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'Severe dust storm' to hit Kuwait on Monday

Country braces for another dusty weekend • Mercury could reach 46 degree Celsius



KUWAIT: Motorists negotiate through the thick orange haze as a dust storm blanketed Kuwait on Monday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: Dusty weather is predicted for the weekend yet again in Kuwait. Strong winds of up to 50 km/h in speed that cause rising dust and drop in visibility may hit Kuwait by Friday evening and continue through the weekend, said Yasser Al-Bloushi, meteorologist at Kuwait Meteorological Center. He further warned of a "severe dust storm" that is expected to hit Kuwait on Monday.

The weekend's weather is also expected to be hot with the temperatures ranging between 41 and 46 degree Celsius, according to Bloushi. Meanwhile, the strong winds could cause high sea waves of up to six feet on Friday and Saturday, Bloushi warned.

A massive dust storm coming from Iraq affected large areas of Kuwait on Monday, dropping visibility to less than 1,000 km and suspending flights from and to the country. Kuwait Meteorological Center said the dust storm was accompanied with strong winds exceeding 50 km/h in speed, while sea waves would reach as high

as six feet.

The bad weather conditions, described as "severe" in the meteorological center's weather warning, disrupted flights at Kuwait International Airport and cargo movements at Kuwait ports. Motorists were urged to avoid driving unless necessary and take extreme caution while on the road as visibility dropped to as low as 100 meters especially in open areas. The health ministry also warned people with breathing difficulties to take extra caution, while the education ministry also closed schools on Tuesday as a precautionary measure.

Kuwait has been hit by frequent dust storms this year well ahead of their usual season. Most of the dust is carried from Iraq to Kuwait by north-westerly winds brought by the Indian monsoon depression affecting the region. Another massive dust storm hit Iraq on Wednesday the eighth since mid-April. Iraq has been battered by soil degradation, intense droughts and low rainfall linked to climate change. — Agencies

Rare monkeypox outbreaks in North America, Europe

MONTREAL, Canada: Health authorities in North America and Europe have detected dozens of suspected or confirmed cases of monkeypox since early May, sparking concern the disease endemic in parts of Africa is spreading. Canada was the latest country to report it was investigating more than a dozen suspected cases of monkeypox, after Spain and Portugal detected more than 40 possible and verified cases.

Britain has confirmed nine cases since May 6, and the United States verified its first on Wednesday, saying a man in the eastern state of Massachusetts had tested positive for the virus after visiting Canada. The illness, from which most people recover within several weeks and has only been fatal in rare cases, has infected thousands of people in parts of Central and Western Africa in recent years but is rare in Europe and North Africa. Italy on Thursday reported its first case of monkeypox joining a number of other European and North American nations in detecting the disease endemic in parts of Africa. Meanwhile, one person in Sweden has a confirmed case of monkeypox, health authorities said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday it was coordinating with UK and European health officials over the new outbreaks. "We really need to better understand the extent of monkeypox in endemic countries... to really understand how much is circulating and the risk that it poses for people who are living there, as well as the risk of exportation," infectious disease epidemiologist Dr Maria Van Kerkhove said at a WHO press conference on Tuesday on global health issues.

The first case in Britain was someone who had traveled from Nigeria, though later cases were possibly through community transmission, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said in a statement.

Continued on Page 6

Jordan king says half-brother to remain under house arrest

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II said Thursday his half-brother Prince Hamzah, accused of involvement in a coup plot last year, is in a state of "delusion" and will remain under house arrest. Authorities in Jordan announced in April last year that they had foiled a bid to destabilize the Western-allied kingdom, marking a rare

crisis in a nation seen as a pillar of regional stability. Two former officials were sentenced to 15 years in jail in July after they were found guilty of conspiring to topple the king in favor of Prince Hamzah, who escaped prosecution but was ordered into house arrest.

The king said in a statement released on Thursday that his half-brother would remain under house arrest, and that further restrictions would be imposed upon him. "A Royal Decree was issued, approving the recommendation of the council formed in accordance with the Royal Family Law, to restrict the communications, place of residence, and movement of Prince Hamzah," the statement from the royal palace said.



Prince Hamzah

Continued on Page 6

Zionists arrest pallbearer of slain journalist

JERUSALEM: Zionist entity has arrested one of the pallbearers of slain Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh, police said Thursday, but rejected his lawyer's claim that the detention was linked to his role at the funeral.

In a raid that has sparked international outrage, baton-wielding Zionist entity's police beat several pallbearers as they carried the journalist's coffin out of a hospital in Zionist-annexed

east Jerusalem. Abu Akleh was shot dead during a Zionist army raid in the West Bank last week.

Palestinians and the TV network said Zionist troops killed her, while Zionist entity said she may have been killed by Palestinian gunfire or a stray shot from a Zionist entity sniper. A lawyer for pallbearer Amro Abu Khudeir told AFP that his client had been arrested and questioned over his role at the funeral. According to the lawyer, Khaldoun Najm, Zionist entity also claimed to have "a secret file on (Khudeir's) membership of a terrorist organization".

"I think they will arrest more young men who participated in the funeral," Najm said.

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JERUSALEM: In this file photo taken on May 13, 2022, Amro Abu Khudeir (gray shirt) covers his head protectively as he carries the casket of slain Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh out of a hospital, before being transported to a church and then her resting place, in Jerusalem. — AFP

Independents celebrate in Lebanon

BEIRUT: When Firas Hamdan was injured at a protest near Lebanon's parliament two years ago, the then activist never imagined he would one day return as a lawmaker. Hamdan, one of 13 independent politicians who emerged from a mass anti-government protest movement in 2019, made it to parliament on a reformist plat-

form at elections on Sunday.

The 35-year-old lawyer and another independent, Elias Jarade, both snatched seats from allies of the powerful Shiite group Hezbollah in one of its south Lebanon strongholds—a first in three decades. It was a breakthrough at the first election since the Mediterranean country was plunged into a deep economic crisis that has stoked popular fury with the hereditary and graft-tainted ruling class.

"To those who protested and clashed with authorities, those who were beaten by security forces, I say: 'Today one of those victims is in

Continued on Page 6



BEIRUT: Newly-elected Lebanese MP Firas Hamdan shares a moment with friends at his residence in the southern Lebanese village of Kfeir. — AFP

Local

Kuwait takes part in Arab Civil Aviation Organization meeting

Meeting to discuss regional aviation industry in post-COVID era

RABAT: Kuwait is taking part in the 27th meeting of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization's (ACAO) Executive Council, held in Rabat, Morocco. Deputy Director-General for Aviation Safety, Air-Transport and Aviation Security Duaij Al-Otaibi said in a statement that this participation comes from our keenness on contributing to Arab joint mechanism, especially in the civil aviation sector. "Kuwait's participation in the event is part of its executive membership in ACAO, to help contribute to promoting the civil aviation sector in Arab countries," he said. "This meeting in particular will discuss several topics concerning civil aviation industries and the repercussions of COVID-19 on aerial transportation and its effects on the Arab region," he added. Kuwait participates in this meeting with an official delegation headed by the President of Kuwait's Civil Aviation Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



RABAT: Deputy Director-General for Aviation Safety, Air-Transport and Aviation Security Duaij Al-Otaibi (left) is seen on the sidelines of the event. — KUNA

Dr Suad Al-Sabah eulogizes Palestinian journalist Abu Akleh

KUWAIT: Sheikha Dr Suad Mohammad Al-Sabah said the Palestinian cause will remain in the free hearts that believe rights must go back to their owners, and the presence of the occupier remains temporary no matter how long it stays. Dr Suad conveyed her condolences to the Palestinian embassy on the death of Shireen Abu Akleh. She was represented by Director of Suad Al-Sabah Cultural House Ali Al-Masoudi. He was received by Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub, who reminded of Dr Suad's status in the Arab culture and human action, and he valued her long-time efforts in the support of the Palestinian cause. Tahboub also appreciated Dr Suad's initiative of launching a media award in the name of Shireen Abu Akleh. Dr Suad wrote in the condolences book that Shireen Abu Akleh will remain alive in the hearts, streets and trees just like the Palestinian cause. Masoudi said he was happy to represent Dr Suad Al-Sabah to convey her condolences, adding that Suad Al-Sabah will remain committed to her causes as ever since she founded the Arab Organization for Human Rights in the 1980s with a number of intellectuals, continues her hard work in helping the human being and his right in a dignified life, and rejects all types of oppression and occupation. Masoudi thanked the Ambassador for the good reception and hospitality.



KUWAIT: Director of Suad Al-Sabah Cultural House Ali Al-Masoudi offers condolences to Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub.



Director of Suad Al-Sabah Cultural House Ali Al-Masoudi writes in the book of condolences.



KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed tours the General Medical Council branch in Funaitees. — KUNA

Mishref labor testing center open soon: Minister

KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed inaugurated on Thursday a branch for the General Medical Council in Funaitees to serve citizens in Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorates. During the event, Dr

Saeed revealed also that the ministry is finalizing the Mishref labor testing center, which can finalize around 500 transactions daily, raising the ministry's total capacity to 4,000 daily transactions. —KUNA

PAM participates in college career fair

By Yousuf Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower participated in the job opportunities exhibition that was held at the science college of Kuwait University, Shadadiya campus. The event was held under the title 'Science Expo' on May 18th and 19th. As PAM is keen to reform the marketplace in

Kuwait, and to contribute to extending all types of services to universities in order to support graduates from various colleges, it participated in the 'Science Expo' for science college graduates to open opportunities for students training and give consultations in all fields as well as provide high skills and support the human development process. In addition, its participation came to qualify graduates through training programs and guidance sessions in order to improve their skills and guide them to work in the private sector according to their majors. PAM thanked the college of science for its effective role in encouraging graduates to work in the private sector.



Kuwait's April trade surplus with Japan up 82.7 pct

TOKYO: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan surged 82.7 percent from a year earlier to JPY 82.0 billion (\$638 million) in April, up for the 13th consecutive month thanks to high export bills, thanks to robust exports, government data showed Thursday. Kuwait posted black ink with Japan for 14 years and three months, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Kuwaiti overall exports to Japan jumped 53.9 percent year-on-year to JPY 98.5 billion (\$753 million) for the 13th straight month of expansion. Imports from Japan declined 13.5 percent to JPY 16.6 billion (\$129 million), down for the eighth month in a row. Middle East's trade surplus with Japan swelled 117.0 percent to JPY 1.1 trillion (\$8.3 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region soaring 91.3 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 96.3 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, jumped 98.6 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan grew 19.7 percent on demand for automobiles, machinery and manufactured goods. The world's third-biggest economy posted a global surplus of JPY 839.2 billion (\$6.5 billion) in April for the ninth straight month of red ink, as surging energy bills and a weaker yen continued to push up the value of its imports. It marked the longest streak of trade deficit since February 2015. Exports grew 12.5 percent from the year before, buoyed by robust shipments of steel, mineral fuels and automobiles. Imports inflated 28.2 percent on higher energy prices, especially crude oil, LNG and coal. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Diplomatic Women's Committee hosted a special event recently to celebrate the Kuwaiti Women's Day. Ambassadors, spouses of ambassadors, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event which highlighted the Kuwaiti women's achievements locally and in the region.

Local

Kuwait's 13th Municipal Council elections, step within country's democratic march

44 candidates vie for 10 seats in Saturday's vote

KUWAIT: Kuwait's 13th Municipal Council elections take place on Saturday in yet another manifestation of democracy and a boost to role of civil society in development and advancement in the Arab Gulf country. Municipal elections are important because of the vital role of Municipal Council which formulates policies of Kuwait Municipality, particularly health, environment and urban development. Saturday's elections will feature 44 candidates including two women, running in 10 constituencies. The government will then appoint six members in the 16-seat Municipal Council.

Kuwait Municipality was established in 1930, during which Kuwaiti citizens had a chance to elect their representatives in the Municipal Council, a historic development within Kuwait community. Since its independence on June 19, 1961, the State of Kuwait witnessed 12 Municipal Council elections. The first was held in June 1964. This council, chaired by Mohammad Al-Adsani, lasted until May 14, 1966. This council did not complete its term because an Amiri Decree was issued on May 19, 1966 that dissolved the house and formed a committee, chaired by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Yusuf Al-Rifaa, carrying out the Municipal Council's mandate

until 1972. The second elections were held in June 1972 with a turnout of 36.6 percent. Bader Yusuf bin Essa was elected chairman. He resigned and replaced by Abdulaziz Al-Adsani.

The third Municipal Council was elected in June 1976 with a voting turnout at 36.8 percent. Mohammad Al-Adsani was elected as chairman. The fourth Municipal Council was elected in June 1980 with a turnout of 36.1 percent. Abdulaziz Al-Adsani was elected chairman. However, the Council was dissolved on December 20, 1983. The fifth council was elected in January 1984 and lasted until August 1986. Dawood Al-Saleh was elected as chairman. The turnout in this election was 67.6 percent.

Elections for the sixth Municipal Council were held on October 4, 1993, the first following the liberation of Kuwait. Turnout was 47.9 percent and Mohammad Al-Shaye was elected as chairman. However, an Amiri Decree was issued on December 11, 1994 that dissolved the council. Elections for the seventh Municipal Council, which saw a turnout of 54.1 percent, were held on June 6, 1995. Abdulrahman Al-Houti was named chairman.

The eighth Municipal Council was elected on June 9, 1999. Turnout was 61.3 percent. Ahmad Al-

constituency which includes 14 schools. Nafisa bint Al-Hassan Girls School and Abdelwahab Abdelrahman Al-Fares boys school were also cleaned.

The public relations department at Kuwait Municipality announced that a field work plan about the preparations for the municipal council elections was prepared, and field teams were formed and distributed to the eight constituencies. The plan calls for increasing field tours for specialized teams to make sure about the necessary preparations that leads to easing the election process and serve voters be it by placing dumpsters inside and outside voting centers besides the cleaning process, removing abandoned cars that occupy parking places.

It said that supervisory teams assigned a supervisor at each school, five sweeping workers for each voting center with cleaning equipment and supplies, five dumpsters with a capacity of 240 liters inside each center, two dumpsters of 1,100 liters outside each school. It said the number of schools where voting will take place is 76, and the committees and sub-committees is 443 both for males and females.



Council formulates Kuwait Municipality policies



KUWAIT: Members of the Municipal Council attend a session on May 16, 2022. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Adsani was elected chairman of council. The ninth Municipal Council was elected on June 2, 2005, which was the first time that women ran for council seats. Three days later, the government appointed two women as members of the council: Assistant Undersecretary at the Amiri Diwan Fatma Al-Sabah and Fawziya Al-Bahar. The 10th Municipal Council was elected on June 25, 2009 with a low turnout at 20.56 percent. Zaid Ayesh was elected as chairman.

The next elections for the 11th Council were held on September 28, 2013. On May 12, 2018, elections for the 12th Municipal Council took place, Osama Al-Otaibi was elected as council chairman. Women indeed ran for Municipal Council elections but were unlucky. However, the government appointed female members. Ashwaq Al-Mudhaf, Jenan Bushehri and Mona Buresli in 2009 and Maha Al-Baghli in 2018. —KUNA

Municipality cleans up polling stations

By Yousuf Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT: As part of Kuwait Municipality preparations for the Municipal Council 2022 elections scheduled to be held Saturday, the supervisory team of the public cleanliness department at Jahra Municipality branch started a field tour Thursday at the eight constituencies that includes 10 polling schools.

The team cleaned Nouriya Al-Sabeeh Girls Secondary School and Saad Al-Abdallah Boys Secondary School from inside and outside in addition to yards and roads leading to the schools, to make it easy for citizens to cast their votes. 20 abandoned cars were removed, while all schools will be cleaned before voting day. The supervisory team of Mubarak Al-Kabeer moved to clean the schools of the ninth



No changes from ministry on restaurant delivery charges

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The delivery fees of restaurants in Kuwait are still the same without any new increase, according to a government official. Restaurants are only allowed to charge 250 fils for delivery in the same area, and 500 fils to different area. Yet, some restaurants are charging higher prices, and many customers complained of being charged KD 2 and 3 for the delivery of their food.

The 500 fils and 250 fils charge was set by a decision that applies on all restaurants and no new changes were applied, said Mish'al Al-Manea, President of the Consumer Protection Association (CPA). "There is no exception for any far area no matter how far it is from the restaurant. The restaurant can only charge a maximum of 500 fils. If the restaurant had many customers in a far area, then they should open new branch there," Manea told Kuwait Times.

The delivery fees may be higher for other than restaurants delivery. "If the company was licensed as a restaurant, then they can't change the above-mentioned fix charge for their delivery. This rule is not applied on delivery companies. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is currently studying issuing a new law to apply the same rule on these companies. The law will be based on the verdicts issued by the court in this matter. This law is expected to be issued soon," he further said.



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News in brief

Conflict in Ukraine affects economic growth: Kuwait

CAIRO: Secretary General of Kuwait Banking Association Dr Hamad Al-Hassawi on Wednesday said that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict affected the global economic growth in 2022. This came in Hassawi's speech at the second session of the Union of Arab Banking Conference for 2022, held in Cairo. He added that the war in Ukraine caused a humanitarian disaster, pointing out that the crisis affected the global economy while it was still recovering from COVID-19 effects, where it had a direct effect in the current global inflation. Hassawi stated that the Arab countries, mainly GCC states, "could take advantage of oil gains to build preventive financial reserves, improve its financial and external budgets and prioritize targeted social spending and productive investment." "Policy-making has become more complex as the overall policy space for dealing with extraordinary shocks amid rising debt and inflation rates is diminishing," he said.

