



2 10 Municipal Council members elected



9 Bitter harvest for Indian farmers after export ban



11 Top US pizzaiolo eyeing Kuwait as his next culinary destination



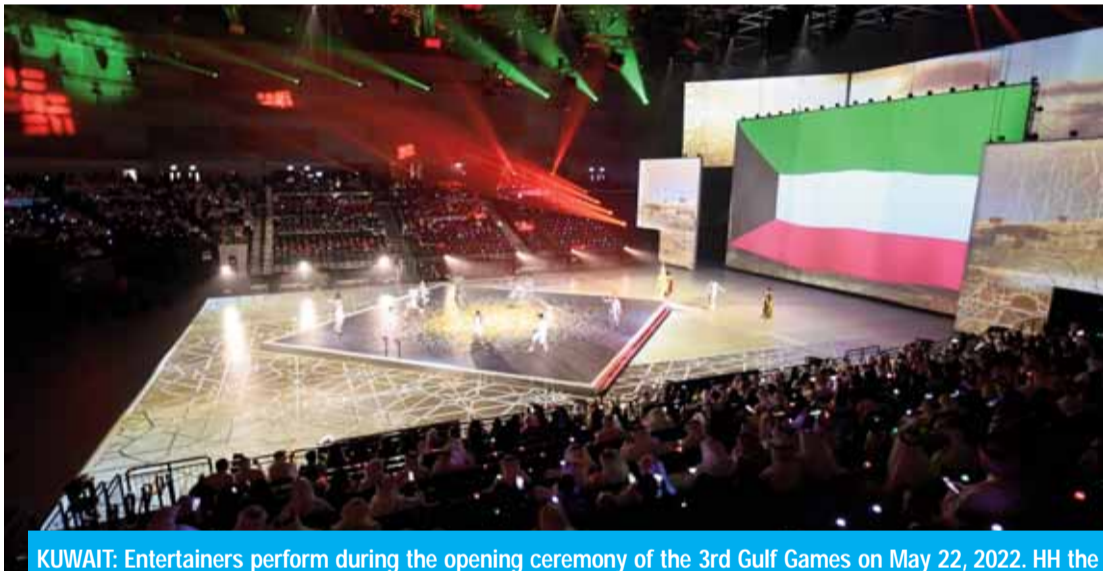
16 City win Premier League title after epic fightback on final day



Kuwait braces for yet another dust storm, with low visibility

May records highest number of sandstorms in 25 years

Gulf Games open in spectacular fashion



KUWAIT: Entertainers perform during the opening ceremony of the 3rd Gulf Games on May 22, 2022. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, ministers, sports officials and guests attended the ceremony. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 16)

KUWAIT: A dense dust storm is forecast to hit Kuwait on Monday, raging from the west and rolling toward inner regions in the country, amid very low visibility, forecast at less than 1,000 meters. Kuwait Meteorological Department said in a statement on Sunday that northwesterly winds of 60 km/h will cause high waves at sea. The dust is expected to prevail throughout the night until the early hours of Tuesday. The department urged the people of Kuwait to follow the weather forecast on its website www.met.gov.kw or its smart app KuwaitMet.

Meanwhile, May has become the month with the highest number of sandstorms recorded in 30 days in 25 years, the Kuwait Meteorological Department said. In a statement to KUNA on Sunday, head of the department Dr Hassan Al-Dashti said June was at the forefront for sandstorms during the past half century, but there has been a change in the pattern of climatic phenomena in recent years, which made May take the lead in dusty conditions instead of June.

Dashti added that due to the desert climate of Kuwait, dust storms increase at the end of spring and during the summer. Kuwait witnessed, as of May 16, a sandstorm from the west and northwest of the country, accompanied by 35 km/h and 50 km/h winds, which reduced horizontal visibility to



KUWAIT: People wait at a bus stop amid a heavy sandstorm on May 16, 2022. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

less than 300 meters, suspended air, maritime navigation and affected allergy and asthma patients.

He noted that the storm originated in the Deir Ezzur region in eastern Syria. It was the most intense storm in recent years, as it rolled and expanded eastward towards Iraq and northern Saudi Arabia, into western and northwestern Kuwait. Dashti said a decline in rainfall helped in raising dust in Kuwait, as the 2021/2022 season witnessed the lowest rainfall in 19 seasons during the last quarter century, recording only 87.8 mm, while the general average for the season is 113 mm. — KUNA



KABUL: A female presenter for Tolo News, Thamina Usmani, covers her face during a live broadcast at Tolo TV station on May 22, 2022. — AFP

Afghan women presenters cover faces on air

KABUL: Women television presenters on Afghanistan's leading news channels on Sunday vowed to speak up for their rights after being forced by Taliban authorities to cover their faces on air. Since seizing power last year, the Taliban have imposed a slew of restrictions on civil society, especially on women and girls to comply with the

group's austere brand of Islam.

This month Afghanistan's supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada issued a diktat for women to cover up fully in public, including their faces, ideally with the traditional burqa. The feared Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice ordered women television presenters to follow suit. After defying the order a day earlier, presenters on Sunday wore full hijabs and veils that left only their eyes on view across leading channels including TOLONews, Ariana Television, Shamshad TV and ITV.

Continued on Page 6



BEIRUT: Jose Charo, head of the Beirut office of the Swiss-based company Passport Legacy, shows the website of his company at his office on April 12, 2022. — AFP

Crisis forces rich Lebanese to buy 'island passports'

BEIRUT: Fearing visa hassles could cost him his job in Dubai while an economic collapse had dashed any homecoming options, Lebanese executive Jad splurged around \$135,000 on a new citizenship for himself and his wife. Within a month of making the payment last year, the 43-year-old businessman received a small package

in his mailbox. Inside were two navy blue passports from the Caribbean island nation of Saint Kitts and Nevis - his ticket to visa-free access to more than 150 countries, including in Europe.

This was a major upgrade from the Lebanese passport, which is ranked among the worst in the world and has become nearly impossible to renew because the cash-strapped state is running out of stocks. "Three years ago, I would not have imagined I would buy a passport," said Jad, who had previously grappled with lengthy

Continued on Page 6



SFAX: People watch sea turtles find their way to the sea after being released on May 21, 2022. — AFP

Turtles freed in Tunisia with tracking monitor

SFAX, Tunisia: Three rescued loggerhead turtles were released into the Mediterranean off Tunisia on Sunday, one with a tracking beacon glued to its shell to help researchers better protect the threatened species. The main risks to sea turtles in Tunisia are linked to fisheries, since they become entangled in nets - including the three that were released into the wild.

The migratory species, which can live to as old as 45, are listed as "vulnerable" in the Red List of threatened species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The turtles' release was watched by a crowd of some 50 people, many of them children, carried out by a specialized care center in Tunisia's eastern port of Sfax.

Some 35 turtles have been cared for at the center in the past year as part of the Mediterranean-wide Life Med Turtle project. Environmental activists helped carry the heavy turtles down the beach, before the animals crawled the final distance

Continued on Page 6

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Local

Kuwait's Amir cables newly elected members of Municipal Council

Amir applauds state's efforts to organize municipal elections



KUWAIT: Hasan Kamal in a group photo with people celebrating his win. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



Fuhaid Al-Muwaizri celebrates with his supporters.



People dance to celebrate Fuhaid Al-Muwaizri's win.



A supporter takes a selfie with newly elected council member Hasan Kamal.



People congratulate Abdullah Al-Mehri on his win.



Abdullah Al-Mehri receives congratulations on his win.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent earlier on Sunday a cable of congratulations to the newly elected members of Kuwait Municipal Council for the trust they gained from Kuwaiti people after winning the elections. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah sent similar cables. His Highness the Amir commended the efforts of state bodies on Saturday in organizing municipal elections, saying the process panned out in an orderly and seamless fashion. The information, health, and education ministries were among the state bodies acknowledged by His Highness the Amir, who also gave equal credit to Kuwaiti voters for their compliance with instructions as they casted their ballots.

The judges of the main committees in charge of the Municipal Council election 2022 announced on Saturday the results of winners for the 13th Legislative session in Kuwait's eight constituencies on Saturday. The judges announced 10 winners and members of the new municipal council on Kuwait State Television, and they are: The winner in the first constituency is Hasan Kamal with 2,755 of the votes. The winner in the second constituency Abdullah Al-Mehri with 4,331 of the votes. The winner in the third constituency is



Amir gives credit to Kuwaiti voters

Fahad Al-Abduljader with 2,510 of the votes. The winner in the fourth constituency is Saud Al-Kanderi with 5,561 of the votes. The winner in the fifth constituency is Nasser Al-Jadaan with 5,681 of the votes. The winner in the sixth constituency is Fuhaid Al-Muwaizri with 5,235 of the votes. The winner in the eighth constituency is Abdullah Al-Enezi with 9,893 of the votes. The winner in the ninth constituency is Nasser Al-Kafeef, who won the municipality seat after winning 13,401 of the votes.

Candidates in the seventh and 10th constituencies won an automatic victory due to being the only nominated candidates in their constituencies, in accordance with local laws governing the voting process. They are Khaled Al-Mutairi in the seventh constituency, and Nasser Al-Azmi in the 10th constituency. The four-year membership of the Municipal Council consists of 16 members, 10 of them get elected based on law number 35-1962, while six members get appointed by a government decree within 15 days from announcing the results of the election. Earlier, the Municipal Council elections closed at precisely 8:00 pm at polling centers throughout Kuwait's eight voting constituencies ahead of the counting of votes. Some 36 hopefuls, including one woman, threw their hat in for the role, some of whom will be ushered in by 438,283 registered voters. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Police officers close a polling station at the conclusion of voting for the Municipal Council elections. —KUNA photo

Minister appreciates security efforts for securing elections

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greatly appreciated the efforts of the Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen

Anwar Al-Barjas, members of the security establishment and all volunteers for their outstanding work during the municipal council elections on Saturday. A statement by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf said "our volunteer sons and daughters" impressively managed an exceptional performance during the 2022 municipal elections. He was also impressed by the management and cooperative measures taken to handle such an occurrence, which as he said was reflected on the field consequent of their awareness and patience to bare such a responsibility. —KUNA

Studies find link between air pollution and lung cancer: CAN

KUWAIT: Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) campaign called for adopting the information issued by the international agency for research on cancer about the risks of environment pollutions and their relation to lung cancer. It said in a press statement that following a full review of some recent scientific papers, there is enough evidence that exposure to polluted air causes lung cancer, and that there is a positive link between pollutants and the risk of bladder cancer. Research revealed that particles that are suspended in the air due to dust, and fumes of vehicles exhaust, it added.

Evaluation showed an increased risk of getting lung cancer with increased level of exposure to particles, CAN said. Most recent information shows that in 2020, lung cancer resulting from air pollution led to 233 deaths all over the world, it added.

Dr Kurt Strive, head of the Academic Studies, said "the air we breathe became contaminated with a mixture of carcinogen material, and we know now

that pollution of free air not only constitutes major risk for health, but also it is a main reason for cancer deaths."

CAN Chairman of the Board Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh said governments' duty is to limit air pollution through planting trees, which does not receive enough attention nowadays, and Kuwait suffers from dust that rise from vast open areas. He said it is also clear that there is a lack of interest in preserving the agricultural environment, particularly on the side of the roads and around cities.

Dr Saleh said Kuwait was among the first to issue legislations that encourage agriculture, but the Public Authority for Agricultural and Fish Resources suffer from the shortage of specialized manpower and enough budget to carry out ambitions to fight desertification and follow the greening process, which led to the increase of suspended material in the air due to dust waves, leading to health risks. Dr Khalid hoped the government cooperates with the private sector to prepare a new plan for planting trees in the country.



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

Local

Association of Youth for Jerusalem holds seminar in support of Palestine

Speakers call Abu Akleh's killing 'premeditated murder' and 'terror act'

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: The Association of Youth for Jerusalem held a seminar on Saturday at the Kuwait Society of Lawyers titled "The Near Victory". The seminar discussed violations by the Zionist occupation and the assassination of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. Participants, including academics, intellectuals, and media representatives, condemned the Zionists, calling for international action to defend the Palestinian people.

"The assassination of Abu Akleh is a premeditated murder. It was a terror act committed by the Zionist government," Kuwait Society of Lawyers Vice President for Professional Partnerships Affairs Meshaal Al-Khanna said. Khanna affirmed there is nothing called "Israel" - it will always be Palestine, an independent Islamic country, calling for a serious stand by the international community to defend the Palestinian people.

"The recent normalization by Arab and Gulf countries caused an increase in savagery and Zionist empowerment towards Palestine," Islamic scholar and preacher Mohammad Al-Awadhi said. He described the late journalist Abu Akleh as "a faithful icon of the Palestinian cause and a dagger in the backs of the Zionists and their followers". "Her death was a fuel that ignites the anger of the Palestinians to fight for their cause and make more sacrifices," Awadhi added.



KUWAIT: (From left) Norah Al-Otaibi, Ahmad Al-Khanna, Mohammad Al-Awadhi, Hamza Tekin, and Ahmad Al-Kendari attend the seminar. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Professor of Jurisprudence and Shariah Politics Norah Al-Otaibi affirmed that people can free Palestine by liberating their minds. "We have to understand that we are in a battle, and awareness is the weapon." Turkish journalist and writer Hamza Tekin assured the media is the only weapon for people to support the Palestinian cause. "The media is the first power that affects the decisions of politicians and all powers," pointing out "the word is a weapon that supports the Palestinian cause and exposes the Zionist occupation."

Tekin warned of "manipulative media platforms' attempts to highlight that the so-called Israel is an entity that has the right of the land of Palestine." He noted that Arab media mislead the world by using some inaccurate terms to describe the Palestinian cause, calling on the media to unify its speech toward the cause away from internal Palestinian divisions.

Regarding the best ways for individuals to face misleading Zionist information on social media, Tekin told Kuwait Times: "The best way to face their misleading information is by not interacting with their published content, even if they disagree.

We have to cut off communications. Every person should try all ways to share the occupation's crimes through social media platforms to emphasize that this entity is a criminal one and not a peacemaker, as they promote it."



Young Kuwaiti kids hold portraits of fallen Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

According to Kuwaiti law, the Zionist entity is a hostile country and it's illegal to make agreements or deals with related institutes or citizens or work for their benefit. At the beginning of the event, Kuwaiti children performed a touching scene about the assassination of Abu Akleh, and they were feted.

Domestic labor union rejects ministry imposed fee

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices opposed a decision by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to set the recruitment cost of domestic workers. In a press statement, the Union of Domestic Labor Offices disagreed with ministerial resolution no. 33 for 2021 regarding amending the prices of recruitment of domestic workers, saying such a decision must be taken by forming a committee from the ministry, Public Authority of Manpower and representatives from the union in order to reach a fair and well-studied decision in line with the requirements and conditions of the recruitment mechanism.

The statement said the board of directors of the Union of Domestic Labor Offices has enough experience to study such decisions according to economic and social conditions, whether for Kuwaiti citizens or the offices. It added the cost of recruiting domestic workers also includes fees from the workers' countries, and coordination and cooperation with labor-exporting countries, which have their own laws and procedures that must be followed.

"Kuwait is considered the cheapest country in the region in terms of the recruiting cost for domestic workers, compared to its neighbors in the Gulf. The prices set by the ministry of commerce are less and do not meet the demands of labor by the Kuwaiti society. So the question is, who will pay the difference in prices," the statement asked.

According to the statement, the Union of Domestic Labor Offices conducted a detailed study on the mechanism and cost of recruitment, and it was submitted to the ministry of commerce to be taken into consideration, but there was no response. "During the joint meeting in February 2021 with the ministry of commerce, Public Authority of Manpower and the union, we rejected the fee imposed by the ministry, explaining the reasons for the KD 990 pre-pandemic rate and the KD 890 rate imposed by the ministry including the plane ticket," the union wrote.

The Union of Domestic Labor Offices called and appealed to Minister of Commerce and Industry Fahad Al-Shuraian to set a date to meet and explain all recruitment costs for domestic workers to take the appropriate decision in light of the new information that will be provided.



Commerce Ministry: Frozen chicken prices fixed in subsidies' centers

By Yousuf Mohammad

KUWAIT: While several importers and producers of food indicated that they may raise prices of their products, a source at the Commerce and Industry Ministry said there is no intention to raise prices of subsidized commodities that are dispensed with ration cards issued for citizens and some expatriates.

The source told Kuwait Times that steps by companies to raise prices are expected, especially after the war in Ukraine and the shortages of food stuff and the rise in shipping costs, in addition to the international rise of oil prices which negatively affects fuel prices used to run factories.

The source said that those benefiting from subsidized stuff will get all products available at the subsidies' centers of Cooperative Societies without any rise in prices, adding that the commerce ministry is committed to supply basic goods of rice, sugar, lentils, oil, chicken and baby formula. He said subsidies include other stuff such as dates, corn flakes, cream cheese, fish and shrimps that are being sold for lesser price than the market through discounts from the supplier.

Prices of subsidized goods vary between KD 5-7 for a carton of chicken while it is sold in supermarkets for KD 8. Baby formula is sold for 900 fils per can while it's sold for KD 2 outside. Oil is sold for KD 1.100, and rice is sold for KD 6 per 50 kilos and for KD 15 unsubsidized.

Regarding the shortage of chicken at the subsidies' centers, and rumors about signing a contract with Egypt to import frozen chicken from there, he said frozen chicken is available in all supermarkets and co-ops in addition to commerce ministry subsidies centers and denied the import from Egypt because health authorities are banning the import of some food stuff from Egypt.

efforts in fighting terrorism, which was embodied in the participation of Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah in the ministerial meeting of the global coalition to defeat the so-called Islamic State (IS), which was held in Marrakech, Morocco on May 11. He added that Kuwait has participated in several meetings internationally or locally to fight off (IS). In that context, he affirmed the necessity of discussing new ways to rehabilitate fighters in combat areas after fair trials to blend them in society. He also stressed on the importance of finding solutions for the upcoming phase by cooperating, brainstorming and exchanging information between member countries. —KUNA

Kuwait to host anti-terrorism int'l meeting

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for International Cooperation and Development Hamad Al-Mashaan said on Sunday that Kuwait was preparing to host an international meeting on May 24 to fight terrorism. In a statement to the press, Mashaan said that this came as part of Kuwait's

Kuwait marine force conducts live-ammunition exercise Tue, Wed



KUWAIT: The marine force will carry out Tuesday and Wednesday a live-ammunition exercise from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm, the Kuwaiti army announced on Sunday. The army advised citizens and residents to steer clear of the specified area of exercise, east of Kuwaiti shores. —KUNA

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GENEVA: Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed attends the meeting. —KUNA

Arab ministers to organize joint German-Arab medical conference

GENEVA: Arab health ministers are in the process of organizing a joint German-Arab medical exhibition and conference and an Arab strategy project to improve nursing, midwifery and enhance blood transfusion techniques, Kuwaiti Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed said, Sunday.

