



**6** Tunisia's Saied confirms no state religion in new charter



**8** UK hit by biggest rail strike in over 30 years



**13** Dubai eateries earn Middle East's first Michelin stars



**16** Lightning thrash Avalanche to bounce back in Stanley Cup



# Kuwait: First offshore drilling, biggest oil refinery in works

## Kuwait committed to hydrocarbon investment to meet demand



DOHA: Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani speaks during the opening session of the Qatar Economic Forum on June 21, 2022. — AFP

DOHA: Kuwait is starting its first offshore oil exploration and building the world's biggest oil refinery, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's chief executive said on Tuesday. Kuwait is also committed to investing to meet increasing demand for hydrocarbons. "Kuwait can go higher than current output and is ready to meet any increases OPEC authorizes," Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah told the Qatar Economic Forum hosted by Bloomberg in the capital Doha.

Sheikh Nawaf said the company was supplying all customers, but that multinational oil firms were not matching the investment of national oil enterprises. He also said the first offshore rig had arrived in Kuwait and would begin drilling soon. "We have never touched the offshore in Kuwait. The first offshore drill rig arrived in Kuwait a week ago and will start soon," he said. The new refinery would

come online by the end of 2022, Sheikh Nawaf added. "It will be the largest refinery in the world at 615,000 barrels of oil a day capacity," he said adding that it would help meet increased demand from Europe and elsewhere.

Sheikh Nawaf said there was a "dangerous trend", with world consumers wanting energy but not being prepared for the change from polluting hydrocarbons to green energy. "That is a paradox here that is causing quite a tremendous disruption in the investment cycle. We are making the long-term investments, but not international oil companies," Sheikh Nawaf said the world currently produces and consumes about 100 million barrels of oil a day but that the equivalent of Kuwait's production - about 3.5 million barrels a day - was being lost through declining fields.

Sheikh Nawaf later said a \$30 per barrel "war premium" has been built into the cost of oil. "I see a war premium of about \$30 in the price right now," he told Bloomberg TV on the sidelines of the forum. He also said European buyers are asking about more refined oil from the country, partly in anticipation of its Al-Zour refinery coming fully onstream. "We're getting more calls for products," he said. "By the end of the year, we'll have about 615,000 barrels of oil a day being converted into mostly diesel and very low sulfur fuel oil."

Consumers must be prepared to endure up to five years of turbulent oil markets, the head of ExxonMobil said Tuesday, citing under-investment and the coronavirus pandemic. Energy markets have been roiled by the Ukraine war as Russia has

Continued on Page 6

### News in brief



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi receives Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on June 20, 2022. — AFP

### Saudi crown prince in Egypt

CAIRO: Saudi and Egyptian companies signed 14 agreements worth a total of \$7.7 billion during a two-day visit to Cairo by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who kicked off a regional tour extending to Jordan and Turkey. The Saudi investment ministry said the agreements aimed to "enhance investment and economic cooperation between the two countries". — AFP



NEW YORK: The 2021 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Dmitry Muratov is displayed during a charity auction at The Times Center on June 20, 2022. — AFP

### Nobel medal sells for \$103.5m

NEW YORK: Dmitry Muratov, the Russian editor-in-chief of the independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta, on Monday auctioned off his Nobel Peace Prize gold medal for a whopping \$103.5 million to benefit children displaced by the war in Ukraine. The medal was sold to an unidentified phone bidder at the sale in New York organized by Heritage Auctions. — AFP (See Page 13)

## Opposition steps up campaign amid political stalemate

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti opposition stepped up its anti-government campaign on Tuesday as about 20 MPs continued an open-ended sit-in at the National Assembly building, while prominent former

politicians continued holding daily rallies. The aim of the campaign, which began a week ago, is to force the resumption of Assembly sessions, suspended since the Cabinet resigned on April 5, and to ward off attempts to undermine the 1962 constitution.

Kuwait has effectively been without a proper Cabinet for almost the past 80 days after HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah submitted his resignation to HH the Amir after 26 lawmakers, two more than the required quorum, said they will support a non-cooperation motion filed following a grilling.

HH the Amir accepted the resignation more than a month ago and asked the premier and the

Cabinet to continue to manage urgent matters in a caretaker capacity. Since the resignation, the Assembly has not convened regular sessions, which opposition MPs claim amounts to preventing the legislature from meeting to decide on issues relevant to the people.

The opposition claimed that this was an attempt to undermine the rule of the constitution which governs relations between the lawmakers and the government. Around 20 MPs decided to stage an indefinite sit-in at the Assembly building, including sleeping in their offices to protest the paralysis of the constitution and the country's democracy.

Continued on Page 6

## Summer of 'hell' begins for Iraqis

BASRA: Umm Mohammed, 74, waves a fan back and forth to cool down, but in the blistering heat of Iraq's southern city of Basra there is nothing but stiflingly hot air. While Basra is used to scorching summers, this year it has started sooner than expected, bringing misery to residents in a city also plagued by chronic electricity shortages. "By God, we are tired," Umm Mohammed said faintly, adding that the heat had woken her up in the middle of the night.

Just days into summer, the temperature in Basra has already soared to around 45 degrees Celsius. Umm Mohammed's modest home has a flimsy sheet-metal roof that retains the sweltering heat. Further north in the capital Baghdad, temperatures have already topped 50 Celsius - in the shade. Battered by decades of conflict that has sapped its infrastructure, Iraq is struggling with droughts, repeated sandstorms, desertification and a drop in some river levels.

Chronic power cuts are exacerbated in the summer, and only those who can afford private generators are able to keep their fridges or air conditioning units running. In Basra, high humidity compounds the oppressive heat.

Continued on Page 6



NASIRIYAH, Iraq: Children sit in an empty pool next to a fan outside their home in this city in the southern Dhi Qar province on June 10, 2022. — AFP

## Cambodia nets world's biggest freshwater fish

PHNOM PENH: A fisherman on the Mekong river in Cambodia has hooked the biggest freshwater fish ever recorded, scientists said - a 300-kilogram stingray. The giant freshwater stingray, which measured four meters from snout to tail, was caught last week and released back into the wild after being fitted with a tag to track its behavior.

The monstrous bottom-dweller beat the previous record for biggest recorded freshwater fish, held by a

293-kilo Mekong giant catfish caught in Thailand in 2005, the US-funded Wonders of the Mekong research project said. The stingray, caught in Stung Treng province in northern Cambodia, was more than twice the weight of an average lowland gorilla, the experts said.

"In 20 years of researching giant fish in rivers and lakes on six continents, this is the largest freshwater fish that we've encountered or that's been documented anywhere worldwide," Zeb Hogan, a fish biologist leading the Wonders of the Mekong project, said in a statement released Tuesday. "This is an absolutely astonishing discovery, and justifies efforts to better understand the mysteries surrounding this species and the

Continued on Page 6



This handout photo taken on June 14, 2022 shows a 300-kg giant freshwater stingray that was caught and released in the Mekong River in Cambodia's Stung Treng province. — AFP

# Kuwait Crown Prince receives Sheikh Nasser, Minister Fares

## Amir condolences with Bangladesh over floods victims



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Fares.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday at Bayan Palace His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Kuwait Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Fares.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of condolences to the President of Bangladesh Mohammad Abdulhameed over the victims of floods in the country's southeastern areas. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables to President Abdulhameed. — KUNA

## Kuwait defense minister hails military promotions

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah hailed on Tuesday recent promotions within the ranks of the

country's army, saying the procedure is among the "undeniable rights" of military personnel. The minister's remarks came amid a ceremony in which several army officers ascended to the rank of brigadier in what was the biggest such promotion in Kuwait's history, he underlined. On the promotions, he said it was the start of a plan to overhaul Kuwait's military in the face of the "biggest challenges" facing the region and the entire world, urging the officers to "have the nation's best interest at heart." — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah and senior army officials pose for a group picture with the promoted military personnel. — Defense Ministry photos



Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah speaks with the newly-promoted personnel.

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## Kuwait, Czech Republic discuss Kuwaitis' Schengen exemption

PRAGUE: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Majdi Dhafiri met Tuesday, in the Czech capital Prague, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Non-European Countries, Economic and Development Cooperation of the Czech Republic, Martin Talpa. During the meeting, both sides examined mutual and bilateral ties between the two countries, besides discussing Schengen visa exemption for Kuwaiti citizens. The Czech side affirmed full support for Kuwait for finalizing all required measures as soon as possible, noting the Czech Republic supportive role in this regard particularly when it takes over the European Union Chairmanship in July. Dhafiri's visit to the European country came in line with the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry's plan for serving the State of Kuwait's interests, facilitating citizens' issues, cementing ties with friendly states and opening new horizons for cooperation with the foreign nations at various levels. — KUNA



PRAGUE: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Majdi Dhafiri meets Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Non-European Countries, Economic and Development Cooperation of the Czech Republic Martin Talpa. — KUNA

## Company busted selling used phones as new

KUWAIT: Commerce and Industry Ministry inspectors raided a company accused of committing commercial fraud. The company workers repaired used phones, then repackaged and sold them as new devices, the ministry said in a statement. The raid was made after days of surveil-

lance, and a large quantity of phones were found in the company's office, it added. The ministry is reviewing the company's invoices to identify the shops which bought any of the phones to take action against them for the protection of consumers, the ministry concluded.

### Fatal fire

Separately, a young man died in a Sulaibiya house fire, Kuwait Fire Force said on Tuesday. Sulaibkhat and Istiqlal fire stations responded to a call and battled the fire which had erupted on the first floor of the building. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire, KFF added.



Local

# Refugees' numbers worldwide doubled in a decade: UNHCR Representative to Kuwait

## UNHCR office in Kuwait hosts 'World Refugee Day' event

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: UNHCR held an event on Monday to commemorate World Refugee Day, which is marked on June 20 every year, under the slogan "Whoever. Wherever. Whenever. Everyone has the right to seek safety." The event was attended by UNHCR partners from the government, private and charitable sectors, and representatives of diplomatic missions and international organizations. It featured a group of artists displaying paintings that reflected this year's theme for World Refugee Day.

UNHCR Representative to Kuwait Nasrin Rabian said the number of refugees and displaced persons worldwide reached a record high by the end of 2021 at 8 percent, more than double the figure 10 years ago. "This year's World Refugee Day is quite different from any other year due to the efforts to provide protection and solutions for refugees," she said.

"In addition to persecution, refugees and displaced persons face extreme poverty, insecurity, more hunger and displacement, severe shortages of health and medical services and a lack of funding for humanitarian operations due to the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent conflicts and wars that suddenly broke out in Afghanistan, Ukraine and others," Rabian pointed out.

### 42 percent

According to UNHCR's Global Trends report for this month, children account for 42 percent of all refugees and displaced persons. Low- and middle-income countries hosted 83 percent of refugees, while LDCs granted asylum to 27 percent of the total. The report revealed 72 percent of refugees live in countries neighboring their countries of origin, with Turkey hosting nearly 3.8 million refugees, the largest number of refugees worldwide, followed by Uganda (1.5 million), Pakistan (1.5 million) and



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah speaks during the event. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



Nasrin Rabian, UNHCR representative to Kuwait, makes her address.



A general view of guests in attendance.

Germany (1.3 million). Colombia hosts 1.8 million Venezuelans displaced outside their homeland.

The report shows that Lebanon also hosts the largest number of refugees per capita (1 out of 8), followed by Jordan (1 out of 14) and Turkey (1 out of 23), in proportion to the number of their citizens. Aruba hosted the largest number of displaced

Venezuelans (1 in 6), followed by Curacao Island (1 in 10), compared to their populations. Meanwhile the report mentioned that more than two-thirds of refugees (69 percent) come from only five countries - Syria (6.8 million), Venezuela (4.6 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.4 million) and Myanmar (1.2 million).

Rabian stressed the importance of joint efforts with all partners from countries, governments, individuals, charities and the private sector to support humanitarian activities in order to alleviate the suffering of people under UNHCR's mandate and to meet their emergency needs in more than 137 countries and regions where UNHCR operates, to build humanitarian relations with these people as well as to secure a future for them.

### Providing support

Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah said: "Since joining the United Nations, Kuwait has been keen to provide all aspects of support and assistance to the activities undertaken and sponsored by the organization and its specialized agencies, especially in the humanitarian, development and relief fields, and it has spared no effort in providing various types of political, material and moral support to refugees and displaced persons around the world."

He added: "The violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that refugees around the world are subjected to, especially in our region, which is riddled with conflicts, and the scarcity of resources and the need for shelter, food, education, health and other basic requirements for human life, calls for a serious stance from the international community to work on the need to address the roots of conflicts."

Jarallah called for supporting political tracks, preventive diplomacy and obligating parties involved in conflicts to assume their duties towards protecting civilians, allowing the entry of humanitarian aid to those who deserve it, and respecting the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and human rights principles. He urged the international community to activate international mechanisms to criminalize all internationally prohibited acts, stressing that impunity from punishment cannot be an option in armed conflict.

## Kuwait's outdoor labor ban: 730 violations in June

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: According to resolution no. 535/2015, workers are prohibited to work in open areas in direct sunlight from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm from June till August to guarantee the health and safety of all workers at worksites and to abide by international work regulations and subsidiary laws. But many companies violate the Public Authority of Manpower's (PAM) decision and continue to force workers to work in open areas and construction sites.

Abdulrazzaq Al-Azazi, Communication Officer at

Kuwait Society for Human Rights (KSHR), told Kuwait Times that the KSHR team goes on field trips to monitor violations. The number of violations has reached 730 in June, with 254 construction workers, 272 delivery workers, 113 cleaners, 27 road construction workers and 64 house security guards found working in the heat.

Azazi said the team observes and reports the violations, both the ones they witness during the field tours or reported by people who record the violations and tag the society. "We have 'The Heat Kills Them' campaign that allows people to tag us and contact the authorities to report



Abdulrazzaq Al-Azazi

the violation," he said.

Azazi noted that the campaign launched by the KSHR to monitor violations is a contribution by the society to support government efforts in addressing violations that workers are exposed to while performing their work, in addition to involving the community in monitoring violations and informing the competent authorities.

"KSHR received today a complaint about a medical test center for expatriate workers in Al-Sabah Health Zone, where people are asked to stand in queues outside the center in the heat of the sun with their children, which is unacceptable," he pointed out.

Since June 1, PAM has been conducting surprise campaigns to round up violators who do not comply with the authority's decision to make sure the law is applied. It enforces the ban on employees working under direct sunlight, and ensures that the work is shifted to the evening, calling on people to contact the hotline 99523590 to report any violations.

## Manpower authority hosts program for Kuwaiti fresh graduates



By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: To encourage young Kuwaitis to work in the private sector, the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) held the 'My Path to Professionalism' (Masari) program for two days in cooperation with INJAZ Kuwait. This program aims to rehabilitate

young Kuwaitis and fresh graduates from both genders to improve their skills through training courses and workshops on various topics including time management, preparing for job interviews, creating a CV to get a job, actively working in a competitive work environment and providing a complete explanation of the private sector and its benefits.



Fifty-four participants attended this program. At the end of the course, all participants received accredited certificates from INJAZ Kuwait. INJAZ is a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) driven by Kuwait's private sector to deliver educational programs and empower the youth of Kuwait to be able to build a successful future.

## Flour mills company to reduce animal feed production

KUWAIT: Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company informed the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources that it is compelled to reduce the amount of shuwar (wheat bran) used as feed to 4,000 tons per month instead of 6,750 tons starting from July 1 until further notice, informed sources told Kuwait Times. The company justified its decision to a decline in sale of flour, which is linked to the production of shuwar, adding current rates of flour production does not allow the company to supply shuwar at the current rate. Shuwar is a byproduct resulting from grinding wheat, which makes it linked to the production of flour, and it is not a ready product for packing and delivery. PAAAFR sources expected KFMBC to increase feed prices, and this will make the authority look for other options to provide feed at suitable prices and prevent a monopoly.

## Ministry reaches agreements with suppliers to maintain food stocks

KUWAIT: A commerce and industry ministry committee is satisfied with the availability of foodstuff and their strategic stocks, ensuring their availability in the Kuwait market at suitable prices, despite current fluctuations around the world that negatively affected food prices, with many countries refraining from exporting important products.

The committee said in a report to Commerce Minister Fahad Al-Shuraian, which will be submitted during the next meeting of the committee on food security at the Council of Ministers, that the ministry succeeded in agreeing with suppliers to direct their shipments to Kuwait, as competition is heated between many countries,

adding frozen chicken is among the products that faced shortages in local markets.

It was also officially agreed with India to supply wheat to Kuwait and make it available for Kuwait Flour Mills, which will increase production when necessary, and it has the capacity to do so, informed sources told Kuwait Times. The committee said most products find their way to Kuwait easily, which means there is no need for a rise in prices and monopolization, as inspection teams continue their work and punish violators. It said the commerce ministry succeeded in convincing suppliers to increase their shipments to Kuwait after guaranteeing payments within one month of delivery of the shipment.

