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# Assembly approves KD 3,000 handout for retired Kuwaitis

## Opposition MPs begin sit-in in parliament over constitution

By B Izzak

### Crown Prince in good health condition: Diwan

KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is in good condition after he experienced a minor discomfort requiring rest, the Amiri Diwan said on Tuesday. The Diwan wishes HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad well-being, the statement added. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal later received a phone call from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, inquiring about his health condition and wishing him good health and well-being. — KUNA



HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: The National Assembly on Tuesday unanimously approved a draft law requiring the government to pay a KD 3,000 grant to all retired Kuwaitis, in a session boycotted by several opposition MPs. All thirty-eight MPs and ministers present during the emergency session voted for the bill that obliges the state-owned Public Institution for Social Security, the agency that looks after pensioners, to pay close to KD 600 million, according to the finance minister.

Finance Minister Abdulwahab Al-Rasheed told the Assembly that payment of the handout will commence immediately after the law becomes effective. The law was co-sponsored by a majority of MPs and the government, so the government is highly expected to sign the law.

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KUWAIT: Pensioners celebrate in the viewing gallery of the National Assembly on June 14, 2022 after MPs approved a draft law requiring the government to pay a KD 3,000 grant to all retired Kuwaitis. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

### News in brief



#### Currency counterfeiters arrested

KUWAIT: Police arrested four suspects for selling forged Kuwaiti dinar and US dollar banknotes for half their value, the interior ministry announced. The gang includes three Africans and a European resident. Police raided their residence, where they found forged KD 20 and \$100 notes as well as white and green papers, adhesive tape, white powder, a large box, cotton and two liquor bottles.

#### Bahrain reshuffles cabinet

MANAMA: Bahrain's king has made 17 cabinet changes by royal decree, including appointing a new oil minister in the Gulf nation's biggest-ever reshuffle and first for two decades. Oil Minister Mohammed bin Mubarak was among 13 new faces in the cabinet under Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa. — AFP

#### BTS going on 'hiatus'

SEOUL: K-pop supergroup BTS on Tuesday announced they were taking an indefinite "hiatus" from one of the world's most popular acts to focus on solo pursuits. The seven members dropped the bombshell during their streamed annual "FESTA" dinner, part of a celebration that marks their anniversary as a group. — AFP

#### IPL rights sold for \$6.2bn

MUMBAI: India's cricket board said Tuesday it has sold the broadcast rights of the IPL tournament for the next five seasons to global media giants for an eye-popping \$6.2 billion. Star, owned by US behemoth Disney, bought the TV rights while Viacom18 - a joint venture between Indian tycoon Mukesh Ambani's Reliance and US group Paramount Global - picked up the streaming rights. — AFP (See Page 14)

## Biden signals US-Saudi thaw on Mideast trip

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will meet Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman next month after the White House ended weeks of speculation Tuesday, announcing that Biden will travel to the Zionist entity, the Palestinian West Bank, and Saudi Arabia from July 13-16 - his first trip to the Middle East since taking office. In addition to meetings with individual leaders in all three places, he will attend a regional Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Saudi Arabia.

Biden is expected to press for increased Saudi oil production, in the hope of taming spiraling fuel costs and inflation at home ahead of midterm congressional elections in which his Democratic party risks a drubbing. But his meeting with the crown prince will mark a shift. Pressed by reporters, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said "the president is going to see over a dozen leaders on this trip... We can expect the president to see the crown prince as well." Saudi Arabia's statement was more direct, noting simply that Biden would meet with King Salman and then the heir to the throne.

US inflation is at 8.6 percent, the highest rate in 40 years, with high fuel costs largely to blame. Political fallout has been swift as voters vent over

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WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden walks on the South Lawn of the White House after disembarking Marine One on June 14, 2022. — AFP

## UAE urges COVID caution as cases double in a week

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates warned Monday that people must follow its anti-COVID measures including wearing masks indoors or face heavy fines, after cases more than doubled in a week. The Gulf state also urged people who test positive to

comply with isolation rules, adding that hospitalization rates were rising.

Daily recorded cases climbed to 1,356 on Tuesday from 572 a week earlier, still well short of the peak of 3,116 recorded in January. The UAE says 100 percent of its 10 million population is vaccinated. "A lack of commitment to isolating was noted among a small group of people infected with COVID-19, which threatens the safety of the community and causes the spread of the virus," Taher Al-Ameri, spokesperson of the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority, said Monday.

The validity of a "green" or healthy pass on the government contact-tracing app was reduced from 30 days to 14 days after a negative PCR test. Ameri warned of fines up to 3,000 dirhams (\$816) for not wearing masks in closed areas. Cases have also been rising in other Gulf countries, including Kuwait. In Saudi Arabia, which peaked at 5,000 in January, cases breached 1,000 a day last week from just 99 on May 1. However, Saudi Arabia on Monday scrapped mandatory face masks in most public places, weeks before it is due to welcome 850,000 visitors for the hajj pilgrimage in July. — AFP

## Muslims in India face bleak future

NEW DELHI: In the aftermath of recent rhetoric offending Islam and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) by a Bharatiya Janata party spokesperson, and despite a promising and secular constitution guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of all people regardless of religion, clashes between religions are becoming more overt in India. The current economic and sociopolitical climate, under the governance of rightwing Prime Minister Narendra Modi, forecasts a bleak future ahead for Indian Muslims, as they are already

living under grueling circumstances and seen as second-class citizens.

Muslims' religious rituals and dietary habits are being attacked and even criminalized; women are banned from wearing hijab in schools, and Friday prayer is prohibited in the city of Gurgaon, along with several issues relating to Muslim personal status law. Hindu extremists are also demanding speakers no longer transmit the Muslim call to prayer.

The homes and businesses of Muslim people are being targeted and sabotaged, and their livelihoods threatened. Demands of changing Muslim names of certain cities and roadways, contesting the use of the word "halal", inflammatory media portrayals of Muslims, as well as Hindutva propaganda alleging that Muslim

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ALLAHABAD: A bulldozer demolishes the residence of Javed Ahmed, a local leader who was allegedly involved in the protests against former BJP spokeswoman Nupur Sharma's incendiary remarks about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), on June 12, 2022. — AFP

# Venezuelan President meets Kuwaiti top officials during visit

## Kuwait's Prime Minister holds official talks with Maduro



KUWAIT: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro Moros meets National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro Moros meets His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro Moros meets Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro Moros meets OPEC Secretary General Haitham Al-Ghais.

KUWAIT: Visiting Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro Moros met on Tuesday at his place of residence in Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. The Venezuelan President also met Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. He also received Secretary General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Haitham Al-Ghais. Advisor to the Amiri Diwan and Head of the Honorary Delegation Mohammad Abu Al-Hassan attended the meetings.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday the visiting Venezuelan President and his accompanying delegation. His Highness the Prime Minister headed the Kuwaiti side in the official talks that were held during the meeting. President Moros chaired the Venezuelan delegation during the meeting. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, expressing good wishes to the visiting president and his country.

President Moros reciprocated, requesting that the prime minister relay his greetings and gratitude to His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, hoping that Kuwait may witness sustainable development and progress under the sagacious leadership of His Highness the Amir. Meanwhile, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said the Kuwaiti-Venezuelan talks dealt with means of boosting the bilateral relations and cooperation for serving issues of common concern. Later, His Highness the Prime Minister held a luncheon in honor of the Venezuelan president and his companions.

At the conclusion of his visit, President Maduro and his spouse Cilia Adela Flores de Maduro were seen off at the airport by the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah and the head of the accompanying delegation of honor, Adviser to the Amiri Diwan Mohammad Abdullah Abul-Hassan. — KUNA

To you my father, in memory of your absence

## Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, a man the size of a homeland

By Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah

You were Kuwait, originality and civilization and Arab virtues and roots The sea is you... overflowing with its shores - the great are destined to remain great

Two stanzas written by my dear mother Dr Suad Al-Sabah, may Allah make her live long in His Obedience, in which she describes a homeland, a man, a time, culture and commitment. Kuwait with its originality and its prestigious culture, and its move towards civilized development, adds to its moral civilization and its Arab virtues.

That was a period of senior Kuwait personalities and its wise leaders, with Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah in the lead, the last and youngest son of modern Kuwait's founder Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah. My father, from whom I learnt a lot, as of those who lived with him, of virtues.

The two stanzas are part of a long poem titled 'The Last of Swords', in which she laments a man who closed his eyes for the last time on this date in 1991, months after liberation, after being sure about Kuwait, as its people returned to it after a bitter occupation.

His homeland he built with his own hands, and spent his life in its service, defending it and sacrificing for it, and he was in the center of the ruling circle as a deputy ruler, and when he noticed some differences that threaten the country's stability and reached a dead end, he had to decide between Kuwait's interests or his personal interests. He decided to sacrifice his own in exchange of maintaining Kuwait's interest, as foreign pressure wanted him to give up his convictions to spread differences and strife inside the decision-making circle, but he decided to block these attempts and sacrifice his stability and that of his family.

He resigned all his posts and decided to live in self-exile, living in the shadows, away from politics. He left with his family for Beirut, and put an end to all rumors, and followed the affairs of his country from a distance. After being sure that he laid all bases of growth, stability and power, and what was left was the courage of decision (opinion comes ahead of the courage of the courageous). For that he embraced the family's youth, trained and taught them, pushed them in front and qualified them to be up to the major responsibility to lead the country.

All that was after laying the blocks of political stability and achieving Kuwait's belonging to Arabism. He established the army and police, launched the radio, formed literary and football clubs, encouraged equestrian sport, sponsored camel races, laid the basics of aviation, sent stu-



Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah



Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah

dents on scholarships abroad for the first time in the history of Kuwait and encouraged oil investment in every direction, when he was an aide to the late Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber when he was the ruler. He was along his side during the launch of the first oil shipment in the history of Kuwait. He was the launcher of the batch of desalinated water in a Kuwaiti plant. He travelled to the developed world in order to realize this in reality, to meet Kuwait's need for freshwater.

He also laid down the foundations of education as the chief of the higher education council from 1947 until the start of the sixties, and when he chaired the council's sessions, very important decisions were taken in the history of Kuwait education, most notably the decision to establish Kuwait University. He announced in Kuwait Al-Youm magazine, through the education department, the preparation of a historical register for Kuwait in which he encouraged citizens to collect all documents on the country's history. He encouraged boy scouts among school students and was present with them, sponsoring their events.

When he used to visit Britain and other countries, he used to allocate some time to visit Kuwaiti students on scholarships to make sure about their conditions and academic progress, listen to their views and learn about their needs, and this is what he instilled in me, and made me care for outstanding students and encourage them.

He supported the literary movement and journalism, be it in Kuwait or abroad. He established the "Humat Al-Watan" magazine, and made top Arab writers contribute in it. He was one of the most important sponsors of the fourth Arab writers conference that was held in Kuwait in 1957, and he hosted the top writers who came to Kuwait at Mishref Palace on that occasion, as he sought to keep Kuwait a destination for the most notable scientists and writers come to, to a point that Kuwait journalism became a model, head-

ed by Al-Arabi magazine.

He encouraged girls' education, and stood beside the woman's right to education and decision making, besides participating in the society's renaissance. He remained out of politics for 30 years, and did not give even one statement that can be used by some who waited for one word or sentence to shake Kuwait's stability, be it about his family in particular or Kuwait in general, and they could not get any expression of anger or criticism from him!

He had a dignified silence and wise patience. He was a man of patience when the situation required, and became angry when the situation warranted, and did not choose absence when the situation required his presence. Despite him leaving his posts as a deputy ruler, and despite his lack of response to all attempts by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem to make him change his decision. He sent delegations to Beirut and Geneva to convince him to withdraw his resignation, yet when he believed that the situation required his presence, as when the King of Saudi Arabia Saud bin Abdulaziz decided to visit Kuwait and sought him to lead those receiving the king, he came and supervised the reception ceremony and the visit's agenda, and as soon as the mission was over, he turned the page and returned to the shadows.

While abroad, he found respect and honor at the highest level, and despite leaving his post, Arab leaderships treated him like a president and leader, and received him like a ruler, including President Gamal Abdel Nasser, President Anwar Sadat, King Hussein, King Al-Hassan II and many others. He was, at the family level, a security umbrella for us, a teacher, leader and a generous and kind father.

Abdullah Al-Mubarak was a sword among the swords of this country, and this is the way swords are always. May Allah bestow His mercy on you, a father and inspiration, in the memory of your absence on this day (June 15).

## US official touts outgoing Kuwait envoy as 'champion of people in need'

WASHINGTON: US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Benaim said Kuwait's outgoing ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, who served as Ambassador for 21 years under four US presidents, has been a "champion of people in need". Benaim made the remark during a farewell reception held on Monday evening in honor of the ambassador and his wife Rima Al-Sabah, which was attended by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, together with several other US officials and congressmen. The reception was held by Saudi Ambassador to the US Princess Reema bin Bandar Al-Saud and Qatari Ambassador to the US Sheikh Meshal Al-Thani. "He stood for genuinely shared values between ourselves and between our countries," Benaim said "And always, always, for all this time, you've been a champion of people in need."

He added that Sheikh Salem leaves behind "a monumental legacy" and "incredibly strong relations between the United States and Kuwait; diplomatic, military and people to people." The US official noted that Sheikh Salem and Rima Al-Sabah, who is also a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, "are really extraordinary legendary hosts. But just as important, you are extraordinary humanitarians who bring people together to get things done on behalf of people in need, and we've seen that again and again and again for refugees and others around the world." In honor of both, the Saudi and Qatari ambassadors announced that they are presenting 21 benches placed across the nation's capital carrying their names for leaving "their mark in the United States of America for 21 years."

Speaking during the farewell event, Princess Reema said, "Today is a farewell both to Sheikh Salem and Rima Al-Sabah after two decades of setting the standard for humanitarian leadership and not just bringing critical attention to

global needs, but also women's health, education for young girls and the climate crisis." She added that for Rima Al-Sabah, "It wasn't just enough to elevate awareness and promote understanding, she's one of those rare individuals that you know, always takes the extra mile but in her case, it was an extra hundreds of miles. She brought communities and decision makers together." She continued that Sheikh Salem "shouldered the responsibility" along with Rima Al-Sabah "to secure the funding to address and contribute and to find real concrete solutions to the world's most pressing changes."

Meanwhile, Qatar's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Meshal said that Sheikh Salem "has played a fundamental and vital role at every step in the cultivation of the extraordinary partnership between the US and Kuwait that exists today." "Serving as Ambassador through the terms of four US presidents, he has navigated enormous political changes," he added. "He has not only kept the partnerships strong but deepened them in so many ways."

He continued that Sheikh Salem alongside his wife Rima have "embraced the United States and the city of Washington, going above and beyond, and advanced a variety of philanthropic causes." "Sheikh Salem has been a stellar representative of Kuwait's values, committed to reconciliation and dialogue, working tirelessly to serve those in need and advance the cause of peace," he remarked.

In the meantime, Sheikh Salem said, "It has been an absolute honor and an incredible privilege for Rima and myself to represent Kuwait and to live and work among you for the past 21 years." He affirmed, "The Kuwait-US relationship is today stronger than it's ever been. It's a relationship built on a strategic alliance, on a shared vision and mutual respect." — KUNA



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his wife Evan Ryan with Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and his wife Rima Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## Local

# Hundreds of cheating cases despite strict search, tough penalties

## Teacher blames e-learning period for rise in cheating

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Several schools busted hundreds of cases of cheating in the first days of the final exams for 12th-grade students. Rotating school principals entrusted with chairing examination committees is a demand by many in order to avoid and prevent such practices. Sources revealed that the number of cheating cases discovered in two days reached nearly 600 in the science and arts streams. Cheaters are denied entry to the rest of the exams and score zero in all subjects, which is considered as a heavy-handed response by many.

Iman Al-Ali, a teacher, told Kuwait Times that despite being an educational staff member, she considers the action of the ministry of education exaggerated. "The ministry of education has made an ill-considered decision. It is not fair to fail the student in all exams because they cheated. They should fail the student in the exam they cheated in," she said.

Ali explained that cheating has increased due to the e-learning period that led to a deterioration in the quality of education, which made it a phenomenon that threatens the future of generations, adding it is the ministry of education's fault. "I do not agree with cheating, but because the student cheated in one exam, you hand them a ban and let them repeat the whole year for one incident!"

Meanwhile, several secondary school students have complained about the inspection procedures carried out by security staff and teachers, and the embarrassment these procedures cause. Students stressed that the inspections violate their modesty by touching sensitive areas of their bodies.

### Pat-down search

Lawyers have warned that the pat-down search procedure of students in schools is illegal, and whoever is subjected to it can file a case against the school. Lawyer Ahmad Sanat told Kuwait Times that a pat-down search of students is considered illegal and is a violation, demanding parents file a complaint to the director of educational affairs in the area in which the inspection took place.

He warned of breaking inspection rules and legal standards, thus exposing the school to legal accountability, pointing out that students and parents have the right to resort to the judiciary in case of abuse during the inspection. Sanat called on the Supreme Education Council to provide electronic gates or electronic scanners to detect metal objects and limit manual inspection only for suspected students. Sanat stressed inspection without legal or procedural justifications or suspicion puts a violation against the school, in addition to causing a breakdown of trust between students and school administrations.

A source at the legal affairs department at the ministry of education told Kuwait Times that no law allows a pat-down search, and whoever is inspected must go to the ministry of education to file a complaint. "We investigate many of the complaints that we receive, and the complaint is transferred to a committee to verify the incident. The teacher and the head of the examination committee will be held accountable," he said. He affirmed that according to the type of inspection (like a girl's sensitive area), the punishment will be approved. "The penalty will be imposed on who is in charge. It starts from a deduction of salary of three days to a week and a warning, and if repeated, the person will



**KUWAIT:** A control worker uses a metal detector to check for electronic devices as students enter to take their final exams. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

be expelled and deported if they are a non-Kuwaiti."

### Inspected several times

Students told Kuwait Times that individual inspections go too far. Rasha Majidi, a 12th-grade student, said that she was inspected several times with all kinds of searches. "The guard demanded we take off all our clothes, including shirts, trousers, scarves and shoes. The policy of preventing cheating is supposed to be in all grades. Parents should rectify the situation, because smart students who have studied hard are being affected and are distracted by cheaters," she said.

Kuwait Society of National Integrity said in a press statement that education of young people is among the main indicators of the future of countries. "Cheating in exams has turned into a phenomenon, which poses a severe danger to Kuwait's future that goes beyond

security risks and economic concerns," it said. The society demanded the government should impose strict control over all examination procedures, and in the event of leaked exam papers, investigation committees must be formed to hold accountable and punish those who are negligent.

In addition, it should provide schools with modern technological means to detect devices used for cheating and consider them as crime tools, which requires investigation with the student and the guardian to know how the student got this cheating device. The statement addressed the need to prohibit imports of cheating tools and issue a decision by the ministry of commerce to prevent the sale and purchase of such devices. Also, media campaigns should be organized to consolidate the values of educational integrity and raise students' and parents' awareness of the dangers of cheating.

## High demand on travel despite rising ticket prices

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** Despite the high prices of airline tickets, travelers are choosing to bear the soaring costs, especially after a long pause in travel and ending of restrictions in most countries due to the coronavirus pandemic. Demand for air tickets has exceeded expectations. CEO of Delta Airlines Ed Bastian said during an airline industry conference. He also said post-pandemic airfares have risen globally by around 30 percent.