This came in a statement to the press following his participation at the Council of Arab Health Ministers meeting, held in Geneva on the sidelines of the 75th World Health Assembly. The Minister stressed the importance of strengthening the Arab Fund for Health Development and to support the Palestinian health sector.

The agenda for this session focuses on discussing the health conditions in the occupied territories and follow-up previous reports for the improvement of the Arab health sectors, he said. Regarding the 75th World Health Assembly meetings, these sessions are the most important and effective of the World Health Organization, as it contains important health files especially following the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. —KUNA

Kuwait plans key projects to promote youth leadership

CAIRO: Kuwait plans to introduce a number of marquee endeavors designed to thrust its youngsters into leadership roles, the chief of its public authority for youth said on Sunday, citing progress his country has made towards youth development.

The progress Kuwait has made in its efforts to further engage with the nation's youngsters has propelled the country to the 27th spot in an Arab Youth Development Index, Dr Mishaal Al-Rabee said on the sidelines of pan-Arab talks on youth development.

Kuwait used the talks as a platform to unveil projects it has in store to allow youngsters the chance to assume leadership positions, added the official, highlighting the necessity for more regional cooperation on the matter. —KUNA



CAIRO: Director-General of the Public Authority for Youth Dr Mishaal Al-Rabee heads the Kuwaiti delegation to the Arab event. —KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: This picture taken on May 21, 2022, from Kuwait City shows a view of the sun and the sunspot region AR3014, one of the largest in years, stretching more than 125,000 Km from end to end, more than 10 times the Earth's diameter. —Photo by Mohammad Al-Hajeri

May one of the highest months with sandstorms in Kuwait

KUWAIT: May has become one of the highest months of the year in recording sandstorms, with 30 days in 25 years, Kuwait Meteorological Center said. In a statement to the press on Sunday, head of the center Dr Hassan Al-Dashti said that June was at the forefront during the past half century, but there had been change in the pattern of climatic phenomena in recent years, which made May the lead in dusty conditions instead of June. Dashti added that due to the desert climate of Kuwait, dust storms increase at the end of spring and during the summer.

Kuwait witnessed, as of May 16, start of a sandstorm from the west and northwest of the country, accompanied by 35 km/h and 50 km/h winds, which reduced horizontal visibility to less than 300 meters, suspended air, maritime navigation and affected patients of allergy and asthma. He noted that the storm originated in Deir Ezzur region, eastern Syria. It was the most intense one in recent years, as it rolled and expanded eastward towards Iraq and northern Saudi Arabia, into western and northwestern Kuwait. Dashti said rain decline helped in raising the dust in Kuwait, as the 2021/2022 season recorded the lowest rainfall among 19 seasons during the last quarter century, recording only 87.8 mm, while the general average for the season is 113 mm. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Cars drive amid a heavy sandstorm in Kuwait City on May 16, 2022. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait fund approves \$49.5 million loan to boost Argentina water supply



KUWAIT: Officials sign the agreement. —KUNA

KUWAIT: A Kuwait-based fund said on Sunday it would provide Argentina with a loan worth \$49.5 million (KD 15.2 million) for a project to improve water supply in two of its northern provinces. The endeavor aims to prop up economic development in the South American nation's Santa Fe and Cordoba

provinces, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) said in a statement, highlighting the project's aim of ensuring adequate water supply in those areas. On the intricacies of the project, which costs \$76.88 million (KD 23.59 million), the statement said it entails the construction of a water

treatment plant to boost supply in the two provinces, putting a three-year timeframe on the endeavor. The deal is the latest in an aid package KFAED has earmarked for Argentina, which has already received previous loans of up to \$288 million (KD 70 million), added the statement. —KUNA



Court ruling leaves migrants in limbo at Mexican-US border

Xinjiang crackdown under scrutiny ahead of UN rights chief visit

Page 7

Page 6



KHARKIV, Ukraine: People carry their belongings as they walk past a damaged building in Kharkiv on May 21, 2022, amid Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

Ukraine takes centre stage at Davos

Shelling and missile strikes hit Kharkiv in the north

KYIV, Ukraine: Russian forces pursued their bombardment of frontline Ukrainian cities Sunday, seeking to gain military momentum as Kyiv's diplomatic counter-offensive targeted the world's business and political elite gathering in Davos. Shelling and missile strikes hit Kharkiv in the north, and Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia in the south, while eight civilians were killed on the eastern front in the Donbas, Ukrainian officials said.

Three months after launching their invasion, Moscow's forces are focused on securing and expanding their gains in the Donbas region and on Ukraine's southern coast. Kyiv, meanwhile, is rallying international support and receiving Western weapons supplies, even if EU powers are struggling to agree on expanding sanctions to Russia's huge energy exports.

Poland's President Andrzej Duda was to address the Ukrainian parliament and meet President Volodymyr Zelensky later Sunday, a day ahead of the Ukrainian leader's Davos videoconference. "He will in particular pay homage to those who, in defending Ukraine, are fighting to defend Europe," Duda's adviser Jakub Kumoch told the news agency PAP.

The World Economic Forum brings together the world's business and political elite in the Swiss mountain resort of Davos, and this year's gathering will put Ukraine's crisis at centre stage.

Davos snubs Moscow

Zelensky is due to hold a videoconference with delegates Monday evening to mark the opening of Ukraine House Davos, a forum for Kyiv and its international backers. In March, Davos organisers cut ties with Russian firms and officials, and announced that anyone under international sanctions would not be welcome at the event.

Biden in Japan with no response on outreach to N Korea

TOKYO: President Joe Biden arrived Sunday in Japan for the second leg of an Asia trip underlining US commitment to the region but overshadowed by concern that North Korea will test a nuclear weapon after ignoring Washington's attempt at outreach. Biden, making his first trip to Asia as president, flew from South Korea into Yokota Air Base outside Tokyo, where he will meet with Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and emperor on Monday, as well as unveiling a US-led multilateral trade initiative.

On Tuesday, he reinforces the theme of American leadership in the Asia-Pacific by joining the leaders of Australia, India and Japan for a summit of the Quad group. The trip, which comes as rival China is experiencing significant economic disruption due to COVID outbreaks, has been touted by Washington as a display of US determination to maintain its commercial and military edge across the region.

But hanging over every step of Biden's tour is fear that unpredictable North Korea will test a nuclear-capable missile or a bomb. Speculation that this might even happen while Biden was just across the border in Seoul did not materialise. However, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters that the threat remains.

Echoing Biden's earlier statement that the United States is "prepared for anything North Korea does", Sullivan said the dictatorship has a choice. "If North Korea acts, we'll be prepared to respond. If North

Western nations have rallied behind Ukraine's defence of its territories, led by the United States—which just approved a \$40-billion war chest for Kyiv—and neighbours like Poland. But some European countries that are dependent on Russian oil supplies, such as Hungary, are resisting calls for an embargo on crude—and major EU economic powers like Germany remain huge gas importers.

The European Union is also reticent on Kyiv's ambitions to join the bloc. France's President



Zelensky to hold a videoconference

Emmanuel Macron has suggested creating a "European political community" as a kind of antechamber to full membership. Zelensky dismissed this idea. "We don't need such compromises," he said Saturday during a joint news conference with visiting Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa.

"Because, believe me, it will not be compromise with Ukraine in Europe, it will be another compromise between Europe and Russia." France's Europe Minister insisted Sunday that "Ukraine is Europe", without addressing a potential EU bid, adding that the immediate goal is "to avoid any Russian victory".

But, while rejecting any concessions to Russia—and fighting to regain territory lost since Moscow

began its offensive in late February—Kyiv knows that talks will come. "There are things that can only be reached at the negotiating table," Zelensky told Ukrainians Saturday.

The war, he said, "will be bloody, there will be fighting, but it will only definitively end through diplomacy". After just over 12 weeks of fierce fighting, Ukrainian forces have halted Russian attempts to seize Kyiv and the northern city of Kharkiv, but they are under intense pressure in the eastern Donbas region. Moscow's army has flattened and seized the Black Sea port of Mariupol and subjected Ukrainian troops and towns in the east to relentless ground and artillery attacks. "There is no work, no food, no water," said Angela Kopytsa, a 52-year-old with bleached hair, breaking into tears as she spoke to AFP reporters on a Russian-organised tour of Mariupol.

Incessant fighting

Kopytsa said both her home and life had been destroyed during the fighting in the port and that "children at maternity wards were dying of hunger". The once-bustling Azov Sea port city has lived without electricity since early March and has now been reduced to a wasteland, the carcasses of charred buildings stand amid the lush greenery of tree-lined streets and parks.

The incessant fighting of the previous weeks has died down, and the Russian army and its separatist allies now patrol the streets. Elena Ilyina, who used to teach at a university in Mariupol, sobbed as she told AFP about her life, saying her apartment has been destroyed and she now lives with her daughter. "I have nothing left," the 55-year-old said. "I'd like to live in my apartment, in peace, go to work and talk to my children." — AFP



SYDNEY: Leader of the Australian Labor Party Anthony Albanese (C) meets with Labor candidate for Reid, Sally Sitou (R) and supporters after winning the general election at Marrickville Library and Pavilion in Sydney on May 22, 2022. — AFP

Albanese vows to repair Australia's image overseas

SYDNEY: Incoming prime minister Anthony Albanese vowed to end Australia's reputation as a climate laggard and reset relations with the rest of the world Sunday, as he raced to form a government in time for a key Tokyo summit. Fresh from an electoral victory that ended a decade of conservative rule, Albanese signalled an era of fairer, greener and less pugilistic politics for Australia.

"I want to change the country," the 59-year-old centre-left leader said. "I want to change the way that politics operates in this country." It is still unclear whether Albanese's Labor Party will win enough parliamentary seats to form an outright majority, or whether he will have to turn to independents or smaller parties for support.

But "Albo" and key ministers are expected to be sworn in on Monday to be able to attend a summit with Japanese, Indian and US leaders—the so-called Quad. Albanese said the summit was "an absolute priority" for Australia and an opportunity "to send a message to the world".

He said partners overseas can expect wholesale changes "particularly with regard to climate change and our engagement with the world on those issues". In recent years, images of smouldering eucalypt forests, smog-enveloped cities and blanched-out coral reefs have made Australia a poster child for climate-fuelled destruction. Under conservative leadership, the country—already one of the world's largest gas and coal exporters—has also become synonymous with playing the spoiler at international climate talks. Albanese has vowed to adopt more ambitious emissions reduction targets and make the sun-kissed continent a nation a renewable energy superpower.

After the summit and bilateral meetings with Quad leaders on Tuesday, Albanese said he would return to Australia on Wednesday. "Then we'll get down to business," he said. US President Joe Biden called Albanese to congratulate him. "President Biden expressed deep appreciation for... (Albanese's) early commitment to the alliance, reflected in his decision to travel almost immediately to Tokyo to attend the Quad Summit," the White House said in a statement. — AFP



PYEONGTAEK, REPUBLIC OF KOREA: US President Joe Biden (C) poses for a photo as he departs for Japan from Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek on May 22, 2022. — AFP

Korea doesn't act, North Korea has the opportunity, as we've said repeatedly, to come to the table."

Pyongyang has so far declined to answer US appeals for dialogue, officials say, even ignoring offers of help to combat a sudden mass outbreak of COVID-19, according to Biden. And while in Seoul, Biden confirmed he was prepared to meet with Kim Jong Un if the leader-for-life is "sincere", but Sullivan said that remains far off. "We're not even at step one yet," he said. Symbolising the apparent one-way conversation, Biden said the only message he has right now for Kim would consist of a single word: "Hello. Period," he said.

Biden spent two days with South Korea's new President Yoon Suk-yeol, with beefing up the military defence against North Korea high on the agenda. They issued a statement on Saturday saying that "considering the evolving threat" from Pyongyang, they were looking at expanding the "scope and scale" of joint US-South Korean military exercises.

Joint exercises had been scaled back due to COVID and for Biden and Yoon's predecessors, Donald Trump and Moon Jae-in, to embark on a round of high-profile but ultimately unsuccessful diplomacy with North Korea. — AFP

International

For Iraqis back from Syria, life on hold in 'rehabilitation' camp

'This camp was not set up to detain or isolate the families, it is a transit stop'

JADAA CAMP, Iraq: Awatef Massud is longing to reunite with her Iraqi family after years spent in Syria, but first she must do time in a vetting camp to ensure she has no links to jihadists. The 35-year-old mother of five fled to neighbouring Syria in 2014 to escape violence at home after the Islamic State group swept across swathes of Syria and Iraq.

For four months now, since her return to Iraq, she has been living in the Jadaa camp, a compound near the northern city of Mosul presented by the authorities as a "rehabilitation" centre for those coming back from Syria. All the returnees were transferred from Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria, which houses displaced families but also relatives of IS jihadists, including foreign nationals. Massud is adamant that her husband was killed by IS. But she admits that her in-laws "were once part of the (jihadist) group". "We left (Iraq) because of the terrorism. They (IS) made us leave our houses, they forced those who refused to join them to leave," she said.

Massud spent three years in Al-Hol with her five children. Two of them are now with her in Jadaa, where they attend a public school, while the other three stayed behind with her in-laws at Al-Hol. "I am waiting for their return so that I can reunite with my family" in the western Anbar region, she said. More than 450 families live in Jadaa, a sprawling camp lined with blue tarp tents, where visitors must present an official permit to security guards before they are allowed in. The camp is located south of Mosul, once an IS bastion before the group was defeated in 2017.

'Shame'
Some of the women questioned by AFP acknowledged links to IS, through their husbands or a relative, but others denied having had anything to do with the jihadist group. As they await processing, the families try to keep a semblance of a normal life with the help of activities sponsored by UN agencies and NGOs.

Some women learn to sew while teenage girls attend classes about puberty. Younger boys and



'I can reunite with my family'

girls mingle in a small playground. Camp administrator Khaled Abdel Karim told AFP that only "a very limited" number of families at Jadaa had been influenced by IS ideology.

"This camp was not set up to detain or isolate the families, it is a transit stop," said Abdel Karim. Experts, he said, help families overcome the "shame linked to IS", while others assist them with preparing the documents they need to get through the vetting



AL-JADAA, Iraq: A woman walks near her tent at the Jadaa rehabilitation camp for the displaced near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. About 30,000 Iraqis, including 20,000 children, are still in northeastern Syria, in camps where refugees and displaced live alongside families connected to the Islamic State (IS) group.—AFP

process and resume life outside the compound.

"Through our daily contacts, we see that our activities are not being rejected," the official told AFP. "When it comes to the mixing between men and women, or the type of clothes they wear, there is nothing to signal extremist thinking," he added.

Until they are allowed to go back home, Jadaa residents receive family visits four times a month. But before they can return to their hometowns, tribal elders must hold council and give their approval.

"Families with perceived affiliation to (IS)... often find their return blocked by security actors, experience community rejection and stigmatisation, and are at high risk of revenge attacks and violence," a World Bank report released in January said. "At the same time, it is common for people living in the area of return to fear that the return of families they believe supported or continue to support (IS)... will destabilise their communities and create new risks for security and social relations," it added.—AFP

Iraq trial of Briton, German for antiquity theft adjourned

BAGHDAD, Iraq: An Iraqi court on Sunday adjourned for two weeks the trial of a Briton and a German man accused of trying to smuggle antiquities after a defence lawyer called for more investigations. James Fitton, 66, a retired British geologist, and Volker Waldmann, 60, a Berlin psychologist, have been in custody since they were arrested on March 20 at Baghdad airport as they wound up their holiday.

According to statements from customs officers and witnesses, Fitton's baggage contained 10 stone fragments, pieces of pottery or ceramics. Waldmann allegedly had two pieces, but denied they were his. The two men did not know each other before they travelled to Iraq on an organised tour, and both say they had no intention of breaking the law.

The trial was adjourned until June 6 to allow time for further investigations, at the request of Waldmann's defence lawyer, Furat Kuba. During initial investigations, "certain important aspects were not examined", Kuba said, citing the report of an expert committee that said the fragments found with the men were antiquities.

"We don't have any more details: what site do these pieces come from? What era, what civilisation do they date back to?" Kuba asked, adding there were also outstanding questions relating to the site where the fragments were collected.

"Is it fenced and protected?" Kuba asked. "Are there signs indicating that these are ancient pieces that it is forbidden to collect?" Kuba said he wanted the tour guide or an Iraqi official who had been



BAGHDAD, Iraq: James Fitton, 66, a retired British geologist (L) and Volker Waldmann, 60, a Berlin psychologist, are dressed in the yellow uniform of detainees as they arrive at a courthouse in the Iraqi capital Baghdad on May 22, 2022.—AFP

present at the site to give evidence in court as to whether the tourists had received instructions prohibiting them from picking up fragments.

Their trial comes with the war-ravaged country, whose tourism infrastructure is almost non-existent, timidly opening to visitors. Iraq has also been trying to recover antiquities that were looted over a period of decades from the country whose civilisation dates back thousands of years.

The judge told the accused they were charged under a 2002 law which provides for sentences up to the death penalty for those guilty of "intentionally taking or trying to take out of Iraq an antiquity".