### In my view

## Multinational companies

By Yousuf Awadh Al-Azmi

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"If you're changing the world, you're working on important things." - Larry Page

There are gigantic capitalist entities representing a multinational and transcontinental private sector. They are companies that spread around the world due to their efficiency in their fields, and they have capitals that equal countries' budgets if not more - rather there are companies that became a symbol of economic liberalism, which is one of the political and economic doctrines. What are known as multinational transcontinental companies are playing roles that are considered soft power in certain approaches, be they economic, social or cultural.

In the energy sectors, we see an influential global presence of companies whose budgets are equal to that of countries. In the food sector, there are many transcontinental trademarks. Major multinational companies look for certain facilities, without which it will be difficult to enter the local market of a country. Among the most important facilities are political stability and security, the legal and organizational environment (legislations), size of the local market, total economy stability, exchange rates, material infrastructure, competitive and low tax rates, possibility of getting land and real estate assets, presence of attractive financial channels, skilled low-cost labor and other things companies look for.

There are those who are apprehensive towards these types of companies, due to their influence over several things, such as their control of the market in which they operate due to the huge facilities they possess. Also, there are those who believe that the entrance of such companies cannot be without a certain political cover, and in this particular case, it is mostly alluded to bribing influential politicians or a form of administrative and financial corruption, which allows these companies to control the fields they operate in the market. Of course, not all that is said is true, and there must be exceptions. There must be honest parties who lead countries' economies.

There are those who link the spread of gigantic companies with globalization, and that the world has become a small village. There are those who confirm the world has even become a small room. Of course, there is no doubt about the truth and reality of this linkage, yet what are the effects of the penetration of these large capitalist companies with huge resources on the local trade? Will it be motivational and boost the interest of all, or will they take everything, or sway the market according to their moves?

The talk is too much about this, and dealing with these companies is supposed to be professional considering the fluctuations of the world economy and requirements of the local one, by passing legislations that strike a balance between supply and demand, and decide on the investor with what agrees with the country's laws and free competition. We must not be afraid of the investor in a way that is not constructive and does not present any benefit; rather we should deal in a way that preserves the right of all, and the first of these rights is a clean judiciary that deals with people equally, with flexible legislations, and a financial and administrative infrastructure that accepts all.

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## News in brief

## Saudi approves security agreement with Kuwait

**RIYADH:** The Saudi Cabinet approved a cooperation agreement between the Presidency of State Security in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State Security Bureau of Kuwait in the field of combating crimes and funds for terrorism. This came during a Saudi Cabinet session held on Tuesday and chaired by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

## Kuwait oil price down to \$112.81 pb

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil plummeted by \$7.86 to settle at \$112.81 per barrel on Monday in contrast with \$120.67 pb last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Tuesday. Globally, Brent crude climbed \$1.01 to \$114.13 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate crude edged up by 61 cents, settling at \$110.17 pb.

## Arab League, UNHCR launch health care strategy

**CAIRO:** The Arab League and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched, on Tuesday, "The Arab Strategy on access to public health services in asylum and displacement contexts in the Arab region." In a statement, Arab League Assistant Secretary-General Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh welcomed the strategy and its action plan, which will provide health care to refugees to mitigate the effects of asylum in the Arab region and supports the efforts made by the countries hosting them.

The strategy aims to provide health services to refugees and asylum seekers in Arab member states to control diseases and early mortality rates by supporting and improving quality health care services, she explained. The approval of this strategy came after a number of consultative meetings with experts from the ministries of health in the Arab countries, Abu Ghazaleh noted, expressing her belief in the importance of achieving the third goal of the Sustainable Development 2030.

The first Arab workshop will be on held on Tuesday and Wednesday to follow up on the implementation of this strategy, in cooperation and coordination with the Office of the UNHCR. Meanwhile, the representative of the (UNHCR) to Egypt Pablo Matteo, praised the progress witnessed in health care sector in the Arab countries, "despite its decline in middle or low-income countries and conflict areas." In a similar speech, Matteo pointed out that the refugee movements have caused pressure on the health care systems in the host countries, which led to the growth of health concerns and problems that affected the refugee and displaced communities, "especially the most vulnerable groups." He praised the strategy, which will "ensure all refugees have access to their rights to life-saving health care, reproductive health services, and food security, nutrition, water and sanitation services." This strategy was prepared in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Cairo and reviewed by experts concerned with the ministries of health in the Arab member states before being approved by the Council of Arab Health Ministers. —KUNA



## Kuwait Fire Force, Health Ministry officials discuss cooperation

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Force's Deputy Chief for Prevention Sector Major General Khalid Fahad Chaired a meeting in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering and Projects Affairs at Health Ministry Ibrahim Al-Nahham, Directors of governorates in the prevention sector at KFF, KFF Public Relations Director, and hospitals directors in order to strengthen cooperation between Kuwait Fire Force and Health Ministry to make it easier for inspection teams. The meeting discussed the appointment of liaison officers to quickly process licenses and projects.

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive on a main highway in Kuwait at sunset. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Kuwaiti healthcare firm opens new facility in Jahra

Fourth of five primary healthcare centers in operational stage



Thamer Arab

Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN), a public-private healthcare firm, inaugurated its fourth primary healthcare center in Kuwait on Tuesday. The new clinic is located in Jahra, west of Kuwait City. Addressing the opening ceremony, the company's Chairman Mutlaq Al-Sanea said the new facility, which covers 2,095 square meters and embraces eight specialized clinics, is considered a fresh step of the firm's strategy purposed to serve this densely populated area. He added that it is the fourth of five primary healthcare centers planned for the company's current operational stage. He emphasized that the planned centers are a core element of the firm's drive to establish an integrated healthcare system that targets, in its final stage, three hospitals and 12 centers in all governorates.

Speaking to reporters while opening the facility, DHAMAN's CEO Thamer Arab said the company's fifth center would be established in Fahaheel in Ahmadi Governorate. Arab added that it would be the company's largest primary healthcare center, spanning over 4,000 square meters and covering 45 specialized clinics. Meanwhile, Spokesman of the Health Ministry Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad commended the new center as being a considerable addition to the country's public and private health-



KUWAIT: Officials tour the Health Assurance Hospitals Company's new primary healthcare center in Jahra. —KUNA photos

care system. He said the company's health facilities would serve many citizens and residents, thus easing out pressure on the country's current health system. "This will positively reflect on the quality of healthcare provided to citizens and residents altogether," he said, pointing out continuing and fruitful collaboration between the ministry and the company in this regard. Since its establishment in 2014, Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) is the first Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) healthcare organization in the Middle East as it was founded upon Amiri directives as part of the national development plan "New Kuwait 2035".

DHAMAN handles establishing an integrated healthcare system that includes medical insurance programs, as well as building and operating a network of primary healthcare centers and hospitals that cover all areas in Kuwait. The shareholder structure of DHAMAN consists of government bodies represented by Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) and the Public Institution For Social Security (PIFSS) with 24 percent, a strategic partner from the private sector with 26 percent, and 50 percent of the Company's shares were allocated for Kuwaiti citizens through an initial public offering. —KUNA

## IBS Director meets with Scholarship Program Graduates

**KUWAIT:** The Director-General of the Institute of Banking Studies, Prof Dr Yaqoub S Y Alrefaei, met the graduates of the "Scholarship Program for Kuwaitis Pursuing a Master's Degree" on June 20, 2022. He congratulated them on their graduation from the best universities in the world.

This is the fifth batch of this program, one of the "Kafa'a" initiative launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks, with implementation supervised by Institute of Banking Studies. The program aims to create distinguished national cadres and competencies that are capable of contributing to and supporting the development process in the State of Kuwait, and that can actively participate in building their country.

Prof Alrefaei congratulated the graduates on their graduation, which was a challenge for them that was not easy to achieve, but they worked and persevered until they achieved this difficult feat by graduating from the best international universities in the year 2021, and he wished them continued success. The graduates are:

- Mohammad Abdullah Al-Ghunaim, graduated from: University of Melbourne, Australia, Major: Master of Management (Finance)



- Sulaiman Khaled Boodai, graduated from: Durham University, United Kingdom, Major: MSc Islamic Finance and Management
- Mohammad Saud Al-Hamad, graduated from: Imperial College London, United Kingdom, Major: Master of Business Administration
- Abdulrahman Abdulmalek Al-Tulaihi, graduated from: Durham University, United Kingdom, Major: MSc Islamic Finance

It is worth mentioning that this program is held with the aim of sending Kuwaiti graduates to obtain master's degrees from the best international universities, according to international classifications in these fields, which enriches the participants' experience and contributes to preparing them to work efficiently and professionally and to serve our beloved country, whether in the public or private sectors.



Islamists storm India-backed yoga event in Maldives

## Ivory Coast 'turns page' on refugee crisis: UNHCR

Page 6

Page 7



TBILISI, Georgia: People rally in support of the Georgia's membership to the European Union, days after the European Commission recommended deferring the country's candidacy, in Tbilisi. — AFP

# 120,000 march in Georgia 'for Europe'

'Every Georgian must assume personal responsibility so that our European hope comes true'

**TBILISI, Georgia:** At least 120,000 Georgians took to the streets Monday in support of the country's EU membership bid, after the European Commission recommended deferring Tbilisi's candidacy. Waving Georgian, Ukrainian, and EU flags, demonstrators flooded on Monday evening the main thoroughfare of the Georgian capital Tbilisi.

In what was the biggest demonstration in decades, at least 120,000 people took part in the "March for Europe" in Tbilisi, according to an AFP estimate based on video footage shot from drones. Many held placards that read "We are Europe" as the EU anthem, the Ode to Joy, was performed at the demonstration.

The rally was initiated by the Black Sea nation's leading pro-democracy groups and supported by all of the opposition parties to "demonstrate the commitment of the Georgian people to its European choice and Western values". "Europe is a historical choice and an aspiration of Georgians, for which all generations have given sacrifices," the rally organisers said on Facebook. One of the organisers, rights activist Shota Digmelashvili, read out a manifesto announcing another rally on Friday and the launch of a "new popular movement" that will include opposition parties but will be dominated by civil activists.

"We will formulate our demands to the government

and if it fails to meet them, the force of a non-violent resistance will sweep off all those who derails Georgia from its European path," he said. "Popular wrath will be directed against (the ruling party founder) oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili" who is widely believed to be calling the shots in Georgia despite having no official political role.



**Biggest demonstration in decades**

### 'European perspective'

One of the demonstrators, 47-year-old writer Malkhaz Kharbedia, said "every Georgian must assume personal responsibility so that our European hope comes true." "We've taken to the streets today as time has come to only rely on ourselves, not anyone else, the time for our personal responsibility, effort, unshaken will, perseverance," he told AFP.

Another demonstrator, biologist Lili Nemsadze, 68, said: "Denying Georgia the status of an EU (membership) candidate will mean we are left in Russia's sphere of influence." Russian President Vladimir "Putin will interpret this as a green light to invade Georgia again."

Georgia's bid for membership of both the EU and NATO—enshrined in the country's constitution—has long angered the Kremlin and tensions culminated in Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008. On Friday, the European Commission recommended that the European Council grant candidate status to Kyiv and Chisinau, but said it will "come back (by the end of 2022) and assess how Georgia meets the number of conditions before granting its candidate status".

The Commission also recommended granting Georgia "the European perspective," something its chief Ursula von der Leyen called a "huge step forward" on Georgia's path toward membership. "The door is wide open," she said, adding: "The sooner you deliver, the sooner there will be progress." On Monday the EU chief specified that Georgia needs to implement more reforms before it can join the bloc.

### 'De-oligarchisation'

Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream party has said it "regretted" that the country was not recommended as

a candidate together with Ukraine and Moldova. Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili on Friday, hailed "the historic decision to grant Georgia European perspective" and pledged to work with Brussels to "implement all the requirements and get a candidate's status."

The Georgian Dream government has faced mounting international criticism over perceived backsliding on democracy, seriously damaging Tbilisi's relations with Brussels. The European Commission said the conditions, which Tbilisi has to fulfil to be put on a formal membership path, include ending political polarisation, progress on media freedom, judiciary and electoral reforms as well as "de-oligarchisation."

Earlier this month, the European Parliament passed a non-binding resolution, calling on the EU to impose personal sanctions against Georgia's richest man Ivanishvili, for his "destructive role" in Georgia's politics and economy. Ivanishvili insists he has retired from politics. Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova have signed association agreements with the EU designed to bring them closer together economically and politically. The agreements also include free trade deals between the countries and the EU as well as visa-free travel for its nationals for a short stay in the Schengen area. But they give no guarantee of eventual membership. — AFP

## Macron holds talks on deadlock, rejects PM resignation

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday was holding talks with the opposition on ending the deadlock sparked by his failure to secure a majority in parliamentary elections, after rejecting an offer by the prime minister to resign. Macron was to host far-right leader Marine Le Pen and other political party chiefs for rare talks at the Elysee as he seeks solutions to an unprecedented situation that risks plunging his second term into crisis two months after it began.



PARIS, France: France's President Emmanuel Macron (R) walks next to France's right-wing Les Republicains (LR) party President Christian Jacob after a meeting as part of his talks with the opposition seeking to end the deadlock. — AFP

The spectre of political paralysis and the breakthrough performance by the far-right under Le Pen has also raised questions over Macron's leadership in Europe as he seeks to keep a prime role in dealing with the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Elysee said French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, blamed by some analysts for heading a lacklustre campaign, had offered her resignation to Macron but the head of state turned it down. Macron believes the government needs to "stay on task and act" and the president will now seek "constructive solutions" to the political deadlock in talks with opposition parties, said a presidential official, who asked not to be named.

Macron started Tuesday's flurry of discussions by talking with Christian Jacob, the head of the traditional right-wing the Republicans (LR), a party on the decline in recent months but which now may be courted by the president to give him a majority.

Socialist Party leader Olivier Faure and Communist

Party boss Fabien Roussel—members of the NUPES left-wing alliance—will also meet Macron. And in a rare encounter, Macron will at 17:30 Paris time (1530 GMT) host Le Pen, his rival in presidential elections and leader of the far-right National Rally (RN).

### 'No question of pact'

The options available to Macron range from seeking to form a new coalition alliance, passing legislation based on ad hoc agreements, or even calling new elections. One option would be an alliance with the Republicans, which has 61 MPs.

But Jacob after the talks appeared to close the door on such a solution. "I told the president there was no question of entering into what could be seen as betrayal of our voters." "We will stay in opposition... there is no question of thinking about some kind of pact," he said, while vowing the party would not block the work of institutions.

Macron had hoped to mark his second term with an ambitious programme of tax cuts, welfare reform and raising the retirement age. All that is now in question. "What can he (Macron) do now?" said the headline in the Le Parisien daily. "Macron in an impasse, NUPES already divided," added Le Figaro. While Macron's Ensemble (Together) coalition remains the largest party after Sunday's National Assembly elections, it fell dozens of seats short of keeping the absolute majority it has enjoyed for the last five years.

Macron's Together alliance won 245 seats, well short of the 289 needed for an overall majority, in a low-turnout vote that resulted in an abstention rate of 53.77 percent. The election saw NUPES become the main opposition force along with its allies on 137 seats, according to interior ministry figures. But it appears unlikely the coalition of Socialists, Communists, Greens and the hard-left France Unbowed will be able to retain common cause in the legislature.

### 'Listen to voters'

Jean-Luc Melenchon, the France Unbowed chief who orchestrated the NUPES alliance, proposed Monday to make NUPES a permanent left-wing bloc but the offer was immediately rejected by the three other NUPES parties.

In a snub to the president, Melenchon is believed to be sending deputies to Elysee talks with Macron on Wednesday rather than going himself. Meanwhile the far-right under Le Pen posted the best legislative performance in its history, becoming the strongest single opposition party with 89 seats, up from eight in the outgoing chamber.

Le Pen said changing the prime minister "would not change much", urging Macron to "listen to what the French voters said". Even if Borne will stay in her post for now, a cabinet shake-up is on the horizon.—AFP

## Russia warns Lithuania, presses offensive in Ukraine's Donbas

**KYIV:** Moscow warned Lithuania of "serious" consequences on Tuesday over its restriction of rail traffic to Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, as Kremlin forces made gains in Ukraine's strategic Donbas region. Kremlin troops were causing "catastrophic destruction" in Lysychansk, an industrial city at the forefront of clashes in the eastern Donbas, the region's governor said. Ukraine confirmed Russia had taken frontline village Toshkivka. Governor Sergiy Gaiday said "every town and village" in Ukrainian hands in Lugansk region was "under almost non-stop fire". Since being repelled from Kyiv and other parts of Ukraine following its invasion in February, Moscow is focusing its offensive on the strategic Donbas region.

In the eastern town of Sloviansk, which could become a flash point as Russian troops advance from the north, local people were preparing to withstand attack and the authorities said the community would defend itself. "We believe they'll beat the Russian scum," resident Valentina, 63, said of local Ukrainian forces. The stakes are high. The town was seized by Russia-backed separatists in 2014 and then retaken by Ukrainian forces after a lengthy siege.

### 'Serious' consequences

Russia's war of words with EU member Lithuania escalated on Tuesday, vowing "serious" consequences over Vilnius' restrictions on rail traffic to the exclave of Kaliningrad. Lithuania says it is simply adhering to EU-wide sanctions on Moscow but Russia countered, accusing Brussels of "escalation". Moscow summoned the EU's ambassador to Russia. Its foreign ministry said Lithuania's actions "violate

the relevant legal and political obligations of the European Union". On the ground, the police chief of the Kyiv region said victims of the Russian attempt to seize the capital city continued to be found. So far, the bodies of 1,333 civilians have been discovered and 300 people still missing.