GCC welcomes partnership plan with EU: Chief

RIYADH: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said on Wednesday it welcomed the approval of a joint proposal on building a "strategic partnership" with the European Union (EU), hailing the move as a measure that would bolster bilateral cooperation. The Gulf Arab bloc is eager to "enhance the strategic partnership" it has forged with the EU, its chief Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf said in a statement, citing his aspirations for greater bilateral relations. The EU had discussed plans to broaden its cooperation with the GCC, saying on Wednesday it had approved a working plan on the matter, according to its top diplomat Josep Borrell.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive under an overpass in Kuwait. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Kuwait health minister lauds IAEA's commitment to radiation protection

KUWAIT: Kuwait's health minister on Wednesday praised the efforts of the United Nations' atomic watchdog towards ensuring the protection of workers exposed to radioactive material, in addition to measures taken to limit the environmental impact of such substances. Dr Khaled Al-Saeed said his ministry is prepared to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a bid to encourage similar efforts on a local level, telling visiting IAEA Deputy Director General Dr Najat Mokhtar that such a measure was necessary. Mokhtar, who also serves as the UN body's nuclear sciences and applications chief, said the IAEA is willing to assist member countries in benefiting from its Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) initiative, an approach aiming to strengthen global responses to future pandemics. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed meets the IAEA Deputy Director General Dr Najat Mokhtar. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters hosted a gallery recently featuring artworks by 25 Kuwaiti visual artists. — KUNA photos



North Korea 'ready for nuclear test' with Biden due in Seoul

French MP candidates under fire in post-MeToo era



SEVERODONETSK: Anna Poladyuk (R), 66, takes cover from cooking outside at the entrance of the basement of an apartment after she heard the sound of incoming mortar fire, followed by an explosion, in Severodonetsk, eastern Ukraine. —AFP

Ukraine steelworks defenders surrender

Russian pleaded guilty to a war crime, faces life sentence

KYIV: Russia said Thursday that 1,730 Ukrainian soldiers had surrendered this week at the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol, showing some emerging on crutches after an all-out battle that has become emblematic of the nearly three-month-old war. The number included 80 who were wounded and taken to a hospital in Russia-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine, the defence ministry in Moscow said.

The ministry released a video appearing to show the surrendered soldiers hobbling out of the sprawling plant after it was besieged for weeks. Russian troops patted them down and inspected their bags as they exited.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it had registered "hundreds of Ukrainian prisoners of war" from the plant in Mariupol, a port city levelled by Russian shelling. Ukraine accuses Moscow's forces of war crimes against civilians in Mariupol and elsewhere, and has begun the first prosecution of a Russian soldier.

Vadim Shishmarin, a shaven-headed Russian sergeant from Irkutsk in Siberia, pleaded guilty to a war crime and faces a life sentence. He admitted to shooting dead Oleksandr Shelipov, an unarmed 62-year-old man, in Ukraine's Sumy region on February 28 — four days into the invasion.

Shishmarin was remorseful as he took the dock for a second day on Thursday. "I know that you will not be able to forgive me, but nevertheless I ask you for forgiveness," he said, addressing Shelipov's wife in the cramped courtroom in Kyiv.

Folk celebration

But while Mariupol has fallen, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said the ancient

folk traditions. Wearing an embroidered shirt instead of his usual military khaki top, Zelensky said on the Telegram social media platform that his people remained "strong, unbreakable, brave and free".

Zelensky's defiance, and his army's dogged resistance, have earned the West's admiration and a steady flow of military support. G7 finance ministers were meeting in Germany to thrash out more cash support. G7 partners have to "assure Ukraine's solvency within the next days, few weeks", German Finance Minister Christian Lindner told the newspaper Die Welt.

But German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said there could be "no shortcuts" to membership of the European Union for Ukraine. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba condemned the "second-class treatment" of his country.

Famine warning

Russia's actions are already redrawing the security map of Europe. US President Joe Biden was to host the leaders of Finland and Sweden later Thursday to discuss their bids to join NATO, after the Nordic neighbours decided to abandon decades of military non-alignment.

"I warmly welcome and strongly support the historic applications from Finland and Sweden for membership in NATO," Biden said, offering US support against any "aggression" while their bids are considered.

Beyond Europe, the invasion also threatens to bring famine, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. "Malnutrition, mass hunger and famine" could follow "in a crisis that could last for years," Guterres warned, urging Russia to release grain exports from occupied Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine produce 30 percent of the

global wheat supply, and the war has already sent food prices surging around the world.

'Time to run'

Despite their last-ditch resistance in places such as Mariupol, and the successful defence of Kyiv, Ukrainian forces are retreating in the east. The losses often come after weeks of battles over towns and small cities that are pulverised by the time the Russians surround them in a slow-moving wave.

"I tell everyone that there is no reason to worry when the banging is from outgoing fire," Volodymyr Netymenko said as he packed up his sister's belongings before evacuating her from the burning village of Sydorove in eastern Ukraine.

"But when it is incoming, it is time to run. And things have been flying at us pretty hard for the past two or three days." In the Russian region of Kursk, one person died and others were injured in an attack on a village on the border with Ukraine, the local governor said.

War crimes trials

A second war crimes trial was due to open in Ukraine Thursday. The International Criminal Court is deploying its largest-ever field team to Ukraine, with 42 investigators, forensic experts and support staff to gather evidence of alleged war crimes.

Ukrainian civilians are bearing the brunt of incessant Russia mortar fire raining down on the eastern city of Severodonetsk. Nella Kashkina sat in the basement next to an oil lamp and prayed. "I do not know how long we can last," the 65-year-old former city worker said.

"We have no medicine left and a lot of sick people-sick women-need medicine. There is simply no medicine left at all." —AFP

Swedish citizen risking Iran execution is 'hostage': Amnesty

PARIS: An Iranian-Swedish citizen facing imminent execution in Iran is being held as a hostage by Tehran in a bid to force Belgium and Sweden to make concessions in two cases concerning former Iranian officials, Amnesty International said Thursday. Ahmadreza Djalali was sentenced to death in 2017 on espionage charges that are deemed baseless by Stockholm and his supporters, and Iranian media reports say he could be hanged by May 21, a punishment that officials have repeatedly insisted will be carried out.

The risk to his life comes as anger grows among families of Western nationals often held for years on end by Iran, who they say are being held as pawns in a game over which the innocent detainees have no control.

"Mounting evidence strongly indicates that the Iranian authorities are holding... Djalali hostage and threatening to execute him to compel third parties to swap him for former Iranian officials convicted or on trial abroad, as well as to refrain from future prosecutions of Iranian officials," Amnesty International said.

In an unprecedented case, a Swedish court is trying Hamid Noury, a former prison official, over his alleged involvement over massacres in Iranian prisons in 1988, with the verdict expected on July 14. Noury, who was arrested in Sweden in November 2019, is being tried under the principle of universal jurisdiction, which allows states to investigate serious crimes that were committed abroad.

Meanwhile, Assadollah Assadi, a former Iranian diplomat, is serving a 20-year prison sentence in Belgium for his role in a thwarted 2018 bomb attack in France that was targeting a meeting of an exiled opposition group.

Before his arrest in Iran in April 2016, Djalali was a visiting professor in disaster medicine at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, a research university in Brussels. Sweden later granted citizenship to Djalali, who had been a resident in the country, in February 2018.

'Hostage-taking machine'

"The Iranian authorities are using Ahmadreza Djalali's life as a pawn in a cruel political game, escalating their threats to execute him in retaliation for their demands going unmet," said Diana Eltahawy, Amnesty's deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa.

"The authorities are attempting to pervert the course of justice in Sweden and Belgium, and should be investigated for the crime of hostage taking," she said. The London-based NGO says that since at least late 2020, the Iranian authorities had been "conditioning" Djalali's fate on seeking a "deal" with Belgium to swap him for Assadi, and with Sweden for Noury.

The UN Human Rights Office had said Tuesday that it was "deeply alarmed" by reports that Djalali's execution was imminent, saying his hanging would "constitute an arbitrary deprivation of life."

Djalali's supporters, led by his wife Vida Mehrannia, have also sought to keep up the pressure, with his 10-year-old son holding up a sign reading "Free My Dad" at a protest in Stockholm last week where he was joined by his classmates. —AFP

UK police end 'Partygate' probe with 126 fines

LONDON: London police said on Thursday they had completed their probe into the "Partygate" scandal rocking Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government and issued a total 126 fines in all. The Metropolitan Police said in a statement that of the fines issued for breaching COVID restrictions, 73 were to women and 53 to men but that some people received more than one fixed penalty notice.

Police were called in to investigate gatherings at Downing Street and across government departments on eight dates between May 2020 and April 2021. Last week, the force said it had issued more than 100 fines. The exact amount of the penalties has not been confirmed, but the fines can range from £30 to £10,000 (35-11,800 euros, \$37-12,400) for the most serious breaches.

Those fined so far include Johnson, his wife Carrie and finance minister Rishi Sunak. The government said they were fined for a gathering in Downing Street marking the prime minister's birthday in June 2020. Johnson has said he would reveal if he receives further fines.

Britain's domestic Press Association news agency said it understands the prime minister has not yet received notification of another fixed penalty notice. The probe was launched on January 25 and saw 12 detectives sift through 345 documents, including emails, door logs, diary entries and witness statements, 510 photographs and security camera footage and 204 questionnaires, the Met said.

"When COVID regulations were introduced, the Met was clear that whilst we would not routinely investigate breaches of regulations retrospectively, there may be occasions when it would be appropriate to do so," said the Met's Acting Deputy Commissioner Helen Ball.

"The information that we received with regard to the alleged breaches in Downing Street and Whitehall was sufficient to reach our criteria to begin such an investigation. "Our investigation was thorough and impartial and was completed as quickly as we could, given the amount of information that needed to be reviewed," she said.

"This investigation is now complete." Johnson has apologised for the breach of COVID regulations, but refused demands to resign after becoming the first UK leader to be found to have broken the law while in office.

Johnson also faces an investigation by a parliamentary committee into his past denials to the House of Commons of lockdown lawbreaking. The parties have fuelled widespread public anger



LONDON: A handout photograph released by the UK Parliament shows Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaking during prime minister's questions in the House of Commons in London. —AFP

against the ruling Conservatives, who suffered a drubbing in recent local elections.

The main opposition Labour party's leader, Keir Starmer, has promised to step down if police in northeast England fine him for his own alleged breach of coronavirus laws during a campaign meeting. The gathering took place in Durham in April last year, with a video later emerging of Starmer drinking beer and eating a takeaway meal inside an office with party colleagues. —AFP

International

French MP candidates under fire in post-MeToo era

Candidates dropping out is a sign things are changing

PARIS: The #MeToo anti-sexual harassment movement is finally reshaping France's sexist political culture, with several politicians running for parliament in upcoming elections forced to stand down over alleged violence against women. Several French feminist politicians and journalists launched the "MeToo Politique" movement last November to decry sexism in politics and to demand that men accused of sexual violence be systematically thrown out of office.

Six months later, their bid to shake up politics appears to have taken root, with several prominent candidates for the June legislative elections accused of violence against women throwing in the towel under pressure.

Jerome Peyrat, a candidate for President Emmanuel Macron's LREM party who was found guilty of violence against his former partner, will no longer stand, party chief Stanislas Guerini said on Wednesday.

Guerini had prompted an outcry earlier in the day by appearing to downplay the issue. "Peyrat is an honest man. I don't think he is capable of violence against women," he told FranceInfo radio. Peyrat, who was an advisor to former presidents Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy as well as to Macron, was handed a suspended fine of 3,000 euros (\$3,160) in September 2020.

Medical examinations seen by the Mediapart news site noted bruises on the face, neck, arm, shoulder and wrist of Peyrat's ex-partner, as well as jaw pain and a post-traumatic stress disorder. She was signed off work for two weeks.

"Nominating someone to stand as an MP means giving them weight and a platform," said local Paris politician Alice Coffin. She is a founding member of the Observatory of Sexist and Sexual Violence in Politics, created in November when

"MeToo Politique" was launched.

"We cannot celebrate abusers," she told AFP. Taha Bouhafs, who was running for MP on a hard-left ticket with the France Unbowed movement (LFI), also stepped down last week after several women came forward to LFI and accused him of sexual assault.

Candidates dropping out is a sign things are changing, said Fiona Texeira, a staffer at the Paris City Hall and founding member of the Observatory. "(But) the true victory will be when parties do the work internally and don't nominate people accused of sexist or sexual violence," she added.

Boys' club

French politics has long been perceived as a boys' club. French women did not win the right to vote until 1944, several decades after their British, Dutch and American counterparts. The country has never had a female president and it was not until this week that Macron named the second-ever female prime minister, Elisabeth Borne.

But a series of high-profile sexual violence cases involving prominent politicians have shaken the political sphere. In 2011, when powerful Socialist politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn was arrested in New York on charges of trying to rape a hotel maid, the French political class closed ranks behind him.

Such a stance is much more unlikely in the aftermath of #MeToo, experts say. In recent years, prominent political figures such as Green politician Denis Baupin and former environment minister Nicolas Hulot have been forced to retire from public life following accusations of sexual harassment or abuse.

'We cannot celebrate abusers'



SAINTES, France: Former comedian Gerald Dahan, candidate for the left-wing coalition "NUPES" (for "Nouvelle Union Populaire Ecologique et sociale" in French) in the Charente-Maritime department for the upcoming parliamentary elections, talks with people during a campaign visit at a market in Saintes. —AFP

Hulot withdrew from public life in November last year after a documentary aired on prime-time television featuring several women claiming he sexually abused them, including a woman who says he raped her when she was a minor.

Macron's decision in 2020 to appoint Gerald Darmanin as interior minister—even though he was accused of rape, sexual harassment and abuse of power—also drew heavy criticism, even sparking demonstrations. However Darmanin has denied any wrongdoing and prosecutors in January asked for the case to be dropped.

'By nature sexist'

"The mediatisation of sexist and sexual violence has definitely evolved in favour of women these past years," said

Merabha Benchikh, a sociologist from Strasbourg University in eastern France. But #MeToo has had less effect in France than in Britain and the United States, Benchikh added. She put this down to a culture of seduction in France she says often amounts to harassment.

Shortly after the #MeToo movement began, around 100 French women writers, performers and academics including screen icon Catherine Deneuve wrote an open letter defending the "right to bother" women.

"We were the only country to have an opinion column signed by women against #MeToo," said Coffin. Three candidates for the presidential election in April—Eric Zemmour, Jean Lassalle and Francois Asselineau—had been accused of sexual abuse or harassment. —AFP

Green outshine Scholz as stars of German government

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has seen his popularity slide over his cautious stance on the war in Ukraine, eclipsed by two ministers from the Green party who have taken a more decisive approach. Scholz, whose Social Democrats (SPD) are in power with the Greens and the liberal FDP, has faced a barrage of criticism over his perceived weak response to the war, including his hesitancy over sending heavy weapons to Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Green party Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Economy Minister Robert Habeck have impressed with their more vocal approach, topping a recent survey of the country's most popular politicians. Scholz sought to redress the balance with a speech to the Bundestag parliament on Thursday.

"(Russian President Vladimir) Putin still believes that he can forge peace by dictatorship, but he is wrong—just as he was wrong about Ukraine's determination and the unity of our alliances," he said. Scholz also tried to shake off accusations that he is dragging his feet in dealing with Moscow over fears of escalating the crisis. "I want to say clearly that helping a brutally attacked country to defend itself is not an escalation but a contribution to repelling an attack and thereby ending the violence as quickly as possible," he told parliament. But the chancellor has his work cut out to turn around public opinion.

In a nod to just how badly this reticent stance has played with the public, the SPD suffered a crushing defeat in a key regional election at the weekend—losing to the conservative



BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivers a speech ahead of the next EU summit during a session at the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) in Berlin on May 19, 2022. —AFP

CDU with its worst-ever result in Germany's most populous state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The Greens, meanwhile, almost tripled their score compared with five years ago to finish in third place and look almost certain to be part of the next regional government. Der Spiegel magazine called the result a "personal defeat" for Scholz after he was heavily involved in the election campaign, appearing on posters and at rallies. In a bid to win back the public, Scholz has in recent days given lengthy television interviews. But in a devastating reading of his performance on screen, the weekly Focus said "his language is poor, his facial expressions monotone and his body language too understated."

According to Der Spiegel, the chancellor's communications strategy seems to revolve around one mantra: "Repeat, repeat, repeat." Other media have accused him of stubbornly sticking to the same plan and ignoring what is going on around him. —AFP

Brazil's Lula ties the knot

SAO PAULO: Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the front-runner in Brazil's October presidential elections, took a break from campaigning Wednesday to marry his fiancée and fellow Workers' Party member, sociologist Rosangela da Silva.

The former president posted a photo on Instagram Wednesday night in which he appears to be saying his vows to Da Silva while placing a wedding ring on her finger. Lula, 76, and Da Silva, 55, tied the knot in an evening ceremony in the upscale Brooklin neighborhood of Sao Paulo.

Closed to the press, the event was attended by about 200 guests, including family members, politicians and artists, who only found out about the location the day before. Upon entering the party, they were instructed to leave their cell phones in the coatroom, according to local media.

Before the event, rumors about the festivities, budget and menu swirled online, with supporters of far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro painting the allegedly lavish party as evidence in support of the corruption charges that have long dogged leftist ex-president Lula.

Seen arriving at the party were former president Dilma Rousseff, former Sao Paulo governor and Lula's vice-presidential candidate Geraldo Alckmin, and singer Gilberto Gil, among others. Looking considerably grayer than during his 2003-2010 presidency, Lula has presented his relationship with "Janja"—his fiancée's nickname—as evidence he still has the youthful energy to lead Latin America's biggest economy.

Pictures of the couple kissing and cuddling regularly go viral on social media, and one of them in a Speedo-



SAO PAULO: Rosangela da Silva, known also as Janja, is seen in a wedding dress during her wedding ceremony with former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

style swimsuit embracing her with a giant grin became a topic of national conversation when Da Silva posted it online in August.

