting a new policy for reforms and fighting corruption. He also called for pardoning politicians who fled the country. MP Abdullah Al-Mudhaf said that the overwhelming popular support for the new premier is the way to succeed. MP Osama Al-Shaheen said the new premier took immediate and decisive reforms as an interior minister and "we are looking for similar reforms" in the government.

PAM, ministry tackle domestic workers issues

KUWAIT: Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and Commerce Ministry are discussing some issues that are related to Kuwait's domestic helpers. The plan is to hire the actual numbers of workers needed so as to reduce the number of expats in accordance with the demographic structure. The current number of domestic helpers in Kuwait is more than 650,000 - although this number dropped 17,000 the previous year. Automatic cancellation of domestic helpers' residence permits will continue - for those who are still outside the country for more than six months.

Other issues include: harmonizing domestic workers' salaries - not per nationality but according to their contracts. Currently, some Asian helpers are receiving more salaries than the Africans. This makes Kuwait unattractive to Africans as they prefer the neighboring countries. Meanwhile, there are delays in the signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) over the years due to the lack of agreement on salaries and to labor contracts.

Informed sources revealed that the transfer of jurisdiction of domestic helpers from Interior Ministry to PAM did not achieve the goal of protecting the rights of domestic helpers and improving Kuwait's image abroad. Officials discussed the recommendations - to explore other countries and hire domestic helpers from there. Other suggestions include allowing domestic helpers to work either daily or on monthly basis; guarantee their rights and quickly resolve any disputes with their employers.

Lebanese 'gang' kidnaps a Saudi

BEIRUT: Lebanese authorities launched an investigation Monday into the kidnapping at the weekend of a Saudi lured to the country's eastern city of Bekaa to buy a property, a judicial official said. The public prosecutor of the Bekaa region instructed security forces to "conduct investigations and gather information on his whereabouts, which is likely the Al-Sharawneh neighborhood" on the outskirts of Baalbek, the official told AFP, asking not to be named.

Unrest and clashes between rival influential families are common in Baalbek, where the Iran-backed Shiite movement Hezbollah is dominant. The army often conducts raids in the city, notably in Al-Sharawneh, over cases of drug trafficking, theft, kidnapping and other crimes. A "gang" lured the victim to Lebanon to buy property and the man was taken directly to Baalbek on Sunday upon landing in Beirut, the official said.

A ransom demand has not been issued but the Saudi was likely taken "with the aim of financially

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KFH seals AUB-Bahrain deal

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (Baitak) held its ordinary and extraordinary General Assembly meeting on Monday and approved the deal to acquire Ahli United Bank - Bahrain with the attendance of 83.189 percent of shareholders. All items on the agenda of the ordinary General Assembly were approved during the meeting, which includes the approval of the Sharia Supervisory Board report with regards to the proposal to acquire Ahli United Bank (BSC), and its attachments, the approval of the board of directors to approve the exchange rate which is one share from KFH for 2.695 shares of Ahli United Bank (BSC), and approve the evaluation of real assets that was

done by one of the evaluators accredited by the Capital Markets Authority to increase the issued capital of KFH.

The General Assembly approved the renewal of the ordinary general assembly that was issued in its meeting on January 20, 2020 regarding the listing of KFH on the stock exchange in Bahrain. All items on the extraordinary General Assembly Agenda, were also approved, most important of which is the recommendation of the Board of Directors to increase the issued and paid up capital of KFH by issuing maximum number of shares at 4,200,000,000 shares, with the national value of the shares to use it for executing the acquisition.



KUWAIT: KFH holds ordinary and extraordinary general assembly meeting on Monday.

Baitak Chairman of the Board Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al-Marzouq said the KFH acquisition of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain represents a historic milestone at a time when Kuwaiti banking sector is moving for-

ward in a highly competitive industry both regionally and internationally. At the same time, opportunities for small banks to compete with bigger banking entities over the years have diminished. — (See Page 8)

Murmu sworn in as India's first tribal president

NEW DELHI: Droupadi Murmu was sworn in as India's president on Monday, making her the first person from one of the country's marginalized tribal communities to serve as head of state. The former school teacher and state governor was elected to the largely ceremonial position last week with 64 percent of the vote by members of India's parliament and state assemblies.

Murmu, who is from the Santhal tribe and was born in eastern Odisha state,

paid her respects before her inauguration at a memorial dedicated to India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi in New Delhi. "I started my life journey from a small tribal village," Murmu, 64, said after taking the oath of office in parliament. "From the background I come from, it was like a dream for me to even get elementary education," she added. "But despite many obstacles, my resolve remained strong and I became the first daughter from my village to go to college."

Murmu's win was considered a certainty because of the strength of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies in the parliament and state assemblies. Analysts said the move would probably help Prime Minister Narendra Modi extend his base among the poor tribal communities ahead of his re-election bid

Continued on Page 6



NEW DELHI: India's new President Droupadi Murmu (center) inspects a guard of honor after her swearing-in ceremony, at presidential palace Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on July 25, 2022. - AFP

Russia-West gas war

PARIS: Natural gas has emerged as a weapon of war between Russia and Europe since Moscow's February 24 invasion of Ukraine. Here is how the standoff developed:

Nord Stream 2 halted

On February 22, 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz says he is suspending the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project with Russia in response to Moscow's recognition of two break-away regions in Ukraine. The project has long been a source of tension with Berlin's allies in the United States and Europe, who worry it would increase Germany's energy dependence on

Russia. Ukraine also fears it will lose revenues from gas transit if Nord Stream 2, which would deliver Russian gas to Germany via the Baltic Sea, goes ahead.

Gas prices soar

On February 24, Russia invades Ukraine. Gas and oil prices soar on fears of possible cuts in supplies. On March 2, the European Union cuts seven Russian banks off from the SWIFT banking transfer system. But it spares two major lenders with strong ties to the energy sector, reflecting the dependence of several EU states on Russian gas.

Continued on Page 6



UNTERREIT: An employee of Uniper Energy Storage walks through the above-ground facilities of a natural gas storage facility at the Uniper Energy Storage facility in Bierwang, southern Germany. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's Crown Prince receives Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

Amir receives letter of gratitude from new Prime Minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Prime Minister retired General Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Prime Minister retired General Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday received a letter of gratitude from the newly appointed Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad. As he faces the task of naming new Cabinet members, the Prime Minister said he was "honored to fill the job." He thanked His Highness the Amir for his "trust and appreciation," pledging to do his utmost to protect the constitution, serve the nation and "retain national gains." He wished Kuwait continued prosperity and development,

reiterating that he was honored to have been named the country's new prime minister. His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a similar letter from Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad.

Former First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was named Kuwait's new prime minister in an Amiri order on Sunday. Born in 1956, Sheikh Ahmad is the son of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. A Bachelor's degree of Commerce Kuwait University graduate, he was later drafted in military service, arriving at the



Amir thanks Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

rank of general before retirement from the army. He had assumed the role of first deputy prime minister and interior minister since March 2022. This was preceded by several stints, also at the Ministry of Interior alongside the National Guard.

At the Ministry of Interior, he has served as Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passports Affairs followed by the role of Assistant Undersecretary for Education and Training Affairs. His retirement from the ministry thereafter was followed by his appointment as Governor of the Hawalli Governorate. In November 2020, an Amiri order was given,

appointing Sheikh Ahmad to the role of Deputy Chief of the National Guard at the minister rank.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a letter of thanks to outgoing prime minister His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. In the message, His Highness the Amir spoke highly of His Highness Sabah Al-Khaled's dedication in serving "the dear homeland" and promoting its "development march" during his tenure. "We hold you in high esteem for delivering on your responsibilities at your best, which will remain in the memory of the homeland," His Highness the Amir wrote. He expressed best wishes for His Highness Sabah Al-Khaled, hoping that he will continue contributing to the progress and prosperity of the homeland. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a similar letter to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. —KUNA

Arab League urges respect for human rights, specialties of states



CAIRO: Arab League officials attend the opening session of the fourth high-level Arab conference on protection of human rights. —KUNA photos

CAIRO: Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League for Social Affairs on Monday stressed the importance of promoting human rights culture in the framework of respect for the sovereignty and specialties of each country. "The civil society organizations play a key role in promoting the culture of human rights and spreading information which help strengthen peace, development and stability," Haifa Abu-Ghazala said. She made the statements at the opening session of the fourth high-level Arab conference on protection of human rights, themed "impacts of crises on practicing human right - COVID-19 a model." The Arab League official recommended collecting and analyzing information on the impacts of the pandemic on socio-economic development with a view to drawing lessons for the future of individuals and communities. Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi leads Kuwait delegation to the



Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi attends the conference.

conference which gathered representatives of regional human rights organizations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. —KUNA

Italy praises Kuwait's balanced foreign policy, humanitarian aid

ROME: Kuwait is distinguished internationally for its balanced foreign policy, pioneering role in the global humanitarian domain, and for boosting stability worldwide, Italian President's Diplomatic Advisor Emanuela d'Alessandro said on Monday. D'Alessandro gave these remarks earlier on Monday during a meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah, as she conveyed to him regards of the Italian Presidency on the occasion of ending his productive tenure in Italy. The Italian Advisor expressed thanks to Kuwaiti diplomat for his fruitful efforts and active role, especially during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, in boosting bilateral ties between both nations. She endorsed the leading developmental role of Kuwait that receives huge international respect and appreciation. The Kuwaiti Ambassador expressed his gratitude to the Italian presidency and government for the kindness and cooperation



ROME: Italian President's Diplomatic Advisor Emanuela d'Alessandro presents a memento to Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA

they offered, which reflects the deep-rooted ties between both nations. —KUNA

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Local

Kuwait Times intern Nada Al-Oqaili: Managing time, setting achievable goals key to success

Oqaili looks to invent a cellphone that can be charged by solar power

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times intern Nada Saleh Al-Oqaili is a young ambitious Kuwaiti girl who has big dreams to achieve in life. Despite her young age of only 17 years, she has already managed to achieve several of her goals. Oqaili joined Kuwait Times as a trainee which helped improve her writing skills as she describes, while her main goal was to take advantage of her summer vacation to promote her knowledge and professional experience. Oqaili spoke in an interview with Kuwait Times about her journey, training experience, life expectations and other topics. The following are excerpts from the interview:

Kuwait Times: How do you spend your day?
Nada Al-Oqaili: I try to keep myself busy throughout the day with useful things that motivate me to upgrade myself. Every day I have a time to read because I think reading helps me in managing my time. Meanwhile, I like to schedule my daily tasks and future goals that I would like to achieve in the next three months every day, and I try to divide my tasks into small goals that are more achievable.

KT: How did you learn planning your time?
Oqaili: I lived in the United States of America until I reached 10 years old. I learned the importance of managing my time there, especially that I was exposed to many bad experiences due to my lack of knowledge in time management. The school played an important role in improving this skill: they used to show us stories about successful people who achieved their goals through managing their time. Therefore, one of our first tasks was learning it. This gave me an advantage when I moved back to Kuwait and motivates me to accomplish more goals.

KT: What would you like to do beside reading in your leisure time?
Oqaili: I mostly try to communicate more with my friends, because the lifestyle in Kuwait is more social than professional, unlike in the US. While immersing myself in work, sometimes I forget to communicate with my friends. Therefore, I made a time to improve my social life. Meanwhile, to keep up my motivation, I play tennis which also rejuvenates my energy for work.

KT: What are your plans for the future?
Oqaili: I am planning to study electrical engineering, and I am happy to say that I was accepted in the University of Manchester. The reason I chose this major is because I am looking forward to inventing a cellphone that can be charged by solar power, which I think will be



KUWAIT: Nada Saleh Al-Oqaili at Kuwait Times office. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

the future of cellphones.

KT: What is your perspective of life?
Oqaili: When I think of life, I remind myself by its end. While some people may think it is a pessimistic idea, it's not the same thing for me. This idea always motivates me to leave behind what could benefit others. Furthermore, this thought gives me a different life perspective: To work more on my legacy than focusing only on the general goals of life.

KT: What are the main differences that you found between living in US and Kuwait?
Oqaili: In the beginning, it was a big shock for me, and a big difference at all levels, including social and professional. Despite that, I had never felt the social life in US, unlike Kuwait, and the feeling of losing the social life versus the professional one didn't suit me. This made me think that I can take advantage of knowledge and professional experience through online platforms and still manage to live between my family and friends and practice the social life I love. For me, Kuwait is a better place to live in, in terms of safety, religion and social life. There are alternatives to life in the US that can be reached elsewhere, and that's why I plan to come back to Kuwait after I finish my bachelor's degree.



'Kuwait is a better place to live in terms social life'

KT: Are you planning to complete your postgraduate studies?
Oqaili: I don't like to limit myself to anything. Although it may not be the right idea and I should plan for my future ahead, I am not the type of person that likes long term plans. I am a person who likes to continuously change my lifestyle. Therefore, I don't have any intentions to complete postgraduate studies unless the state gave me a scholarship that I will not refuse for sure.

KT: What are the achievements that you are proud of?
Oqaili: I achieved lots of thing this year that I was planning from a long time. Most importantly, I finally created my personal blog space under the name of "Nada". Since I was young, I practiced writing all the time and my mother encouraged me to write everything I think of, and by time, it changed my thinking and my perspective to things in life. And while I was learning it by myself, I wanted to share it with my friends. I wanted to transfer my personal experiences to people and benefit them using online platforms. After creating my personal blog, I was happy with my success. My other achievements were completing a training course in academic and business writing, while my newest achievement is joining Kuwait Times as a trainee.

KT: What are the causes that you stand for?
Oqaili: I am interested in the issue of mental and psychological diseases, in addition to the main issue that I stand for, Palestinian issue. Therefore, this year I joined an initiative called "Hiber" which was founded by my friend Haya Al-Shatti. The initiative aims to support students in Palestine to complete their university studies, and targets those who cannot afford tuition costs. We managed to collect KD 127,000 this past Ramadan to support those students to complete their studies in different fields.

KT: Was there any important points in your life that changed you for the better?
Oqaili: One of the most important stages of my life that made me move to a better stage was the time in which I adhered to the spiritual side and began to pray. This helped me a lot to remove the feeling of loss that I was constantly feeling, especially the time I was still in school and I had started a business that I was able to succeed in well, but I was constantly feeling lost.

KT: How did you find your experience as a trainee at Kuwait Times?
Oqaili: Since I am a journalism lover, and I used to work as a freelancer in this field, I was looking for an English-language press institution to become a trainee there. Despite my pride in the Arabic language, I am more powerful in English writing. On the other hand, I



Soon-to-be electrical engineering student and current Kuwait Times intern Nada Saleh Al-Oqaili.

improved my writing skills to be simpler and more direct to the point I want to deliver, which gave my writing an additional value and broaden my mind in this field. It also improved my skills in communicating with people.

KT: What is your advice to your peers to develop their skills and take advantage of their time?
Oqaili: It is not a requirement that goals determine the value of a person, and there are only a few people who strive to achieve their dreams. I advise my peers who still have not found success in achieving what they want to not feel frustrated, especially that our age is between maturity and childhood. They just need to take care of their mental health, their relationship with God, set a clear goal and be open to try new things in life.

It is normal for a person not to know what he wants when he is still young but being open and accepting new things could teach them a lot. I think there is a divine message for us in every moment in our life. That should push us to think of new ideas and projects that improve us every day. Using time without purpose will not help achieve anything. So, the purpose must come before daily habits.

KT: What are your plans for the future?
Oqaili: I am planning to study electrical engineering, and I am happy to say that I was accepted in the University of Manchester. The reason I chose this major is because I am looking forward to inventing a cellphone that can be charged by solar power, which I think will be

Manpower authority officials meet Bangladesh Ambassador

KUWAIT: Acting Director of Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Dr Mubarak Al-Azmi received Bangladesh's Ambassador to Kuwait Major General Md Ashikuzzaman and his delegation on Monday. Azmi welcomed the guests, lauded the historic relations between the two countries and expressed keenness on strengthening them. The ambassador said Kuwait has a cooperative and moderate policy and is a country of law and order. He said the two sides are keen on joint cooperating in regards to Bangladeshi labor and hoped that the percentage of his country's laborers would increase in the country.



KUWAIT: Acting Director of Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Dr Mubarak Al-Azmi meets Bangladesh's Ambassador to Kuwait Major General Md Ashikuzzaman.

One dead in Farwaniya house fire

KUWAIT: One person died in a fire reported in a Farwaniya house recently, Kuwait Fire Force said. Firemen headed to an Arab-style old house in the area in response to an emergency call, and found that some residents were trapped behind flames at a second-floor apartment. They managed to rescue the trapped persons, but one of them succumbed to his fatal injuries on site, KFF said. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire, it added. Meanwhile, KFF said that firemen battled a blaze reported in a Sulaiybiya house recently. No injuries were reported as an investigation was opened into the incident, KFF said.



In my view

The story of saving a human being

By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh



local@kuwaittimes.com

Someone asked for permission to see me in the clinic, and as soon as I allowed him in, he came in with a huge smile. He shook my hand hard and thanked me warmly. I knew him, as he is one of the senior people of opinion in Kuwait. After his enthusiasm cooled down, he told me what he experienced earlier.

"At the start of last summer, I was going to Switzerland, where I usually spend my usual vacation," he said. "At the airport, there were volunteers from CAN campaign." He was referring to the National campaign for fighting cancer, which is under the patronage of His Highness the Amir. The role of volunteers was to distribute booklets about awareness of cancer, he said. "Just before I entered the passports counter, a young man approached and presented me with a booklet while smiling and said: 'here, uncle,' so I smiled back, received the booklet and slipped it in my pocket," he said.

"While on board the plane, I took the booklet out and began reading it," he went on. "The booklet was about prostate cancer that affects men and contained an explanation of the initial symptoms and how easy it can be treated with early detection. I looked closely at the symptoms, and I found them in myself. I felt the booklet was explaining to me what started to hit me. I was worried at first, then continued to read and found the most important message in the booklet, which calls for seeing a doctor and have the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test."

The senior man said, "as soon as I arrived in Geneva, I went for my doctor, and I asked him for that test. The doctor listened to my complaint and did what is required, and the result was the rise in tumor indicators. That was followed by taking a biopsy, and specialists were sure that there was prostate cancer in its early stages. I received treatment and recovered after that."

"Before returning to Kuwait, and during my last visit to the doctor, he asked me: 'Who told you about the name of this test and warned you about the initial symptoms?' I took the booklet out and I pointed to the campaign's name, so the doctor told me to go to one of the volunteers of the campaign and thank him because they saved my life," he said.

This is a story I recall today, as the latest statistics by Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) showed that prostate cancer among men in Kuwait became number one among total cases. The CAN campaign continues with awareness against the most common cancer diseases in Kuwait headed by prostate cancer. Awareness about this cancer means that each man who reached 50 years of age must visit his clinic and ask for the PSA test, and this becomes more necessary among men who start to complain from weak urine flow or become intermittent.

The volunteers in this campaign will feel the value of what they are doing if they found who pay attention to the awareness campaigns, and I will be happier if the story of this man is repeated many times, as awareness is the secret of success against cancer and increase the rates of recovery. To men who are over 50, take precaution. The PSA is only a blood test that is available in every health center, and makes your smile so wide, as it was on the face of that senior man, because it means you have defeated the era's disease.