On the maritime front, Russia's navy is blockading ports, which Ukraine says is preventing millions of tonnes of grain from being shipped to world markets, contributing to soaring food prices. Prior to the war, Ukraine was a major exporter of wheat, corn and sunflower oil. With European officials due to gather this week at a summit expected to approve Ukraine's candidacy to join the EU, Brussels foreign policy chief Josep Borrell called the Russians' port blockade "a real war crime". He said it was happening "while in the rest of the world people are suffering hunger".

Moscow denies responsibility for the disruption to deliveries and, following Borrell's comments, blamed the West's "destructive" position for surging grain prices. Growing concerns about a food crisis are "the fault of Western regimes, which act as provokers and destroyers", said foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv was engaged in "complex negotiations" to unblock grain exports, although he cautioned that there was no progress as yet. In an address to the African Union, he said the continent was a "hostage" of the conflict, and rising food prices had "already brought (the war) to the homes of millions of African families". The EU has pledged an additional 600 million euros (\$635 million) to help vulnerable nations weather the food security crisis.—AFP



BUCHA, Ukraine: Servicemen fire a salvo in tribute to Ukrainian servicemen Vladislav Andreev killed in Donetsk region, during his funeral ceremony at Bucha's cemetery. — AFP

## International

# Zionist entity's 'change' government brought down by Palestinian conflict

## Veteran Netanyahu will battle for a comeback

**JERUSALEM:** Zionist entity's unlikely coalition government, the first ever backed by an Arab party, was forged a year ago to oust right-wing premier Benjamin Netanyahu, but ultimately collapsed over the Palestinian conflict. As a result, Zionist entity looks headed for new elections—the fifth in less than four years—and the threat of widening fissures between the groups that made up the eight-party “change” alliance.



All efforts to salvage coalition exhausted

The veteran Netanyahu, some observers predict, will battle for a comeback in part by exploiting divisions between the right-wing Jewish and Arab-Zionist groups that had managed to cooperate for 12 months. During that time, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett held together the ideologically disparate coalition of hawks, centrists, doves and Arab Islamists, united chiefly in their desire to oust Netanyahu after 13 years in power.

Bennett—who is now due to hand over the top post to Foreign Minister Yair Lapid—focused on areas of consensus and sought to avoid the most divisive topics, especially around Zionist's occupation of the West Bank.

But it was that flashpoint issue that eventually ended the unlikely coalition which, already weakened by defections, now also faced a revolt by left-wing and Arab lawmakers. The issue that brought down the curtain was a previously obscure law that allows Jewish settlers in the West Bank to live under Zionist jurisdiction

while many Palestinians live under the rules of military occupation.

Arab coalition MPs, from the left-wing Meretz and the Islamist Raam party, refused to re-certify the law, which gives settlers equivalent legal standing to people who live inside Zionist entity's internationally recognised borders.

### 'One big weak link'

Bennett—a religious nationalist who once led a settler lobby—said that allowing the measure to lapse by a June 30 deadline would spell security risks and “constitutional chaos”. He instead chose to end the government, thereby delaying a final vote on the issue until after another election.

Political analyst Dahlia Scheindlin said the coalition's collapse proved, once again, that “no government can afford to put aside the Zionist-Palestinian conflict”. She told AFP that Netanyahu, despite his ideological support for extending Zionist entity's law to West Bank settlers, had told his Likud party to vote against its renewal, in order to deliver a fatal blow to Bennett's government. “Netanyahu is a very good political strategist,” she said.

“I think he knew from day one ... that there are many things that the coalition could agree on—and that there is one big weak link between those parties that he can (use to) wedge it apart, and that is the occupation.”

The end came late on Monday, when Bennett and the centrist Lapid, the coalition's chief architect, announced that all their efforts to salvage the coalition had been “exhausted”. They said they would back a bill to dissolve parliament. Barring any surprises, such as defections to the Netanyahu camp, this would likely trigger an election that could be held on October 25. In keeping with their power-sharing deal agreed one year ago, Lapid will serve as prime minister of the caretaker government for its remaining months.

### Unforgivable sin'

The political turmoil again throws a spotlight on lawmakers from Zionist's Arab minority, who make up 21 percent of the population—especially Mansour

Fighting rocked the commercial capital Abidjan, some 3,000 people were killed and at least half a million people fled to safety, according to official agencies. The lifting of refugee status by the UNHCR will take effect on June 30 and concerns a few tens of thousands of refugees who sought refuge in neighbouring countries during the conflict, Grandi said.

The UNHCR estimated in September last year that Ivoirians had, with some exceptions, no cause to benefit any longer from international protection. Of 325,000 refugees, 310,000 have already returned voluntarily to their country, the commissioner added.

“Everywhere in the world we see rather the opposite. I came here to show the exception and to say that it is possible to do it if there is a political will,” he said, at a time when the UNHCR has counted more than 100 million refugees or displaced people around the world.

Ivory Coast, the former economic hub of west Africa and still the world's leading cocoa producer, is engaged in a reconciliation process, marked in June 2021 by Gbagbo's return after the International Criminal Court acquitted him of crimes against humanity during the crisis. — AFP

“really sucked a lot of revenues out of the industry”. Woods said companies and governments needed to think long-term. “We are going to see a lot of volatility and discontinuity in the marketplace if we don't get to more thoughtful policies,” he predicted. Representatives from the Middle East energy industry also renewed calls for better planning in consumer countries.

Qatar's Energy Minister Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi meanwhile criticized the “demonization” of oil companies, and the windfall taxes on oil majors that many governments are proposing. “I don't see the governments coming to pitch in when they (oil companies) were losing money and borrowing when the oil price was negative in Texas,” he said.

ExxonMobil has taken a 6.25 percent stake in the expansion of Qatar's North Field, which contains the world's biggest natural gas reserves. The stake is the same as France's TotalEnergies while Italy's Eni and US firm ConocoPhillips have 3.13 percent shares. Woods said the project will “bring balance to the global market”. — Agencies

returned from more than three years in exile in Turkey a few months ago. One of these former lawmakers, Jamaan Al-Harbash, said their attendance is a sign of support and to unify the ranks of the opposition to protect the constitution.

But Deputy Speaker Ahmad Al-Shuhoumi launched a scathing attack on the opposition, accusing them of “terrorizing” their opponents. Former pro-government MP Ahmad Al-Fadhil, writing on Twitter, held the prime minister responsible for the turn of events, claiming the government failed to stop violations during the Dec 5, 2020 parliamentary elections, where the opposition scored an impressive victory.

Meanwhile, pro-government MP Abdullah Al-Turaiji said he has obtained information that the bank accounts of four MPs have been inflated with illegal deposits. He said he has sent questions to the finance minister, requesting details on the issue and on what legal procedures will be taken.



JERUSALEM: Zionist entity's former premier Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to the press at the Knesset (parliament) in Jerusalem. — AFP

Abbas, head of the Raam party, which won four parliament seats a year ago. Abbas said he decided to become the first Arab party leader to support an Zionist government in order to improve living conditions for his constituents, including Bedouin in the southern Negev desert.

Netanyahu—who at one stage had also made overtures to Abbas—on Monday evening lashed out at Bennett for leading a government that “depended on terrorist supporters” and which had “abandoned the Jewish character of Zionist entity”. “I will not form a coalition with Mansour Abbas,” Netanyahu vowed.

Some commentators have seen Abbas's collaboration with the Bennett alliance as a game-changer that creates more space for Arabs in Zionist politics. But

the lessons are not clear, argued former Netanyahu adviser Aviv Bushinsky.

Some voters may say “it was an interesting experiment, with the Arab Zionists in the government, but it cost us too much,” Bushinsky told reporters. The view, he said, may be that the Arab lawmakers “wanted more than we were willing to give, or they didn't deliver as we expected”.

Nahum Barnea, a columnist with Zionist's Yediot Aharonot newspaper, predicted that Netanyahu will now focus on the issue of Arabs in politics in a campaign sure to be “brutal, malicious and nauseating”. “Likud will say that bringing an Arab party into the coalition was an unforgivable sin, an act of treason against the homeland.” — AFP

## Tunisia's Saied confirms no state religion in charter

**TUNIS:** Tunisian President Kais Saied confirmed Tuesday that a draft constitution to be put to a referendum on July 25 will not enshrine Islam as the “religion of the state”. “The next constitution of Tunisia won't mention a state with Islam as its religion, but of belonging to an umma (community) which has Islam as its religion,” he told journalists at Tunis airport.

“The umma and the state are two different things.” Saied took delivery of the draft text on Monday, a key step in his drive to overhaul the Tunisian state after he sacked the government and seized far-reaching powers last July in moves opponents called a coup.

Sadeq Belaid, the legal expert who headed the drafting committee, had told AFP in an interview this month that he would remove all reference to Islam from the new document in a challenge to Islamist parties.

His comments, partly referring to Saied's nemesis Ennahdha, an Islamist-inspired party which has domi-

nated Tunisian politics since 2011, sparked a heated national debate. The first article of Tunisia's 2014 constitution—and its 1959 predecessor—defined the North African country as “a free, independent and sovereign state. Islam is its religion and Arabic is its language”.

The 2014 document was the product of a hard-won compromise between Ennahdha and its secular rivals three years after the revolt that overthrew dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The new text, produced through a “national dialogue” excluding opposition forces and boycotted by the powerful UGTT trades union confederation, is meant to be approved by Saied by the end of June before being put to voters next month.

That is a year after the former constitutional law professor sacked the government, later consolidating his power grab by dissolving parliament and seizing control of the judiciary. His moves have been welcomed by some Tunisians tired of the corrupt and often chaotic post-revolutionary system, but others have warned he is returning the country to autocracy.

Saied has long called for a presidential system that avoids the frequent deadlock seen under the mixed parliamentary-presidential system. Asked about that issue on Tuesday, he said: “Whether the system is presidential or parliamentary is not the question.” — AFP

## Kuwait: First offshore drilling...

Continued from Page 1

reduced some exports and faced sanctions while Europe has announced plans to wean itself off dependency on Russian fossil fuels in coming years.

Speaking ahead of ExxonMobil's unveiling as the fourth international partner for Qatar's natural gas expansion, chairman and chief executive Darren Woods said major uncertainty lies ahead. “You are probably looking at three to five years of continued fairly tight markets,” Woods told the Qatar Economic Forum. “How that manifests itself in price will obviously be a big function of demand, which is difficult to predict.”

On top of under-investment in finding new oil sources in 2014-2015, Woods said the pandemic

## Opposition steps up campaign amid...

Continued from Page 1

Around 19 former prominent opposition MPs issued a statement backing the MPs' action and decided to hold gatherings at diwanias in support of the striking lawmakers. The first rally was hosted by former speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun. The next two rallies were hosted by former MPs Abdullah Al-Nafisi and Waleed Al-Jari. Jari said that all that the people want is to safeguard the 1962 constitution and democracy.

Monday's rally saw the attendance of former prominent opposition leader, ex-MP Musallam Al-Barrak, and a number of former MPs who had

## Summer of 'hell' begins...

Continued from Page 1

And with many Iraqis struggling to survive, spending around \$105 dollars a month for a private generator is not an option. The authorities “must help poor people”, Umm Mohammed said, decrying their failure to provide an adequate mains supply. Referring to how the government treats its citizens, she said: “Even God does not agree to that.”

Iraq is the second-largest oil producer in the OPEC cartel. But the once thriving country has for years bought gas from neighboring Iran, which supplies about one-third of its power sector needs. US sanctions on Iranian oil and gas have complicated Baghdad's payments for the imports, leaving Iraq in heavy arrears and prompting Tehran to periodically switch off the taps.

The result is longer power cuts for most of Iraq's 41-million-strong population, many of whom blame politicians and endemic corruption for their plight. Anger over blackouts helped fuel deadly protests from late 2019 to mid-2020, including many in southern Iraq. Nataq Al-Khafaji, who lives in Nasiriyah, just north of Basra, said getting by in the

heat without electricity was “very difficult for the children and the elderly”. “It's hell,” he added.

During the summer holidays, Khafaji's three children have nowhere to go and little to do. Stuck in their darkened home, they try as best as they can to escape the suffocating heat outdoors. Khafaji has bought a battery-operated fan, but expressed worry that it would not be enough during the worst months “when it will be close to 50 degrees”.

The United Nations ranks Iraq as one of the top five countries most vulnerable to climate change. Since mid-April, it has been battered by 10 sandstorms - a product of intense drought, soil degradation, high temperatures and low rainfall linked to climate change. President Barham Saleh has warned that tackling climate change “must become a national priority for Iraq as it is an existential threat to the future of our generations to come”. Saleh said desertification affects 39 percent of Iraq, where water supplies are also dwindling drastically and crop yields are declining.

With heat waves and dust storms “expected to increase over the years”, so will health issues, said Seif Al-Badr, a spokesman for the health ministry. “We expect to be treating more people for a variety of illnesses linked to climate” change, he told AFP. But efforts to address such issues appear to have been shelved, as Iraq grapples with political deadlock that has left it without a new government after polls last October. — AFP

## Cambodia nets world's biggest...

Continued from Page 1

incredible stretch of river where it lives.” The researchers fitted an acoustic tag to the stingray before returning it to the river, to try to learn more about the secretive creature's elusive behavior. Last month, an endangered giant freshwater stingray four meters long and weighing 180 kilos was also hooked by a fisherman in the same

province. More than 1,000 fish species call the Mekong home and the stingray is not the only giant lurking in the muddy waters - the giant catfish and giant barb also reach up to three meters long and 270 kilos in weight.

Scientists have warned that plastic waste threatens wildlife even in the deepest stretches of the Mekong, along with “ghost nets” - abandoned by fishers but still able to snare fish. The famous waterway starts in China and twists south through parts of Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam, feeding 60 million people through its basin and tributaries. But environmentalists have long voiced concerns about dam building along the Mekong River that will destroy fish stocks. — AFP

## International

# Trial of Myanmar's Suu Kyi moved to prison compound

## Junta sentenced dozens of anti-coup activists to death as part of its crackdown on dissent

**YANGON, Myanmar:** Hearings for the trial of ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi will be moved to a prison compound in the military-built capital Naypyidaw, a source with knowledge of the case said Tuesday. The Nobel laureate, 77, was detained by the military when it ousted her government last year and faces a raft of charges that could see her jailed for more than 150 years.

She has since been confined to an undisclosed location in Naypyidaw, leaving only to attend hearings in a municipal compound in the east of the sprawling, low-rise capital inaugurated by the army in 2006. Future hearings "will be conducted at the new Special Court in Naypyidaw Prison" following the completion of a new court building in the compound, said a source with knowledge of the case.

The source did not give further details. Suu Kyi's lawyers have been banned from speaking to the media and journalists barred from her trial. Under a previous junta regime, she spent long spells under house arrest in her family mansion in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city.

Her current detention has seen her links to the outside world limited to brief pre-trial meetings with her lawyers. She has already been convicted of corruption, incitement against the military, breaching COVID-19 rules and breaking a telecommunications law, with a court sentencing her so far to 11 years.

Suu Kyi turned 77 on Sunday and brought a birthday cake to court to eat with her lawyers

ahead of a hearing on Monday, according to a source with knowledge of the matter. Meanwhile, the Myanmar junta's plans to execute political opponents may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity, a UN official said Monday. The junta said on June 3 it would execute a former lawmaker from Aung San Suu Kyi's party and a prominent democracy activist, both convicted of terrorism, in what would be the country's first judicial executions since 1990.

Four people, including former MP Phyo Zeya Thaw and democracy activist Ko Jimmy, "who were sentenced to death will be hanged according to prison procedures", junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun told AFP then. Nicholas Koumjian, head of the UN's Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, said he was following this case closely. "The available information strongly suggests that under international law, fundamental rights of the convicted persons were blatantly violated in these proceedings," Koumjian said of the trials, which were closed to the public.

"Imposing a death sentence, or even a period of detention, on the basis of proceedings that do not satisfy the basic requirements of a fair trial may constitute one or more crimes against humanity or war crimes," he added.

The junta has sentenced dozens of anti-coup activists to death as part of its crackdown on dissent after seizing power last year, but Myanmar has not carried out an execution for decades. For a trial

Communist Party to hang on to power," he said.

Some critics say Britain could have done more for Hong Kong before the handover, but Patten insisted the country did not betray the finance hub. "Whatever we had done in terms of changes before 1997 were unlikely to have affected the way that the Chinese Communist Party behaved after the arrival of Xi Jinping in the top job," Patten said.

"I think the big changes have come since 2012, 2013, 2014 since Xi Jinping's been the dictator," Xi, the son of a revered communist revolutionary, was named general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012 before becoming president the following year.

### 'Constrain China'

The 25th anniversary marks the halfway point of Beijing's "One Country, Two Systems" promise for Hong Kong, a deal that was enshrined in the 1984 joint declaration signed by British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang.