Fitton, at the start of the trial, when asked why he tried to take the artefacts out of Iraq, cited his "hobby", saying he was interested in "geology and ancient history and archeology," and was not aware that taking the fragments was illegal. Waldmann has denied the pieces allegedly found in his luggage were his, but they belonged to Fitton.—AFP

Court ruling leaves migrants in limbo at Mexican-US border

REYNOSA, Mexico: Asylum seekers in the dusty, violence-plagued Mexican border city of Reynosa were back to playing an uncertain waiting game Saturday, their dreams of entering the United States frustrated anew by a health rule imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"They say they're going to open the border today. Do you think that's true?" asked Michelle, a 26-year-old Haitian who had come to the pedestrian bridge crossing the Rio Grande hoping for good news. She was left disappointed, however.

A federal judge ruled Friday that the rule known as Title 42 — meant to stem the spread of COVID, it can effectively prevent anyone without a visa from entering the United States, even to claim asylum — must remain in effect.

Using social media, migrants in Reynosa have followed the legal showdown between the White House, which wants to lift the rule, and Republican governors of more than 20 states, who argue that relaxing it would spur a huge and inadequately controlled influx of migrants.

On Friday, Judge Robert Summerhays issued an injunction siding with those Republican-led states in support of the rule, first imposed under President Donald Trump. "The Plaintiff States contend that the Termination Order will result in a surge of border crossings, and that this surge will result in an increase in illegal immigrants residing in the states," the ruling said.

"The court finds that the plaintiff states have satisfied each of the requirements for a preliminary injunction."



REYNOSA, Mexico: Haitian migrants remain outside a shelter in Reynosa, Tamaulipas state, Mexico, in the border with McAllen, Texas state, US, on May 19, 2022.—AFP

"The White House said it would abide by the ruling, but that the Department of Justice would appeal. "The authority to set public health policy nationally should rest with the Centers for Disease Control, not with a single district court," a statement said.

Reynosa, across the border from the Texas city of McAllen, lies in one of Mexico's most violent regions and has been shaken by turf wars between rival drug cartels in recent years. Last year the medical aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned that migrants deported to Reynosa under Title 42 were at risk of kidnapping and violence.

Those stranded in the Mexican city face a host of additional concerns, including housing, healthcare, food and their children's well-being.

Lifting Title 42 would have a sting in the tail. Migrants deported to Mexico under its terms can now try to enter the United States as many times as they want. But if deported to their home country, they would face another long and potentially dangerous journey back to the border.—AFP

Afghan women presenters cover...

Continued from Page 1

"Today, they have imposed a mask on us, but we will continue our struggle using our voice," Sonia Niazi, a presenter for TOLONews, told AFP after presenting a bulletin. "I will never ever cry because of this order, but I will be the voice for other Afghan girls." The diktat was an attempt to push women journalists to quit their jobs, Niazi said. "It is like stripping off your identity," she added. "Despite this we want to raise our voice... We will come to work until the Islamic Emirate removes us from public space or forces us to sit at home."

Lima Spesaly, a presenter with news network ITV, said it was difficult working under the Taliban government but she was ready for a fight. "We will continue our struggle until our last breath," Spesaly told AFP, minutes before going on air. TOLONews

director Khpolwak Sapai said the channel had been compelled to make its women presenters follow the order. "I was called on the telephone yesterday and was told in strict words to do it. So, it is not by choice but by force," Sapai said.

Women presenters were previously only required to wear a headscarf. Male journalists and employees at TOLONews on Sunday wore face masks at the channel's offices in Kabul in solidarity with the women presenters. Other female employees continued to work with their faces visible. Later in the evening, male presenters on both TOLONews and ITV went on air wearing black masks as a protest to the Taliban's order against women presenters.

Ministry spokesman Mohammad Akif Sadeq Mohajir said authorities appreciated that broadcasters had observed the dress code. "We are happy with the media channels that they implemented this responsibility in a good manner," he told AFP. Mohajir said authorities were not against women presenters. "We have no intention of removing them from the public scene or sidelining them, or stripping them of their right to work," he said.—AFP

and Malta, have also operated "golden passport" schemes, but they have run into opposition from the European Commission over the back door they offer to EU citizenship. Wealthy Lebanese, mostly living in Gulf or African nations, are now among those hunting for passports that offer easier travel and a safety net from the economic crisis at home.

Commonwealth Caribbean nations are particularly attractive because of their long-standing schemes offering citizenship within months in exchange for a lump sum. Applicants are not even required to visit. When Jad first went to Paris as a Kittitian, officers at passport control told him: "You come from a nice country." "But actually I have never been there," he said.

Jad's Lebanese friends in the Gulf were also shopping for "island passports" or investing in real estate in Greece and Portugal to obtain residency as part of so-called "golden visa" schemes, he said. "This is not just a trend. It's a solution." Lebanese expatriates in Gulf Arab states have long borne the brunt of political bickering and rifts between their capitals.—AFP

World Cup police brace for huge crowds in Doha

DOHA: Controlling hundreds of thousands of football fans in Qatar's capital will be the biggest security challenge of World Cup 2022, FIFA told police chiefs from competing nations on Sunday. Unlike previous World Cups, where only two teams and their supporters would generally converge on one city at any given time, all the games will take place in and around Doha.

The most geographically compact World Cup therefore represents the tournament's biggest "challenge", FIFA security director Helmut Spahn told a security conference for the tournament in Doha. Qatar has predicted that 1.4 million people will visit during the 28 day tournament, that starts November 21, with "approximately 350,000"

attendees in Doha "at the same time", Spahn noted, speaking on the sidelines of the conference. "You have to manage that," he said. "But we can create history and I am pretty sure that we will manage it."

Major General Abdulaziz Al-Ansari, head of Qatar's World Cup security operation, also acknowledged that the numbers were the main concern. "But we are very much confident that we have reviewed this over and over again," Ansari said. "Of course there are going to be challenges, but the challenge is going to be part of the enjoyment." The Gulf state's police are preparing an intricate system of road closures and extra public transport to move rival groups of football fans around.

The gas-rich nation has spent billions of dollars on seven new stadiums and refurbishing an eighth for the World Cup. The longest distance between any of the two stadiums is about 70 km. Ansari said police delegations from competing nations would inspect the World Cup stadiums and review transport in Doha over the next two days.—AFP

Crisis forces rich Lebanese to buy...

Continued from Page 1

visa procedures for business trips. "But now because of the situation in Lebanon - and because we can afford it - we finally did it," he said, asking for his full name to be withheld for privacy reasons.

A Saint Kitts passport ranks 25th in the world while Lebanon languishes at 103rd on the Henley passport index for freedom of travel. With a population of under 55,000, it started selling citizenships a year after gaining independence in 1983. Citizenship by investment schemes have become a booming business internationally, attracting the well-to-do from volatile countries like Iraq, Yemen and Syria.

Some EU member states, including Bulgaria, Cyprus

Turtles freed in Tunisia with...

Continued from Page 1

towards the sea. All of them were tagged, but one of them also had a phone-sized tracking beacon glued to its hard shell, which will track its progress as it moves across the sea.

"This beacon, given to us by the University of Primorska in Slovenia, will allow us to follow this turtle in its movements," said Imed Jribi, a science professor from the University of Sfax and a coordinator of the Life Med Turtle project. "Identifying wintering, grazing and migration routes plays an important role in protecting this endangered species," Jribi said. As well as loggerhead turtles, two other turtle species are



SFAX: A scientist installs an electronic tag on the shell of a sea turtle before releasing it into the sea on May 21, 2022.—AFP

found in the Mediterranean, the green and leatherback turtle.—AFP

International

Bangladesh's worst floods recede but millions still marooned

Around 50 people killed in days of flooding, landslides and thunderstorms in India

SUNAMGANJ, Bangladesh: North-east Bangladesh's worst floods in nearly 20 years began receding on Sunday, but rescue workers were struggling to help millions marooned by extreme weather across the region that has killed around 60 people. Floods are a regular menace to millions of people in low-lying Bangladesh and neighbouring northeast India, but many experts say that climate change is increasing the frequency, ferocity and unpredictability.

In the past week after heavy rains in India, floodwater breached a major embankment in Bangladesh's Sylhet region, affecting around two million people, swamping dozens of villages and killing at least 10. Arifuzzaman Bhuiyan, head of the state-run Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, told AFP that the floods had hit some 70 percent of Sylhet district and about 60 percent of neighbouring Sunamganj.

"It is one of the worst floods in the region," he told AFP. But he said the situation would improve further in the next few days after heavy rains stopped. Police said that a scuffle broke out in the rural town of Companyganj on Saturday as authorities stepped up relief operations for the roughly two million people hit.

"There were more flood-affected people than the estimated relief packs. At one point everyone

started to snatch relief goods when police dispersed the crowd," local police chief Sukanto Chakrobarti told AFP. Mozibur Rahman, head of Sylhet district, said that the embankment washed away along the Bangladesh-India border was yet to be repaired.

"It is impossible to fix the embankment unless waterflow from India plunges. The inundation scenario in Sylhet city has improved. But outer towns are still underwater," Rahman said. "We are trying to send relief and have opened hundreds of shelters for the flood-hit people."

Mofizul Islam, a resident of Sylhet city where floodwaters were slowly subsiding, said that he fell off his motorbike after he hit a pothole hidden under the water on Sunday. "It is very risky for the people who are going out today," Islam told AFP.

Hundreds of shelters opened

50 dead in India

Over the border in India, around 50 people have been killed in days of flooding, landslides and thunderstorms, according to local disaster management authorities. In the north-eastern state of Assam, authorities said on Sunday that the death toll from the floods had reached 18. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), almost 3,250 villages were partially or fully submerged. ASDMA officials said the situation had improved slightly but that it remained critical in some districts.

According to their estimate, more than 92,000

shares the UK's new land border with the EU. Keeping the border open with neighbouring Ireland, an EU member, was mandated in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, given that the frontier was a frequent flashpoint during three decades of violence.

'Frank' discussion

But the protocol's requirement for checks on goods arriving from England, Scotland and Wales has infuriated the DUP and other unionists, who say it drives a wedge between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. Lewis stressed that the DUP, as the biggest unionist party, had a democratic mandate to back its position.

"And at the moment, the protocol, which the EU claims is about protecting the Good Friday Agreement, is the very document putting the Good Friday Agreement most at risk," he said. But the EU insists the protocol is not up for renegotiation.

And last week Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the US House of Representatives, warned that the UK could forget about a post-Brexit trade deal if it rewrites the agreement. On Saturday, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss met in England with a congressional delegation led by Richard Neal, a senior member of Pelosi's Democratic party in the House.

"We discussed our cast-iron commitment to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the importance of free trade and our condemnation of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine," Truss tweeted.

The foreign ministry declined to comment fur-

ther. But according to Britain's Observer newspaper on Sunday, Truss told Neal's delegation that London could not let the "situation drag on" if the EU did not respond favourably.

Neal, however, stressed Washington's "unity" with the EU after the members of Congress visited Brussels on Friday. And after what he called the "frank" meeting with Truss, the Democrat tweeted on Sunday: "I urge good faith negotiations with the EU to find durable solutions for post-Brexit trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland." —AFP

Lack of access

Beijing has vociferously denied genocide allegations, calling them the "lie of the century" and arguing that its policies have countered extremism and improved livelihoods. Bachelet will meet virtually with heads of foreign missions on Monday before visiting Xinjiang on Tuesday and Wednesday, according to diplomatic sources in Beijing.

The visit to China is the first by the UN's top human rights official since 2005, when Beijing was keen to soften its global image as it prepared to host the 2008 Olympics. Since 2018, UN officials have been locked in negotiations with the Chinese government to secure "unfettered, meaningful access" to Xinjiang before the trip was announced in March. Instead, campaigners fear that Bachelet will get a stage-managed tour that sidelines key issues.

With hundreds of thousands in detention and many mosques closed or destroyed, authorities in Xinjiang appear to have pivoted in recent years to focusing on economic development, according to scholars and Uyghurs based outside China. "Now there's not much visible evidence of repression," said Peter Irwin of the Uyghur Human Rights Project. Rights groups have warned that pervasive state surveillance and fear of retaliation will prevent Uyghurs on the ground from speaking freely to the UN team.

"We fear the visit will be manipulated by the Chinese government to whitewash the severe abuses in Xinjiang," said Maya Wang, senior China researcher at Human Rights Watch. Campaigners in Hong Kong this month.

"I attentively and actively follow the often complex life and the matters of the faithful and pastors, and I pray every day for them," the pontiff told the public gathered in St Peter's Square. Francis said he took the chance to "assure them once again of my spiritual closeness".

Retired cardinal Joseph Zen, one of the most senior Catholic clerics in Asia, was among a group of veteran democracy advocates arrested in Hong Kong earlier this month for "colluding with foreign forces".

UK demands EU action on N Ireland as US lawmakers visit

LONDON: Britain has insisted it is up to the European Union to unblock political paralysis in Northern Ireland, after assuring a delegation from the US Congress of its "cast-iron" commitment to peace in the province. The UK government has provoked anger on both sides of the Atlantic with a plan to overhaul the so-called Northern Ireland Protocol, a trading arrangement that was agreed as part of its Brexit divorce deal with the EU.

London is bidding to placate pro-UK unionists who are refusing to join a new power-sharing government in Belfast-led for the first time by pro-Irish nationalists-until the protocol is reformed. Interviewed by the Sunday Telegraph newspaper, Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis demanded that Brussels adopt a new negotiating mandate to address the fierce objections of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

"I made this point to the EU myself before the (May 5) elections. My view was, it was much easier to get a deal before the elections than afterwards," Lewis said. "The idea that it was going to be easier after the elections was a crazy one from the EU."

The protocol recognised Northern Ireland's status as a fragile, post-conflict territory that

Xinjiang crackdown under scrutiny ahead of UN chief visit

BEIJING, China: China's crackdown on Muslim minorities in the remote region of Xinjiang will return to the spotlight next week when Beijing hosts the United Nations human rights chief for the first time in nearly two decades. The highly scrutinised six-day trip by High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet will begin Monday, with stops in the cities of Urumqi and Kashgar in Xinjiang, as well as Guangzhou in southern China, the UN announced Friday.

Bachelet will meet "a number of high-level officials", her office said, adding that she would "also meet with civil society organisations, business representatives, academics, and deliver a lecture to students at Guangzhou University". But hopes of a thorough investigation into rights abuses have given way to concern among rights advocates that the ruling Communist Party will use the visit to whitewash its alleged atrocities. China is accused of incarcerating one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in detention camps in the far-western region in a years-long security crackdown that the United States and other countries have called a "genocide".

Pope following 'complex' life of Catholics in China

VATICAN CITY, Holy See: Pope Francis said Sunday that he was following "attentively" the "often complex" life of Catholics in China, without directly referencing a 90-year old cardinal arrested



NAGAON, India: Villagers make their way on a raft past homes in a flooded area after heavy rains in Nagaon district, Assam state. Heavy rains have caused widespread flooding in parts of Bangladesh and India, leaving millions stranded and at least 57 dead. —AFP

people were in relief camps. The state and national rescue forces, helped by the army, were working to rescue people from villages and distribute food, clean drinking water and other essentials, as well as to clear roads. West of Assam, at least 33 people

were killed in Bihar state in thunderstorms on Thursday. Bihar, in common with other parts of northern India and Pakistan, has been suffering an intense heatwave, with temperatures reaching 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). —AFP



BELFAST, United Kingdom: Ireland's Prime Minister Micheal Martin speaks with members of the media after a series of meetings with the main Stormont parties to discuss the Northern Ireland Protocol and the assembly crisis, at the Grand Central Hotel in Belfast, Northern Ireland. —AFP

ther. But according to Britain's Observer newspaper on Sunday, Truss told Neal's delegation that London could not let the "situation drag on" if the EU did not respond favourably.

Neal, however, stressed Washington's "unity" with the EU after the members of Congress visited Brussels on Friday. And after what he called the "frank" meeting with Truss, the Democrat tweeted on Sunday: "I urge good faith negotiations with the EU to find durable solutions for post-Brexit trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland." —AFP

have questioned why Bachelet—a former president of Chile and a torture survivor—has not been more outspoken about Xinjiang.

The United States warned Friday that Bachelet's "continued silence in the face of indisputable evidence of atrocities in Xinjiang" was "deeply concerning". Her reluctance to criticise may reflect Beijing's powerful influence at the UN, which puts officials "under a lot of constraints", Irwin said. Rights groups have been dismayed by the stalled release of Bachelet's long-awaited report on Xinjiang, believed to have been completed in September. Once published, the report could provide "political cover" for countries normally afraid to criticise China's rights record, added Irwin. A spokeswoman for Bachelet said Tuesday that it would not be released before her trip and there was no clear timing for making it public. Hundreds of overseas Uyghurs and Kazakhs—another Muslim minority in Xinjiang—have staged rallies in recent weeks to urge Bachelet to visit detained relatives.

Tursan Can Heyit, 31, joined a demonstration in Istanbul after unsuccessfully petitioning Chinese authorities for years for information about his parents and sister, who vanished in 2017 and 2018. The Uyghur PhD student has since learned that his sister was sent to a "re-education" camp in 2018, but his parents' whereabouts remain unknown.

"The UN must raise the concerns of relatives of Uyghur concentration camp victims in meetings with high-level Chinese officials," he told AFP from Istanbul. "I've tried asking through all the available channels, but now I'm increasingly disappointed." —AFP

Those detained were all trustees of a now-disbanded defence fund that helped pay legal and medical costs for those arrested during the huge and sometimes violent democracy protests three years ago.

The Vatican said at the time it was concerned by Zen's arrest and "following the development of the situation very closely". Zen has been critical of the Vatican's decision to reach a compromise with China over the appointment of bishops on the mainland, and critics have accused the Vatican of downplaying his arrest. —AFP

Bangkok votes for new governor

BANGKOK: Bangkok went to the polls Sunday in its first governor election in almost a decade, with the ballot viewed as an indicator for a national vote expected within a year. Around four million people are eligible to vote in the first major poll since Thailand's huge youth-led street protests in 2020 demanding political change and reform to the once-untouchable monarchy.