Local

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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
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at KD 0.307,
Euro at KD 0.313

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US dollar on Monday remained stable against the Kuwaiti Dinar at KD 0.307 and the Euro at KD 0.313 compared with Sunday's rates. The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said on its daily bulletin that the sterling pound remained stable at KD 0.368, the Swiss franc fell by 0.11 percent to KD 0.318 and the Japanese yen stood at KD 0.0022. Exchange rates declared by the CBK reflect average prices and not rates of actual transactions. —KUNA



Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Palm trees at the Salmiya Park. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

TikTok growing as news,
information source in Kuwait

UK govt report says app fastest growing news source for adults

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced that TikTok was the most used streaming app in Kuwait in the second quarter of 2022, followed by YouTube and Netflix respectively. Kuwait Times spoke to several people who said that TikTok is growing as a source of news and information in Kuwait, adding that it has broken the stereotype of being a typical social media platform that was known at one point as an app for "dancing and entertainment" only.

Ghazi Marafe, 29, told Kuwait Times that with the rise in serious topics discussed on TikTok, it is becoming an app for adults more than teenagers. "Many news outlets and public figures have accounts on TikTok, and they gained many followers who show interest in keeping up-to-date with what is happening in the world," he said. He noted that he believes TikTok is faster in delivering news and celebrity updates compared to any other platform, including fast videos that posted in case of any event or disaster. Alia Ezz, 32, agrees with Ghazi, saying that the scene on TikTok has been evolving remarkably. "I have signed up two years ago. At first it was just for entertainment, but nowa-

days you can find great content that could help in developing the current situation in Kuwait politically and socially," she added.

According to Britain's communications authority (Ofcom) report, TikTok is the fastest growing news source for adults. The app is used by seven percent of adults for news with nearly half turning to TikTokers rather than conventional outlets for updates. The growth is primarily driven by young users, with half of its news followers aged 16 to 24. The report stated that it found for the first time that TikTok, Instagram and YouTube were among the most popular news sources for the 12-15-year-old group. Meanwhile, Hamed Al-Rasheedi, 24, said that while people on TikTok can post several videos on news and related topics, he still doesn't believe that people take the app seriously. "It is still an unreliable source," he argued, adding that the app can only transfer the real events that may be covered by media.



Many still believe app remains unreliable source

among young people.

TikTok was launched in 2016, and the Chinese app was one of the top social media platforms in June 2022 with 6.8 billion visits in June 2022, according to Similarweb data of monthly visits. According to a statistic in January 2022, TikTok has

Parental control

Iman Basoni, an academic, told Kuwait Times that TikTok is an app that parents must keep up with in order to control what their children consume from it. "The apps' benefits are same as its bad impact; we cannot rely on the useful content to be in our children's hands," she said.

A report issued late last year concluded that TikTok had managed to displace the search engine giant Google as the most visited site on the Internet. What distinguishes TikTok is its short videos, which are now up to three minutes long. The app is also distinguished with its easy-to-scroll user interface, which is another factor that makes the app very popular



more than 1.1 billion monthly active users, and it is expected to reach 1.8 billion users by the end of 2022 according to the 'Business of Apps' website.

TikTok, which launched six years after Snapchat, has twice the number of the latter's monthly active users. It is 11 years newer than Twitter, yet it is miles ahead in terms of the number of active users, and it is close to overcoming Instagram to become the third top social networking service in terms of the number of monthly active users. Statista, a German company specializing in market and consumer data, revealed that TikTok users spent more than 960 minutes per month on the application in 2021, at a rate of 32 minutes per day.

Blizzard Games most used gaming app in Kuwait

Kuwait's most used gaming apps in Q2 2022

1	Blizzard Games
2	PC: Valve's Steam Service
3	PlayStation Network
4	PC: Valve's Steam Download
5	Origin Games
6	ROBLOX
7	Call Of Duty
8	PC: Fortnite
9	Origin Games Download
10	PUBG Mobile

CITRA

KUWAIT: Blizzard Games' desktop app, home of Warcraft, Overwatch and other hit titles, is the most used video games distribution service in Kuwait during the second quarter of 2022, according to official statistics. The PC gaming app ranks ahead of Steam, PlayStation Network,

Kuwait's most used social media apps in Q2 2022

1	Facebook
2	Twitter
3	Tumblr
4	Odnoklassniki
5	Instagram
6	Pinterest
7	Vkontakte
8	Tagged
9	Reddit
10	Tencent

CITRA

Origin and other apps in Kuwait according to statistics released by the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) on Monday.

Meanwhile, Facebook remained the most used social media app in Kuwait during the second

Kuwait's most used streaming apps in Q2 2022

1	TikTok
2	YouTube
3	Netflix
4	Twitch
5	SHAHID
6	Twitter Video
7	Dailymotion
8	Amazon Video
9	Facebook Video
10	Bein Connect

CITRA

quarter of 2022, ahead of Twitter, Tumblr, Odnoklassniki and Instagram, respectively. Notably, the CITRA statistics classify TikTok as a streaming app and rank it as the most used streaming service in Kuwait ahead of YouTube, Netflix and Twitch, respectively.

Kuwait took effective measures to combat COVID-19: Official

CAIRO: Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Talal Al-Mutairi affirmed on Monday that his country had taken many measures since the beginning of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to protect the safety of citizens and residents. This came in a statement to KUNA during his participation in the fourth Arab regional high-level conference on the protection and promotion of human rights.

He added that among the measures taken by Kuwait in the amendment of the preventive health law and economy contributed greatly to reducing the effects of the pandemic in terms of humanitarian and economic terms. He pointed out that the conference touched upon the instructions of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the government since the beginning of the pandemic to provide assistance and protection to all segments of society.

Mutairi stressed the pandemic have had a significant impact on enjoying basic human rights issues, including the right to live and access to health services, considering that the conference was an occasion to recall the efforts made by Arab countries in addressing COVID-19. —KUNA



Myanmar junta executes two pro-democracy figures

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QUEZON CITY, Philippines: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr (front C) gestures as he arrives for his first State of the Nation address at the House of Representatives in Quezon City, suburban Manila on July 25, 2022. — AFP

Marcos Jr unveils economic blueprint

‘We have assembled the best Filipino minds to help navigate us through this time of global crisis’

MANILA: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr vowed Monday to slash poverty, rein in soaring food prices and boost renewable energy, as he unveiled an ambitious blueprint for his six-year term.

In his first State of the Nation address, Marcos Jr offered a laundry list of targets, ranging from getting children back into classrooms, easing the debt burden of farmers, and expanding internet access. Unlike his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte, who used to frequently go off script in a stream of consciousness and threaten to kill people, Marcos Jr stuck to a prepared speech that was methodical and heavy on numbers.

After inheriting an economy ravaged by COVID-19 lockdowns and inflation, the new president expressed cautious optimism for the future—even as the war in Ukraine and supply chain disruptions drive up food and fuel prices.

“I do not intend to diminish the risks and challenges



But we need to start now

that we face in this turbulent time in global history,” he told the audience of lawmakers, diplomats and judges. “And yet I see sunlight filtering through these dark clouds. We have assembled the best Filipino minds to help navigate us through this time of global crisis.”

Marcos Jr, who is the son and namesake of the country’s late dictator, spoke for 74 minutes without

mentioning human rights, corruption or peace talks with militant groups. Instead, the 64-year-old scion focused on the economy, clean energy, agriculture, and helping poor Filipinos.

Marcos Jr vowed to more than halve the poverty rate to single digits by the end of his term and offer financial relief to many farmers, including forgiving debts. Renewable energy was “at the top of our climate agenda”, he said, insisting it was time to reconsider building nuclear power plants in the disaster-prone country.

He also pledged to boost agricultural productivity and bring down food prices. “These will not be done in one day, one month or one year. But we need to start now,” he said.

Peaceful protests

Marcos Jr was swept to power by a landslide in

the May 9 elections, completing his family’s remarkable comeback from pariahs in exile to the peak of political power. Hours before his speech, several thousand protesters marched peacefully along a major avenue to oppose his victory and criticise his first weeks in office.

“He’s just sitting around, he’s busying himself revising history instead of doing the urgent work of stopping the rising costs of commodities especially food, distributing land to farmers and raising the wages of workers,” said Angelo Suarez, who volunteers for an agricultural workers union.

The higher cost of living is worsening the financial misery of millions of Filipinos already struggling to feed their families. The central bank recently raised interest rates for the third straight month as it struggles to rein in surging energy prices. Inflation hit 6.1 percent in June, the highest level in nearly four years. — AFP



EDMONTON, Canada: Pope Francis (R) and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (L) take part in a welcoming ceremony for the Pope at Edmonton International Airport in Alberta Province, Canada. — AFP

Pope to apologise for Canada school abuse

EDMONTON, Canada: Pope Francis will visit a former residential school in Canada on Monday, where he is expected to make a historic personal apology to Indigenous survivors of abuse committed over decades at the Catholic-run institutions.

The leader of the world’s 1.3 billion Catholics arrived the previous day in Edmonton for a six-day visit, which has long been awaited by the First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities. The 85-year-old pontiff’s trip, which he has described as a “penitential journey,” is primarily to apologise to survivors for the Church’s role in the scandal that a national truth and reconciliation commission has called “cultural genocide.” From the late 1800s to the 1990s, Canada’s government sent about 150,000 First Nations, Metis and Inuit children into 139 residential schools run by the Church, where they were cut off from their families, language and culture.

Many were physically and sexually abused by headmasters and teachers, and thousands of children are believed to have died of disease, malnutrition or neglect. A delegation of Indigenous peoples traveled to the Vatican in April and met the pope—a precursor to Francis’ six-day trip—after which he formally apologized. Francis is to arrive at 10:00 am (1600 GMT) Monday at the community of Maskwacis, about 100 kilometers (62 miles) south of Edmonton, where the former Ermineskin residential school—one of the largest in Canada—was located until its closure in 1975.

After a silent prayer in the cemetery, he will deliver his first speech, in Spanish, to an estimated crowd of 15,000, expected to include former students from across the country. At 4:30 pm, Francis will go to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church of the First Peoples in

Edmonton, one of the city’s oldest churches, where he will deliver a second speech to Indigenous communities. “I hope that this visit is the beginning of a change in history, a change in the way business is going to be done, and a way for us to begin our healing journey,” George Arcand Jr, the grand chief of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, said on national television. “I asked the Pope to walk with us and create this new road that needs to be created.”

‘Healing journey’

Since May 2021, more than 1,300 unmarked graves have been discovered at the sites of the former schools, sending shockwaves throughout Canada. The country has slowly begun to acknowledge this long, dark chapter in its history.

The papal visit, though highly anticipated, is also a source of controversy for some survivors and their families. Many expect Francis to make symbolic gestures, such as returning some of the Indigenous artifacts that have been held in the Vatican for decades.

“It means a lot to me” that he came, said Deborah Greyeyes, 71, noting her “entire reserve” was going to hear Francis speak. Greyeyes, an Edmonton resident, is a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, the largest Indigenous group in Canada.

“I think we have to forgive, too, at some point,” she told AFP. But “a lot of stuff was taken away from us.” After a mass before tens of thousands of faithful in Edmonton on Tuesday, Francis will head northwest to an important pilgrimage site, the Lac Sainte Anne.

Following a July 27-29 visit to Quebec City, he will end his trip in Iqaluit, capital of the northern territory of Nunavut and home to the largest Inuit population in Canada. There he will meet with former residential school students, before returning to Italy.

The flight to Edmonton constituted the longest since 2019 for Francis, who has been suffering from knee pain that has forced him to use a cane or wheelchair in recent outings. The pope was in a wheelchair Sunday and used a lifting platform to board the plane in Rome, and was also in a wheelchair on the tarmac in Edmonton. Francis is the second pope to visit Canada, after John Paul II, who did so twice in the 1980s and again in 2002. — AFP

Singapore asked to indict Sri Lanka’s exiled leader

SINGAPORE: An international human rights group has formally asked Singapore to indict Sri Lanka’s deposed president Gotabaya Rajapaksa for crimes against humanity during his country’s decades-long civil war, officials said Monday.

Rajapaksa fled his country earlier this month after his official residence was stormed by tens of thousands of protesters infuriated by the island nation’s painful economic crisis. He later escaped to the Maldives in a military plane and travelled on to Singapore, from where he tendered his resignation.

Rajapaksa helmed Sri Lanka’s defence ministry while his brother Mahinda was president and was in charge when the country’s brutal Tamil separatist conflict came to a bloody end in 2009. Rights groups accused government forces of killing 40,000 Tamil civilians in a no-holds-barred offensive during the war’s final weeks.

The South Africa-based International Truth and Justice Project said it had urged Singapore to exercise its universal jurisdiction to arrest the former president for grave breaches of international humanitarian law.

“These include murder, execution, torture and inhuman treatment, rape and other forms of sexual violence, deprivation of liberty, severe bodily and mental harm, and starvation,” according to the 63-page complaint.

Singapore’s Attorney General’s Chambers (AGC) confirmed Monday it had received a complaint from the group on the weekend, without giving further details. The once powerful Rajapaksa clan has long maintained that no civilians were killed in crushing a Tamil Tigers

UK’s Sunak vows tough action on China

LONDON: Britain’s two prime ministerial contenders were set Monday to go head-to-head for the first time in a televised debate after a weekend of tough talking on China. In response to criticism by Conservative leadership favourite Liz Truss, rival Rishi Sunak announced plans to crack down on Beijing’s influence, calling it the “number one threat” to domestic and global security.

China’s state-run Global Times has previously said former finance minister Sunak was the only candidate in the contest with “a clear and pragmatic view on developing UK-China ties”. The Daily Mail, which has come out for Foreign Secretary Truss in the race to succeed Boris Johnson, called that “the endorsement that nobody wanted”.

Sunak’s proposals include the closure of all 30 Confucius Institutes in Britain, preventing the soft-power spread of Chinese influence through culture and lan-

guage programmes. He also promised to “kick the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) out of our universities”, by forcing higher education establishments to disclose foreign funding of more than £50,000 (\$60,000) and reviewing research partnerships.

Britain’s domestic spy agency MI5 would be used to help combat Chinese espionage, and he would look to build “NATO-style” international cooperation to tackle Chinese threats in cyberspace. China’s foreign ministry said in response that UK politicians should not “talk about China at every turn and make irresponsible remarks such as the so-called ‘China threat theory’, which cannot solve their problems”.

Sunak has been accused by Truss of being soft on both China and Russia when he was finance minister, reportedly raising economic concerns when Johnson pushed for tough sanctions following Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

His toughened line on China came ahead of Monday’s BBC television debate, to be held at 9:00 pm (2000 GMT), as he looks to claw ground back from Truss. Opinion polls put Truss well ahead in the crucial hunt for votes from the roughly 200,000 grassroots Tory members, after she and Sunak emerged as the run-off candidates in a series of votes by MPs. The winner will be announced on September 5.—AFP



NEW DELHI: A demonstrator shouts slogans after being detained by police personnel during a protest in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka, outside the Sri Lankan embassy in New Delhi. — AFP

local and international condemnation. Rajapaksa has also been accused of leading death squads, but he denied abducting dissidents and journalists and killing them when he served as defence secretary between 2005 and 2015. Two cases against him in a California court were frozen in 2019 after he became president and acquired sovereign immunity.—AFP

International

Tunisians vote on constitution set to bolster one-man rule

‘The country’s run into a brick wall, but today we turn a new page’

TUNIS: Tunisians were voting Monday on a new constitution promoted by President Kais Saied, which has been criticised for giving his office nearly unchecked powers and threatening to install an autocracy in the birthplace of the Arab Spring. The referendum comes a year to the day after Saied sacked the government and froze parliament in a power grab that his rivals condemned as a coup.



‘The start of the new Tunisia is today’

His moves were however welcomed by many Tunisians fed up with a grinding economic crisis, political turmoil and a system they felt had brought little improvement to their lives in the decade since the 2011 overthrow of dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Few doubt Monday’s vote will pass, but turnout will gauge Saied’s popularity after a year of increasingly tight one-man rule that has seen scant progress on tackling the North African country’s economic woes.

Early on Monday, a handful of voters had queued up waiting for the opening a polling station in Tunis, guarded by a pair of soldiers and four police officers. After casting their ballots, they emerged with purple ink on one finger to prevent fraud. The electoral board said by 0830 GMT an “encouraging” 6.3 percent of voters had cast ballots. Speaking mid-morning, Saied told journalists the country faced a “historic choice” and a free vote. “Together we are founding a new republic based on genuine freedom, justice and national dignity,” he said. Voter Imed Hezzi, a 57-year-old waiter, said he had

“lots of hope” Saied would improve the country. “Tunisia will prosper from today onwards,” he told AFP after casting his ballot. “The start of the new Tunisia is today.”

‘None of the safeguards’

Some 9.3 million out of Tunisia’s 12 million people are eligible to vote. No minimum participation has been set for the constitution to pass, nor any provision made for a “no” result, and Saied’s critics have warned Tunisia risks sliding back towards dictatorship.

The new text would place the head of state in command of the army, allow him to appoint a government without parliamentary approval and make him virtually impossible to remove from office. The president could also present draft laws to parliament, which would be obliged to give them priority.

The new charter “gives the president almost all powers and dismantles any check on his rule and any institution that might exert any kind of control over him,” declared Said Benarbia, regional director of the International Commission of Jurists.

“None of the safeguards that could protect Tunisians from Ben Ali-type violations are there any more.” Saied’s charter would replace a 2014 constitution that was a hard-won compromise between Islamist-leaning and secular forces after three years of political turmoil.

His supporters blame the resulting parliamentary-presidential system and the dominant Islamist-influenced Ennahdha party for years of political crises and corruption. Saied’s draft constitution was published this month with little reference even to an earlier draft produced by a committee he appointed himself.

Sadeq Belaid, a mentor of Saied who led the process, warned the president’s first draft was far removed from that of the committee and risked creating a “dictatorial system”. A slightly amended version did little to address such concerns. Opposition parties and civil society groups have called for a boycott, while the powerful UGTT trade union has declined to take a position.

But nations have mostly received them only sporadically, fearing a domestic political backlash. The Kurds handed over “42 women and 104 children, including orphans, who were held in the Al-Hol and Roj camps” in northeast Syria to Tajikistan’s ambassador to Kuwait Zaidullah Zabidov, Kurdish foreign affairs official Fanar al-Kaeet said.

Zabidov is handling the repatriation process for Tajikistan. The ex-Soviet state has been in contact with Syria’s Kurds “for months” to repatriate their citizens, Kaeet said during a press conference in the northeastern city of Qamishli.

The women “did not commit any crimes or terrorist acts in northeastern Syria,” he said. Al-Hol and Roj camps are home to tens of thousands of relatives of IS militants from Syria and abroad, with the former holding 10,000 foreigners. Kurdish-led forces escorted the women, some in colourful clothing, others in long black robes, and the children, as they were bussed out to Qamishli airport, AFP correspondents in Qamishli reported. Some women tried to hide their faces.—AFP

Syria’s Kurds send home IS-linked Tajiki women, children

QAMISHLI, Syria: Syria’s semi-autonomous Kurdish administration handed Tajikistan 146 women and children related to Islamic State group jihadists, a Kurdish official said Monday, in the first such repatriation to the ex-Soviet state.