Recent coronavirus outbreaks in the territory have overshadowed plans for celebrations and it is still unclear if Xi will attend them in person. During the launch Monday of "The Hong Kong Diaries", his book based on his time as governor, Patten told reporters, "the most difficult part of the job was... negotiating with China to try to safeguard 'One Country Two Systems'." In his farewell speech in 1997, Patten said it had been "the greatest honour and privilege" of his life to have been governor and to have "some responsibility for Hong Kong's future".

"Now Hong Kong people are to run Hong Kong. That is the promise and that is the unshakable destiny," he added. But China, Patten now says, has breached the declaration "comprehensively". The former Conservative party chairman said things went "downhill" in the city partly because Xi and his colleagues were

The Indian head of state enjoys certain constitutional powers but largely acts on the advice of the government, making it more of a titular position. But agreeing on a candidate and getting him or her elected would be a symbolic victory for India's splintered opposition after eight years of rule by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP is likely to announce its own candidate this week and may again put forward the incumbent, Ram Nath Kovind, a member of India's marginalised Dalit community, to serve another term. Gandhi, who was governor of West Bengal state between 2004 and 2009 after being appointed by the then-ruling Congress party, ran for vice-president in 2017 but lost out to a BJP candidate.

The paternal grandson of India's freedom movement icon is considered a vocal critic of Modi's Hindu nationalist policies and has accused the government of crushing dissent in the world's largest democracy.

Gandhi is the third person to decline an offer by

Travel exemptions permitting 15 Taliban officials to go abroad for talks and negotiations were set to expire Monday. For 13 officials the travel exemptions were extended for at least two months, but they were scrapped for two education officials in response to the Taliban's decision to ban secondary girls' education.

According to a diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity, the officials now banned from traveling are Said Ahmad Shaidkhal, the deputy education minister, and Abdul Baqi Basir Awal Shah—also known as Abdul Baqi Haqqani—the minister of higher education.



**NAYPYIDAW, Myanmar:** File photo shows detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi (L) and detained president Win Myint are seen during their first court appearance in Naypyidaw, since the military detained them in a coup on February 1. —AFP

to be considered fair it must be held in public to the greatest extent possible, said Koumjian.

"Exceptions based on national security or other considerations must be limited to the extent that they are strictly justified," he said. But in these cases, "it appears that there were no public proceedings nor are the judgments publicly available".

This raised doubts as to whether the tribunal was impartial and independent, he added. The UN mechanism for Myanmar was created by the UN human rights council in 2018. Its task is to gather evidence of international crimes and human rights violations in the former Burma and document them with a view to facilitating criminal proceedings. —AFP

## Patten hits out at China's 'vengeful' acts in Hong Kong

**LONDON:** On June 30, 1997, Britain's last governor of Hong Kong Chris Patten left Government House for the final time, struggling to contain his emotions as the "Last Post" played and the Union flag was lowered.

The 25th anniversary is approaching of that rainy day and the midnight handover to China on July 1 that the BBC at the time called "the epilogue of empire". For Patten, now 78, the memory of his departure is still vivid.

"It was a big wrench. I had five extremely enjoyable and fruitful years in Hong Kong and I miss it," he told AFP on Monday. But in the intervening years, his "sadness" has been replaced by anger at Beijing and President Xi Jinping, whom he accuses of "vengefully" targeting the city's freedoms.

Under the Sino-British Joint Declaration, China agreed Hong Kong could keep some freedoms and autonomy for 50 years under a "One Country, Two Systems" model. But a National Security Law imposed by China in 2020 has eroded those freedoms, targeting pro-democracy activists and local media. Hong Kong once had a raucous law-making chamber but now only those who are loyal can stand for office to join a body which passes new laws.

### The 'dictator'

"China has ripped up the joint declaration and is vengefully and comprehensively trying to remove the freedoms of Hong Kong because it regards them as a threat, not to the security of China but to the ability of the Chinese

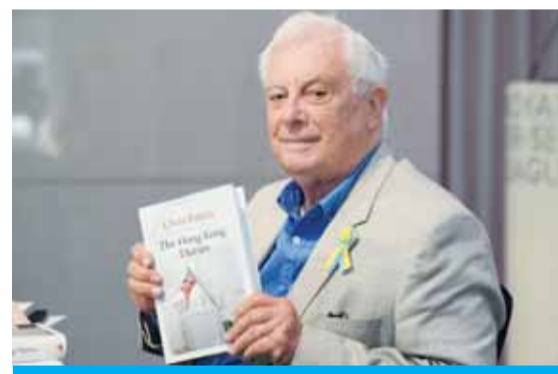
## Mahatma Gandhi's grandson bows out of presidential race

**NEW DELHI:** The grandson of India's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi has dropped out of the race to become president after his name was proposed by an alliance of opposition parties. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, 77, a diplomat turned politician said he had declined the request of the 17-party alliance to be their nominee for the largely ceremonial role.

"I am most grateful to them. But having considered the matter deeply I see that the Opposition's candidate should be one who will generate a national consensus and a national atmosphere beside Opposition unity," Gandhi said in a statement on Monday. National and state lawmakers are slated to vote on a new president on July 18.

## UN revokes travel privileges for two Taliban officials

**UNITED NATIONS:** The United Nations on Monday banned two Taliban officials from traveling abroad in response to the harsh restrictions the hardline Islamists have imposed on Afghan women, diplomats told AFP.



**LONDON:** Former Hong Kong governor Lord Chris Patten, poses with his new book "The Hong Kong Diaries" at the end of a press conference to present it, in central London, on June 20, 2022. —AFP

"terrified" of what Hong Kong actually stands for.

But while Patten said it was necessary to "constrain China", he admitted it was also necessary to deal with China to tackle climate change and epidemics. "But I don't think we should delude ourselves; I think we have to be pretty clear about what is our real interest, and we have to constrain China, not contain it."

### Fears over Taiwan

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, there have been heightened fears over similar action by China against self-governed democratic Taiwan. Beijing claims all of the island as its own territory, and has said it is determined to retake it, by force if necessary.

Patten said Xi must learn "what an incredibly dangerous enterprise it would be" after seeing the difficulties the Russian army has faced in Ukraine and the world's reaction. "My gut instinct is it's so dangerous for Xi Jinping to try that I hope the system will encourage him not to do it," he said. —AFP



**Gopalkrishna Gandhi**

the opposition to be their candidate. The Gandhi dynasty of assassinated former prime ministers Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, and of current opposition figure Rahul Gandhi, are descended from India's first premier Jawaharlal Nehru and not from Mahatma Gandhi. —AFP

Since seizing power in August, the Taliban have rolled back marginal gains made by Afghan women during the past two decades, limiting their access to education, government jobs and freedom of movement. In March, supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada ordered secondary schools for girls to shut, just hours after they reopened for the first time since the Taliban returned to power. The decree, which stops hundreds of thousands of teenage girls from attending schools, was met with international outrage. A top Taliban education official criticised the latest UN decision as "superficial and unjust".

"Such decisions will only make the situation more

## Islamists storm India-backed yoga event in Maldives

**MALE:** Islamic extremists stormed an India-backed public yoga session in the Maldives on Tuesday, with police in the South Asian tourist paradise firing tear gas to clear the mob. Dozens of people waving white flags emblazoned with religious slogans chased out a crowd sitting on gym mats and preparing to mark International Yoga Day at a football stadium in the capital Male.

Police responded with tear gas and arrested six people after the mob smashed billboards advertising the event, which was organised by the sports ministry and the local Indian Cultural Centre. Local media reports said the mob had claimed the meditative practice was against the teachings of Islam.

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih said the attack was of "serious concern", adding that police were investigating. "Those responsible will be swiftly brought before the law," he said on Twitter. Radicalisation has been a major concern for security forces in the Maldives, a Sunni Muslim archipelago nation southwest of India better known for its boutique beachside resorts and celebrity tourists.

Authorities blamed "religious extremists" for an assassination attempt on parliamentary speaker Mohamed Nasheed last year. The government has cracked down on extremism, with police arresting a suspected Islamic State recruiter in 2019, and foreign preachers are banned from entering the country.

Tuesday's yoga session in Male was one of many organised around the world to mark International Yoga Day, an annual event adopted by the United Nations in 2014. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the star participant of one outdoor practice on Tuesday morning next to an ornate palace complex in the southern city of Mysore. —AFP



**SRINAGAR:** People participate in a mass yoga session near the Dal Lake to celebrate the International Day of Yoga in Srinagar on June 21, 2022. —AFP

critical," deputy minister of higher education Lutfullah Khairkha told AFP. After difficult negotiations, the UN's Taliban Sanctions Committee compromised on an extension for the 13 other Taliban leaders for "60 days + 30 days," diplomats told AFP.

Some countries were in favor of revoking all of the travel exemptions due to the deterioration of women's rights, but others objected, according to diplomats. Under the terms of the agreement, the exemption will automatically be extended for 13 Taliban leaders in the third month "unless objected by any Council member," a diplomatic source said. —AFP

# Business

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2022



LONDON: Empty platforms and trains are pictured at Waterloo Station in London as the biggest rail strike in over 30 years hits the UK. — AFP



HAMMERSMITH: Cars queue in traffic in Hammersmith as commuters make their way to central London amid the biggest rail strike in over 30 years to hit the UK. — AFP

## UK hit by 'biggest' rail strike in over 30 years

### People to trek to work on foot, by bike, bus

LONDON: Rush-hour commuters in the UK faced chaos on Tuesday as railway workers launched the network's biggest strike in more than three decades, forcing people to trek to work on foot, by bike, bus-or simply not bother at all. The RMT rail union argues the strikes are necessary as wages have failed to keep pace with UK inflation, which has hit a 40-year high and is on course to keep rising.

Last-ditch talks to avert the work stoppage broke down on Monday, meaning more than 50,000 RMT members will walk out for three days this week. Train and London Underground stations, normally a sea of people for the morning rush to work, were deserted or even locked, with just a skeleton service running on many networks across the country.

Passengers were warned not to travel all week, with two more days of strike action scheduled for Thursday and Saturday wreaking havoc to schedules. In London, cab firms reported a surge in demand, while main roads were packed with buses and cars, with cyclists weaving in between. Long queues formed at bus stops on the outskirts of London shortly after 6:00 am, but many gave up as services carried on without stopping, already full.

### Boursa Kuwait, UNDP organize workshop

KUWAIT: In keeping with its commitment to the support and promotion of responsible, sustainable and impactful business practices, Boursa Kuwait partnered with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to organize a workshop around the standards, practices and tools for ensuring the impactful implementation and reporting of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles as well as the importance of integrating them with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and into business operations.

The ESG-SDG Impact Sensitization Course was held at Boursa Kuwait's premises on May 31 and June 1 and attended by over 40 senior management and decision makers from various Kuwaiti listed companies. During the two-day workshop, UNDP experts delved deep into a wide range of topics and various aspects of ESG, sustainability, Impact Management and Measurement (IMM) and the SDGs.

The speakers included Vito Intini, Lead Economist, UNDP Regional Hub, UNDP SDG Impact Director Fabienne Michaux, Independent Senior Development Consultant (PFM) and Lecturer at Duke University Jean Mulot and Pedro Cortez, Impact Analyst, UNDP Business Call to Action (BcTA), who discussed the business case for more sustainable business models and explored how companies can integrate sustainability in their operation in Kuwait as well as ensuring competitiveness and sustainability at the same time.

Commenting on the workshop, Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi, Marketing and Communication Senior Director at Boursa Kuwait, said: "As we continue to strengthen our reputation as a model issuer and a socially and environmentally conscious company through responsible and sustainable business practices, we remain committed to supporting the companies listed in the Kuwaiti stock exchange in their ESG journey, signified by our long-term strategic partnership with the UNDP."

Al-Sanousi added: "As we encourage market participants towards more sustainable business operations and practices, it is critical to raise awareness and inform them about the most important ESG principles and practices, as well as explaining the benefits of embedding those principles and how they can help them become more efficient and impactful, adding not just to their bottom line, but helping them fulfill their long-term business objectives. I would like to thank the various UNDP experts for sharing their valuable insights and look forward to more collaborations in the future."

**'Frustrating'**  
Peter Chiodini, 73, a doctor, he had been "inconvenienced" by having to take the bus rather than the train and did not support the strikes. "I think we do need a guaranteed minimum service because people are going to lose money on this, they're going to be inconvenienced, children have to get to exams and so on," he told AFP. Amber Zito, 24, a canine hydrotherapist from Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, called the strikes "frustrating" after missing her train home, but supported the rail workers. "Everything is kind of going tits up at the moment-planes, trains, everything. I blame the government. I don't blame the people who work for train companies at all, they are only trying to do what everyone wants for their job."

The government maintains that it is an issue to be resolved by the private train operators and the unions. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said he "deplored" the strikes, which he said evoked the "bad old days of the 1970s" when industrial action was far more common. "The people that are hurting are people who physically need to turn up for work, maybe on lower pay, perhaps the cleaners in hospitals," he told Sky News.

**'Stay the course'**  
Prime Minister Boris Johnson, addressing his cabinet, urged "the union barons to sit down with Network Rail and the train companies" to thrash out a deal. The country needed to "stay the course", defending reforms to the rail network as needed and in the public interest. RMT general-secretary Mick Lynch has described as "unacceptable" offers of below-inflation pay rises by both overground train operators and London Underground, which runs the Tube in the capital. The walkouts risk causing significant disruption to major events including the Glastonbury music festival. Thousands of teenagers taking national school exams could also be hit.

The strikes are the biggest dispute on Britain's railway network since 1989, according to the RMT. Rail operators, however, warn of disruption throughout the week. Only about 20 percent of services are running during the walkouts and half of all lines are closed. Those lines that are still open are running at reduced capacity. And as well as the above-ground rail strike, RMT members on the London Underground are staging a 24-hour Tube train stoppage Tuesday.

**Teachers, lawyers, NHS**  
Countries around the world are being hit by decades-high inflation as the Ukraine war and the easing of COVID restrictions fuel energy and food price hikes. Unions warn also that railway jobs are at risk, with passenger traffic yet to fully recover after the lifting of coronavirus pandemic lockdowns. The strikes are compounding wider travel chaos after airlines were forced to cut flights owing to staff shortages, causing long delays and frustration for passengers. Thousands of workers were sacked in the aviation industry during the pandemic, and the sector is struggling to recruit workers back as travel demand rebounds following the lifting of lockdowns.

Other areas of the public sector meanwhile are also set to hold strikes. The Criminal Bar Association, representing senior lawyers in England and Wales, have voted to strike from next week in a row over legal aid funding. Teaching staff and workers in the state-run National Health Service are reportedly also mulling strike action. And several other transport unions are balloting members over possible stoppages that could occur in the coming weeks.— AFP



Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi



Hideko Hadzalic

ward to more collaborations in the future." For her part, Hideko Hadzalic, Resident Representative, UNDP Kuwait, said: "For some time, the private sector and financial markets have been integrating ESG - Environmental, Social and Governance - criteria into their business models and investment decisions. This is good for the companies' bottom lines and has a positive impact on the well-being of people and the environment."

She added: "A survey of the 75 largest asset managers in the world found that 48% of investors are developing an approach to the SDGs, with the private sector playing a vital role. We expect them to increase their participation towards the achievement of the "New Kuwait 2035" vision and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals."

The workshop comes as part of Boursa Kuwait's

ongoing initiatives to promote Corporate Sustainability in the Kuwaiti capital market and encourage the adoption of best standards in ESG disclosure and reporting among listed companies. In addition to many webinars and workshops, the company published a comprehensive disclosure guide to support listed companies to report on ESG issues, and to meet the growing needs of various stakeholders, including investors, customers, suppliers, and regulators for transparent and regular information. Furthermore, the company published its annual Sustainability Report, detailing its accomplishments in CS during 2021, earlier this year.

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

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, environmental protection as well as safety and preventive measures against COVID-19.



### Lebanon signs gas deal with Egypt and Syria to boost grid

BEIRUT: Lebanon signed a deal Tuesday to import natural gas from Egypt via Syria to boost power supply by an additional four hours a day amid round-the-clock cuts. Grappling with its worst-ever financial crisis, Lebanon launched talks with Egypt last year to import gas through the Arab Gas Pipeline, which passes through Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

On Tuesday, Lebanese Energy Minister Walid Fayad and Syrian and Egyptian officials signed a final version of the agreement in Beirut. "The importance of this deal... stems from the fact that it will secure an additional four hours of electricity per day following its implementation," Fayad told a press conference. The deal is a part of wider efforts—which include a separate electricity deal with Jordan—to boost supply by 8 to 10 hours a day in the coming months, up from just two currently.

Implementation of both agreements still needs World Bank funding and US assurances that they won't trigger sanctions under the so-called Caesar Act which prohibits commercial dealings with Damascus. "We hope that after today, all hurdles will have been cleared so that we can receive World Bank funding and... final guarantees from the US, especially with regard to sanctions," Fayad said. Syria stands to gain gas from Egypt as an in-kind payment for its part in the deal, but will not receive funds, Fayad told AFP in January.