Regarding the reasons for price hikes, Saeed Radwan, a ticketing and reservation officer at a travel agency, told Kuwait Times that "taxes imposed by airlines have increased by 15 percent due to high fuel prices, which automatically increased ticket prices", pointing out the travel season usually witnesses price rises.

"Most travel agencies do not have any promotions for tourist destinations this year compared to last summer, which led to the price hikes," Radwan

added. He stressed that despite the high prices of tickets, demand for tourist destinations continues among Kuwaitis, especially to Europe and Turkey.

Ehab Hani, general manager of a travel agency, told Kuwait Times: "Ticket prices have risen by around 20 percent, which is much higher than last year due to the pandemic, which is unjustified, while taxes are continuously rising since the Ukraine war." Hani pointed out that airline companies are taking advantage of travelers who are willing to pay in order to travel for tourism purposes or visit their home countries after more than two years.

"Airline companies have price categories for certain seats, and many of them block cheap seats on their websites, which indirectly forces travelers to buy the more expensive seats, which will give them high profits," Hani said, adding "there is no law that prevents this." "Some airlines increase the price of tickets before the traveler makes the final booking without referring to us or the client, which is unethical and leads to losing customers," he added.

Hani stressed such actions by airlines has not dented demand for traveling among citizens or expats. Regarding the most expensive destinations, Hani said Istanbul has the most exaggerated prices, as the original price for a roundtrip economy class ticket, which was between KD 120 and KD 180, has today exceeded KD 320, while a business class ticket costs between KD 500 and KD 550.

"Airfares to Geneva and London have increased



significantly. Tickets to Geneva before the pandemic were priced between KD 600 and KD 700, but now it is more than KD 1,100, while airfares to London have increased by about 40 percent," Hani said. He said the most in-demand destinations among expats are Egypt, India and Philippines. Prices of tickets to Egypt have increased by 15 percent on average, which is not considered high due to many options available for travelers.

Several international studies indicate there are many reasons for the high prices of air tickets. Not all of them are caused by the airlines itself, such as fuel price hikes, jumbo planes being grounded, travelers upgrading to higher classes for leisure trips and shortage of staff.

## Various violations found in raids at Hawally clinics

By Nawara Fattahwa

**KUWAIT:** The joint committee of the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM), Medicine Inspection Department and Medical Licensing Department of the Ministry of Health, and the Residency Affairs Department of the Ministry of Interior raided some clinics in Hawally governorate, where they found various serious violations. These include practicing work without license, unauthorized staff working at the clinic, and selling expired medical materials.

The inspectors of this joint committee discovered an unlicensed clinic operating in a medical center in Salmiya. According to a statement by both PAM and MoH, the Asian staff working in this clinic are not certified doctors or medical technicians. The joint inspectors found numerous domestic workers practicing nursing. PAM said the main violation was breaching article 10 of the labor law

for the private sector. Also, they found one of the doctors at the clinic was practicing her job with an expired license and work permit for over a year.

Dr Fahad Al-Mourad, Acting Deputy General Director of the Protection Department of PAM, noted PAM's inspectors are conducting raids at various medical clinics, with the joint committee focusing on dermatology and plastic surgery clinics, especially since the number of violations there are very high.

After inspecting the place, the inspectors found the unlicensed clinic was providing medical services (dermatology and beauty) without a license. The inspectors also found a huge amount of medications, food supplements and cosmetics that were either expired or unregistered at the ministry of health, and of an unknown source. They also seized Botox and expired filler injections.



The Medicine Inspection Department of MoH frequently holds inspections in cooperation with the authorities in charge of places that sell medications, pharmaceutical products and herbs. The inspectors seized some counterfeit and smuggled materials, in addition to other violations of law no. 28/1996 on practicing the pharmaceuti-

cal profession and dealing with drugs. MoH appreciates the initiative of people in reporting any violation in this field.

Legal action will be taken against violators and the clinic was shut down. The inspectors said the clinic was being managed by an Arab expat after the Kuwait owner suffered a stroke more than a year ago.

## Lebanese President affirms deep ties with Kuwait

**BEIRUT:** Lebanese President Michel Aoun affirmed on Tuesday the deep bilateral ties between his country and Kuwait. This came in a

statement by the Lebanese President during his reception of Kuwait's Ambassador to Lebanon Abdulaal Al-Qenae on the occasion of his tenure ending after 15 long years. He granted the Ambassador the National Cedar Medal of the rank of Senior Officer. The Lebanese Presidency expressed its appreciation to the Kuwaiti officials' permanent support for Lebanon, especially in the difficult circumstances the Lebanese people went through. "Lebanon seeks the best relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and

wishes them continuing security, stability and progress," said the President. Meanwhile, Ambassador Qenae said, "I was honored to meet with President Michel Aoun, on a farewell visit that comes after 15 years of service in this brotherly country." "These relations will continue under the supervision and guidance of the leadership of the two brotherly countries with continued progress and prosperity for the benefit of the two brotherly countries and peoples," said the Ambassador. — KUNA

## In my view

## A day in the life of a writer



By Yousuf Awadh Al-Azmi

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"Espresso is all that stands between us and creative defeat." - Hari Kunzru

I always talk about writing and its merits and there comes to mind many questions about it. Is writing, for example, a piece wanted from a student about a subject that concerns sunrise or sunset, the darkness of night or the rays of day? Writing may be considered a delicious hot meal in a favorite restaurant, a spicy pizza or even chicken biryani that is rich with spices brought in from Mumbai.

The challenge any writer faces is about what they may write, how to think, how to write, etc. For example, will they write about the repercussions of the presence of multinational companies, or what is known as intercontinental companies.

I have an idea about the topic, but it is not enough and needs an additional team so I can understand the subject clearly to write while looking at the fully distorted picture. Then there was an idea to write about Dubai, especially since I returned yesterday morning from that magnificent emirate after a three-day visit. But what am I going to write about "Dar Al-Hai" (this is what many call Dubai), especially as my travel was for a private family affair? So, what am I going to write about?

The writing time is constricted, and while I was thinking, I received a message about a new library in Dubai that has six million books. It is a public library run by the state, which is good news, yet this is not a full idea I can write about, either to laud or criticize it - of course, if the work concerns the Dubai government, it is hard to have criticism. True, there must be drawbacks, but when you see more positives, the positive silence becomes a tactful behavior.

I took some time to go to a major bookstore in Dubai, and while shopping for books, I found three. But if I did not have a single dirham to buy, I would have faced two solutions - either to quickly borrow money or snatch the books and run to the door! (Of course, I say this as a joke.) I think a lot about the issue of books and having them - is it an addiction or unwanted appetite?

What does it mean to stack hundreds of books, when most of them you can find on your mobile phone with just a press of a button? Is it overspending, squandering, addiction, or is it a positive phenomenon? The answer is yours, yet I am sure it is the most beautiful and beneficial addition!

I am writing with a cup of Arabic coffee next to me, remembering some columns that carry silent messages. Their expressions are between the lines, and only people interested with the topic can understand the matter. It is a difficult writing craft, yet I am certain that it is the most beautiful type of writing. Only the sender and receiver can feel it, and its aroma is not far from that of coffee. This attribute is also available in the art of poetry.

## Kuwait blasts Zionist entity's policy of dealing with UN bodies

**GENEVA:** Kuwait on Tuesday vehemently denounced the Zionist entity's policy of dealing with United Nations (UN) agencies, especially mechanisms of human rights in occupied Palestinian territories. This came in a speech delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN and Other International Organizations Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim during the 50th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council, held from June 13-July 8. He said his country calls on the international community to protect the Palestinian people and live up to its due responsibilities by ensuring that international human rights law and international humanitarian law are respected in occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. He added that Kuwait shares the international community's concerns over these serious violations, while calling for bringing the Zionist entity to accountability for the use of excessive force against Palestinians. The Kuwaiti diplomat cited a recent independent international committee report as showing so obviously "the deterioration of human rights conditions in occupied Palestinian territories due to the Zionist entity's violence and aggressions against Palestinian people". He added that the report indicated that the Zionist entity is responsible for serious and systematic breaches of international humanitarian law. He also voiced Kuwait's condemnation of recent violations by the Zionist entity's occupying forces at Islamic holy sites in the city of Jerusalem, including recurrent breakings by Jewish settlers into Al-Aqsa Mosque. In this context, the Kuwaiti diplomat called on the international community to take action against these violations by the Zionist entity, cautioning against the impacts of the Zionist entity's hostilities on regional stability. He concluded by saying that the Zionist entity's continuing settlement activities, including dispossession and displacement, would absolutely undermine the bi-state solution and comprehensive and just peace in the region. — KUNA

## Local

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
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## News in brief

Cabinet discusses  
several issues

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Cabinet was briefed by the Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed on the health situation in the country. Moreover, the cabinet approved the formation of a committee to remove preventive and regulatory violations that conflict with safety and fire protection conditions, under the supervision of the Kuwait Fire Force. The cabinet also touched on the recommendation of the Committee to Strengthen the Food Security System regarding the immediate, short and medium-term strategic projects proposed to be implemented during the fiscal years 2022-2025 to enhance the food security system in Kuwait.

Kuwait, UK sign  
civil aviation deal

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's civil aviation regulator signed a deal on Tuesday with its British counterpart aiming to improve flight operation on the two countries' respective state carriers. The deal entails several amendments to a previous agreement signed between the two sides. Kuwait Civil Aviation chief Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah said in statement. The deal also aims to ensure that the aviation industry in the two countries would continue to remain on an upward trajectory, subsequently improving bilateral trade ties and air transport services, added the Kuwaiti official.

Kuwait oil price  
down to \$120.05 pb

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by \$3.33 to \$120.05 per barrel on Monday compared to \$123.38 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday. Globally, Brent crude climbed 26 cents to settle at \$122.27 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate crude edged up by 26 cents, settling at \$120.93 pb.

CAIT to build  
cybersecurity system  
for govt services

**KUWAIT:** Director of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Haya Al-Wadaani said on Tuesday the agency is seeking to actively participate in supporting the building of a cybersecurity system to protect users of online government services. This came on sidelines of a workshop organized by CAIT on "the foundations of cybersecurity," in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior (MoI), in light of digital transformation witnessed in Kuwait to provide easy and secure electronic services. In a statement to the press, Wadaani stressed importance of dealing carefully with social media networking, and not to share any private or personal information or data to maintain privacy.

Moreover, she underscored some security precautions such as using "strong passwords that contribute effectively to preventing hacking and infringement of privacy." Furthermore, she affirmed that cybersecurity awareness contributes to expansion of services provided, achieving rapid progress in digital transformation in a safe manner, and raising the level of confidence among users of government services from all segments of the society. The workshop discussions addressed several topics related to cybersecurity, including risks of cybersecurity systems that face users, ways to prevent electronic fraud, risks management, and dealing with cyber threats to reach the highest levels of awareness. —KUNA

AIU introduces Art  
Lounge to showcase  
students' works

**KUWAIT:** AIU believes in student-centered education and at the heart of this academic approach is displaying the students' art, projects, and designs. Student art and designs can be seen in abundance around the critically acclaimed, award-winning campus. Just above the main reception area, outside of the campus auditorium, AIU has designed the Art Lounge, an area dedicated to showcasing student art. Displaying students' work is crucial to their development as artists and designers as it generates motivation, cultivates a community of artists, and empowers future artists.

When students know their art is going on display, it changes the design process dynamic. The art and design classrooms become a collaborative community where students and instructors create together. Student work will be on display for all students and faculty to see,

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Pigeons soak in water at a location in Kuwait City amid soaring heat. The temperature in Kuwait is expected to remain high throughout the week, reaching as high as 49 degrees Celsius on the weekend. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Kuwait ranks Arab's most  
prone city to heat

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait City ranked as the Arab World's most prone capital to heat, with an average temperature of 45 degrees Celsius during summer and a maximum of 51 degrees. It is followed by Baghdad (44 and 50), Riyadh (43 and 49), Abu Dhabi (42 and 47), and Doha (41 and 47), according to a recent analytical report by the CSRGULF. Khartoum ranked sixth with an average temperature of 41 degrees and 44 degrees maximum, then Manama (38 and 45), followed by Muscat (37 and 46), Damascus (36 and 44), and Cairo (36 and 43).

Nouakchott ranked eleventh, with an average temperature of 36 degrees and a maximum of 40, followed by Tripoli (35 and 45), Mogadishu (34 and 36), Tunis (33 and 44), and Amman (32 and 39).

Sanaa ranked in the 16th place with an average temperature of 31 degrees and a maximum of 36, followed by Ramallah (30 and 31), Algeria (29 and 40), Beirut (28 and 34), Rabat (28 and 31) and Moroni, the capital of the Comoros, which came in last place with an average temperature of 28 and 30 max.

Zain visited  
students during  
final exams

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, visited grade 12 high school students during the final exams period in a contribution to ease the hot weather conditions faced by students and school staff at the end of the academic year.

Zain's contribution came as part of its keenness to share this very important phase of the students' academic life after their year-long efforts. The company continues to dedicate more initiatives and programs that enrich community contributions and add to the local education scene.

Zain's team was present with grade 12 students and school staff in the morning to offer ice cream and help lessen the summer's intense heat, which coincides with this year's final exams. The team also wished the students all the best of luck in their exams.

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

Zain is fully committed to supporting young people in their development through a wide variety of community activities, including educational programs and career development initiatives. The company's solid social and sustainability strategy is what drives it to continue being committed to support all sectors of society.

Zain's tireless efforts have extended throughout the year, where it has launched its own social initiatives and supported existing community and social programs under its corporate sustainability and social responsibility strategy.



**KUWAIT:** Zain's team with the students.



**Company officials with the school's administration.**



think about, and react to. By displaying student work, the students have expectations to meet, providing the motivation to be successful and the empowerment they require to nurture their artistic minds once their work is visible to others.

The School of Architecture and Design at American International University provides students with the foundation and support they will need to foster their creative abilities and go on to pursue careers in the art and design world. Students majoring in Architecture and Design can

go on to become graphic designers, art directors, architects, and interior designers. AIU is proud of the School of Architecture and Design and looks forward to providing more student-centered courses to help empower the next generation of Kuwaiti artists.



Cambodia convicts 60 oppn figures in mass trial

## UK government defends Rwanda migrant deportation policy

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LOS ANGELES: Demonstrators join the "March for Our Lives" rally in Los Angeles, California. Protesters are demonstrating across the US for tighter firearms laws to curb devastating gun violence plaguing the country. — AFP

# US Senate gun measures gain support

## Legislation could be introduced within days and possibly passed in early July

WASHINGTON: Two horrific massacres in recent weeks have succeeded in bringing Democrats and Republicans close to the most significant federal legislation addressing US gun violence in three decades. Twenty senators — 10 from each party — reached a deal to put through legislation that would tighten some rules on gun sales and put more resources toward mental health treatment.

The 10 Republicans are just enough to ensure that the legislation could overcome Senate rules that have allowed the party since the 1990s to block almost every single measure aimed at controlling the flood of personal firearms on the US market.

Their agreement comes less than a month after two shocking mass shootings: first, when 10 African Americans were killed on May 14 at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, and then less than two weeks later when 19 children and two teachers were shot and killed at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Those tragedies also brought into focus smaller, but more frequent instances of gun violence across the United States. Chris Coons, a Senate Democrat who led the chamber's bipartisan effort, said the legislation could be introduced within days and possibly passed in early July.

"In the wake of the horrifying recent shootings in Buffalo, Uvalde, and across the country, Americans have demanded that the Senate take meaningful steps forward on this issue," said Coons. "This framework will save lives. If it becomes law, it will

lower the risks of mass shootings, of lethal domestic violence incidents, of violence we see too frequently on our streets."

### Modest measures

The senators' agreed measures are modest, and



**"This framework will save lives"**

far short of what US President Joe Biden called for following last month's tragic killings.

### They include:

Enhanced background checks for people under 21 buying a gun, allowing a review of juvenile crime and mental health records.

Funding and incentives for states to pass "red flag" laws to keep guns out of the hands of people deemed a danger to themselves or society, and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Tougher penalties for "straw purchasers" of guns for others that feed illegal firearms trafficking.

Closing loopholes on gun dealer regulations. Federal support for state investments in school security and mental health programs.

But they did not approach demands from gun control advocates, including an outright ban on assault rifles, as was in place from 1994 to 2004, a ban on gun sales to people under 21, mandatory waiting periods in all gun purchases, and bans on high-capacity magazines.

Both the Buffalo and Uvalde shootings were by 18-year-olds using high-powered AR-15-style semi-automatic rifles. Moreover, whatever gains that come with the legislation could be dealt a setback by a Supreme Court ruling due this month that could overturn state restrictions on carrying guns in public.

### 'Breaking the logjam'

Even so, gun control advocates cheered the measures, recognizing the potential for a significant shift towards breaking the gun industry's stranglehold. "We applaud this historic step forward for gun violence prevention—one born out of the recognition that this nation needs change and action to save American lives from preventable gun violence," said Kris Brown, president of the Brady United Against Gun Violence group. "We're breaking the logjam in Congress and proving that gun safety isn't just good policy—it's good politics," said Shannon Watts,

founder of the group Moms Demand Action.

### Narrow political margin

Yet supporters were not fully confident the measures will pass, knowing that the legislation could be blocked if fewer than 10 of the Senate's 50 Republicans support it. Working in their favor is that none of the 10 Republicans who agreed to the deal Sunday are standing for reelection in November. Four are retiring, and five won't face reelection until 2026; one other faces reelection in 2024.

The 20 senators "are committed to each other and to this project," said Coons. But the National Rifle Association, which has wielded powerful influence over Republicans for decades, made clear their fundamental opposition.

"NRA will continue to oppose any effort to insert gun control policies, initiatives that override constitutional due process protections and efforts to deprive law-abiding citizens of their fundamental right to protect themselves into this or any legislation," the group said.

David Hogg, leader of anti-gun violence group March For Our Lives and himself a school shooting survivor, called for action to counter the NRA's political pressure. "We're going to need a lot of gun owners to speak out and let these Republican senators know that they are supported, that the NRA speaks only for the NRA and not the majority of responsible, voting gun owners," he said. — AFP

## Memorials held five years on from London fire tragedy

LONDON: The names of the 72 people who perished in Britain's worst residential fire since World War II were read out on Tuesday at a church service marking the fifth anniversary of the blaze. Survivors and families of the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire gathered at Westminster Abbey for the first of a day of events to remember the tragedy.

The fire started in a faulty freezer and ripped through the 24-storey block in west London in an inferno that was visible across the British capital. An official report blamed highly combustible cladding fixed

to the exterior of the high-rise as the "principal reason" the fire spread.

But despite a costly ongoing public inquiry, the government has been accused of failing to implement urgent safety changes to prevent a similar tragedy. Also on Tuesday, attendees observed a 72-second silence and laid flowers at the foot of the tower, which is still shrouded in tarpaulin.

Five years on, emotions remain raw about the treatment of survivors and the bereaved, some of whom are yet to be permanently rehoused. The local Anglican Bishop of Kensington, Graham Tomlin, said in the years before the fire, Grenfell had become a "tinderbox" and a tragedy was inevitable.