Thousands of foreign extremists joined IS as fighters, often bringing their wives and children to live in the “caliphate” declared by the group across swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014. The jihadists were dislodged in 2019 from their last scrap of territory in Syria by Kurdish-led forces backed by a US-led coalition, and Kurdish authorities have repeatedly called on countries to repatriate their citizens from crowded displaced camps.



QAMISHLI, Syria: Women and children from families of Islamic State fighters sit in buses after Kurdish authorities handed them over to Tajikistan in Syria’s Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli in the northeastern Hasakeh province, on July 25, 2022.—AFP

Murmu sworn in as India’s first...

Continued from Page 1

in 2024. “Her assuming the Presidency is a watershed moment for India especially for the poor, marginalised and downtrodden,” Modi said on Twitter after Murmu’s address.

‘Great satisfaction’

Murmu said her election would give hope to those left behind by India’s recent economic growth. “It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that those who have been deprived for centuries, who have been away from the benefits of development... are seeing their reflection in me,” she said.

Lebanese ‘gang’ kidnaps...

Continued from Page 1

extorting” him, he said. In April, a gang kidnapped an Egyptian accountant in Baalbek. He was rescued by the army after two weeks in captivity. On July 11, a Saudi dissident living in Beirut’s southern suburbs was killed, and two of his brothers were arrested in

India’s prime minister wields executive power, but the president can send back some parliamentary bills for reconsideration and also plays a guiding role in the process of forming governments. Murmu is the country’s second woman president, after Pratibha Patil, who held the position for five years from 2007. She succeeds Ram Nath Kovind, the second president from the Dalit community, the bottom of the Hindu caste system.

Chinese President Xi Jinping was among the world leaders to congratulate Murmu and said he was “ready to work” with his new Indian counterpart to strengthen relations, according to Chinese state media. Relations between the world’s two most populous nations have been frosty since a deadly Himalayan military stand-off between the countries in 2020. Both sides have since reinforced their disputed border with extra soldiers, military hardware and new infrastructure, and multiple rounds of military and diplomatic talks have failed to de-escalate tensions.—AFP

connection with the murder.

The latest kidnapping comes three months after Riyadh announced the return of its ambassador to Beirut, following a diplomatic crisis last year between Lebanon and Arab states in the Gulf. Riyadh also suspended fruit and vegetable imports from Lebanon in April last year, saying shipments were used for drug smuggling and accusing Beirut of inaction. Captagon pills, an amphetamine that is wreaking havoc in the kingdom and other Arab states, are produced mainly in Syria, neighboring the Bekaa, and smuggled to the main consumer markets in the Gulf.—AFP



TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied speaks after voting with his wife Ichraf Chebil in a referendum on a draft constitution he put forward, at a polling station in the capital Tunis, on July 25, 2022.—AFP

Revolutionary ‘correction’

Benarbia said the text “doesn’t even envisage the possibility of a no vote”. Saied, a 64-year-old law professor, won the 2019 presidential election in a landslide, building on his image as incorruptible and distanced from the political elite.

He has appeared increasingly isolated in recent months, mostly limiting his public comments to official videos from his office—often diatribes against domestic foes he brands as “snakes”, “germs” and “traitors”.

He has vowed to protect Tunisians’ liberties and describes his political project as a “correction” and a return to the path of the revolution. Mongia Aounallah, a

62-year-old retiree, said she hoped the referendum would lead to “a better life for our children’s children”.

“The schools are a catastrophe,” she said. “The situation is catastrophic. Everything is catastrophic.” Day labourer Ridha Nefzi agreed. “I came to vote to change the situation of the country,” the 43-year-old said. “The country’s run into a brick wall. But today we turn a new page.”

But while Saied enjoys some popularity, that will be tested by soaring inflation, youth unemployment of 40 percent and a tough loan deal with the International Monetary Fund. Voting is set end at 10:00 pm (2100 GMT) and results are expected late Tuesday or early Wednesday.—AFP

Iran won’t be rushed into nuke deal

TEHRAN, Iran: Iran said Monday it will not be rushed into a “quick” deal reviving its faltering 2015 nuclear accord with world powers, as negotiations remain deadlocked. “They demand that Iran makes a quick decision, (insisting that) time is limited and Iran must respond quickly,” foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said at his weekly news conference, referring to Western parties to the nuclear deal.

Kanani said the Islamic republic will “not sacrifice the country’s fundamental interests... with a rushed process”. It was being put under “psychological pressure and unilateral expectations”, he said. But “if the US acts constructively and positively, an agreement is close,” Kanani said.

The 2015 agreement gave Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its atomic programme to guar-

antee that it could not develop a nuclear weapon—something it has always denied seeking. But the US’ unilateral withdrawal from the accord in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump and Washington’s reimposition of biting economic sanctions prompted Iran to begin rolling back on its own commitments.

Talks in Vienna that started in April 2021 to restore the deal have stalled since March amid differences between Tehran and Washington on several issues. The two sides negotiated indirectly through the European Union coordinator.

Qatar hosted indirect talks last month between the United States and Iran in a bid to get the Vienna process back on track, but those discussions broke up after two days without any breakthrough. On Thursday, State Department spokesman Ned Price said Iran “doesn’t seem to have made the political decision—or decisions, I should say—necessary to achieve a mutual return to compliance” with the deal.

France’s envoy to the UN, Nicolas de Riviere, in June urged Iran to “seize without further delay the offer on the table”. French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday told his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi that reviving the landmark deal was “still possible” but must happen “as soon as possible”.—AFP

33 die as Kenya bus plunges into a river

NAIROBI: Thirty-three people were killed when a bus plunged into a river at a notorious accident blackspot in central Kenya, officials said Monday. The accident occurred late Sunday when the bus was travelling from the town of Meru to the coastal city of Mombasa.

The bus plunged off a bridge about 40 metres (130 feet) into the Nithi River valley below. Pictures published in local media showed the bus ripped apart after rolling down the steep slope, with reports saying wreckage and bodies were strewn in the water

and on the riverbank. The National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) said in a statement on Twitter that 33 people had died and that it had halted the operations of the bus company involved, Modern Coast Express Ltd.

“A thorough multi-agency investigation into the crash and an evaluation of the operator’s safety operational standards is currently under way,” it added. County commissioner Norbert Komora had told reporters earlier: “The search is still on and we are trying to retrieve the wreckage. “Investigations are still going on to establish the cause of the accident”. The number of people killed on Kenya’s roads has increased in recent years. In the first half of 2022, 1,912 people were killed, up nine percent from 1,754 in the same period last year, according to NTSA figures.—AFP

Russia-West gas...

Continued from Page 1

US embargo

On March 8, President Joe Biden bans US imports of Russian gas and oil. The EU says it will cut its imports of Russian gas by two-thirds this year and Britain says it will phase out its Russian energy imports by the end of 2022.

Russia’s riposte

On March 23, Russian President Vladimir Putin bans European gas customers from paying their bills in dollars and euros, in response to the freezing of some \$300 billion in currency reserves held by Russia overseas. He announces that Moscow will now only accept payment in rubles from “unfriendly” countries, including EU nations. The European Commission warns EU members that by paying in rubles they would be violating international sanctions against Moscow. Washington agrees to provide Europe with an extra 15 billion cubic meters of liquefied natural gas this year.

Taps turned off

On April 27, Russian giant Gazprom cuts off gas supplies to Bulgaria and Poland, in a move European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen describes as “blackmail”. She says the two EU and NATO members are now receiving gas from their EU neighbors. On May 21, Russia cuts gas to neighboring Finland,

which has refused to pay in rubles and angered Moscow by asking to join NATO. The Netherlands and Denmark are also cut off after refusing to pay in rubles. On May 30, EU leaders agree to stop most Russian oil imports by the end of the year but put off a ban on Russian gas.

Pressure on Europe

In mid-June, Gazprom drastically cuts daily gas supplies to Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline, causing prices to soar. Claiming a technical problem, Gazprom reduces deliveries by several notches, as EU leaders prepare to give Ukraine candidate status. On June 23, Germany moves closer to rationing gas, raising its supplies alert level to the second of three stages.

EU plan

On July 11, Gazprom begins 10 days of routine maintenance on its Nord Stream 1 pipeline, resulting in gas cuts in Europe. A week later, the EU and Azerbaijan sign an agreement to double gas imports from the energy-rich Caspian nation to Europe. The 27-nation bloc has also turned to oil-rich countries such as Qatar, Norway and Algeria to make up for its energy shortfall. On July 20, the European Commission urges EU states to reduce demand for natural gas by 15 percent over the coming months to secure winter stocks.

Supplies slashed again

On July 25, Gazprom says it is further cutting the supply to about 20 percent of the pipeline’s capacity from Wednesday due to the “technical condition” of one of the turbines. The German government says there is “no technical reason” for the move.—AFP

International

Myanmar junta executes four prisoners including two pro-democracy figures

Executions sparked widespread condemnation

YANGON: Myanmar's junta has executed four prisoners including a former lawmaker from Aung San Suu Kyi's party and a prominent activist, state media said Monday, in the country's first use of capital punishment in decades. The executions sparked widespread condemnation, heightened fears that more death sentences will be carried out and prompted calls for the international community to take sterner measures against the already isolated junta.

The four were executed for leading "brutal and inhumane terror acts", the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said, without saying when or how the men were killed. The junta has sentenced dozens of anti-coup activists to death as part of its crackdown on dissent after seizing power last year, but Myanmar had not carried out an execution for decades.

Phyo Zeya Thaw, a former lawmaker from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) who was arrested in November, was sentenced to death in January for offences under anti-terrorism laws.

Democracy activist Kyaw Min Yu—better known as "Jimmy"—received the same sentence from the military tribunal. Family members of the two men gathered outside Yangon's Insein prison after news of the executions was published, in the hope of retrieving their bodies, local media reported.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy—which won a landslide in 2020 elections before being ousted by the military months later—said it was "devastated" by the news. A junta spokesman could not be reached for comment. Responding to media enquiries on reports of the executions, a junta statement said "it is as stated in the state media". The United Nations'

Special Rapporteur on Myanmar Tom Andrews said he was "outraged and devastated by the news".

"These depraved acts must be a turning point... what more must the junta do before the international community is willing to take strong action?" The two other men were sentenced to death for killing a woman they alleged was an informer for the junta in Yangon.

Amnesty International said the executions were an "atrocious escalation in state repression" and warned around 100 others were currently on death row after being convicted in junta courts. The United States condemned the "execution of pro-democracy leaders and elected officials for exercising their fundamental freedoms". "We join the people of Myanmar in mourning," its embassy in Yangon said in a statement posted to Twitter. Japan's government—a major provider of economic assistance to Myanmar—said in a statement it "seriously deplores" the executions.

'We join the people of Myanmar in mourning'

Diplomatic condemnation

UN rights workers have said that under the junta's martial law provisions, the death penalty could be given for 23 "vague and broadly defined offences"—which in practice could include any criticism of the military. Myanmar expert Richard Horsey of the International Crisis Group (ICG) said on Twitter that the executions were "an outrageous act. And one that will create political shockwaves, now and for a long time to come."

Phyo Zeya Thaw had been accused of orchestrating several attacks on regime forces, including a gun attack on a commuter train in Yangon in August that killed five policemen. A hip-hop pioneer whose sub-



YANGON: File photo taken on January 13, 2012 shows Kyaw Min Yu (C), known as Jimmy, and his wife Ni Lar Thein (L) holding her child, both members of the 88 Generation student group, celebrating their arrival at Yangon international airport following their release from detention. —AFP

versive rhymes irked the previous junta, he was jailed in 2008 for membership of an illegal organisation and possession of foreign currency.

He was elected to parliament representing Suu Kyi's NLD in the 2015 elections, which ushered in a transition to civilian rule. Kyaw Min Yu, who rose to prominence during Myanmar's 1988 student uprising against the country's previous military regime, was arrested in an overnight raid in October.

The country's military alleged voter fraud during

the 2020 elections, as justification for its coup on February 1 last year. Suu Kyi has been detained since then and faces a slew of charges in a junta court that could see her face a prison sentence of more than 150 years.

The Nobel laureate, 77, learned of the executions at her latest hearing on Monday, a source with knowledge of the matter said. She did not comment on the news but "looked sad" the source said. —AFP

Taiwan stages Chinese invasion war games

TAIPEI: Taiwan kicked off its largest annual military exercises Monday, with trench warfare and shoulder-launched Stinger missiles deployed against simulated Chinese attacks in drills informed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Democratic Taiwan lives under constant threat of being seized by China, which views the self-ruled island as part of its territory to be taken by force if necessary.

Russia's assault on Ukraine has heightened fears that Beijing might similarly follow through on threats to annex its much smaller and outgunned neighbour.

This year's five-day "Han Kuang" (Han Glory) war games have incorporated lessons from the ongoing European war, simulating "all possible actions" China could take to invade Taiwan, according to the defence ministry.

On Monday, reservists armed with machine guns ran into sandbagged trenches dug under a bridge before getting into firing position, in a drill aimed at blocking enemies from gaining access to the capital Taipei. "The underground bunkers help cover the troops and ward off the enemy's strike forces," said Su Tzu-yun, a military expert at Taiwan's Institute for National Defence and Security Research.

"They are part of Ukraine's urban warfare." Stinger missiles, effective against helicopters and low-flying planes, were also deployed in some high-rise buildings in the area, he said. The highly



TAIPEI, Taiwan: Military personnel guide local residents to take shelter during the Wanan Air Raid Drill, a civilian air-raid drill held on the same day of the annual Han Kuang military exercises, in Taipei on July 25, 2022. —AFP

portable missiles have been invaluable to Ukrainian forces fighting off Russian air power.

Separately, the streets in several northern cities were empty for 30 minutes as part of a civilian air-raid drill, with pedestrians and cars banned after sirens and text-message alerts warned of mock missile attacks.

Beijing's sabre-rattling has increased considerably since Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, as she rejects its stance that the island is part of China.

quately probe abuses, with two commissions set up for that purpose in 2015 failing to resolve a single case between them despite over 60,000 complaints.

The government this month presented a bill to amend existing laws relating to war criminals, seven years after the Supreme Court ordered for revisions to stop serious human rights violators from being granted amnesty.

But in a joint statement, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and other international watchdogs said the proposed amendments would still make it difficult or impossible to prosecute the worst offenders. "Victims and their families who have waited anxiously for amendments to the law, hoping that their demands for truth and justice will be met, are disappointed," said Mandira Sharma of the International Commission of Jurists.

"Despite the promise of reform, this bill, if implemented as it stands today, would shield many perpetrators from being brought to justice," she added.

firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017.

The training, which runs to July 29, is being carried out at the Rodriguez Live Fire Complex, close to the heavily-fortified Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, the US 2nd Infantry Division told AFP.

The drills ensure US air crews "are qualified on their Apaches, maintain their proficiency on their helicopters, and are capable of executing their mission if called upon," a spokesperson said in a statement sent to AFP.

According to local reports, the US military stopped using the Rodriguez Live Fire Complex in Pochon in 2018 due to complaints from local residents about noise and safety. The ongoing drills are

Bill Burns, director of the United States' Central Intelligence Agency, recently said China appeared determined to use force in Taiwan, with Russia's experience in Ukraine affecting its calculations on when and how — not whether — to invade.

Last year, Taiwan recorded 969 incursions by Chinese warplanes into its air defence zone, according to a database compiled by AFP — more than double the roughly 380 in 2020. The number of sorties has reached more than 600 so far this year. —AFP

Several other aspects of the proposed reforms, including limitations on the right to appeal, also fell short of international standards, according to the joint statement.

Suman Adhikari, whose father was killed by Maoist rebels in 2002, told AFP that the proposed amendments failed to address the concerns of victims. "We feel that we are not getting justice," he said, adding that the reforms still seemed "designed to grant amnesty to all culprits."

Critics say Nepal's truth and reconciliation process has been poorly designed from the outset and stymied by a lack of funding and political will, with many former Maoist rebels now in government ranks.

Just two convictions related to crimes committed during the civil war crimes have been handed down in civilian courts, one linked to the murder of a teenage girl and another related to the killing of a journalist. —AFP

understood to be for "noise measurement", an official from Seoul's defence ministry said, apparently referring to locals' concerns over the disruption.

But the two countries, long-time regional security allies, said in May that they were looking to ramp up joint military exercises, which had been scaled back due to Covid-19, and during a bout of failed diplomacy with the North.

South Korea's hawkish new President Yoon Suk-yeol—who took office in May—has vowed a tougher stance against Pyongyang, vowing to "normalise" US-South Korea joint military drills. Such exercises have always infuriated the North, which considers them rehearsals for invasion.

The US is using its advanced AH-64E v6 Apache helicopters in the drills, according to

News in brief

PNG capital on high alert

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea: Residents of Papua New Guinea's capital were told to stay home and troops were deployed to its streets Monday, after a brutal election-related attack hospitalised two people. In a politically motivated attack, a machete-wielding gang chased down two victims outside a counting centre in Port Moresby on Sunday, leaving one with a traumatic brain injury and another with an injured limb, doctors and police said. Gunshots were heard elsewhere in the capital, with more violence expected. "The situation does remain very volatile at this point," police commissioner David Manning said, as he requested more troops to help his overwhelmed and understaffed force. "They accepted our request and actioned our request for additional manpower," he said. Papua New Guinea is nearing the end of a month-long vote already marred by violence. About 10,000 police, army and corrections services personnel had already been mobilised for the vote, but they have struggled to maintain control.

Sailor survives night

SYDNEY: A Chinese sailor was rescued off Australia's west coast Monday after falling from a cargo ship and enduring a long night adrift in sharky waters. The man, in his 30s, was left bobbing in the inky Indian Ocean for more than 12 hours after he went overboard from the Chinese-flagged bulk carrier Guang Mao on Sunday evening, according to police and maritime authorities. Aerial and marine crews struggled to find him during initial efforts before suspending searches overnight. On Monday morning, rescue teams plucked the stranded seaman from waters about 10 kilometres (six miles) from shore. "The man is being conveyed to shore and will be taken to hospital for a medical assessment," West Australian police said in a statement. Australia's west coast is well known for its large shark population, and although rare, several attacks on swimmers and surfers have been recorded in the area. —AFP

Nepal laws will leave civil war crimes unpunished

KATHMANDU, Nepal: Nepal risks letting wartime atrocities committed during the Himalayan kingdom's Maoist insurgency go unpunished with long-delayed reforms to its transitional justice laws, rights groups said Monday.

Both security forces and former rebels have been accused of carrying out torture, killings, rapes and forced disappearances during Nepal's decade-long civil war, which ended in 2006 with more than 16,000 people dead.

Authorities have been criticised for failing to ade-

US helicopters hold live-fire drills in S Korea

SEOUL: US Army Apache attack helicopters stationed in South Korea are holding live-fire drills with guns and rockets, the US military said Monday, as Seoul looks to boost deterrence against the nuclear-armed North.

The drills—the first such exercises since 2019 — come after a record-breaking blitz of weapons tests by Pyongyang this year, including

images tweeted by the US 2nd Infantry Division. "5th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment and 4-2 Attack Battalion are conducting aerial gunnery, certifying their crews on AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, Hydra 70 rockets and 30mm canon," it said.

Washington and Seoul officials have repeatedly warned that the North is preparing to carry out what would be its seventh nuclear test—a move that the United States warned would provoke a "swift and forceful" response.