Two years into Lebanon's economic meltdown, the cash-strapped state is struggling to purchase fuel for its power stations. With mains electricity effectively non-existent, many rely on private generators, but prices have increased after the government lifted fuel subsidies as global fuel prices soared. Lebanon's crumbling electricity sector has cost the country more than \$40 billion since the end of its 1975-1990 civil war. Successive governments have failed to cut down on losses, repair crumbling infrastructure or even collect electricity bills regularly across the country.— AFP



## Business

# Dead rivers: Cost of Bangladesh's garment-driven economic boom

## Bangladesh overtakes India in per capita income

DHAKA: Bangladeshi ferryman Kalu Molla began working on the Buriganga river before the patchwork of slums on its banks gave way to garment factories - and before its waters turned pitch black. The 52-year-old has constant cough, allergies and skin rashes, and doctors have told him the vile-smelling sludge that has also wiped out marine life in one of Dhaka's main waterways is to blame.



DHAKA: In this picture, industrial effluents enter the waters of the Buriganga River as children wait to board a Ferris wheel ride along the river bank in Karanigonj, on the outskirts of Dhaka. - AFP

"Doctors told me to leave this job and leave the river. But how is that possible?" Molla told AFP near his home on the industrial outskirts of the capital Dhaka. "Ferrying people is my bread and butter." In the half-century since a devastating independence war left its people facing starvation, Bangladesh has emerged as an often unheralded economic success story.

The South Asian country of 169 million has overtaken its neighbor India in per capita income and will soon graduate from the United Nations' list of the world's least developed countries. Underpinning years of runaway growth is the booming garment trade, servicing global fast-fashion powerhouses, employing millions of women and accounting for around 80 per-

cent of the country's \$50 billion annual exports.

But environmentalists say the growth has come at an incalculable cost, with a toxic melange of dyes, tanning acids and other dangerous chemicals making their way into the water. Bangladesh's capital Dhaka was founded on the banks of the Buriganga more than 400 years ago by the Mughal empire. "It is now the largest sewer of the country," said Sheikh Rokon, the head of

byproducts of fabric dyeing have also helped to starve the river of the oxygen needed to sustain marine life.

### 'They are powerful people'

In Shyampur, one of several sprawling industrial districts around Dhaka, locals told AFP that at least 300 local factories were discharging untreated wastewater into the Buriganga river. Residents say they have given up complaining about the putrid smell of the water, knowing that offending businesses are easily able to shirk responsibility. "The factories bribe (authorities) to buy the silence of the regulators," said Chan Mia, who lives in the area.

"If someone wants (to) raise the issue to the factories, they'd beat them up. They are powerful people with connections." The crucial position of the textile trade in the economy has created a nexus between business owners and the country's political establishment. In some cases, politicians themselves have become powerful industry players. Further south, in Narayanganj district, residents showed AFP a stream of crimson-colored water draining into stagnant canals from a nearby factory.

"But you cannot say a word about it loudly," an area resident told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We only suffer in silence." The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), which represents the interests of around 3,500 top factories, defends its record by pointing out the environmental certifications given out to its members. "We are going green - that's why we are witnessing big jumps in export orders," BGMEA president Faruque Hassan told a recent press conference.

But smaller factories and sub-contractors operating on the industry's razor thin margins say they are unable to afford the cost of wastewater treatment. A top garment official in the Savar industrial district, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, said even most high-end factories serving major US and European brands often do not turn on their treatment machinery. "Not everyone regularly uses it. They want to save costs," he said.

### 'Facing the same fate'

Bangladesh is a delta country criss-crossed by more than 200 waterways, each of them connected to the mighty Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers that course from the Himalayas and through the South Asian sub-continent. More than a quarter of them are now heavily contaminated with industrial pollutants and need to

lowering a three-day holiday weekend, but inflation jitters still fester.

Oil prices extended gains on hopes of improving energy demand in key consumers China and the United States, while the euro climbed on the prospect of rising eurozone borrowing costs. "Risk appetite has managed to recover for now, perhaps because we get a much needed-break from central bank decisions this week," IG analyst Chris Beauchamp told AFP.

"But while a bounce is overdue, it is probably only temporary." There remains an overarching sense of gloom as traders speculate that the sharp lift in borrowing costs around the world will tip economies into recession. Focus this week is on Federal Reserve boss

days on the job. He had been waiting to be formally removed at the company's next shareholders' meeting, scheduled for July. Bolsonaro, seeking reelection in October, is widely blamed by voters for double-digit inflation, polls show, on the back of skyrocketing global and local fuel prices. Bolsonaro faces an uphill battle against leftist ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), remembered for presiding over a booming economy. Brazil has seen fuel prices surge by over 33 percent in a year, according to official figures. Inflation stands at 11.73 percent, far above the central bank's target of 3.5 percent.

Russia's war in Ukraine has led to a sharp rise in crude prices in recent weeks, adding to the pressure. On Friday, Petrobras announced a 5.18 percent hike in gasoline prices and more than 14 percent for diesel, blaming "a challenging scenario in Brazil and the world." Bolsonaro reacted angrily, saying Petrobras "could sink Brazil in chaos." The company reported a net profit of 44.6 billion reais (about \$8.6 billion) in the first quarter of this year-about 38 times the result of a year earlier.

Arthur Lira, the president of Brazil's chamber of deputies and a Bolsonaro ally, has proposed raising taxes on Petrobras profits-which he has described as "absurd." Congress is also mulling a Bolsonaro proposal to lower the tax on fuel. Petrobras shares were volatile in Monday trade-after a temporary halt to morning trading on news of Coelho's resignation and then a two percent drop on the Sao Paulo Stock Exchange, they finished up 1.14 percent.—AFP



COLOMBO: Autorickshaws are parked in a queue along a street to tank up petrol from a Ceylon petroleum corporation fuel station in Colombo.—AFP

## Sri Lanka allows younger women to work abroad

COLOMBO: Crisis-hit Sri Lanka on Tuesday reduced to 21 the minimum age at which women can go abroad for work and earn much-needed dollars for the bankrupt economy. Colombo imposed age restrictions on women working overseas in 2013 after a 17-year-old Sri Lankan nanny was beheaded in Saudi Arabia over the death of a child in her care. Following outrage over the execution, only women older than 23 were allowed to go abroad, while for Saudi Arabia the minimum age was set at 25. But with Sri Lanka in its worst economic crisis since independence, the government on Tuesday eased the rules, including for Saudi Arabia. "The cabinet of ministers approved the decision to lower the minimum age to 21 years for all countries given the need to increase foreign employment opportunities," spokesman Bandula Gunawardana told reporters.

Remittances from Sri Lankans working abroad have long been a key source of foreign exchange for the country, bringing in around \$7 billion per year. This number dived during the coronavirus pandemic to \$5.4 billion in 2021 and was forecast to drop under \$3.5 billion this year because of the economic crisis. More than 1.6 million people from the nation of 22 million work abroad, mainly in the Middle East. The South Asian country's foreign currency reserves are so low that the government has restricted imports even of essentials including food, fuel and medicine.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka closed schools and halted non-essential government services on Monday, starting a two-week shutdown to conserve fast-depleting fuel reserves as the IMF opened talks with Colombo on a possible bailout. The country of 22 million people is in the grip of its worst economic crisis after running out of foreign exchange to finance even the most essential imports including food, fuel and medicines.

On Monday schools were shut and state offices worked with skeleton staffing as part of government plans to reduce commuting and save precious petrol and diesel. Sri Lanka is facing record-high inflation and lengthy power blackouts that have contributed to months of protests - sometimes violent - calling on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to step down.—AFP

## Most markets climb as calm returns after sharp sell-off

LONDON: Asian and European stocks mostly rose Tuesday as calm returned following last week's rout, but analysts warned of more pain after central bank officials hinted at further interest rate hikes to tackle soaring inflation. Wall Street reopens later and is expected to burst higher as traders play catch-up fol-

## Petrobras CEO quits in fuel price standoff with Bolsonaro

BRASILIA: The CEO of Brazil's state-owned oil company Petrobras, who has stayed in his post despite being fired by Jair Bolsonaro in May, resigned Monday after a new fuel price hike that enraged the far-right president. Jose Mauro Coelho is the third Petrobras CEO to leave since February last year in a stand-off between the company and Bolsonaro over fuel prices. Petrobras announced Coelho's resignation on Monday. The company said Fernando Borges-its head of exploration and production-would take over temporarily until government pick Caio Paes de Andrade, an economy ministry official, assumes the top job.

Coelho was appointed for a one-year term in April after Bolsonaro fired his predecessor Joaquim Silva e Luna in March after slightly more than a year in the post. The far-right president said then that the price of fuel-set by Petrobras but tied to international market movement-was "unaffordable" and amounted to a "crime" against Brazilians. Silva e Luna, in turn, had replaced Roberto Castello Branco, fired by Bolsonaro in February 2021.

### 'Absurd' profits

In May, Bolsonaro dismissed Coelho after just 40



SAO PAULO: A man looks at a chart on display on an electronic board at the Sao Paulo Stock Exchange (B3) in downtown Sao Paulo, Brazil. — AFP

be "urgently" saved, said an April legal notice sent to the government by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA).

Authorities have established a commission tasked with saving key water bodies, upon which close to half



DHAKA: A man washes clothes along the banks of the Buriganga River on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh, the South Asian country of 169 million, has overtaken neighbor India in per capita income and will soon graduate from the UN's list of the world's least developed countries. - AFP

the country's population depend for farming, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. The National River Commission has launched several high profile drives to fine factories found to have polluted rivers. Its newly appointed chief, Manjur Chowdhury, said "greedy" industrialists were to blame for the state of the country's waterways.

But he also admitted that the enforcement of existing penalties was inadequate to address the scale of the problem. "We have to frame new laws to face this emergency situation. But it will take time," he told AFP. Any action will be too late for the five rivers that circle Dhaka and its industrial outskirts. All are already technically dead, meaning they are completely devoid of marine life, said prominent environmental activist Sharif Jamil. "With factories now moving deep into the rural heartland, rivers across the country are facing the same fate," he said.—AFP

Jerome Powell's two days of testimony to lawmakers in Washington, which will be closely watched for insight into the bank's thinking and possible clues about its plans for fighting surging prices.

The Fed announced a three-quarter interest rate hike last week, after inflation data days earlier had smashed forecasts and hit a four-decade high. While the volatility of last week has gone, banks' intention to continue hiking rates could cause fresh ructions in markets. "A sprinkle of positivity is sugaring financial markets, masking the bitter taste induced as investors have been forced to assess the repercussions of surging inflation for the global economy," said Hargreaves Lansdown analyst Susannah Streeter.—AFP

## Egyptian trade delegation visits Zionist entity

JERUSALEM: A delegation of Egyptian business leaders was in Zionist entity on Monday, the first such visit in a decade, in a sign of "warming" ties between the two countries Zionist officials said. The trip was part of a trade agreement known as QIZ (Qualifying Industrial Zone), which was initiated in 1996 between Zionist entity, Jordan, Egypt and the United States to foster Middle East peace. The deal allows Egypt to export some products to the US duty free, so long as they include 10.5 percent Zionist inputs. The visiting Egyptian delegation includes executives from the textile and clothing industries, the Zionist foreign and economy ministries said in a joint statement.

Zionist Minister of Economy and Industry, Orna Barbiway, said the visit "will contribute to the promotion of shared interests for both countries".

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett met Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Sharm El-Sheikh in September 2021, the first visit to Egypt in over a decade by a Zionist head of government. On Monday, Bennett said "improved" ties with Cairo had helped curb the military buildup of the Islamist Hamas movement that rules the Gaza Strip across the border from Egypt.

"They (Egyptian authorities) are stepping up controls at the Rafah border crossing (with Gaza) to prevent weapons and other equipment" from reaching Hamas, Bennett said. In the past year "Hamas's military buildup has been the slowest in years", Bennett added. Egypt was the first Arab country in 1979 to sign a peace treaty with Zionists, after decades of enmity. Jordan was the second, establishing full diplomatic relations with Zionists in 1994. Egypt now regularly serves as an intermediary between Zionists and Hamas, and worked behind the scenes last year to mediate a ceasefire during an 11-day conflict that erupted between Zionists and Gaza-based Islamist factions. Zionist-Egyptian relations have proven icy at times, especially during the one-year reign of Egypt's Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2012, but broad security cooperation has carried on under Sisi—AFP

## Business

# More strike calls cloud summer for European low-cost airlines

## Staff in Spain and France announce new walkouts

**PARIS:** Europe's low-cost airlines are facing more strikes this summer as staff in Spain and France announced new walkouts on Tuesday. Trade unions representing Ryanair cabin crew in Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain have called for strikes this coming weekend, while easyJet's operations in Spain face a nine-day strike next month.

Damien Mourgues, a representative of the SNPNC trade union at Ryanair in France, said the airline doesn't respect rest time laws and is calling for a raise for cabin crew still paid at the minimum wage. Cabin crew will go on strike on Saturday and Sunday. A strike on the weekend of June 12 and 13 already prompted the cancellation of about 40 Ryanair flights in France, or about a quarter of the total. Ryanair's low-cost rival easyJet also faces nine days of strikes on different days in July at the Barcelona, Malaga and Palma de Mallorca airports.

The union said Tuesday that Spanish easyJet cabin crew, with a base pay of 950 euros per month, have the lowest wages of the airline's European bases. The strikes come as air travel has rebounded since Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. But many airlines, which laid off staff during

the pandemic, are having trouble rehiring enough workers and have been forced to cancel flights, including easyJet, which has been particularly hard hit by employee shortages.

On Monday, the European Transport Workers' Federation called "on passengers not to blame the workers for the disasters in the airports, the cancelled flights, the long queues and longer time for check-ins, and lost luggage or delays caused by decades of corporate greed and a removal of decent jobs in the sector." The Federation said it expects "the chaos the aviation sector is currently facing will only grow over the summer as workers are pushed to the brink."

### Aviation sector 'chaos'

In Spain, trade unions have urged Ryanair cabin crews to strike from June 24 to July 2 to secure their "fundamental labor rights" and "decent work conditions for all staff". Ryanair staff in Portugal plan to go on strike from Friday to Sunday to protest work conditions, as are employees in Belgium. Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary has been dismissive of the strikes.

"We operate two and half thousand flights



BERLIN: An airplane of Irish airline Ryanair approaches the BER airport near Berlin Schoenefeld. —AFP

every day," he said earlier this month in Belgium. "Most of those flights will continue to operate even if there is a strike in Spain by some Mickey Mouse union or if the Belgian cabin crew unions want to go on strike over here," he added in a

media conference. In Italy, a 24-hour strike is set to hit Ryanair operations on Saturday with pilots and cabin crew calling for the airline to respect the minimum wages set for the sector under a national agreement. —AFP

## Crunch talks kick off on global pact to protect nature

**NAIROBI:** Negotiators from almost 200 countries will begin crunch biodiversity talks in Nairobi on Tuesday, working towards a much-delayed global pact to protect nature from the damage wrought by human activities. International efforts to protect the natural world - including the air we breathe, the food we eat and the water we drink - have been severely slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, while the destruction continues at a frantic pace.

As the meeting kicked off, the UN confirmed that the thrice-delayed COP15 biodiversity summit - originally set for Kunming, China in 2020 - will now take place from December 5 to 17 this year in Montreal, Canada. Country representatives in Nairobi are tasked with hammering out details of a draft text outlining a global framework to "live in harmony with nature" by 2050, with key targets to be met by 2030.

Many hope the landmark deal, when finalized, will be as ambitious in its goals to protect life on Earth as the Paris agreement was for climate change - even if the United States is not a party to UN efforts to conserve nature. Proposals include a global commitment to set aside at least 30 percent of both land and oceans as protected zones by the end of the decade, as well as efforts to cut plastic and agricultural pollution.

"What is important is increasing protection, restoration of degraded areas, trying to prevent the further degradation of natural habitats by infrastructure development and pollutions," said Linda Krueger of The Nature Conservancy environmental group. Doing so has become critical after countries failed almost entirely to reach a similar set of 10-year objectives set in 2010 under the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

### Delays

Delegates gathered in person for the first time in two years for talks in Geneva in March, but the meeting ended with many unresolved issues. The draft text is currently peppered with brackets on almost every line, which means there is not a consensus on the current wording. Further discussions were then scheduled for the June 21 to 26 Nairobi meeting, to prepare for the main COP15 conference. Initially set to take place in China in October 2020, COP15 has been postponed several times. A first largely ceremonial meeting was held virtually in Kunming in October 2021. One of the main tasks for delegates in Nairobi will be to clean up the "messy" draft text so it is ready for final discussions at COP15 when it goes ahead, said Li Shuo of Greenpeace. "The Nairobi meeting will answer one simple question - are we going to open COP15 on firm or shaky ground?" he told AFP.

### Funding challenge

A major point of contention is finance for poorer countries seeing the most severe impacts on biodiversity. In Geneva, a coalition of countries from Africa, South and Central America caused a stir by calling for at least \$100 billion a year initially - similar to the money promised by rich countries to help poorer ones adapt to climate change.

By 2030 they said the support should rise to \$700 billion dollars annually. Wealthy countries have balked at the proposal but the issue will be at the heart of the discussions in Kenya. "A key challenge will be to rebuild trust on finance between developed and developing countries," said Oscar Soria, of the campaign group Avaaz. Without that he said it would be difficult to find consensus on the agreement's ambitious goals.