"I'm in love as if I were 20 years old," Lula told Time magazine recently. "A guy as happy as I am doesn't have to rage-let your opponents do what they want... If I can, on the campaign, I will speak only about love. I don't think it's possible to be a good president if you only feel hate inside you."

It will be Lula's third marriage. His first wife died in 1971, two years after they married. Marisa Leticia, his second wife, was Brazil's first lady during his two terms. They had four children together and were married for 43 years, until she died of a heart attack in 2017. —AFP

Rare monkeypox outbreaks in North...

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"These latest cases, together with reports of cases in countries across Europe, confirms our initial concerns that there could be spread of monkeypox within our communities," said UKHSA Chief Medical Adviser Dr. Susan Hopkins.

The WHO said it was also investigating that many cases reported were people identifying as gay, bisexual or men who have sex with men. "This is new information we need to investigate properly to understand better the dynamic of local transmission in the UK and some other countries."

The UKHSA noted that monkeypox has not previously been characterized as a sexually transmitted disease, underscoring that "it can be passed on by direct contact during sex." "Anyone, regardless of sexual orientation, can spread monkeypox through contact with body fluids, monkeypox sores, or shared items (such as clothing and bedding) that have been contaminated with fluids or sores of a

person with monkeypox," a US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statement said Wednesday, adding that household disinfectants can kill the virus on surfaces.

The illness often starts with flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle ache and swollen lymph nodes before causing a chickenpox-like rash on the face and body, the US agency explained. The Massachusetts Department of Health, said that the case there—the first confirmed this year in the United States—occurred in a patient who had recently traveled to Canada and "poses no risk to the public, and the individual is hospitalized and in good condition."

Health authorities in Canada's Quebec province announced they were investigating at least 13 suspected cases of monkeypox, the public broadcaster CBC reported Wednesday. The cases were flagged to Montreal authorities after diagnoses were made in several clinics specializing in sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) told CBC it had called on "public health authorities and laboratory partners across Canada to be alert for and investigate any potential cases." According to the CDC, there were no reported cases of monkeypox for 40 years before it re-emerged in Nigeria in 2017. —AFP

among the mourners hurled projectiles at officers.

Zionist forces frequently crack down on displays of Palestinian identity, including the national flag, one of which was draped over Abu Akleh's coffin. Police have vowed to investigate the controversial incident. Meanwhile, a left-wing Arab lawmaker in Zionist entity quit the governing coalition on Thursday, citing among other factors police aggression at an Al Jazeera reporter's funeral, rendering the government a minority in parliament. The decision by Ghaida Rinawie Zoabi of the dovish Meretz party leaves the coalition headed by right-wing Prime Minister Naftali Bennett with just 59 out of 120 seats in Zionist entity's parliament, the Knesset.

The development does not, however, necessarily indicate that the coalition—an alliance of parties ranging from the Jewish right and Zionist entity doves to an Arab Muslim party—is set to collapse. Approving a motion to dissolve parliament and call new elections requires 61 votes. —AFP

Jordan king says half-brother...

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Hamzah had last month announced he was "renouncing the title of prince", a month after a royal court statement said he had apologized to the king for the attempted coup. But Abdullah II said on Thursday that Hamzah had during the past year or so "exhausted all opportunities to restore himself on the right path".

Independents celebrate in...

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parliament," Hamdan told AFP. Speaking at his family home in the village of Kfeir, he vowed to fight for the rights of ordinary Lebanese who have been left behind.

Hamdan was hit in the chest by a lead pellet in 2020 during a demonstration near parliament, days after a deadly explosion struck Beirut's port. At the time, rights groups said security forces and men dressed in civilian clothing fired rubber-tipped bullets and tear gas canisters into the crowd.

But on Tuesday after the election results came in, jubilation was in the air as exhausted friends gathered in his backyard to celebrate. Youths aspiring for change in Lebanon have rejoiced at the victories of Hamdan and Jarade. Hamdan won against unpopular banker Marwan Kheireddine, while Jarade nabbed a seat held since 1992 by pro-Syrian regime politician Assaad Hardan.

In 2019 Hamdan was among hundreds of thousands of Lebanese who protested against the entrenched ruling class, widely blamed for the country's economic collapse. "We fought against an alliance of banks and the political class... to show there is an opposition in the south, to break the political hegemony imposed on us, and we succeeded," he said.

A dashing young man and an eloquent speaker,

"The delusion he lives in is not new," the king said. "Not long after vowing to renounce his erroneous ways, he goes back on his promises and returns to the path he chose years ago, putting his interests before the nation." The king appointed Hamzah as crown prince in 1999, at the request of his late father, King Hussein, but removed him from the post in 2004, later naming his son, Prince Hussein, as next in line to the Hashemite throne. Hamzah's mother, American-born Queen Noor, said on Twitter shortly after the king's announcement that "some truly bizarre and stranger than fiction stuff (is) circulating right now," without elaborating. —AFP

Hamdan hopes he will be able to pave the way for a new style of politics in Lebanon. But the road ahead is strewn with difficulties in a country where the system favors sectarian allegiances and power is often inherited.

"We want to build a nation where there is rule of law... to restore people's confidence in the country so that it does not remain a place of death and migration," he said. An economic meltdown has pushed many middle-class Lebanese to emigrate in search of a better future.

Some of Lebanon's most disadvantaged people have tried to reach Europe on rickety boats—a treacherous and often deadly route. Hamdan's father Ismael, a former brigadier general, said he was proud of his "self-made" son.

"Officials must understand that change has begun," he said, standing in front of a large portrait of himself in military uniform. A few kilometers (miles) away in the village of Ibl Al-Saqi, Jarade's family welcomed well-wishers who filled the house with bouquets of flowers and cheerful chatter.

But the newly elected MP, also an eye surgeon, was busy tending to patients in Beirut.

Jarade's friends and family who gathered in his living room lavished him with praise. "We voted (for independents) like we were clinging to a piece of wood to keep us from drowning," said retired teacher Ibrahim Rizk, as he sipped on his coffee. A Harvard university graduate with a passion for farming, Jarade is well-liked in his community because he is seen as humble. When he is not working the land and raising poultry and fish in his farm, the surgeon spends time tending to patients between Lebanon and Dubai. —AFP

Zionists arrest pallbearer of...

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"For them, the subject of the funeral and the coffin was scandalous." Police dismissed any link between the funeral and Khudeir's arrest. "We are witnessing an attempt to produce a conspiracy that is fundamentally incorrect," a statement said.

"The suspect was arrested as part of an ongoing investigation which contrary to allegations had nothing to do with his participation in the funeral procession."

Police justifications for the raid at St Joseph's hospital have varied. They have cited the need to stamp out "nationalistic" chants and also said that "rioters"

International

North Korea 'ready for nuclear test' with Biden due in Seoul

North Korea is preparing to conduct its seventh nuclear test this year

SEOUL: North Korea is poised to conduct a nuclear test, Seoul said Thursday, as the United States warned it could come as President Joe Biden visits South Korea this week. The visits to Seoul, followed by Tokyo, are being touted as proof that Washington is seeking to cement its years-long pivot to Asia, where rising Chinese commercial and military power is undercutting decades of US dominance.

However, Biden's first trip as president to the region looks set to be overshadowed by an increasingly belligerent North Korea. Despite a spiralling COVID outbreak, Pyongyang's "preparations for a nuclear test have been completed and they are only looking for the right time", South Korean lawmaker Ha Tae-keung said after being briefed by Seoul's spy agency.

Military adjustments

Biden, who will visit some of the nearly 30,000 US troops stationed in South Korea, is ready to make "adjustments" to the US military posture in the region, and Seoul's hawkish new President Yoon Suk-yeol is eager for stronger ties.

Both Biden and Yoon have said they're open for talks with Pyongyang but they expect to see real progress on denuclearisation-which analysts say is anathema to Kim and will stall talks. "Biden judges that the North Korean issue can't be resolved through impromptu meetings between the leaders as Trump did," said Woo Jung-yeop, a researcher at the Sejong Institute. North Korea will be watching the outcome of the Yoon-Biden meeting Saturday very closely, said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. "Depending on the result, North Korea will decide on whether it will speed up or slow down its ICBM and nuclear tests," Yang said.

Sullivan said the security situation regarding North Korea was being "closely" coordinated with South Korea and Japan and that he had also spoken about the issue with his Chinese counterpart on Wednesday. It is likely that Kim is still debating what to do, in particular due to this US pressure on Beijing-Kim's sole major ally-to help rein in Pyongyang's nuclear and ICBM tests, the Sejong Institute's Cheong said.

Kim is also well aware of the gridlock at the UN Security Council after Russia's invasion of Ukraine-so it is "highly likely" a nuke or ICBM test will come during Biden's Asia tour, Cheong added. Moscow would likely block any attempt at the UN to impose further sanctions on Pyongyang over a weapons test.

Strategic neglect?

After Seoul, Biden heads to Japan on Sunday for talks with Tokyo's top leaders, before joining a Quad summit-a grouping of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. Sullivan said Biden is bound for Asia with "the wind at our back" after successful US lead-



SEOUL: File picture shows people watching a television screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a railway station in Seoul. — AFP

ership in the Western response to President Vladimir Putin's now almost three-month-long invasion of Ukraine. The high military, diplomatic and economic cost imposed on Russia is seen in Washington as a cautionary tale for China, given its stated ambitions to gain control over democratic-ruled Taiwan, even if that means going to war. But the fact he arrives in Asia under the shadow of a possible North Korean nuclear test is partly due to his "strategic neglect" of the region since he took office, said Park Won-gon, a professor at Ewha University.

Talks between Washington and Pyongyang have been stalled for years, after an extraordinary show of

diplomacy between then US president Donald Trump and Kim-brokered by Yoon's predecessor Moon Jae-in-ultimately ended in failure. Trump held three headline-grabbing meetings with Kim and claimed that the two were "in love", but analysts say little to no progress was made in dismantling the North's nuclear programmes. At a vast military parade in Pyongyang recently, Kim said he was strengthening his nuclear arsenal "at the fastest possible speed". "In terms of denuclearisation and US-North Korea ties, we have returned to a situation where it's difficult to find any progress," Park said. "There is no way to really stop North Korea now." — AFP



Want to attract global attention

US intelligence says there is a "genuine possibility" that North Korea's Kim Jong Un could stage this "provocation" after Biden arrives in Seoul late Friday, his administration said. This could mean "further missile tests, long-range missile tests or a nuclear test, or frankly both" around the time of Biden's trip, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said.

Satellite imagery indicates North Korea is preparing to conduct what would be its seventh nuclear test-which would cap a record-breaking blitz of launches this year, including intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"North Korea will want to attract global attention by conducting a nuclear test during President Biden's visit," Cheong Seong-chang of the Center for North Korea Studies at the Sejong Institute told AFP.

Nearly 60m people internally displaced worldwide in 2021

GENEVA: Conflicts and natural disasters forced tens of millions to flee within their own country last year, pushing the number of internally displaced people to a record high, monitors said Thursday.

Some 59.1 million people were registered as internally displaced worldwide in 2021 — an all-time record expected to be broken again this year amid mass displacement inside war-torn Ukraine.

Around 38 million new internal displacements were reported in 2021, with some people forced to flee multiple times during the year, according to a joint report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

That marks the second-highest annual number of new internal displacements in a decade after 2020, which saw record-breaking movement due to a string of natural disasters. Last year, new internal displacements from conflict surged to 14.4 million-marking a 50-percent jump from 2020 and more than doubling since 2012, the report showed.

'World is falling apart'

And global internal displacement figures are only expected to grow this year, driven in particular by the war in Ukraine. More than eight million people have already been displaced within the war-ravaged country since Russia's full-scale invasion began on February 24, in addition to the more than six million who have fled Ukraine as refugees. "2022 is looking bleak," IDMC director Alexandra Bilak told reporters. The record numbers seen in 2021, she said, marked "a tragic indictment really on the state of the world and on peace-building efforts in particular". NRC chief Jan Egeland agreed, warning: "It has never been as bad as this."

"The world is falling apart," he told reporters. "The situation today is phenomenally worse than even our record figure suggests." In 2021, sub-Saharan Africa counted the most internal movements, with more than five million displacements reported in Ethiopia alone, as the country grappled with the raging and expanding Tigray conflict and a devastating drought. That marks the highest figure ever registered for a single country.

'Titanic shift' needed

Unprecedented displacement numbers were also recorded last year in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan, where the Taliban's return to power, along with drought, saw many flee their homes. In Myanmar, where the military junta seized power in a February coup last year, displacement numbers also reached a record high, the report found.

The Middle East and North Africa region recorded its lowest number of new displacements in a decade, as the conflicts in Syria, Libya and Iraq de-escalated somewhat, but the overall number of displaced people in the region remained high.

Syria, where civil war has been raging for more than 11 years, still accounted for the world's highest number of people living in internal displacement due to conflict — 6.7 million-at the end of 2021.

That was followed by the DR Congo at 5.3 million, Colombia at 5.2 million, and Afghanistan and Yemen at 4.3 million. Despite the hike in conflict-related displacement, natural disasters continued to account for most new internal displacement, spurring 23.7 million such movements in 2021.

A full 94 percent of those were attributed to weather and climate-related disasters, like cyclones, monsoon rains, floods and droughts. Experts say that climate change is increasing the intensity and frequency of such extreme weather events.—AFP

Climate fight rages in rich Australia suburbs

SYDNEY: In a land struck by ferocious bushfires and floods, Australian voters frustrated by climate inaction are flocking to a band of right-leaning green-minded independents, threatening to flip a string of conservative strongholds from blue to "teal".

More than 20 candidates-highly qualified, well financed and mostly women—are barnstorming some of Australia's wealthiest suburbs ahead of Saturday's election, aiming to snatch parliamentary seats held by ruling conservatives for generations.

Polls indicate these "teal" independents-somewhere between conservative blue and environmental green on the political spectrum-could not just win seats, but hold the balance of power in a hung parliament. Among the districts up for grabs are those previously held by four conservative Liberal Party prime ministers and the district of current Treasurer Josh Frydenberg, who is seen as a possible future party leader and prime minister.

More than 17 million voters are registered for the May 21 polls, which will choose all 151 seats in the lower chamber and 40 of the 76 seats in the Senate. The independents are sticking a dagger into the conservatives' exposed flank on the climate and other major concerns such as corruption and the treatment of women in government. Australia's 2019-2020 "Black Summer" bushfires and subsequent east coast floods highlighted the deadly and catastrophic consequences of climate change. But Morrison's Liberal-National coalition backs coal mining and burning into the distant future, and has resisted calls to cut carbon emissions from 2005 levels

faster than its current commitment of up to 28 percent by 2030. The government has also failed to deliver a promised federal anti-corruption watchdog. Analysts say the climate is a national concern but is more likely to sway votes in leafy suburban seats where people feel no threat from a cut to mining jobs.

Some conservative voters feel they have been "left in the wilderness" by the Liberal Party's drift to the right, said Zoe Daniel, a former ABC journalist turned independent who is now a front-runner in the polls in the wealthy Melbourne seat of Goldstein.

'Powerful influences'

A YouGov poll published May 11 put Daniel slightly ahead of the incumbent Liberal Party member for Goldstein, Tim Wilson. The "umbrella issue" for voters is integrity, Daniel told AFP, not just the need for a federal anti-corruption watchdog but also transparency in spending taxpayers' money and political donations.

That spills over into other issues such as the climate, said Daniel, who supports a 60-percent cut in carbon emissions by 2030, far more than the government or opposition Labor Party. "I think the penny has started to drop for people that there are powerful influences in the background and that's why our climate policy looks the way it does," she said.

It is no secret that the Liberal Party has close links to the mining industry, said Paul Williams, associate professor at Griffith University. "And the mining industry is Australia's most powerful lobby group." Labor, which relies on support from unions including those representing mine workers, has proposed a 43-percent cut in carbon pollution by 2030.

Monique Ryan, another independent favouring climate action and clean politics, led treasurer Frydenberg in the Melbourne seat of Kooyong, the survey indicated. Once a safe Liberal Party seat, Kooyong is also the former constituency of Australia's longest-serving prime minister, the late Robert Menzies.—AFP



SYDNEY: Voters queue up outside a pre-polling station in Berala electorate of Sydney on May 19, 2022, as Australians go to the polls on May 21 to decide who will run the country for the next three years. — AFP

UN slams Taliban closure of human rights body

GENEVA: The United Nations on Thursday slammed the Taliban's closure of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), calling it a "deeply retrograde step". Since the Taliban seized

power last August the hardline Islamists have closed several bodies that protected the freedoms of Afghans, including the electoral commission and the ministry for women's affairs.

UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said she was "dismayed" at the dissolution announced Tuesday. "The AIHRC performed extraordinary work in extremely difficult conditions over many years, shining a spotlight on the human rights of all Afghans, including victims on all sides of the conflict," she said in a statement.

"It has however, been unable to operate on the ground since August. "The AIHRC has been a powerful

News in brief

Kidnappers arrested

LAGOS: Nigerian police said they arrested two suspects behind the kidnapping of students from a Nigerian college last year, one of the most high-profile cases in a recent string of abductions of pupils. Gunmen killed a member of staff as they stormed Greenfield University in northwestern state of Kaduna on April 20, 2021, before seizing around 20 students. Five of the hostages were killed a few days later to force families and the government to pay a ransom. Fourteen were released after 40 days in captivity. The Nigerian police said late Wednesday they had detained two suspects-Aminu Lawal, also known as Kano, and Murtala Dawu, otherwise known as Mugala-who were implicated in several abduction cases. — AFP

Ship attacked off Yemen

LONDON: A British maritime security agency on Thursday said it was investigating reports of an attack on a vessel off Yemen's lawless coast. UK Maritime Trade Operations said the reported attack happened 34 nautical miles southwest of the Red Sea port of Hodeida, held by Huthi rebels. "Investigations are ongoing," it added. The UKMITO is involved in anti-piracy operations and is part of the Royal Navy, which is coordinating surveillance in the region. Previous attacks have been blamed on Somali pirates but have fallen in recent years as a result of international security operations.—AFP

Five migrants found dead

MEXICO CITY: The bodies of five migrants suspected to have died of dehydration and heat stroke were found in a railroad car in northern Mexico near the US border, authorities said Wednesday. The victims were three Hondurans, a Mexican and another unidentified person, Mexico's National Institute of Migration (INM) said. They appeared to have taken the train, which came from the United States and was headed to central Mexico, in the wrong direction, authorities in Coahuila state said. Railway security personnel found the bodies after seeing a foot sticking out of a moving railroad car near the city of Piedras Negras, according to the INM. The probable causes of death include "severe dehydration exacerbated by heat stroke," it said. Many thousands of US-bound undocumented migrants, most of them Central Americans, enter Mexico each year fleeing poverty and violence. — AFP

voice for human rights and a trusted partner of UN Human Rights, and its loss will be a deeply retrograde step for all Afghans and Afghan civil society."