A total of six US top-of-the-line F-35A fighters also arrived in the South earlier this month for a 10-day allied exercise that took place until July 14. It was the first public deployment of American stealth warplanes in the country since late 2017. —AFP

Business

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2022



KUWAIT: KFH holds ordinary and extraordinary general assembly meeting on Monday.

KFH general assembly approves acquisition of AUB-Bahrain

Acquisition a historic milestone for Kuwaiti banking sector: Al-Marzouq

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (Baitak) held its ordinary and extraordinary General Assembly meeting on Monday and approved the deal to acquire Ahli United Bank - Bahrain with the attendance of 83.189 percent of shareholders.

All items on the agenda of the ordinary General Assembly were approved during the meeting, which includes the approval of the Sharia Supervisory Board report with regards to the proposal to acquire Ahli United Bank (B.S.C), and its attachments, the approval of the board of directors to approve the exchange rate which is one share from KFH for 2.695 shares of Ahli United Bank (B.S.C), and approve the evaluation of real assets that was done by one of the evaluators accredited by the Capital Markets Authority to increase the issued capital of KFH.

The General Assembly approved the renewal of the ordinary general assembly that was issued in its meeting on January 20, 2020 regarding the listing of KFH on the stock exchange in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

All items on the extraordinary General Assembly Agenda, were also approved, most important of which is the recommendation of the Board of Directors to increase the issued and paid up capital of KFH by issuing maximum number of shares at 4,200,000,000 (four thousand and two hundred million) shares, with the national value of the shares to use it for executing the acquisition.

Baitak Chairman of the Board Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al-Marzouq

Baitak Chairman of the Board Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al-Marzouq said the KFH acquisition of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain represents a historic milestone at a time when Kuwaiti banking sector is moving forward in a highly competitive industry both regionally and internationally. At the same time, opportunities for small banks to compete with bigger banking entities over the years have diminished.

Various implications of the deal on the bank, its shareholders and customers were also discussed at the meeting. The assembly also discussed the possible impact of the deal on the banking system and the national economy and expected quantitative and qualitative benefits from the takeover as well as the financial safety as far as capital adequacy, assets quality, profitability, liquidity, etc are concerned.

He said the existence of a major banking entity that is compliant with Sharia rules has become something more than necessary especially that Islamic banks are only six decades old while the traditional banks are six centuries old. So, the Islamic banks will be able to achieve higher growth rates in the future in case they adopt expansionist policies, adding that



Hamad Al-Marzouq

through (Baitak - Ahli United Bank) deal, the unified entity will be able to absorb shocks and confront risks. Besides, the entity will strengthen the ranking of the Kuwait banking sector at the GCC level as Kuwait banks are currently in fourth place among Gulf banks as far as asset sizes, according to recent data.

- 83.189% shareholders attend the general assembly
- General Assembly approves all items on agenda
- Meeting discusses multiple advantages of acquisition
- Capital base of the bank after the takeover to be more than \$10bn

Al-Marzouq said despite the leadership of Kuwait banks, the Gulf banking sector witnessed 11 takeovers and mergers over the last ten years resulting in the formation of larger entities reducing the ability to compete in the local banking sector.

Important facts

Facts confirm that the deal is in favor of all concerned parties, especially that the supervisory



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood

authorities made extensive studies to find out the expected effects on the banking sector and local economy. This is in addition to the studies that were conducted for some major shareholders by international organizations of experts and professionals that confirmed the feasibility of the process and its importance.

As for the time period for the procedures and approvals the acquisition required, he said, the idea of this project began six years ago and was discussed by all shareholding entities as well as supervisory authorities in more than one country. More than 14 consultants participated in the study of this deal, most of whom are international as well as local consultants. For example, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA)



Shadi Zahran

appointed two international consulting firms Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley to evaluate the effects of the takeover on their share in Baitak. The results of their studies were positive and in favor of the takeover. Central Bank of Kuwait appointed McKinsey to evaluate all implications resulting from the takeover deal on the

banking sector in particular and on the local economy in general, and the results were also positive.

At Baitak level, it appointed several international and local advisors such as Goldman Sachs, Al-Shall and others and the results of all these studies were positive. The consultants gave detailed reports on the financial advantages of the acquisition for "Baitak" and its shareholders, including government entities.



Dr. Sayed Mohammed Tabtabae

High financing capacity

To go along with the programs and projects of partnership between the public and private sectors, Kuwait needs banking entities with large capital basis that are able to provide major finances required for the national development projects. And this is what this acquisition achieves as the capital base of the bank after the takeover will be more than \$10 billion. This will lead to the reduction of depending on international banks for financing, assets management, consultations and other processes for Kuwait banks, especially if they were big entities with huge capitals so the contribution of local banks in the economy will increase, serve the goals of diversifying income sources and economy and also create opportunities for national labor.

Advantages of acquisition

Advantages of mergers and acquisitions in the banking sector are manifold in light of the accelerating economic variables that occur in the market. The need for enhanced competence and quality services at a lesser cost have become essential and the change of customer needs and advancement of technology now control all facets of economy.

The economic and financial advantages of the acquisition are countless and some of these were discussed during the meeting.

- Kuwait has a declared goal for the development project which is to elevate its competitiveness as a financial hub and in achieving that goal, the country needs bigger banks. The takeover is a step in this direction and it supports Kuwait's status as a commercial center in addition to the fact that it increases the opportunities for its development of Islamic banking, improve and reduce cost of services.
- Liquidity management in Kuwait needs the borrowing market to finance its development project. And its needs will be huge and the bigger its banking sector the more its ability to meet these requirements.
- The merged entity combines



Jassem Al-Saadoun

two cultures for two successful banks, even if it was measured by the historic rise of the business size, or the rise of profitability level. It is for sure that the merged entity will benefit from the integration of their services to strengthen and unify the good among them.

- The acquisition creates a strong banking entity with a capital base of over \$10 billion and assets that are equal to \$121 billion. This capital base will strengthen the bank's ability to finance the infrastructure projects and major oil projects through local banks and reducing dependence on foreign banks.
- The new banking entity will have distinguished geographic variation as it will operate in nearly 12 regional and international countries.
- This takeover will raise the net "Baitak" profits in foreign currency from 19.8 percent to 39.6 percent which will contribute to increasing Kuwait's returns in foreign currency.
- The acquisition will increase the bank's activity and its ability to create new job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth inside and outside Kuwait through the bank's main premises in Kuwait and its foreign branches in 12 countries.
- This acquisition will increase the size of Kuwaiti banks that could compete with other Gulf banks in terms of size and competitiveness. Notably, there were 11 acquisitions and mergers that took place mainly in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE while the number of these operations in Kuwait was limited to just one which was the takeover Boubyan Bank by the National Bank of Kuwait.
- The acquisition will benefit all shareholders without any exception, and public funds will be bigger. The international consultant Goldman Sachs estimated that the returns on the government shares, that is public fund, will be around \$5.2 billion as a result of the increase in the expected capital value and around \$110 million in annual financial returns.



KUWAIT: Baitak board members attend the general assembly meeting

KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P.

(Incorporated in the State of Kuwait)

Commercial Registration Number 26066

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House



NOTIFICATION OF KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P.'S REVISED FIRM INTENTION TO MAKE A VOLUNTARY CONDITIONAL OFFER TO ACQUIRE UP TO 100% OF THE ISSUED ORDINARY SHARES OF AHLI UNITED BANK B.S.C. BY WAY OF A SHARE SWAP

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

THE CENTRAL BANK OF BAHRAIN AND BAHRAIN BOURSE ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTENTS OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, MAKE NO REPRESENTATION AS TO ITS ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS AND EXPRESSLY DISCLAIM ANY LIABILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY LOSS HOWSOEVER ARISING FROM OR IN RELIANCE UPON THE WHOLE OR ANY PART OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY AND DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN INVITATION OR OFFER TO ACQUIRE, PURCHASE OR SUBSCRIBE FOR SECURITIES OF KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

THE DIRECTORS OF KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE K.S.C.P. ISSUING THIS NOTIFICATION OF ITS REVISED FIRM INTENTION TO MAKE AN OFFER, WHOSE NAMES APPEAR IN THIS DOCUMENT JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS NOTIFICATION. TO THE BEST OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF OF THE DIRECTORS, WHO HAVE TAKEN ALL REASONABLE CARE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH IS THE CASE, THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS NOTIFICATION IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FACTS AND CONTAINS NO OMISSIONS LIKELY TO AFFECT THE IMPORTANCE AND COMPLETENESS OF THIS NOTIFICATION.

Important note: Pursuant to TMA-2.7.6 of the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) Rulebook, Volume 6, Takeovers, Mergers and Acquisitions Module (TMA Module), the offer document must be sent to the offeree company by or on behalf of the offeror within 21 calendar days of the date of the announcement of the terms of the offer. Capitalised terms used herein and not defined have the meaning as defined in the offer document which will be published shortly after this document (the Offer Document).

Date of submission of the statement of firm intention

Kuwait Finance House K.S.C.P. (the Offeror or KFH) notified the board of directors of Ahli United Bank B.S.C. (the Offeree or AUB) on 25 July 2022 after trading hours, that it has a firm intention to make a voluntary conditional offer to acquire up to 100% of the issued ordinary shares of AUB by way of a share swap, subject to the fulfillment, or waiver by KFH, of the conditions outlined below.

Due to the consequences of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, KFH and AUB announced, on 12 April 2020 and again on 29 December 2020, that it was agreed to postpone the proposed acquisition.

On 1 December 2021, each of KFH and AUB disclosed their board of directors' approvals to update the acquisition studies. On 6 July 2022, KFH announced that it has received a final approval from the Central Bank of Kuwait (the CBK) in connection with the acquisition of 100% of the issued ordinary shares of AUB. On 6 July 2022, AUB announced that its board has resolved to accept the revised share exchange ratio of 2.695 AUB shares for each KFH share as proposed by KFH, subject to (i) the fairness opinion of the independent professional advisor to be appointed by the AUB board of directors; and (ii) the aggregate ownership of the AUB shareholders in KFH immediately following completion of a full acquisition of all AUB shares being not less than 31% of the total outstanding and paid-up shares of KFH at such time. On 25 July 2022, the General Assembly of the KFH shareholders resolved to approve the proposed acquisition of AUB at the revised exchange ratio and authorized KFH's board of directors to proceed with the relevant procedures to effect the proposed acquisition.

Identity of the Offeror making the statement of firm intention to make an offer

Kuwait Finance House K.S.C.P.
PO Box 24989 Safat 13110 Kuwait
Telephone: + (965) 22445050

KFH is registered with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the State of Kuwait under commercial registration number 26066 as a Public Kuwaiti Shareholding Company whose ordinary shares are listed on Boursa Kuwait (the BK).

KFH is licensed by the CBK as a locally incorporated bank operating as an Islamic bank providing a wide range of banking Sharia'a compliant products and services.

KFH has an authorized share capital of KWD1,348,570,712.700 and an issued and paid-up share capital of KWD928,570,712.700 divided into 9,285,707,127 ordinary shares with a nominal value of KWD0.100 each and 9,207,101,211 outstanding ordinary shares with a nominal value of KWD 0.100 each.

Shareholders of the Offeror

The summary of principal shareholdings in KFH is given below:

Shareholder's Name*	% owned in KFH	No. of shares
Kuwait Investment Authority	24.08%	2,235,931,828
Public Authority for Minors Affairs	10.48%	973,533,936
General Secretariat of Awqaf	7.30%	677,491,164
Other Public	58.14%	5,398,750,199
Total	100%	9,285,707,127

*As at 7 July 2022 based on the information disclosed by the shareholders to Bourse Kuwait on such date

Board of Directors and Management of the Offeror

KFH's board of directors currently comprises of 12 board members, as follows:

Board of Directors	Title
Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al Marzouq	Chairman
Abdul Aziz Yacoub Alnafisi	Vice Chairman
Fahad Ali AlGhanim	Director
Muad Saud Al Osaimi	Director
Khaled Salem Al Nisf	Director
Noorur Rahman Abid	Independent Director
Hanan Yousef Ali Yousef	Director
Hamad Abdellatif Al-Barjas	Director
Motlaq Mubarak Al-Sanei	Director
Salah Abdulaziz Al-Muraikhi	Director
Ahmad Meshari Al-Faris	Independent Director
Mohammed Naser Al-Fouzan	Director

The current management team of KFH is:

Management Personnel	Title
Abdulwahab Issa Al-Rushood	Acting Group Chief Executive Officer and Group Chief Treasury Officer
Shadi Ahmed Zahran	Group Chief Financial Officer
Khaled Yousif Al-Shamlan	Group Chief Retail & Private Banking Officer
Ahmed Soud AlKharji	Group Chief Corporate Banking Officer
Fahad Khaled Al-Mulkaizeem	Group Chief Strategy Officer
Gehad Mohamed El-Bendary	Group Chief Risk Officer
Zeyad Abdulla Alomar	Group Chief Human Resources Officer
Haitham Abdulaziz Alterkait	Group Chief Information Technology Officer
Abdullah Mohammed Abu Alhous	Group Chief Operations Officer
Wissam Sami El-Kari	Group Chief Internal Auditor
Dr. Khaled Mohammed Al-Jumah	General Manager Legal Group

KFH's Firm Intention to make an acquisition offer

Offeree Ahli United Bank B.S.C.
Building 2495, Road 2832, Al Seef District 428
PO Box 2424, Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

AUB is registered with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in the Kingdom of Bahrain under commercial registration number 46348 as a public joint stock company whose ordinary shares are listed on the Bahrain Bourse (the BB) and BK.

AUB is licensed by the CBB as a locally incorporated bank operating as a conventional retail bank.

AUB has an issued and paid-up share capital of USD 2,786,982,864.500 divided into 11,147,931,458 ordinary shares with a nominal value of USD0.25 each.

Details of securities for which an offer will be made

AUB shares that comprise up to 100% of AUB's issued and paid-up share capital. That is inclusive of 11,147,931,458 AUB shares of a nominal value of USD 0.25 each and any AUB shares, whether bonus shares or pursuant to an employee share option scheme, that are issued after the date of the Offer Document, but before the Effective Date (the AUB Shares).

Consideration for the offer

The consideration for the offer is new shares in the Offeror at a share exchange ratio of 1 KFH share for each 2.695 AUB Shares.

The offer price (which determines the number of shares that will be issued to AUB shareholders in KFH as a result of the offer) was considered by the respective boards of directors of KFH and AUB with reference to advice and assistance from their advisers and their review of due diligence information on their respective businesses. Following such consideration, KFH's board of directors approved the new revised final share exchange ratio and AUB's board of directors has resolved to accept the revised share exchange ratio of 2.695 AUB shares for each KFH share as proposed by KFH, subject to (i) the fairness opinion of the independent professional advisor to be appointed by the AUB board of directors; and (ii) the aggregate ownership of the AUB Shareholders in KFH immediately following completion of a full acquisition of all AUB shares being not less than 31% of the total outstanding and paid up shares of KFH at such time.

Mechanism

It is envisaged that the offer will be implemented by way of a voluntary conditional offer to the shareholders of AUB by KFH to acquire up to 100% of the issued ordinary shares of AUB by way of share swap, at the exchange ratio, in line with the applicable procedures of the TMA Module.

Compulsory acquisitions (squeeze-out) Subject to receipt of acceptances from AUB shareholders in respect of AUB shares representing no less than 90% of the total outstanding share capital of AUB and the satisfaction of the requirements under Article 319 bis I of the Commercial Companies Law and requirements under the TMA Module, KFH intends to acquire the remainder of AUB shares (pursuant to Article 319 bis I of Law No. 21 of 2001 promulgating the Commercial Companies Law in the State of Bahrain (as amended), and Article TMA-3.4.4 of the TMA Module), within 3 months from the date of receipt of the Requisite Acceptances (as defined below), being the prescribed level under the Commercial Companies Law and TMA required for compulsory acquisition. AUB shareholders should note that the Requisite Acceptances shall not be deemed to have been received until the date on which the Offer is declared unconditional in all respects (and not any prior date).

It is to be noted that the acquisition of the remainder of the AUB shares is conditional on KFH receiving acceptances in respect of AUB shares representing no less than 90% of the total outstanding share capital of AUB, as detailed in the Offer Document to be circulated to AUB shareholders in accordance with the terms of the TMA Module. Upon completion of the compulsory acquisition, KFH will acquire 100% of the share capital of AUB, AUB will become a wholly owned subsidiary of KFH and AUB will apply to the CBB to delist AUB from the BB in accordance with the terms of the TMA Module.

Offer finance sources

Excluding the impact of fractional entitlements, the consideration of the offer will be financed through an issue of up to 4,200,000,000 new shares in KFH (assuming the acquisition by KFH of 100% of AUB's share capital), which has been approved by the extra ordinary general assembly of KFH held on 25 July 2022. The final consideration number of new KFH shares will be determined and announced by KFH as part of the offer process. Conditions to which the offer or the posting is subject The implementation of the Offer will be subject to the fulfillment or waiver, where applicable, of the following conditions precedent. For the avoidance of doubt, the offer shall not become unconditional unless the below conditions precedent are fulfilled or, where applicable, waived by KFH:

(a) KFH having received acceptances in respect of AUB Shares representing at least 90% of the total outstanding share capital of AUB, which would result in total ownership by KFH of at least 90% of the total outstanding share capital of AUB (Requisite Acceptances).

(b) Receipt of all regulatory and statutory approvals, exemptions and/or waivers from the CBB and the Kuwait Capital Markets Authority as may be determined to be required in connection with the offer, the acquisition of up to 100% of the issued ordinary shares of AUB and the issuance of new KFH shares.

(c) Receipt of all regulatory and statutory approvals, exemptions and/or waivers from any other regulatory or statutory authority as may be determined to be required in connection with the offer and the acquisition of up to 100% of the issued ordinary shares of AUB.

(d) KFH completing all the steps required, and obtaining all regulatory approvals required, to complete a cross-listing of the KFH shares on Bahrain Bourse as at the Effective Date (as such term is defined in the offer document) in line with the applicable rules and regulations of the CBB and BB.

(e) No material breach of the warranties given by AUB in the implementation agreement (to be entered into between KFH and AUB in respect of this offer) having occurred during the period up to (and inclusive of) the Initial Offer Closing Date as such term is defined in the Offer Document (provided, however, that if such breach is capable of remedy, and is remedied to the reasonable satisfaction of the non-breaching party prior to such date, this condition shall not be deemed unsatisfied solely as a result of such breach).

(f) No Material Adverse Effect (as defined below) having occurred prior to, and being continued as at, the date on which the offer would have been declared unconditional in all respects (but for the occurrence of a Material Adverse Effect).

Shareholders and/or potential investors of AUB should note that the offer shall be subject to the satisfaction or, with the exception of conditions (b) and (d) above, waiver by KFH (where applicable) of the conditions, and is conditional upon the offer becoming or being declared unconditional in all respects. Accordingly, the offer may or may not become unconditional. Shareholders and/or potential investors of AUB should therefore exercise caution when dealing in the securities of AUB. Persons who are in doubt as to the action they should take should consult their licensed brokers, dealers, solicitors, professional accountants or other professional advisers.