"The memory of today is really hard for people," he told Times Radio. "People are still deeply traumatised by it." Firefighters who braved the heat and flames to try to

rescue residents have accused the government of failing to take fire safety seriously.

The general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, Matt Wrack, said firefighters and the Grenfell community had a "bond that was forged in tragedy". But there had been job cuts across the service since 2017.

"The community have faced constant denials from those responsible for Grenfell being covered in cladding as flammable as petrol," he said. "They have faced a wait for criminal charges that continues to this day."

The FBU has also highlighted "multiple failings" in the testing and approval of cladding, insulation and other material used in the Grenfell Tower. It claimed the tragedy could have been averted had the building's regulator not been privatised and been "dependent on fee income" from manufacturers. — AFP



LONDON: File photo shows flames and smoke coming from a 27-storey block of flats after a fire broke out in west London. Survivors and families of the victims of Britain's worst residential fire since World War II will mark the fifth anniversary of the tragedy on June 14, 2022. — AFP

## Amnesty urges India to stop crackdown

NEW DELHI: India must immediately end a "vicious" crackdown on Muslims who took to the streets to protest a ruling party official's remarks about the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), Amnesty International said Tuesday. Two demonstrators were killed and hundreds of others arrested last week in nationwide protests over the comments, which embroiled India in a

diplomatic furore and caused widespread outrage in the Islamic world. Footage of bulldozers demolishing homes of those arrested or identified as protesters has since been spread on social media. Authorities were "selectively and viciously cracking down on Muslims who dare to speak up... against the discrimination faced by them," Amnesty's Aakar Patel said in a statement.

"Cracking down on protesters with excessive use of force, arbitrary detention and punitive house demolitions... is in complete violation of India's commitments under international human rights law."

More than 300 people have been arrested in the northern Uttar Pradesh state for joining last week's rallies. The state's chief minister, firebrand monk Yogi Adityanath, is one of India's most prominent Hindu nationalist politicians, known for sectarian rhetoric

against India's 200-million strong Muslim minority.

Adityanath has repeatedly called on authorities to demolish the homes of people accused of crimes, an exhortation critics say violates constitutional and human rights law prohibitions on collective punishment. Amnesty has demanded an "immediate and unconditional release" of detained protesters, and Patel said the arrests and demolitions were "part of an alarming escalation of the states' measures targeting Muslims."

Since coming to power nationally in 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been accused of championing discriminatory policies towards Muslims.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government proposed a controversial law that granted faster citizenship to refugees in India, but not if they are Muslim, while state BJP governments have passed laws making inter-

religious marriages harder. Cities around India saw sizable demonstrations on Friday, with some crowds burning effigies of Nupur Sharma—the BJP spokeswoman whose comments during a TV debate show set off the furore.

Sharma has been suspended from the party, which issued a statement saying it respected all religions, while the governments of nearly 20 Muslim-majority countries called in their Indian envoys to register their disapproval.

Friday also saw huge protests in neighbouring countries, with police estimating more than 100,000 people mobilised across Bangladesh after midday prayers. Another 5,000 people took to the streets in the Pakistani city of Lahore, demanding that their government take stronger action against India over the comments. — AFP

## International

# UK government defends Rwanda migrant deportation policy

## Bishops call the policy 'immoral' and said it 'shames Britain'

LONDON: The UK government on Tuesday defended its controversial policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, even as the entire senior leadership of the Church of England branded it shameful and immoral. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss insisted the first flight to Kigali would take off no matter how many people were on board, after 23 of the 31 migrants had their tickets cancelled.

"We're expecting to send the flight later today," she told Sky News, as fresh protests were held at a detention centre near London Gatwick airport. Truss said she was unable to confirm how many people would be on the charter flight to Kigali, which was due to leave from an undisclosed airport on Tuesday night.

But she said the policy, which the UN refugee agency has also criticised as "all wrong", was vital to smash the business model of human-trafficking gangs exploiting vulnerable migrants. Record numbers of migrants have made the perilous Channel crossing from northern France, heaping pressure on the government in London to act after it promised to tighten borders after Brexit.

Campaigners supporting migrants and a union representing Border Force workers who will have to carry out the policy failed in a legal challenge

to stop the deportations. After the latest attempt was thrown out on Monday, the two senior-most clerics in the Church of England and 23 bishops called the policy "immoral" and said it "shames Britain".

"They (migrants) are the vulnerable that the Old Testament calls us to value," Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell wrote in a letter to The Times. "We cannot offer asylum to everyone, but we must not outsource our ethical responsibilities, or discard international law-which protects the right to claim asylum."

At the weekend, it was reported that Queen Elizabeth II's heir, Prince Charles, had privately described the government's plan as "appalling". Truss, though, hit back. "The people who are immoral in this case are the people traffickers trading on human misery," she said. "Our policy is completely legal. It's completely moral," she added, accusing critics of having no alternative plan.

### 'Value for money'

Truss said she could not put a figure on the cost of the charter flight, which has been estimated at some £250,000 (\$303,000). But she insist-

ed it was "value for money" to reduce the long-term social cost of irregular migration. "There will be people on the flights and if they're not on this flight, they will be on the next flight," she added.

Deported asylum seekers who make it to Kigali will be put up in the Hope Hostel, which was built in 2014 to give refuge to orphans from the 1994 genocide of 800,000 to one million ethnic Tutsis. Some 20 orphans were living in the hostel when the partnership between Rwanda and Britain was signed. They have since been evicted.

Hostel manager Ismael Bakina says up to 100 migrants can be accommodated and he will charge \$65 a day. "This is not a prison. It's a home like our home," hostel manager Ismael Bakina told AFP. "In a hotel a person will be free in everything they want. When they want to go out of the hotel, it's no problem."

Under the agreement with Kigali, anyone landing in Britain illegally is liable to be given a one-way ticket for processing and resettlement in Rwanda. The government of President Paul Kagame has said the deportations will begin slowly and rejected criticism that Rwanda is not a safe country.

Human Rights Watch has warned that there are



LONDON, United Kingdom: A protester holds a placard as she stands outside the Home Office in central London on June 13, 2022, to demonstrate against the UK government's intention to deport asylum-seekers to Rwanda. —AFP

"serious human rights abuses" in Rwanda, including curbs on free speech, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture. Rwandan opposition parties also question whether the resettlement scheme will work given high youth unemployment rates.

Kagame is due to host leaders of the 53 other Commonwealth countries later this month, as well as Prince Charles as head of the grouping. —AFP

## Abortion in Italy is legal, but finding one is hard

ROME: For 40 years, gynaecologist Michele Mariano has been the only person performing abortions in Italy's conservative Molise region. He has delayed retiring twice because no one will replace him, many refusing to terminate pregnancies as conscientious objectors.

It's an extreme example, but emblematic of a wider issue in Italy, where abortion up to 90 days after conception has been legal since 1978 — but many health-care providers don't offer them. A majority of gynaecologists refuse on conscientious objection grounds, driven either by religion or societal pressure, while recent moves by right-wing politicians with links to the Church have only increased obstacles for women.

As a result, dozens of hospitals and clinics across the country provide no abortion services at all. Finding doctors to perform them can be a minefield, since there are no official lists disclosing those who do, while services vary wildly across the country.

"Someone goes to the hospital not knowing whether the doctor in front of them will do it," said Eleonora Mizzi, 32, an abortion activist in Pisa.

### 'Something wrong'

Some 67 percent of gynaecologists across Italy's cities and rural areas alike are conscientious objectors, according to the latest health ministry figures from 2019. That figure exceeds 80 percent in five of Italy's 20 regions.

Martina Patone, 35, described how she called about 10 hospitals in Rome and other cities to get an abortion eight years ago before a charity helped her out. She had sought a medical abortion-which involves taking pills-but in the end had to undergo surgery.



ROME, Italy: File photo shows a woman holding a sign reading "Yes to Life, No to Abortion" as activists take part in a march organized by Italian Pro-Life anti-abortion movements, entitled "National March We Choose Life" (Marcia nazionale Scegliamo la Vita) in central Rome. —AFP

Patone recalled having to explain to a nurse how the abortion pills worked, and before getting help from the charity having to lining up at 6:00 am in a "rusty staircase" of a Rome hospital basement to be put on a long waiting list.

"I really thought that going to the hospital would be easy. Not at all," she told AFP. Besides the red tape, the process makes women feel as if "you did something wrong, you shouldn't say anything", she said. She called it "absurd" that women continue to have the same problems exercising their right to abortion.

### 'See you later'

Data published in May by the Luca Coscioni Association, which advocates for abortion rights, found that in at least 31 hospitals, all doctors or health workers who would assist in an abortion were objectors. To help avoid such roadblocks, Mizzi's group "Obiezione Respinta" (Objection Overruled) created an interactive online map where women can warn others where they will be turned away. — AFP

## Human remains found in Amazon search for missing journalist, expert

ATALAIA DO NORTE, Brazil: Human remains have been found in the search for a British journalist and Brazilian indigenous expert who disappeared deep in the Amazon after receiving threats, Brazil's president confirmed Monday.

Relatives of veteran correspondent Dom Phillips and respected indigenous specialist Bruno Pereira meanwhile said authorities informed them two bodies had been found-though police and local indigenous leaders denied that, adding to confusion around the case. The families of Phillips, 57, and Pereira, 41, have endured an anguished wait for news since the pair disappeared a week ago Sunday during a reporting trip to Brazil's Javari Valley, a remote jungle region rife with illegal fishing, logging, mining and drug trafficking.

"The evidence leads us to believe something bad was

done to them, because human innards were found floating in the river, which are now undergoing DNA testing," President Jair Bolsonaro said.

The development came a day after police said they had found personal items belonging to the two, including Pereira's health card, pants and boots, as well as Phillips's backpack and clothing. Bolsonaro, whose government has faced accusations of failing to act urgently enough in the case, said hope was fading.

"Because of the time that's passed-eight days now, approaching the ninth-it's going to be very difficult to find them alive," the president told CBN Recife radio. "I pray to God for that to happen, but the information and evidence we're getting suggest the opposite."

Phillips's niece Dominique Davies told AFP via text message that authorities had informed the family two bodies had been found. "We are waiting on confirmation from the federal police (in Brazil) as to whether they are Dom and Bruno. We all remain upset and distressed at this time," she said.

Britain's Guardian newspaper, where Phillips was a regular contributor, said the bodies were found tied to a tree, according to information given to Phillips's family by an aide to Brazil's ambassador in London. — AFP

## Rescue operation for Indian boy trapped in well

RAIPUR: Indian emergency workers were scrambling Tuesday to rescue a 10-year-old boy with hearing and speech impairments who has been trapped down a narrow well for four days. Rahul Sahu fell down the 80-foot (24 metres) waterhole on Friday while playing in the backyard of his house in the central state of Chhattisgarh.

Earth movers and cranes are helping dig a tunnel next to the well, which is only a couple of feet wide,

with army soldiers and members of India's disaster response agency lending their assistance. But bad weather-and venomous snakes and scorpions unearthed by the dig-have hampered rescue efforts, local officials said.

Sahu was "responding well" to rescuers and a camera is monitoring his condition and movements, Janjgir district police chief Vijay Agrawal told AFP by phone from the scene. "Since the boy cannot speak or listen, we have a bigger challenge," he added.

An oxygen pipe is feeding Sahu fresh air, but a government spokesman said the tunnelling effort had been slowed down by hard stone underneath the ground. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said he was hopeful Sahu would be brought up from the well alive and tweeted that the boy had eaten a banana sent down to him by rescuers. — AFP

## Assembly approves KD 3,000...

Continued from Page 1

The draft law also stipulates that at least KD 500 million will be withdrawn from the state budget in favor of the pension agency to help cover what is known as actuarial deficit.

The finance minister said that experts have calculated the actuarial deficit of the agency, its future anticipated shortfall, at KD 24 billion, adding that the government already paid KD 10.9 billion to the body between 2009 and 2016 to cover part of the deficit. But head of the Assembly's budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the minister's esti-

mates are highly exaggerated, and that the more realistic actuarial deficit is only KD 2 billion based on calculations by the Audit Bureau. The lawmaker called for seeking the opinion of other experts on how to calculate the deficit.

Before approving the bill, the Assembly amended the bill to make the huge transfers under the supervision of the Audit Bureau, the country's accounting watchdog. Around 12 opposition MPs boycotted the session, saying the move violates the constitution, although they declared their support for the retired people.

The lawmakers then declared an open and indefinite sit-in at the National Assembly to protest what they called "obstructing the application" of the constitution and preventing regular Assembly meetings. The lawmakers have decided to sleep in their offices in the Assembly building. Around 17 opposition MPs joined the protest.

nuclear development. Biden will meet Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, likely in Bethlehem, the US official said. Biden will stress "his lifelong commitment to a two state solution" for Palestinians and Zionists and restore US ties with Palestinians that were "nearly severed" under his predecessor Donald Trump.

The part of the trip that will make history - and generate the most chatter - comes last. Biden's flight from the Zionist entity to Jeddah will be the first by a US president from the Zionist entity to an Arab state that does not recognize the country. In 2017, Trump made the journey in reverse. Once there, Biden will attend the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting with leaders from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as being joined by the leaders of Egypt, Iraq and Jordan, the US official said.

A priority for Biden will be maintaining the recently extended truce in Yemen, as well as deterring Iran, "advancing human rights, and ensuring global energy and food security," the official said. Biden will also join a virtual summit of the so-called I2-U2 diplomatic group of India, the Zionist entity, the UAE and the United States, with focus on "the food security crisis" sparked by Russia's invasion of major agricultural exporter Ukraine. — AFP



KOLKATA: Muslim activists take part in a unity rally to promote communal harmony on June 14, 2022. — AFP

## Muslims in India face...

Continued from Page 1

monuments such as Taj Mahal and Qutab Minar are originally Hindu sites, all contribute to the alienation of the Muslim people.

In addition, journalists and media personnel not adhering to the extremist national policy of Hindutva are persistently being silenced and reprimanded. The response of the Indian government to the recent offensive remarks is seen as a renewal of the image of the country and an attempt to protect its economic interests instead of an actual concrete attempt to better the reality of Muslims in India.

Due to the lack of Muslim political representation or media presence, government bodies are increasingly adopting more anti-Muslim policies. Majoritarian violence is influencing the ebb and flow of the decision-making process as the legislative and executive authorities are taking provocative measures against the Muslim community, including arrests of prominent figures.

On the political front, the Indian Congress Party, which was once on the forefront of Indian independ-

ence, is currently in shambles. The party that contributed to the writing of the constitution preformed quite weakly in local and national elections, as it failed to appeal to the masses. Other leftist parties are also restricted to certain states with very limited representation in parliament; therefore, an alternative where political parties answer the pleas of Muslims and repair the systemized political social and economic oppression is unlikely.

Furthermore, many Indian Muslims question the motives and integrity of leftist parties as they either unknowingly or purposely play into rightwing agenda. Despite reports of a number of Muslims subscribing to the rightwing party, a permanent alliance between the two is implausible as the governing party continues to taint the image of Muslim Indians and paint them as successors of violent invaders who killed Hindus and toppled temples, dividing the country.

The image of a peace-loving India that was put in place by Mahatma Gandhi is gradually deteriorating, adversely affecting in the long run hefty economic opportunities in the fields of information technology, imports, exports, health and tourism. Independent journalists are warning of the eruption of a civil war if the government fails to regulate Hindutva, while others are saying India has indeed become a Hindu state. — KUNA

## Biden signals US-Saudi thaw...

Continued from Page 1

Biden's inability to change global oil markets. John Kirby, a White House foreign policy spokesman, told MSNBC on Tuesday that oil production "absolutely... is going to be part of" Biden's discussions in Saudi Arabia.

But while the White House also confirmed that "energy security" will be a topic, officials stressed that the whole trip has broader aims. Jean-Pierre emphasized that "this visit to the Middle East region culminates months of diplomacy," as opposed to being driven by recent domestic political concerns. Biden's multiple leader-level engagements during the brief yet intense journey will demonstrate "the return of American leadership" to the region, a senior US official told reporters.

The tour starts with meeting Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in the Zionist entity, with emphasis on the lavish US support for the Zionist armed forces. That includes the Iron Dome anti-rocket system at a time of tension over ongoing failure to resurrect an international pact curtailing Iran's

## International

# Cambodia court convicts around 60 opposition figures in mass trial

## We are deeply troubled by today's unjust verdicts

**PHNOM PENH, Cambodia:** A Phnom Penh court convicted around 60 opposition figures including an outspoken US-Cambodian activist in a mass trial Tuesday as long-serving leader Hun Sen cracks down on dissent ahead of national elections next year.

The defendants faced charges ranging from treason to incitement and conspiracy over opposition leader Sam Rainsy's failed bid to return to Cambodia in 2019 — a move characterised by the government as an aborted bid to overthrow Hun Sen.

While some were senior figures in the now-dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) directly involved in organising the return, many were prosecuted simply for posting support on social media. Sam Rainsy, who has lived in France since 2015 to avoid jail for convictions he says are politically motivated, had another eight years added to his existing sentence.

"The political repression against the opposition gets more and more violent, and I would say also more and more blind," he told AFP. "It targets all spheres of society, and actually targets freedom of expression, which is not tolerated under part of the authorities."

Outside court, US-Cambodian lawyer and campaigner Theory Seng-dressed as the Statue of Liberty-was abruptly dragged into a car by police after receiving a six-year jail term for treason. "I am ready for a guilty verdict because this regime will not let me go free," Theory Seng said before her conviction. "It will be an unfair and unjust verdict

because I am innocent, the others charged with me are innocent," the 51-year-old added.

Following her detention, there was a brief scuffle outside the court between police and relatives of those convicted, as well as supporters of Theory Seng. "We are deeply troubled by today's unjust verdicts," a spokesman for the US embassy in Phnom Penh said, calling for her and others convicted to be released.

The embassy urged Cambodian authorities to "stop politically motivated trials" against political activists, journalists, and human rights campaigners. "Freedom of expression and association, and tolerance of dissenting views, are vital components of democracy," US ambassador Patrick Murphy added in a tweet.



**'This regime will not let me go free'**

**'Living in a dictatorship'**

Theory Seng is among scores caught up in a push to detain and arrest former members of the now-dissolved opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), human rights defenders, and any dissenting voices.

Several defendants have already been jailed, while many remain at large or have fled Cambodia — 27 of Tuesday's convictions were in absentia, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said, with sentences ranging from five to eight years.

"The mass trials against political opposition members are really about preventing any electoral challenge to Prime Minister Hun Sen's rule, but they have also come to symbolise the death of Cambodia's democracy," HRW spokesman Phil Robertson said.

"By creating a political dynamic that relies on



**PHNOM PENH, Cambodia:** Cambodian-US human rights advocate Theory Seng, dressed as Lady Liberty, is arrested by police after being found guilty of treason in her trial in front of the Phnom Penh municipal court on June 14, 2022. —AFP

intimidation and persecution of government critics, Hun Sen demonstrates his total disregard for democratic rights." The prime minister is one of the world's longest-serving leaders, having been in power for 37 years, and is reportedly grooming his eldest son.

Theory Seng was charged by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court with conspiracy to commit treason and incitement to commit a felony. "We are living in

a dictatorship," she said, claiming Hun Sen's government "uses the law as a weapon against its own people".