The Nairobi meeting is also expected to underscore the role of indigenous peoples, who steward land home to 80 percent of Earth's remaining biodiversity, according to a recent landmark UN report on climate change impacts. In Tanzania, a voluntary government relocation program ushering Maasai from the Ngorongoro Nature Reserve has been criticized by human rights activists. "This is exactly what should be avoided" under the new UN agreement, said Jennifer Tauli Corpuz of the non-profit Nia Tero, who is part of the indigenous caucus to the CBD. —AFP

## Twitter deal remains deadlocked over fake users, Elon Musk says

**DOHA:** Business magnate Elon Musk said Tuesday that his \$44 billion move to take over Twitter remained held up by "very significant" questions about the number of fake users on the social network. Musk was reluctant to talk about the deal when asked at the Qatar Economic Forum, saying it was a "sensitive" matter. "There are still a few unresolved matters," Musk said by video link.

This includes whether "the number of fake and spam users on the system is less than five percent as per their claims, which I think is probably not most people's experience when using Twitter. "So we are still awaiting resolution on that matter and that is a very significant matter," the Tesla car and SpaceX exploration chief said.

Musk said there were also questions about

Twitter's debt and whether shareholders will vote for the deal. "So I think these are the three things that need to be resolved" to make the transaction happen. Musk said he wanted to get 80 percent of the North American population and half the world's population onto Twitter. "That means it must be something that is appealing to people, it obviously can't be a place where they feel uncomfortable or harassed or they will simply not use it."

"I think there is this big difference between freedom of speech and freedom of reach," Musk added. "You are allowed to yell whatever you want in a public space, more or less. But whatever you say, however controversial, doesn't need to then be broadcast to the whole country. "So I think generally the approach of Twitter should be to let people say what they want within the balance of the law but then limit who sees that based on any given Twitter user preferences."

He said that if the deal went ahead his role would be to "drive the product", saying this is what he did at Tesla and SpaceX. Musk said he expected Tesla's number of employees to fall by about 3.5 percent in



Tesla CEO Elon Musk

the next three months but the headcount would start rising again in a year. Asked about the next US presidential election in 2024, Musk said he had not decided who to back but that he was ready to inject \$20-\$25 million into a candidate's campaign. He has previously indicated he could support Florida's Republican governor Ron DeSantis. —AFP

## Kellogg splits into 3 separate companies

**NEW YORK:** American cereal giant Kellogg announced Tuesday it is splitting into three independent companies, sending the group's shares up by eight percent in pre-market trading. One of the new firms will be focused on global snacks and North American frozen breakfasts, a second on cereal sales in North America and the Caribbean, and a third will specialize in plant-based foods, the group said in a statement. The yet-to-be-named entities will initially be known as

Global Snacking Co, North America Cereal Co, and Plant Co. The latter two will be created through tax-free spin-offs.

Kellogg is aiming to complete the split by late 2023, subject to approval by US regulators. "These businesses all have significant standalone potential," Kellogg's chairman and CEO Steve Cahillane said in a statement. "An enhanced focus will enable them to better direct their resources toward their distinct strategic priorities," he said. The giant behind such household names as Corn Flakes and Rice Krispies said North American Cereal and Plant Co. would remain headquartered in Battle Creek, Michigan. The Global Snacking will have dual headquarters-in Battle Creek and Chicago. —AFP



ARLINGTON: Kellogg's cereals, including Special K, are seen at a store in Arlington, Virginia. —AFP

## Indigenous people protest over fuel price in Ecuador

**QUITO:** Thousands of Indigenous people and members of other disgruntled groups marched into Ecuador's capital on the eighth day of fuel price protests Monday, accused by the president of seeking only "chaos" and his removal. President Guillermo Lasso extended a state of emergency to cover six provinces, with a nighttime curfew in Quito, as he seeks to curtail demonstrations that have seen roads barricaded countrywide, cost the economy tens of millions of dollars and left dozens of people injured.

"With this decision, the welfare of citizens is safeguarded in the face of violence. At the same time, the rights of those who demonstrate peacefully are protected," the government said. On foot, on motorcycles and in crowded trucks, the Indigenous protesters began a peaceful march towards the city center from Cutuglagua, an area in southern Quito where they have been steadily growing in number since Sunday.

A hundred Indigenous people also entered the city from the north. The powerful Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Conaie) — credited with helping topple three presidents between 1997 and 2005 — called the protest as Ecuadorans increasingly struggle to make ends meet. Indigenous people comprise more than a million of Ecuador's 17.7 million inhabitants, and their protest has since been joined by students, workers and others feeling the economic pinch.

"We have reached out, we have called for dialogue, but they do not want peace," Lasso, a former banker in power since May 2021, said in a video on Twitter Monday. "They seek chaos. They want to eject the president." At least some in Monday's crowd—a number of whom waved Ecuadorian flags, wielded sticks or carried their children in their arms—said the president's ouster was precisely what they sought.



QUITO: Demonstrators block a road near El Arbolito park in Quito, on the ninth consecutive day of protests against the government. —AFP

"We are the people and we will stay here until the end," Victor Taday, a 50-year-old Indigenous resident of Quito originally from Chimborazo province, told AFP. It was time for Lasso, he said, to "go away". Police say 63 personnel have been wounded in clashes and 21 others briefly held hostage since the protests began, while human rights observers reported 79 arrests and 55 civilians wounded.

### 'Zone of peace'

A state of emergency declared last Friday has allowed Lasso to mobilize the armed forces to maintain order, suspend certain civil rights and declare curfews. On Sunday, Ecuadoran police requisitioned an Indigenous cultural center in Quito to use as a base for protest monitoring. The center had sheltered thousands of Indigenous people during 2019 anti-government demonstrations that left 11 dead and more than 1,000 injured but forced then-president Lenin Moreno to abandon plans to eliminate fuel subsidies.

The Salesian University, in the north of the capital, decided on Monday to "open the doors" of its facilities as a "zone of peace and humanitarian shelter" for the indigenous people and called "to stop actions and attitudes that interfere or alter the processes of dialogue and the search for solutions." Oil producer Ecuador has been hit by rising inflation, unemployment and poverty exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. Fuel prices have risen sharply since 2020, almost doubling for diesel from \$1 to \$1.90 per gallon and rising from \$1.75 to \$2.55 for gasoline.

Conaie demands a price cut to \$1.50 a gallon for diesel and \$2.10 for gasoline. It also wants food price controls and a commitment to renegotiating the personal bank loans of about four million families. Ecuador's parliament Monday evening voted 81 to 56 in favour of a resolution demanding the government conduct a "serious, clear and honest" dialogue and calling for a round table seeking solutions that would include the UN, Red Cross, local universities and the Catholic Church. —AFP

MOSCHINO MEN'S SPRING 2023



Models present creations for Moschino's Men's Spring-Summer 2023 fashion collection on June 19, 2022 in Milan. — AFP photos

The industrial space of Fonderia Macchi framed Jeremy Scott's first solo men's show for Moschino in Milan. With a bold, focused and cohesive collection, he paid tribute to the late American fashion illustrator and photographer Tony Viramontes, whom Scott considers "an unsung hero, because he's not a household name.... But he had such an influence in pop culture because of his work." The designer transferred his energetic strokes and combinations of vivid colors directly on the clothes, turning them in canvases of movement that evoked some of the illustrators' most prominent works for high-profile magazines and album covers, such as Janet Jackson's "Control" from 1986.

Collaborating with Viramontes' estate to obtain the rights to his images, Scott applied

abstract faces and motifs to tailoring, as seen on a striking series of suits ranging from the bicolored show opener to an over-size, elongated blazer jacket. Overall, silhouettes came with contrasting proportions, from cropped shirts and denim jacket to roomy hoodies and anoraks; from relaxed Bermudas to tapered pants tucked in biker or combat boots, as well as pleated skirts and sarongs thrown in the mix.

While the graphics were the immediate object of attention, the whole collection channeled the Buffalo Boys attitude. The reference to Viramontes' work for The Face magazine on the key fashion movement of the 1980s spearheaded by Ray Petri, matched the fearless message of self-expression Scott has always pushed during his tenure at Moschino.

The combination of tailoring and workwear with leather and vinyl separates delivered the grit, toughness and sense of rebellion of the reference, amplifying the visual force of the collection. At the end, the mix best served the purpose of Scott's presence in Milan's June calendar: express the true power of his menswear, freed from the shadow of the women's flamboyant counterpart. Mission accomplished.

—www.ca.finance.yahoo.com





In this file photo taken in 1964 English band The Beatles (from left to right) John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and George Harrison are pictured during a press conference in London. — AFP photos



In this file photo British musician Paul McCartney performs during a concert as part of his One on One tour at the Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre in Tinley Park, Illinois.

# McCartney to headline return of legendary Glastonbury music fest

More than 200,000 music fans and megastars Paul McCartney, Billie Eilish and Kendrick Lamar descend on the English countryside this week as Glastonbury Festival returns after a three-year hiatus. The coronavirus pandemic forced organizers to cancel the last two years' events, and those going this year face an arduous journey battling three days of major rail strikes across the country.

Doors open at Worthy Farm in Somerset, southwest England, on Wednesday, with acts on the main stages beginning on Friday. Planned walk-outs by train staff, including on Thursday and

Saturday, threaten disruption for those heading to the remote site. Ticket holders will also be keeping a close eye on the weather forecast, hoping that current predictions for a largely dry event hold true and that the site does not turn into a mud bath.

Headliners on the main Pyramid Stage include former Beatle McCartney, US singer Eilish and rapper Lamar. Other big-name performers on the bill are soul legend Diana Ross, Led Zeppelin frontman Robert Plant, New Zealand singer-songwriter Lorde and electro-pop duo Pet Shop Boys. Dairy farmer Michael Eavis first organized the festival in 1970, the

day after Jimi Hendrix died, and fans who came to see acts including Marc Bolan and Al Stewart paid £1 each for entry and received free milk from the farm. The festival was held intermittently in the 1970s and it wasn't until the 1990s that it really began to acquire its current status.

#### Cultural power

Glastonbury was due to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2020, but those plans were put on hold by the pandemic. A virtual event was held last year, with Coldplay performing from the site, but it was marred by technical issues. Despite being firmly in middle age, the festival still

has huge cultural power and moments of controversy.

A successful headline spot can catapult bands to superstardom. Legendary performances from Radiohead in 1997, Coldplay in 2002 and Muse in 2004 helped elevate them to their current heights. There was controversy in 2008 when rapper Jay-Z was given a headline slot, but the doubts were dispelled after he delivered one of the most memorable sets ever. The festival has had its darker moments, with 235 people arrested in 1990 after travelers started fighting with police. Integral to the festival's development was the late Arabella Churchill,

granddaughter of Winston Churchill, who set up and then ran the Theatre and Circus fields.

As a result, the festival developed a diverse reputation and the 900-acre (360-hectare) site now encompasses various thematic areas. McCartney, who turned 80 on Saturday, will become the oldest headliner to play at the festival when he performs the coveted Saturday night slot. Other acts include Oasis star Noel Gallagher, US pop-rockers Haim, electro pioneer Herbie Hancock and veteran Australian indie band Crowded House. — AFP

## South Africa's latest hot export to China? Donkeys

Chinese demand for traditional medicines has sent poachers hunting for African animals from rhinos to pangolins. Now a humbler creature is threatened: donkeys. Once prized by emperors, a gelatin called ejiao-made from donkey skins-is increasingly sought after by China's middle class.

The health benefits are believed similar to products derived from rhino horns, from working as a blood thinner to acting

skin trade," said Jesse Christelis, co-founder of the Donkey Dairy. A recent study by researchers from the University of South Africa showed the donkey population shrank from 210,000 in 1996 to about 146,000 in 2019.

The shrinking supply has sent prices soaring. According to Christelis, a donkey would fetch about \$30 at auction five years ago. Now they cost about \$125 each. That is still a relative bargain in China where donkey hides that sold for \$473 in 2018 now sell for \$1,160.

The ejiao produced from them can sell for up to \$360 per kilogram. South Africa legally exports about 10,500 donkey hides to China every year, but the real quantity is believed much higher as smugglers have tapped into the trade. "This year, we intercepted two loads of donkeys that were going to Lesotho," said Grace De

the kill-buyers who supply the trade with donkey skins."

Theft of donkeys also hits small farmers who need the animals to transport their produce. "Stock theft units need to be more proactive," said Ashley Ness, an inspector at the Highveld Horse Care Unit, an equine welfare agency situated on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

"Instead of taking action after the cause, they should take leads from villages that get approached by suspicious agents." The top agriculture official in the North West province, Manketsi Tlhape, said they are "investigating all the reported incidents".

However, donkey farmers like Christelis have limited options to protect their herd from thieves. "We have electric fences, alarms and our donkeys are also micro chipped in case they get stolen," he said.

#### Donkey Dairy

There is scant information on the size of the ejiao market, but the Britain-based animal welfare group Donkey Sanctuary estimated that in 2019 China needed five million skins to supply to the trade. In contrast, the market for products using donkey milk is still in its infancy. The size of the global donkey milk market is projected to reach just \$16 million by 2026.

South Africa has two donkey dairies, but they may not be viable if prices for the animals keep rising. Kenya banned donkey slaughter in 2020, after the populations there plunged due to the skin trade. Donkey milk is believed to contain antioxidant, antimicrobial and antidiabetic properties.

"I think the donkey skin trade is definitely a threat to donkey dairies in South Africa and across Africa," said Christelis, who owns 116 donkeys at his farm. "The increased demand for donkey milk is mainly from people suffering from eczema, psoriasis," he said. "Seeing the donkey population being depleted, we don't know if the demand for donkey milk will be met." — AFP

Lange of the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

#### Donkey rustlers

"On our farm there has been a big focus to go look for donkeys that have been placed in places of misery and we actually buy them out," he told AFP. "We sit often on most of the auctions whether it is online or a physical auction to out bid



Jesse Christelis, 27, owner of the Donkey Dairy Farm in Magaliesburg, plays with some of his animals.

as an aphrodisiac, which could ease pressure on endangered rhinos. But as in countries from Burkina Faso to Kenya, South Africa is now seeing its donkey population plunge, threatening other businesses that make soaps and creams from donkey milk.

"In South Africa we have seen a rapid decline of the donkey population due to illegal slaughter to supply the Chinese



This aerial view shot in Magaliesburg shows a group of donkey at the Donkey Dairy Farm.

## In Vienna, snails are slowly reclaiming their culinary fame

A chef presents a snail skewer at the "Wiener Schnecken" snail farm owned by breeder Andreas Gugumuck in Vienna.

On the outskirts of Vienna, farmer Andreas Gugumuck tosses some extra cereal to thousands of snails inching over planks and lush greenery. Far from being pests, the slow-moving molluscs have become his main produce. "It started as a joke," said 48-year-old Gugumuck, a former computer scientist who now raises more than 300,000 snails annually in an effort to resurrect a lost culinary tradition of the Habsburg empire.

Twelve years ago, an article featuring a renowned Vienna chef serving snails piqued his interest. After some research and poring over old cookbooks, he "found out that Vienna was a real snail capital".

Back when this predominantly Catholic country strictly observed religious holidays, wealthy priests and monks were forced to give up meat during Lent and other religious holidays-and found snails to be a worthy, less sinful substitute. In the 19th century, snails gained popularity across the city of Vienna, with a market in the center serving them deep fried, sprinkled with sugar, or with a side of cabbage or bacon. Though France is well-known for its garlic and butter escargots, in Vienna, snails used to be so popular they were shipped down the Danube by the barrel load.

#### It's a great taste

In Gugumuck's restaurant next to his farm, he now serves snails in risottos and on pizzas, stuffed in dumplings, and sausages, as "snail and chips", and even in sweet cinnamon buns. Making it in the snail business wasn't easy, he said. He recalled how chefs around the city initially turned their noses up, thinking diners would steer clear of intimidating invertebrates.

But Gugumuck started setting up events and guided tours at his snail farm to re-establish the tradition, and today, some of those chefs look enviously at the small burgeoning enterprise which, Gugumuck said, is fully booked eight weeks in advance. Greater awareness of meat-eating's environmental impact has also helped boost business, Gugumuck believes. Snails need little space, water or food, but he said they are packed with four times as much protein as beef, making them "a real future food".

For the most part, Gugumuck's customers are pleasantly surprised. "It's a great taste-you have to try it," said Patrick Filzmaier, a 33-year-old bank employee who attended a wine tasting at the farm, complete with electro music. He likened the flavor to nuts, meat, and baked goods. "It's small but it fills you up," he said. — AFP



Snail breeder Andreas Gugumuck sorts snails in a basket at his "Wiener Schnecken" snail farm in Vienna. — AFP photos



Snails are pictured at the "Wiener Schnecken" snail farm owned by breeder Andreas Gugumuck in Vienna.



Snails are pictured at the "Wiener Schnecken" snail farm owned by breeder Andreas Gugumuck in Vienna.



Chefs and owners pose for a picture during a ceremony revealing the 2022 selection of the Michelin Guide Dubai, the first-ever edition in the United Arab Emirates. — AFP photos



Chefs and owners pose for picture on the stage during a ceremony revealing the 2022 selection of the MICHELIN Guide Dubai.