In the event valid acceptances that represent at least 90% of the total outstanding share capital of AUB are not received by the Initial Offer Closing Date (as defined in the Offer Document), KFH reserves the right to waive condition (a) above and proceed to declaring the offer unconditional in all respects (subject to the satisfaction or, where applicable, waiver of the other conditions), in which case KFH may either (i) proceed to settlement of the Offer after the Final Offer Closing Date; or (ii) announce that it intends to seek the delisting of AUB from BB and BK, and request that the AUB Board (subject to the approval of the CBB and other competent regulatory authorities in Bahrain), after the Final Offer Closing Date, invites the shareholders of AUB to convene a general meeting in order to consider and approve the delisting of AUB from the BB and the BK. All AUB shareholders, including shareholders who accept the Offer, but excluding, where applicable, the Offeror and persons acting in concert with the Offeror shall be eligible to vote their AUB shares in such general meeting.

For the purposes of condition (f) above, Material Adverse Effect means any event, occurrence or change in circumstances which individually, or when aggregated with all such other events, occurrences or changes, has or could reasonably be expected to have a material adverse effect on the business, assets, liabilities, financial position, profitability or prospects of either of the KFH Group or the AUB Group (in each case taken as a whole), provided that in no event shall a deterioration of the economic, political or market conditions in the industry globally, in the Middle East, in Kuwait, in Bahrain or in general be treated as a 'Material Adverse Effect' except to the extent that such effect disproportionately adversely affects the KFH Group or the AUB Group (as the case may be) compared to other businesses or participants in the industry. The occurrence of a Material Adverse Effect shall be: (i) determined by KFH or AUB (acting reasonably); and (ii) subject to the consent of the CBB. Offeror's intention for the future of the company Following the successful implementation of the offer and acquisition of shares, KFH intends to maintain AUB's commercial registration, however, KFH intends to change AUB's name in due course to reflect its acquisition by KFH. AUB will continue to operate under normal course of business and maintain its operations as a wholly owned subsidiary of KFH where disruption to or cessation of any significant line of operations of AUB is not expected to occur as a result of the proposed acquisition of shares under the offer.

KFH's strategy for AUB post-acquisition commences with the process of converting the business of AUB in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq and the United Kingdom to Sharia'a compliant offering full range of Sharia'a compliant banking products subject to approval of CBB.

Following the successful completion of the offer, KFH will commence converting AUB's subsidiary in Kuwait to a digital bank as requested by the CBK. Immediately following the successful completion of converting AUB's business to Sharia'a compliant, KFH will commence the process of conducting a statutory merger to merge its two wholly owned subsidiaries in Bahrain, being AUB and KFH Bahrain, to become "Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain".

Details of any existing holding of AUB Shares and rights over the AUB Shares

None.

No AUB Shares have been acquired by KFH in the last 12 months.

Details of any outstanding derivative in respect of the AUB Shares entered into by KFH or any person acting in concert with it

None.

Details of any arrangement (whether by way of option, indemnity or otherwise) in relation to the KFH shares or AUB Shares which might be material to the offer

None.

Details of any relevant securities of AUB in which KFH or any person acting in concert with it has an interest or has a right to subscribe

None of the KFH directors have any direct or deemed interest in the AUB Shares as of the date of this firm intention.

Details of any relevant securities of AUB which KFH or any person acting in concert with it has borrowed or lent, excluding any borrowed shares which have been either on-lent or sold

None.

Details of any agreements or arrangements to which KFH is party which relate to the circumstances in which it may or may not invoke or seek to invoke a pre-condition or the consequences of its doing so, including details of any break fees payable as a result

None.

Details of any arrangement for the payment of an inducement fee or similar arrangement

None.

1 KFH shall not waive the condition (a) unless, as at the Initial Offer Closing Date (as defined in the Offer Document) KFH has received acceptances which represent at least 50% of the total outstanding share capital of AUB.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of KFH

Mr. Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al Marzouq
Chairman

Business

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait's project activity eases in 2Q22 with slow approvals

Overall project awards came to just KD 156 million, a decline of 55% q/q

KUWAIT: According to MEED projects, the rate of project awards fell in 2Q22 compared to 1Q22. Overall project awards came to just KD 156 million, a decline of 55 percent q/q. This is significantly below the KD 1 billion that was anticipated, most likely as a result of the ongoing slow approval process and cost rationalization, as well as ongoing supply chain issues that have increased the costs of materials and labor.

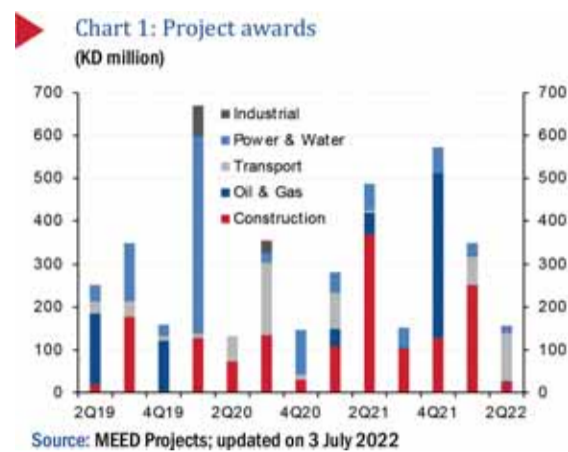
Transport sector awards increased in 2Q22,



Supply chain issues weigh

up 72 percent compared to the previous quarter, coming in at KD 113 million, the highest since 3Q20. This was mainly due to the signing off of the Public Authority for Industry's (PAI) Shaddadiya Industrial Area Infrastructure Package (KD 84 million) and parts of the Kuwait Ports Authority's Shuwaikh Port Expansion project.

• Meanwhile, only KD 23 million worth of construction sector projects were awarded in Q2, a



decrease of approximately 90 percent q/q. This primarily involved the development of Hornet B at Jaber air base by the US Army Corps of Engineers (KD 16 million).

• Project activity in the power and water sectors retreated again in 2Q22, with the value of awards falling 49 percent q/q to KD 17 million. Two small-scale projects were awarded in the quarter: MEW's Doha East high voltage transformers and Boubayan's main transformer station.

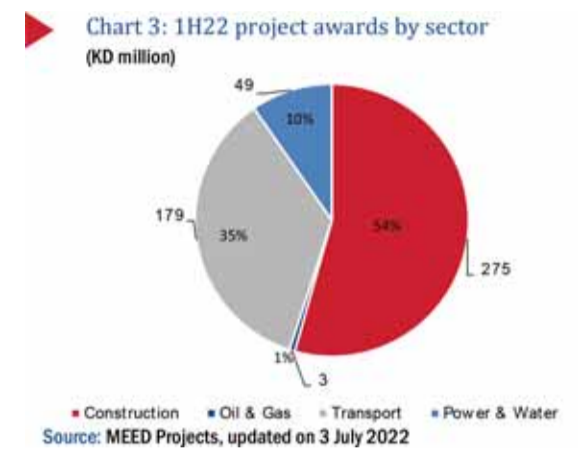
• Kuwait's oil and gas sector saw just KD 3.3 million in awards in the second quarter, with a single KOC pipeline repair contract.

• Looking ahead, project activity could accelerate amid greater liquidity and business confidence, though the government's recent resignation



is expected to create further delays. MEED Projects anticipates a total of KD 3.1 billion worth of awards could be signed off this year - although that appears optimistic at this juncture. Despite pressing needs in power production capacity, improvements to transportation, facilities and social infrastructure, based on January's draft budget, only projects integral to the development plan are likely to be issued, however spending may be revised upwards given higher oil prices. In addition, labor shortages and increasing material costs could hinder progress on existing projects.

• In 2H22 planned project awards amount to KD 2.6 billion, the majority of which were apparently deferred from prior quarters. In the power and water sectors, approximately KD 1.5 billion is



expected for 2H22, with the largest being MEW's Sabiya Power and Desalination Plant (KD 195 million) and MPW's Wastewater Treatment Plant in South Al-Mutlaa (KD 173 million). Planned projects in the construction sector total KD 348 million, including KOC's KERF (KD 150 million). Meanwhile, planned awards in the transport sector come to KD 431 million, the largest of which is the MPW's crossroads for the airport terminal (KD 120 million), slated to be completed in 3Q22. In the oil and gas industry, however, awards are expected to remain modest, with just KD 319 million worth of small-scale projects scheduled.

• Kuwait's chemical sector could see some much anticipated movement in 2023, with KIPIC's Al-Zour Petrochemical Complex (KD 2.85 billion).

CBK bonds and related Tawarruq

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KD 200 million for three months with a rate of return at 1.875 percent.

German business mood sours as recession looms

FRANKFURT: The business climate in Germany worsened "significantly" in July, according to a key survey published Monday, as an energy crisis pushed Europe's largest economy closer to a recession this year. The Ifo institute's monthly confidence barometer, based on a survey of 9,000 companies, fell to 88.6 points in July from 92.2 points last month and the "lowest level since June 2020" near the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

The pessimistic figures suggest that "Germany is on the cusp of a recession", said Ifo president, Clemens Fuest. The mood among businesses had "cooled significantly", while "higher energy prices and the threat of a gas shortage are weighing on the economy".

The fall was particularly steep in the manufacturing sector, where "pessimism regarding the coming months reached its highest level since April 2020", Fuest said.

"Weaker global demand (and) supply chain frictions" were also weighing on the Germany economy, said ING analyst, Carsten Brzeski. The strong headwinds and weak data meant Germany's economy could have seen a contraction "already in the second quarter", Brzeski said.

The risk that Russia could cut off its supply of gas to Germany, in retaliation for Berlin's support of Ukraine, has prompted fears of an energy shortage at the end of the year. Looking ahead, "there are more downside than upside risks to the outlook", Brzeski said. —AFP

Fed set for rate hike with economy on knife's edge

WASHINGTON: US central bankers face an increasingly difficult balancing act as they struggle to douse scorching inflation while still keeping the economy growing, though they have made it clear they are willing to risk a recession. But with war still raging in Ukraine and COVID-19 causing ongoing issues in Asia, avoiding an economic downturn will require luck and depend on many factors outside the Federal Reserve's control. As American families struggle to make ends meet amid surging prices for gas, food and housing, Fed officials have made clear that fighting inflation is their top priority even if that means inflicting pain.

The Fed will hold its two-day policy meeting beginning Wednesday, when it is expected to hike the benchmark borrowing rate by another three-quarters of a percentage point in its aggressive campaign to cool demand and ease price pressures. Despite a healthy job market with near-record low unemployment, workers are seeing their wage gains over-

Huawei FreeBuds Pro 2 Depicted: The Ultimate true sound earbuds with pure voice call

KUWAIT: Wireless earphones have come a long way in the past decade. It has come to the point that it doesn't make sense to use wired earphones for everyday things like answering calls or listening to music. The sound quality of newer wireless earphones is dipping its toes into audiophile territories. Huawei recently announced the all-new Huawei FreeBuds Pro 2 in Kuwait. It packs all the features that you would ever want in a pair of TWS earbuds, such as amazing sound quality, impressive active noise cancellation, crystal clear voice clarity, and more. Here's a closer look at Huawei FreeBuds Pro 2.

Experience high-fidelity sound wirelessly

Huawei FreeBuds Pro 2 boasts an ultra-hearing dual-driver true sound system, which consists of two built-in powerful sound units and, coupled

with the digital dual-crossover technology, delivers the most powerful sound quality. These are the first TWS earbuds to use a planar diaphragm that is only typically found in high-end earbuds. This helps Huawei FreeBuds 2 achieve a most precise lightweight flat voice coil, with treble and overtone above 9KHz being bright and sharp. For medium and low frequencies, these earbuds use a four-magnet large dynamic drive to bring out powerful bass. The bass goes effectively down to 14Hz, and treble goes up to 48KHz, exceeding the frequencies beyond the range of perception of human ears.

Equipped with "Triple Adaptive EQ" technology, Huawei FreeBuds Pro 2 can automatically tune audio according to ear canal structure, wearing posture and volume level for personalized sound in real-time. These earbuds also support LDAC high-resolution codec, with a maximum audio transmission



rate of 990 Kbps and a sampling rate and bit depth of 96kHz/24bit. This helps reduce the delay and deterioration in audio transmission, preserving overall details in music and giving you a high-fidelity sound.

Huawei FreeBuds Pro 2 is the result of a collaboration between Huawei and

Deviate - a high-end acoustic technology brand from France. It combines state-of-the-art technologies in acoustic engineering with unrivaled acoustic innovations to enable more people to experience high-fidelity sound with new technologies. Both brands have worked together to fine-tune the audio experience on Huawei FreeBuds Pro 2, creating a surging bass with detailed and pure sound quality.

Kremlin says Odessa strikes should not hamper grain exports

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said Monday that Russian strikes on Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odessa "should not affect" a UN-brokered deal between Moscow and Kyiv to unblock grain exports.

"This cannot and should not affect the start of shipment," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, two days after Moscow hit the port. He said Moscow's strikes targeted "exclusively" military infrastructure and were "not connected with the agreement on the export of grain."

The weekend strikes on Odessa came less than a day after Moscow and Kyiv signed a landmark deal to release grain exports from Ukraine's ports.

Western countries denounced the move, with the US saying it cast "serious doubt" on Russia's com-

mitment to the deal. Turkey, which helped broker the accord, said after the double cruise missile hits that it had received assurances from Moscow that Russian forces were not responsible.

But Russia then admitted that it had struck a Ukrainian military vessel and arms delivered by Washington. Ukraine has denounced the strikes as "barbarism."

Odessa is one of three export hubs designated in the agreement. Ukrainian officials said grain was being stored in the port at the time of the strike, although the food stocks did not appear to have been hit.

Kyiv expects the first grain deliveries under a UN-brokered deal to leave Ukrainian ports "this week", Ukraine's infrastructure minister said Monday, despite Russian strikes on Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odessa. "We expect the agreement to start working in the coming days," Oleksandr Kubrakov, who led Ukraine's delegation at grain talks in Turkey, told a press conference.

"We are preparing for everything to start this week," he added. Kubrakov also highlighted the

importance of security following a strike on the port of Odessa, one of the three export hubs designated in the agreement.

"Our position is very simple. We signed an agreement with the UN and Turkey. If the sides guarantee security, the agreement will work. If they do not, it will not work," Kubrakov said. Russia and Ukraine signed agreements on Black Sea grain exports in Istanbul Friday, with Turkey and the UN as co-guarantors. Both countries are major exporters of agricultural products, but Moscow's invasion has severely disrupted Ukrainian wheat exports as the fighting damaged harvests and left ports blocked and mined.

Kubrakov added that de-mining will take place "exclusively" in the shipping lanes required for grain exports, while Ukrainian ships will accompany the departing convoys that will transport not only grain but also fertilizer.

Deputy infrastructure minister Yuri Vaskov told the press conference that the southwestern port of Chornomorsk will be "the first" used for grain deliveries, followed by the nearby ports of Odessa and Pivdennyi. —AFP

welmed by consumer prices that rose by a new 40-year high of 9.1 percent in June.

Slowing the economy is likely to cause more job losses, but policymakers want to avoid at all costs the greater pain of a price spiral that becomes entrenched or spins out of control.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, herself a former Fed chief, has previously warned that such a soft landing will require good luck. On Sunday she stressed again that while "growth is slowing," data does not necessarily point to a recession. "I'm not saying that we will definitely avoid a recession, but I think there is a path that keeps the labor market strong and brings inflation down," she told NBC.

Aggressive rate hikes

Former Fed vice chair Donald Kohn told AFP it was a "very complicated, multi-dimensional issue," especially due to the ongoing supply chain uncertainty. After flooding the world's largest economy with support during the pandemic-zero interest rates and a steady stream of liquidity into the financial system-Fed policymakers were congratulating themselves on how quickly the economy recovered, regaining millions of jobs in a matter of months.

But they were caught flat-footed by the rapid run-up in prices, as Americans flush with cash due to mas-

sive government aid went on a spending spree, buying up cars, houses and other goods at a time when the global supply chain was still bogged down by pandemic lockdowns that continue in China.

The Fed finally began liftoff-taking the policy interest rate off zero-in March, starting with a 25-basis-point increase, followed by 50 in May and 75 in June. Higher lending costs make it more expensive to borrow funds to buy cars and homes or expand businesses, which should cool demand, while also making it more attractive to save rather than spend.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell last month said the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee would consider either a 50 or 75 bps hike at the July meeting, and most economists expect a repeat of the June three-quarter-point increase. Fed Governor Christopher Waller recently floated the idea of a mammoth 100-bps hike, which would be the first since the US central bank started using the federal funds rate for policy in the early 1990s. The equivalent amount of tightening in a single move hasn't been seen since the early 1980s, when then-Fed chief Paul Volcker was on a crusade to crush a wage-price inflationary spiral.

Mixed data

But even Waller noted it is important not to move too fast, and a full point hike would only be called for if

data continue to show accelerating price increases. "I think they will probably discuss 100 basis points just because the inflation picture is still very bad," said Julie Smith, a Lafayette College economics professor.

But some recent data "indicate that previous rate increases have very likely started to work," she said in an interview. Housing prices have skyrocketed, hitting new records repeatedly, even as interest rates have risen, and consumer spending continues to increase, leading some economists to warn of a contraction in the second quarter.

But there are signs of cracks, including falling home sales, a dramatic drop in mortgage applications and an increasing share of spending going to necessities.

Officials have said the US economy is strong enough to withstand higher rates without a serious downturn, but others, including former Treasury secretary Lawrence Summers, say they are overly optimistic and job losses will have to rise sharply in order to tame inflation. Kohn said it will be important for Powell to communicate clearly about what data the Fed is looking for to slow or pause the rate hike cycle. "I think a fairly shallow recession," with higher unemployment than the 3.7 percent the Fed projected last month, "will be necessary to break this inflation spiral," he said. "But, boy, the amount of uncertainty around it is just huge." —AFP

Business

stc announces KD 153.8m revenue with KD 15m net profit for first half of 2022

Revenue increased by 10.3% • stc's customer base increased by 13.6% to reach 2.2 customers

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the six-month period ended 30 June 2022, highlighting the most significant achievements, financial and operational performance in addition to the social initiatives made by the company during the first half of 2022.



Commenting on the announcements of these results, Dr. Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman, stc's Chairman, stated: "stc's outlook with regards to the increased demand on the ICT integrated technologies and digital solutions is considered one of the key factors for executing company's corporate strategy of expanding its services in the B2B sector."

Accordingly, stc has completed its acquisition on all the share capital of E-portal and its subsidiaries in the second quarter of 2022. This acquisition demonstrates stc's commitment to grow its position in the ICT field by providing the best in class integrated technical solutions to its individuals and enterprise customers. With an increased focus on the ICT services, stc was able to capture new streams of revenue driven by the latest extensive demand on the digital communications and information technology services."

He pointed out: "stc is currently developing its

operational strategy aimed at adding value through utilizing the capabilities of its subsidiaries specialized in providing suitable solutions to the enterprise sector in Kuwait. Stc is; therefore, keen to maintain its position as a pioneer in the ICT services and the enterprise solutions".

Dr. Abdulrahman noted that during Q2, stc managed to strengthen its extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) program by launching and contributing to various initiatives that aimed to empower the community. The Company collaborated with different government entities, as well as companies within the private sector, in line with its CSR program that aims to create a larger impact within the community. Whereby, stc launched a series of campaigns and initiatives that actively engaged with members within the community while spreading awareness on various causes. Throughout these campaigns, stc primarily focused on tackling key issues within the areas of health, entrepreneurship, the environment, as well as sports and education.