She added that "this regime is imprisoning liberty and freedom". Ahead of recent local elections, the United Nations Human Rights Office said it was disturbed by reports of opposition obstruction in a "paralysing political environment". Hun Sen's political party later announced a landslide win. —AFP

## Top US, Chinese national security figures hold talks

**BEIJING:** The top Chinese and US security advisers have held lengthy talks, with both sides describing them as "candid" following days of acrimonious exchanges over Taiwan and other flashpoint issues. Readouts of the meeting in Luxembourg on Monday were toned down compared with last week, when China's defence minister warned his country would not "hesitate to start a war" over Taiwan, while the US defense secretary blasted Beijing's "provocative, destabilising" military activity.

But US security advisor Jake Sullivan and top diplomat Yang Jiechi did not indicate any compromise on their core points of disagreement, especially Taiwan. China considers the self-ruled island a part of its territory, to be seized by force one day if necessary.

"The Taiwan question concerns the political foundation of China-US relations which, unless handled properly, will have a subversive impact," Yang was quoted as saying by China's official Xinhua news agency. "The United States should not have any misjudgements or illusions (about Taiwan)."

## Urgent UN appeal to Myanmar junta to halt executions

**GENEVA:** The UN rights chief said Tuesday Myanmar's junta has likely committed crimes against humanity and urged authorities to stop planned executions, including of prominent democracy activists. Myanmar's military seized power on February 1 last year, ousting the civilian government and arresting its de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. The junta has since waged a bloody crackdown on dissent.

The UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet warned that going ahead with the country's first judicial executions since 1990 would "violate the right to life". "I urgently call on military authorities to refrain from such a regressive step," she told the UN Human Rights Council.

Myanmar's junta this month said it would execute a former lawmaker from Suu Kyi's party and a prominent democracy activist—both convicted of terrorism. They are among dozens who have been sentenced to death as part of the junta's crackdown.

On Tuesday, Bachelet repeated her office's findings that the military's abuses since the coup may

A senior White House official said Sullivan reiterated the US policy of recognising Chinese sovereignty but expressed "concerns about Beijing's coercive and aggressive actions across the Taiwan Strait". Tensions over Taiwan have escalated in recent months due to increasing Chinese military aircraft incursions into the island's air defence identification zone (ADIZ).

US President Joe Biden, during a visit to Japan last month, appeared to break decades of US policy when, in response to a question, he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily if it was attacked by China.

The White House has since insisted its policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether or not it would intervene had not changed. The Sullivan-Yang meeting, which followed up on a May 18 phone call, lasted about four and a half hours, the White House official told reporters.

Xinhua said the talks were "candid, in-depth, and constructive" while the White House statement described them as "candid, substantive, and productive".

**Red lines**

The US-China relationship has deteriorated in recent years, with the two powers locking horns on several issues, from international trade and security to human rights in China and—most recently—the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

On Monday, Sullivan "underscored the impor-

amount to "crimes against humanity and war crimes". She said at least 1,900 killings by the military had been reported since the coup, with more than 13,500 people arbitrarily arrested, including politicians, journalists and lawyers.

More than 10,500 are in detention, she said. Post-coup violence has pushed the number of displaced people in Myanmar to more than one million, with around 14 million in the country needing urgent humanitarian assistance, according to the UN.

**'Senseless violence'**

In a March report, the rights office described how the military had bombed populated areas with air strikes and heavy weapons and deliberately targeted civilians. Many were shot in the head, burned to death, arbitrarily arrested, tortured or used as human shields.

Bachelet said Tuesday that since then, the "senseless violence in Myanmar has intensified". She pointed to the "well-documented tactic of the military is the burning of entire villages, residential buildings, schools, houses of worship and other objects specially protected under international humanitarian law".

"The targeting of civilians and the burning of villages must stop now," she said, adding that 11,000 sites may have been targeted so far. Bachelet also voiced alarm at reports suggesting the junta was

Institute. In the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, home to 300 million, crippling lung and heart disease caused by so-called PM2.5 pollution reduces life expectancy by eight years, and in the capital city of New Delhi by a decade.

PM2.5 pollution — 2.5 microns across or less, roughly the diameter of a human hair—penetrates deep into the lungs and enters the bloodstream. In 2013, the United Nations classified it as a cancer-causing agent.

The WHO says PM2.5 density in the air should not top 15 microgrammes per cubic metre in any 24-hour period, or 5 mcg/m3 averaged across an entire year. Faced with mounting evidence of damaging health impacts, the WHO tightened these standards last year, the first change since establishing air quality guidance

in 2005. "Clean air pays back in additional years of life for people across the world," lead research Crista Hasenkopf and colleagues said in the Air Quality Life Index report. "Permanently reducing global air pollution to meet the WHO's guidelines would add 2.2 years onto average life expectancy."

**Major gains in China**

Almost all populated regions in the world exceed WHO guidelines, but nowhere more so than in Asia: by 15-fold in Bangladesh, 10-fold in India, and nine-fold in Nepal and Pakistan. Central and West Africa, along with much of Southeast Asia and parts of central America, also face pollution levels—and shortened lives—well above the global average.

### News in brief

#### Guinea charges five

**CONAKRY, Guinea:** Judicial authorities in Guinea have charged five members of the security forces after a young man was killed during a demonstration, a high-profile case that challenges the country's ruling junta. A chief warrant officer named Moriba Camara was charged with murder and held in custody, while four were charged with dereliction of duty for failing to prevent a suspected crime, prosecutor Alphonse Charles Wright said in a statement late Monday. The charges came after Thierno Mamadou Diallo, 19, was shot dead on June 1 on the sidelines of a spontaneous demonstration in Conakry against rising fuel prices. After seizing power last September, the military vowed to break with the practices of former president Alpha Conde. Dozens of Guineans were shot dead in anti-Conde protests between 2019 and 2021. —AFP

#### Burkina attack rises to 79

**OUAGADOUGOU:** The death toll from a massacre by suspected jihadists in northern Burkina Faso last weekend has risen to 79, the government said Tuesday. "Twenty-nine more bodies have been found. This figure adds to the 50 bodies that have already been found, bringing the provisional toll of victims of the killings to 79 dead," it said in a statement, adding that search operations were continuing. The attack unfolded overnight Saturday in the village of Seytenga. It came after two days after a jihadist attack on government forces that prompted an army offensive against the militants. The country on Monday began three days of mourning following the bloodshed. —AFP

#### Turkey is a 'safe country'

**ANKARA:** Turkey is "a safe country", its foreign ministry said on Tuesday after Zionist entity authorities urged their citizens to leave over fears of Iranian attacks. In an indirect response that did not mention Zionist entity, the ministry noted "some countries" had issued travel warnings. "Turkey is a safe country and continues to fight against terrorism", the statement said. "These travel warnings are considered to be related to different international developments and motives", it added. Zionist entity's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid on Monday urged citizens in Turkey to leave "as soon as possible" over threats that Iranian operatives were planning attacks on Zionists in Istanbul. He said there was "a real and immediate danger" from Iranian agents. —AFP

Surprisingly, PM2.5 pollution in 2020, the most recent data available, was virtually unchanged from the year before despite a sharp slow-down in the global economy and a corresponding drop in CO2 emissions due to COVID lockdowns. "In South Asia, pollution actually rose during the first year of the pandemic," the authors noted. One country that has seen major improvements is China. PM2.5 pollution fell in the nation of 1.4 billion people by almost 40 percent between 2013 and 2020, adding two years to life expectancy. But even with this progress, lives in China are on average cut short today by 2.6 years. The worst-hit provinces include Henan and Hebei, in north-central China, and the coastal province of Shandong. —AFP

## Polluted air cuts life expectancy by two years

**PARIS:** Microscopic air pollution caused mostly by burning fossil fuels shortens lives worldwide by more than two years, researchers reported Tuesday. Across South Asia, the average person would live five years longer if levels of fine particulate matter met World Health Organization standards, according to a report from the University of Chicago's Energy Policy

# Business

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2022



GENEVA: Ukraine's ambassador Yevheniia Filipenko waits for the start of the opening ceremony of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) at the headquarters of the World Trade Organization (WTO), in Geneva. — AFP



GENEVA: A man walks near a sign of the World Trade Organization at the WTO headquarters on the start of a four-day WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva. — AFP

## WTO goes green as climate change impacts businesses

### Ministers seek to boost trade in support of sustainable development

GENEVA: The World Trade Organization's boss insisted Monday that turning trade green was now urgent business, with the WTO putting climate change at the heart of its negotiations. The WTO is staging its first meeting of trade ministers in nearly five years and environmental issues are rocketing up the agenda at the global trade body.

The European Union on Monday teamed up with Ecuador, Kenya and New Zealand to launch a new Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate, in the expectation that other countries will join the forum. And diverse nations are already banding together in other groups to try and find mutual ways forward on topics such as environmentally-sustainable trade and tackling plastic pollution.

"Greening trade is urgent: climate change isn't waiting," WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said after attending the new coalition's launch on day two of the WTO

ministerial conference in Geneva. EU trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said the new group would try to tackle the climate crisis in a fair manner through trade policy. "Trade has to be part of the solution. It is an engine of growth that can create new green jobs, reduce poverty and support the transition to climate-neutral economies," he told the group's launch.

#### Children's future

Its ministers want to boost trade, and trade policies, in support of sustainable development and the 2015 Paris Agreement climate goals. A first meeting is planned for July to work out the coalition's next steps. Climate change is not strictly within the WTO's purview but the organization - which is looking to revive its importance on the world stage - wants to make sustainable development and environmental protection among its core objectives. "We need to profoundly change how we produce and consume

things if we want our children to have a sustainable, peaceful and comfortable life in 50 years' time," said WTO deputy director-general Zhang Xiangchen.

The WTO traditionally reaches agreements by consensus, and some of its 164 members form groups on various issues to try and find ways forward - with climate change being no exception. Several dozen WTO member countries pledged in late December to intensify discussions on plastic pollution, fossil fuel subsidies and environmentally sustainable trade, in a move hailed as historic by Okonjo-Iweala.

#### Fossil fuel subsidies 'insane'

Australia's WTO ambassador George Mina, who co-chairs the Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution, said 72 countries were now on board. Mina said countries had failed to tackle major environmental problems through the WTO, but in recent months, "we've seen a significant ele-

vation in the profile, energy and focus" on such issues. "Trade policy has to be a part of the solution on the environment and climate change response," he said.

Co-chair Li Chenggang, China's WTO ambassador, added: "Plastic is an important basic raw material but the leakage of plastic waste in the natural environment has brought environmental pollution and harm." At a press conference on fossil fuel subsidies, Iceland's Foreign Minister Thordis Kolbrun R Gylfadottir said renewable energy was "good business", making economic and environmental sense.

"The fact that global subsidies for fossils fuels exceed those for renewable energy should come as a wake-up call for all of us," she said. Meanwhile New Zealand's trade minister Damien O'Connor said subsidies at a time when countries needed to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels "seems somewhat contradictory, if not insane". — AFP



GIRONDE, France: Men are at work at a construction site in Merignac, outside Bordeaux, southwestern France, on June 14, 2022 as a heatwave hits France. France's weather service said a heatwave would hit southern regions from late June 14, worsening a drought across much of the country that is threatening farm harvests. — AFP

### France promises cash for urban vegetation

PARIS: The French government announced 500 million euros on Tuesday to encourage urban vegetation projects to tackle high temperatures in towns and cities as a heatwave began to strike in the south and southwest. "The government is going to encourage the development of cool spaces in urban areas with strong support for local authorities as they adapt to the consequences of climate change," government spokeswoman Olivia Gregoire told reporters.

A total of 500 million euros (\$522 million) would be set aside for the initiative, she said. She also called for "vigilance" as temperatures began to climb in the south and southwest of the country, which is expected to bear the full brunt of a heatwave later this week. Peak temper-

atures of more than 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) are forecast between Thursday and Saturday, national weather forecaster Meteo France has said, with the whole of the country set to experience a hotter-than-usual spell.

"Faced with this significant, strong and early heatwave, the government calls for vigilance," Gregoire added, saying the elderly, people living on their own and the homeless were particularly at risk. School children and teachers are also complaining about the impact of the hot weather which is coinciding with end-of-year exams for many students. A primary school teacher in Marseille told AFP she had measured 30 degrees C in her class on Monday. "We're facing fully south and we couldn't even open the windows to get some air in," she said.

Water use restrictions are already in place in around a third of France-and utilities are urging farmers, factories and public service providers to show "restraint" in their water use. The spring has been exceptionally warm and dry so far, with May 2022 the warmest May since records began. Under a 2015 law passed by parliament, all rooftops on new buildings built in commercial zones in France must either be partially covered in plants or solar panels. — AFP

### Top energy producer Australia braces for blackouts

SYDNEY: Australians have been warned to expect blackouts across the densely populated east coast on Tuesday, as an energy crisis grips one of the world's biggest coal and gas producers. The Australian Energy Market Operator warned there could be significant power shortfalls in the states of Queensland and New

South Wales, which are home to more than 13 million people. It also issued notices for a forecast of reserve shortfalls in the states of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. Newly elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese blamed the energy crisis on the previous government, which was in power for nearly a decade.

"The consequences of the former government's failure to put in place an energy policy is being felt right now," he told reporters in Brisbane. Albanese said "all things are on the table" as his government examines how to ease the crisis, which has dominated his centre-left government's first weeks in power. The Australian Energy Market Operator spent much of Tuesday negotiating with generators but an Aus\$300/MWh (\$208) price cap left many unwilling to pump more power into

### WTO floats fund to help net fishing deal

GENEVA: The WTO tried to net a long-sought deal on curbing harmful fishing subsidies by promising Tuesday an implementation fund it hopes will reel in wavering developing countries. Negotiations have been going on at the World Trade Organization for more than 20 years towards banning subsidies that threaten the sustainability of the planet's fish stocks by encouraging overfishing.

The global trade body's leader, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, wants to pull off a major coup by finally concluding a deal at the WTO's first ministerial conference in nearly five years, being held in Geneva this week. There are hopes that a financing fund to help developing countries implement the new rules may help soothe lingering concerns.

"We've been discussing and progressively refining this idea with a sizable group of members on both sides-both potential donors and potential beneficiaries," Okonjo-Iweala explained. The idea is to provide members with the means to build up their capacities to integrate the new rules, involving adopting systems to manage their fisheries and provide catch data. The fund is targeting around \$20 million in contributions, with a starting amount of around \$10 million-of which \$5 million has already been pledged.

#### 'Historic opportunity'

"While work is continuing on the last remaining issues, we have never been so close to concluding," said Colombia's WTO ambassador Santiago Wills, who chairs the fisheries negotiations at the organization. However, a Geneva-based diplomat said the financing mechanism was helpful but was not a major issue in the negotiations, which still revolve around the carve-outs for certain developing countries and whether they would apply to China and India. "It's a nice thing to have and will help in the implementation of the agreement but it's not going to make the deal-sadly," the diplomat said. "That would be an extraordinary deliverable for this week if we could actually get there," but "right now, people aren't sure we're going to".

Special treatment for the poorest countries is widely accepted, but demands from some self-identified

developing countries for exemption from subsidy constraints, including large fishing nations like India, have met resistance. New Zealand's trade minister Damien O'Connor is facilitating the fisheries talks in Geneva. He told his counterparts that there was an "historic opportunity for the WTO to do something that will massively benefit the world for many generations to come, and that we simply cannot, and must not, miss this opportunity," WTO spokesman Daniel Pruzin told reporters.



GENEVA: Official delegates sit in the lobby at the headquarters of the World Trade Organization on the start of a four-day WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva. — AFP

#### Indian intransigence

Besides fisheries, the WTO is trying to strike deals on e-commerce, agriculture, food security, Covid-19 vaccine patents and WTO reform. Okonjo-Iweala warned countries against trying to do trade-offs between the different tracks. Agreements at the WTO are reached by consensus, meaning objections from any one of the 164 members can stymie talks towards a deal. Okonjo-Iweala-who turned 68 on Monday-took over as WTO director-general in March 2021, and has staked her reputation on breathing new life into the crippled organization.

"We all have dreams and sometimes not all of those dreams can be fulfilled," she said Tuesday. "My own dream for my birthday is to get a successful ministerial. "One or two packages passed... I think that would do." But several diplomats have indicated that India is proving the main obstacle in securing any agreements at the conference. — AFP

in the system to avoid loadshedding and blackouts, as long as there were no further outages. But he told Australians to "expect a bumpy winter" with low temperatures, coal station outages, geopolitical pressures and record east coast floods combining to create the crisis.

Fossil fuels provided an estimated 71 percent of Australia's electricity last year, and coal alone 51 percent, government figures show. Energy expert Richie Merzian of The Australia Institute said the balance needs to shift to avoid these kinds of crises. "As long as Australia remains dependent on gas and coal, Australian consumers will be over the barrel of global fuel prices influenced by events beyond our control," he said. — AFP



## Business

# Keeping China fed as inflation surges; COVID disruptions threaten harvest

## Global food prices spike since Russia's invasion of Ukraine

BEIJING: Bedeviled by high fuel and fertilizer costs, along with a labor crisis driven by COVID-19 restrictions, China risks a smaller autumn harvest that could supercharge demand for commodities just as the world can afford it least. Global food prices have spiked since Russia's February invasion of Ukraine, a major world producer of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, driving costs to record highs.

Moscow stands accused of pushing the globe to the brink of catastrophe by blockading Ukrainian ports and seizing commodity stocks, driving up prices and leaving the world's poorest nations facing hunger.

China is relatively self-reliant, producing more than 95 percent of its needs in rice, wheat and maize. But relentless COVID disruptions-caused by restrictions on the movement of goods and farm workers-on top of higher fertilizer and fuel costs and issues with access to equipment, threaten the autumn harvest of key crops such as soybean and corn.

Experts caution even a small rise in demand from the world's most populous nation could drive global commodity costs up sharply. "The last thing the global market needs right now is for China to become a more active buyer," said Even Pay, an agriculture analyst with consultancy Trivium China. Corn prices hit a nine-year high in April, while soybean prices traded near a 10-year high this month. China is the last major economy to adhere to a zero-COVID policy.



BEIJING: People walk past a residential area under lockdown due to COVID-19 coronavirus restrictions in Beijing on June 14, 2022. — AFP

How that manifests itself in the next harvest is uncertain, but Pay said "last-mile logistics" have been complicated by virus restrictions in rural areas afraid of the spread of the disease. "Villages have been very resistant to letting outsiders in during COVID-control periods," she added. If China ends up going to the global market to fill any shortfall, there will be "a big impact" on prices, said Darin Friedrichs, co-founder

of agriculture research firm Sitonia Consulting.

### Seeds of doubt

For now, Beijing is keeping a close eye on the country's wheat harvest. At a meeting last month, Premier Li Keqiang said a strong summer harvest with manageable prices depended in part on "unimpeded" access of workers and machines to wheat-

from industry body the Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders (SMMT).