The work of the commission, which included documenting civilian casualties of Afghanistan's two-decade war, was halted when the Taliban ousted a US-backed government last year and the body's top officials fled the country.

Bachelet said that during her visit to Kabul in March, she discussed with the de facto authorities the importance of re-establishing an independent human rights mechanism that can receive public complaints and bring concerns to the authorities. — AFP

FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2022

Business

G7 finance ministers meet to thrash out Ukraine aid plan

Italy impounds Russian-controlled jets, assets

KONIGSWINTER, Germany: G7 partners met in Germany on Thursday hoping to find a solution for Kyiv's budget troubles as the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to roil the global economy. "I'm quite optimistic that we will be able at this G7 meeting to raise funding which allows Ukraine to defend itself over the next months," German Finance Minister Christian Lindner said at the opening of the meeting in Koenigswinter, near Bonn.

The outbreak of the war has blown a hole in Kyiv's finances, with tax incomes having fallen sharply. A "double-digit billion euro" figure was needed to assure Ukraine's "liquidity", Lindner said.

The war in Ukraine has triggered a sharp rise in energy prices, raw materials and agricultural goods, heaping pressure on the global economy. In Europe, the continent's heavy reliance on Russian energy imports also leaves it exposed to further fuel price rises or potential disruptions to supply.

Financial support

"The bilateral and multilateral support announced so far will not be sufficient to address Ukraine's needs, even in the short term," US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a speech in Brussels on Tuesday. Yellen, who is attending the Koenigswinter gathering of the Group of Seven industrialized nations, called on US partners to "join us in increasing their financial support" for war-scarred Ukraine.

The United States has forged ahead with a \$40 billion (38 billion euros) aid package to fill Kyiv's coffers and military stores. Ahead of the G7 meeting, the European Union also proposed to boost its

aid to Ukraine by up to nine billion euros.

The war has left the Ukraine with a current budget shortfall of around \$5 billion a month, the government estimates. Around \$7.5 billion of the US aid package is earmarked to help plug the hole in Ukraine's government budget caused by the war, a source close to the G7 organisers indicated.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmygal is set to address the G7 finance ministers' meeting by video link. Besides Germany, other members of the group are Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Britain and the United States.

'Turbulence'

The outbreak of the Ukraine war has diminished growth prospects globally and pushed already elevated inflation rates even higher. The US Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates aggressively in response to high inflation rates has created concerns that the central bank could step on the brakes too hard, hurting growth.

Yellen said Wednesday she did not "expect" a recession in the United States, but warned of the risks for Europe. The continent, which has also been battling decades-high inflation, was "more vulnerable and of course more exposed on the energy front" as prices rise following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, she said. Europe's reliance on Russian energy imports for much of its needs means further disruptions to supply could come at a heavy cost for industry.

Shortages of raw materials and agricultural products caused by the conflict also threatened to heap extra pressure on consumers. The rise in energy and food prices was being felt particularly hard



KONIGSWINTER, Germany: Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmygal is displayed on a screen during a meeting of finance ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven industrialized nations (G7) on May 19, 2022 at the Petersberg in Koenigswinter near Bonn. —AFP

in developing nations. Lindner said, just as rising dollar interest rates made their debts harder to finance. The combined pressures could quickly lead to a "critical situation", the G7 host added, calling on China, one of the world's biggest creditors, to be more transparent about its lending.

Meanwhile, Italy said Thursday it had impounded aircraft and frozen monetary assets linked to Russia's state-controlled United Aircraft Corp as part of EU sanctions against Kremlin-linked entities. The Italian government put the value of the frozen assets of the Russian aerospace and defense company at more than 146 million euros (\$154 million). Financial police froze 90 percent of the capital of

Superjet International, based in Venice, and impounded four of its aircraft, the government said in a brief statement. Superjet is a joint venture between Russia's Sukhoi Holding Company and Italy's aerospace multinational Leonardo, according to the company website.

Leonardo holds 10 percent in the company. A Leonardo spokesman said its 10 percent stake was not affected. Police also impounded an aircraft belonging to the Irkut Corp, a Russian company similarly controlled by United Aircraft, Italy said.

Sukhoi and Irkut were merged in 2006 along with Russia's other top military and civilian aircraft makers into United Aircraft. —AFP

Sri Lanka to repay debts after six months: Governor

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka will take at least six more months to start repaying its debts, the central bank said Thursday as the government shut schools because of fuel shortages. Central Bank of Sri Lanka Governor Nandalal Weerasinghe said there will be no debt servicing until the country was able to restructure its \$51-billion external debt. "We hope to be able to reach an agreement with our creditors in about six months," Weerasinghe said.

"Our position is very clear. Until they come to (a) restructure (agreement), we will not be able to pay."

He said the mob violence that claimed nine lives last week and the government's failure to finalize a finance minister under a new cabinet could delay negotiations with creditors and the IMF. The governor said bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund were under way, but a final agreement required approval by a finance minister the country is yet to appoint.

Prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned last week following pressure over the acute economic hardships faced by the 22 million population. His successor Ranil Wickremesinghe has attempted to cobble together a "unity cabinet", but has inducted only four ministers, all from President Rajapaksa's SLPP party, and none from the opposition. Wickremesinghe Thursday asked state sector employees to stay at home on Friday and take a



COLOMBO: University students take part in a demonstration demanding the resignation of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa over the country's crippling economic crisis, in Colombo on May 19, 2022. —AFP

long weekend as the country faced an acute shortage of petrol.

The government also closed public schools from Friday because of the fuel crisis which has led to miles-long queues for the scarce fuel stocks at a few pumping stations. Only a few taxis were operating while most were in queues at the few pumping stations which still dispensed rationed petrol. In a bid to improve dollar liquidity in commercial banks, the central bank Thursday criminalized the holding of dollar notes by Sri Lankan citizens for longer than two weeks.

Vueling, said the order was subject to approval by shareholders. "The addition of new Boeing 737s is an important part of IAG's short-haul fleet renewal," IAG chief executive Luis Gallego said in the statement. "These latest-generation aircraft are more fuel-efficient than those they will replace and in line with our commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050." While Boeing has resumed deliveries of the 737 MAX after a lengthy grounding following the fatal crashes, the company has halted deliveries of the 787 since May 2021 while it works through production problems.

'No vote of confidence'

CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson told AFP that the order was "more about the (aviation) industry's woes than anything else". IAG "gets a discount for replacing its older less fuel-efficient aircraft and Boeing gets to offload its 737-MAX planes which it is struggling to offload in the wake of the two crashes which trashed its reputation", he said.

"It's certainly not a vote of confidence in the conventional sense." The European airlines conglomerate had initially announced its intent to buy 200 MAX jets three years ago at the Paris Air Show, despite deadly crashes involving the aircraft in 2018 and 2019. The 737 MAX was temporarily grounded worldwide following two crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed a combined 346 people.

"The order of fifty Boeing 737 MAX jets by IAG provides a much-needed booster-shot of confidence for the US aircraft manufacturer," Hargreaves Lansdown analyst Susannah Streeter told AFP. "This

Existing laws allowed Sri Lankans to up to \$15,000 for three months before depositing in a bank or encashing at the official exchange rate. In two weeks, the limit will be reduced to \$10,000 and the time period the currency could be held will be reduced to two weeks, Weerasinghe said.

Sri Lanka's foreign currency shortage has been at the heart of the current crisis, forcing the government to halt many imports of essential goods. This has led to galloping inflation, severe shortages and power blackouts in Sri Lanka's worst economic crisis since independence in 1948. —AFP

HEISCO wins \$6.4m tender from MEW

KUWAIT: Heavy Engineering Industries and Shipbuilding Company (HEISCO) announced Thursday it has won a tender valued at KD 1.8 million (\$6.4 million) for the benefit of the Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy. In a disclosure published on Kuwait Stock Exchange website, HEISCO said that the tender project is related to the supply, installation, examination, and testing of four high voltage transformers at the Doha East Power Generation and Water Distillation Station.

The company was established in 1974 and listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange in 1984. Its authorized capital is KD 22 million (\$79.2 million) and it works in building and repairing ships and security systems used in electricity, water and oil. —KUNA

US to fly in baby formula on military contracted planes

WASHINGTON: The US government will fly in baby formula on commercial planes contracted by the military in an airlift aimed at easing the major shortage plaguing the country, the White House said on Wednesday. The lack of formula—the result of a perfect storm of supply chain issues and a massive recall—is leaving parents increasingly desperate, and has become a political headache for President Joe Biden as midterm elections loom.

The Department of Defense "will use its contracts with commercial air cargo lines, as it did to move materials during the early months of the COVID pandemic, to transport products from manufacturing facilities abroad that have met Food and Drug Administration (FDA) safety standards," the White House said. "Bypassing regular air freight routes will speed up the importation and distribution of formula and serve as an immediate support as manufacturers continue to ramp up production," it said, dubbing the effort "Operation Fly Formula."

Biden has also invoked the Defense Production Act to give baby formula manufacturers first priority in supplies. "Directing firms to prioritize and allocate the production of key infant formula inputs will help increase production and speed up in supply chains," the White House said. Initially caused by supply chain blockages and a lack of production workers due to the pandemic, the shortage was exacerbated in February when, after the death of two infants, manufacturer Abbott announced a "voluntary recall" for formula made at its factory in Michigan and shut down that location. —AFP

Boost for Boeing as BA-owner orders MAX jets

LONDON: British Airways owner IAG on Thursday ordered 50 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft worth \$6.25 billion at list prices, in a boost for the crisis-hit jet after two deadly crashes.

The deal comes also amid signs of recovery in the global aviation sector, which was ravaged by the deadly COVID pandemic. Analysts however expressed doubt over whether it was a vote of confidence for both Boeing and the aviation industry as a whole. The US titan last month logged a \$1.2-billion first-quarter loss, weighed down by costs of its Russia business, the Air Force One presidential jet, and its delay-hit 777X plane in a growing litany of problems.

'Latest generation'

International Airlines Group has reached agreement for 25 Boeing 737-8200 jets, also called the 737 MAX, and 25 of its 737-10 aircraft at a "substantial" discount. IAG added in a statement that it also has an option to purchase 100 more MAX planes. The fuel-efficient MAX jets will be delivered between 2023 and 2027 to replace ageing aircraft in IAG's fleet.

IAG, which owns also Spanish carriers Iberia and



LONDON: British Airways owner IAG on Thursday ordered 50 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft worth \$6.25 billion at list prices, in a boost for the crisis-hit jet after two deadly crashes.

deal has been a long time coming and has been significantly scaled down from hopes of 200 aircraft, but it still represents a lift for the company which has been buffeted by winds of turbulence over its order book, production delays, supply chain worries and inflation." The news also dealt a heavy blow to Boeing's fierce European rival manufacturer Airbus. "This is a surprising and very big kick in the teeth for Airbus," noted independent aviation analyst Howard Wheelton. "The discount must have been pretty massive and we live in hope that there are no implications of Airbus' failure to secure more single aisle business from IAG in the UK." —AFP

Business

Indonesia to lift ban on palm oil exports from Monday

Decision relieves pressure on global vegetable oil market

JAKARTA: Indonesia will lift its ban on palm oil exports next week, President Joko Widodo said Thursday, relieving pressure on the global vegetable oil market after prices spiked because of the suspension and the war in Ukraine.

The archipelago nation issued the ban last month to secure supplies of the commodity, used in a range of goods from chocolate spreads to cosmetics, in the face of a domestic shortage. "Based on the supply... of cooking oil and considering there are 17 million people in the palm oil industry-farmers and other supporting workers- I decided that cooking oil exports will reopen on Monday, May 23," Widodo told an online briefing.

"The government will still be monitoring everything strictly to ensure the demand will be met with affordable prices," he said. Authorities had rigorously enforced the export ban, with the Indonesian navy seizing a tanker carrying palm oil out of the country in violation of the order earlier this month. After the ban came into force, Widodo said supplying the country's 270 million people was the "highest priority" of his government. There are no But Jakarta came under pressure for further saddling prices that were already skyrocketing after Russia's invasion of agricultural powerhouse Ukraine. Palm oil producers staged protests last week in the centre of Jakarta and several towns in Indonesia complaining that the prices for palm oil fruits had dropped dramatically.

'Return to normal'

The Indonesian leader said he was reversing the suspension because the domestic supply and price of

cooking oil had improved since the ban came into effect on April 28. Widodo said prices had fallen from 19,800 rupiah (\$1.35) per liter to about 17,200 rupiah (\$1.17) since the ban.

Domestic supplies of cooking oil also tripled after the ban from 64,500 tons per month to 211,000 tons, he said. Industry figures hailed the decision to resume exports. Eddy Martono, secretary general of the Indonesian Palm Oil Association (GAPKI), said the organization "is very grateful to the government, especially to the president" for lifting the ban. "It is a fact that the condition on the ground is very difficult because the tanks have been all full. We hope with the export reopening, the palm oil production can return to normal."

Oil Palm Farmers Association chairman Gulat Manurung thanked Widodo and said oil palm farmers would repay his decision by boosting domestic supplies.

"We, oil palm farmers, pledge to help ensure that domestic supplies of cooking oil will be available," he told AFP. Palm oil is the most widely used vegetable oil in Indonesia and, despite being the world's biggest producer, the country has been facing a cooking oil shortage for months because of poor regulation and producers reluctant to sell at home. The shortages have in some cases forced consumers to spend hours in queues at distribution centers.

Indonesia produces about 60 percent of the world's palm oil, with one-third consumed by its domestic market. India, China, the European Union and Pakistan are among its major export customers. — AFP



A worker loads freshly harvested palm fruits onto a truck

EU publishes report on the security of Open RAN

The EU member states, with the support of the European Commission and ENISA, the EU Agency for Cybersecurity, recently published a report on the cybersecurity of Open RAN. This new type of 5G network architecture explores alternative ways of deploying the radio access part of 5G networks based on open interfaces.

Following up on the coordinated work already

done at EU level to strengthen the security of 5G networks with the EU Toolbox on 5G Cybersecurity, Member States have analyzed the security implications of Open RAN. The report found that Open RAN could bring potential security opportunities, provided certain conditions are met. However, the Open RAN concept still lacks maturity and cybersecurity remains a significant challenge. Especially in the short term, by increasing the complexity of networks, Open RAN would exacerbate a number of security risks. Those risks include a larger attack surface and more entry points for malicious actors, an increased risk of misconfiguration of networks and potential impacts on other network functions due to resource sharing. The report also notes that technical specifications, such as those developed by the O-RAN Alliance, are not sufficiently mature and secure by design. Open

RAN could lead to new or increased critical dependencies, for example in the area of components and cloud.

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, said: "Our common priority and responsibility is to ensure the timely deployment of 5G networks in Europe, while ensuring they are secure. Open RAN architectures create new opportunities in the marketplace, but this report shows they also raise important security challenges, especially in the short term. It will be important for all participants to dedicate sufficient time and attention to mitigate such challenges, so that the promises of Open RAN can be realized."

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market, added: "With 5G network rollout across the EU, and our economies' growing reliance on digital

infrastructures, it is more important than ever to ensure a high level of security of our communication networks (...). This report shows that there are a number of opportunities with Open RAN but also significant security challenges that remain unaddressed and cannot be underestimated. Under no circumstances should the potential deployment in Europe's 5G networks of Open RAN lead to new vulnerabilities."

Overall, the report recommends a cautious approach to moving towards this new architecture. Any transition from and coexistence with existing, reliable technologies should be done by allowing sufficient time and resources to assess risks in advance, implement appropriate mitigations and clearly define responsibilities in case of failure or incident.