As a pioneer in Kuwait's telecom and digital solutions sector, stc will continue to contribute through its rich, diverse, and widespread program with the sole objective of creating a positive and sustainable impact in the local community. This approach falls in line with stc's vision to back and support the community by implementing initiatives and events that align with its robust social responsibility framework.

Commenting on stc's financial position as of June 30, 2022, Dr. Abdulrahman said: "stc's total assets reached KD 424.1 million by the end of June 2022, while total shareholders' equity increased by 7 percent reaching KD 222.3 million. Moreover, stc has a strong solvency position among its peers in the Middle East".

Commenting on stc's achievements during the first half of 2022, Eng. Maziad Bin Nasser Al-Harbi, stc's CEO stated: "In the first half of 2022, stc was able to enhance its financial and operational performance, as well as improve its customer service with the dedication and commitment of its employees to implement the compa-

ny's digital transformation strategy with the highest quality. In this regard, stc was also capable to provide the most efficient service delivery within the telecommunications and information technology sector.

Driven by its refreshed strategy, promising outlook for the enterprise segment in Kuwait and in line with the latest rapid global developments in the ICT field, stc was eager to improve its efficiency and internal capabil-

ity's digital transformation strategy with the highest quality. In this regard, stc was also capable to provide the most efficient service delivery within the telecommunications and information technology sector.

growth rate of 10.3 percent compared to KD 139.4 million in the previous year. stc managed to achieve this growth in revenue with the significant support from the increase in its customer base which has reached 2.2 million customers by the end of June 2022, representing a rise of 13.6 percent compared to that in June 2021".

Al-Harbi noted: "Accordingly, stc's EBITDA witnessed a growth of 4.5 percent to reach KD 40.2 million

- EBITDA increased by 4.5% to reach KD 40.2 million
- stc launched advanced as well as distinct products and services backed by 5G technology
- stc completed the acquisition of E-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries - the leading ICT services provider in Kuwait

in this sector. Accordingly, stc has expanded its presence in the ICT sector through a number of transactions represented by its acquisition of Qualitynet (solutions by stc) in May 2019 and its latest acquisition of e-portal Holding Company in April 2022. Thus, stc is keen to capture the investment opportunities in this field and leverage the expertise of its subsidiaries to provide its customers with the latest and most advanced services in the field of telecommunications, information technology, and digital services".

Commenting on the announcement of the company's financial results for the six months period ended June 30, 2022, Eng. Maziad bin Nasser Al-Harbi said: "stc generated good financial results driven by the increased demand on the integrated business solutions and the steady demand on the traditional telecommunications services in the Kuwaiti market. stc's total revenue reached KD 153.8 million in the first half of 2022 with

in the first half of 2022 compared to KD 38.5 million in the same period of 2021. Whereby, EBITDA margin reached 26.2 percent during the six months ended in 2022. As a result, the company's net profit during the six months period ended 30 June 2022 reached KD 15.0 million (earnings per share 15fils)".

Al-Harbi added: "In the first half of 2022, stc has successfully increased its share capital to reach KD 99.9 million through distributing 100 percent bonus shares to its shareholders. This decision came from stc's positive outlook on creating an added value to its shareholders and place their interest on its top priorities. In this regard, stc's management ensures developing long term financial policy to balance between its operational and financial performance that would positively reflect on its solvency and enhance its market position as a leader in the telecom industry and a pioneer in the digital transformation".



Ryanair flies back into quarterly profit

LONDON: Irish budget airline Ryanair said Monday that it returned to profit in the first quarter as demand jumped on the travel sector's nascent recovery from the Covid pandemic.

Net profit hit 170 million euros (\$174 million) in its first quarter or three months to June, the Dublin-based carrier said in a statement. That contrasted sharply with a net loss of 273 million euros a year earlier, when it continued to be hit by COVID travel restrictions.

Traffic increased more than five-fold to 45.5 million passengers. However, Ryanair's performance still fell short of its pre-pandemic net profit of 243 million euros in the first quarter of its 2019/2020 financial year. "While traffic recovered strongly... Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February damaged Easter bookings

and fares," said chief executive Michael O'Leary. He also warned of ongoing threats to the sector's fragile outlook. Global aviation is still in recovery mode from the deadly COVID pandemic, which ravaged travel demand, grounded planes and sparked sector-wide losses. "While we remain hopeful that the high rate of vaccinations in Europe will allow the airline and tourism industry to fully recover and finally put COVID behind us, we cannot ignore the risk of new COVID variants in autumn 2022," warned O'Leary.

"Our experience with Omicron last November, and the Ukraine invasion in February, shows how fragile the air travel market remains, and the strength of any recovery will be hugely dependent upon there being no adverse or unexpected developments over the remainder" of this year.

Ryanair was "insulated from the spiralling cost of fuel" with 80 percent of its kerosene costs hedged for the 2022/2023 year, it added. Airlines bet against volatile oil prices by hedging, or taking a defensive position on futures markets. —AFP

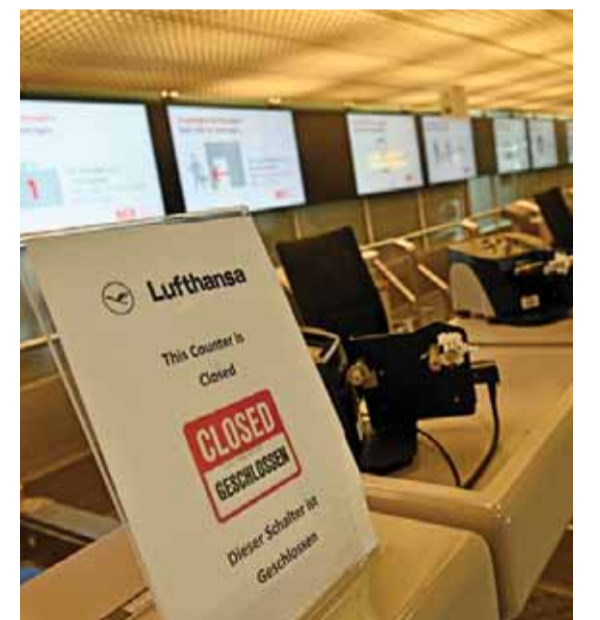
German union calls July 27 strike at Lufthansa

FRANKFURT: German national carrier Lufthansa is braced for further travel upheaval as the country's powerful Verdi union called on ground crew to strike on Wednesday in a row over higher wages.

The stoppage from 0145 GMT on Wednesday until 0400 GMT on Thursday will cause "major flight cancellations and delays", Verdi warned on Monday. The walkout at one of Europe's largest airlines adds to a troubled summer season at airports across the continent as eased coronavirus restrictions have boosted tourism demand, but chronic staff shortages have left passengers grappling with flight disruptions, long queues and lost luggage.

Lufthansa has already scrapped around 6,000 flights this summer to cope with the chaos. The Verdi union, representing around 20,000 Lufthansa ground staff, is seeking a 9.5-percent pay rise, or at least 350 euros (\$360) per month. It also wants a minimum hourly wage of 13 euros.

The union says management's offer so far "does not come close to compensating for inflation" which stood at 7.6 percent in Germany last month. Lufthansa ground staff "urgently need more money and they need relief, for themselves and for the passengers", said Verdi vice-president Christine Behle. "The employers' offer is not enough."



BERLIN, Germany: This file photo taken on June 11, 2020 shows a closed check-in desk of German airline Lufthansa at Berlin's Tegel Airport. —AFP

There is currently a shortage of more than 7,000 employees in Germany's aviation sector, the IW economic institute recently calculated. Many airport workers found jobs in other sectors when travel demand collapsed during the pandemic, and they have not returned now that tourism has bounced back, the economists found. — AFP

Chinese property stocks rally on pledge of state support

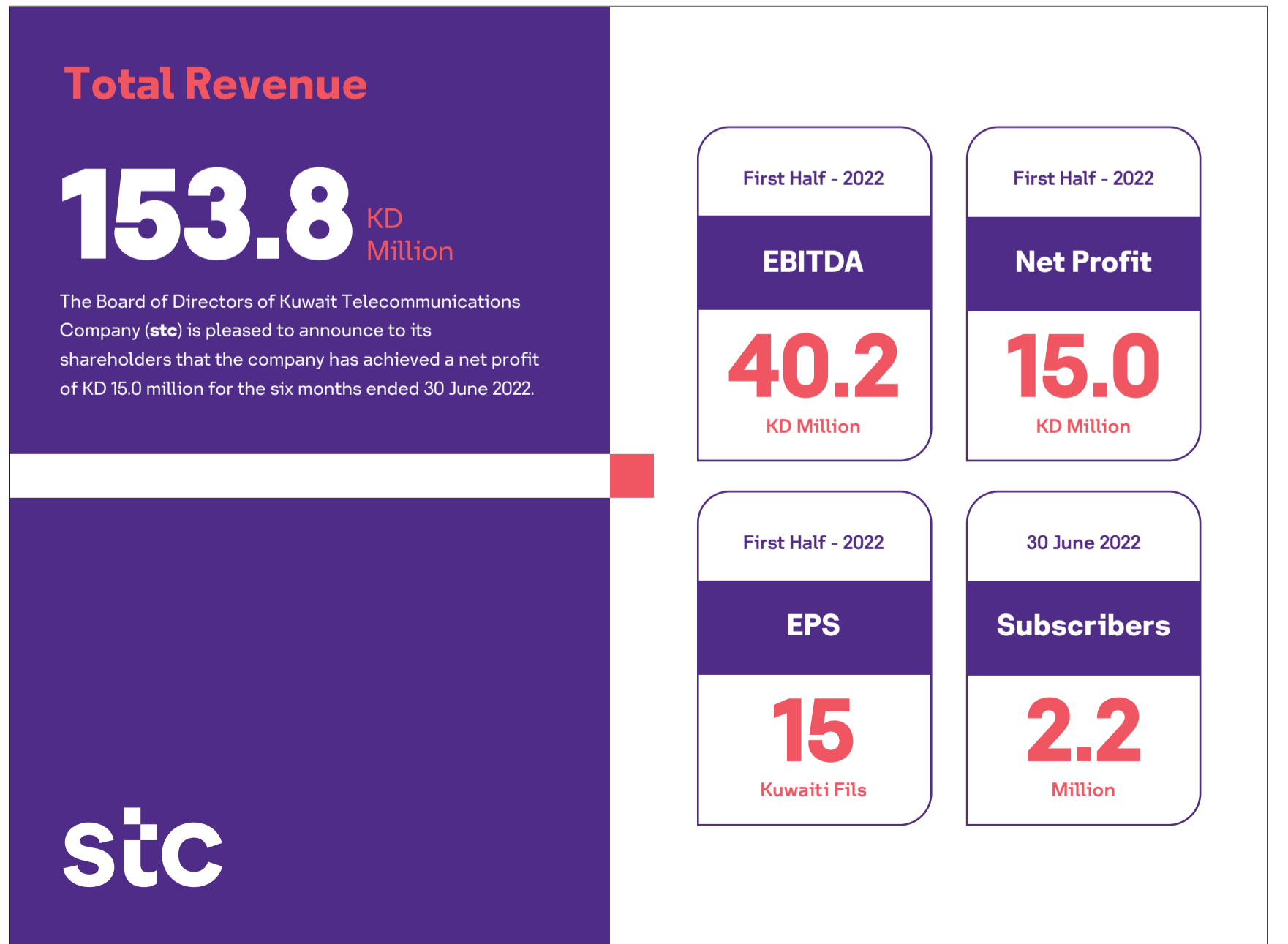
BEIJING: Battered Chinese property stocks rallied Monday after Premier Li Keqiang pledged to support developers and hinted at possible state funding at a cabinet meeting. Debt-laden developers have come under increasing pressure after the government squeezed funding sources and demand cooled owing to economic uncertainties caused by the pandemic.

Frustrated homebuyers in some cities have also stopped making mortgage payments on units in unfinished projects in recent weeks. The property market debt crisis has been a major drag on the economy over the past year, and officials have rushed to offer support after dismal second-quarter growth of 0.4 percent—the worst since the pandemic began.

"City-specific policies will promote the steady and healthy development of the real estate market," Li said at a cabinet meeting held late Friday, without offering details. He also urged regulators to "do a good job in policy-based development financial instruments", hinting at state funding to bailout developers. The comments pushed the Hang Seng Mainland Properties Index—which tracks major Chinese developers listed in Hong Kong — up more than three percent Monday. Among the top gainers, CIFI Holdings (Group) surged 12 percent and Guangzhou R&F Properties was up six percent.

Shanghai-listed Cinda Real Estate, Poly Developers and Gemdale group were all up between three and six percent. The announcement comes with embattled Chinese real estate giant Evergrande expected to reach a restructuring agreement with debtors, to whom it owes an estimated \$300 billion.

Property and related industries are estimated to contribute as much as a quarter of China's gross domestic product. Dozens of local governments have issued statements in recent weeks relaxing rules for new home buyers to access loans as they scramble to prevent the property crisis from spreading further across the country's financial system. — AFP





A local resident of Pasco County, Jay Pasqua, holds dead giant African snails which he found in his backyard in New Port Richey, Florida.—AFP photos



Employees of Florida Department of Agriculture display various sizes of shells of the giant African snails near the inspection ground in New Port Richey, Florida .



An employee of the Florida Department of Agriculture shows eggs of the giant African snail.

FLORIDA HURRIES TO CATCH FAST-SPREADING SNAIL INVASION

It might not be speedy, but it's big, hungry and fast at reproducing: the giant African snail, a potential health risk to humans, has once again invaded the southern US state of Florida. Jason Stanley, a biologist with Florida's Department of Agriculture, says that the gastropod greedily "feeds on over 500 different kinds of plants." "We're concerned with that being in our environment," he told AFP.

Since June 23, employees from his agency have been combing through the gardens of New Port Richey, a small town on Florida's west coast, where the invasive species has taken root. A single giant African snail can lay up to 2,000 eggs each year, Stanley explains, which-coupled with its appetite-could spell disaster for the state's robust agriculture industry. In a grassy plot of land in New Port Richey, Mellon, a yellow Labrador trained to sniff out the snails, walks with his handler.

He darts under a tree and sniffs around in the grass. When Mellon eventually locates a snail, he sits directly on top of it, as he's been trained to do. Florida authorities believe that the snail, native to eastern Africa, was reintroduced to the state when

someone brought it home as a pet. Unlike other brown-tinted giant snails, this particular breed has white flesh. "These white phenotypes are very popular in the pet trade," Stanley noted.

Through the talents of Mellon and another snail-sniffing canine, more than 1,000 giant African snails have already been caught in Pasco County, where New Port Richey is located. Authorities are also trying to stamp out the giant snails by applying metaldehyde, a pesticide that is harmless to humans and animals, according to the state. The Florida Department of Agriculture has established a quarantine zone within New Port Richey: no plants or other vegetation can be removed from the area to try to prevent the snails from spreading further.

Carries harmful disease

"Another issue with this snail is that it carries the rat lungworm, which can cause meningitis in humans," Stanley added. That type of parasite, which has been detected among the snails caught in Pasco County, enters rats' lungs when they eat the snails and then spreads when the



Lorena Dewitz, an employee of Florida Department of Agriculture, handles a trained dog Mellon, as he sniffs and searches for the giant African snails in New Port Richey, Florida.

rodents cough. If a human ingests one of the worms, Stanley says, it usually makes its way to the brain stem, where it can cause meningitis.

Local resident Jay Pasqua still can't

believe the stir caused by the giant African snail. In late June, a Department of Agriculture official came to his lawn mower sales and repair store in New Port Richey to flag the presence of the invasive

species.

"In the beginning, it was kind of funny to see all the attention that a snail was getting," the 64-year-old told AFP. "But (after) starting to understand the process of their growth, how they got here, and what diseases and what problems they cause, it did become a concern at that time."

He has since found dozens of the pests in his garden, although he says he hasn't seen any for three days. The giant African snail has been eradicated from other parts of Florida twice before, first in 1975 and then again in 2021. The latter extermination campaign took place in Miami-Dade County and was the result of 10 years of effort at a cost of \$23 million.

Stanley says he's optimistic that this time will be much easier. "So far, it's isolated in one area, and we're already surveying and treating this area. So we're very hopeful that it's not going to take that amount of time here."— AFP

Yep, 'Nope' rules at N America box office

Universal's new horror flick "Nope" opened atop the North American box office, hammering the latest edition of Marvel's "Thor" franchise to earn an estimated \$44 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. The alien-invasion sci-fi mystery, which features a Black family struggling to make ends meet on their bleached California horse ranch, is the highly-anticipated latest effort by writer and director Jordan Peele, whose 2017 debut "Get Out" earned rave reviews. "This is an excellent opening for an original horror movie," said analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research. The film—which stars Daniel Kaluuya, who stole the show in "Get Out"—managed to bump "Thor: Love and Thunder" to second spot after the superhero blockbuster spent two weeks at number one.

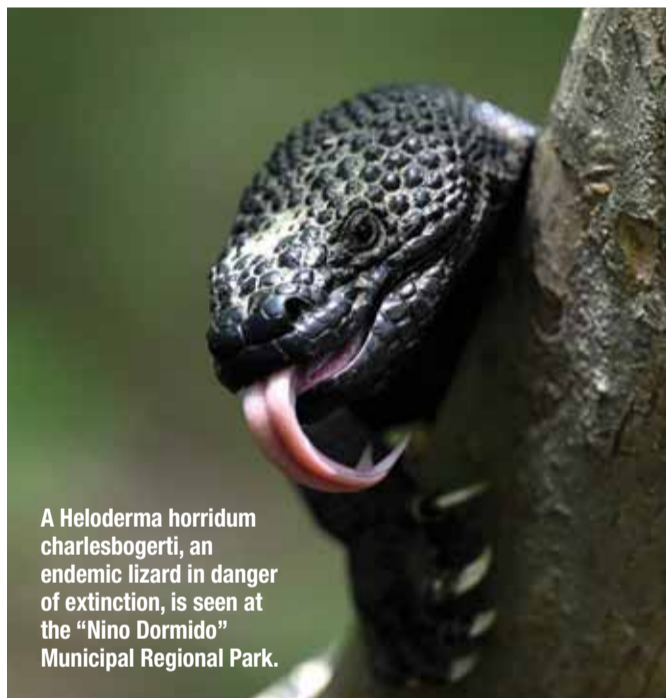
The action comedy starring a muscled, self-parodying Chris Hemsworth as the space viking who finds himself pining for his ex-girlfriend Jane Foster (Natalie Portman), pulled in \$22.1 million for the Friday-to-Sunday period, for a worldwide cumulative total of \$276 million. Third spot belonged to "Minions: The Rise of Gru." The latest goofy installment in Universal's animated "Despicable Me" franchise took in \$17.7 million, for a cumulative total of \$298 million. "Where the Crawdads Sing" also slipped one spot, to fourth. Sony's adaptation of Delia Owens' novel about an abandoned girl who grows up in marshland of 1950s and 60s North Carolina and, at a murder trial years later looks back on that rough and violent upbringing, earned \$10.3 million.

Dropping from fourth to fifth was Paramount's "Top Gun: Maverick," the crowd-pleasing sequel to the original 1986 film that once again features Tom Cruise as cocky US Navy test pilot Pete "Maverick" Mitchell. The fighter ace feature, in its ninth week in theaters, has now grossed an eye-popping \$635 million worldwide. Baz Luhrmann's music biopic "Elvis"—starring Austin Butler as the King alongside Tom Hanks as his exploitative manager, Colonel Tom Parker—took sixth in the Warner Bros film's fifth weekend of release, at \$6.3 million.