The grant was launched in 2011 to help encourage Britons to ditch high-polluting diesel and petrol cars. It has since supported the sale of almost half a million electric cars, the DfT added, stressing that the subsidy was always a "temporary" policy. Sales of fully electric cars rocketed from less than 1,000 in 2011 to almost 100,000 vehicles in the first five months of this year alone. However, the government is now switching its focus to offer subsidies on sales of new plug-in electric taxis, motorcycles, vans, trucks and wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Britain plans to ban new sales of diesel and petrol cars in the UK from 2030, as part of its goal to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Tuesday's announcement drew stark criticism

from industry body the Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders (SMMT). "The decision to scrap the plug-in car grant sends the wrong message to motorists and to an industry which remains committed to government's net zero ambition," said SMMT boss Mike Hawes. "Whilst we welcome government's continued support for new electric van, taxi and adapted vehicle buyers, we are now the only major European market to have zero upfront purchase incentives for EV car buyers."

Britain's automobile sector had stalled last year on pandemic fallout including a semiconductor shortage. However, greener electric vehicles now account for one in six new car sales. That rises to just over half of all new car sales, if hybrid vehicles are included. — AFP

growing provinces from eastern Anhui to northern Shanxi.

China has harvested about 80 percent of its winter wheat crop so far, according to state media, although Friedrichs cautioned that prices are 25 percent higher than last year, at about 3,000 yuan (\$450) per ton.

While a decent wheat harvest is good news to world markets, "COVID-related disruptions haven't gone away", according to Pay, who added that prices of fertilizers and fuels were riding high.

China has "massively ramped up its wheat, corn, barley purchases" in recent years, from below 20 million tons a year around four years ago to some 50 million tons now, according to Andrew Whitelaw, an analyst at Thomas Elder Markets. But global inflation and uncertainty will make it expensive for China to import more. Already, China has bought newly harvested wheat for its reserves at sky-high prices this month.

The political dimension of feeding China's vast population has not been lost on Beijing. President Xi Jinping has said China should make "unrelenting efforts to ensure grain security", state media reported. The issue has grown in importance since 2020, when the coronavirus spread worldwide, said Friedrichs. "There were worries about global disruptions to supply chains, and now we have the global food crisis-that's redoubled focus on food security," he said. — AFP

## Britain scraps subsidies for plug-in cars

LONDON: Britain on Tuesday axed its £1,500 (\$1,800) subsidy for buyers of new plug-in cars as it focuses on other types of electric vehicles, but the news drew anger from the auto sector. "The government is today closing the plug-in car grant scheme to new orders after successfully kickstarting the UK's electric car revolution," the Department

## South Korean truckers end weeklong strike

INCHEON, South Korea: South Korean truck drivers ended their nationwide strike on Tuesday after an eight-day protest over wages and fuel costs that snarled global supply chains, Yonhap news agency reported. The truckers' industrial action had disrupted shipments and production for the crucial steel, petrochemical and automobile sectors, in an early test for new President Yoon Suk-yeol who has vowed to deal with labour disputes "strictly".

The Cargo Truckers Solidarity Union reached an agreement with the transport ministry late Tuesday and truckers will return to work from Wednesday, Yonhap said. The truckers called their action in protest over sharp rises in fuel prices - with inflation at its highest level in more than a decade-and the ending of a minimum wage guarantee.

The Safe Trucking Freight Rates System was due to expire later this year but the two sides reportedly agreed to keep it in place, Yonhap said. The policy was designed to help prevent dangerous driving by truckers and guarantee minimum freight rates. "All

we are asking for is to remove the uncertainty in our lives," union member Cho Jeong-jae told AFP earlier Tuesday at a protest in Incheon, a city bordering Seoul. "Our livelihood is at stake."

Cho said the rising cost of fuel had not been reflected in the fees businesses pay to transport their goods. "When fuel prices drop, it's reflected very quickly by lowering freight fees," Cho said. "But that's not the case when fuel prices rise." The strike in Asia's fourth-largest economy was the latest blow to international supply chains that are already strained by COVID-19 lockdowns in China and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

South Korea is the world's largest memory chip exporter and home to global chip powerhouse Samsung Electronics, as well as large car companies including Kia and Hyundai Motors. South Korea's trade ministry said Tuesday that the action had resulted in losses for businesses of about 1.6 trillion won (\$1.2 billion).

At a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo had called for an end to the strike, saying "It's causing a major setback to the logistics network." On the campaign trail, President Yoon - a political novice - had vowed to be strict on labor disputes and indicated he was more pro-business on issues such as minimum working hours. At least 23 members of the Cargo Truckers Solidarity Union have been arrested for "illegal activities" at the protests, according to the transport ministry. — AFP



INCHEON: An aerial photo shows trucks parked as part of a strike in a parking lot near a container port in Incheon on June 14, 2022, on the eighth day of protests over rising fuel costs that have further snarled global supply chains. — AFP

protest. However, the curbs are only being eased on a small number of chicken types-and not the one most commonly exported to Singapore-meaning the impact could be limited. The halt on exports of 3.6 million chickens a month, which began on June 1, was the latest protectionist step in Asia as prices of everyday goods surge.

But it caused consternation in Singapore, a tiny city-state that relies on its larger neighbor for a good chunk of its food imports, including around a third of its chicken. There were particular concerns over the impact on "chicken rice", a hugely popular dish of poached chicken, rice and

chicken are more expensive than broiler birds, according to news outlet CNA.

"I don't think customers will want to fully switch to selling kampung (free-range) chicken for the time being," said secretary association Ma Chin Chew. Like many other countries, Malaysia is battling rising inflation, particularly when it comes to food, which prompted it to impose the curbs. But Singapore is also facing rising prices, with inflation at a 10-year high. Other countries that have taken protectionist measures include India, which banned wheat exports, and Indonesia, which temporarily halted palm oil shipments. — AFP



COLOMBO: Motorists queue to buy fuel at the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation fuel station in Colombo. — AFP

## Take holiday to grow food, Sri Lanka tells civil servants

COLOMBO: Crisis-hit Sri Lanka is asking civil servants to take an extra day off each week to grow crops in their backyards in a bid to forestall a looming food shortage. The island nation's unprecedented economic downturn has left several staple foods in short supply, along with petrol and medicines, and rampant inflation is ravaging household budgets.

"It seems appropriate to grant government officials leave for one working day of the week and provide them with the necessary facilities to engage in agricultural activities in their backyards," a cabinet statement said Tuesday. The extra day off would be a "solution to the food shortage that is expected to occur in the future", the statement read, adding that cutting down on civil servant commutes would also help reduce fuel consumption.

Last week the United Nations warned Sri Lanka was facing a "dire humanitarian crisis", and said four out of five people in the nation of 22 million were forced to skip meals. Motorists, meanwhile, have suffered through months of chronic petrol and diesel shortages, and long queues of vehicles outside filling stations are a regular sight around the country. Public employees will have every Friday off for the next three months without a pay cut, according to the cabinet decision, but the arrangement will not apply to essential services staff.

The government also said any members of the 1.5 million-strong public sector who wanted to travel abroad to find work would be given up to five years of unpaid leave without affecting their seniority or pensions. The move is aimed at encouraging more people to get foreign jobs and send money back to the island, which is laboring under a critical shortage of foreign currency to buy imports. Sri Lanka has defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt and is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout.

Public protests have demanded the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa over mismanagement of the country's economy and the severe hardships facing its people. Rajapaksa introduced sweeping tax cuts soon after coming to power in November that have been blamed for leaving the island without the means to pay for essential imports. The cash shortfall was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which savaged the local tourism industry and cut remittances sent back home by Sri Lankans working abroad. — AFP

## Global nuclear spending surges as tensions rise

WASHINGTON: The world's nuclear powers are increasing investment in their arsenals, with spending up nine percent to \$82.4 billion in 2021, according to a report released Tuesday by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Washington led the spending, at \$44.2 billion, followed by Beijing, which spent \$11.7 billion as it races to build an arsenal of nuclear warheads to rival those of global leaders Russia and the United States.

Russia spent \$8.6 billion, followed by Britain, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, and the newest nuclear power, North Korea, the report said. "Through an ever changing and challenging security environment, from security threats of climate change to the COVID-19 pandemic to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, nuclear weapons spending has steadily increased, with no resulting measurable improvement on the security environment," the Nobel Peace Prize-winning group said.

The report combines official defense spending on nuclear weapons with contracts awarded the private sector and spending on research and promotion of nuclear activities, like investments in think tanks and lobbying by the industry, to reach the figures. "The exchange of money and influence, from countries to companies to lobbyists and think tanks, sustains and maintains a global arsenal of catastrophically destructive weapons," said ICAN, which brings together non-governmental organizations opposed to nuclear weapons.

The group argued that Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February was evidence that the superpowers' nuclear weapons have not provided the security their supporters claim. "We were told that the billions invested in thousands of weapons of mass destruction with the power to destroy the world many times over was the price to pay for peace in Europe," the report said. "This spending failed to deter a war in Europe and squandered valuable resources that could be better used to address current security challenges, or cope with the outcome of a still raging global pandemic." — AFP

## After squawks of protest, Malaysia eases chicken ban

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia partially lifted on Tuesday a ban on chicken exports that was aimed at fighting domestic shortages but sent prices soaring in neighboring Singapore, sparking squawks of

## Business

# Gas price cap comes into effect in Spain, Portugal

## Turkey begins laying Black Sea natural gas pipeline

**MADRID:** An EU-backed cap on the price of natural gas used by power plants in Spain and Portugal came into effect Tuesday to ease the spiraling electricity prices in the two nations. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused gas prices to rise, pushing up already soaring power bills in the two countries which have little electricity interconnection with the rest of Europe. Last week the European Commission agreed to initially cap gas used for power generation at 40 euros per megawatt-hour, with the price limit projected to average out at 50 euros over the coming 12 months.

The Spanish government predicts the measure—which will be in effect until May 31, 2023 – will lead to a reduction in household energy prices of up to 20 percent. Spain's Energy Minister Teresa Ribera said the cap will “protect” Spanish and Portuguese household in a “turbulent and complicated” energy market due to the war in Ukraine.

The cost of energy has risen sharply in recent months in Spain and Portugal because of European electricity market rules, which force producers to sell their energy at the price of the most expensive technology—currently gas-fired power stations. For months, Madrid and Lisbon have been fighting against this system, which was deemed unsuited to the energy situation on the Iberian Peninsula which have large amounts of renewable power. But several European countries were opposed to a reform, saying they

feared the impact on competition within the European Union.

### Black Sea natural gas

In another development, Turkey's president hailed on Monday the start of the construction of an underwater pipeline to tap a Black Sea natural gas field that the government hopes will help wean the country off its dependence on energy imports. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan watched via video link as the first pipeline section was laid and connected to the seabed from the port of Filyos, around 400 kilometers east of Istanbul on the Black Sea coast. He said the Sakarya gas field could produce 10 million cubic meters by the first quarter of 2023.

The Sakarya gas field, 170 kilometers out to sea, was discovered in August 2020. At the time, Erdogan described it as “the largest natural gas field in Turkey's history”, citing estimated reserves of 320 billion cubic meters. “The Sakarya field will hopefully reach its peak production in 2026,” Erdogan said on Monday. “We will continue our efforts until we can fully ensure our energy security,” he added. Turkey is still highly dependent on imports to cover its energy needs and is paying a high price, especially following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Last year 45 percent of the gas used in Turkey came from Russia, and the rest from Iran and Azerbaijan. Inflation in the country is running at 73.5 percent, a rate not seen since 1998, and the



SEVILLE: Two women use fans to fight the scorching heat during a heatwave in Seville. —AFP

currency is in free fall – making the cost of living hard to bear for most Turks. Turkey's annual gas consumption has risen from 48 billion cubic

meters in 2020 to 60 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach 62-63 billion this year, according to official figures. —AFP

## Facing gas 'blackmail' by Russia, EU turns to Zionist entity

**BEERSHEBA:** The European Union wants to strengthen its energy cooperation with Zionist entity in light of Russia's use of gas supplies to “blackmail” its members over the Ukraine conflict, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said Tuesday. Her remarks came as Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, also visiting Zionist entity, said Rome was seeking to boost gas supplies from Zionist entity as EU members eye options to diminish their reliance on Russian energy.

“The Kremlin has used our dependency on Russian fossil fuels to blackmail us,” von der Leyen said in a speech at the Ben Gurion University in the city of Beersheba. “Since the beginning of the war, Russia has deliberately cut off its gas supplies to Poland, Bulgaria and Finland, and Dutch and Danish companies, in retaliation for our support to Ukraine.”

But Moscow's conduct “only strengthens our resolve to break free of our dependence on Russian fossil fuels,” she said, noting the EU was “exploring ways to step up our energy cooperation with Zionists,” with work on an underwater power cable and a gas pipeline in the eastern Mediterranean. Zionist exports gas to Egypt, some of which is then liquefied and shipped to Europe. A significant increase in gas exports would require major long-term infrastructure investments.

In talks with Energy Minister Karine Elharrar on Monday, von der Leyen reiterated “the EU need for Zionist gas,” the minister's spokesperson said. The spokesperson said there had been talks since March on establishing the legal framework to enable more Zionist gas exports to Europe via Egypt. Another option would be the EastMed project, a proposal for a seafloor pipeline linking Zionist entity to Greece and Italy via Cyprus.

But US President Joe Biden's administration has questioned the viability of the project, given its huge cost and the time it would take to complete. Speaking alongside Zionist Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Jerusalem, Draghi said Italy and Zionist entity were “working together on the use of gas resources from the eastern Mediterranean and for the development of renewable energy”. “We want to reduce our dependence on Russian gas, and accelerate the energy transition towards the climate goals we have set ourselves,” Draghi added.

### Lebanese maritime dispute

Bennett described Europe's need for alternative gas supplies as “good news.” A Zionist-Turkey pipeline project, estimated to require three years and \$1.5 billion, is another option to get Zionist gas to European markets. Bennett directed fresh criticism at northern neighbor, Lebanon, with which it remains technically at war.

The two countries have a long-running maritime border dispute and Washington has been brokering talks aimed at demarcating a border and allowing both sides to ramp up exploration. Lebanon had backed away from the talks, but Zionists urged Beirut to re-engage. “I look forward to the day Lebanon will decide to take advantage of the natural gas in its economic water,” said Bennett.

“It's a shame that Lebanon's leadership, instead of extracting gas for its people, is busy fighting internally and externally,” he added. Zionist entity is estimated to have gas reserves of at least one trillion cubic meters, with domestic use over the next three decades expected to total no more than 300 billion. Von der Leyen was due to hold talks with Bennett later Tuesday, before travelling on to Egypt. —AFP

## UK's unemployment rate edges higher as inflation slams wages

**LONDON:** Britain's unemployment rate has risen slightly, while soaring inflation is causing the value of wages to fall at the fastest pace in more than a decade, official data showed Tuesday. Unemployment rose to 3.8 percent in the three months to the end of April, but remained close to a 50-year low as Britain sees record-high vacancies.

That compared with an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in the first quarter of the year, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. ONS Head of Economic Statistics, Sam Beckett, meanwhile noted that “pay in real terms is falling at its fastest rate in over a decade”, with UK inflation at a 40-year high.

The jobs data follows official figures Monday showing British economic output declined for a second month in a row in April, weighed down by runaway consumer prices. “It is possible that this is the

very first signs that the weakening in economic activity since the start of the year is filtering through into a less tight labor market,” Paul Dales, chief UK economist at Capital Economics, said Tuesday. However, “that won't be anywhere near enough to prevent the Bank (of England) from raising interest rates on Thursday”, he added.

The BoE is expected to raise its main interest rate for a fifth time in a row to cool the pace of price rises. UK annual inflation rate has soared to nine percent, causing a cost-of-living crisis for millions of Britons. “With inflation hurtling towards double digit territory, many workers are increasingly finding that their wages are not stretching wide enough to meet the bumper cost of seemingly everything from food to petrol,” said Myron Jobson, senior personal finance analyst at Interactive Investor.

The Bank of England is widely expected to raise its key interest rate this week by a quarter-point to 1.25 percent, while some are forecasting a half-point jump. In the United States, Friday's forecast-beating inflation print has triggered expectations that the Federal Reserve will ramp up the pace of its interest rate increases, heightening fears of a recession. —AFP



WESTERSHAM: The price in pounds sterling for one litre of Diesel and Unleaded Petrol is displayed on a sign at a BP petrol station on the M25 motorway, south of London. Prime Minister Boris Johnson sought to reset his embattled leadership with vows to tackle Britain's cost-of-living crisis, including contentious new measures to boost home ownership. —AFP

## Russia slashes gas deliveries via Nord Stream: Gazprom

**MOSCOW:** Russia's energy giant Gazprom said Tuesday it would be reducing the daily gas deliveries via the Nord Stream pipeline to Germany due to the “repair” of compressor units by German company Siemens. “Gas supplies via the Nord Stream gas pipeline can currently be provided in the amount of up to 100 million cubic metres per day,” Gazprom said in a statement on Telegram, adding that the expected daily volume is 167 million cubic meters. With the delayed return of components from Siemens, only three gas-pumping units were currently operational at the Portovaya compression station near the northwestern

city of Vyborg, Gazprom added.

Along with many Western companies, German conglomerate Siemens announced its exit from the Russian market after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine on February 24. Moscow has lost several European gas clients after it demanded that all “unfriendly” countries pay for Russian natural gas in rubles in response to a barrage of Western sanctions over Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, Finland and the Netherlands have had their natural gas deliveries suspended over refusing to pay in rubles.

The Nord Stream pipeline was commissioned in 2012 and delivers gas from northwestern Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea. The launch of another pipeline, Nord Stream 2, that was set to double Russian gas deliveries to Germany was halted in response to Moscow's military action in Ukraine. EU countries have scrambled to reduce their dependency on Russian energy but are divided about imposing a natural gas embargo as several member states are heavily reliant on Moscow's energy supplies. —AFP



BAVARIA: 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

## Jazeera Airways offers KD99 return flights to Prague and Vienna

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways launched a special summer KD99 offer on return flights to Prague (Czech Republic) and Vienna (Austria) as part of its ongoing campaign to promote tourism in the two countries in partnership with their local tourism boards. The Czech Republic and Austria have lifted all restrictions on travel ahead of the summer season, enabling tourists to travel without having to perform a PCR test before travel or the requirement to be vaccinated.

The airline's first flight to Prague takes off June 22, while the first flight to Vienna takes off June 23. A Jazeera spokesperson said: “These are part of the great

low fares travellers can still get for the summer with Jazeera. Our new routes into Europe to Prague and Vienna are exciting and popular places for Kuwaitis to visit. Demand for travel is increasing so the message is to book early for the summer holidays.”

Austria is a popular summer destination with its outdoor activities in the middle of the nature surrounded by waterfalls, trees, cultural landscapes, mountains, and waters. It is also a great culinary destination with its unique cuisine influenced from its geographic location at the heart of Europe and its rich history, in addition to being a culturally and historically rich country that gives tourists myriads of landmarks and leisure destinations to visit.

Known for its castles, chateaux, sixteen UNESCO monuments and historical cities, the Czech Republic has many impressive treasures from different eras. The reflections of the past can also be experienced in the still living traditional crafts and colorful folklore, in addition to discovering the tastes of the Czech cuisine



in all its traditional and modern forms. The country also offers many hiking or cycling activities, spas and unforgettable experiences in the picturesque countryside and mountains.