## Dubai restaurants earn Middle East's first Michelin stars

Eleven Dubai restaurants were awarded the first Michelin stars in the Middle East on Tuesday as dozens of the city's eateries made it into the prestigious gastronomic guide. Two restaurants were given two-star ratings, another nine gained one star and 14 received the Bib Gourmand for value-for-money gourmet fare.

Dubai, the United Arab Emirates' commercial hub, joins a growing number of cities worldwide covered by the coveted French listings. Inspectors spent months

visiting eateries "from the most elegant and luxurious restaurants run by globally renowned chefs, to the simple bistro operated by friendly locals", Michelin guide international director Gwendal Poullennec said at the announcement event at Dubai Opera.

"It's a historic moment for Dubai and the Michelin guide," he told AFP. Sixty-nine restaurants serving 21 types of cuisine were listed, including Italian, Japanese, Arabic, French and Indian. Il Ristorante-Niko Romito, and STAY by

Yannick Alleno, which is on Dubai's Palm development of man-made islands, were the two-star winners.

"This I believe should be a game-changer," Firas Fawaz, founder and managing partner of featured restaurant The Artisan, told AFP. "You have the international standard... that pushes us to go the extra mile to deliver something different from the norm."

Created in 1900 by the brothers Andre and Edouard Michelin of tyre company Michelin for motorists, the guide has

become a reference for food lovers and has been known to make or break careers. Poullennec said Dubai's 90 per cent expat population, of 200 nationalities, had created an "epicurean kaleidoscope" in the desert city.

Dubai's inclusion is a recognition of the different nationalities "bringing their experience, their background and culture into every single bite", Issam Kazem, CEO of Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce, told AFP. — AFP



A host holds a Michelin star during a ceremony revealing the 2022 selection of the Michelin Guide Dubai.



Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov (second left) reacts on stage to the bid of \$103.5 million to buy his 2021 Nobel Peace Prize medal in New York.

## Russian Nobel laureate sells medal for \$103.5 million to benefit Ukraine kids

Dmitry Muratov, the Russian editor-in-chief of the independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta, on Monday auctioned off his Nobel Peace Prize gold medal for a whopping \$103.5 million to benefit children displaced by the war in Ukraine. The medal was sold to an as yet unidentified phone bidder at the sale in New York organized by Heritage Auctions.

The sale was a spirited one, with lots of applause and bidders egging one another on to increase the total. Muratov was seen recording videos of the bidding screen and those in the room. When the final bid came in, at tens of millions of dollars more than the previous offer, many in the room expressed shock, including Muratov himself.

"I'm just like you in that regard," he told AFP, speaking through a translator after the sale. Muratov won the prize in 2021 alongside journalist Maria Ressa of the Philippines, with the committee honoring

the pair "for their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression."

He was among a group of journalists who founded Novaya Gazeta in 1993 after the fall of the Soviet Union. This year, it became the only major newspaper left voicing criticism of President Vladimir Putin and his tactics inside and outside the country. In March, more than a month into Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Novaya Gazeta suspended operations in Russia, after Moscow adopted legislation providing for tough jail terms against anyone criticizing the Kremlin's bloody military campaign.

In April, Muratov was assaulted on a train when a person threw oil-based paint mixed with acetone on him, causing his eyes to burn. Muratov's medal was available to bidders both in person and online, with all proceeds going to UNICEF's Humanitarian Response for Ukrainian Children Displaced by War. When asked why he chose UNICEF as the recipient of

the funds, Muratov said: "It's critical to us that that organization does not belong to any government. It can work above government. There are no borders for it."



A woman holds Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov's 2021 Nobel Peace Prize medal in New York. — AFP photos

### 'We must stay in our jobs'

Since 2000, six of Novaya Gazeta's journalists and collaborators have been killed in connection with their work, including investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya. Muratov dedicated his Nobel prize to their memory. On Monday, he hailed the persistence of journalists as an important check on governments, and one way that war can be prevented.

"So no matter how many times each one of us wants to turn in our notice and quit, we must stay in our jobs," he told AFP. Speaking in a video released by Heritage in connection with the sale, the prominent journalist said that winning the Nobel "gives you an opportunity to be heard." "The most important message today is for people to understand that there's a war going on and we need to help people who are suffering the most," he said. — AFP



Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov, editor-in-chief of the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta, celebrates after a person made a final offer of \$103.5 million to buy his 2021 Nobel Peace Prize medal.

## Geoffrey Rush to get top prize at Czech film festival



Photo shows Actor Geoffrey Rush. — AFP

Oscar-winning Australian actor Geoffrey Rush will receive the Crystal Globe award for his "outstanding contribution to world cinema" at the Karlovy Vary film festival next month, organizers said on Tuesday. The 70-year-old Rush won the Academy Award for Best Actor for "Shine" in 1996.

Known as Captain Barbossa from the "Pirates of the Caribbean" films, Rush was also nominated for an Oscar for

"Shakespeare in Love", "Quills" and "The King's Speech". Benicio del Toro, who won an Oscar for best supporting actor for his role in "Traffic", will receive the Festival President's Award. The 56th edition of the festival will be held in the western Czech spa city of Karlovy Vary on July 1-9. — AFP



A scene from 'My Neighbor Totoro'.

## Totoro's home: Japan crowdfund for forest that inspired film

A Japanese city is launching a crowdfunding campaign to help preserve a special spot of woodland: the forest that inspired the animator of beloved movie "My Neighbor Totoro". The city of Tokorozawa outside Tokyo plans to buy the 3.5-hectare "Totoro Forest" for 2.6 billion yen (\$19 million), with crowdfunding covering just a small portion of that, a city official told AFP.

"The area is one of the places that director (Hayao) Miyazaki developed ideas for Totoro after walking there," the official said, adding that the plan aims to turn the forest into a nature reserve. The 1988 animation film from Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli features the cuddly but mysterious forest spirit character Totoro, who has become an instantly recognizable figure for fans around the world.

The forest that inspired his home is

about 30 kilometers northwest of Tokyo and has some 7,000 oak trees.

Tokorozawa will ask crowdfunding participants to contribute 25,000 yen (\$185) and in return, they will receive prints of background artwork offered by Studio Ghibli. An initial 1,000 sets will be available, targeting donors inside Japan, though additional rounds could be organized if there is interest, the official said.

While the campaign will only cover a small portion of the cost of buying the land, the city is hoping it will bring attention to the forest and build support for its preservation. Miyazaki, who co-founded Studio Ghibli with Isao Takahata, is known for a string of animated hits, including "Spirited Away", though Totoro is one of his studio's most beloved characters. — AFP



The forest that inspired the movie.

## Sports

# Rugby league joins swimming in banning 'transgender' athletes

## 'Welfare, legal and reputational risk'

**SYDNEY:** The sport of rugby league on Tuesday joined swimming by banning transgender players from international competition, as world athletes said it was also considering a rule change. Rugby league authorities said transgender athletes would be "unable to play" in international matches while they undertook consultations and research to finalize a new policy for 2023.

They cited the "welfare, legal and reputational risk" to the game and players in taking their decision. The 13-a-side game's governing body acted a day after international swimming effectively banned transgender athletes from women's races, placing them instead in a new "open category".

World Athletics hinted at tougher policies on transgender athletes taking part in women's events, with president Sebastian Coe saying fairness is more important than inclusion.

Sports are drawing up new regulations on participation after the International Olympic Committee last year announced guidelines while asking federations to produce their own "sport-specific" rule. The issue has ignited into a fractious debate between those fighting for transgender athletes' rights to compete freely as women and those arguing they enjoy an unfair physiological advantage.

The International Rugby League's announcement means transgender athletes will be banned from this year's Women's Rugby League World Cup in England in November. "The IRL reaffirms its belief that rugby league is a game for all and that anyone and everyone can play our sport," it

said in a statement. But the sport said it had to balance each player's right to take part against the perceived risk to other players "and to ensure all are given a fair hearing".

### 'In the gutter'

The rugby league governing body said it would work with the eight nations taking part in the Women's Rugby League World Cup for a "future trans women inclusion policy in 2023", taking into account the "unique characteristics" of rugby league. Transgender former New South Wales rugby player Caroline Layt criticized the league's decision. "We are human beings, we have feelings, and we feel like we are being singled out," Layt told AFP. "Basically what they're saying is: 'We don't want you.'"

Swimming's governing body FINA made its decision to exclude transgender swimmers from women's races after setting up legal, medical and athletes' committees to examine the issue. FINA decided that male-to-female transgender athletes could only join women's races if they had not experienced any part of male puberty. It said its medical committee found that males acquired advantages in puberty, including in the size of their organs and bones, that were not lost in hormone suppression.

World Athletics president Coe hinted Monday that track and field could follow swimming in bringing in a tougher policy on transgender athletes competing in women's events. "My responsibility is to protect the integrity of women's sport and we take that very seriously, and if it



**BUDAPEST:** France's Analia Pigree competes in a heat for the women's 50m backstroke during the Budapest 2022 World Aquatics Championships at Duna Arena in Budapest on June 21, 2022. —AFP

means that we have to make adjustments to protocols going forward, we will," said Coe, who attended the swimming world championships in Budapest on Sunday.

"I've always made it clear: if we ever get pushed into a corner to that point where we're making a judgment about fairness or inclusion, I will always fall down on the side of fairness."

Under World Athletics rules, transgender women have to show they have low testosterone levels for at least 12 months before competition. Cycling's governing body, the UCI, has also toughened its rules on transgender eligibility by doubling the time period before a rider transitioning from male to female can compete. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Players can leave Ukraine

**LAUSANNE:** FIFA has extended until June 2023 the possibility for foreign players and coaches based in Ukraine and Russia to unilaterally suspend their contracts and move to another club. "The Bureau of the FIFA Council has decided to extend the temporary employment rules established in the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP) with the aim of effectively assisting players, clubs and coaches impacted by the war in Ukraine," FIFA said in a statement Tuesday. The decision follows changes made to the transfer rules in March following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "Should clubs affiliated to the Ukrainian Association of Football (UAF) or the Football Union of Russia (FUR) not reach a mutual agreement with their respective foreign players and coaches before or on 30 June 2022... these players and coaches will have the right to suspend their employment contracts with their clubs until 30 June 2023," FIFA added.

#### Napoli probed over Osimhen

**MILAN:** Napoli are being investigated for potential false accounting in the transfer deal which brought Nigeria's Victor Osimhen to the Serie A club, prosecutors confirmed on Tuesday. Prosecutors in Naples said in a statement that Italian finance police searched Napoli's Castel Volturno and Rome offices to collect documents regarding Osimhen's 70 million euros (\$73.9 million) move from Lille in 2020. They added that the searches come following requests from both Italian and French judicial authorities, with Lille having been also the subject of a search in last month. Italian media report that club owner Aurelio de Laurentiis was also under investigation. Osimhen's transfer was one of dozens of suspicious deals looks by Italian Football Federation (FIGC) investigators in a probe into allegedly inflated transfer values designed to artificially boost clubs' balance sheets. The deal stood out as it involved four players valued at just over 20 million euros moving to Lille as part of the deal.

#### Saudi-backed LIV Golf

**LOS ANGELES:** Four-time major champion Brooks Koepka is set to become the latest star to join the Saudi-backed LIV Golf series, media reports said on Tuesday. The 32-year-old American world number 19 is expected to make his debut on the lucrative circuit at its maiden US event in Oregon next week. Koepka's management team did not immediately respond when contacted by AFP on Tuesday. But multiple reports in Britain and the United States said Koepka - who removed "PGA Tour" from his Twitter profile on Monday - will follow the likes of Dustin Johnson and six-time major-winner Phil Mickelson by joining LIV. The upstart series, which is bankrolled by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, has plunged the golf world into turmoil since its emergence. The circuit, which launched in Britain earlier this month, offers some of the richest purses in golf tournament history, with \$25 million on offer at each of its events - roughly double the prize money of other majors.

#### Alaphilippe set for comeback

**PARIS:** Double world road cycling champion Julian Alaphilippe will make his return after two months out injured at Sunday's French Championships, his Quick-Step Alpha Vinyl team announced on Tuesday. Frenchman Alaphilippe, 30, suffered multiple fractures during April's Liege-Bastogne-Liege. His team-mate Remco Evenepoel will also race this weekend, but in Belgium. "The week of the National Championships is one of the best of the year," Quick-Step's sports director Tom Steels said in a statement. "You've got a lot of racing happening in many countries and our riders are all motivated to get some good results," he added. Alaphilippe's return on a 241.7km run starting and finishing in Cholet, near Nantes, will come a matter of days before the Tour de France begins in Copenhagen on July 1. His presence on the Tour, at which he has worn the race leader's yellow jersey in the last three editions, is uncertain. —AFP

## 'So much pain in my heart': Tennis star helps Ukraine

**PARIS:** Former women's tennis world number three Elina Svitolina has told AFP she hopes one day to return and see her octogenarian grandmother who has been trapped in the Black Sea port of Odessa since Russia invaded Ukraine. "I hope that this will end one day and I can come back and see her," said Svitolina. The 27-year-old was speaking a week after she and Ukrainian Champions League-winning football legend Andriy Shevchenko were asked on a Zoom call by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to become ambassadors for United24.

The charity was launched by Zelensky to collect donations to cover Ukraine's most pressing needs: Defence and de-mining, medical aid and to rebuild the country which has been devastated since Vladimir Putin launched the invasion in February. Svitolina is expecting her first child - a baby girl - in October with French tennis star Gael Monfils but says that happy news is offset by her anxiety for family members who remain in Ukraine.

Svitolina's parents and brother managed to leave but aside from her grandmother Tamara, her uncle and his family remain in Odessa. The city, a multi-cultural crossroads of a million inhabitants, is under de facto Russian blockade and has found itself isolated. Svitolina, a Wimbledon and US Open semifinalist in 2019, says it is especially harrowing for her grandmother's generation who experienced the Nazi invasion in 1941.

"It is tough for older people to get through

another war," she said. "The deficit of food, staying at home or in a basement for days... for them it is extremely stressful and very, very tough mentally. "I try to keep contact with her in Odessa and try and help her as much as I can. She was way too old to move." Svitolina says her grandmother has an unlikely savior. "She is with her cat who she says is her biggest defender!"

"My uncle and his family live not so far from her. They see each other when it is possible to leave the house and this is a big help. "Our friends are also helping by volunteering to go and see her." Despite not having lived in Ukraine for years, Svitolina said "it feels like home" and she used to visit three or four times a year.

### 'Drop of help'

Hence her desire to do something to help her country like other leading Ukrainian sports personalities such as fellow tennis player Sergiy Stakhovsky and Sheriff Tiraspol manager Yuriy Vernydub, who returned to join up. "A lot of my friends have come back and taken up weapons to defend the country," she said. "So many people are struggling right now that is why I feel like through (United24) we can do something that will help all Ukrainians and military and children who are in need. "It is a small part to play that will hopefully make a difference."

Svitolina admits she was nervous when she joined former Ukrainian national manager Shevchenko for the call with Zelensky. "It was such an honor and I was really worried like never before. Even when I was in the Wimbledon semifinals I was not that worried," she said. She and Shevchenko will raise funds through charity events and publicize it through their social media platforms. Svitolina though can no longer play in exhibition matches due to her pregnancy, howev-



**NEW YORK:** Ukraine's Elina Svitolina serves to Canada's Leylah Fernandez during their US Open Tennis tournament women's quarter-finals match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. Svitolina was asked on a Zoom call by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to become an ambassador for United24. —AFP

er. She says her "mission" is the least she can do given the example in leadership Zelensky had set since the outset.

"He gave me this hope that we will win this war, that we will come through this," she said. "That is why with his example he gives all this hope to Ukrainians. "It is a huge example of respect for President Zelensky for his bravery in staying in the country. He has surpassed all expectations." Svitolina says after several months of war and no end in sight it was important to keep people's minds focused on the conflict. "I have so much pain in my heart seeing how many cities destroyed and how many people young and old have lost their lives in one moment," she said. "They need help and I can be the one who can add a drop of help to the ocean for them." —AFP

## Muguruza gets a much-needed win in Eastbourne

**EASTBOURNE:** Garbine Muguruza kickstarted a difficult season as the former Wimbledon champion beat Poland's Magdalena Frech 6-1, 7-6 (9/7) to reach the last 16 of the Eastbourne International on Monday. The number five seed earned just her third win on the WTA Tour since February. "The conditions were hard today. I feel like I fought hard against the wind, and I haven't played many matches on grass either," said Muguruza. "I could see today that if I didn't fight as hard as I can, I wasn't going to win."

Muguruza next faces the winner of the second round match between 12th seed Camila Giorgi and Canadian lucky loser Rebecca Marino, who got the better of Britain's Heather Watson 7-6 (7/1), 6-4. Magda Linette produced an upset to beat 17th seed

Alison Riske in a marathon encounter lasting over three hours. World number 66 Linette came from a set down to outlast Riske 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4). All eyes on Tuesday will turn to Serena Williams' return to court as she pairs up with world number three Ons Jabeur in the doubles.

Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam singles champion, has not played since suffering an injury during her first-round match at Wimbledon 12 months ago, plummeting to 1,204th in the world rankings. However, the 40-year-old has been handed a wildcard to return to singles action at Wimbledon next week and is getting some match practice this week at Eastbourne. "Many players were jealous because I'm playing with her. Honestly, Serena is Serena. She is a legend and always will be," said Jabeur.