Completing the top 10 were:

"Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank" (\$3.9 million)
 "The Black Phone" (\$3.4 million)
 "Jurassic World: Dominion" (\$3 million)
 "Mrs Harris goes to Paris" (\$1.3 million)

— AFP



A *Heloderma horridum charlesbogerti*, an endemic lizard in danger of extinction, is seen at the "Nino Dormido" Municipal Regional Park.

With its sharp claws, scaly skin and venomous bite, Guatemala's "Sleeping Child" lizard has earned itself few human friends. One of them, forest ranger Juan Alvarado, has spent the last 17 years of his life trying to save the much-maligned creature from extinction. Alvarado, 68, works at a forest reserve in Guatemala's Zacapa department that is dedicated to saving the Guatemala Beaded Lizard (*Heloderma charlesbogerti*), dubbed Nino Dormido (Sleeping Child) by locals for its lethargic gait.

He expertly handles one specimen, rescued from a nearby village, holding it deftly by the head and body and placing it gently on the ground. Seemingly nonplussed, the lizard slinks off into the undergrowth. "People used to say that if you see a *Heloderma*, you're dead," Alvarado said of the reptile's foul reputation. While the lizard does pack a painful bite, it is rarely deadly to humans who nevertheless view it as a mortal enemy.

Saving Guatemala's poisonous 'Sleeping Child' lizard

Projects to save the critter include encouraging villagers to bring lost specimens to the park-sometimes in exchange for payments of food. Its venom, explained Alvarado, was being studied for possible use in cures for diseases such as diabetes and cancer. Yet the creature has a fearful reputation, and individuals who stray into areas inhabited by humans are frequently killed.

Sleeping Child lizard numbers have been further decimated by human encroachment on its ever-shrinking habitat, climate change, and capture for sale as exotic pets. At one point, they could fetch as much as \$2,000 apiece in Europe, said Alvarado. Given the multitude of threats, Guatemalan conservation officials estimate there are only about 600 individuals left in the world—an increase from 200 two decades ago. The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists the lizard as endangered. — AFP



Juan Alvarado, 68, of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), holds an iguana is seen at the "Nino Dormido" Municipal Regional Park, in Cabanas, Guatemala.



An iguana is seen at the "Nino Dormido" Municipal Regional Park.



A woman holds a *Heloderma horridum charlesbogerti*, an endemic lizard in danger of extinction, before releasing it.— AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features

UK to host 2023 Eurovision instead of Ukraine

Britain said Monday it had reluctantly agreed to take Ukraine's place as hosts of next year's Eurovision song contest after organizers said there was no prospect of the event going ahead in the war-torn country. The BBC will instead produce what it called the world's "largest and most complex music competition", and will now start choosing a host city in the UK in collaboration with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

Ukraine won this year's contest, held in Italy, ahead of Britain's entry in second place. It had insisted it could host next year's despite the Russian invasion. But

the EBU ruled that out, and Ukrainian broadcaster UA:PBC acquiesced to a UK-hosted event infused with "Ukrainian spirit".

"The 2023 Eurovision Song Contest will not be in Ukraine but in support of Ukraine," UA:PBC chief Mykola Chermotyskyi said in a joint statement with the EBU and BBC. "We are grateful to our BBC partners for showing solidarity with us," he said.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman said it was his "strong wish" for Ukraine to host the 2023 edition and found it "deeply regrettable" that was no

longer possible. Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said the BBC had stepped in at the request of the EBU "and the Ukrainian authorities" led by President Volodymyr Zelensky.

"I'm just sorry that due to Russia's continued acts of bloodshed it has not been possible to host the event in Ukraine, where it should be," she said. "As hosts, the UK will honor the competition's spirit and diversity, and most importantly, ensure it reflects Ukraine's recent Eurovision victory and Ukrainian creativity." — AFP



Members of Ukraine's band "Kalush Orchestra", Oleh Psiuk, Tymofii Muzychuk, Ihor Didenchuk, Vitalii Duzhyk, Oleksandr Slobodanyk and Vlad Kurochka arrive for the opening ceremony of the Eurovision Song contest 2022 at the Palaipitour venue in Turin. — AFP

FROM WAR TO PEACE: VIETNAM'S RUBBER SANDALS MARCH ON



This photo shows a client trying on rubber sandals at a shop in Hanoi.



This photo shows workers cutting apart a rubber truck tyre outside a workshop in Hanoi.



This photo shows Nguyen Tien Cuong posing with his company's rubber sandals at a showroom in Hanoi.



This photo shows a staff member checking rubber sandals at a shop in Hanoi.



This photo shows workers overturning a truck tyre outside a workshop in Hanoi, before it is transformed into rubber sandals.



This photo shows Nguyen Duc Trung hand making rubber sandals at a shop in Hanoi.



This photo shows worker cutting apart a rubber truck tyre outside a workshop in Hanoi.

Made from recycled military truck or aircraft tyres, Vietnam's hand-made rubber sandals, the famously rugged footwear of the Viet Cong, have travelled vast distances over the decades. In the bustling capital Hanoi, all kinds of shoes are on sale: from \$1,000 Gucci heels to \$2 plastic slippers. But for those seeking a nod to yesteryear, the hard-soled rubber sandals- evocative of the communist state's resourcefulness under fire-are available at markets and small stores alike.

Uncle Ho's sandals

Dao Van Quang paid \$8 for a standard pair at a shop outside a Hanoi museum devoted to the country's revolutionary leader-and dedicated rubber sandal wearer-Ho Chi Minh. "I wore rubber sandals when I was at school, in the 1980s," the 47-year-old from central Quang Nam province told AFP. "They are of historical value, easy to wear and look nice." At the museum, the well-worn pair belonging to the former North Vietnam president known affectionately as "Uncle Ho" are displayed in a glass box with his Chinese-style uniform.

Ho's sandals have even been lauded in national songs praising his simple lifestyle. "These sandals helped Uncle travel a long way, and with them, he overcame difficulties to build the country," the lyrics of one song say. The Vietnamese first began making rubber sandals in the late 1940s, during the First Indochina War against the French, using tyres from an ambushed army truck.

They found the sandals were cheap to make and survived well in wet, muddy and hilly conditions, as soldiers marched through thick jungle. Later, during the



This photo shows Nguyen Duc Trung making rubber sandals at a shop in Hanoi.

Vietnam War, the simple but sturdy footwear became a symbol of the communist Viet Cong forces' ingenuity in their fight against the United States' military might. Even in peacetime, the design remains popular for sustainability reasons, said Nguyen Duc Trung, who has spent his life crafting the shoes. "I think there is still much potential for rubber sandals," the 58-year-old said.

Rising popularity

Vietnam is one of the world's top four countries for shoe manufacturing and its factories produce pairs for major brands such as Nike and Adidas. The footwear export industry generated nearly \$12 billion in the first half of this year, according to government figures.

While the humble rubber sandal does not quite generate the same revenue, it is

high on heritage value and its popularity as a casual shoe is rising. Vua Dep Lop, which started as a small business and became Vietnam's rubber sandal leader, sells the footwear for around \$10 a pair.

At its workshop in Hanoi, shoemakers use sharp knives and chisels to craft the sandals from huge tyres that are almost the same height as the workers. While the traditional black models are best-sellers, a colourful modern twist is helping the sandal appeal to a younger demographic. Nguyen Tien Cuong took over the business from his father-in-law in 2011, and has sold more than half a million pairs of rubber sandals since then. "We tried to make them softer and more fashionable. After changing the style and format, we started having more customers," he said. — AFP



This photo shows former president Ho Chi Minh's rubber sandals inside the Ho Chi Minh museum in Hanoi.



This photo shows workers making rubber sandals at a shop in Hanoi.



Photo shows Nguyen Tien Cuong pushing a truck tyre outside a workshop in Hanoi, before it is transformed into rubber tyres. — AFP photos

Sports

Canada's Henderson wins second major title at Evian Championship

Schubert falls short of a fairytale success

EVIAN: Canada's Brooke Henderson birdied the final hole to survive a pressure-packed final round and end her long wait for a second major title at the Evian Championship on Sunday. The 2016 Women's PGA champion shot a final-round 71 for a 17 under par total and claimed the title by a single shot from American world number 283 Sophia Schubert, who closed with a 68.

The 24-year-old Canadian had led by two overnight, but struggled to find form in the ideal final-day conditions and fell out of the lead after two bogeys and a double - she four putted the sixth - in the first 11 holes. But, one behind Schubert, she hit back with birdies at the short 14th and long 15th and was tied for the lead at the closing par-five hole. She pulled her tee shot but hit her third shot to eight feet and holed out for victory.

"I didn't get the start I wanted and it certainly wasn't my best day," said Henderson, who led by three after two 64s and was still in control after her third-round 68. "But they say majors don't start until the back nine on Sunday and I kept that in my mind. I managed to stay patient, made a few birdies on the way home and the one at 18 was really special. I'm super excited to win my second major and my 12th win on Tour." Only 18 when she won her first major, it has taken an unexpectedly long time for number two to come round.

Part of the turnaround is thanks to a new put-

ting technique and leaving the flag in the cup. "I took a break a couple of months ago and went home and spent time with my Mum and Dad - he's my coach - and my sister, Brittany (her caddie) also helped me work on a few things in my game. I came back and won a tournament last month and now this. I feel I've got a really good mind-set and now I'm just hoping to continue with the same form."

Schubert just falls short

The 26-year-old Schubert, a former US Women's Amateur champion, fell just short of a fairytale success. But second place for the LPGA rookie marked an incredible breakthrough. "I was just trying to stay calm coming down the stretch and didn't know until the last hole where I stood," revealed Schubert, whose one professional victory came on the Symetra Tour in 2019.

"I decided not to look at the leaderboards. "It was not to be, but I'm very happy with my effort and I just want to carry the momentum through the rest of the season." Five players shared third place on 15 under par - Mai Saigo (65), Lydia Ko (66), Kim Hyo-joo (67), Charley Hull (67) and Carlota Ciganda (68). World number one Ko Jin-young finished in the next group on 13-under after a 69 - the same mark as former world number one Nelly Korda (69) and the player in second place overnight Ryu So-yeon, who shot a disappointing 73. —AFP



EVIAN: Brooke Henderson of Canada celebrates with the trophy after winning the Evian Championship in the French Alps town of Evian-les-Bains, a major tournament on the women's calendar, on July 24, 2022. —AFP

Cricket Scotland found to be 'institutionally racist'

LONDON: An independent review into allegations of racism at Cricket Scotland has found the governance and leadership practices of the organization to be "institutionally racist". The report, which was described as a "wake up call for Scottish sport", found 448 examples of institutional racism. A review was commissioned by sportscotland, the national funding body, last year after Scotland's all-time leading wicket-taker Majid Haq and former teammate Qasim Sheikh said they had suffered racist abuse.

As part of the review, an anonymous survey was carried out, with 62 percent of those who responded saying they had experienced, witnessed or had received reports of incidents of racism, inequalities or discrimination. Allegations include racial abuse, use of inappropriate language, favoritism towards white children from public schools and a lack of a transparent selection process.

The investigation, carried out by consultancy firm Plan4Sport, found Cricket Scotland failed in 29 out of 31 indicators of institutional racism. As a result of the findings, the governing body has been placed into special measures until at least October 2023, with sportscotland effectively taking control of the organization. "Governance and leadership practices of Cricket Scotland have been institutionally racist," said Louise Tideswell, managing director of Plan4Sport.

"The reality is that the leadership of the organization failed to see the problems and, in failing to do so, enabled a culture of racially aggravated micro-aggressions to develop." On Sunday, the board of Cricket Scotland resigned en masse. Interim chief executive Gordon Arthur said: "The racism and discrimination that has taken place in the sport that we all love should never have been allowed to happen, or to go unchallenged for so long. I would like to again issue a heartfelt apology to all those who have been the victims of racism and discrimination in Scottish cricket."

Among the recommendations of the review are for the new board to be comprised of no more than a 60-40 gender ratio either way and a minimum of 25 percent of members should come from black, south-east Asian, or other mixed or multiple ethnic groups. The chief executive of sportscotland, Stewart Harris, described the findings as "deeply concerning and in some cases shocking". "Today should also act as a wake-up call for all of Scottish sport," he added. "Racism is a societal problem and it is no longer good enough to simply be non-racist, Scottish sport must now be actively anti-racist."

The issue of racism within British cricket as a whole was brought to the fore again two years ago when former spinner Azeem Rafiq said he had been subjected to racial harassment and bullying during his time as a player for leading English county Yorkshire. Although an investigation upheld seven of Rafiq's 43 allegations, the club initially stated nobody would be disciplined, a decision that was greeted with widespread incredulity. Pressure eventually mounted on Yorkshire, leading to a mass clear-out of senior boardroom figures and coaching staff. —AFP

O'Ward takes Iowa IndyCar win after Newgarden crash

WASHINGTON: Mexico's Pato O'Ward won Sunday's IndyCar Salute to Farmers 300, capturing his fourth

Axar Patel's 64 fuels India in series, clinching victory

PORT OF SPAIN: Axar Patel's career-best 64 not out lifted India to a series-clinching two-wicket win with two balls to spare over the West Indies in the second One-Day International of a three-match series at Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad on Sunday. After Shai Hope's assured 115 in his 100th ODI paced the home side to a competitive 311 for six batting first, the tourists were indebted to Patel's bludgeoning innings off just 35 balls in his first ODI for five years.

Three fours and five sixes highlighted the left-hander's spectacular effort in which 100 runs came off the last 58 deliveries of the match to give India an unbeatable 2-0 lead and extended their winning streak against the West Indies to 12 matches dating back to November, 2018. Kyle Mayers, who had taken two early wickets and featured in two other dismissals, was entrusted with the final over with India runs away from victory.

He looked on course to deny the visitors until a full-toss was smashed for a straight six by Patel to obliterate the previous record of 272 by the West Indies against Pakistan in 1988 as the highest success ODI run-chase at the venue. "When I went out there we were aiming to get 10-11 runs-per-over," said Patel after receiving the "Man of the Match" award. "We thought it could be done because of our IPL (Indian Premier League) experience."

Finau surges to 3M Open win as Piercy falters late

WASHINGTON: Tony Finau charged late to card a four-under par 67 on Sunday to win his third US PGA Tour title at the 3M Open as fellow American Scott Piercy stumbled down the stretch. Finau, ranked 17th in the world, grabbed three of his six birdies at the 14th, 15th and 16th to pull away for a three-shot win over South Korean Im Sung-jae, who carded a bogey-free 68, and Argentina's Emiliano Grillo, who posted an even par 71.

Chasing Piercy for most of the day after starting five adrift, Finau had finally seized the lead when he got a great break at the par-three 17th, where his tee shot got held up in the rough and stayed just inside the line marking the water hazard. He gave the ball a little kiss after saving par, and even though he was less lucky at the par-five 18th-where his tee shot did find the water-a closing bogey was ultimately irrelevant as his 17-under par total of 267 gave him the win with strokes to spare at TPC Twin Cities in Blaine, Minnesota.

Finau, whose 10 career runner-up finishes include two this season at the Canadian Open and Mexico Open, said it took "really everything I had" to win. "I was playing great and really every time I looked up it seemed like I was four or five shots back really all day," he said. He was chasing Piercy, the 43-year-old seeking a fifth PGA Tour title, who started the day with a four-shot lead and was up by as many as five after rolling in birdies of 10 and 30 feet at the second and sixth holes.

career title and second of the year after long-time leader Josef Newgarden crashed late in the race. O'Ward took the lead when Newgarden crashed out due to a suspension failure then kept it after a final pit stop under caution in the 300-lap feature on the 0.894-mile oval at Newton, Iowa.

O'Ward surged ahead on a restart with 50 laps remaining and stayed in front to the finish with Australian pole-sitter Will Power second, New Zealand's Scott McLaughlin third, New Zealand's Scott Dixon fourth and



PORT OF SPAIN: Axar Patel of India hits 4 during the 2nd ODI match between West Indies and India at Queens Park Oval, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on July 24, 2022. —AFP

Shreyas Iyer (63) and Sanju Samson (54) had gotten India back on course after early setbacks, but it was Patel's intervention which made all the difference. Hope's 13th ODI century earlier in the day, just his second in the Caribbean, came off 227 balls and was decorated with eight fours and three sixes. He received good support from Nicholas Pooran as the home captain stroked 74 in a 117-run fourth wicket partnership with the opening batsman to justify his decision to bat first.

Mayers, West Indies top-scorer in the first

match two days earlier which India won by just three runs, again set the pace with a brisk 39 in an opening stand of 65 with Hope. Seam bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur was the leading wicket-taker with three for 54, removing Pooran, Rovman Powell and then Hope to peg back their opponents who looked on course for a total closer to 330. "Axar played well and we didn't hold our nerve," Pooran admitted in reflecting on a second nail-biting loss in three days. "We just could not keep things under control in the last five overs." —AFP



BLAINE: Tony Finau of the United States lines up a putt on the 18th green during the final round of the 3M Open at TPC Twin Cities on July 24, 2022 in Blaine, Minnesota. —AFP

The first signs of trouble for Piercy showed with bogeys at the eighth, ninth and 11th. But the real disaster came late, when he dropped five shots in three holes with a bogey, triple-bogey and bogey at the 13th 14th and 15th. At 14, Piercy needed two shots to get out of a fairway bunker and when he did, he found the water. Piercy's five-over 76 left him tied for fourth on 271 alongside fellow Americans James Hahn, who carded a 65, and Tom Hoge, who signed for a 70.

Finau notched his first victory since winning last year's Northern Trust, the first event of the FedEx Cup playoffs. "I really got things going in the middle of our back nine," said Finau, who drained a 15-foot birdie putt at the 11th. He holed an eight-foot birdie putt at 14, curled in a 32-footer at the 15th and rapped in a nine-footer at 16. "Once I got control of the golf tournament it was a whole different mindset, trying to seal the deal. "Couple of squirrely swings coming in, but I called 'bank' on 17 and it worked out." —AFP

remaining with a crash in the fourth turn, the American losing control low and spinning into the outer wall.

Newgarden was near the first IndyCar weekend sweep in five years after winning Saturday's race. "I want to cry," Newgarden said. "So sad for my team. I don't know what happened. I didn't know it happened until I was in the wall." Newgarden appeared to be unharmed in the crash but after he was examined and released from the infield medical center he fell in a trackside motor home and was taken to hospital in Des Moines for further evaluation. —AFP

American Jimmie Johnson fifth. "Super stoked. Super happy," O'Ward said. "It was all about capitalizing and being there when we needed to be."

Indianapolis 500 winner Marcus Ericsson of Sweden, who finished sixth, kept the season points lead 403-395 over Power with Newgarden and Dixon 34 points behind and O'Ward 36 adrift. "We're still in the lead and now we're going to tracks where we know we're strong, so I'm happy about that," Ericsson said. Newgarden started second and led 148 laps but his race ended with 65 laps

Sports

Vingegaard ends Pogacar's reign, wins Tour de France

Wiebes outsprints Vos to win first stage of women's Tour

PARIS: Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard won the Tour de France on Sunday, ending the reign of two-time defending champion Tadej Pogacar after a grueling three weeks and 3,350km of relentless struggle. The 25-year-old former fish-market worker claimed his first Tour de France title, a year after his breakout performance when he came second to Pogacar. "This victory is huge for me, it's incredible," said Vingegaard as he stood on top of the podium on a sun-kissed Champs Elysees.