But daily life rather than politics has dominated the candidates' campaigns, with the leading contenders promising to clear up the congested, polluted and noisy megapolis home to 10 million. Polling centres opened across Bangkok at 8:00 am (0100 GMT) — closing at 5:00 pm—with temperature checks and Covid-19 restrictions at each voting station.

"I am not excited about the election. It will hardly change Bangkok, but I vote for a person who I think can change Bangkok, though a little bit. I do hope this candidate will make some change," said 28-year-old Nat, who gave only his nickname, after he voted.

A record 30 candidates are in the running for the top job, throwing their names into the hat eight years after the 2014 coup saw local elections scrapped and the city run by government-appointed leaders.

First thing Sunday morning, frontrunner and independent candidate Chadchart Sittipunt was seen riding his bike to his local polling station to cast his ballot. The ex-transport minister in the government ousted in the last coup has promised to tackle the city's notorious traffic, as well as making numerous green pledges, and insisted voters want a change from the entrenched political divisions.

He is facing off against incumbent Aswin Kwanmuang, a former police general backed by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, who has also promised to fix the city's perennial flooding issues.

But his poor record on the issue—after just under six years as governor—saw him endure criticism after parts of Bangkok flooded earlier this week following heavy rains. Political analyst Thitinan Pongsudhirak of Chulalongkorn University said the outcome would give some idea of the capital's willingness to back candidates of the royalist and military establishment that dominates Thai politics.

"Bangkok is not Thailand, but the Bangkok governor election this time will be a bellwether for bigger polls to come," he told AFP this week. Results are not formally expected until late Sunday evening and will have to be ratified by the country's electoral commission. —AFP



BANGKOK, Thailand: A woman casts her vote in the governor elections in Bangkok on May 22, 2022. —AFP

MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022

Business

NIC holds analysts conference for Q1 2022 financial results

Net profits reached KD15.4m; 19.3 fils earnings per share

KUWAIT: National Investments Company held its Analysts Conference for the first quarter of 2022, on Wednesday, May 18th, which was attended by Girish Nair, NIC's Chief Financial Officer, Bashar Khan, Senior Vice President - Investment Banking Sector, Al-Muthana Al-Maktoum, Executive Vice President - Wealth Management Sector, who presented a brief about the company and shed light on the positive financial results achieved in Q1 2022, which reflect the company's exceptional performance and strong operational achievements that led to maintaining and strengthening its financial position, high quality assets and its ability to achieve sustained growth, this is all due to the effective strategy and its competent and experienced team.

Financial position

The company has announced a net profit of KD 15.4 million with earnings per share of 19.3 fils per share and other comprehensive income of KD 19.1 million through shareholders' equity, which translated into a total comprehensive income of KD 34.5 million for the first quarter



Company achieves exceptionally strong results in Q1 2022

of 2022. During the comparative period of 2021, a net profit of KD 3.8 million with earning per share of 4.7 fils was reported, the other comprehensive income was KD3.1 million and the total comprehensive income was KD 6.9 million.

Girish added that the return on average equity and average assets reached 6.6 percent and 5.5 percent respectively during the first quarter of 2022, with leverage ratio of only 1:0.21 at March 31, 2022, and the company's quick liquidity ratio was 50.5 percent.

Total assets and shareholders' equity attributable to the parent company increased to KD 328.6 million and KD 251.3 million respectively at the end of the first quarter of this year, compared to KD 228.6 million and KD 181.9 million at the end of the first quarter of 2021.

Income and expenses performance

Girish highlighted the company's performance excellence with a total income of KD 19.9 million for the first quarter of 2022, compared to KD 7.1 million during the same period of 2021, which reflects a 180 percent increase. He also clarified that a key factor behind the increase in the company's total income in Q1 of 2022 is the profit from financial assets at fair value through profit or loss of KD 16 million and a major factor that contributed to other comprehensive income is the increase in the value of Kuwaiti investments at fair value through other comprehensive income of KD 17 million.

Total expenses during Q1 2022, including impairments and provisions of KD 2.2 million, were similar to KD 2.2 million for the comparable quarter of 2021. Administrative expenses amounted to KD 2.1 million for the current quarter, slightly higher than KD 1.8 million in the first quarter of 2021. This increase was offset by a decrease in impairments and provisions from KD 0.2 million in 2021 to almost nil during the first quarter of 2022.

Girish also noted that income from management, brokerage and consulting fees grew by 69 percent from KD 1.48 million for the first quarter of 2021 to KD 2.49 million during the first quarter of this year, and the growth was through brokerage income from one of our subsidiaries, Al-Waseet Financial Business, which grew by 96 percent, and management fees from funds and portfolios that grew by 39 percent.

Total proprietary assets grew by 13 percent during the first quarter of 2022, which amounted to KD 329 million, compared to KD 291 million at the end of 2021, as a result of the increase in the fair value of the investments, through profit or loss, and financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income. The fiduciary assets under management increased to KD 1.31 billion as of March 31, 2022, compared to KD 1.09 billion during the same period in 2021, an increase of 20 percent, which reflected on the company's ability to provide efficient portfolio management services and solutions.

Key events

Girish added saying: "MENA securities sector was successful in seizing opportunities for company funds and customer portfolios, where the sector has developed detailed plans to take advantage of investment opportunities by shifting customer portfolios into attractive sectors across funds, portfolios and private equity portfolios to achieve positive returns. The outstanding performance of our investment funds has enabled us to offer distributions to unit owners of The Wataniya Fund at 5.5 percent, Darj Fund at 6.2 percent, Zajil Fund at 4.5 percent and

Mada Fund at 3.6 percent, and on the other hand the MarketMaker service has been expanded to four additional companies in different sectors of the market."

Girish went on to say that The National Investments Company continues to provide its advisory services, and is engaged in 2 major flagship pre-IPO deals including Ali Alghanim IPO which is expected to be completed in 2022 and is currently engaged in executing several advisory mandates on the sell-side and buy-side in multiple sectors including infrastructure, technology-backed, healthcare, food and beauty. The alternative investment management has also successfully invested in several



Girish Nair

Bashar Khan

Al-Muthana Al-Maktoum

projects managed by leading global private investment companies, as well as a regional e-commerce platform, a delivery company and an international clothing company, while exploring new investment opportunities in the field of international real estate and direct investment openings, while evaluating current investments for potential exits.

The real estate investment sector is working on developing and improving collection rates and portfolio revenues and achieved a rental collection rate of 95 percent, and maintained occupancy rates at 84 percent in the first quarter of 2022.

Considerate plans

Bashar Khan, Senior Vice President - Investment Banking Sector said that the company's strategy focuses on building managed assets, through the development of international real estate products and the initial focus on venture capital, in addition to obtaining excellent opportunities for joint investments, including Boursa Kuwait,

identify opportunities in the market, including acquiring a controlling stake in Boursa Kuwait in February 2019, with a 14.4 percent share of national direct investments since the acquisition, Boursa Kuwait's shares were also made available for public offering and listing, and the market price today has been more than double the cost of acquisition, achieving more than double gross return of 12.29 times (based on market values).



شركة الاستثمار الوطنية
NATIONAL INVESTMENTS COMPANY

In addition to Kuwait Foundry's study which complies with the acquisition of an asset with discounted pricing that has a substantial value much greater than the prevailing market value. The investment also provided a specific path to fair value, with a 20 percent stake acquired in January 2019 and actions taken to achieve fair value. Most of the equity in the transaction was restored and the total double return on the basis of market value was 1.28 times, as well as the study of investment in the logistics warehouse project in Italy leased to FedEx, a 15-year leasing contract was signed, and is expected to generate annual cash returns of 8 percent and a net internal return rate of 9 percent over 18 months.

Finally, the investment in a blockchain fund, managed by Pantera Capital, a leading company in this sector, to be the first company to provide a symbolic fund in its early stages and the first exclusive blockchain fund.

At the end of the conference National Investments Company has confirmed that it will be in constant contact with its shareholders and customers to keep them up-to-date with any developments through the quarterly analyst conference.

Total assets and shareholders' equity attributable to the parent company increased to KD 328.6 million and KD 251.3 million respectively at the end of the first quarter of 2022

Kuwait Foundry, FedEx Italia and Pantera Capital, and the implementation of high quality operations with special focus on medium sized customers, we have completed many key transactions, established specialized teams in the capital markets and completed mergers, acquisitions and venture capital that have been identified as key growth areas for the company, and we continue to develop digital channels for the company's customers as well as enhance governance.

Studies and opportunity acquisition

Studies have demonstrated the company's ability to



G20 failing to update carbon cutting pledges

GLASGOW: Nations in the G20 group of major economies have yet to strengthen greenhouse gas reduction goals despite agreeing to revisit their plans ahead of critical UN climate talks in November, according to an analysis by leading research NGOs seen exclusively by AFP. At the Glasgow COP26 climate summit last year countries pledged to review inadequate plans for cutting carbon pollution this decade ahead of the COP27 conference.

Without a sharp reduction in emissions before 2030, the Paris Agreement target of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius would likely be breached, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned. The world has warmed nearly 1.2C so far-enough to usher in a crescendo of deadly heatwaves, floods and storm surges made worse by rising seas.

Current pledges registered under the 2015 treaty, if fulfilled, would still see temperatures rise a catastrophic 2.8C, potentially triggering runaway warming, where natural processes would add massive amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. The G20 accounts for three-quar-

ters of all human-caused emissions, which means the planet's future is largely in its hands.

Two G20 nations-India and Turkey-have failed to update their original carbon cutting plans submitted in 2015, as required under the Paris Agreement. Neither has non-G20 member Egypt, which will host the COP27 climate summit in November. Australia, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico submitted revised 2030 targets that did nothing to further reduce emissions, according to the joint analysis from the World Resources Institute, the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit and the E3G non-profit groups.

'Now or never'

Russia, Saudi Arabia and China-which accounted for a third of global emissions last year-did offer enhanced plans, "but there is still considerable scope to improve their commitments this year beyond their current policies," the report concluded. The remaining G20 countries, including the United States and major European economies, raised their ambitions in 2021 but are still not on track to meet their earlier targets. "None of the G20 nations are doing enough to keep hopes of limiting warming to 1.5C alive," said Tom Evans, a researcher at E3G. "So far this year, they seem to have completely forgotten the promise they made at COP26 just six months ago to strengthen their 2030 climate targets." A rapid rise in fossil fuel prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine coupled with the declining cost of renewables could help speed the shift away from carbon-intensive energy, the report said. —AFP

Musk's Twitter bid creates 'chaos tax'

SAN FRANCISCO: A top Twitter executive has told employees that Elon Musk's \$44 billion takeover bid for the company had created a "chaos tax," according to internal Slack messages seen by reporters in the US. In an internal message addressing the tumultuous takeover of the company, Twitter's new head of product, Jay Sullivan, is reported to have told employees: "I expect the 'chaos tax' and ups and downs to continue." He added: "As I know more, I will find ways to share with this group!"

Twitter has held 15 company-wide or division-wide meetings to address employee concerns amid upheaval following the Twitter board's decision to accept Musk's hostile takeover bid. Sullivan himself joined as a result of this upheaval, replacing one of the two executives let go by CEO Parag Agrawal in a "shake-up" that also included a hiring freeze and rescinding job offers.

Some employees have left the company, others are looking for new jobs, while others are said to be hunkering down to see how Musk changes the company, the report said.

Musk has publicly berated Twitter since agreeing a deal to buy the company, accusing it of not being politically neutral, blocking free speech, and being wrong about its estimates of the number of bots on the platform. He has put the deal "on hold" over the question of fake accounts. Agrawal wrote a Twitter thread on Monday explaining why Musk's proposition that Twitter should take a sample of 100 users to determine the number of bots would not work. Musk replied with a poop emoji. According to the report, a number of employees had expressed optimism about the takeover, with "dozens" in a Slack channel labeled "i_dissent" hoping Musk could help transform a company that had over-counted its user total for three years. — Agencies

US, S Korea sign pact on supply chains, economic ties

SEOUL: The United States and South Korea have agreed to work more closely on crucial trade and supply-chain issues, the US Commerce Department announced Saturday. Establishing a US-Korea Supply Chain and Commercial Dialogue, the statement said, would "foster increased collaboration and strengthen the international competitiveness of US and Korean industry."

The announcement, which offered little detail about the scope or workings of the new group, followed a roundtable meeting including prominent executives from both countries and led by US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and her Korean counterpart Lee Chang-Yang.

The US delegation is accompanying President Joe Biden on a five-day trip to Korea and Japan meant to reconfirm a US-Asian economic partnership that was strained under former president Donald Trump. The US statement said the two countries recognized that closer cooperation on "semiconductors, electric vehicles and batteries for electric vehicles, fuel cell and solar technology, and the digital economy will continue to transform our societies and drive our shared economic prosperity."

Roughly 75 percent of the world's semiconductor chips are produced in East Asia, and supply-chain issues, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in severe shortages affecting major buyers including the US auto industry. The US and South Korea are important trade and investment partners. Korea is the sixth-largest US trading partner, and the US is Korea's second-largest source of foreign direct investment. The Korean business executives who took part in Saturday's meeting included leaders of Hyundai Motor Group, LG, Lotte Group, Naver, OCI, Samsung and SK Group; the US companies represented included Applied Materials, Bloom Energy, GM Korea, Google, Lam Research, Qualcomm, Corning and GE. — AFP

Business

Bitter harvest for Indian wheat farmers after govt bans export

Govt says food security a priority despite inflation worries

KHANNA, India: When New Delhi banned wheat exports as prices soared over Russia's invasion of Ukraine it provoked consternation abroad and drove the cereal even higher. Now Indian farmers and traders are fuming they have been denied a windfall as domestic prices have plummeted.

India is the world's second-biggest wheat producer,

exchanges in Chicago and Europe. But at Asia's largest grain market in Khanna, in India's breadbasket state of Punjab, values went the other way. Every year, thousands of farmers from the wheat-growing region sell their produce at the facility, which is dominated by a dozen giant storage sheds, each the size of a football pitch. From 2,300 rupees (about \$30) per 100 kilograms

losses due to a severe heatwave.

The price fall represents the difference between a bumper payout and heartache, they say. Farmer Navtej Singh saved half his 60-tonne wheat harvest to sell during the lean season, when prices normally rise, and is aghast at the government's decision.

Now he is scrambling to sell his remaining stock. "This ban has come as a shock," he told AFP. "The price has dropped to the lowest and doesn't even cover our expenses. I can't even wait for a day." The authorities had not consulted anyone and had acted "selfishly", he said. "We were already hit with production losses this year, and the ban order has made our life difficult."

'Feed the world'

Before the war in Ukraine and the heatwave, India's wheat production of 109 million tons in 2021 and seven million tons of exports had both been expected to rise this year. Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month even offered to help plug the global wheat deficit and "feed the world". But extreme weather conditions are becoming more frequent in a phenomenon experts say is driven by climate change. After producers in Punjab were hit by a heatwave, the national harvest came in at four million tons less than expected. Now federal and state authorities are cutting procurement for the public distribution system, which provides free and highly subsidized grains to nearly 800 million people, as food security schemes set up during the coronavirus pandemic are cut back.

Even so, retail wheat flour prices are at a 12-year high, and Manish Pajni, head of the Punjab government's grain procurement department in Khanna, has backed the ban, saying wholesale rates could have gone as high as 3,000 rupees without it. But trader Raj Sood said the government should have adopted a wait and watch policy before abruptly halting exports and causing market turmoil. "The market was already under stress from the harvest crisis and, without a thought, the government came up with the ban," he said. "No doubt the major losses will be incurred by big exporters like Cargill, ITC and Glencore, but small traders and farmers will also be impacted."

And many businessmen in Khanna say the measure will only have a temporary effect as the rules of supply and demand are unavoidable. Flour mill owner Divender Verma usually obtains his raw materials from government stocks but said they were running at their minimum. "This time we do not hope they can provide for us. So the scenario for wheat is tight," Verma told AFP. Private suppliers will inevitably charge more, he added, further driving up prices for bread and other wheat products. —AFP



KHANNA, India: Workers carry sacks of wheat to load on a freight train at Chawa Pail railway station in Khanna, Punjab state. — AFP

but the government—itsself the country's biggest buyer of the crop—said it chose to protect food security for its mammoth population despite inflation concerns. The move—along with dwindling global supplies from Russia and Ukraine, both among the world's top five wheat exporters—sent prices to all-time highs on commodity

of wheat before the export ban, prices slumped to 2,015 rupees—the government-set minimum price at which it buys grain for its vast public distribution system. India's hundreds of millions of small farmers eke out a borderline existence, subject to the vagaries of the weather, and some in Punjab were already reeling from production



Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal

Saudi prince to sell 16.87% of firm to sovereign fund

RIYADH: A Saudi billionaire is to sell a 16.87-percent stake of his company to a sovereign wealth fund run by the kingdom's crown prince, a statement said Sunday. The sale by Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal of 625 million shares of the Riyadh-headquartered Kingdom Holding Company is worth roughly \$1.5 billion, according to a regulatory filing published by the Saudi stock exchange, or Tadawul. The company owns the famed George V hotel in Paris and has a majority stake in The Savoy in London, according to a breakdown of its portfolio on its website. Al-Waleed once was dubbed the Warren Buffett of Saudi Arabia.