Williams and Jabeur begin their partnership against Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo and Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic. In the men's event, Australia's Alex de Minaur began the defence of his title with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Chilean Cristian



**PARIS:** Spain's Garbine Muguruza returns the ball during her women's singles match against Estonia's Kaia Kanepi at the Court Simonne-Mathieu on day one of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament in Paris on May 22, 2022. —AFP

Garin. America's Sebastian Korda (7/5). Millman will next play pulled out of Wimbledon due to "terrible shin splints" after he lost in straight sets to John Millman 6-3, 7-6

don't know, we can't really verify. "We don't believe it's the number mentioned in France, which was more or less 30,000 to 40,000," he added.

Keller said other factors caused the problems at the Stade de France, in mayhem that saw the French police use tear gas at close range, even against children. "It wasn't only the paper tickets that created chaos in front of the gates," he said. "The reasons are numerous: a transport strike, poor reaction from stewards, police, there were delinquents and an extremely big flux of people in front of the stadium without a ticket or with fake tickets," he added. Liverpool and Real Madrid supporters are due to give evidence to the Senate later in the day. —AFP

## UEFA rubbish French minister's Champions League fake tickets

**PARIS:** A senior UEFA representative said on Tuesday he did not believe French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin's claims about the number of fake tickets in circulation during the chaotic scenes before last month's Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid.

Following the game on May 28, Darmanin claimed that between 30,000 and 40,000 fake tickets in the hands of Liverpool fans was the cause of problems as police funneled thousands of fans into overcrowded underpasses around the stadium, leading to the kick-off being delayed by more than 30 minutes.

Martin Kallen, general director of UEFA Events, who are in charge of the body's commercial events, told a hearing at the French Senate, which is investigating the incidents, the figure was much lower. "We know there were around 2,600 tickets taken to the turnstiles which were fake," Kellen said. "But a lot of tickets didn't get to the turnstiles... How many? We

Sports

# Taiwan condemns China over changes in WCup fan labeling

## Island's name ended up as 'Chinese Taipei'

TAIPEI: Taiwan accused China of "bullying" on Tuesday after the island's name ended up as "Chinese Taipei" on a FIFA World Cup fan identification card following multiple changes by organizers in Qatar. The "Hayya" fan ID card system acts as a visa to enter the country and a pass to access stadiums. Initially neither Taiwan nor Chinese Taipei - the name used for the island in international sports events - were listed on the Hayya online portal as options, and officials said Taiwanese fans might be labeled as Chinese. Last week a "Taiwan" tag was added following a complaint by the island, but it was then changed again to Chinese Taipei - which Taiwan's foreign ministry said was due to Beijing's "interferences".

"We express deep regret over the Qatar World Cup organizers' failure to resist improper interferences by political powers," said the ministry's deputy spokesman Tsuei Ching-lin at a press conference. "The foreign ministry again condemns the Chinese government's bullying... and its political manipulation of international sports events." China considers self-ruled, democratic Taiwan as part of its territory - a stance Taipei firmly rejects - and vows to seize it one day, by force if necessary.

Beijing bristles at any use of the word Taiwan - such as when Lithuania allowed Taipei to open a de facto embassy under its own name last year - lest it lend the island a sense of international legitimacy. The sporting world's use of the name "Chinese Taipei" is based on a 1981 compromise



DOHA: Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro heads a ball during his visit to the Lusail stadium, where the closing ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will take place, in Doha. —AFP

made with the International Olympic Committee to allow Taiwan to compete on the international stage. Qatar is expecting more than one million

fans to visit during the World Cup, which runs from November 21 to December 18, and all must register for the ID card. —AFP

## Giggs quits as Wales manager to avoid WCup distraction

LONDON: Ryan Giggs resigned from his role as manager of Wales on Monday as the former Manchester United great awaits trial on an accusation of domestic violence. Giggs has been on leave since November 2020 when he was arrested. The 48-year-old is accused of controlling and coercive behavior against his former girlfriend Kate Greville between August 2017 and November 2020.

Giggs is also accused of assaulting Greville, causing her actual bodily harm, and common assault of her younger sister, Emma Greville, at his home in the Manchester area in November 2020. He has denied the allegations and pleaded not guilty to all charges. His trial has been delayed until August in January to a courts backlog. Since then, his former assistant Rob Page, has led Wales to their first World Cup since 1958. Giggs' decision to step aside means Page will take charge of games against the USA, Iran and England in Qatar in November.

"After much consideration, I am standing down from my position as manager of the Wales men's national team with immediate effect," Giggs said in a statement. "It has been an honour and a privilege to manage my country, but it is only right that the Wales FA, the coaching staff and the players prepare for the tournament with certainty, clarification and without speculation around the position of their head coach." Giggs won 13 Premier League titles and two Champions Leagues among 25 major honors during a 24-year career with United at club level.

He began his coaching career at Old Trafford, taking temporary charge at the end of the 2013/14 season after David Moyes was sacked before working as an assistant to Louis van Gaal for two years. Giggs was appointed Wales boss in January 2018 and helped them secure qualification for Euro 2020. And he said he hopes to return to management in the future. "I do not want the country's preparations for the World Cup to be affected, destabilized or jeopardized in any way by the continued interest around this case," he added.

"It is my intention to resume my managerial career at a later date and I look forward to watching our national team alongside you in the stands." In a statement, the Football Association of Wales (FAW) said: "The FAW places on record its gratitude to Ryan Giggs for his tenure as manager of the Cymru Men's National Team and appreciates the decision he has taken, which is in the best interests of Welsh football. "The full focus of the FAW and the Cymru Men's National Team is on the FIFA World Cup in Qatar later this year." —AFP

Euro 2020, three years after reaching the semi-finals of the World Cup in Russia. "My personal opinion on Gareth is that he is, by the facts on the pitch, the most successful England manager we've had for 55 years," said Hewitt, who took over as FA chair in January. "The bit people don't see as much is the Gareth at camp and the culture he's created. "Certainly prior to Gareth being the manager of England, there was not the pride of wearing the England shirt. There were the club rivalries we'd read about. The players not getting on. "He's changed that beyond recognition and I've seen that first hand." Hewitt praised Southgate's willingness to take responsibility for setbacks. "It's refreshing working with somebody like that because that openness to learn is quite remarkable and quite unusual in any sphere," she said. —AFP

## Barca to spend '15 to 20m euros' on Olympic Stadium

MADRID: Barcelona president Joan Laporta said on Tuesday the club will have to spend "between 15 and 20 million euros" to improve the Olympic Stadium, where Barca will play the 2023/2024 season while renovation work is carried out at Camp Nou. "We have committed ourselves to adapting the Olympic Stadium's facilities, which are already in very good condition, and modernising several areas, such as the press stand, the changing rooms and parking," Laporta said.

In December, Barcelona's members approved the club taking out a loan of up to 1.5 billion euros to finance renovation projects, with 900 million euros allocated towards the revamp of Camp Nou. Barcelona's board was also given permission last week to sell off portions of both its licensing and merchandising business and its La Liga television revenues, which the club believe could raise 700 million euros.

Barca are still battling huge debts, which stood at more than a billion euros at the start of last season, causing the departure of Lionel Messi to Paris Saint-Germain. But the 99,000-capacity Camp Nou is seen as an historic stadium in urgent need of repair. By modernizing the ground, and increasing its capacity to 105,000, the club hope to boost revenues in the future.

Barcelona plan to begin renovations this summer and work will continue through next season. In the 2023/2024 campaign, Barcelona will move to the Olympic Stadium to coincide with the revamp of the stadium's third tier and the roof. Barca will then return to Camp Nou in the 2024/2025 season, but with a reduced capacity of around 50 per cent, before the refurbishment is due to complete for the 2025/2026 campaign. —AFP

## FA chair backs Southgate despite poor England run

LONDON: Gareth Southgate has been strongly backed by Football Association chair Debbie Hewitt following England's disappointing Nations League results, which included a 4-0 home defeat to Hungary. That embarrassing loss last week even sparked a debate over whether the England boss should be sacked ahead of the World Cup in Qatar, which starts in November. But Hewitt hailed Southgate's role in transforming the team's fortunes on the pitch and instilling a healthy culture off it.

The 51-year-old last year took England to the final of



## Double victory for Kuwait at ISSF GP

KUWAIT: Kuwait's shooting team remained at the top of the medals table at the international shooting competition in Turkey, having bagged five medals so far, including three gold medals. The ISSF Grand Prix Rifle, Pistol, Shotgun continued in Konya, Turkey. Yesterday, two Gold medals were won by

Kuwait athletes, who is confidently leading in medals standing.

Eman Al Shamaa from Kuwait came to the top of the podium in Skeet women final and won her first ISSF competition award. Turkey's Nur Banu Ozpak also won her first ISSF medal - finishing second. Finalist of the ISSF World Cup 2022 in Baku, Nurlana Jafarova (from Azerbaijan) won Bronze. World Cup winner Kuwait's Mansour Al Rashedi won the Skeet men's final after a tough match.

# Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics			
Sabah Hospital	24812000		
Amiri Hospital	22450005		
Maternity Hospital	24843100		
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700		
Chest Hospital	24849400		
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010		
Adan Hospital	23940620		
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300		
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000		
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9		
Clinics		Industrial Shuwaikh	
Kaizen center	25716707	Qadsiya	24814764
Rawda	22517733	Dasmah	22515088
Adaliya	22517144	Bneid Al-Gar	22532265
Khaldiya	24848075	Shaab	22531908
Kaifan	24849807	Qibla	22518752
Shamiya	24848913	Ayoun Al-Qibla	22459381
Shuwaikh	24814507	Mirqab	22451082
Abdullah Salem	22549134	Sharq	22456536
Nuzha	22526804	Salmiya	22465401
			25746401

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Marshal Tioph Fernandes, Resident of Bhatir Vaddo, Morjim, Pernem, Goa - India, has done correction in my name from Marsal Tioph Fernandes to Marshal Tioph Fernandes, which is wrongly typed in my passport bearing No. T4012610, for all purposes. sd/- Marshal Tioph Fernandes (C 2013)

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DAMMAM: Kuwait National Futsal team players celebrate after beating Mauritania 7-2 on Tuesday in the Arab Cup in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

## Kuwait pound Mauritania 7-2

### 2022 Arab Futsal Cup: Palestine beat Saudi Arabia

**DAMMAM:** Kuwait National Futsal team on Tuesday regained the tone of victories in the Arab Cup held in Dammam, Saudi Arabia as they beat their Mauritanian counterparts 7-2 in the second round of Group A. Kuwait's Abdul Rahman Al-Taweel scored three goals; Abdul Latif Al-Abbasi (2) while Saleh Al-Fadil and Sultan Al-Majed scored one goal each. On the other hand, Mauritania's Ibrahim Al-Abed scored the two goals for his team.

Saudi Arabia kicked off their 2022 Arab Futsal Cup campaign with 6-4 defeat to Palestine in Dammam on Monday night. The result leaves the Green Falcons bottom of the three-team Group 3,

with Palestine leading with three points. Libya will face Saudi Arabia in the group's last match on Wednesday.

In Group 1, Morocco overcame Kuwait 6-4 on Monday, while Mauritania comprehensively beat Somalia 8-1 to take an early lead in the table. Meanwhile in Group 2's only match on the opening night, Egypt and Iraq played to a 3-3 draw.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia reached the semifinals of the 2022 WAFF Women's Futsal Championship after beating Oman 5-0 at King Abdullah Sports City Hall in Jeddah on Monday night. The result ensured the Green Falcons ended second in Group E with three points, having lost their first match 3-1

to Kuwait, who finished top with a maximum of six points. Oman were last in the group having lost both their matches.

Saudi's goals came from a brace each by Raghad Mukhayzin and Lana Abdelrazek, and a strike from Leen Mohammed, to set a date with Group A winners Bahrain in the semifinals of the tournament on Wednesday. The other last-four clash will see Kuwait take on Iraq on the same day. Meanwhile Palestine and Oman will meet earlier on Wednesday in the fifth-place playoff. The tournament, organized by the West Asia Football Federation, concludes on Friday, June 24, with the final and the third-place playoffs.



TAMPA: Andrei Vasilevskiy #88 of the Tampa Bay Lightning makes a save during the second period against the Colorado Avalanche in Game Three of the 2022 NHL Stanley Cup Final on June 20, 2022. —AFP

### Stanley Cup: Lightning thrash Avalanche 6-2

**MIAMI:** The defending champion Tampa Bay Lightning roared back into Stanley Cup final contention on Monday, battering the Colorado Avalanche to claim their first win of the series. Humiliated 7-0 by the Avalanche on Saturday to go 2-0 down in the best-of-seven finals, the Lightning signalled their determination to go down fighting with a battling performance in game three in Florida.

"People can say whatever we want but we know what we have in our dressing room," Lightning captain Steven Stamkos said after the win. "We knew coming back home we'd play well in front of our fans and that was a great comeback tonight. "Colorado is a tough place to play—they come out strong and come out fast. But we can do that too. We've got a series now."

Another clinical Colorado display appeared to be on the cards in the first period as the Avs peppered the Tampa Bay goal only to be denied by some superb saves from Bolts goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy. Colorado looked to have taken an early lead when right wing Valeri Nichushkin finally beat Vasilevskiy with a deft flicked shot, only for the goal to be chalked off for offside after a lengthy review. But Colorado did finally take the lead through skipper Gabriel Landeskog after eight minutes, the Swedish winger poking in a rebound from close range.

That was cue for a spirited comeback by Tampa Bay, however, with Anthony Cirelli scoring the equalizer before Ondrej Palat played a clever give-and-go with Stamkos and rifled home to give the Lightning a 2-1 lead. Nicholas Paul then slapped in a first-time shot at the start of the second period to put the Lightning 3-1 up and although Landeskog pulled one back for Colorado on a power play soon afterwards, Tampa Bay were only just warming up.

A burst of scoring with goals from Stamkos, Pat Maroon and Corey Perry left the home side 6-2 ahead going into the final period. Colorado's frustration boiled over late in the final period with the Avs' Logan O'Connor trading punches with Tampa Bay's Ross Colton in a protracted brawl with just over two minutes remaining. Game four in the series takes place in Tampa Bay on Wednesday. —AFP

### Thousands salute victorious Warriors

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Tens of thousands of fans poured onto the streets of San Francisco on Monday to salute the victorious Golden State Warriors as the team celebrated its fourth NBA championship in eight seasons with an open-top bus parade. A blizzard of blue and gold confetti billowed along downtown San Francisco's Market Street as buses carrying the Warriors players and team staff made their way along the 1.4 mile-long parade route. The Warriors clinched their seventh NBA crown on Thursday after defeating the Boston Celtics on the road in game six of the finals to close out a 4-2 series victory.

The victory completed a triumphant return to the pinnacle of the sport just two years after the Warriors finished the 2019-2020 season with the worst record in basketball. Warriors talisman Stephen Curry - wearing a gold chain carrying his collection of NBA championship rings - led the festivities as Golden State players sprayed hordes of fans with champagne in brilliant sunshine. "I had to bring the jewelry back out," Curry said of his ring-laden necklace. "I don't look at it during the year. Every so often though you gotta remind yourself - we got four!"

Curry said the Warriors had been motivated to get back in the winner's circle after a painful defeat in the 2019 NBA Finals. "I'd be lying if I said I knew we'd be champions because it's a lot of work - but sometimes you've got to manifest it," Curry said. "We had some reverses, hit some road bumps, but peaked at the right time and everybody, 1 through 16, our coaching staff, everyone, played a significant part in this."



SAN FRANCISCO: US basketball player Stephen Curry (left) holds the MVP trophy alongside teammate Damion Lee (right) as they celebrate from a double-decker bus during the Golden State Warriors NBA Championship victory parade along Market Street in San Francisco. —AFP

#### 'An amazing year'

The Warriors' defensive star Draymond Green paid tribute to the Warriors players and team personnel that made the win possible. "This has been an amazing year," Green said. "I told you no one could stop us from winning a championship. I warned you all. "I really love this group, and when I say this group, I mean this entire group. "There were times in the past when we won a championship and everything didn't have to be aligned, like we were just that good. "But for this to work, every single person up here had to be aligned. It's just so special. "You talk about which championship means more, but the reality is every single one of them has their own journey."

"What you appreciate about the journey is the people you go through it with. And what brings me the most joy is seeing the guys who are win-

ning it for the first time." Warriors coach Steve Kerr meanwhile revealed he had been inundated with messages of congratulations ranging from fellow NBA coaches such as Gregg Popovich to former president Barack Obama. "I got a text from president Obama, which was pretty cool. That was pretty special," Kerr said.

"This is incredible. When we started camp I thought we would be pretty good but I didn't know we could win the whole thing. "To be sitting here enjoying the parade and feeling the love of the whole Bay Area is pretty incredible." Kerr once again reserved special praise for Warriors star Curry, the NBA Finals MVP. "We've got a bunch of great guys who want to play together," said Kerr. "And it starts with Steph. Everybody wants to play with and for Steph, and we just had a great group of guys and that's the key." —AFP