—Published by European Commission



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 19 MAY 2022

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	1,035	1,020	1,040	994	46	35,788,342	-10	-0.97%	7.42%	1,012	1,024	21.1	2.02	2.8%	1.04
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	355	373	375	355	20	68,593,974	26	7.49%	40.38%	364	375	26.2	1.76	1.8%	1.04
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	236	229	238	225	13	12,245,879	-4	-1.72%	9.25%	229	233	34.4	0.71	1.6%	1.11
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	286	272	289	263	26	10,447,355	-13	-4.56%	13.78%	271	275	19.8	1.03	1.7%	1.31
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	940	900	945	890	55	92,937,200	-25	-2.70%	18.99%	896	917	33.0	4.48	1.2%	1.22
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	862	850	889	815	74	5,384,713	-5	-0.58%	19.32%	847	862	67.6	4.19	0.5%	1.05
204	National Investments	Financial Services	400	403	412	381	31	26,693,736	18	4.68%	84.02%	384	405	8.8	1.27	11.3%	1.63
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	183	169	184	163	21	18,803,906	-8	-4.52%	19.01%	161	172	32.7	0.94	2.8%	0.89
252	Al Intiaz Investment	Financial Services	115	112	117	105	12	9,816,299	-1	-0.88%	-5.08%	112	117	110.9	0.65	8.0%	1.12
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	166	164	168	160	8	13,603,435	0	0.00%	-8.38%	158	166	24.0	1.16	1.8%	0.98
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	769	776	795	737	58	9,376,175	27	3.60%	3.73%	764	787	17.4	1.87	1.7%	1.12
501	National Industries	Financial Services	303	291	306	285	21	37,224,164	-8	-2.68%	11.82%	287	296	4.3	1.32	0.0%	1.43
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,656	1,643	1,678	1,570	108	1,651,211	-2	-0.12%	88.63%	1,630	1,750	16.4	1.33	3.6%	0.77
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	1,031	1,039	1,055	998	57	4,059,064	19	1.86%	21.95%	1,019	1,083	14.1	1.97	5.2%	0.90
526	Al Qurain	Basic Materials	372	370	373	365	8	2,005,810	-2	-0.54%	6.63%	357	371	31.7	0.93	4.3%	0.97
603	Agility	Industrials	1,148	1,130	1,195	1,010	185	44,491,565	34	3.10%	19.58%	1,111	1,145	68.5	1.36	1.7%	1.35
605	Zain	Telecommunications	617	642	648	596	52	38,758,995	34	5.59%	7.90%	641	645	15.9	2.44	5.2%	0.86
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,140	3,145	3,200	3,065	135	964,364	45	1.45%	-2.45%	3,100	3,200	6.6	3.90	12.7%	0.67
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	207	200	210	196	14	2,438,504	-5	-2.44%	-8.26%	195	203	NULL	0.69	0.0%	1.18
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,848	1,844	1,880	1,800	80	1,658,732	44	2.44%	42.95%	1,820	1,880	24.9	15.27	1.7%	1.43
818	Ahli United Bank	Banking	300	276	300	273	27	83,644,043	-11	-3.83%	9.21%	275	285	18.1	1.89	2.9%	1.75
821	Warba Bank	Banking	274	268	277	265	12	16,057,960	-5	-1.83%	-2.19%	264	269	31.7	1.47	0.0%	1.01
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	567	546	577	538	39	704,844	-20	-3.53%	-7.30%	541	565	20.2	1.56	3.2%	0.29
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	433	438	445	418	27	8,279,320	18	4.29%	2.30%	428	445	37.7	1.76	2.3%	0.72
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	220	215	220	213	7	5,131,978	0	0.00%	-5.70%	213	220	16.6	2.70	8.4%	0.55
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,474	2,510	2,590	2,470	120	706,921	40	1.62%	24.26%	2,483	2,600	28.6	9.67	2.6%	0.66

* As of end of week closing

Business

New Zealand budget offers cash to tackle rising costs

Ardern aims to make country 'ready and secure' to handle financial challenges

WELLINGTON: New Zealand on Thursday unveiled a big-spending budget including cash handouts to combat the rising cost of living. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said she aimed to make the country "ready and secure" to handle the impact of global financial challenges.

"The budget eases the impact of global inflation on families. While we know the current storm will pass, it's important we do what we can to take the hard edges off it now," Ardern told parliament in a video link from her home where she is recuperating from COVID-19. "We're investing now to make sure we're ready and secure for what lies ahead. Be it the impact of climate change or growing pressure on health services, now is not the time to take our eye off the ball."

In addition to fuel discounts for all, low- and middle-income earners will get an extra NZ\$27 (US\$17) a week for three months, while the government also plans to spend billions of dollars on the health system and climate crisis.

The price of the cost-of-living package would be NZ\$1.0 billion. Another NZ\$11.1 billion was earmarked for the health sector. The budget included nearly NZ\$3.0 billion in climate change initiatives announced earlier in the week, offering cash incentives to get motorists to trade in gas-guzzling cars for electric or hybrid vehicles.

'Spending spree'

"COVID-19, climate change and the war in Ukraine have taught us we need to build a more secure economy that protects New Zealand households from the external shocks we know are coming," Ardern said. "The fundamentals and trajectory of our economy are strong but we have an immediate cost of living crisis to get through."

Finance Minister Grant Robertson, who titled his budget "A Secure Future", said it charted a course for "economic security and a high-wage, low-emissions economy." He forecast the economy strengthening from the second half of this year with annual growth peaking at 4.2 percent in the year to June 2023.

He expected a return to budget surplus in 2024-2025. Net debt was forecast to peak at 19.9 percent of gross domestic product in 2024. Opposition leader Christopher Luxon from the centre-right National Party, who has advocated for tax cuts in the cost of living crisis, described it as a "backwards budget".

"Labour's spending addiction means the books are going backward. Not content with a NZ\$6.0 billion spending spree, they've also raided future budgets - spending 2.0 billion from budget 2023 and 0.4 billion from budget 2024. And that's before you count climate spending



WELLINGTON, New Zealand: New Zealand's government said on Thursday it would hand over an additional few hundred dollars to more than 2 million low-income adults to help address what is being described as "the peak of the global inflation storm."

and the cost of living banded - which are on top," he said. "They're pushing out surpluses and shifting the goalposts to clear the way for more spending by lifting debt limits." —AFP

Jazeera Airways CEO receives Top CEO Award for 2021

KUWAIT: In the annual Top CEO Conference and Awards held in Dubai, Jazeera Airways' Chief Executive Officer, Rohit Ramchandran, received the Top CEO Award in the Logistics and Industrial category for the airline's record return to profitability for the financial year 2021. The Top CEO Awards are based on the financial performance, size, and corporate governance of GCC-listed companies. The awards were created in 2012 to recognize those who created value and contribute to boosting the region's economy while maintaining transparency and good corporate governance.

Speaking on the significance of the award, Ramchandran, said: "I collect this award on behalf of the whole Jazeera team who worked incredibly hard to deliver great results and expedite the recovery of the company after the

pandemic. Jazeera's resilient business model has not only enabled millions of passengers to access low-cost travel, it has also delivered excellent results to our shareholders over the years. We have accomplished this by staying true to the values set by the Founder and Chairman, Mr. Marwan Boodai, who launched the airline 17 years ago, and under the oversight and guidance of our Board who take governance and building shareholder value very seriously."

The awards shortlist the best performing 100 companies listed in the seven stock exchanges and operating in ten sectors. The Hawkamah Institute provides corporate governance guidelines developed by the Top CEO in partnership with INSEAD Business School. The "Big Four" auditing firm, KPMG, has audited the rankings of the 2022 awards. In 2021, Jazeera Airways returned to profitability despite continued travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The airline had safeguarded its position during the peak of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and returned to profitability in record time during the third quarter of the year.



Jazeera Airways CEO receives Top CEO Award 2022

Isam Al-Sager 'Top CEO' in Kuwait's banking industry

KUWAIT: Isam Jassem A Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of the National Bank of Kuwait, was named the Top CEO in the Banking industry in Kuwait and among the top 10 CEOs of the GCC Banking Sector. The "Top CEO" Awards Ceremony 2022 honored the most successful and innovative CEOs of listed companies on the seven GCC stock markets.

The award was announced on the sidelines of the "Top CEOs Conference and Awards", which returned in its sixth edition in the UAE on May 17-18, 2022. The prestigious event was attended by senior entrepreneurs and industry leaders in the Arab region, including CEOs and senior government officials, as well as regional and international experts. GCC-listed companies are evaluated based on their financial performance, size, and adherence to corporate governance standards in accordance with Dubai based Hawkamah Institute's guidelines.

Al-Sager was named "Top CEO"

in the Kuwaiti banking sector and among the top 10 CEOs in the GCC banking sector, based on certain factors including growth, profitability, and corporate governance. Moreover, Hawkamah Institute has provided corporate governance guidelines developed by the Top CEO in partnership with INSEAD Business School and KPMG audited the Top CEO ranking for the 2022 awards.

Extensive banking expertise

The event was a celebration of the Top 10 CEOs in ten different sectors in the GCC, who effectively achieved significant growth and profitability for their companies and demonstrated their commitment to corporate governance last year. The conference organizers amplified that the GCC companies successfully managed to achieve significant growth in the aftermath of the global financial crises, and that would not have been possible without the key role played by the



innovative and resilient CEOs.

Al-Sager enjoys extensive professional expertise with over 45 years in banking experience. He played a major role in turning NBK into a leading regional institution with a wide international presence. He is the Vice Chairman and Group CEO. He is also Chairman or member of various management Committees. Al-Sager is the Chairman of the Board of NBK (International) PLC and

serves on the Board of Directors of Watani Wealth Management (KSA). Al-Sager is a Board member of MasterCard. He was the Chairman of National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt until May 2019 and a Board member of Turkish Bank, Watani Holding, NBK Trustees (Jersey) Limited. Al-Sager holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from California State Polytechnic University, USA.

Huawei showcases top products for smart, healthy living

MILAN: Huawei Consumer Business Group (BG) featured a variety of Huawei's cutting edge hardware products at the Milan - "Huawei Flagship Product Launch 2022" event including: Huawei Watch GT3 Pro, Huawei Mate Xs 2, Huawei P50, Huawei Watch D, Huawei Band 7 and Huawei Watch FIT 2 which aims to further simplify the daily lives of consumers.

Along with its hardware products, Huawei also features its world-renowned Health App which has aided consumers all around the world lead a healthy lifestyle. Huawei Consumer Business Group always puts consumers at the centre of what it does. At the launch event, Richard Yu, CEO of the Consumer Business Group, highlighted Huawei's continuous dedication to optimizing user experience to fulfil its strategy and vision of an All-Scenario Seamless AI Life.

The Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro series is compatible with Huawei devices as well as other Android and iOS devices. The smartwatch is available in two variants - Titanium Edition and Ceramic Edition. Huawei's latest smartwatch will be available in Kuwait for pre-orders on the 12th of May, 2022 for KWD 119.9. It will be available in retail on the 19th of May, 2022 on Huawei's official website and select retailers.

The Huawei Watch GT3 Pro comes with a "moon phase collection" interface design, premium materials, an ultra-clear large screen and a range of watch faces to choose from. The latest Huawei's latest flagship smartwatch makes it easy to support a healthy lifestyle, with ECG analysis, and Huawei TruSeen 5.0+ data monitoring technology, allowing for accurate heart health measurement and blood oxygen monitoring.

Huawei Mate Xs 2

Introducing the Huawei Mate Xs 2, Huawei's brand-new flagship foldable smartphone. With a weight of only 255g and a thickness of only 5.4mm, the phone features the first 3D Fibreglass Design to achieve a fusion of aesthetic colors and textures. To achieve an ultra-flat surface which is minimalistic and natural, the phone uses the Falcon Wing Design. Through that, the movement of the hinge and screen is precisely synchronized via the fixed-length linkage control. For the phone's screen, the use of Huawei's self-developed innovative industry-first composite screen to absorb all shock and buffer makes the Huawei Mate Xs 2 ultra-reliable.

To further enhance user-quality, the Huawei Mate Xs 2 is equipped with Huawei flagship products such as a 7.8-inch True-Chroma foldable display to deliver high resolution content, Silicon-Based Anode battery for higher density and larger capacity, 66W Huawei SuperCharge that allows a 90 percent charge within 30 minutes, and an Anti-Reflective Nano Optical layer to help reduce glare.

Huawei P50

It comprises the powerful Main Camera Matrix and SuperZoom Matrix. The hardware is integrated with the Huawei XD Optics and Huawei XD Fusion Pro image engine, resulting in high-resolution images that are brighter and cleaner with more details. Huawei went the extra mile to glean a better understanding of colors. It created a comprehensive solution and tweaked over 2,000 colors in the full color gamut. There is a new super color filter system with True-Chroma Image Engine and Super HDR technology that provides comprehensive enhancements to details, colors and dynamic range. The HUAWEI P50 is outstanding in videography as it is in photography. The True-Form Dual-Matrix Camera supports 4K video recording on both the front and rear, providing vivid clear footage from every angle.

LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Summer Specials 2022'

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the regional leader and trend-setter in retailing, launched its 'Summer Specials 2022' promotion with an official launch ceremony held at the Alrai outlet of the hypermarket on 19 May. The promotion was flagged off by LuLu Hypermarket's top management in Kuwait, in the presence of a select gathering of leading online fashion bloggers and social-media influencers.

The promotion, which runs until 24 May, had its soft launch on 15 May with the release of the 'Summer Specials 2022' brochure, detailing the offers available during the promotion period.

The 'Summer Specials 2022' promotion features the latest summer fashion collections for men, women and children, including eclectic selections from leading fashion brands such as Cortigini, Debackers, Eten, John Louis, Marco Doneitelli, Reo, and Tom Smith among others. Besides signature



summer-wear garments, also on offer at amazing prices are a wide range of products including, footwear and ladies handbags that help make a fashion statement this summer.

Lifestyle | Features



Algerian singer Soolking performs at the Apollo Theater in New York City. — AFP photos



Algerian singer Soolking performs at the Apollo Theater in New York City.

Algerian rapper Soolking plays Harlem's Apollo during debut US tour

As his merengue-inflected single "Suavemente" once again topped France's songs chart, Algerian rapper Soolking was stateside, delighting fans and wooing new followers with his blend of rap and Maghrebian folk music. Already acclaimed in the Francophone world, the Algerian rapper Soolking this year set his sights on North America, where he played historic venues including New York's Apollo and the Globe Theatre in Los Angeles.

"I never thought that one day I would come here to sing," the artist born Abderraouf Derradji told AFP backstage ahead of his set at Harlem's esteemed venue, which launched the careers of icons including Billie Holiday and Aretha Franklin, and where James Brown recorded a groundbreaking live album. "It's a mythical hall like Paris' Olympia... where so many legendary artists have performed," said Soolking, wearing oval sunglasses and a black beanie. "It's an honor for me; it's cool."

Born and raised in a suburb of Algiers, the 32-year-old was born to a

percussionist father and at a young age began playing music and learning dance. He first moved to France in 2008, but returned to Algeria to be in the rap group Africa Jungle, with whom he released two albums: "Ched Rohek" and "Eclipse." The artist returned to France several years later, launching a solo career in 2016, adopting the moniker Soolking and starting to play small venues and drop music online. He went viral shortly thereafter after performing his song "Guerilla"—a track about his experience immigrating without papers—on the popular French radio Show "Planet Rap."

'Representing for Algeria'

With two successful albums under his belt and another on the way, Soolking embarked this spring on a North American tour that along with New York and Los Angeles included dates in Montreal, Houston, Chicago and Washington. The artist who sings in both French and Arabic is interested in expanding his global reach but isn't ter-

ribly concerned with where his fans come from: "The most important thing is my fans."

"In my country of origin, there's people who listen to me and people who don't listen to me," the rapper continued. "I'm going to look for what's human, because in the end, music is feeling." As evidenced by his first New York show, Soolking had broken ground in the United States long before he played any of its stages: fans danced and sang along at the Apollo, waving Algerian flags and illuminating their phones.

"It's just amazing to see someone from our country in New York City and their name in lights," said 26-year-old Sarah Hammadi, one of four cousins who traveled from New Jersey to catch the show. "It's amazing—he's really representing for Algeria." "It just feels like you're back at home," seconded her cousin Dilia, 18. "He's such a pop icon in our country... it just brings warmth to our heart." — AFP

Pentagon creates new office to probe UFO reports

The Pentagon is creating a new office to investigate unidentified flying objects amid concerns that after broad probes it cannot explain mysterious sightings near highly sensitive military areas. Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks, working with the US director of national intelligence, ordered the new investigatory body to be established in the US Defense Department's intelligence and security office, the Pentagon said late Tuesday.

The order came five months after a classified US intelligence report on possible alien UFOs came up inconclusive; it could explain some reported incidents but was unable to account for other phenomena, some filmed by pilots near military testing areas. The new office will focus on incidents in, or near, designated "special use airspace" (SUA) areas strictly controlled and blocked from general aviation due to security sensitivities.



US Deputy Director of Naval Intelligence Scott Bray explains a video of an unidentified aerial phenomena, as he testifies before a House Intelligence Committee subcommittee hearing at the US. — AFP

The US military is worried some of the unidentified aerial phenomena spotted by military pilots in the past may represent technologies of strategic rivals unknown to US scientists. "Incursions by any airborne object into our SUA pose safety of flight and operations security concerns, and may pose national security challenges," the Pentagon said in a statement.

The Defense Department "takes reports of incursions—by any airborne object, identified or unidentified—very seriously, and investigates each one," it added. The new office was dubbed the Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronization Group (AOIMSG), the successor to the US Navy's Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force. It will be overseen by a panel of experts from the military and intelligence community. A mostly classified official review of UFO reports released in June determined that most of around 120 incidents over the past 20 years could be explained and had nothing to do with unknown or secret US or foreign technology. — AFP



Men look on at an art installation by Senegalese Artist, Yakhya Ba, along Dakar's sea promenade. — AFP photos

Senegal festival brings contemporary African art to the streets

Intriguing pyramids and a huge yellow dog have cropped up on the Senegalese capital's seafloor. The enormous exhibits are part of the much-anticipated Dakar Biennale of Contemporary African Art, which opens on Thursday and promises to "break down" gallery walls by bringing modern art to the streets of Senegal. It's a fresh idea for the 14th Biennale as the organizers set out to challenge art's "elitist image". The exhibition is all about moving "the artist's studio to the street", they say—a "plea for art to be more present in public spaces".

By the ocean, people silently approach two pyramid-shaped mausoleums. Dozens of earthen faces appear in piles in their interior and on their outside walls, their eyes closed. Some are screaming. A line of shoes leads away from the tombs and towards the cliff edge of Dakar's cornice, as though they're falling into the sea. Senegalese artist Yakhya Ba's work is a powerful study of the agony faced by migrants and their families. A little further on, others take selfies by Egyptian artist Khaled Zaki's massive dog sculpture. He wanted his work to delight children—and draw attention to the problem of stray canines in the Senegalese capital.