In January 2018, Al-Waleed was freed. Crown Prince Mohammed is chair of the sovereign wealth fund, known as the Public Investment Fund, which is at the heart of Saudi Arabia's efforts to end its reliance on oil. More recently, Al-Waleed has sparred with Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk over his bid to buy Twitter. When Musk unveiled his bid in April, Al-Waleed was among the investors who spoke out against it, saying it did not reflect Twitter's "intrinsic value... given its growth prospects". —AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 19 MAY 2022

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	36,114	8,696.47	-0.5%	-6.6%	13.8%	551,468,489	314,047,355	48,948	30.3	2.9	78.1%
Main Market	10,120	6,041.28	-0.6%	-5.5%	2.6%	570,297,199	75,327,136	28,381	17.5	1.4	21.9%
All Share	46,234	7,829.50	-0.5%	-6.3%	11.2%	1,121,765,688	389,374,491	77,329	27.4	2.5	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	27,482	1,839.60	-1.4%	-6.0%	13.4%	337,953,031	188,262,325	23,545	29.9	2.8	58.78%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,038	1,165.70	0.7%	0.5%	13.8%	6,101,950	4,908,314	1,101	20.4	1.5	2.22%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	779	1,526.78	-0.1%	-5.5%	14.2%	19,707,020	5,261,743	2,433	18.7	8.5	1.67%
CONSUMER STAPLES	202	664.66	-4.0%	-6.4%	-9.1%	995,473	438,935	247	21.8	1.4	0.43%
ENERGY	247	1,191.14	-2.9%	-4.6%	-16.6%	12,731,028	618,631	507	12.3	1.2	0.53%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,458	1,524.94	-0.9%	-7.9%	7.1%	453,002,630	68,752,655	20,450	15.0	2.1	9.54%
HEALTH CARE	244	492.00	0.0%	2.1%	-38.3%	0	0	0	16.6	2.4	0.52%
INDUSTRIALS	4,658	1,310.67	1.1%	-8.2%	14.8%	87,838,779	66,367,073	13,702	42.4	1.5	9.96%
INSURANCE	636	1,525.68	0.0%	-1.0%	-0.5%	3,940,754	771,629	272	7.5	1.0	1.36%
REAL ESTATE	2,775	1,290.18	0.8%	-5.9%	-2.7%	151,996,390	26,390,714	8,726	14.5	1.4	5.94%
TECHNOLOGY	8	615.46	-10.9%	-8.0%	-10.0%	200,213	17,003	29	-	0.7	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,988	1,301.83	3.2%	-7.9%	19.5%	42,166,442	26,484,535	5,751	16.2	2.4	8.53%
UTILITIES	236	565.79	0.0%	-3.2%	-5.7%	5,131,978	1,100,935	566	16.6	2.7	0.50%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KUWAITRE	311	14.76	152	46	8
MASAKEN	34.6	7.79	165,300	5,412	25
GBK	373	7.49	68,593,974	25,356,851	3,818
OSOUL	95	6.74	1,077,379	96,756	93
CLEANING	46.4	6.67	563,814	25,867	57

Top Losers

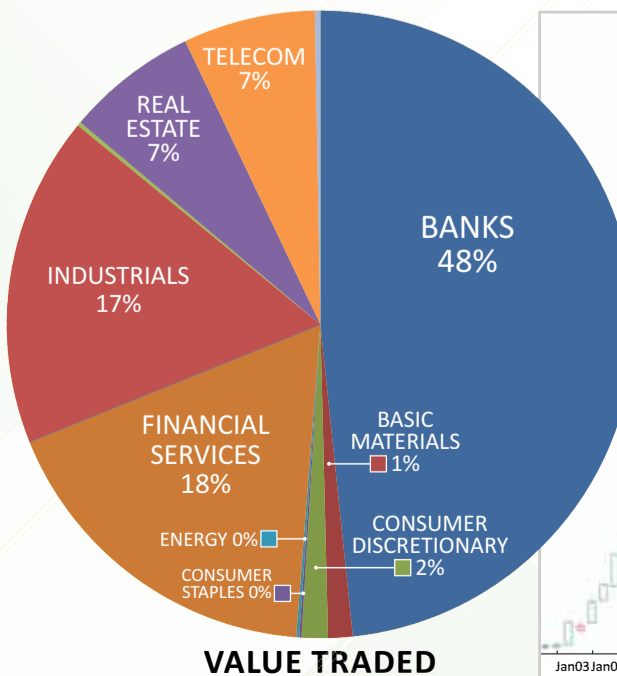
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
JIYAD	34.5	-26.28	6,124,256	208,535	309
HAYATCOMM	75.5	-21.35	196,327	16,518	39
ALSAFAT	156	-15.68	35,069,071	5,548,664	1,956
NOOR	250	-15.25	2,483,425	734,707	284
ARGAN	89.9	-14.38	620,102	57,229	92

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	92.8	-4.82	112,907,651	10,804,990	3,071
KFH	900	-2.70	92,937,200	84,349,274	8,328
AUB	276	-3.83	83,644,043	23,734,207	2,187
GBK	373	7.49	68,593,974	25,356,851	3,818
ALOLA	94.8	-0.31	57,839,472	5,467,165	1,183

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	900	-2.70	92,937,200	84,349,274	8,328
AGLTY	1,130	3.10	44,491,565	49,236,188	7,914
NBK	1,020	-0.97	35,788,342	36,272,240	3,978
GBK	373	7.49	68,593,974	25,356,851	3,818
ZAIN	642	5.59	38,758,995	24,188,215	4,455



Market Summary:

- Due to the heavy sales in the Premier market, the volume and value increased by 9% and 26%, respectively. Main market volume and value decreased by 19% and 17%, respectively.
- The Premier index bounced back from the support level to hit a wall and retreat, while the Main index is yet to find peace and stability.
- Technically, the All-Share index closed at 7829, with support levels at 7810, 7677, and 7635, while resistance at 7850. Premier index closed at 8696, support levels at 8687, 8599, 8543, and 8527, while resistance at 8736. The Main index closed at 6041, with support levels at 6023, 5990, 5990, and 5970, while resistance at 6058.

Business

Abbott CEO apologizes to US families for baby formula crisis

Abbott to set up a \$5m fund for affected families

WASHINGTON: The head of baby formula manufacturer Abbott apologized Saturday to US families affected by the shortage of the essential supply. "We're sorry to every family we've let down since our voluntary recall exacerbated our nation's baby formula shortage," Abbott CEO Robert Ford wrote in an op-ed in The Washington Post.

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, Abbott announced a "voluntary recall" for formula made at its factory in Michigan and shut down that location.

"This is tragic and heartbreaking, and it is consuming my thoughts and those of my colleagues," Ford wrote. He said Abbott will set up a \$5 million fund for the families of children who were hospitalized after consuming the recalled formula.

Ford also said the manufacturer was taking "serious steps" to alleviate the shortage, such as converting production lines for adult goods at its factory in Columbus, Ohio to "prioritize" making formula. Abbott is also importing formula from its factory

in Ireland. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reached an agreement Monday with Abbott to resume production at its Michigan plant. The deal needs to be approved by a judge, and the factory should reopen within two weeks.

"By the end of June, we will be supplying more formula to Americans than we were in January before the recall," Ford promised. "We are making significant investments to ensure this never happens again." US President Joe Biden tweeted Saturday that he had signed an act allowing certain requirements in a federal food grant program to be waived "so people can more easily access the infant formula that they need."

The White House said Wednesday that the US government would fly in formula on commercial planes contracted by the military. Biden also invoked the Defense Production Act to give baby formula manufacturers first priority in supplies. A White House official said Friday that the first flight, carrying 132 pallets of Nestle brand formula, will take place this weekend from Germany to Indianapolis, Indiana. —AFP



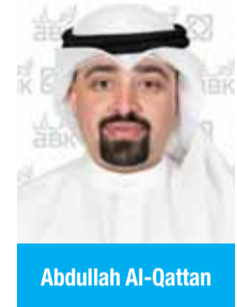
CHELSEA: Shelves are pictured empty in Chelsea, Massachusetts on May 20, 2022. —AFP

ABK launches 'smart funds transfer form' service

KUWAIT: In line with its continuous efforts to streamline and enhance its services, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announces the launch of the 'Smart Funds Transfer Form' an easy to use form for the purpose of local and international remittances. With the 'Smart Funds Transfer Form' customers will have faster turn-around time, IBAN validation based on country selected, along with data security and confidentiality. The service auto-populates the amount in words and in Kuwaiti dinar equivalency to avoid discrepancy errors, thereby facilitating an efficient, secure, reliable, and speedy funds transfer and clearing in the banking sector across the region.

Regarding this new service, Abdullah Al-Qattan, Executive Manager Retail Operations & Payments - Operations Division at ABK said, "As part of its Simpler Banking strategy, the Bank looks to integrate the latest and securest technologies to continuously improve the quality of its services. According to the Central Bank of Kuwait, total remittances of expatriates in Kuwait reached about KD 4.14 billion during the first nine months of 2021, resulting in an increase of 8.63 per cent compared to the same period of 2020. In order to make this process more seamless for our customers, we are happy to launch this new simplified service."

Al-Qattan added, "By digitalizing the process, ABK is reducing the margin of error, while also empowering consumers with a greater sense of security and a more unified and secure transaction process. The launch of the 'Smart Funds Transfer Form' reinforces ABK's commitment to embedding technology in all of the Banks' key operations to provide consumers with impactful services and solutions." Customers using the 'Smart Funds Transfer Form' are able to view the Banks' transfer terms and conditions in Arabic and English. A key element to the newly launched service is cross-checking information using a QR code by scanning the characters using a reader application.



Abdullah Al-Qattan

Jazeera Airways partners with Czech Tourism Authority

KUWAIT: In an event endorsed by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to the State of Kuwait, Jaroslav Siro, Jazeera Airways and the Czech Tourism Authority held a trade event for travel agents and business partners to promote the airline's upcoming launch of direct flights to Prague as well as tourist and trade opportunities in the Czech Republic.

Inaugrating the event, the ambassador said: "We are proud of the launch of this new service to Prague, further strengthening the relations between the Czech Republic and Kuwait and opening new opportunities to further growth in the fields of tourism, education, healthcare and trade. There is so much to discover in the Czech Republic and this new service plays a role in enabling this step. We look forward to welcoming Jazeera Airways' customers in our country and are very excited to continue promoting everything the rich Czech capital and the rest of the country has to offer to visitors."

Attended by over 100 travel and tourism agents, the event showcased the rich cultural heritage, active holidays options as well as spa and wellness in the Czech Republic, giving visitors so much to discover. The International Marketing Manager for New Markets at Czech Tourism Authority, Marek Kroutil, said: "Czech Republic has so much to discover beyond what so many might know from its capital Prague, giving solo travelers, families, friends and adventurers so many options that will without a doubt exceed their expectations. We invite the people of Kuwait as well as those living within the network of Jazeera to visit the Czech Republic so we can share the depth, details, and culture of a modern destination that combines natural beauty with a fascinating history."

Castles, chateaux, sixteen UNESCO monuments and historical cities are some of the most popular trip destinations in the Czech Republic. History,

NBK Money Markets Report

Central bankers vow to raise interest rates

KUWAIT: Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Tuesday pledged that the US central bank would ratchet interest rates as high as needed until it sees "clear and convincing" evidence that inflation is coming back down towards the US central bank's longstanding two percent target. Powell affirmed the central bank's commitment to taming price pressures, saying restoring price stability was essential to the smooth functioning of the economy and vowing to raise interest rates to a level that actively constrains demand if necessary.

The Fed has raised interest rates by 0.75 of a percentage point since March from its near-zero levels that had been in place for roughly two years. Further 0.5 percent rate rises such as the one the central bank implemented earlier in the month are likely, with at least one more in the next month and a possibility of another in the following month. The Fed may also consider a fourth half point rate rise at its September policy meeting if inflation does not moderate significantly by then, before dialing back the size of its increases to quarter point increments.

Traders now expect the federal funds rate to reach roughly 2.8 percent by the end of the year, a sizeable jump from its current level of between 0.75 percent and 1 percent. If reached, the rate would still be within the two percent to 3 percent range that Fed officials have previously indicated is considered "neutral" when inflation is at the 2 percent target. Powell said that the Fed "won't hesitate at all" to raise rates above neutral if warranted by the data, although he reiterated that officials do not know with "any confidence" where that level is, given the strength of the labor market and the extent to which inflation is above the regulator's target. He said the Fed would instead look at how financial conditions and the economy are adapting in real time. Powell added that there are "pathways" for the Fed to damp demand and bring down inflation without substantial labor market loss-



Czech Ambassador Jaroslav Siro with the teams of Jazeera Airways and the Czech Tourism Authority during the event.



Jazeera team

es, although he said the unemployment rate may rise "a few ticks" from its very low 3.6 percent level today. The following day to Powell's speech, two US central bankers said they expect the Federal Reserve to downshift to a more measured pace of policy tightening after July, in an attempt to quell inflation without lifting borrowing costs so high that they send the economy into recession. It is not clear if the view that was shared by the Chicago Federal Bank President Charles Evans and Philadelphia Fed Chief Patrick Harker marks a consensus at the Fed for how to bring down the highest inflation seen in 40 years. But it does suggest that while policymakers broadly back using half-point rate hikes to get short-term borrowing costs to a range of 1.75 percent to 2 percent over the next two months, support for sticking to that pace beyond July may be limited. Fed Chair Jerome Powell has not been specific about his expectations for the policy path beyond July.

Solid retail sales

American consumers continued to pump money into the US economy with retail sales rising 0.9 percent m/m and 8.2 percent y/y in April, marking the fourth straight month of higher spending. Data revealed more was spent on restaurants, furniture, clothing, and electronics. Spending on gasoline was cut as prices pulled back briefly in April from the rally owing to the war in Ukraine. Excluding gasoline, retail sales rose 1.3 percent. Other data added to signals of strong economic momentum, as US industrial production marked its fourth month of gains after increasing 1.1 percent in April. Looking at the labor market, April marked the 12th straight month of solid job gains sending unemployment close to pre pandemic levels at 3.6 percent.

Dollar cool down

The US dollar kept rising in all but two of the last 14 weeks, and started this week on a firm foot, garnering support from a flight to safety by investors, amid a rout across markets due to fears of the impact of soaring inflation and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But later in the week, the dollar started to flounder, with the dollar index ending the week 1.26 percent down at 103.152. The dollar's weakness partly reflected a recent fall in US Treasury yields adjusted for inflation, and is mostly attributed to the recent buildup of long US dollar positions that are weighing on the greenback, raising the question on

ter, while the country's spas are some of the most popular in the world.

Jazeera Airways spokesperson said: "We are very excited to be launching the new service for the summer season, giving our customers more choice to enjoy a vacation filled with activities and cultural experiences with family or friends. Demand for unique tourist destinations is very high following two years of travel restrictions. We look forward to welcoming customers on board these new flights very soon." Flights to Prague will be operated on Tuesdays and Sundays, starting June 22.

whether the dollar really has reached exhaustion. Other safe-haven currencies have rallied this week as global equities have come under pressure, the Swiss franc ended the week 2.68 percent up versus the dollar, while the Japanese yen closed 1.08 percent up. The euro has also benefitted from the dollar's weakness, closing the week up 1.5 percent.

Out of the negative

The European Central Bank is expected to raise the deposit rate for the first time in over a decade this coming July, and to finally bring it out of negative territory at its following meeting in September. With inflation hitting 7.5 percent in the eurozone in April, and almost every other major central bank having already raised interest rates, ECB president Christine Lagarde backed calls for an early rate hike by policymakers last week. The bank is now expected to end its bond purchases program in July and follow that with a 25 basis-point deposit rate hike a few weeks later. The European Commission cut its growth forecast for the euro zone this year to 2.7 percent from 4.0 percent projected in February, and upgraded its inflation forecasts to 6.0 percent this year from 3.5 percent.

United Kingdom

In its monetary policy report hearing, Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey spoke in front of the Parliament on Monday where he said that he was unable to stop UK inflation from hitting 10 percent this year, admitting that he sounded "apocalyptic" on food price rises. Senior Tory MPs have been attacking the BoE on its handling of soaring price increases, and Bailey accepted that inflation was far too high but blamed global shocks including Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Bailey insisted the BoE would raise interest rates far enough to ensure UK inflation falls from an expected peak of more than 10 percent in the fall back to the central bank's 2 percent target. "The most important thing we can do is to get inflation back to target and to get back to target without unnecessary disruption to the economy," Bailey told MPs. He implied the BoE would not shy away from generating a recession to do that if it was necessary.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30650.

UK finance minister makes rich list for first time

LONDON: Finance minister Rishi Sunak became the first high-profile British politician to make the Sunday Times Rich List, weeks after his family's tax arrangements attracted controversy and amid a cost-of-living crisis. Sunak and his Indian wife Akshata Murty, whose father co-founded the IT behemoth Infosys, made the annual list for the first time with their joint £730 million (\$911 million, 861 million euros) fortune.

The bulk of their wealth is believed to come from Murty's £690-million stake in Infosys, but Sunak also had a highly lucrative career in finance before entering politics in 2015. The listing, which started in 1989, this year estimates the minimum wealth of Britain's 250 richest people or families, and features far fewer Russian billionaires due to Western sanctions following the invasion of Ukraine.

Sunak's inclusion comes a month after it was revealed that his wife was sheltered from paying tax on foreign earnings to his Treasury department after claiming so-called non-domiciled status. The "non-dom" scheme has become controversial in recent years, particularly now that Britons face tax rises and the cost-of-living crisis, with some opposition parties calling for its abolition. It has been estimated Murty's non-dom status could have saved her £20 million in taxes on dividends from her shares in Infosys. Soon after the revelations emerged, she announced she would start paying UK tax on "all worldwide income", noting that she did not want her tax affairs to be a "distraction" for her husband. —AFP



Chef Ali serves his award-winning Bombay Tikka Masala pizza.



Chef Pizzaiolo Ali Haider is flying high in the pizza world.



TOP US PIZZAIOLO EYEING KUWAIT AS HIS NEXT CULINARY DESTINATION

By Shakir Reshamwala

After wowing America with his unique pizzas, a Kuwait-born pizzaiolo is back to explore opportunities in a place he still has fond memories of. Ali Haider is an award-winning chef who runs two halal restaurants in California. 786 Degrees has been named as the best restaurant in California by USA Today, with delectable creations like Bombay Tikka Masala, Istanbul and Bulgogi Gangnam Style winning rave reviews. That's not to say his pizzas are not authentic — Ali learned his trade in Naples, the birthplace of pizza.

Sun Valley and Pasadena. 786 Degrees is the highest-rated pizzeria in the US with more than 5,000 5-star reviews on Yelp. Chef Ali, 42, also makes frequent appearances on Food Network and Hulu.

years. They remained in touch with Ali after graduating, and are now flocking to taste his pies in Kuwait during his short stay in the country.

Born to an Iraqi father and Indian

palates, Chef Ali aims to stimulate minds and bring together his deep understanding of hospitality and take it to the next level.