"There are so many people I want to thank but I don't know where to start," he added, reserving particular praise for organizers who started the race in his native Denmark. Vingegaard also hailed teammate Wout van Aert as "phenomenal" and "the best rider in the world", as he was flanked by second-placed Pogacar and 2018 champion Geraint Thomas, who was third. "We had a plan and we followed it to the letter, all my teammates outdid themselves," added the champion.

Packed ranks of Danes in front of the podium began to chant his name as he thanked "the two girls in my life", a reference to his partner and daughter. "Without them, I couldn't have done this." Runner-up Pogacar won three stages along the way and also took the white jersey for best under-25 rider for a third straight year. He was thanked by Vingegaard for this "formidable battle".

"The white jersey wasn't really what I was after, but I'm happy with how I raced and am proud to be second," said Pogacar. "We all dream when we are children of one day being on the Tour de France, of becoming a professional cyclist. "The simple fact of participating in the Tour is incredible, especially when you come from a country like Slovenia. So to finish second is still exceptional."

Belgium's Jasper Philipsen won the dash for the line on the cobbled Champs Elysees to take the iconic final stage victory, his second of this Tour, turning the page on his embarrassment at mistakenly celebrating on stage four, when he had in fact finished second. "This is the nicest win for any sprinter, it buries the end of the Tour, this one counts," said Philipsen.

Jumbo-Visma produced a brilliant collective effort with six stage wins, the green sprint jersey and the red combativity jersey for van Aert and the polka dot mountains jersey for Vingegaard as well as the overall title and yellow jersey. After a relentless struggle over peaks and plains in a crushing heat-wave, Vingegaard assured his win on Saturday's time-trial having taken the lead in the Alps and extended it in the Pyrenees. Geraint Thomas, the 2018 champion, was third after the veteran raced largely at his own pace, silencing doubters who thought that at 36, the affable Welshman was past his best.

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Struggle for supremacy

The 21st stage was a largely ceremonial run as Vingegaard and others sipped champagne while rolling past sights of Paris including the Jardin du Luxembourg, through Saint Michel and past the Louvre before a sprint over eight laps of the Champs Elysees. The Jumbo team had celebrated Saturday at their stop-over in Limoges but the triumph came after a long, collective effort that nearly fell flat at the last minute. Vingegaard survived the "heart attack" of a near fall on Saturday's individual time-trial to virtually wrap up the Tour.

The two main protagonists had fought each other from start to finish, with Vingegaard dethroning Slovenian Pogacar with a pair of soaring performances in the high mountains. Pogacar made all the early running with his lone wolf attacking mentality, gradually clawing his way into top spot on stage six with an air of invincibility. But the stars aligned against Pogacar when he lost teammates to Covid and injury. He is also a man known to dislike intense heat and temperatures hit 40 degrees during the final week of the race.

Vingegaard took the yellow jersey from Pogacar on stage 11 and while the UAE man refused stubbornly to give up, he lost further ground on stage 18. Their epic struggle was highlighted by a moment of sportsmanship when Pogacar fell at high speed and Vingegaard waited for him to catch up, the pair clasping hands briefly in a memorable image from one of the best modern editions of the Tour.

Women's Tour

Meanwhile, Lorena Wiebes outsprinted fellow



PARIS: UAE Team Emirates team's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar wearing the best young rider's white jersey (left) sticks out his tongue as he cycles ahead of Jumbo-Visma team's Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey (center) and Jumbo-Visma team's Belgian rider Wout Van Aert wearing the sprinter's green jersey during the 21st and final stage of the 109th edition of the Tour de France cycling race on July 24, 2022. —AFP

Dutchwoman Marianne Vos to win the first stage of the new women's Tour de France in Paris on Sunday and pull on the leader's yellow jersey. After a 33-year break, the eight-stage women's edition of the race around France got underway on the same day as the men's event fin-

ished in Paris and will be broadcast live on television for the first time. French cycling legend Jeannie Longo, winner of three editions including the last in 1989, saw off the 144 riders who competed in an 81.6km circuit from the Eiffel Tower. —AFP



Kuwaiti clinches 3rd in European Jet Ski championship

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti racer Abdullah Al-Fadhel clinched the third place in the 2022 European Jet Ski Championship's Pro-AM Runabout Stock race, which concluded in Poland Sunday. In statements to KUNA, via phone, Al-Fadhel expressed pleasure for

raising Kuwait's flag high at this international event, where 180 renowned international racers competed. He regretted that a technical problem in his boat in the fourth round of the race had deprived him from occupying the second place. —KUNA

Gerhardsson to lead Sweden to Euro glory

STOCKHOLM: As an "expert on changing his mind", Sweden's Peter Gerhardsson, the lone male coach among the final four at Euro 2022, prefers to keep a low profile and allow his players to shine. His side take on hosts England in the semi-finals at Bramall Lane on Tuesday, with a final place against either France or Germany up for grabs.

When Gerhardsson took over as head coach of the Swedish national women's team in 2017, they seemed to be on a downward trajectory, having dropped out of the world's top 10 for the first time. The team had then been headed by Pia Sundhage, who took over the mantle after guiding the United States to two successive Olympic golds.

Unlike his predecessor, who was a figurehead that brought women's football to new levels in Sweden, Gerhardsson has not been as prominent a figure in interviews and on TV morning shows, instead opting for a more anonymous role. "I'm constantly chasing perfection, and that is of course to stand at the top. But I would be even happier by seeing the players be happy, winning the gold... that would give me even more," the 62-year-old told newspaper Dagens Nyheter in June.

"Since I know how much they have fought. So the joy from seeing them win would probably have contributed to me completely flipping out," he added.

Reflecting back on the time he took over, he said that one of his main goals had been not to be the centre of attention. "I want the players to be the ones on show," he said. Since taking over, Gerhardsson has guided the team to a World Cup bronze medal in 2019 and an Olympic silver in 2021.

'I don't trust myself'

Currently ranked number two in the world, after the United States, Sweden were among the pre-tournament favorites in England. "Pia Sundhage elevated women's football. Peter Gerhardsson elevated the national squad," sports commentator Anders Lindblad wrote in a commentary for newspaper Svenska Dagbladet ahead of Sweden's home game against Brazil, currently led by Sundhage, in June.

Gerhardsson's team managed to emerge as 3-1 winners in front of a record 33,000 fans at the Friends Arena in Stockholm. Prior to managing the national side, Gerhardsson coached Gothenburg men's club BK Hacken, who play in the Swedish top flight. Despite his accolades, Gerhardsson's humble, and at times care-free, attitude shines through. "I'm an expert at changing my mind," he told reporters ahead of Sweden's opening Euro game against holders the Netherlands. —AFP

Macron confronts concerns over Paris 2024 Olympics

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday gathered senior ministers to tackle issues shadowing preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympics, almost two years to the day before the sporting extravaganza opens. The Olympics should be a centrepiece of the freshly re-elected Macron's second term, projecting an image of a France comfortable in its

modern identity but open to the world. But with two years to go to the opening ceremony on July 26, 2024, concerns are growing not just over costs but also security preparations.

France's reputation as a reliable host of sporting events took a major battering over the chaos that marred the Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid in Paris on May 28 that critics blamed on heavy-handed policing. A particular subject of anxiety is the ambitious vision-in-a-typical Macron flourish-of an opening ceremony which will not take place as is customary in the athletics stadium but as a flotilla down the River Seine. —AFP

CHAN qualifying kicks off; convincing wins for Ghana, Senegal

JOHANNESBURG: Ghana captain Gladwin Awako completed the scoring in a 3-0 rout of Benin when 2022 African Nations Championship (CHAN) qualifying kicked off this weekend. Before Awako struck nine minutes from time in Cape Coast on Sunday, Daniel Barnieh and Mohammed Alhassan, two of his teammates at Accra club Hearts of Oak, scored either side of half-time.

Barnieh converted a 26th-minute penalty awarded for handball and Alhassan doubled the lead on 48 minutes with a shot through a crowd of players after Benin failed to clear a corner. Awako gave Ghana a convincing advantage ahead of the first round second leg on July 30 when he curled a shot into the roof of the net from just inside the box. Ghana have experienced mixed fortunes in the CHAN - a biennial competition restricted to home-based stars - finishing runners-up in 2009 and 2014 but failing to qualify for the last three editions.

In the likely event that they eliminate Benin, Ghana will face arch rivals Nigeria for a place at the 18-nation finals in Algeria. Senegal completed a memorable four days for the country ranked No. 1 in Africa when they beat Liberia 3-0 in Paynesville with Bouly Sambou, Raymond Ndour and Jean-Louis Diouf scoring before half-time. On Thursday in Morocco, 2022 African Player of the Year Sadio Mane led the way as Senegal topped five of the seven men's categories at the annual awards ceremony.

South Africa overcame bungled travel arrangements to defeat the Comoros 1-0 in Moroni through a second-half goal from Khulekani Shezi. The kick-off was delayed 90 minutes due to the late arrival of the visitors, who dashed from the airport to the stadium and played after a brief warm-up. South Africa have a dismal record in CHAN qualifying, reaching the finals only once in five attempts. A second tournament appearance in 2014 was due to the country being the hosts.

Recently crowned southern Africa champions Zambia are set to reach the second round after forcing a 0-0 draw with Mozambique in Maputo. Eswatini have not won a qualifier since debuting 14 years ago, and the unwanted record stretched to 17 matches after a 0-0 draw against Botswana in Francistown. Apart from automatic qualifiers Algeria, title-holders Morocco and Libya have secured places with the other 15 finalists to be known by September 4. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Clinics

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

Industrial Shuwaikh

Qadsiya	24814764
Dasmah	22515088
Bneid Al-Gar	22532265
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shah Manan Kumar Jitendra Bhai, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3827682 having permanent address Gujarat, India 380015 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: Given name - Manan Jitendrabhai and Surname - Shah. (C# 2025)

I, KANAIYALAL VALLABHBHAI PAREKH, R/o BEDEKAR COMPLEX, A-Wing, Room No#101, Maharashtra, India, Dist. Raigad, Shriwardhan, Pin 402110. Passport No. P6317340. I have changed my name from Kanaiyalal Vallabhbbhai Parekh to Zaid Vallabhbbhai Parekh. Kanaiyalal and Zaid both names

belong to one and the same person. (C#2023)

I, Ranjit Khiva S/o Nachhatar Khiva R/o Mohalla. That now I have changed my name from Ranjit Khiva to Ranjit Singh. All concern may be noted. That Nachhatar Khiva and Nacchatar Singh both name's are belong to one. (C#2024)



OREGON: Sweden's Armand Duplantis reacts as he sets a world record in the men's pole vault final during the World Athletics Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon on July 24, 2022. —AFP

Record-breaking Duplantis soars at World Athletics Championships

Nigeria's Amusan storms to 100m hurdles gold

EUGENE: Armand Duplantis wrapped up the World Athletics Championships in Eugene in stunning fashion on Sunday, setting a new world record in the pole vault as the curtain came down on the 10-day global track and field extravaganza. The gripping finale could not have been any better scripted for the first world championships ever to be held on American soil - apart from the fact maybe that the US-born and raised Duplantis was wearing the yellow and blue of Sweden and not representing the Stars and Stripes.

As the furious hullobo of the frenzied 4x400m relays won by the US men and women died down, all eyes turned on Duplantis. And the 22-year-old Swede did not disappoint, sailing with ease over 6.21 metres at the second time of asking. The packed, raucous crowd at Hayward Field went wild as Duplantis sprinted to see his father and coach Greg and plant a kiss on girlfriend Desire Inglander. "It is great, I cannot complain!" said Duplantis, whose new mark bettered by 1cm his previous best set when winning gold at the World Indoor Championships in Belgrade in March.

It was his fifth world record, and third this year. "Actually, I did not think about the record that much today," he said. "Usually, it is always somewhere in the back of my mind but today, I was really focused on the win and I really wanted to win the gold so badly. It was the medal I was missing. I love

jumping in Eugene and it was amazing here. I cannot figure the next heights right now. I am going to have a bit time off with my family and my friends."

Record for Amusan

Unheralded Nigerian Tobi Amusan had earlier stolen the show with two electric runs on her way to gold in the 100m hurdles. In the very first event of a loaded evening of track, people had barely had chance to sit down with their sodas and popcorn before Amusan rocketed to a new world record of 12.12 seconds in the semi-finals. When she retook to the track later in the session, the Nigerian stormed to victory in 12.06sec, although a tailwind speed of 2.5 meters per second meant it wouldn't go down in the freshly-inked record books.

"The goal was to come out and to win this gold. I just did it," said Amusan, who finished ahead of Jamaica's Britany Anderson and Olympic champion Jasmine Camacho-Quinn of Puerto Rico. "I believe in my abilities but I was not expecting a world record at these championships." American Athing Mu lived up to her hype by adding the world 800m title to her Olympic crown. Mu, still only 20 years of age, was forced to dig deep to hold off British rival Keeley Hodgkinson in a thrilling battle

down the final straight before taking gold in a world-leading 1min 56.30sec.

"I'm just glad I made it to the line to finish the race, and thankfully I won gold. I just physically wasn't where I would like to be," Mu said. Another gold medalist from last year's Tokyo Olympics, Malaika Mihambo, won Germany a long-awaited medal as she retained her world long jump title. But Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei floundered in a 5000m race won convincingly by Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen, who bounced back from the disappointment of silver in the 1500m.

"I didn't want a sprint finish," Ingebrigtsen said. "I wanted to prove that I'm a better runner than the rest of the guys. It was a great race. I ran it, I needed it. I felt really good today, but 5km is really tough." In the absence through injury of Olympic champion Damian Warner of Canada, France's Kevin Mayer seized the moment to claim a second world decathlon gold. Mayer accrued 8,816 points after 10 disciplines over two days to follow up on previous world gold in 2017 in London.

Consolidating their place atop the medals table with a world championship record of 33 (13 gold, nine silver, 11 bronze), the United States claimed emphatic victories in both 4x400m relay finals, much to the delight of the partisan crowd. Strength in depth saw record-breaking 400m hur-



OREGON: Gold medalist Nigeria's Tobi Amusan poses on the podium during the medal ceremony for the women's 100m hurdles during the World Athletics Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene. —AFP

dles gold medalist Sydney McLaughlin anchor the women and individual 400m winner Michael Norman take a leg for the men's quartet. The women's victory meant the now-retired Allyson Felix bagged a 20th world medal as she was a squad member who ran in Saturday's heats. —AFP



KUWAIT: Thailand's Sarawut Suthet (right) and Iran's Sajid Mohammad compete during the Kuwait International Boxing Championship at the Boxing Hall on July 24, 2022.



KUWAIT: Uzbekistan's Abdulmalik Khalokov (left) and Hong Kong's Rex Tso Singyu compete during the Kuwait International Boxing Championship on July 24, 2022.

—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait Boxing Championship ends in style

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Uzbekistan boxers proved tough in a highly competitive 1st Kuwait International Boxing Championship that concluded on Sunday. Five out of seven boxers qualified for the final bouts. The closing ceremony was attended by President of Asian Boxing Confederation Pichai Chunhayajra and President of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi as well as diplomats and heads of delegations from 20 countries.

The semi-finals saw a highly technical confrontation between Uzbek and Iranian fighters as they met in

the 51kg, 80kg and 92+ kg and all ended in favor of the Uzbeks while only two Iranians qualified for the final of 51kg and 63 kg. The 71kg bout between Moroccan Hamza Albarbari and Uzbek Javlonbek Yuldoshev was very exciting and very close and went in favor of Yuldoshev.

President of the Asian Boxing Confederation (ABC) Pichai Chunhayajra said the 1st Kuwait International Boxing Championship achieved outstanding success in all fields. "We are proud of the role Kuwait Boxing Federation played and the attention that was given to all participating delegations, led by Chairman Mohammad Mansi," he said. He said ABC will be the first to support Kuwait if it applies to host any regional, continental or international championships in the future.

Head of the referees committee Abdallah Al-Raqam said there were no official protests from participating delegations over the final results - adding that the 17 international referees who officiated the bouts were as expected and observed all international boxing rules

which contributed to the success of the event.

The results of the semifinal bouts are as follows: In the 51 kg, Mostafa Rigi (IRI) beat Mansour Mubarak (KWT); Abdumajid Mannopov (UZB) defeated Muntadher Ali Nasser (IRQ). In the 57 kg, Sarawut Sukthet (THA) outpunched Sajad Mohammad (IRI); Abdulmalik Khalokov (UZB) defeated Tso Singyu (HOK). In the 63kg, Khuntip Pidnuch (THA) beat Lazizbek Fattoev (UZB) while Bagher Faraji (IRI) overpowered Yahya Sami (IRQ).

In the 71kg, Sitthisak Choomkulmarn (THA) beat Zhakshylyk (KGZ) as Javlonbek Yuldoshev (UZB) defeated Hamza El Barbari (MAR). In the 80kg, Uulu Erkin Adylbek (KGZ) defeated Seyed Hossein Mirahmadibabaeidari (IRI) while Dilshodbek (UZB) beat Seyed Shahin Mousavi (IRI). In the 92kg, Diyorbek Uralov (UZB) beat Toufan Sharifi (IRI) as Mykyta Gorbatenko (UKR) defeated Khalid Al-Shimmari (KWT). In the 92+kg, Maimaiti Aihemaiti (CHN) overpowered Tuohongtaji Aizhaier (CHN).

Rampant PSG end Japan tour in style

OSAKA: Lionel Messi and Neymar combined to devastating effect as Paris Saint-Germain thrashed Gamba Osaka 6-2 on Monday to finish their pre-season Japan tour with three wins out of three. The star forwards both played the opening 70 minutes in Osaka and Neymar scored a first-half penalty before setting up a goal for Messi. Messi then returned the favor in the second half, releasing Neymar for the Brazilian to notch his second goal of the game. Kylian Mbappe got his name on the scoresheet with a late penalty after coming on for the final 30 minutes. Pablo Sarabia and Nuno Mendes also scored for PSG, who now head to Israel to play Nantes in the French Super Cup in Tel Aviv on July 31. Gamba goalkeeper Masaaki Higashiguchi frustrated PSG's stars early in the game, first denying Messi and then keeping out Neymar with the Brazilian clean through on goal. The French champions found a way through in the 28th minute after a defensive mistake gave the ball to Messi, whose saved shot fell nicely for Sarabia to slam home. Neymar made it two just minutes later, rolling his penalty to the goalkeeper's left after the Brazilian forward had been brought down in the box.

Gamba hit straight back when Keisuke Kurokawa bundled the ball home after Gianluigi Donnarumma had initially kept out the Japanese side with a sharp reflex save. Mendes restored PSG's cushion after controlling a pass from Vitinha and smashing the ball past the goalkeeper. Messi made it four after Neymar picked him out in the box to turn the ball home. Neymar scored his second in the 60th minute but Gamba kept PSG on their toes, Hiroto Yamami turning the ball home in the 70th minute. Mbappe added the final touch for PSG with a penalty in the 86th minute. —AFP