'Africa at the crossroads'

The Biennale this year will showcase works from more than 2,500 artists across 85 countries. It is to feature some 300 exhibits in the capital and nearby islands of Ngor and Goree, as well as around 100 in other towns and countries of the diaspora. The exhibition was postponed due to COVID in 2020, but the 2018 event attracted almost 250,000 visitors, including 50,000 from abroad. For this year's edition, artistic director El Hadji Malick Ndiaye asked 17 artists to produce monumental works to interact with locations along Senegal's coast, from fishing villages to universities and prisons. This year's theme

is "Ndaffa"—the forge in Wolof—and "the construction of new models".

"This Biennale is symbolically strong because it's after the Covid-19 crisis that shook and tested African countries," Ndiaye told AFP. "Africa is at the crossroads of several changes. There are movements for a new appropriation of African heritage, questions about the CFA franc and the autonomy of African countries, unrest in several countries, and the emergence of new citizen consciousness..." He said participating artists had been invited "to have their own points of view on all this" and "forge new ways of thinking".

Dreamlike work

A former courthouse hosts the Biennale's international exhibition, which displays the work of 59 artists from 28 countries, including 16 African countries and 12 countries of the diaspora. There's dreamlike work from Senegalese painter and contemporary art sensation Omar Ba, video pieces courtesy of South African artist Sethembile Msezane, and space-age creations from Franco-Togolese-Senegalese Caroline Gueye—who is also an astrophysicist.

Other exhibits include a "forest" of 343 armless sculptures by Senegalese artist Ousmane Dia, a fierce critic of inequality who is calling for a new order "that focuses more on human dignity". There will also be a seminar, organized by Senegalese writer Felwine Sarr, discussing the restitution of African heritage. The Biennale, which runs until June 21, comes as war rages in Ukraine. Artistic director Ndiaye said art was vital to encourage reflection in such fateful, changing times. "When weapons crackle, we must make sure culture does too," he said. — AFP

Macklowe art collection becomes most expensive ever sold at auction

The famed Macklowe collection, subject of a bitter divorce battle between a New York property developer and his ex-wife, became the most expensive art collection ever sold at auction Monday. Sotheby's sold its second offering of works from the collection for \$246.1 million, bringing the total value of the group of paintings to \$922.2 million, a spokesman told AFP.

That exceeds the \$835.1 million that the Rockefeller collection sold for in 2018, then the highest total ever made by a single private collection at auction. Among the highlights of Monday evening's sale were Mark Rothko's "Untitled," which fetched \$48 million and Gerhard Richter's "Seestuck", which went for \$30.2 million.

Andy Warhol's "Self Portrait" sold for \$18.7 million while Willem de Kooning's "Untitled" went for \$17.8 million. Sotheby's won the rights to sell the Macklowe works back in September. It sold 35 of the pieces in November for \$676.1 million before selling the remaining 30 on Monday. Sotheby's had described the paintings as the "most significant collection of modern and contemporary art to ever appear on the market." During divorce proceedings, Harry Macklowe and his ex-wife Linda had been unable to agree on how much the vast collection was worth. A New York judge ruled in 2018 that they should sell all 65 works and split the profits. — AFP



Andy Warhol's 'Self Portrait' during a press preview for the Macklowe Collection at Sotheby's in New York. — AFP

Race satire meets teen buddy comedy in Amazon's 'Emergency'

"Emergency" begins like any coming-of-age buddy comedy. But its young heroes' night of party-hopping hi-jinks quickly takes a more serious and sinister turn in large part because they are Black. Unlike white characters from genre classics like "Superbad" who emerge unscathed from playful interactions with bemused cops, college students Sean and Kunle panic when they find a high-school girl passed out on their living room floor. Fearing what might happen if they dial 911 in such a compromising scenario, they rope Latino housemate Carlos into helping ferry her to hospital, setting off a series of hilarious and terrifying consequences. "It seems like it's gonna be a 'Superbad' or a 'Booksmart' type of movie—I feel like even the characters want this so badly to be like a teen comedy," the movie's writer K.D. Davila told AFP.

"They want it to be that, but it's not, it can't be." "Which is a f----up, bitter reality of what it's like for a lot of people," agreed director Carey Williams. At the heart of "Emergency," out in US theaters Friday and on Amazon Prime Video next week, is the constant and everyday burden placed on young men of color whom society is quick to perceive as a threat. Growing up, Davila said she "saw this phenomenon where my dad and other men in my family, especially the ones who were darker skinned, had to do this strange calculation every time we went anywhere, (of) considering how they're being perceived."

"You can make those calculations and you can do your best to project 'innocence' or whatever. But it doesn't matter sometimes. You can still get pulled over and searched for no reason." Davila and Williams turned those observations into a short film, winning awards at festivals including Sundance and SXSW in 2018, before Amazon and a cast including pop star Sabrina Carpenter came aboard for this year's feature-length version.

The intervening period brought the death of George Floyd, the explosion of Black Lives Matter protests and a greater focus on diversity in Hollywood,

but the filmmakers reject the idea their film is "topical." "This is literally not new. We're glad that people were talking about it and engaging with it. But the idea that it had to get to this point was a little surprising," said Davila. In a nod to the superficiality of society's change, an indignant white couple film themselves confronting Sean and his friends simply for parking at night outside their home—the lawn of which proudly bears a "Black Lives Matter" sign.



In this file photo Sabrina Carpenter attends the Los Angeles Premiere of Amazon's 'Emergency' at Directors Guild of America in Los Angeles, California.

'Cathartic and funny'

But the filmmakers say they did not set out to preach to white people about race. "We weren't like 'We're teaching you how bad this is!'" said Davila. Instead, "Emergency" was made "for people who've been through this, who've been living in this culture of fears." "Hopefully, the movie is cathartic and funny to people who've been through that. That was the thing that might be a little different in our approach than other movies." For Williams, the film is an opportunity to delve into the young friends' relationship, and their different approaches to handling "Black masculinity and vulnerability."

Clean-cut and trusting Kunle (Donald Elise Watkins) doesn't initially feel he is treated any differently due to his skin color, while cocky and macho Sean (R.J. Cyler) has had a fear of authority seemingly drilled into him by lived experience. This contrast leads to the pair making very different choices over the course of the night—each of which Williams hopes the audience can empathize with.

"There is a lot of humor... in the way they reacted to each other trying to do the right thing and get out of the situation," said Williams. He added: "The film should raise questions about how these young men have to maneuver through the world." — AFP



In this file photo Sebastian Chacon, RJ Cyler, Diego Aberham and Donald Elise Watkins attend the Los Angeles Premiere of Amazon's 'Emergency' at Directors Guild of America in Los Angeles, California. 'Emergency' begins like any coming-of-age buddy comedy. — AFP photos



Environmental activist Rob Greenfield walks around Beverly Hills, wearing a suit filled with every piece of trash he has generated living and consuming like a typical American for one month to raise awareness about how much garbage just one person generates. — AFP photos



Environmental activist Rob Greenfield walks around Beverly Hills.

What a waste: US campaigner wears his trash for a month

We all know someone with a rubbish fashion sense, but Rob Greenfield is proud to be wearing garbage—it's all part of a plan to show just how much trash we unthinkingly throw away every month. The campaigner is wandering the streets of Los Angeles and surrounding cities in a specially designed suit that holds all of the junk he has produced over the last few weeks. "For most of us, trash is out of sight, out of mind," he told AFP on the swanky shopping streets of Beverly Hills. "We throw it in the garbage can and it goes away and we never think about it again. I wanted to create a visual that helps people to really see how much our trash adds up."

With just a few days left to go in his challenge, Greenfield is wearing around 62 pounds (28 kilograms) of rubbish generated from the drinks, snacks and meals he has consumed. All of it is packed in his clear plastic suit, with specially constructed pockets on the arms, legs and back.

The legs are already bulging with cans that clatter and restrict his ability to walk, adding to the overall impression of a robot made of junk. "It was about day 12 that I started to really feel the burden of con-



Environmental activist Rob Greenfield talks to customers in a Starbucks in Beverly Hills.

sumerism," he said, noting that the average person in the US creates around five pounds of waste per day. "I really started to feel the weight and see the visual and just say 'wow, it's astounding how much our trash really adds up.'"

Greenfield, who prides himself on living a minimalist life with only a handful of pos-

sessions, no bank account and no driving license, is no stranger to stunts aimed at raising awareness of environmental issues. In 2019, he fed himself for a whole year on food he grew and harvested himself. But for the purpose of the trash suit, he decided to put aside the asceticism and consume like the average American



Environmental activist Rob Greenfield eats a breakfast sandwich while walking around Beverly Hills.

for 30 days.

The sight of a man wearing garbage as he wanders through upmarket parts of one of America's most avowedly consumerist cities raises some eyebrows, but, he says, most people are interested in learning more. "There are some people who think I'm someone who's experienc-

ing homelessness or that I have a mental health issue, but for the most part, people have just been very positive. "People can understand this message and it helps me to really reach people from all walks of life." — AFP

Tom Cruise receives honorary Palme as 'Top Gun' jets into Cannes

Tom Cruise received an honorary Palme d'Or and gushed about his passion for cinema as he made his first visit in 30 years to the Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday for the launch of "Top Gun: Maverick". The French Air Force display team streaked across the sky over the red carpet as the stars headed into the screening for the long-awaited sequel to Cruise's superstar-making 1986 blockbuster.

The movie was supposed to premiere at the French Riviera film fest back in 2020 before it was cancelled by the COVID pandemic and the film's release delayed multiple times. Cruise was adamant it was worth waiting for cinemas to be back in full swing, and said he never considered releasing "Top Gun: Maverick" via a streaming platform.

"That was not going to happen, ever," he told a Cannes audience in a talk ahead of the premiere. "I make movies for the big screen. Cinema is my love,



US actor Tom Cruise receives a Palme d'Or d'honneur (honor Palme d'Or) ahead of the screening of the film 'Top Gun: Maverick' during the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.

my passion. I always go to movies when they come out. I'll put my cap on and sit in the audience with everyone." Fans lined balconies and stood on roofs along the Cannes seafront to catch a glimpse of the stars, while others held up signs begging for a last-minute ticket to the screening.

'No to war'

Earlier, the festival's main competition got going with a movie from Russian dissident Kirill Serebrennikov, who has been forced into exile since the invasion of Ukraine. His entry in the race for the Palme d'Or, "Tchaikovsky's Wife", is unlikely to improve his standing with the Kremlin given that it shines a light on the legendary composer's homosexuality—a story that remains taboo for Russian conservatives. "No to war," he said after the premiere.

"I am totally convinced that culture and people of culture can help ensure that this war ends," added the director, who was unable to attend the festival for two previous nominations due to a controversial court case that barred him from leaving Russia. The war has already been a major theme at the festival, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky making a surprise video appearance at the opening ceremony on Tuesday. There will be a special screening on Thursday of "Mariupolis 2", a documentary about the conflict by Lithuanian director Mantas Kvedaravicius, who was killed in Ukraine last month—reportedly by Russian forces. Ukraine's beleaguered film-makers will get a special day at the festival and one of its most promising directors, Sergei Loznitsa, will show "The Natural History of Destruction", about the bombing of German cities in World War II.

'Emotional wallop'

Meanwhile, Cruise's fight is to boost cinemas as they struggle to emerge from the pandemic. His 39 films as a lead actor have pulled in just shy of \$8.5 billion (8 billion euros) worldwide, and Box Office Pro estimates "Top Gun: Maverick" could add as much as \$390 million in the United States alone. Critics have been mostly giddy in their reviews, with Empire magazine praising its "slick visuals, crew camaraderie, thrilling aerial action, a surprising emotional wallop and, in Tom Cruise, a magnetic movie-star performance as comforting as an old leather jacket".

The Cannes Film Festival continues to be a popular launchpad for big budget spectacles, with industry insiders noting that its new sponsor TikTok has added another level of social media buzz this year. Cruise received his surprise honorary Palme as he entered the theatre for Wednesday's screening.

He was last in Cannes in 1992 for the premiere of "Far and Away" with his then-wife Nicole Kidman, and is the only Hollywood megastar of that era to have maintained his box office power, even as he prepares to turn 60 this year. "In the history of cinema... he has one of the highest success rates," festival director Thierry Fremaux said. "This is someone that we haven't seen on streaming platforms, TV series, or doing adverts.... He is someone who is devoted to cinema." — AFP



Married couple land record UK lottery jackpot of £185 million

A married couple from western England were revealed Thursday as Britain's biggest-ever lottery winners after scooping a jackpot of nearly £185 million (\$230 million, 218 million euros) in the EuroMillions draw. Joe and Jess Thwaite, from Gloucester, called the unprecedented win "huge for us" as they claimed the record-breaking sum of £184,262,899 with a ticket of randomly selected numbers earlier this month.

"It was amazing but also surreal," said Joe, 49, who works at a communications company, at a press conference with his wife as they recounted the momentous moment they discovered online their May 10 win. "I looked at the amount. I put the phone down and I picked the phone up again and I looked at the amount again!" The early-riser somehow contained his excitement enough to let his wife keep sleeping until her alarm sounded—and then relayed the news.

"He was like, 'I've got a secret to tell you'," recalled Jess, 44. "I was like 'don't be stupid!'," she said, adding they initially thought it was a joke and "obviously wrong". The couple, like many other Britons, have been struggling through the country's growing cost-of-living crisis and plan to share their newly-amassed fortune with friends and family. "This is an amazing thing that's happened to us, and this means it's an amazing thing that's happened to our family and we want to share that with them," said Jess, who runs a hair salon with her mother and sister. — AFP



US actor Greg Tarzan Davis (left), US actress Keleigh Sperry, US editor Linda Bruckheimer, US actor and producer Tom Cruise (center), US actress Jennifer Connelly and Cannes Film Festival director Thierry Fremaux look at the French air force's aerobatic unit "Patrouille de France", flying over the Festival Palace, as they arrive for the screening of the film "Top Gun: Maverick" during the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov poses during a photocall for the film 'Tchaikovsky's Wife (Zhena Chaikovskogo)' at the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

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'How to murder your husband' writer on trial for murder of husband

A writer who penned a piece titled "How To Murder Your Husband" is on trial in the United States for...killing her husband. It is a case that has all the hallmarks of classic detective fiction—a huge insurance payout, an impeccable suspect who claims to have amnesia, a missing weapon, and surveillance footage that seems to have caught the culprit red-handed. But for novelist Nancy Crampton Brophy, it's not the plot of her latest book; it's real life in an Oregon court room.

Crampton Brophy, whose "Wrong Never Felt So Right" series of novels include "The Wrong Husband" and "The Wrong Lover," stands accused of shooting Daniel Brophy, using a gun whose now-missing barrel she bought on eBay. Prosecutors say the 71-year-old writer was struggling to make payments on her mortgage, but kept up multiple life insurance policies that would pay out a total of \$1.4 million in the event of her husband's demise.

"I do better with Dan alive financially than I do with Dan dead," she said as she took the stand in Portland this week, The Oregonian newspaper reported. "Where is the motivation I would ask you? An editor would laugh and say, 'I think you need to work harder on this story, you have a big hole in it.'" Prosecutor Shawn Overstreet said security camera footage had captured Crampton Brophy's minivan outside the Oregon Culinary Institute on June 2, 2018 at almost exactly the time her chef husband was killed in one of the school's classrooms.

"You were there at the same time that someone happens to be shooting your husband...with the exact type of gun that you own and which is now mysteriously missing," he said. Crampton Brophy told the court she has no memory of being there, though acknowledges she must have been, insisting the CCTV images show her in the area because she was driving around getting inspiration for a story. "This is not a man I would have



shot because I had a memory issue. It seems to me if I had shot him, I would know every detail."

Daniel Brophy, 63, was found dead that morning by students readying for a class. He had been shot twice. Investigators say the barrel from the Glock handgun used in the slaying was

purchased by the suspect on eBay. That barrel—which would contain damning forensic clues—has never been recovered, despite an exhaustive police search.

Crampton Brophy admits having bought a Glock pistol, which she says was for her husband to protect himself when he went mushroom hunting in the

woods, but says the missing barrel was purchased as part of research for an unfinished novel. "There was a big separation between what was for writing and what was for protection," she told the court, The Oregonian reported.

Prosecutors say Crampton Brophy, whose "How To Murder Your Husband" remains accessible online and whose books can be bought on Amazon, was facing financial ruin before her husband's death, but continued to pay into 10 separate life insurance policies. The blog on murdering a husband discusses methods and motivations for dispatching an unwanted spouse. These include financial gain and the use of a firearm, although it notes guns are "loud, messy, require some skill." "But the thing I know about murder is that every one of us have it in him/her when pushed far enough," the essay says. The trial, which began in early April, is ongoing. — AFP



Russian Bolshoi Ballet's former prima ballerina Olga Smirnova rehearses in a studio at the Dutch National Opera. — AFP photos



Russian Bolshoi Ballet's former prima ballerina Olga Smirnova (left) rehearses.

RUSSIAN BALLET STAR 'FOLLOWED CONSCIENCE' TO LEAVE BOLSHOI

Russian superstar ballerina Olga Smirnova quit the Bolshoi Ballet over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, but says the famed dance company will outlive the vagaries of war. "History changes, but the Bolshoi stays," Smirnova told AFP as she rehearsed in Amsterdam, where she joined the Dutch National Ballet in March. Smirnova, who made headlines when she left the Bolshoi, added: "I had to follow my conscience."



Russian Bolshoi Ballet's former prima ballerina Olga Smirnova poses during a photo session at the Dutch National Opera.

The 30-year-old prima ballerina said she feared for the future of dancers, choreographers and artists still left at the Bolshoi, as Russia became increasingly isolated globally because of its decision to attack its neighbor. "For the Bolshoi 20 years is nothing, but for a dancer it's their whole life," Smirnova told AFP in an interview just ahead of a rehearsal for veteran Dutch choreographer Hans van Manen's ballet "Frank Bridge Variations".