Serving his signature Neapolitan-style pizzas at a friend's pizzeria in downtown Kuwait City, Ali is aiming to replicate the concept of his successful eateries in the US. "Food has always been my passion, and I had a waistline to prove it too. Nobody trusts a skinny chef!" Chef Ali told Kuwait Times during a balmy Friday evening, dimples flashing. With his trademark pies influenced by Asian and Mediterranean cuisines, he said he is ready to take his first step towards his vision of expanding his successful model throughout the Gulf by collaborating with the right strategic partner. "The idea is you are not serving pizza — you are

servicing love and respect," he stressed.

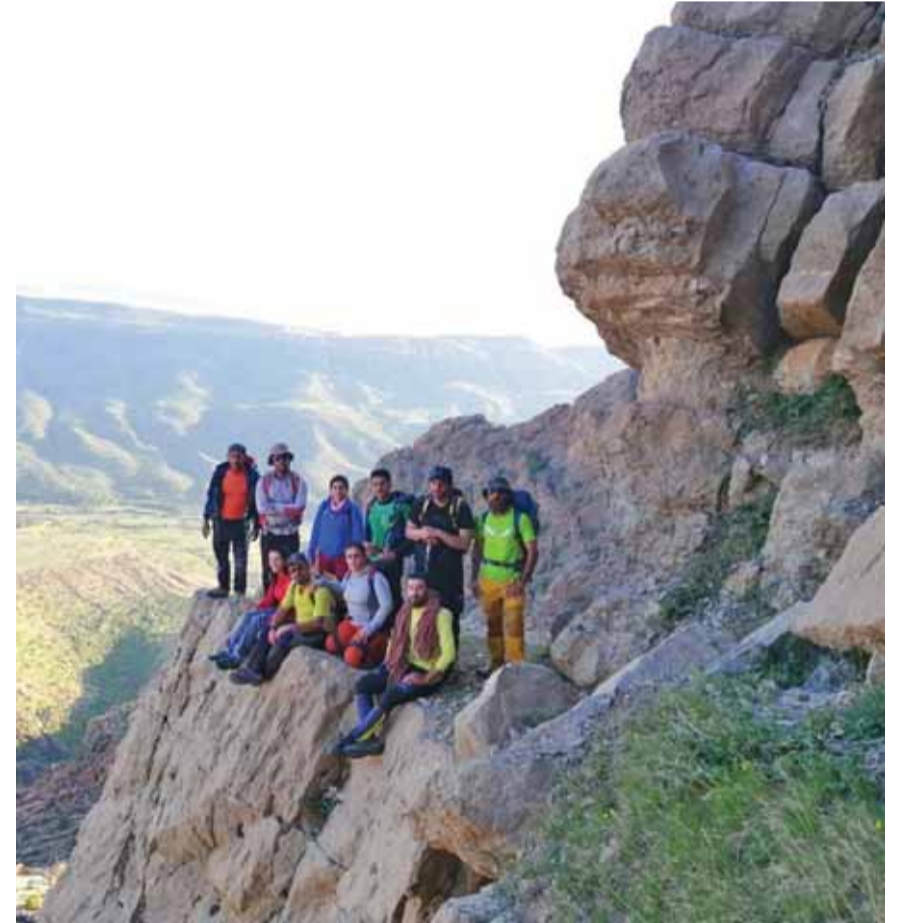
Ali doesn't want to go the chain restaurant way like other breakthrough food carts that became immensely successful; he wants 786 Degrees to be a place people will take out time to drive to and enjoy the offerings on the menu in a cozy setting. "Many restaurants went too big too fast and crashed, which is why I'm hesitant to take that route," he said. Instead, Chef Pizzaiolo Ali wants the journey to be one where every moment is savored — winning hearts one pizza at a time internationally. And what better place than Kuwait, a food-lovers' paradise whose sophisticated patrons are willing to give all comers a chance to shine.

With America eating out of his hands, Kuwait-born chef returns 'home' to replicate the magic

An eight-time national and international award-winning pizzaiolo, he is also a member of United States Pizza Team and a Guinness record holder for his pizzas.

Chef Ali's restaurants are also popular with Kuwaiti students in Los Angeles craving halal food, and he has built friendships with many of them over the

mother in Kuwait, Ali was raised and schooled here, before he left for the US for higher studies at the age of 18, eventually settling there and becoming a naturalized US citizen. But he retained an affinity for Kuwait, and when he decided to take 786 Degrees global, this is where he came. Not content with stimulating



Snow-capped summits in Iraq's Kurdistan attract adventurers

Iraq's Kurdistan Region high mountains draw a large number of male and female climbers and nature aficionados, the bulk of whom come from nearby predominantly-Kurdish regions and other Iraqi areas. The Kurdistan region is well known for natural attrac-

tions, namely lush and green mountainous panorama.

Athletes, tourists and adventurers, clad in suitable suits, come to the region for taking photos via alleys marked with safety instructions. Some mountain ranges peak as high as thou-

sands of meters above sea level with summits engulfed in snow much of the year time. There are some 200 hiking teams grouped in a local union, established in 2006. — KUNA



Chile to reopen Easter Island for tourism for first time since pandemic

Popular Pacific Ocean tourist destination Easter Island will reopen to the world on August 1, after more than two years closed due to the pandemic, the Chilean government said on Friday. The island, located 3,500 kilometers west of the coast of Chile, is world-famous for its "moais," huge stone statues in human form partially buried in the earth. "It has been agreed that the opening of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) would take place on Monday, August 1, 2022," said a state-

ment from the ministry of economy, development and tourism.

The original reopening date was February, but that plan did not materialize under the government of former president Sebastian Pinera. Authorities drew up a new plan to reopen the island after leftist President Gabriel Boric took office in

March.

The island's main source of revenue was domestic and international tourism before flights to and from it were grounded on March 16, 2020, following the first reported cases of coronavirus in the country. Easter Island currently has only one weekly flight, operated by the Latam air-

line. From August 1, up to three flights per week will be operated by Latam to transport tourists, the ministry said.

The Chilean government has set a precondition that the local Covid-19 vaccination rate must reach 80 percent in order for tourism to reopen. The current vaccination rate among the island's 10,000 inhabitants

is approximately 73 percent. The medical center of its only city, Hanga Roa, does not have an intensive care unit, but is equipped with respirators. An emergency flight to the mainland takes about five-and-a-half hours.

The island has had only a handful of cases of coronavirus. No hospitalizations or deaths have resulted from the outbreak, according to local authorities. In October, the indigenous population of Easter Island held a referendum on whether tourism to the UNESCO world heritage site should be resumed. The result, which was non-binding, showed more than 67 percent of those who voted were against the move. Chile has recorded 3.6 million cases and more than 57,000 deaths due to the coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic, according to the World Health Organization.—AFP



Lifestyle | Cannes Film Festival



Italian-Senegalese influencer Khaby Lame arrives for the screening of the film "Armageddon Time" during the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

HOW TO TIKTOK YOUR WAY TO A PRIZE AT THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

You no longer need millions of dollars and a distribution deal to win prizes at the Cannes Film Festival—just a mobile phone and a bit of ingenuity will do. Turning 75 this year, the world's leading film gathering knew it needed a shot of youth and made TikTok an official sponsor. That has brought some of the video platform's biggest stars to the French Riviera—including Italian-Senegalese sensation Khaby Lame and his 139 million followers—inevitably breaking the festival's usual taboo against selfies on the red carpet.

TikTok has also sponsored a short film competition, with prizes awarded by a jury of film professionals, as well as Lame. "You might think that three min-

utes is short, but we really tried to judge them just as we would a film of 120 minutes," jury member and French director Camille Ducellier told an audience gathered for the prize-giving on Friday.

The top prize was shared by Japan's Mabuta Motoki, with a simple but touching short about traditional wood carving, and Slovenian Matej Rimanic with a mini-ode to black-and-white silent comedies. However Cannes' youngest competition did not go entirely smoothly. The head of the jury, French-Cambodian director Rithy Panh briefly resigned the day before the award gathering, accusing TikTok of trying to influence the selections. "TikTok reversed course and gave us back our sovereignty," Panh told

AFP, saying they had eventually been given the freedom to award "the films that we chose."

'Beautiful, poetic'

The TikTok representatives seemed in a panic at the awards show, cutting off AFP from talking to the jury and preventing interviews with the winners. But Panh was in positive mood as he introduced the prizes, telling the audience it was "amazing to feel the energy" from the films they had watched. "There were beautiful, poetic films that were just one minute, that told everything from the difficulties in life, to traditions, humour, pain, love—it's not easy to do in one shot and one minute," he said.

Ducellier said she welcomed the vertical style of filming for TikTok, despite her usual work in traditional cinema. "It allows you to free yourself from the weight of all these decades of a horizontal screen, and to create a whole new visual style," she said.

One exception to the ban on interviews was Claudia Cochet, a French TikToker with 250,000 followers, who won the prize for best script. The 34-year-old discovered TikTok during the pandemic, when her day job in a theatre was shut down. "TikTok offers me freedom to create an audience and it gives me confidence to do things on my own," she told AFP.

Her winning film was a world away

from the usual fun and silliness of TikTok, alluding to violence against women. "When we're a victim of conjugal violence, we don't dare to speak about it, but we can show it," she said. Some 70,000 videos were entered for #TikTokShortFilm from 44 countries, the organizers said. Eric Garandeau, head of TikTok France, said it could inject new life into filmmaking. "Today, cinema is sometimes a bit 'obese' and TikTok offers a shorter alternative and a more intense experience," he said. He chose not to comment about the reasons for the jury president's temporary resignation. — AFP



(From left) Romanian cinematographer Tudor Panduru, editor Mircea Olteanu, actress Orsolya Moldovan, Romanian actor Marin Grigore, Romanian film director Cristian Mungiu, Romanian actress Judith State, Romanian actress Macrina Barladeanu, production designer Simona Paduretu and producer Tudor Reu attend a press conference for the film 'R.M.N.' during the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

Cannes favorite returns to show horror of 'human animals'

One of eastern Europe's most acclaimed film-makers, Romania's Cristian Mungiu, is back at the Cannes Film Festival with a dark tale about how little it takes for people to turn on their neighbors. His wrenching Ceausescu-era drama about illegal abortion "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" clinched the top prize at the world's top cinema showcase in 2007. Mungiu also won best screenplay for 2012's "Beyond the Hills" and best director for "Graduation" in 2016.

His new film, "R.M.N.", again sees him in the race for the Palme d'Or, and the 54-year-old told AFP it explores the collapse of hopes for a new era of peace following the end of the Cold War. "I try to speak about human nature and about the state of the world today and about this feeling that we have today that things are not going in the right direction," he said. "Things are coming to some sort of an end and everybody feels this anxiety," not least over the war raging in Ukraine, he said.

'Capable of anything'

RMN is the Romanian abbreviation

for an MRI which Mungiu said when scanning the brain can reveal fascinating secrets of how human beings are wired. The film explores the anxieties of a multi-ethnic community in Transylvania, a historical crossroads of migration and competing empires which has left Romanian, Hungarian and German speakers living side-by-side to this day. It is inspired by a story widely covered by Romanian media in 2020, when a village in Transylvania rose up against the local bakery for hiring two Sri Lankans.



Romanian film director Cristian Mungiu poses during a photocall for the film "R.M.N." at the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.

In the film the foreign men are recruited to a bread factory reliant on EU grants and offering minimum-wage jobs that long went unfilled because the salary was too low for locals. A manager tries to look after the dislocated Sri Lankans, who don't speak any of the local languages and are struggling to integrate. A violent attack leads to confrontations with the police, the village priest and finally a town meeting in which hysterical fears about the out-

siders are aired.

Mungiu said he aimed to hold up a mirror to the "instincts and cruelty which is deep inside us as human animals and to see that people who are neighbors today are capable of anything tomorrow—raping, killing and torturing somebody else simply because somebody told me this is the enemy".

'A movement'

The film won warm reviews, with The Guardian saying it was "seriously engaged with the dysfunction and unhappiness in Europe that goes unreported and unacknowledged". US movie website IndieWire called it another "moral thriller" from Mungiu that pulls "harder and harder at the tension between complex socioeconomic forces and the simple human emotions they inspire". Mungiu is part of Romania's New Wave of film-makers tracking the realities of the post-communist transition who have scooped up prizes at international festivals for the past two decades.

He admitted at Cannes that those acclaimed movies have been far less popular at home. "(Romanians) don't really like what we do—they don't really understand why somebody likes it somewhere else," he said. "But for us it's really important that we managed to create some sort of a movement which is now complex enough—there are quite diverse film-makers expressing themselves. "At some point I think it will be acknowledged as something good that we did also for the culture of Romania." The Palme d'Or will be awarded on May 28. — AFP

Kill Japan's elderly? Cannes film probes chilling idea

A Japanese film-maker is shaking Cannes film audiences to the core with a dystopian vision of her country in which old people agree to be euthanized to solve the challenge of a rapidly ageing population. "Plan 75" by Japanese director and writer Chie Hayakawa is based on a very real problem. Japan is the most rapidly-ageing industrial society, a trend that is causing huge economic and political problems as a dwindling number of younger people must support a growing army of the old.

Close to 30 percent of Japan's population is over 65, the majority women, and that rate is expected to continue rising in coming decades. In the movie, anybody over 75 is encouraged to sign up for a deal with the government by which they receive a sum of money in return for agreeing to be euthanized. A collective funeral is thrown in for free. Slick ad campaigns and calls from people with soothing voices are part of the effort to get people to sign up. Handsome advisors list the small pleasures candidates could afford with the money. "You'll be able to go to the restaurant," says one.

"On the face of it, the government's Plan 75 is full of goodwill and friendliness and pragmatism, but in truth it is both very cruel and shameful," Hayakawa told AFP in an interview. "The

ageing of the population is not a recent problem, I've always heard people discussing it," she said. "When I was young, a long life was considered to be a good thing, people had respect for older people. That's no longer the case," the 45-year-old director added.



Japanese director and screenwriter Chie Hayakawa poses during a rendez-vous for her film "Plan 75" at the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.

'Cold and cruel'

"Plan 75", Hayakawa's first full-length feature film, is full of slow sequences with minimal camera movement. "I wanted the images to be aesthetic and beautiful, as well as cold and cruel, just like the plan itself," she said. Asked how close to today's Japanese reality her scenario is, Hayakawa quickly answered "eight out of 10".

She said she interviewed older people as part of her research for the movie, and discovered that many found merit with the idea of buying financial security with their willingness to end their life. "It would alleviate the stress of wondering how they can survive once they are alone. Choosing the moment and the method of their death could be very reassuring," she said. She said the approach would find support among the younger generations, too. —AFP



Filipino actress Stefanie Arianne (left), Japanese director and screenwriter Chie Hayakawa (center) and Japanese actor Hayato Isomura arrive for the screening of the film "Plan 75" at the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

Tilda Swinton says stories are vital as new fantasy film hits Cannes

Tilda Swinton said Saturday that the world needs stories more than ever as her fantastical new fable "Three Thousand Years of Longing", from "Mad Max" creator George Miller, premiered at Cannes. Swinton plays an academic who releases a djinn (played by British star Idris Elba) from a bottle she finds in an Istanbul market, who offers her three wishes. The djinn tells her how he found himself trapped—

throwing the audience back through a series of fabulous folktales reminiscent of "The Arabian Nights"—though seeded with doubts about what is true and what is deception.

Speaking at Cannes, Swinton said it was fitting for a film "about having a variety of angles". "The thing that's dangerous about stories is when you only have one story," she told a press conference. "It's so clear now, particularly in the last few months that... when people only hear one story, things go down the tubes fast," she said, in an apparent reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "Keeping our ears and hearts open—that's really important," she said. On a lighter note, the film team faced the inevitable question of what three wishes they would make if they had the chance.

"I wish I had a better answer for that very question," Elba said with a chuckle. "My second wish is that the audience

takes from this film that we learn from stories and that this is quite an unconventional telling of a story. "And my third wish would be for an electric Ferrari," he added, to laughs from the reporters. Miller is the lauded Australian director behind such varied films as "Mad Max", "Babe" and "Happy Feet".

Given that his new film is a celebration of centuries-old myths, he was asked for his thoughts on Hollywood's current obsession with superhero franchises and whether they would endure. "It's obvious that the Marvel and DC Universe are basically the vestiges of the Greek, Norse and Roman mythologies," Miller said. "They're echoes of the past but adjusted to have meaning to us and it's no accident that they're so popular and that the people making them are sincere," he added. —AFP



British actress Tilda Swinton arrives for the screening of the film "R.M.N." during the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Imagineer Costumeur Ella Clarke sorts props in the company's workshop in Coventry, central England. — AFP photos



Imagineer designer Trudy Rees-Marklew makes a prop in the shape of a swan in the company's workshop.



Life-sized models of corgi dogs are seen lined up in Imagineer's workshop.

Queen's pet passions to take centre stage in Jubilee parade

Corgi dogs, horses and swans are all being put through their paces in a historic warehouse in Coventry ahead of their starring roles in a parade to mark Queen Elizabeth II's 70-year reign. One of the procession's tableaux, entitled "The Queen's Favorites", has been commissioned from Imagineer, an outdoor events company based in the English West Midlands city.

Director Jane Hytch said the royal commission came as a "total surprise", but that the job was a "huge honor". The parade, touching on more personal aspects of the 96-year-old queen's life, will wind through central London to Buckingham Palace on June 5.

"When we were given the queen's favorites... we thought about what does she love outside of all her duties?" said artistic director Kathi Leahy. Dogs and horses were the obvious choices. In particular, Leahy focused on the queen's most famous canine companions, the short-legged, big-eared corgis. A pack of 20 corgi puppets, mounted on wheels, will be stars of the show. The lead puppet is named Susan, after the first corgi given to Princess Elizabeth by her parents for her 18th birthday. Each one has its own expression. One, with full brown eyebrows, has been nicknamed Groucho Marx.



Imagineer maker and puppeteer John Leahy makes a prop of a boat in the company's workshop.