### Flight schedule between Kuwait (KWI) and Prague (PRG):

Flight Number	Period	Frequency	From	To	Departure (Local Time)	Arrival (Local Time)
J9-37	Starting June 22	Tuesdays, Sundays	Kuwait	Prague	06:20	10:45
J9-38	Starting June 22	Tuesdays, Sundays	Prague	Kuwait	11:30	17:35

### Flight schedule between Kuwait (KWI) and Vienna (VIE):

Flight Number	Period	Frequency	From	To	Departure (Local Time)	Arrival (Local Time)
J9-21	Starting June 23	Monday, Thursday	Kuwait	Vienna	08:20	12:30
J9-22	Starting June 23	Monday, Thursday	Vienna	Kuwait	13:15	19:00



Visual artist from Kosovo Petrit Halilaj poses during his exhibition at the Kamel Mennour Gallery in Paris. — AFP photos

## Revisiting trauma with a child-refugee-turned artist

**P**etrit Halilaj knows something about how art can help pull children out of the horror of war—but also the dangers of them being used as a propaganda tool. As a 13-year-old refugee from the conflict in Kosovo in 1999, his felt-tip pen drawings of soldiers killing civilians were singled out by then-UN secretary general Kofi Annan as a powerful depiction of the war's impact on young minds.

Halilaj, now 36, has since become a successful artist and has revisited those drawings with a radical show for Britain's Tate and now at the kamel mennour gallery in Paris—pulling his original pictures apart and blowing up elements into huge installations. In the process, he tried to recall why he had ultimately refused to hand over the drawing he had prepared for Annan.

"At first, I thought this was my chance to stop the war. I was rushing to complete a big drawing before he arrived," Halilaj told AFP with a laugh. It was, he thinks, his grandfather who

cooled his excitement. "My grandfather was almost annoyed by my enthusiasm—he couldn't deal with my joy in drawing the picture. He told me (Annan's visit) was just theatre."

When Annan visited the camp in Albania, accompanied by the world's media, and asked if he could take the drawing to a major UN meeting, Halilaj said no. "Maybe I was thinking about my grandfather's words," said Halilaj. "But maybe I just had a sense that this is my drawing and I wanted to keep it!"

### 'Afraid of strangers'

The teenage Halilaj made the drawings under the supervision of an Italian child psychologist who was volunteering in the camp. His experiences have obvious relevance as millions of children are again forced to flee a brutal European war, this time in Ukraine.

"In war, you learn to be afraid of strangers and the other. Only once I was in the camp did I learn to start connecting



to strangers again and having art was so important as a way to express and share," he told AFP. But his new show emphasizes the importance of being guided by a psychological expert.

Its co-curator, Amy Zion, said she was concerned to see pictures of Ukrainian children being used to depict the war in newspapers recently. "It worried me that it could so easily become a journalistic

trope," she told AFP. "Petrit had a psychologist trained in working in traumatic situations who really understood how to present the situation as therapy first and foremost, and not something to be instrumentalized."

### 'Coming out'

That is perhaps why many of the drawings did not feature violence, but rather peaceful scenes of nature and animals. In revisiting them, Halilaj was fascinated to rediscover elements that suggested other issues stirring in his young mind. He highlights the huge colorful peacock that now dominates the exhibition space in Paris. "Clearly, this was also me coming out in silence as a queer teenager. When I see the colors, I think: this is a pride march!" he said, laughing. "I had more going on inside than just the war." — AFP

## War-stricken pets await new life at Kyiv shelter

**U**krainian vet Nataliya Mazur cradles Murzik, a big green-eyed tabby, in her arms at a makeshift animal rescue shelter in Kyiv. The three-year-old cat comes from Bucha, a suburb of the Ukrainian capital now synonymous with alleged Russian war crimes since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine nearly four months ago. "His owner in Bucha survived shelling and the occupation," Mazur explains. "But eventually she died. She couldn't endure the situation." Murzik's fate is shared by animals across the country, who have suffered alongside humans since Russia invaded on February 24 despite great lengths to save them.

Footage of Ukrainian civilians evacuating their devastated homes with their beloved dogs and cats in their arms went viral at the start of the conflict. But like people who stayed behind, animals have been killed or wounded by Russian shelling. Many have lost their homes or owners. Other pets have been lucky. Rescued by civilians or soldiers and brought to shelters like Mazur's to be fed and cared for, they have a chance of a new life and potentially new owners.

### New homes

Since Mazur set up her temporary shelter at the end of March in southern Kyiv, 132 animals from the region around the capital and the east—the current epicenter of the fighting—have lived here. Ninety-seven of them have already found new owners, a sign perhaps of the human need for positivity and kindness to offset the bleakness of war. There are

where Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused the Russians of atrocities "much more horrific" even than Bucha. Kai has been de-fleaed and has a good appetite.

### Need for care

"When the war began, the number of homeless pets shot up," says Mazur, who also heads Kyiv's animal hospital. "We set up this shelter with the help of the

remained in a place where there's fighting and explosions, then first of all it needs socialization," Mazur explains. "They're used to being with humans, so they need tenderness and care. They need someone to sit and talk to them." Animals have also helped the war effort, some famous in Ukraine for their unusual abilities.

### 'Love animals'

A Jack Russell called Patron rose to

In the Kyiv shelter, volunteers shower the animals with affection. "My wife and I love animals very much," Dmytro Popov tells AFP, after walking a small dog with a fluffy tail across the park.

"We want a dog, but we're not allowed to have one in our rented apartment. So, we decided to come here and help as much as we can," the 28-year-old botanist smiles. Earlier in the day, another two dogs were picked up by their new



Veterinarian Nataliya Mazur (left) and an employee examine a dog in a temporary animal shelter. — AFP photos

currently 19 dogs and nine cats in the sanctuary, some jumping about and barking, others curled up in their enclosures.

A dark dog lies peacefully on a rug. The paper card attached to his wooden door says his name is Kai. He is seven and he arrived on April 19 from Borodianka—a northwest suburb of Kyiv

Kyiv authorities and volunteers, to look after pets and help find them new families." It is housed in one of the pavilions of an open-air exhibition centre. Volunteers come and go, inspecting the animals, feeding them and taking them for walks around the grassy grounds.

"If the pet has lost its owner and



Journalists take photos as landmine sniffer dog, Jack Russell Terrier Patron, plays after returning from mine clearance work in the village of Yahidne in Chernihiv region.

nationwide renown for helping sappers demine areas recaptured from Russian forces. Patron, who has more than 290,000 followers on Instagram, received a medal for Dedicated Service from Zelensky in May and was awarded a special prize at the Cannes Film Festival the same month.

owners. "I've been friends with dogs since I was a child," 31-year-old volunteer Yuriy Manko says. "I don't know what will happen tomorrow, but I want to keep coming here." — AFP



Puppies stand in an enclosure in a temporary animal shelter.



A volunteer leads a dog outside temporary animal shelter after a walk.

# 'Minions' return with hopes of more box office gold

Completely stupid but terribly endearing, the Minions have become one of the most profitable bunch of characters in animation. Their latest escapade, "Minions: The Rise of the Gru", was screened at the opening of the Annecy Film Festival in France on Tuesday ahead of its worldwide release in early July.

It is the fifth instalment in a franchise that began with "Despicable Me" in 2010 and has grossed \$3.7 billion at the box office, according to IMDB, without even counting the vast sales of cuddly toys and other Minion-related paraphernalia.

The new film promises another frenetic succession of gags, action and slapstick stupidity. "The whole point of these films is just to kind of be silly and have fun," director Kyle Balda told AFP. This time, there are nods to classic 1970s Kung Fu films and a Minions cover of The Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want".

The little yellow doofuses were just



side characters in the first films, but proved so popular that they got their own spin-off, "Minions", in 2015. It was risk putting characters who barely speak a comprehensible language at the heart of a film-but it paid off with \$1 billion in ticket sales. To make people laugh without dialogue- "for an animator, it's like their

Mount Everest," said Balda.

"Of course they're speaking, but nobody understands what they're saying," added the director, who said the team is inspired by classic physical comedians like Charlie Chaplin and Jacques Tati. The new film goes back to the origins of Gru, the Minions' master, as he tries to earn

his place among an elite group of supervillains while still a teenager.

Naturally, things don't quite go according to plan. The "Despicable Me" films have been a cross-Atlantic affair from the start, a collaboration between studios Illumination in Los Angeles and Mac Guff in Paris. Paris-based animator Pierre Coffin has provided the voices for the Minions from the start, and served as co-director on the first four films. Their success has allowed Illumination to compete in the same league as the giants of US animation, Pixar and Dreamworks-with other hits including "Sing", "The Secret Life of Pets" and "The Grinch".

More is on the way, with the Illumination team next tackling a movie version of the legendary video game "Super Mario Bros", expected in 2023. This is also unlikely to be the last we hear from the Minions. "I don't think it's over," said Balda. "There is clearly a future for these characters." — AFP



Amber Heard

## Heard says online 'hate and vitriol' during Depp trial not 'fair'

Amber Heard said the "hate and vitriol" she suffered on social media during her libel trial against Johnny Depp was not "fair," but insisted in an interview released Monday she did not blame the jury for largely siding with her ex-husband. After a six-week legal tussle between the former Hollywood power couple, a US jury awarded Depp more than \$10 million in damages for defamation, in contrast to just \$2 million for Heard who had counter-sued. The case, live-streamed to millions, featured lurid and intimate details about the celebrities' private lives, and Heard was targeted by countless social media posts and internet memes throughout.



Johnny Depp

"I don't presume the average person should know those things," Heard told NBC in her first major interview since the verdict. "And so I don't take it personally." "But even somebody who is sure I'm deserving of all this hate and vitriol, even if you think that I'm lying, you still couldn't look me in the eye and tell me that you think on social media there's been a fair representation." "You cannot tell me that you think that this has been fair," she said in a clip from the interview, which airs in full on NBC News' Dateline on Friday.

Depp sued Heard over a Washington Post op-ed in which she did not name him, but described herself as a "public figure representing domestic abuse." Heard counter-sued after Depp's lawyer described her abuse claims as a "hoax." Online public opinion during the trial appeared to come down heavily on Depp's side, and Heard's lawyers accused his legal team of working to "demonize" her. — AFP



A photo shows a piece inspired by traditional Ukrainian pottery, as part of "Chornozem", an exhibition of live Ukrainian design by Ukrainian architect and designer Victoria Yakusha and ger design studio Faina. — AFP photos



A photo shows "Soniah Lighting" (Soniah is Ukrainian for Sunflower) as part of "Chornozem", an exhibition of live Ukrainian design by Ukrainian architect and designer Victoria Yakusha and ger design studio Faina.

## In Milan, Ukrainian designers show off their cultural heritage

With their country mired in war, designers from Ukraine were keen to show their works on the sidelines of Milan's furniture fair, seeking to defend and promote a cultural heritage being ransacked by the Russian army. "It's not a war between Ukraine and Russia, it concerns the whole world. It's a war between democracy and imperialism," said designer Victoria Yakusha, 39.

Her exhibition "Chornozem" ("Black soil") presented on the premises of the T12-Lab cultural association, has been

one of the highlights of the off-schedule shows in Milan. Black, the color of the dark soil of Ukraine, is omnipresent in her collection of contemporary, minimalist furniture. "Our strength is in our connection to our earth. We can't speak with any other color now," Yakusha told AFP in a telephone interview from Brussels, where she has been living for the past two years.

### Antique symbols

Through her work, Yakusha highlights Ukraine's rich history and craftsmanship. From the carpet woven with an ancient symbol from the Trypillia culture once dominant in eastern Europe, to the Kumanec clay vase celebrating pottery skills of old and lamps in the form of sunflowers-everything points to a fertile land. After Russia invaded its neighbor on February 24, "the shock was too great, I could no longer create. All my thoughts were with my family in the (eastern region of) Donbas, my team there and the craftsmen who had to be made safe," Yakusha said.

But she eventually returned to what she calls her mission, to "show the world the creativity and the beauty of Ukrainian culture and thus assert the identity" of her country. Her brand, Faina, was born in 2014 out of the pro-Western Maidan revolution. "We want to defend our land, our freedom" through design, she said. Part of the proceeds of Faina, whose creations are sold in 42 countries, including the United States, France and Britain, is donated to museums and other cultural institutions in Ukraine.

### Geometric forms

Another designer, 38-year-old Kateryna Sokolova, left western Ukraine to attend the fair in Milan. Work on the new collection of her Noom brand, exhibited at Superstudio Piu, stopped abruptly when bombs started falling on the capital Kyiv. "We slept for a week in the parking lot underneath our building," before fleeing by car towards Lviv in the west of the country, where she is now based.

In Lviv, where her suppliers had also taken refuge, "the Russian attacks targeted mostly military installations, but there is no safe place anymore in Ukraine", she told AFP. But after two months, Sokolova and her associate Arkady Vartanov began working again, keen to avoid "Ukrainian design being wiped off the world map".

Sokolova's geometric forms and block colors were inspired by Ukrainian painter Kazimir Malevich, an abstract artist of the 20th century. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a sofa covered with a fabric made of curly wool, created to mark the centenary of the Bauhaus, the artistic movement founded in 1919 in Germany. Elsewhere, steel coffee tables carved by Ukrainian sculptors feature hand-drawn designs reminiscent of rippling water. For Sokolova, the war "is like the return of Stalin". "We want to avoid at all costs returning to the Soviet Union and to safeguard our Ukrainian culture". — AFP



A photo shows "Tree of Life Tapestry" with an ancient Trypillian symbol, as part of "Chornozem", an exhibition of live Ukrainian design by Ukrainian architect and designer Victoria Yakusha and ger design studio Faina.



A photo shows "Domna armchair" as part of "Chornozem", an exhibition of live Ukrainian design by Ukrainian architect and designer Victoria Yakusha and ger design studio Faina.



A photo shows "Tree of Life Tapestry" with an ancient Trypillian symbol, as part of "Chornozem", an exhibition of live Ukrainian design by Ukrainian architect and designer Victoria Yakusha and ger design studio Faina.



Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger

## You can't always get what you want: Jagger gets COVID

Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger on Monday said he had caught COVID, forcing the band to cancel its latest gig in Amsterdam. "I'm so sorry that we've had to postpone the Amsterdam show with such short notice tonight," the 78-year-old singer tweeted. "I have unfortunately just tested positive for Covid. We aim to reschedule the date ASAP and get back as soon as we can."

The legendary British band opened their European tour with a gig in Madrid on June 1, to mark six decades since they were formed. The "Sixty" tour includes 14 concerts across the continent, and follows the band's "No Filter" tour, which began in 2017 but saw the North American leg postponed due to the pandemic.

They wrapped up the tour late last year despite the death of drummer Charlie Watts who died last August aged 80. Jagger, who has been vaccinated against Covid, last April unveiled a new song "Easy Sleazy"-that he recorded at home during the coronavirus lockdown. The same month, they gave a socially distanced rendition of their 1969 classic "You Can't Always Get What You want" from their own homes. — AFP



A visitor views "Nymph and Shepherd" by Italian Renaissance painter Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) during a press preview of the exhibition "Titian: Dialogues of Nature and Love" at the Galleria Borghese in Rome. — AFP

## Nature and allegory at new Titian show in Rome

Italian Renaissance painter Titian was known for his portraits, but a new exhibition opening in Rome on Tuesday asks visitors to examine the role nature played in the 16th-century Venetian master's works. The exhibition, "Dialogues of Nature and Love", at the Galleria Borghese sees two masterpieces spanning Titian's career displayed together for the first time in centuries. "In Titian's work, nature is never incidental," said Maria Giovanna Sarti, the show's curator, noting how "nature echoes the meaning of the painting". There are four paintings in the exhibition, but two take center stage.

The foggy, blurred landscape of "Nymph and Shepherd" from around 1565, or just over a decade before Titian's death, faces "Sacred and Profane Love" from 1514-15, in which hares frolic

in the background. "If the meaning (of Sacred and Profane Love) is marriage, it is a marriage allegory. Then we find the elements that comment on that meaning... like the pair of hares on the left," said Sarti. Titian, who was born in Pieve di Cadore around 1485 and died in Venice in 1576, enjoyed a long and fruitful career working for Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Spain's King Philip II, but also for the papacy.

Bringing together "Nymph and Shepherd"-on loan from Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum-with the Borghese's "Sacred and Profane Love", shows how his style changes with age. Sarti said the later Titians were "quite different" from his earlier ones, where he favored the precise drawing and well-applied colors typical of his contemporaries such as Bellini. With the encounter between the two paintings, "Titian meets himself, the Titian of his youth and the Titian of his later years, on recurring themes" of love and nature, she said. The exhibition runs until 18 September. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

# Britney Spears' ex charged with stalking over his gatecrash of wedding

**A** US court charged Britney Spears' ex-husband with a felony count of stalking on Monday after he attempted to gatecrash the pop princess' wedding in southern California, which he had live-streamed on Instagram. Spears and her longtime partner Sam Asghari were preparing to wed Thursday in her home in Thousand Oaks, California, when the proceedings were interrupted.

Jason Allen Alexander, a childhood friend the 40-year-old singer was very briefly married to in 2004, crashed the sun-soaked event, sparking a police response. According to court filings in



Britney Spears

Ventura County's court, Alexander was charged with a felony count of stalking, as well as misdemeanors counts of trespassing, vandalism and battery.

The 40-year-old Louisiana native who had appeared in court via Zoom from jailed not guilty to the charges, and the judge issued a restraining order requiring Alexander to stay 100 yards from Spears. His bail was also set at \$100,000, and a hearing is next scheduled for Wednesday.

Spears' attorney Mathew Rosengart told reporters he was "pleased" by how the sheriff's office responded to Alexander's intrusion. "This is a serious matter, this is not a 'wedding crash'-this was an infiltration, as we all shockingly saw," Rosengart said outside the courthouse.

According to Ventura County Sheriff's Office, Alexander also has an open warrant for grand theft embezzlement and possession of stolen property. Spears' wedding to Asghari was not widely trailed, with news of the nuptials appearing on specialist publications only hours earlier.

The star-studded affair was attended by celebrities like Madonna, Selena Gomez, Drew Barrymore, Paris Hilton, and Donatella Versace who had designed her dress. "Fairytale are real," the pop princess had posted on Instagram, along with a video of the

preparations showing Spears posing in a horse-drawn carriage decorated in pink roses.

In November, a Los Angeles judge dissolved a controversial conservatorship overseen by Spears' father, an arrangement that has seen her life and multimillion-dollar estate under his control for 13 years. The singer had said her father Jamie Spears had prevented her from having a contraceptive IUD removed despite her desire for more children-an allegation he has denied. — AFP

## 'How to murder your husband' writer jailed for life over spouse killing

**A** US writer who penned a tract entitled "How to Murder Your Husband" was sentenced to life in prison on Monday for fatally shooting her spouse. Nancy Crampton Brophy, 71, will be eligible to apply for parole in 25 years, a judge in the northwestern state of Oregon told her. Crampton Brophy's month-long murder trial heard how the author had used a gun barrel bought on eBay to kill her husband in the hope of collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in life insurance.

The weapon, which she claimed had been acquired as research for a new novel, has never been found. Chef Daniel Brophy was found on the floor of a classroom in a now-defunct culinary institute where he worked, in June 2018. He had been shot twice. CCTV footage showed his wife driving in the area at the time.