For a decade, Smirnova was one of the faces of the company as a prima ballerina, renowned for her slender physique, almond-shaped eyes and swan-like neck with looks described by a British daily as

"the perfect instrument of her art form" evoking a "stunning perfection."

"Now the Bolshoi is also isolated from the world. I had an amazing 10 years working at the Bolshoi, because the best choreographers in the world could come to stage, to create even original ballets." "It really felt like I was part of the world. I think all of this ended with this war," Smirnova said in between her busy schedule.

'Honest with myself'

Even during the Cold War, the Bolshoi's ballet tours to the West were seen as a bridge with the Soviet Union. But after Russia's February 24 invasion, all tours have been cancelled and the Bolshoi's stars are no longer invited abroad. Choreographers like Jean-Christophe Maillot and Alexei Ratmansky have asked the Bolshoi to suspend the performance rights of their ballets.

Smirnova now fears Russian dancers will lose the chance to "discover new worlds" like she and her generation did with choreographers such as Americans John Neumeier and William Forsythe, France's Pierre Lacotte, or Britain's Christopher Wheeldon. However Smirnova refuses to call her decision a "defection", a word used during Soviet times when ballet legends such as Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov crossed the Iron Curtain to the West. "I think I was honest with myself and just followed my conscience... I thought it was right for me," said Smirnova, becoming visibly emotional.

"I felt so terribly sorry about all this... all these people who... lost their houses," she said. Smirnova said she was shocked when learning of Moscow's invasion—which has now seen more than six million refugees fleeing Ukraine. She thought the invasion would end soon.

But "five or six days later" she wrote on the Telegram social messaging platform "I am against the war with all my soul. I never

believed I could be ashamed of Russia." After leaving Moscow, she travelled to Dubai to treat an injury—and then decided to take the plunge. "Nobody knew about it, except my husband and the artistic director of the Dutch National Ballet, Ted Brandsen," Smirnova said.

'Too much thinking'

Her decision was a shock for her parents back in Russia. "For them it's still not really acceptable that I left the country and left the Bolshoi," she said. "My colleagues almost didn't react," when Smirnova left. "I don't know what they think. Maybe they didn't understand my decision. Maybe they are just protecting themselves from the truth... just thinking 'I'm a dancer, I am far from these political things.'" "I feel like I've

lost almost all connection with the dancers from the Bolshoi," she said.

Smirnova said however she was welcomed with open arms in the Netherlands, feeling "more and more at home in Amsterdam" where she moved into a new apartment a day before the interview. In April, she performed the titular role in a new production of classical ballet "Raymonda". "I was put in a ballet routine from the first days. I felt like I'm (back) in my normal life. I was able to rehearse... that made me feel like normal." Dancing "saved me from too much thinking," she said. But one dream remains for Smirnova. "I would love to come to the Paris Opera to dance. I've never danced at the Palais Garnier." — AFP



Russian Bolshoi Ballet's former prima ballerina Olga Smirnova rehearses in a studio at the Dutch National Opera, in Amsterdam.

Pee pals: Dolphins taste friends' urine to know they're around

Think about people you know, and how you could tell they were around even if you couldn't see them: perhaps their voice, or a favored perfume. For bottlenose dolphins, it's the taste of urine and signature whistles that allow them to recognize their friends at a distance, according to a study published Wednesday in Science Advances. "Dolphins keep their mouths open and sample urine longer from familiar individuals than unfamiliar ones," first author Jason Bruck of the Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas wrote in an email to AFP.



"This is important because dolphins are the first vertebrate ever shown to have social recognition through taste alone." The team, which included Sam Walmsley and Vincent Janik from the University of St Andrews, wrote that the use of taste could be highly beneficial in the open ocean because urine plumes persist for a while after an animal has left. This alerts dolphins to the recent presence of that individual even if it had not signaled its presence vocally.

The question of whether animals can attach "labels" to their friends in their minds has been difficult to answer. Bottlenose dolphins, which use signature whistles to selectively address specific individuals, and can remember these for over 20 years, were thus an interesting test case. To investigate, the team presented eight dolphins with urine samples from familiar and unfamiliar individuals, finding they spent around three times as long sampling urine from those they knew.

Genital inspection, in which a dolphin uses its jaw to touch the genitals of another individual, is common in their social interactions, providing a good opportunity to learn the taste of others' urine. For the purposes of this study, the dolphins were trained to provide urine samples on demand in exchange for food. Dolphins do not have olfactory bulbs, leaving the team certain it was taste and not smell at play.

For the second part of the experiment, the team paired urine samples with recordings of signature whistles played via underwater speakers, corresponding to either the same dolphin that provided the urine sample, or a mismatched sample. Dolphins remained close to the speaker longer when the vocalizations matched the urine samples—potentially indicating that the two congruent lines of evidence together evoked more interest.

"It is not every day that scientists find evidence of 'noun'-like use of signals in a non-human vocal system. That's pretty exciting," Bruck told AFP. Dolphins have rich social worlds, he added, and it may be "just as advantageous for a dolphin to recognize alliance members as it is for them to recognize potential antagonists."

The team suggested that lipids were likely responsible for individual chemical signatures. "Given the recognition skills revealed in our study, we think that it is likely that dolphins can also extract other information from urine, such as reproductive state, or use pheromones to influence each other's behavior," they wrote. — AFP



This handout screenshot of Thailand's Channel 7 shows actor Russell Crowe during a cameo appearance on a current affairs show asking questions of candidates in Bangkok's governor election. — AFP

Russell Crowe quizzes Bangkok governor candidates

Hollywood star Russell Crowe quizzed candidates for Bangkok's governor election campaign in a cameo television appearance on Thursday, almost a year after his tweets on visiting the capital delighted Thais. The megapolis is preparing for its first governor poll in almost a decade on Sunday in the

first significant election since youth-led pro-democracy rallies in 2020.

The Australian actor—who regaled his 2.7 million Twitter followers with his Bangkok adventures while filming Vietnam War-era drama "The Greatest Beer Run Ever"—beamed into Thailand's Channel 7 daily current affairs program "The Discussion". "Sa wat dee krap," Crowe said, using the Thai greeting for hello and bowing with his palms, before launching into his questions for the candidates.

He queried them on plans to mitigate the regular threat of flooding in Bangkok, and make the city more "friendly to tourists". He also asked how they would make "beautiful Bangkok even more beautiful?" During his time in the city,

Crowe photographed the notorious tangle of overhead cables—which led to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha ordering local officials to fast-track efforts to put the wiring underground.

"What are your thoughts on visible power lines?" he also asked the candidates. The Thai government said Crowe's social media posts on Thailand had helped generate publicity last year ahead of the kingdom's official border reopening in early November. The 58-year-old Oscar winner posted about getting lost, making friends with a meter-long monitor lizard, bike riding along the river, and admiring the city's "fascinating skyline". — AFP

Sports

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Rangers on penalties to win Europa League

Frankfurt earned spot in next season's Champions League

SEVILLE: Eintracht Frankfurt defeated Rangers 5-4 on penalties to win the Europa League on Wednesday after the final in Seville finished 1-1 at the end of extra time. Aaron Ramsey missed for Rangers in the shoot-out after coming on as a substitute with only three minutes left of extra time, before Rafael Borre struck the winning shot to complete Frankfurt's remarkable triumph. "We will celebrate for the next few days now," said Frankfurt coach Oliver Glasner.

Borre was the hero of the night, after already cancelling out Joe Aribo's opener for Rangers as Frankfurt won their first European trophy since 1980 and booked their place in next season's Champions League group stage. "I dreamed of tonight, of a historic night for the club, a historic night for me," said Borre, the Colombian. "It's my first European title. I will keep this memory forever."

"We are all heroes. Without the fans we wouldn't have made it," said Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp. Both clubs were looking to win a second European title in their history, Rangers after clinching the Cup Winners' Cup in 1972 and Frankfurt after they lifted the UEFA Cup 42 years ago.

But Rangers came up just short at the end of an incredible run to the final. Only 10 years ago this week, Rangers fell into administration before being liquidated and relegated to Scotland's bottom tier. Frankfurt had already beaten Real Betis, Barcelona and West Ham United en route to the final and they were probably deserving winners, shading a compelling contest that always seemed to lack real technical quality.

With a capacity of just under 43,000, Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan ground was never going to be big enough to house all the travelling fans, with Rangers bringing over an estimated 100,000 while around 60,000 followed Frankfurt to Spain. The vast majority enjoyed the day in good spirits but security concerns were not unfounded, with skirmishes breaking out in the city centre during the day on Wednesday while five German fans were arrested late Tuesday after police said 200 Frankfurt fans launched an attack on Rangers supporters.

It was a scruffy opening 15 minutes as Joe Aribo almost got away after a neat pirouette by Scott Wright before John Lundstram scraped his studs down the dipping head of Sebastian Rode, leaving the Frankfurt captain with a bloody shirt that had to be changed and a head that had to be strapped. The Germans gradually took control, suffocating Rangers, who were reduced to speculative punts forward to try to escape the press.



First European trophy since 1980

Pressure mounting

Frankfurt's Ansgar Knauff went close, the penalty box opening up for the winger at the end of a winding run forward, only for Allan McGregor to tip wide. Rangers had their moments and improved before the break as Lundstram's header had to be pushed over and Ryan Jack drove too high.

Frankfurt seemed rejuvenated for the start of the second half but it was Rangers who took the lead just before the hour, capitalising on two dreadful Frankfurt errors, each compounding the other. First, Djibril Sow misjudged a header in midfield, sending it back behind his own defense for



SEVILLE: Eintracht Frankfurt's German midfielder and captain Sebastian Rode lifts the trophy as Eintracht Frankfurt players celebrate after winning the UEFA Europa League final football match between Eintracht Frankfurt and Glasgow Rangers at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Seville on May 18, 2022. —AFP

the lively Aribo to latch onto, and then as Frankfurt's Tutu chased, he slipped, gifting a free run to the striker, who slotted home.

However, Eintracht drew level in the 69th minute as Filip Kostic was given too much space out wide to cross and then in the middle, Connor Goldson and Calvin Bassey both hesitated to clear. Borre nipped between them and prodded in.

There were precious few opportunities in the final minutes but the contest became stretched in extra time. Rangers might have won it in the 118th

minute as the sprinting Ryan Kent arrived at the back post only for Trapp to make a sensational save.

To penalties, and the Rangers fans roared when the coin toss put the shoot-out at their end. James Tavernier, Steven Davis and Scott Arfield all scored for Rangers as did Frankfurt's Christopher Lenz, Ajdin Hrustic and Daichi Kamada, whose shot squeezed in off the post. But Ramsey fired too straight, hitting Trapp's left foot and after Kostic and Kemar Roobe converted, it was up to Borre to finish it. He made no mistake. —AFP

Finalists Orlando Pirates vow to avoid another Moroccan mauling

JOHANNESBURG: South African club Orlando Pirates aim to dispel the belief that they are easy prey for Moroccan rivals by defeating Renaissance Berkane in the CAF Confederation Cup final in Uyo, Nigeria, on Friday.

The Buccaneers from Soweto on the outskirts of Johannesburg suffered a 5-1 aggregate hammering from Raja Casablanca in the quarter-finals of the second-tier African competition last season. Having forced a 1-1 draw in South Africa, Raja powered to a four-goal lead at home before taking their foot off the accelerator and sparing the visitors further humiliation.

"There will be no repeat," stressed Pirates Ghana-born goalkeeper Richard Ofori after a training session. "We are going to Nigeria to win the final. I did not play against Raja but remember that match. The Moroccans were four goals ahead well before half-time. That was a huge stain on Pirates' proud record in Africa."

"We do not underestimate Berkane, especially after they scored four goals to eliminate TP Mazembe (from the Democratic Republic of Congo) in the semi-finals," he said. "I appreciate that Mazembe had a player sent off late in the second half — but when last did any club in Africa score four against Mazembe? Pirates have had a poor domestic season and the only trophy we can win is the Confederation Cup. Supporters remember only winners and that is why we must succeed."

Pirates lie seventh in a near completed South African Premiership already won by Mamelodi Sundowns, and made early exits from the two domestic knockout competitions. The Buccaneers have reserved their best for the Confederation Cup, the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League, particularly in north Africa, a region where they have often struggled in the past.

Stood out

A 2-0 Group B win over JS Saoura in Algeria stood out, as did a semi-final first-leg victory by the same score against Al Ahly Tripoli in Libya. If Pirates can recapture the form shown in those matches, they stand a chance of becoming the first South African winners of the Confederation Cup, after losing the 2015 final to Etoile Sahel of Tunisia.

Twenty years earlier, Pirates became the first South African club to triumph in Africa, lifting the African Cup of Champions Clubs (now the CAF Champions League). "The 1995 heroes are fondly remembered. We want to achieve the same status," said Ofori, who hopes to be at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar with qualifiers Ghana.

Berkane, known as the Orange Boys because they hail from the citrus-growing northeast of Morocco, are not as well known internationally as Pirates. But they boast a proud Confederation Cup record, finishing runners-up to Zamalek in 2019 and beating another Egyptian club, Pyramids, in the following final. They had a tougher path to the final than Pirates, topping a group where former African champions ASEC Mimosas of the Ivory Coast fell before ousting Al Masry of Egypt and Mazembe in knockout ties. —AFP

'Blood, sweat and tears' pays off for Abraham as he eyes European glory

ROME: Tammy Abraham said to himself when he joined AS Roma from Chelsea last summer he would give his "blood, sweat and tears for this club". In keeping his promise he could be rewarded with European silverware next week. The 24-year-old England international striker's nine goals have been pivotal in Roma's passage to next Wednesday's inaugural European Conference League final against Dutch side Feyenoord in Tirana.

With 25 in all competitions he has more than justified Roma coach Jose Mourinho's decision to convince the board to shell out 40 million euros (\$42 million) — not including bonuses — for him. It brought to an end a disappointing final few months for the homegrown Chelsea player who fell out of favour with manager Thomas Tuchel when the German replaced Frank Lampard.

Abraham failed to make either the FA Cup final or Champions League final matchday squads under Tuchel. The German even selected two substitute goalkeepers for the European showpiece. However, Abraham has put those setbacks firmly behind him and from the first day in Italy his attitude was one

of positivity.

"For me since day one, as soon as I touched down in Rome, it made me feel like one of their own straight away," he told AFP and another international press agency in an interview conducted at Roma's training center. "It was the love, the passion, the way they worked with me. I told myself, 'I'll give my blood, sweat, tears for this club,' and it's been an amazing year."

Abraham's impressive performances and the way he has adapted to a different lifestyle in a country where English players have not always flourished could well see him add to the 10 international caps he has accrued.

However, for the moment he is focused on bringing home Roma's first silverware since the Italian Cup in 2008 and first European trophy since the old Fairs Cup — the predecessor to the UEFA/Europa League — back in 1961.

'Club had ambitions'

The Europa Conference may be in its first year and some may sniff at it being the poor man of the three European club competitions but Abraham said that mattered little to him. "For me it's not a little cup," he said. "I believe every final is a final — no matter what competition it is. You get to the final, you want to win the final. It's a trophy and these are the moments you look back on in your career, saying you want to win trophies. For me this is an opportunity and for my teammates and for

Roma fans this is an opportunity to lift a European title."

Mourinho, like Abraham, took the Roma posting to try and revive a career which had rather lost its lustre with a sour end to his spell at Manchester United and a disappointing time at Tottenham Hotspur.

"For me, he's been one of the best coaches in the world for a long time," said Abraham. "He knows his stuff about football. When I spoke to him on the phone he had ambitions, the club had ambitions and a mindset where they want to get to. For him to take a club to a final, which they haven't been in many years, you can only see how well he's doing and how well we're doing."

Ahead of the final in Albania Abraham wants to round off the Serie A season by winning Roma's final match on Friday away at mid-table Torino to secure a place in the Europa League next term. Fiorentina and Atalanta, who are both at home to Juventus and Empoli respectively, are a point adrift of them in sixth spot going into the weekend.

Abraham says victory both on Sunday and in the Conference League final would be due reward for Mourinho and for a "great" bunch of team-mates. "We have a good mix here," said Abraham. "We have Italian players who have played here their whole lives. We have players who've played in England as well. This is a great bunch of lads who have come together. We need to make the last two games a very special moment to top everything off." —AFP

KIB continues to support Kuwaiti Jet Ski champion

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing commitment to support local talents in the field of sports and empower them to compete internationally at the highest level, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently renewed its one-year sponsorship agreement with Kuwaiti jet-ski champion, Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq. This collaboration comes within the Bank's community development initiatives, related to promoting sports culture among society, while encouraging its members to lead a healthy and purposeful lifestyle.

Aqua-Bike world champion, Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq, is considered one of the most prominent Kuwaiti athletes, ranked No.1 worldwide in his area of sport. His career spans more than 18 years, with many notable achievements, including winning the world championship 6 times, and a number of gold medals competing in the Olympics. Guinness World Records enlisted Al-Abdulrazzaq, having collected as many international titles under his belt.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Assistant



Marwah Maarafi

Manager, Marketing & Corporate Communication, Marwah Maarafi stated that the Bank has been continuously striving to enhance its social program, by expanding the scope of its activities and initiatives, especially those related to empowering Kuwaiti athletes. Through this continued support, KIB aims to see them highly qualified and well accomplished to compete, both locally and internationally. According to Maarafi, supporting the success of these figures and driving them to win advanced titles will surely contribute to the Bank's social objectives, mainly those aimed at raising awareness about the level of skill and capability a Kuwaiti player can achieve, presenting only role models to society that are able to inspire current and future generations.

Maarafi further added: "Renewing Al-Abdulrazzaq's sponsorship also came from KIB as an expression of pride and a message of gratitude to this Kuwaiti champion for the history he made in the field of sports, and his extraordinary competitive performance over the years, through which he was able to raise Kuwait's flag



Kuwaiti jet-ski champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq (center) with KIB officials.

high and place his country's name on the map of international sports competitions".