Lady Godiva

To make the puppets as lifelike as possible, each of the young handlers was asked during rehearsals at "Corgi training camp" to "really look at their dogs and think about the character". "Are they mischievous? Are they young? Are they old?" explained Leahy. The parade also has a special place for horses, another of the queen's great passions. It will bring to life 10 of her most beloved companions: from

Peggy, the Shetland pony given to her by father King George V when she was four, to Burmese, the mare she rode several times during annual "Trooping of the Color" ceremonies to mark her birthday.

Some of the horses are depicted with gears, in a tribute to Coventry's rich industrial past. It was on the site of Imagineer's workshop that the first British motor car was built, at the end of the 19th century. To celebrate the city's heritage, a giant Lady



Jane Hytch, Chief Executive of Imagineer, hugs a life-sized model of a corgi dog beside a giant model of a crown in the company's workshop.

Godiva puppet, created for the 2012 London Olympics, will also take part in the parade.

It pays tribute to the 11th century figure who, according to legend, rode naked through the city on horseback to persuade her husband the Earl of Mercia to lower taxes. The procession, bringing together 140 cast members, will also evoke the annual counting of swans on the Thames. By ancient tradition, all swans in England

belong to the crown. It will also use boats dear to Prince Philip, in a tribute to the queen's husband, a former naval commander who died in April 2021 at the age of 99. Hytch noted that with a global television audience watching the pageant, "there'll be a lot of adrenaline, a lot of excitement" for the Imagineer crew. "We've rehearsed and rehearsed, so I think we will do a great job." — AFP



This file photo shows a PsychoKitty NFT (Non-Fungible Token) created by psychedelic artist Ugonzo displayed on a phone and a NFT logo displayed on a computer screen from a Crypto.com NFT marketplace. — AFP

'Enormously risky': How NFTs lost their luster

A slew of celebrity endorsements helped inflate a multi-billion dollar bubble around digital tokens over the past year, but cryptocurrencies are crashing and some fear NFTs could be next. NFTs are tokens linked to digital images, "collectable" items, avatars in games or property and objects in the burgeoning virtual world of the metaverse. The likes of Paris Hilton, Gwyneth Paltrow and Serena Williams have boasted about owning NFTs and many under-30s have been enticed to gamble for the chance of making a quick profit.

But the whole sector is suffering a rout at the moment with all the major cryptocurrencies slumping in value, and the signs for NFTs are mixed at best. The number of NFTs traded in the first quarter of this year slumped by almost 50 percent compared to the previous quarter, according to analysis firm Non-Fungible.

They reckoned the market was digesting the vast amount of NFTs created last year, with the resale market just getting off the ground. Monitoring firm CryptoSlam reported a dramatic tail-off in May, with just \$31 million spent on art and collectibles in the week to May 15, the lowest figure all year. A symbol of the struggle is the forlorn attempt to re-sell an NFT of Twitter founder Jack Dorsey's first tweet. Dorsey managed to sell the NFT for almost \$3 million last year but the new owner cannot find anyone willing to pay more than \$20,000.

The year of scams

Molly White, a prominent critic of the crypto sphere, told AFP there were

many possible reasons for the downturn. "It could be a general decrease in hype, it could be fear of scams after so many high-profile ones, or it could be people tightening their belts," she said. The reputation of the industry has been hammered for much of the year. The main exchange, OpenSea, admitted in January that more than 80 percent of the NFTs created with its free tool were fraudulent—many of them copies of other NFTs or famous artworks reproduced without permission.

"There's a bit of everything on OpenSea," said Olivier Lerner, co-author of the book "NFT Mine d'Or" (NFT Gold Mine). "It's a huge site and it's not curated, so you really have no idea what you're buying." LooksRare, an NFT exchange that overtook OpenSea for volume of sales this year, got into similar problems as its rival. As many as 95 percent of the transactions on its platform were found to be fake, according to CryptoSlam.

Users were selling NFTs to themselves because LooksRare was offering tokens with every transaction—no matter what you were buying. And the amounts lost to scams this year have been eye-watering. The owners of Axie Infinity, a game played by millions in the Philippines and elsewhere and a key driver of the NFT market, managed to lose more than \$500 million in a single swindle.

"As soon as you have a new technology, you immediately have fraudsters circling," lawyer Eric Barbry told AFP. He pointed out that the NFT market had no dedicated regulation so law enforcement agencies are left to cobble together a response using existing frameworks. Molly White said strong regulation could help eliminate the extreme speculation but that could, in turn, rob NFTs of their major appeal—that they can bring quick profits. —AFP

'A great joy': Punk laureate Patti Smith granted France's highest honor

As a child, punk-poet icon Patti Smith was instructed never to accept anything from strangers—which meant one day she was forced to decline a campaign button she coveted and everyone else had. While dejectedly walking to her New Jersey family home, she vowed to her future self that she would soon acquire her own medals to add to her lapel.

On Saturday, the 75-year-old rock legend made good on that promise, as France's ambassador to the United States Philippe Etienne bestowed her with the Legion d'Honneur, his country's highest order of merit. Smith regaled a rapt audience with that touching anecdote after her medal ceremony in central Brooklyn, where crowds gathered for the "Night of Ideas," an annual marathon of philosophy and performance put on by the French Embassy's Villa Albertine in partnership with the Brooklyn Public Library.

"It's an indescribable honor, I understand the gravity of it," she told AFP backstage, after delivering a spirited performance alongside her daughter Jesse on piano and her long-time collaborator and guitarist Lenny Kaye. "For someone... who has been greatly shaped by French culture, French literature, French art, and film, just my whole life—it's especially meaningful," she continued. "I embraced France my whole life, and to receive an embrace like this in return is a wonderful thing."

For more than half-a-century, Smith has been celebrated as an artist's artist, adored for her music, songwriting, poetry



US singer-songwriter Patti Smith reads from the book "Mount Analogue" after receiving the highest French order of merit "Legion d'Honneur" during the "Night of Ideas" event.

and deeply introspective, raw writing that in 2010 won the US National Book Award for her stirring memoir "Just Kids." The book sees Smith excavate memories from her relationship with Robert Mapplethorpe, the late photographer with whom she shared a deep friendship, romance and creative bond.

"I feel like it's very fitting to have such an accolade here in Brooklyn—it's only a couple of subway stops away that Robert Mapplethorpe and I lived at 20-years-old," she told the audience. "At night, when Robert couldn't sleep, he would ask me to read him French poetry... I remember those nights so clearly." Smith also felt a particular kinship to the venue of Saturday's ceremony. "It's also fitting that it should be a library, because coming from a very rural area of South Jersey, with very little culture in the '50s and mid-'60s, I depended on the library to open and expand my world," she said.

In typical Smith fashion, she honored

the artists who came before her in closing her acceptance speech, having opened with a performance of her 1996 song "Wing." The rock laureate read the final letter by spiritual-surrealist poet Rene Daumal, which he wrote to his wife before his death. "Seeing that you are nothing you desire to become," Smith read. "In desiring to become, you begin to live."

People make change

Following the ceremony Smith donning her signature black blazer atop a black vest, along with combat boots and her long, gray hair flowing as a few small braids framed her face-delighted fans with a show that included her hit "People Have The Power," which she wrote with her late husband, Fred "Sonic" Smith. Speaking to AFP, she said that while "artists can always inspire people, they can rally people, give people hope... in the end, it's not artists who make change, it's the people."

"Through voting, through initiative, through mass marches—it's the people that make change." Citing the ongoing pandemic and the "pain of war," Smith said "we are living in a very troubled world," underscoring climate change as the great crisis of our time. "There are heat waves right now that are unprecedented... there's tremendous famine, and violent weather patterns we've never seen," she said.

"The only way it can be solved is a global effort, and I think more than anything... that is the most important thing that people have to address. "However small the gesture, every gesture is important." Smith is set in the fall to release a new book entitled "A Book Of Days," a visual collection inspired by her beloved Instagram account. These days "I'm writing just as always," she told AFP, "writing songs, writing poems, writing another book—I'm always busy, always doing something."

After her performance, Smith said the medal inspired her to do "more work, better work," and it "felt very fitting to work right after I received it." "I still feel like I've got a little, you know, that post-performance adrenaline," she smiled, "but also just the excitement and happiness... of receiving such an honor." "That I would be chosen to, you know, be a sort of a mini-ambassador for the country is really a great joy for me," she said. "So you leave me a happy girl." — AFP



French Ambassador to the US Philippe Etienne presents the highest French order of merit "Legion d'Honneur" to US singer-songwriter Patti Smith during the "Night of Ideas" event at the Brooklyn Public Library in New York. — AFP photos

Sports

Hurting Tiger withdraws from PGA after woeful 79

Pereira grabs 3-shot PGA lead as top six hunt first major

News in brief

Napoli beat Spezia 3-0

MILAN: Napoli ended their season with a comfortable 3-0 Serie A win at Spezia which was stopped for over 10 minutes following clashes between opposing supporters on Sunday. Luciano Spalletti's team were already leading against Spezia on captain Lorenzo Insigne's last game for the club thanks to Matteo Politano's fourth-minute opener when objects were thrown by fans in the home and away sections. That quickly escalated with home fans spilling onto the pitch and players from both teams trying to calm supporters down. DAZN reported that Napoli fans had caused some problems in La Spezia before the match so home fans smashed up their transport and the tension was carried into the match. Piotr Zielinski put the away side two ahead almost as soon as the match was restarted midway through the first half with a powerful close-range finish. — AFP

Norrie wins 4th career title

LYON: British top seed Cameron Norrie won his fourth career title and second of the season on Saturday when he defeated Slovakia's Alex Molcan 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 6-1 in the Lyon ATP final. World number 11 Norrie, who was runner-up to Stefanos Tsitsipas in 2021, recovered from squandering two match points in the second set to seal victory. It was Norrie's first clay court title after hard court triumphs in Delray Beach this year and Indian Wells and Los Cabos in 2021. "It is my first title on the clay so it means a lot to me," said Norrie. "I can't be happier with how I handled everything this week. I had chances to close the matches in straight sets and get it done easier than usual and it didn't go that way and I was able to let that go and respond. In the third set I moved really well and it is nice to get over the line." — AFP

Russia captain quits Zenit

MOSCOW: Russian captain Artem Dzyuba announced on Sunday that he was leaving Zenit Saint Petersburg, two months after asking to be left out of the national squad because of the conflict in Ukraine. "Saint-Pet, thank you for everything!" the 33-year-old striker wrote on his Instagram account. The message was accompanied by a video showing a man in a superhero costume reciting a text of thanks in front of the Gazprom Arena, the Zenit stadium. In a statement, the club thanked Dzyuba for his "sparkling play, incredible dedication, goals, assists, records and our joint victories". The striker arrived at the club in the summer of 2015. — AFP

Fiorentina beat Juventus

MILAN: Fiorentina will return to European football for the first time in five years after beating Juventus 2-0 to qualify for next season's Conference League. Alfred Duncan's finish on the stroke of half-time and Nicolas Gonzalez's late penalty gave Vincenzo Italiano's side the win they needed to guarantee continental competition. Fiorentina ensured seventh spot in Italy's top flight, three points ahead of Atalanta who lost 1-0 at home to Empoli and miss out on Europe for the first time since Gian Piero Gasperini took over as coach in 2016. Giorgio Chiellini made his final appearance in a Juve shirt in a typically feisty match between big rivals and he left the field with a bleeding head after a clash with Fiorentina forward Krzysztof Piatek in build up to Duncan's winner. — AFP

Mayweather dominates Moore

ABU DHABI: Boxing great Floyd Mayweather danced and showboated his way through a one-sided exhibition bout against former sparring partner and fellow retiree "Dangerous" Don Moore in Abu Dhabi early on Sunday. The former welterweight world champion, wearing UAE colours, spoke directly to the cameras and chatted with the referee in between unleashing flurries at his outclassed fellow American. It was the third exhibition appearance for Mayweather, 45, who retired from professional boxing with an unprecedented 50-0 record after beating UFC star Conor McGregor in 2017. — AFP

Badminton champ stunned

HANOI: Singapore's badminton world champion Loh Kean Yew had to settle for silver after being stunned in the men's final at the SEA Games by Thailand's rising star Kunlavut Vitidsarn on Sunday. The 21-year-old Kunlavut won gold with a 21-13, 21-13 victory in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi on the last day of competition at the regional Games. World number 10 Loh took the lead in the first game but his Thai rival, ranked 18th and a three-time world junior champion, battled back to draw level before pulling away in decisive fashion. Kunlavut was always in control in the second game, his surprise victory dealing Singapore a major blow in what was the city-state's opportunity to win men's singles gold for the first time in nearly 40 years at the Games. — AFP

TULSA: Tiger Woods withdrew from the PGA Championship after limping to a nine-over par 79 in Saturday's third round, his remarkable comeback from severe leg injuries succumbing to a painful reality. Woods withdrew from a major for the first time as a professional and only the second time ever following the 1995 US Open.

After struggling to the third-worst major round of his career with pain in his surgically repaired right leg, the 15-time major winner would not commit to playing Sunday's final round at Southern Hills. "Well, I'm sore," Woods said. "I know that is for a fact. We'll do some work and see how it goes." It didn't go well, and just after the round was completed, Woods let organizers know he was done. "We admire Tiger's valiant effort to compete here at Southern Hills and wish him the best as he continues to recover from his injuries," said PGA of America president Jim Richerson.

Chile's Mito Pereira sank a 27-foot birdie putt at the par-4 18th hole to seize a three-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the PGA Championship. But with the leaderboard's top six each seeking a first major title and a trio of major winners just behind them, the scene was set for a Sunday showdown at Southern Hills. Pereira, making only his second major start, fired a one-under-par 69 to finish 54 holes on nine-under 201. He's the first player to hold an outright 54-hole lead in his PGA debut since winner John Daly in 1991.

"Really happy how I ended up playing," Pereira said. "The birdie on 18 was a bonus. Just happy to be in this position." England's Matthew Fitzpatrick and American Will Zalatoris shared second on 204, one stroke ahead of American Cameron Young with Mexico's Abraham Ancer fifth on 206 and Irishman Seamus Power sixth on 207. Only Ancer and Power has ever won US PGA Tour titles. But Fitzpatrick, never better than seventh in 27 prior major starts, has won seven times on the DP World Tour.

Jabeur, Thiem crash at the French Open

PARIS: Arab trailblazer Ons Jabeur crashed out of the French Open at the first hurdle on Sunday as Spanish teenage sensation Carlos Alcaraz prepared to give Roland Garros a glimpse of the future of Grand Slam tennis. Sixth seed Jabeur, seen as a potential champion, despite never having previously got past the fourth round, lost 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 to Poland's 56th-ranked Magda Linette. Jabeur came into the event with a season-leading 17 wins on clay in 2022 and with the prestigious Madrid title under her belt.

However, she was undone Sunday by 24 unforced errors in the two hour 28-minute match. Linette had lost to Jabeur in the third round in 2021 having stunned an injury-hit top seed Ashleigh Barty in her previous match. "I just tried to stay focused after the first set and tried to make her uncomfortable. I was happy to fight for every single point," said Linette who needed treatment on a leg injury after dropping the first set.

"I wanted to put her in the situation where she couldn't move me around as much." Two-time runner-up Dominic Thiem, whose ranking has slipped to 194 after a lengthy battle with a wrist injury, was another early casualty, losing 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 to 87th-ranked Hugo Dellien of Bolivia. Thiem, the 2020 US Open champion, has yet to win a match in six attempts since his return in March. He has now lost

Titmus smashes Ledecy's 400m freestyle record

ADELAIDE: Ariarne Titmus smashed American great Katie Ledecy's 400m freestyle world record at the Australian championships Sunday, touching in 3mins 56.40secs to reinforce her dominant status after a breakout Tokyo Olympics. The 21-year-old upset Ledecy in the Olympic pool last year to claim gold and has now bettered her arch rival's 3:56.46 world best set at the 2016 Olympics in Rio. "Oh my God, I've just loved swimming the past six months, just going to training with no pressure and just enjoying the sport," Titmus said poolside in Adelaide. "Coming here with no pressure, apart from the pressure I put on myself, which is still pretty high, it's just fun."

"I never thought this meet, post-Olympics, I'd be swimming faster than Olympic trials and the

RB Leipzig win first German Cup trophy

BERLIN: Ten-man RB Leipzig lifted the German Cup at the third attempt on Saturday winning 4-2 on penalties having fought back to draw 1-1 against Freiburg after extra-time. "To win with ten men says a lot about our mentality and I'm really proud. It's great to finally get a first title," said Leipzig midfielder Emil Forsberg. Maximilian Eggstein gave Freiburg an early lead at Berlin's Olympic Stadium before Christopher Nkunku equalized inside 90 minutes after Leipzig had Marcel Halstenberg sent off.

Leipzig's triumph comes having lost their previous German Cup final appearances to Bayern Munich in 2019, then Dortmund last season. "That's crazy, we played 60 minutes with ten men," Leipzig



TULSA: Tiger Woods of the United States walks to the tee during the third round of the 2022 PGA Championship at Southern Hills Country Club on May 21, 2022. — AFP

"I've put myself in a lot of winning positions in Europe," Fitzpatrick said. "Having that experience, it bodes well. Winning in Europe will definitely help." The top major winners in the hunt were Americans Bubba Watson, Justin Thomas and Stewart Cink, who shared seventh on 208, seven adrift of Pereira. No one has ever rallied from more than seven strokes back in the last round to win the PGA.

Woods suffered severe right leg damage in a February 2021 car crash and spent weeks hospitalized and months unable to walk. But he made an emotional return 14 months after the accident to finish 47th at last month's Masters, his major feat being to walk 72 holes at hilly Augusta National while huge crowds of spectators cheered him at every hole. His second comeback event didn't end so well.

10 tour-level matches in a row. His last victory came in Rome just over a year ago.