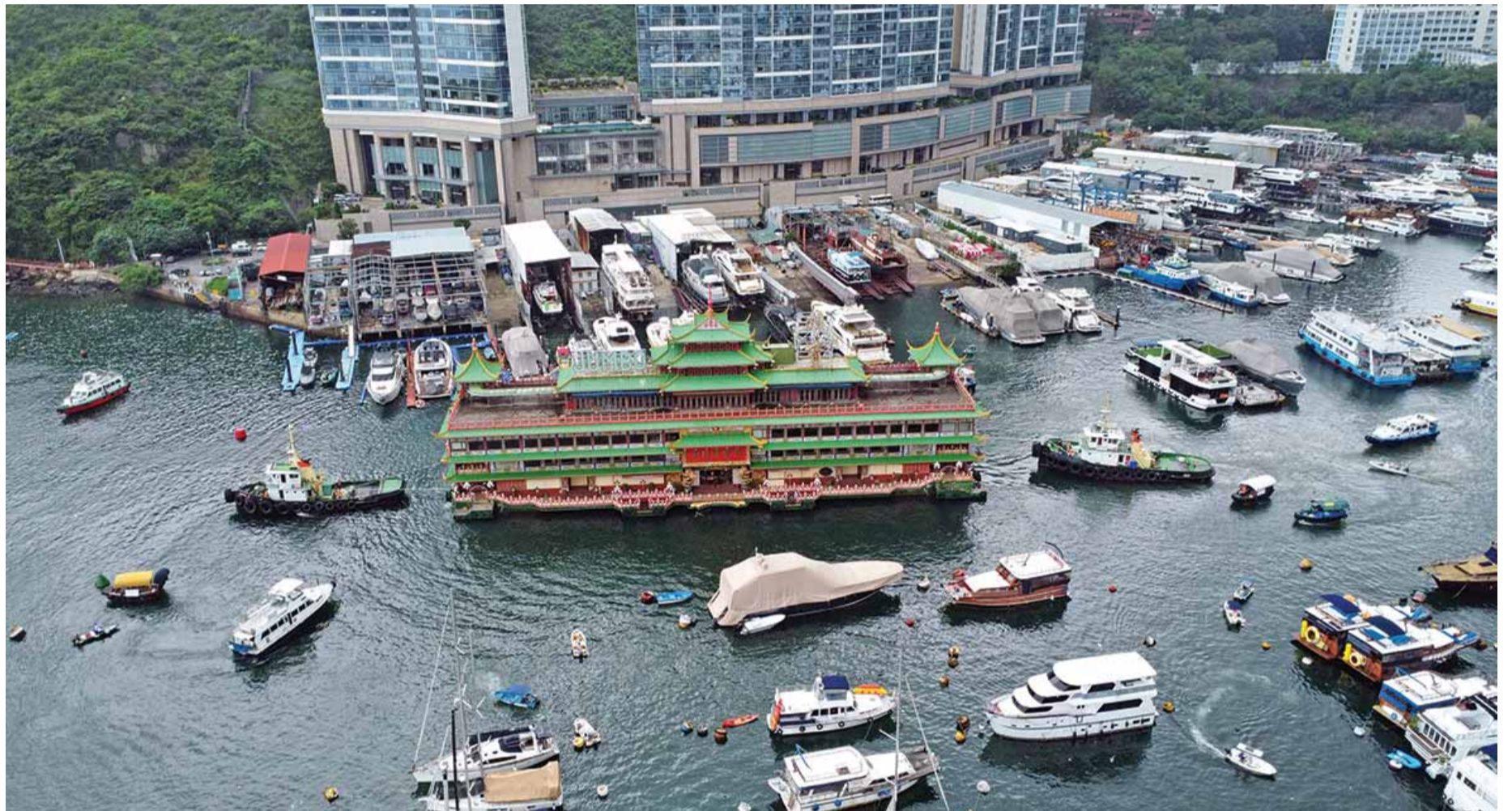
The author, whose "Wrong Never Felt So Right" series of novels include "The Wrong Husband" and "The Wrong Lover," claimed she had no memory of being there, but surmised that she would have been in the neighborhood trying to get inspiration for a new work of fiction.



Nancy Crampton Brophy

Crampton Brophy, whose lawyers said last month they would appeal the verdict, denied the murder, insisting that years of financial struggle were behind the couple and that she had no reason to kill her husband. "Where is the motivation? I would ask you," Crampton Brophy said as she sparred with the prosecutor during her trial.

"An editor would laugh and say, 'I think you need to work harder on this story, you have a big hole in it.'" Her blog post "How to kill your husband," which is still readily available online, discusses methods and motivations for dispatching an unwanted spouse. These include financial gain and the use of a firearm, although it notes guns are "loud, messy, require some skill." "But the thing I know about murder is that every one of us have it in him/her when pushed far enough," the essay says. — AFP



An aerial view shows a tugboat pulling Hong Kong's Jumbo Floating Restaurant, an iconic but aging tourist attraction designed like a Chinese imperial palace, out of Aberdeen Harbor after years of revitalization efforts went nowhere.—AFP photos



Photo shows Hong Kong's Jumbo Floating Restaurant.



Photo shows onlookers taking photos of Hong Kong's Jumbo Floating Restaurant (background center).

# Famed Hong Kong floating restaurant towed away after half a century

**H**ong Kong's Jumbo Floating Restaurant, a famed but ageing tourist attraction that featured in multiple Cantonese and Hollywood films, was towed out of the city Tuesday after the Covid pandemic finally sank the struggling business. The buoyant behemoth, which at 76 meters (250 feet) long could house 2,300 diners, set out shortly before noon from the southern Hong Kong Island typhoon shelter where it has sat for nearly half a century. Designed like a Chinese imperial palace and once considered a must-see landmark, the restaurant drew visitors from Queen Elizabeth II to Tom Cruise, and featured in several films including Steven Soderbergh's "Contagion", about a deadly global pandemic.

The lavish restaurant's operators cited the COVID-19 pandemic as the reason for finally closing its doors in March 2020, after around a decade of financial woes.

Restaurant owner Melco International Development announced last month that ahead of its license expiration in June, Jumbo would leave Hong Kong and await a new operator at an undisclosed location. Under overcast skies, a scattered group of onlookers gathered on the Aberdeen waterfront to see it be dragged away.

Watching the restaurant's ponderous progress across the shelter waters was Mr Wong, a 60-year-old man who told AFP he had come specially to see its departure. "The exterior was for many years a symbol of Hong Kong," he said, adding he had eaten there once 20 years ago. "I believe it will come back and I look forward to it," he added wistfully.

Another spectator, who gave her name as Mrs Chan, said she had heard the news and came to take one last picture by the restaurant before it left. "I think it is such a pity to see it go," she said. "Jumbo has a long history and it has attracted

many locals and tourists... It's a restaurant that's known to the world."

### 'Bidding farewell'

Opened in 1976 by the late casino tycoon Stanley Ho, the Jumbo Floating Restaurant embodied the height of luxury, reportedly costing more than HK\$30 million (\$3.8 million) to build. It featured a "dragon throne" in the style of the Ming dynasty as well as an opulent mural. The throne was fondly remembered by one of those watching the restaurant's departure on Tuesday, a 24-year-old man surnamed Leung who said he had always begged his mother to let him sit on it when they visited for dim sum. "There are quite some childhood memories for me," he said. "I feel a bit sad. (Coming here) to see it is like bidding my farewell."

Aberdeen harbor was traditionally a hotspot for seafood eateries-and fierce competition for customers only cooled

when Jumbo's operators acquired its biggest competitor, Tai Pak Floating Restaurant, in the 1980s. The restaurant was kept afloat by Hong Kong's booming tourism industry but its popularity had dimmed in recent years even before the coronavirus hit.

Restaurant operator Melco said last month the business had not been profitable since 2013 and cumulative losses had exceeded HK\$100 million (\$12.7 million). It was still costing millions in maintenance fees every year and around a dozen businesses and organizations had declined an invitation to take it over at no charge, Melco added. In her 2020 policy address, Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam announced plans to turn the restaurant over to local theme park Ocean Park for revitalization, but the project fell through after the park said it could not find a suitable operator. —AFP

## Hollywood stars pen letter calling for responsible gun depictions

**H**ollywood stars including Amy Schumer, Julianne Moore and Mark Ruffalo signed a letter published on Monday calling for movies and television shows to depict responsible gun ownership and to limit scenes involving children with firearms. The open letter, penned in

response to recent US mass shootings in Uvalde and Buffalo, was also signed by top producers J.J. Abrams ("Lost"), Shonda Rhimes ("Bridgerton") and Lucasfilm head Kathleen Kennedy.

"Cultural attitudes toward smoking, drunk driving, seatbelts and marriage equality have all evolved due in large part to movies' and TV's influence. It's time to take on gun safety," says the letter shared by the Brady Campaign, a gun control nonprofit. "We are not asking anyone to stop showing guns on screen. We are asking writers, directors and producers to be mindful of on-screen gun violence and model gun safety best practices."

Suggested measures include showing characters locking their guns up safely, and holding discussions before production



Amy Schumer

begins about whether alternatives to guns could be used without "sacrificing narrative integrity." Noting that firearms recently surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of death among American minors, the letter asks "colleagues in the creative community" to "limit scenes



Julianne Moore

including children and guns." Last month, 10 people were shot and killed in a racist attack on a grocery store in New York state. Ten days later, 19 children and two teachers were murdered during a school rampage in Uvalde, Texas. Overall, 4,368 US children and adoles-

cents up to the age of 19 died from firearms in 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The open letter was signed by more than 200 Hollywood figures, also including Jimmy Kimmel, Judd Apatow, Bill Lawrence, Damon Lindelof and Adam McKay. It noted that guns "are prominently featured in TV and movies in every corner of the globe, but only America has a gun violence epidemic." "The responsibility lies with lax gun laws supported by those politicians more afraid of losing power than saving lives. "We didn't cause the problem, but we want to help fix it." — AFP

## Sports

# Warriors on brink of title as Wiggins punishes Celtics

## Warriors battle past Boston Celtics 104-94

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Andrew Wiggins scored 26 points as the Golden State Warriors battled past the Boston Celtics 104-94 to move within one win of a seventh NBA championship crown on Monday. With Stephen Curry having a rare off-night after his 43-point game four heroics, Wiggins seized control to lead a balanced Golden State offensive effort which leaves the Warriors 3-2 up in the best-of-seven series.

Wiggins delivered a huge performance at both ends of the Warriors' Chase Center court, shooting 12-of-23 while hauling in 13 rebounds with two steals and a block. The Warriors can clinch the championship when the series heads back to Boston for game six on Thursday. "We have two cracks at getting one win, but we also know how difficult it's going to be," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said.

"Nobody's celebrating but we are excited to be in this spot and we want to take advantage of it." Kerr led the tributes for Wiggins, the Canadian former No.1 draft pick who has steadily become an integral part of the Warriors set-up since joining the franchise two years ago. "He loves the challenge. He loves the competition. And he's found such a crucial role on our team, and I think that empowers him," Kerr said. "He knows how much we need him, so he's been fantastic."

Wiggins led the Warriors scorers while Klay Thompson provided support with 21 points including five three-pointers. Gary Payton II (15 points) and Jordan Poole (14) both made double-digits from the bench. Curry, the Warriors' talisman and front-runner for NBA Finals MVP, chipped in with 16 points but shot only 7-of-22 from the field, going 0/9 from three-point distance. It was the first time in Curry's playoff career he has failed to score a three-pointer and the first time he has drawn a blank from beyond the arc in any NBA game since 2018.



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors brings the ball up court against the Boston Celtics during Game Five of the 2022 NBA Finals on June 13, 2022.—AFP

"I think Steph was probably due for a game like this," Kerr said. "But we've got a lot of talent and a lot of depth that can make up for that, and the guys did a good job of that tonight." Warriors star Draymond Green, who had an improved performance despite fouling out in the fourth quarter, said Curry's display was good news for Golden State. "He's going to be livid going into game six, and that's exactly what we

need," Green said.

### Costly turnovers

Jayson Tatum led Boston's scorers with 27 points while Marcus Smart added 20 and Jaylen Brown 18. But the Celtics, who effectively marked Curry out of the game for long periods, were left ruing another high turnover count of 18 compared to just six from Golden

State. Boston had threatened to produce a repeat of their stunning game one win in San Francisco during a rampant third quarter display in which they outscored the Warriors 35-24 before fading in the fourth quarter. Celtics coach Ime Udoka lamented his team's inconsistent form from one quarter to the next.

"That's the thing - (what) we're not having throughout a full game is consistent efforts, sustained effort, more so offensively than anything," Udoka said. "That's the part where we got to have carryover, not only game to game but quarter to quarter, where we saw it happened in the third but not the fourth." Boston's electrifying burst of second-half scoring wiped out a 12-point Warriors advantage after the first two quarters. After a superb Golden State defensive performance in the first half, Boston had been restricted to just 39 points to trail 51-39 at the break.

But the Celtics flipped the switch after the interval, erasing Golden State's advantage in a matter of minutes with back-to-back Tatum three-pointers to get within two at 51-49. Smart drained another three soon afterwards to tie the game at 55-55 before Al Horford rained in another triple-Boston's eighth straight three-pointer to give the Celtics their first lead of the game at 58-55. Boston would go on to lead by five points at 66-61 - a 17-point turnaround from half-time-but the Warriors dug deep to respond. Poole's buzzer-beating three-pointer put the Warriors ahead 75-74 heading into the final period. The Warriors regrouped in the fourth quarter, Wiggins driving home a layup to launch an unanswered 10-0 run by the home team that gave Golden State a hefty 11-point advantage at 85-74. From there the Warriors never looked like surrendering the initiative and Wiggins would go on to score 10 points as the Warriors slammed the door to close out a deserved win.—AFP



## Kuwait Federation honors players

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Federation (KTF) President Sheikh Ahmad Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and board members honored Kuwaiti tennis players who had excellent results lately in several international events in appreciation of their efforts and as a motivation for them to continue their winning ways in coming events. Kuwaiti players who participated in the Third Gulf Games were also honored. The players include: Essa Qabazard, Abdelhameed Jumaa, Bader Al-

Abdallah and Ali Al-Shatti.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber also honored junior players like Mohammad Al-Awadhi who won the gold medals of the singles and teams in the West Asia 2022 Championship that was held in Bahrain, and Abdelrahman Al-Abdallah who won the doubles gold and singles silver. National juniors team member Mohammad Qally was also awarded. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber congratulated the players for their achievements.

Sheikh Ahmad asked players to exert their efforts during training sessions at Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait in order to improve at the technical and physical levels. He congratulated Kuwait Olympic Committee for the huge success in the Third Gulf Games that was hosted by Kuwait recently.

## 'King' Babar Azam wants WCup glory to fulfill his dreams

**KARACHI:** High-flying skipper Babar Azam hopes that his extraordinary run-scoring can fire Pakistan to World Cup glory-and in the process fulfill a childhood dream. The 27-year-old is in the form of his life across the three formats of international cricket and last week became the first batsman to hit three consecutive centuries on two separate occasions in ODIs. But Azam told AFP that his prolific form will count for little if it does not bring success at the T20 World Cup in October in Australia and the 50-over showpiece in India next year.

"No doubt I am enjoying my form," top-order batsman Azam, who is ranked number one in the world in both ODI cricket and T20 internationals, said in emailed comments. "But with this form my prime goal is to win the two World Cups for Pakistan in the next one-and-a-half years and if that happens I will feel that my runs are worth gold."

The man dubbed "King" featured in two junior World Cups in 2010 and 2012, scoring most runs for his country on both occasions, but Pakistan failed to win the titles. Azam fired a match-winning hundred against eventual runners-up New Zealand at the 2019 ODI World Cup but Pakistan failed to qualify for the semi-finals. They fell to eventual champions Australia in last year's T20 World Cup semi-finals in the United Arab Emirates despite Azam again excelling with the bat.

### Ball boy to star

Azam learnt the game in the streets and grounds of Lahore at the age of 12. "When I started playing cricket as a schoolboy the target was to play international cricket for Pakistan, become the world's top batsman in such a manner that it helps my team to win all the titles," he said. His father Azam Siddique has always been his number one fan and crucial support. "I was crazy about cricket in my childhood and noticing that passion my father backed me," recalled Azam.

His grassroots journey to the top included being a ball boy during a Pakistan-South Africa Test in Lahore in 2007, when Azam's dream came true when he saw his



**MULTAN:** In this file photo, Pakistan's captain Babar Azam plays a shot during the first one-day international (ODI) cricket match between Pakistan and West Indies in Multan.—AFP

idol AB de Villiers up close. "When I was a kid I used to follow AB de Villiers," said Azam of the South African great regarded as one of the best batters in modern cricket. "I liked the way he used to play the ball on the up. It was delightful for me so I developed that and it helps me get even with the bowlers."

Azam attributes extensive preparation and belief to his success. "Nowadays international cricket is so tough and players are so skilled that if you don't prepare well, you can't compete. "The first and foremost thing is that you have to have belief in yourself and with that mindset I get into the middle and bat with a positive and aggressive intent. "I always want to dominate the opponents, and that pays off. "When you score runs, not only the world acknowledges and fans are enraptured, it also motivates the whole team and they also aim to contribute."

Azam became all-format skipper in 2019, but rather than weigh on him, he enjoys setting an example. "As captain I want to take the challenge because I am at the front. If I am in front, only then my team will follow me and that is the same with run scoring," he said. "If I am scoring runs then other batters will follow and get inspired, but there is always room for improvement so I want to improve my finishing and that is important as captain."—AFP

## KFH honors World Jet Ski Champion Burbayea

**KUWAIT:** As part of Kuwait Finance House (KFH)'s social responsibility and under the umbrella of the Strategic Partners Initiative, KFH participated in the ceremony held in Al-Hamra Tower to honor KFH's strategic partner and the World Jet Ski Champion, Mohammed Burbayea for his third win as the Guinness World Record Holder.

The ceremony was held in the presence of Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammed Al-Rajhi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant-General Anwar Al-Barjas, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah and the representative of Guinness World Records. In his speech at the ceremony, KFH's Group DGM, Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh highlighted the ongoing efforts of KFH to support young Kuwaiti talents to succeed in reaching high ranks of international competitions in different areas of sports, social and cultural activities.

### Strategic partners program

He added "We are pleased to participate in the honoring ceremony of world champion, Mohammed Burbayea, who is one of the major members of the Strategic Partners program exclusively launched by KFH. Being a Guinness World Record holder for the third time is a win for this program, and a major value to Burbayea's achievements. In this regard, Al-Ruwaieh expressed KFH's honor at Burbayea's win, adding that it is a global achievement for Kuwait."

The world champion has won 25 gold medals during his 14 years of participation in the World Championship of International Jet Sports Boating Association (IJSBA), with the sponsorship of KFH. Al-Ruwaieh expressed his gratitude to the organizers, indicating KFH prides itself on supporting many of Kuwait's distinguished achievers and champions to secure the highest standards of success. He confirmed that the unwavering support is part of the Bank's social responsibility and its efforts to promote the capabilities

## Media giants buy IPL cricket rights for \$6.2 billion

**MUMBAI:** India's cricket board said Tuesday it has sold the broadcast rights of the IPL tournament for the next five seasons to global media giants for an eye-popping \$6.2 billion. "IPL is now the 2nd most valued sporting league in the world in terms of per match value!" tweeted Jay Shah, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary, announcing the results of a hotly contested three-day online auction. The amount paid for the rights to one of the world's most watched sports contests dwarfs the \$2.55 billion that Star India paid in 2017 for the previous five seasons to 2022. Star, owned by US behemoth Disney, retained the domestic TV rights for the coming five seasons of the annual two-month competition from 2023 to 2027 for \$3.01 billion, the BCCI said. But the digital rights were auctioned off for even more - \$3.04 billion - reflecting the expectation that more people in India and abroad will watch the matches on digital devices.