Concluding his statement, Maarafi reaffirmed KIB's continued efforts in utilizing its resources, as much as can be, for the benefit of the community and all its members - under its corporate slogan: "Bank for Life". She reiterated that the Bank has been consistent in playing an active and leading role within its corporate social responsibility, with a robust development program that has been designed and proposed as an integral and core pillar of the Bank's integrated strategy.

Kuwait disabled table tennis team leaves for Jordan

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Disabled Table Tennis Team left for Jordan Tuesday evening to participate in the 12 "Watani" Paralympic tournament. Ten countries are participating in the tournament including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, India, France, Britain, Cyprus and the host country Jordan. The delegation is headed by Falah Al-Dousary and players Ahd Al-Rashidi, Yaqoob Al-Khalifa, Mohammad Al-Rashidi, Abdallah Hajji and Fahad Al-Ansari. Head of Table Tennis Paralympics committee Duaij Al-Hajiri said the team prepared well for this tournament and hoped the team gets good results despite the expected tough competition.



Sports



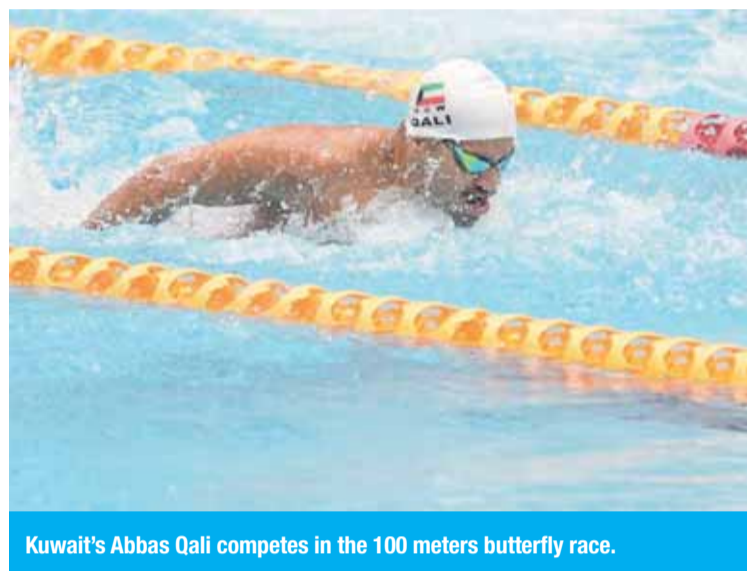
KUWAIT: Kuwaiti female athletes celebrate at the podium during the 3rd GCC Games.



Kuwait's Nasser Al-Meqlid (center), Talal Al-Rashidi (left) and Abdulrahman Al-Faihan celebrate with their gold, silver and bronze medals, respectively, in the men's singles' trap shooting event.



Kuwait's Nadia Al-Haqan (right) and Dalal Faraj celebrate their gold and silver medals, respectively, in the high jump contest.



Kuwait's Abbas Qali competes in the 100 meters butterfly race.



Swimmers take part in the men's 800m freestyle competition at Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed aquarium complex.

Kuwait secures medals in athletics, swimming contests at GCC Games

Kuwaiti shooters dominate, add 4 medals to country's tally

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The 3rd Gulf Games concluded its athletics discipline Thursday with a flurry of activities and heated competition in both men's and women's contests. The women's high jump contest saw Nadia Al-Haqan from Kuwait winning the gold medal with a 1.53 meters, followed by her compatriot Dalal Faraj with 1.50 meters and Saudi Arabia's Raghad Abu Arish with 1.45 meters.

The women's 200 meters race had Kuwait's Mudhawi Al-Shammari winning gold with a time of 23.74 secs, followed by Bahrain's Zenab Mahamat with 23.88 secs and her compatriot Iman Essa 24.35 secs. The women's hammer throw saw Hana Al-Touqi from Oman bagging the gold medal with a 49.36 meters followed by Rania Al-Naji from Qatar with 47.00 m and Wedad Robari from UAE with a 40.63 m.

In the women's 1,500 meters race, Winfred Yavi from Bahrain was first with a time of 4:07.24 minutes followed by her teammate Tigist Mekonen with 4:20.44 minutes while Amal Al-Roumi from Kuwait was third with 4:20.11 minutes. The women's 5,000 meters race had Bontu Rebitu from Bahrain winning gold with a time of 15:51.04 minutes, while her teammate Tigist Belay was in second place with 15:53.76 minutes and Saudi Miznah Al-Nassar was in third with 20:33.43 minutes. The women's 4x400 relay saw Bahrain winning gold in 3:48.00 minutes, beating UAE with 4:20.55 minutes and Kuwait with 4:25.16 minutes, respectively.

Men's athletics

The men's 4x400 relay had Bahrain in first place with a time of 3:06.20 minutes, Saudi Arabia was second with 3:06.37 minutes and Qatar was third with 3:07.27 minutes. In the men's 5,000 meters race, Albert Rop from Bahrain won gold with 13:44.70 minutes, while his teammate Dawit Admasu won silver with 13:48.06 minutes and Yousuf Al-Ansari from Saudi Arabia was third with 14:14.97 minutes.

In the men's Decathlon - 1,500 meters, Majid Al-Zaid

from Kuwait was first with 4:35.65 minutes, followed by Saudi Arabia's Saeed Mubarak with 4:36.25 minutes and his teammate Ahmad Al-Yaseen with 4:36.25 minutes. The men's 1,500 meters race Abdirahman Hassan from Qatar won first place with 4:02.93 minutes, followed by Musab Ali, also from Qatar, with 4:04.32 minutes and Kuwait's Khalid Al-Harbi was third with 4:06.36 minutes.

The men's hammer throw saw Ahmad Al-Sify winning gold with 69.40 meters followed by Ali Zankawi from Kuwait with 66.97 meters and Mahmoud Elgoahry from Bahrain with 64.68 meters. The men's 200 meters race had Yaqoob Yaqoob from Bahrain winning gold in 20.91 seconds. Fahhhad Al-Subaie from Saudi Arabia won silver with 20.91 seconds and his teammate Mahmoud Ibrahim won the bronze medal with 21.13 seconds.

The men's High jump had Mutaz Barsham from Qatar and his compatriot Ali Hamdi winning gold with a 2.15 meters, and Ahmad Al-Tarouti from Saudi Arabia winning bronze with 2.10 meters.

Shooting

The Kuwaiti shooting team won four medals — two gold, one silver, and one bronze — during Thursday's competitions. The event at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex saw Talal Al-Rashidi, Nasser Al-Meqlid and Abdulrahman Al-Faihan securing the gold medal in the men's teams' trap shooting. The UAE and Saudi Arabia came in second and third respectively. In the men's singles' trap shooting, Kuwait's Meqlid struck gold while silver and bronze went to his compatriots Rashidi and Faihan.

As for the 10m singles rifle shooting event, Oman's Salem Al-Nab'ee won gold, while UAE's Ibrahim Khalil won silver and Oman's Essam Al-Bloushi won bronze. Oman won another gold medal in the 25m rapid-fire pistol competition via shooter Mu'ath Al-Bloushi. The silver and bronze medals went to Bahrainis Abdulmajed Abdulkhaleq and Abdullah Rahma respectively.

Swimming

In the Swimming discipline, Kuwait swimmers contin-



Gold medalist Abbas Qali of Kuwait (center), silver medalist Waleed Abdelaziz of Kuwait (left) and bronze medalist Mohamed Mohamed of Qatar pose on the podium after the conclusion of the 100 meters butterfly race.

ued their dominance on the medals table during the second day of competition as they collected three gold medals and one silver out of four competitions. Abbas Qali won the gold medal in the 100 meters butterfly event in 54.16 seconds, followed by his teammate Waleed Abdelaziz who won silver in 54.22 seconds and Mohamed Mohamed from Qatar won bronze in 55.66 seconds.

In the men's 800m freestyle, Saud Al-Shamroukh from Kuwait won gold in 8:38.55 minutes followed by Issa Adawi from Oman with 8:45.49 minutes and Kareem Salah from Qatar in 9:00.46 minutes. In the men's 100m backstroke, Ali Al-Essa from Saudi Arabia won gold in 59.79 seconds, followed by Omar Al-Rowaila from Bahrain in 59.94 seconds and Yousef Aboclela in 1:00.22 minutes. In the men's 4x100m freestyle relay, Kuwait was first in 3:31.02 minutes, Qatar second in 3:35.07 minutes and Oman was third in 3:36.15 minutes.

President of the International Swimming Federation (FINA) Hussein Al-Musallam of Kuwait said the GCC Games should be held regularly due to its positive impact on athletes and the development of their technical levels. "We are happy to host the third games in the country," he said, adding that there was a quality shift as far as information technology, results and organization goes, in addition to linking all information in a joint system through the games' website.

He said among the positives of the games is the women's participation for the first time, as Kuwait insisted on organizing the event which is the first gathering for GCC athletes following the Tokyo 2020 Olympics "which is an achievement on its own." Musallam commended the major role and support of the government to ensure the games' success, and he lauded the cooperation between various government agencies lead by Public Authority for Sport.

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

Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Zaineb, currently holder of Indian Passport no. 25185901 issued in Kuwait on 02/05/2019 have changed my name to Zaineb Juzer Tahery (C 0866) 18-5-22

EMERGENCY

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Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**



SAN FRANCISCO: Stephen Curry #30 hi-fives Klay Thompson #11 of the Golden State Warriors during Game 1 of the 2022 NBA Playoffs Western Conference Finals on May 18, 2022 at Chase Center in San Francisco, California. —AFP

Warriors cruise past Mavs

Curry outguns Doncic in WCF series opener

SAN FRANCISCO: Stephen Curry scored 21 points as the Golden State Warriors bottled up Luka Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks to win their Western Conference Finals series opener 112-87 on Wednesday. Three days after Doncic destroyed the Phoenix Suns with a virtuoso performance, the Slovenian found the going harder against a ruthless Golden State at San Francisco's Chase Center.

Dallas had rained in buckets against Phoenix in Arizona on Sunday, but the scoring dried up against the six-time NBA champions. The Warriors started slowly but pulled clear decisively in the second half after leading 54-45 at half-time.

With Doncic appearing to be nursing a sore shoulder, the Warriors outscored the visitors 34-24 in the third quarter to lead by 19 points heading into the final period. An 8-0 start to the fourth quarter left the Warriors cruising 27 points clear at 96-69 to effectively put the game out of reach.

Warriors coach Steve Kerr was able to withdraw his starters with five minutes left in the game, earning valuable rest for what could be a long series. Curry led the scoring with 21 points, 12 rebounds and four assists, while Jordan Poole and Andrew Wiggins had 19 points apiece.

"We did what we were supposed to do — we won the first game, but there's a lot of work left," Curry said. "We had a specific game plan coming in and for the most part we executed it. It's going to take that same effort three more times to beat this team."

Kerr praised the defensive performance of Wiggins in shutting down Doncic. "Wiggins was fantastic," Kerr said. "Doncic is as difficult a cover as there is in this league. We just asked Andrew to hound him and guard him as best as he could, try to keep the pressure on him. He did a fantastic job."

Disconsolate Doncic

Klay Thompson failed to score a point in the first two quarters but got into the groove in the second



There's a lot of work left, says Kerr

half with 15 points. Seven Warriors players finished in double figures. Doncic led the Mavericks' scoring with 20 points but cut a disconsolate figure after a defeat where Dallas trailed for almost the entirety of the game. The 23-year-old insisted however that there was still time to turn the series around. "It's one game," Doncic said. "That's what the playoffs are about. If you lose by one point or 40 points, it's

just a loss. We just have to get ready for game two now. But I've got to be better. I've got to be better for the whole group and that's on me."

Dallas coach Jason Kidd pointed out that his team had recovered from a 2-0 series deficit against Phoenix. "We've lost two games in a row on the road before and found a way to get back in the series," Kidd said. "This is one game. They did their part and we've got to figure it out. But give them credit, they were good tonight."

Dallas somehow had only trailed by nine points at halftime after a wayward shooting performance in the first two quarters. The Mavs made just 14 of 44 attempts from the field in the first half, and only seven of 29 three-point attempts.

Yet they were able to remain within sight of the Warriors, who shot 22 of 39 but made only five of 18 attempts from beyond the arc. Thompson made only four attempts from the field in the first half — and missed them all — while Curry was also off target from long range, converting only one of six three-point attempts.

The Mavericks pulled to within two points at 35-33 midway through the second quarter, but a brisk 11-2 run, with Curry setting up three-pointers for Poole and Wiggins, saw the Warriors pull clear once more to lay the foundations of victory. Game two of the series takes place in San Francisco on Friday. The winner of the Western Conference finals will play the winner of the Eastern Conference, either Boston or Miami, in the NBA Finals. —AFP

The 20-year-old Sen proved a key player en route to India's 3-0 Thomas Cup final triumph against Indonesia, along with senior singles players Srikanth and Prannoy, and the doubles pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty.

Kumar said India now needed to build on the team's achievements and begin to lay the foundations for future success. "They need to look at how they can market the sport better. Maybe get a team sponsor."

'Galvanized the whole nation'

"And with the money (that comes in) they can get grassroots development for the next line of players." The exploits of the team in Bangkok kept sports fans gripped across the cricket-mad country. "For three days, all of India was looking at badminton. I think that is their achievement, more than winning the Thomas Cup they gave Indians so much joy," journalist G Rajaraman told AFP.

Women's singles players such as Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu kept Indian badminton in the spotlight in recent years by winning Olympic medals, but the sport stands a distant third to cricket and hockey in popularity.

"Badminton is one of our better sports in terms of results, achieved from Prakash (Padukone's) time going down to Gopi (Pullela Gopichand) and more recently through the women," said Rajaraman. "But to see them come together as a team, it galvanized the whole nation."

Now 48 years old, Gopichand has been singled out for being the architect of India's recent badminton success after he mentored Sindhu, Saina and Srikanth, who became world number one briefly in April 2018.

"It's a phenomenal success," Gopichand was



BANGKOK: India's Lakshya Sen hits a return against Indonesia's Anthony Sinsuka Ginting during the men's finals of the Thomas and Uber Cup badminton tournament in Bangkok on May 15, 2022. —AFP

quoted as saying by the Indian media. "What our boys achieved is simply incredible. It was my dream. I am confident that we can build on this success." The Gopichand academy — a state of the art badminton facility in the south Indian city of Hyderabad — has become synonymous with success.

"Nearly every player would have played with Gopi or his academy at some point of time," said Rajaraman. "I think that kind of selfless approach of his, where he has got in foreign coaches even in his own academy has helped India become a better badminton nation." —AFP

Cuban boxers set for professional comeback

AGUASCALIENTES: Cuban boxers will compete in their nation's first professional contest in six decades on Friday, eager to draw on their Olympic success to stage a victorious comeback. Four Olympic medalists, in a squad of six Cuban boxers, will make their professional debuts in Mexico on Friday, "for the first time in the history of boxing," event organizer Gerardo Saldivar said.

Cuba has long been a powerhouse of Olympic boxing, but participation in professional sport was barred by the late revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in 1962. After decades of defections by boxers who fled overseas to pursue salaried careers, the communist nation's authorities in April finally opened up participation in professional boxing competitions.

Members of the "Los Domadores" national team will fight their first professional bouts in Mexico's central city of Aguascalientes under a deal between the Cuban Boxing Federation and the Golden Ring Promotions company. "Let world boxing fans know that Cubans have the quality and pedigree to box in all kinds of fields," said two-time Olympic champion and team captain Julio Cesar La Cruz, 32.

'Let the whole world know'

Also competing against opponents from Mexico and Colombia will be three-time world champion and Olympic medalist Lazaro Alvarez, along with two-time Olympic champions Roniel Iglesias and Arlen Lopez. "I feel very proud and eager to make my professional debut," said Alvarez, who hopes for a "great show" on Friday.

"Let the whole world know and let all the boxers know that I'm looking forward to it and that I want to be great," added the 31-year-old, who will adopt the nickname "The Prince" for his professional debut. The Cuban squad is rounded out by world champion Yoennis Hernandez and super featherweight Osviel Caballero, who replaced Olympic gold medalist Andy Cruz at the last minute.

According to Cuban Boxing Federation President Alberto Puig, Cruz was excluded from the squad because he had neglected training. Cuban boxers hold around 80 World and 41 Olympic titles. Friday's contest comes as Cuba faces its worst economic crisis in nearly three decades, due to the coronavirus pandemic and biting US sanctions.

The Cuban Boxing Federation has said that fighters will be allowed to keep 80 percent of the salary owed to them for each fight. "Many of us have families. I am a father of two... so it will help us to raise our socio-economic status and solve many problems," Lopez told AFP in Havana last month. —AFP

'Years of hard work' pays off as India revels in badminton glory

NEW DELHI: India's badminton team hit new heights last week with their maiden Thomas Cup victory in Bangkok, even managing to keep cricket in the shade leaving former players confident the sport can "build on this success".

The men's team beat giants of the sport Malaysia, Denmark and then 14-time winners Indonesia to win badminton's equivalent to the Davis Cup in tennis. Team manager Vimal Kumar hailed the victory as the "biggest achievement" for a country whose rare top men's tournament successes in the past had included All England Open Championship wins for Prakash Padukone in 1980 and Pullela Gopichand in 2001.

Kumar, a former player who once won a team Asian Games bronze, said he always foresaw good things for Indian badminton as players began to come through. "From 2017 when there were three good singles players in Sai Praneeth, (Kidambi) Srikanth and (HS) Prannoy, I had faith in them," Kumar told AFP. "But as a team, they couldn't play together for various reasons. This win comes after years of hard work."

The latest talented youngster to emerge is Lakshya Sen, who made heads turn when he reached the prestigious All England Open Championship final in March, losing to Danish world number two and Olympic Champion Viktor Axelsen.