The buyer was Viacom18, a joint venture between Reliance - owned by Indian tycoon Mukesh Ambani - and US group Paramount Global as well as an investment group reportedly backed by James Murdoch. "So digital turned out to be bigger than linear TV this season in #IPLMediaRights," BCCI treasurer Arun Dhimal wrote on Twitter. "I would like to thank all the partici-

ties of the society which help enhance Kuwait's standing in all areas.

### (You are our Pride) Platform

Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH is the first bank in Kuwait to launch the platform (You Are Our Pride) to honor distinguished people in various fields, stating that Kuwaiti talents succeeded in reaping big awards under this initiative in worldwide competitions.



### Youth and Sports

Moreover, Al-Ruwaieh underlined KFH's continuous efforts in youth and sports as part of its sustainability plan. The Bank has succeeded in launching qualitative initiatives that embodied KFH's strategy and leadership in social responsibility and sustainability. In addition, the Bank has succeeded in bringing social initiatives to a new level of innovation utilizing technology and other modern applications in collaboration with the creative Kuwaiti youth as well as sponsoring many sports initiatives under the (Better Health, Better Life) theme. This confirms KFH's keenness to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

### Burbayea

Under the long-term strategic partnership, Burbayea thanked KFH for the sponsorship and constant care, adding that the KFH's support contributed to his latest achievement. It is worth noting that Mohammed Burbayea began his water sports journey in 2006 in Kuwait Sea Club. In 2007, he participated in the World Championship held in Arizona for the first time, where he won first place from 2007 to 2021 with a total number of 25 medals.

pants for their interest in the best 'Made in India' sports property!" Also sold were the international broadcast rights, split between Viacom18 and the international arm of India's Times Group.

### Big salaries

Attracting some of world cricket's top stars with bumper salaries, the pioneering IPL helped make Twenty20 - a shorter format of the sport - hugely popular, attracting hundreds of millions of viewers and spawning copycat events worldwide. Last season it expanded to include 10 franchises battling it out in 74 matches, climaxing in a final in the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad in front of 105,000 fans - and millions more watching on television and smartphones. Also in the auction for the rights was Japan's Sony, which televised the IPL for the first 10 years after its inception in 2008. Jeff Bezos's Amazon, which has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on rights for European soccer and American football, had earlier reportedly shown interest in the IPL but pulled out.

### Asia's richest

The deal is a major win for Ambani, Asia's richest man with a net worth according to Forbes of \$97.6 billion who is reputedly a confidante of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Reliance's multi-billion-dollar fortune was made in oil and petrochemicals businesses, but it has diversified into new areas including telecoms, retail and renewable energy in recent years. Reliance shook up the Indian telecom sector with the launch of Jio in 2016 with ultra-cheap data and calls, forcing several competitors to throw in the towel after years of losses.—AFP

Sports

# Majestic Modric gives Croatia victory over off-form France

## World Cup holders finish June run without a victory

PARIS: Luka Modric's early penalty gave Croatia a 1-0 win over off-form France in Paris on Monday as the World Cup holders finished their June run of UEFA Nations League matches without a victory in four outings. Veteran Croatia captain Modric stroked in his spot-kick after just five minutes at the Stade de France, and the home side could not find an equalizer despite Kylian Mbappe returning to join Karim Benzema in the starting line-up.

"We had an inferiority complex against France after their win in the World Cup and so to win at the Stade de France in front of almost 80,000 people against the world champions is extraordinary," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic. France won the previous edition of the Nations League last year but they have managed just two points from their four outings this month, with home defeats against Denmark and now Croatia sandwiching draws away to the Croats and in Austria.

As a result, Les Bleus are bottom of League A, Group 1, seven points behind leaders Denmark who beat Austria 2-0 in Copenhagen on Monday with first-half goals by Jonas Wind and Andreas Skov Olsen. Didier Deschamps' team may now need to win their last two group games in September to avoid being relegated to the less glamorous League B.

Those matches are also the only games they have left before they begin their defense of the World Cup against Australia in Qatar in November. "It is not an excuse but in this get-together we have lacked strength, energy and character too," said Deschamps, who missed the defeat against Denmark earlier this month following the death of his father. "It hurts because we have not managed to

win a game. Maybe I didn't have the usual energy to transmit to them either. "We will need everyone at the start of next season to be in the right frame of mind and in the right athletic condition."

### Fatigue

This clash was the latest meeting between the sides who contested the 2018 World Cup final in Moscow, although Mbappe, Modric and Marcelo Brozovic were the only players who started that day to line up at kick-off here. The home fans in the crowd of over 77,000 were left stunned as the Israeli referee awarded the visitors an early penalty when Liverpool defender Ibrahima Konate was adjudged to have fouled Josip Brekalo.

The evergreen Modric, back at the ground where he won the Champions League with Real Madrid at the end of last month, made no mistake with the resulting penalty even though France goalkeeper Mike Maignan got a touch. From then on it took the occasional burst of pace by Mbappe to bring the crowd to life, although the closest France came to scoring in the first half was when Christopher Nkunku blasted just wide from range. Mbappe had come off injured against Denmark and so missed the draw in Croatia before emerging from the bench to score a late equalizer in Austria.

The Paris Saint-Germain forward did his best to conjure a leveller here as he came close twice early in the second half, and the hosts also had an appeal for a penalty dismissed when Lucas Digne went down in the area. Meanwhile Maignan parried away a fine strike by substitute Lovro Majer at the other end, but Croatia-with Modric as majestic as ever-saw the game out as goalkeeper Ivica Ivusic



SAINT-DENIS: Croatia's midfielder Luka Modric eyes the ball during the UEFA Nations League - League A Group 1 football match between France and Croatia on the outskirts of Paris on June 13, 2022. —AFP

stopped Josip Sutalo scoring an own-goal.

The final whistle was greeted by jeers and Deschamps will hope France's summer slump is simply down to the fatigue among his players after a long campaign, rather than a sign of what might be

to come later in the year. The last raft of Nations League matches before the curtain comes down on the European season will take place on Tuesday, when Germany take on Italy in Moenchengladbach in the standout game. —AFP

## Australia's dancing goalkeeper shines

DOHA: Australia on Tuesday celebrated the antics of dancing goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne whose penalty shootout save against Peru saw them to a fifth straight World Cup final. The 33-year-old clowning his way along the goal line as Peru's players prepared to take their penalty kicks and his block of Alex Valera's shot gave Australia a 5-4 win after the two sides had been deadlocked without a goal for 120 minutes.

Australia coach Graham Arnold brought Redmayne on for team captain Mathew Ryan for the final minutes of extra time as a ploy for the shootout. Martin Boyle missed Australia's first penalty but the next five were all on target. Redmayne danced and jiggled along the line to unnerve the Peru players and Luis Advincula's shot cannoned off a post.

Redmayne's save of Valera's shot set off wild celebrations among the Socceros and their band of a few hundred supporters. Arnold said that Ryan is a "fantastic goalkeeper" but Sydney FC's Redmayne "is a good penalty saver and at that stage of the game I was just trying to do something that could affect them (Peru) mentally."

"Maybe that's why they hit the post," Arnold said. "They thought they had to put it closer to the post to score. It's a risk but it worked." Redmayne denied he was the hero of the night, saying his routine was "a little thing I do" for Sydney that has

"proved quite successful". "If I can gain one percent by making a fool of myself then I will," he said. "I love this team, I love this country and I love this sport. I am under no illusions that all I did was to save one penalty."

### France start

Victory gave Australia the penultimate place available for the tournament that starts on November 21. They will play defending champions France in Group D one day later to start their sixth appearance at the World Cup in all. Peru, 22nd in FIFA's list and who beat Australia 2-0 at the 2018 World Cup group stage, were roared on by 10,000 fans, most of whom had flown halfway round the globe for the playoff only to see a frustrating encounter between the rivals with few clearcut chances. Arnold insisted that his whole team were heroes for getting through.

"What we have been through in the last year and a half with the pandemic, not being able to get back into Australia, players getting COVID, not being able to get the best squad together a lot of the time. "I am so proud and happy for the players," said Arnold. "The sacrifices they have made. No-one thought they could do it but they kept on believing." Peru's Argentine coach Ricardo Gareca said the whole side felt "enormous disappointment" at the way in which they were beaten but would not criticize Redmayne. "It hurts not to make it as we were doing well in the game," added Gareca.

Peru's red and white army of supporters gave the conservative Gulf state a taste of what they can expect in November when some 1.4 million



AL-RAYYAN: Australia's goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne concedes a goal in the penalty shootout during the FIFA World Cup 2022 inter-confederation play-offs match between Australia and Peru on June 13, 2022. —AFP

visitors are predicted to come to town. Their distinctive red and white shirts dominated the streets. For more than two hours the fans chanted "Come on Peruvians, tonight we must win." Most of the team were left in tears of disbelief after the defeat. The final place for the finals will be decided on Tuesday when Oceania champions New Zealand take on Costa Rica who were in the central and north American qualifying contest. —AFP

The Norwegian, however, will instead line up in City blue next season, just as his father Alfie-Inge did between 2000-2003 during a very different era for the club. "First of all my father a little bit," said Haaland when asked why he choose City. "I was born in England, I've been a City fan my whole life. I know a lot about the club. "I feel at home here and also I think I can develop and get the best out of my game at City."

The arrival of petrodollars from Abu Dhabi has long since transformed City's fortunes, with Pep Guardiola's men having won four Premier League titles in five seasons. —AFP

Europe's top talent. The 21-year-old goalscoring phenomenon had his choice of the continent's top clubs thanks to a reported buyout clause of 60 million euros (£51 million, \$63 million) that saw him leave Borussia Dortmund well below his market value.

By comparison, Liverpool are set to spend up to 100 million euros for the far less-hyped Uruguay forward Darwin Nunez from Benfica. Real Madrid wanted Haaland at the Bernabeu next season, Barcelona sought him as a successor to Lionel Messi, while Bayern Munich again aimed to swoop on their Bundesliga rivals.

## Nigeria create AFCON record by winning 10-0

JOHANNESBURG: Napoli forward Victor Osimhen scored four goals as Nigeria crushed Sao Tome e Principe 10-0 in Morocco on Monday to record the biggest victory in Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifying history. Qualifying for the biennial competition has been staged since 1961 and Ghana, Kenya and Libya shared the record with eight-goal victories until Nigeria went on a rampage in the Atlantic resort of Agadir.

Nigeria led 3-0 at half-time in the Group A matchday two encounter and the other scorers were Terem Moffi (two), captain Moses Simon, Oghenekaro Etebo, Ademola Lookman and Emmanuel Dennis. With Nigeria 153 places higher in the world rankings than Sao Tome, a one-sided encounter was expected, but after a fairly competitive first half, the game turned into shooting practice for the Super Eagles.

Nigeria eclipsed their previous highest score in a Cup of Nations qualifier of seven against Burkina Faso in 1991 when now deceased Rashidi Yekini notched four. It was a home fixture for Sao Tome, but had to be moved to southern Morocco because the tiny island nation does not have an international-standard stadium. Goalkeeper Anastacio Braganca, one of several home-based Sao Tomeans in the line-up, has conceded 15 goals in two matches after Guinea-Bissau put five past him in matchday one last week.

Osimhen revealed in the space offered by the minnows and is the leading scorer in 2023 AFCON qualifying with five goals, one more than reigning African Footballer of the Year Sadio Mane from Senegal. Severely injured last year playing for Napoli, Osimhen wore a protective face mask during the first half but discarded it for the second 45 minutes. The 23-year-old nodded the three-time African champions in front on nine minutes in the near-empty 45,000-seat Grand Stade d'Agadir. —AFP

## Haaland satisfies Man City's need for striker, status

MANCHESTER: Manchester City are still waiting for their moment of Champions League glory, but by winning the race to sign Erling Haaland they have established themselves as a go-to destination for

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Khalidiya	24848075
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Kaifan	24849807
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Shamiya	24848913
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Shuwaikh	24814507
Chest Hospital	24849400	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Nuzha	22526804
Adan Hospital	23940620	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Qadsiya	22515088
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Dasmah	22532265
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
		Shaab	22518752
		Qibla	22459381
		Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
		Mirqab	22456536
		Sharq	22465401
		Salmiya	25746401

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

### CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my name from SAIFUDDIN RAJAB ALI to SAIFUDDIN RAJAB ALI TAKDIR. In future I should be known by my new name. My Passport No. L3441234 & Civil ID No. 275010184475. Address: SAIFUDDIN RAJAB ALI TAKDIR R/o Sailypura, Nai Abadi, Banskara (Raj.) (C 0870)

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**NOTICE**  
June 15, 2022

Mr. Mathews Jacob, Indian National, son of Mr. Jacob Mathews, resident of Vadakaneth House, Ayrookuzhiyil, Mulakuzha PO, Chengannur, Alleppey, Kerala, India and Ms. Glaiza Cabacungan Cabides, Philippine National, daughter of Mr. Cirilo Colandog Cabides, resident of 320 Medel St. Zone 3, Signal Village, Taguig City, Philippines both presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwaitmea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965- 22550171, 00965-22533125).

First Secretary (Community Affairs) and Marriage Officer, Embassy of India, Kuwait.  
Email: cw2.kuwaitmea.gov.in

**EMERGENCY ☎ 112**



KUWAIT: Jordan and Kuwait players go for a header during the Asia Cup qualifiers on Tuesday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Jordan overwhelm Kuwait 3-0

By Chidi Emmanuel

**KUWAIT:** Jordan maintained their 100 percent record in the Asia Cup qualifiers as they claimed a hard-fought 3-0 victory over Kuwait on Tuesday. Jordan's convincing victory confirmed that they are the best team in Group A as they

booked their place in next year's AFC Asian Cup. This follows a 2-0 win over Nepal.

The Jordanian team took control of the match held at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium. With this result, Jordan have qualified for the AFC Asian Cup for the fourth time in a row while Kuwait, champions in 1980, missed out on two

consecutive editions for the first time in their history, having previously only failed to qualify in 1992, 2007 and 2019.

Jordan's first chance came just before the quarter-hour mark as winger Mousa Al-Taamari embarked on a solo run from the right and into the Kuwaiti net, but his final touch, a lobbed fin-

ish attempt with his right passed across the mouth of goal and behind for a goal kick. Jordan's Ali Alwan scored the first goal in the 62nd minute to put them ahead. Two more goals by Mahmoud Al-Mardhi and Nouredin Al-Rawabdah in the final minutes of the match sealed the victory for the Jordanians.

## Tunisia stun Japan to win Kirin Cup

**OSAKA:** Tunisia stepped up their World Cup preparations with a 3-0 win over Japan in Osaka on Tuesday to finish first in the four-team Kirin Cup tournament. Mohamed Ali Ben Romdhane scored a penalty 10 minutes into the second half before Ferjani Sassi and Ali Maaloul scored to round off an impressive victory for the North Africans.

Tunisia have been drawn with France, Denmark and Australia in World Cup Group D and they can reflect on a productive trip to Japan this month after also beating Chile 2-0 in last Friday's semi-final. Tunisia and Japan, who are also bound for Qatar, both struggled to create clear-cut chances in a tight first half. Japan forward Takumi Minamino could only manage a fresh-air shot when the ball dropped invitingly to him in the box midway through the first half.

Daichi Kamada was guilty of an even worse miss when he slid in at the back post 10 minutes later with the goal at his mercy. Minamino put the ball into the net at the end of the first half, only for the linesman to flag him for offside. Tunisia made Japan pay 10 minutes after the restart when Anis Ben Slimane released Taha Yassine Khenissi into the box and Maya Yoshida took him down with a poorly timed challenge. Romdhane stepped up and smashed the penalty past goalkeeper Daniel Schmidt.

Japan then handed Tunisia a second when a defensive mix-up between Yoshida and Ko Itakura let Youssef Msakni steal into the box, and Sassi was in position to finish off his pass. Maaloul put the icing on the cake for Tunisia when he made it three after a break on the counter in injury time. In the day's earlier game between beaten semi-finalists, Ghana beat Chile 3-1 on penalties after a 0-0 draw. Ghana, who have also qualified for the World Cup, finished the game with nine men after Alidu Seidu and Mubarak Wakaso were sent off. —AFP

## Kuwait Winter Games Club gets ISU membership

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Winter Games Club announced that it has obtained membership in the International Skating Union (ISU) after fulfilling all sports, technical and administrative requirements, foremost of which was the establishment of local competitions and participation in several continental and international tournaments.

In a statement to KUNA Tuesday, Fahad Al-Ajmi, the club's head, said that the club received the approval to join from its international counterpart, which is based in Lausanne, after the approval of the ISU Congress that held its meeting in Thailand

from June 11-12. ISU's approval will grow this game for girls in the country with opportunities in gaining experiences through international participation, as they will participate more after this accession in the most vital international tournaments, he explained.

He valued the efforts of Kuwait Olympic Committee in facilitating the club joining ISU, which comes within the framework of the committee's support for sports federations and specialized clubs, underlining the club's keenness to develop its five games such as ice hockey and skating. — KUNA



Fahad Al-Ajmi

## Liverpool and Nunez seal \$105 million deal

**LIVERPOOL:** Jurgen Klopp said Liverpool had shown "decisiveness and ambition in equal measure" to land Darwin Nunez for a fee that could rise to a club-record 100 million euros (£85 million, \$105 million). The Champions League finalists have splashed an initial 75 million euros on the 22-year-old, with an extra 25 million in performance-related add-ons according to figures released by Benfica.

That could take Nunez's move beyond the £75 million Liverpool paid for Virgil Van Dijk in January 2018 and make him the fifth most expensive transfer in Premier League history. The Uruguayan scored 34 goals in 41 appearances last season, including twice against Liverpool in the Champions League quarter-finals.

"This is super news, really super news," Klopp told the Liverpool website. "I'm very grateful to everyone at the club for making it happen. We've shown decisiveness and ambition in equal measure. "Darwin is a wonderful player; already really good but so much potential to get even better. "That's why it's so exciting, to be honest. His age, his desire, his hunger to be even better than he currently is. His belief in our project and what we are looking to do as a club."

Liverpool narrowly missed an unprecedented quadruple of trophies last season. Klopp's men lifted the League Cup and FA Cup, but lost out on the Premier



Uruguayan forward Darwin Nunez

League title to Manchester City by one point and were beaten 1-0 by Real Madrid in the Champions League final. And Nunez said he wants to write himself into the club's storied history. "I'm really happy and delighted to be here at Liverpool. It's a massive club," said Nunez. "When I arrived at the training ground, I was really surprised to see the set-up and the structure and all the trophies here.

"You can then imagine yourself winning more trophies and then later on when you come here again and see the trophies on display, you can say, 'Look, I was a part of that, I was there at that time, winning trophies'. "That's one of the reasons why I came here to Liverpool - to win trophies and titles." — AFP



OSAKA PREFECTURE: Tunisia's players and officials celebrate with the trophy after their victory in the Kirin Cup football final match between Japan and Tunisia at the Panasonic stadium in Suita on June 14, 2022. — AFP