'Not greatest feeling'

The 28-year-old Austrian, a former world number three, reached at least the quarter-finals at Roland Garros five years running from 2016 to 2020. He finished runner-up to Rafael Nadal in 2018 and 2019. "It's not the greatest feeling to go in a Grand Slam knowing that all is not perfect in practice. I don't play like I would like to in practice," said the Austrian. Alcaraz, 19, bidding to become just the eighth teenager to capture a major men's title, is widely tipped to end the dominance of 13-time champion Rafael Nadal and two-time winner Novak Djokovic. He is the tour's dominant player in 2022, winning a season-leading 28 matches with just three losses.

Three of his titles have come on clay in Rio, Barcelona and Madrid where he defeated Nadal, Djokovic and world number three Alexander Zverev to take the title. Later Sunday, Alcaraz begins his French Open campaign against Argentine lucky loser Juan Ignacio Londero, ranked at 141 but who made the last 16 in 2019. Alcaraz was ranked 97 this time last year. He was only two when Nadal won the first of his 13 French Opens in 2005 but he made his mark at the 2021 tournament where he came through qualifying to reach the third round.

"He definitely is special," admitted Djokovic of Alcaraz who also claimed the prestigious Miami Masters earlier in the year. Top seed Djokovic, who celebrated his 35th birthday on Sunday, and fifth-seed-

Olympic Games. I guess if you keep surprising yourself it keeps the sport interesting," she added. Titmus was under world record pace for the entire race, turning at the halfway mark in 1:56.99 before bringing it home to huge cheers from the crowd. Ledecy won the 400 free at the US trials last month in 3:59.52. But Titmus is not expected to defend her world title against her rival in Budapest in June, opting to skip the event and focus on the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in July.

It capped an impressive meet for the Australian who won the 200m freestyle in 1:53.31, the third fastest time ever. She beat Ledecy to win Olympic gold in that event too. Titmus also clocked a personal best in the 100m in Adelaide, but opted out of the 800m. It was the second world record of the meet after Olympic 200m breaststroke champion Zac Stubblety-Cook smashed that mark on Thursday, hitting the wall in 2:05.95.

Double Olympic backstroke champion Kaylee McKeown swept to victory in the 200m medley in 2:09.15. It was her fourth win of the event after coming home first in the 400m medley and 100m and 200m backstroke. "It was tough race and tough

managing director Oliver Mintzlaff told ARD. "We're going to party hard, this is an historic evening for us." The trophy ceremony was delayed while a person, believed to be a fan, was treated next to the pitch for a medical emergency. It is the first major title won by RB Leipzig, who are backed by energy drinks giants Red Bull and were only founded in 2009.

They shot up Germany's football pyramid with four promotions in seven years to reach the Bundesliga in 2016/17, twice finishing second to Bayern Munich in the last six years. Leipzig coach Domenico Tedesco finishes his first season with a trophy having replaced Jesse Marsch last December. In Saturday's shoot-out, Freiburg captain Christian Guenter, then replacement striker Ermedin Demirovic failed to convert their penalties as Leipzig nailed all four of theirs.

Freiburg stamped their authority when

Woods made five consecutive bogeys at a major for the first time in his career from the ninth through 13th holes and stood on 12-over 222 after 54 holes when he pulled the plug. "I didn't do anything right," Woods said. "I didn't hit many good shots. Consequently I ended up with a pretty high score."

After struggling to his worst Masters rounds with weekend 78s, Woods again could not follow the effort to make a cut in Tulsa with a solid round. Woods struggled to his worst-ever score in 79 PGA Championship rounds and his only worse major scores were a 10-over 81 in the third round of the 2002 British Open and a 10-over 80 in the first round of the 2015 US Open. "I just didn't play well," Woods said. "I didn't hit the ball very well and got off to not the start I needed to get off to." — AFP



PARIS: Tunisia's Ons Jabeur serves the ball to Poland's Magda Linette during their women's singles match on day one of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament at the Court Philippe-Chatrier in Paris on May 22, 2022. — AFP

ed Nadal, with 41 Grand Slam titles between them, are not in action until Monday. Also sitting out the opening day is women's world number one Iga Swiatek, the 2020 champion, who is on a 28-match win streak, having won five successive tournaments. — AFP



ADELAIDE: Ariarne Titmus of Australia competes in the women's 400 metre freestyle final on day five of the 2022 Australian Swimming Championships in Adelaide on May 22, 2022. — AFP

training and hopefully come back in a few weeks a bit stronger," she said. Shayna Jack also shone with the world's fastest 50m freestyle time this year, taking the mantle from star veterans Cate Campbell and Emma McKeon who skipped the Australian event and will not be at the world championships. — AFP

Eggstein's shot from outside the area rocketed past Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi on 19 minutes. Leipzig protested furiously as replays showed the ball clipped the hand of Freiburg's Roland Sallai in the build up but the goal stood after a VAR review. The momentum swung towards Freiburg when Halstenberg was left with his head in his hands after earning a red card by pulling the shoulder of Freiburg striker Lucas Hoeler, who was through on goal.

Leipzig deserve credit for fighting back as defender Willi Orban headed a free-kick to the far post where Nkunku tapped in. Despite the numerical disadvantage, Leipzig pushed for the winner. Only a reflex save by Freiburg goalkeeper Mark Flekken kept out a Dominik Szoboszlai free-kick, then Dani Olmo fired wide from close range. Freiburg replacement striker Janik Haberer had a shot palmed onto the post, then clipped the crossbar in extra time. — AFP

Sports

Heat battle past Celtics to take series crucial 2-1 lead

Adebayo delivers a 31-point masterpiece

BOSTON: Bam Adebayo delivered a 31-point masterpiece as the Miami Heat dug deep to defeat the Boston Celtics 109-103 on the road and take a crucial 2-1 lead in their Eastern Conference finals series on Saturday. After an injury forced Miami talisman Jimmy Butler out of the game at half-time, Adebayo stepped up with a superb all-round display to hold off a ferocious Boston fightback at the Celtics' TD Garden. Adebayo, who had averaged just eight points a game in the first two fixtures of the best-of-seven series, finished with 10 rebounds, six assists and four steals in addition to his 31-point haul.

That helped Miami close out a thrilling battle which had seen the Celtics claw their way back from a whopping 26-point first-half deficit to get within one point with just under three minutes remaining. "Those last couple of games, my team depended on me and I didn't show up," Adebayo said afterwards. "I took it upon myself to lock in and get the win." Miami coach Erik Spoelstra praised Adebayo's readiness to fill the void created by Butler's second-half absence.

"He did his version of what Jimmy does in doing what is needed in the game," Spoelstra said of Adebayo. "He was assertive in key moments. And it wasn't just the scoring—he did so many things in terms of getting us organized, facilitating, defending against a team that presents a lot of challenges. He's a winning player. "He really is the heart and soul of our group... When Jimmy was out in the second half, he stabilized us because it got a bit gnarly out there."

Costly turnovers

Boston, who had routed the Heat to level the

series in Miami on Thursday, were left counting the cost of 23 turnovers that led to 33 opposition points. "We didn't match them from the start," Celtics coach Ime Udoka said. "It looked like we were kind of wilting to the pressure, and complaining to the refs. "It took us out of the game from the start. Disappointing to come out that flat in a conference final game. When you turn the ball over 23 times and gift them 33 points, you dig yourself a hole."

Boston's Jaylen Brown produced a magnificent scoring performance with 40 points, but Miami's P.J. Tucker successfully bottled up Celtics star Jayson Tatum to deprive the home team of a crucial offensive weapon. Tatum finished with just 10 points from 3-of-14 shooting.

Although the game went down to the wire, it looked early on as if the Celtics were headed for a painful drubbing as the Heat roared into a 46-20 lead early in the second quarter. But with the prospect of a blowout looming, the Celtics rallied, going on a 10-0 run to close the half which trimmed the Miami lead to 15 points. The return of Kyle Lowry at point guard also changed the offensive balance for Miami, giving Boston another headache in addition to the resurgent Adebayo.

Until the late second-quarter rally, Boston had struggled to cope with the movement of Miami's offense, and also were left ruing 11 first-half turnovers. A chaotic start to the second half saw Miami confirm that Butler was ruled out of the remainder of the game with right knee inflammation. Soon afterwards Boston suffered what looked like a cruel blow when Smart twisted his right ankle in a collision with Lowry and hobbled to the locker room.



BOSTON: Bam Adebayo #13 of the Miami Heat dunks the ball against the Boston Celtics during Game 3 of the 2022 NBA Playoffs Eastern Conference Finals on May 21, 2022. —AFP

Incredibly, Smart returned to the fray to deafening roars and promptly drained a three-pointer to get Boston back to within 10 points of Miami. Boston kept chipping away at the lead and moved within nine of Miami at one stage, but the Heat weathered the storm and took a 15-point lead into

the fourth quarter. Again Boston edged back with Brown's three-pointer making it a one-point game. But a huge Max Strus three-pointer and an Adebayo bucket pulled Miami back clear as the Heat hung on for the win. Game four of the series takes place in Boston on Monday. —AFP



Al-Tomoooh Sports Club organizes health forum

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Al-Tomoooh Sports Club organized a health awareness forum for members of the special Olympics and their parents under the theme "if my health interests you." Several renowned medical personnel and top dignitaries attended the forum. Professor Khalid Al-Sabeeh, Dr Abdulwahab Mohammad, Dr Mohammad Al-Saqqa, the National Director of Special Olympics, Chairwoman of Tomoooh Club Rihab Buresli and board members also attended the event.

Health related subjects were discussed. Official spokeswoman of the international special Olympics in MENA region Mariam Theyab gave a lecture that was highly appreciated. Rihab Buresli lauded the



participation of the elite group of doctors and the attendance of the special Olympics members and their families. She said this health forum is part of integrated programs being executed by the special Olympics which includes sports, training, prepare leaders, and health care.

The excellent results and the positive returns of the programs for players and their families gave us more confidence and motive to continue. Dr Khalid Al-Sabeeh lauded the initiative of Tomoooh Club to extend links of cooperation and attracting medical centers to provide health care for this dear group.

nator-after Mumbai's victory.

"It was unbelievable, the emotions in the changing room were unbelievable," Kohli said after he and the rest of the team watched the Mumbai-Delhi game on TV. "Thank you Mumbai, will remember this for a long time," he said. Du Plessis said, "The last game we played we felt almost like we played our best game of cricket of this campaign so far and that's how you want to enter those knockout stages. "We needed someone to do us a favor in Mumbai so we're really thankful for that but obviously, now the work starts again."

It has been a topsy-turvy 15th edition of the IPL, held in India for the first time in its entirety since the pandemic but in just two cities—Mumbai and Pune—and with limited spectators. Five-time winners Mumbai-led by Kohli's replacement as India captain Rohit Sharma—had a shocker, ending bottom of the table with 10 losses. Also keeping up the rear were defending champions Chennai, led by MS Dhoni, who finished ninth in a season of surprises. Two new franchises—Gujarat and Lucknow—finished first and third. —AFP

Mbappe in position of power at PSG after agreeing to new deal

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe's decision to stay at Paris Saint-Germain confirms the Qatar-backed club's position of power within European football but also means the superstar striker is likely to wield huge influence as they rebuild for another assault on the Champions League. The 23-year-old had for so long seemed certain to sign for Real Madrid before being persuaded to commit to a new three-year deal at PSG, the club he joined in 2017 from Monaco.

His new salary is set to be even more eye-watering than before and accompanied by an astronomical signing-on fee: there were reports that Real's own offer included a signing-on fee of 150 million euros (\$154m). Yet PSG will also be determined to do everything they can to provide Mbappe with a team good enough to deliver finally the trophy he wants the most, and that the Qataris have chased without success since arriving in Paris in 2011.

This season's defeat in the last 16 to Real Madrid following a collapse in the second leg was just the latest humiliation for PSG in the Champions League, a series that most notably includes the 6-1 defeat to Barcelona in 2017. Five years ago they reacted to that stinging loss by signing Neymar from Barcelona as well as a teenage Mbappe. Now they have exacted revenge on Madrid by denying them Mbappe.

"I always said that Paris was my home. I hope I can carry on doing what I love most—playing football and winning trophies," the player said after the announcement of his new deal and before scoring a hat-trick in PSG's 5-0 win over Metz on Saturday in their last game of the season. Hours after that came the news that sporting director Leonardo—heavily criticised by supporters—had been fired. Reports in France on Sunday suggested PSG may now look to replace Leonardo with Luis Campos, the Portuguese recruitment guru who helped build title-winning teams at Lille and Monaco and knows Mbappe well.

Pochettino set to follow Leonardo

Coach Mauricio Pochettino is also expected to leave despite delivering the club's French record-equalling 10th league title. "I only found out a few minutes before the official announcement," admitted the Argentine on Saturday when asked about Mbappe's new deal. Pochettino has struggled to stamp his mark at PSG, although it is not clear who they might look to as a successor—the possibility of Zinedine Zidane appears unlikely. Then there is the team itself. "It is a big step forward, but there is still a lot of work to be done," admitted captain



Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe

Marquinhos following Mbappe's decision to sta.

PSG's recruitment of Lionel Messi has not worked out as hoped, the former Barcelona man managing just 11 goals in his first season in France. Messi won his seventh Ballon d'Or last year but will be 35 next month, while Neymar continues to struggle with his form and fitness. Could PSG look to offload both as they make Mbappe the undisputed figurehead of their project? And if so who would be willing and able to take Messi and Neymar off their hands?

Too much influence?

A sensible approach for PSG would surely be to focus more of their efforts on bringing through the best players emerging from the vast Paris region, one of the most fertile breeding grounds for footballing talent in the world. Too many academy graduates have left PSG early in recent years. The latest France squad features Mike Maignan, Adrien Rabiot, Kingsley Coman, Moussa Diaby and Christopher Nkunku, all former PSG players who chose, or were encouraged, to depart.

Nkunku has just won the player of the year award in the Bundesliga after scoring 35 goals for RB Leipzig. But front and centre is Mbappe, the World Cup winner from the northern Paris suburb of Bondy who finished the season with 39 goals. There is arguably no more thrilling sight in modern football than Mbappe running at full speed at an opposition defence. His pace is astonishing. He is a voracious goal-scorer and the player expected to dominate the sport for years to come.

And as Pochettino remarked: "Kylian really identifies with this city." The prospect of winning a first Champions League with his hometown team will be an enticing one for Mbappe, but giving one player such power is a risk. "The danger is that PSG become Mbappe FC," said France 1998 World Cup winner Bixente Lizarazu, speaking on television show Telefoot. "They need to try not to have this rock-star policy. They need to build a collective." —AFP

Golden boy Kohli gets a shot at first IPL title

NEW DELHI: Faltering superstar Virat Kohli and his IPL side Royal Challengers Bangalore have a shot at winning their first title after a late blitz and a bit of luck secured them a playoff spot. Bangalore, led by Faf du Plessis after Kohli stepped down, sneaked in as the fourth side to make the final four after Delhi Capitals went down to wooden-spooners Mumbai Indians on Saturday.

With eight wins in 14 league matches, Bangalore entered the play-offs for the third time in a row in the Indian Premier League, and will play Lucknow Super Giants in the eliminator on Wednesday. Kohli, who bounced back from three golden ducks this season with a match-winning 73 in his team's last league game, tweeted "Kolkata"—venue of the elimi-

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics					
Sabah Hospital	24812000	Clinics	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764	
Amiri Hospital	22450005		Kaizen center	25716707	
Maternity Hospital	24843100		Rawda	22517733	
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700		Adaliya	22517144	
Chest Hospital	24849400		Khaldiya	24848075	
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010		Kaifan	24849807	
Adan Hospital	23940620		Shamiya	24848913	
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300		Shuwaikh	24814507	
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000		Abdullah Salem	22549134	
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9		Nuzha	22526804	
				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, Santosh Tucarama Raicar, R/o H.NO. 1131, Tolecanto Velim Salcete Goa. Hereby change my name from Santosh Tucarama Raicar to Santosh Tucarama Raicar, as per my birth certificate and also my father's name from Raikar Tucaram to Tucarama Dormu Raicar and mother's name from Raikar Ratna to Ratna Tucarama Raicar. Therefore in all my future dealings & documents I shall be known as Santosh Tucarama Raicar. Sd/- SANTOSH TUCARAMA RAICAR (C 1450)

Automated enquiry about the Civild card is 1899988

EMERGENCY 112



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Brazilian midfielder Fernandinho lifts the Premier League trophy as City players celebrate on the pitch after their English Premier League match against Aston Villa at the Etihad Stadium on May 22, 2022. — AFP

City retain Premier League title

Burnley relegated • Leeds beat the drop • Spurs qualify for Champions League

LONDON: Manchester City won the Premier League for the fourth time in five seasons after a pulsating title race reached a dramatic conclusion as the champions staged an incredible comeback from two goals down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 on Sunday. Pep Guardiola's side were teetering on the brink of blowing the title after falling 2-0 behind midway through the second half at the Etihad Stadium.

But Ilkay Gundogan sparked an astonishing City revival as the German midfielder reduced the deficit before Rodri grabbed the equalizer. Gundogan turned in City's third goal in the space of five minutes in the 81st minute, triggering wild celebrations and rendering second placed Liverpool's 3-1 victory against Wolves irrelevant. City finished with 93 points, one ahead of Liverpool as they ended their rivals hopes of winning an unprecedented quadruple.

On a breathtaking final day, Burnley were relegated as Leeds beat the drop, while Tottenham qualified for the Champions League at the expense of their north London rivals Arsenal. It was City who hogged the spotlight on a day their fans, who spilled onto the pitch in delight, will never forget. Guardiola's men can rightly be called a dynasty after joining Manchester United as the only clubs

in the Premier League era to have won four titles in five seasons, with Alex Ferguson's teams doing it on three separate occasions.

The eighth league title in City's history is Guardiola's ninth major trophy since arriving at the club in 2016. Once again, City saved the best until last as they edged Liverpool out on the final day of the season for the second time after beating them to the finish line in 2019. It was 10 years since Sergio Aguero's famous last-second goal against QPR sealed City's first title since 1968 and this jaw-dropping success was almost as unlikely.

Guardiola had called on City's fans to be "loud, loud, loud" in their bid to retain the crown, but they were stunned into silence in the 37th minute. Lucas Digne whipped in a cross from the left and Matty Cash got in front of Joao Cancelo to score with a bullet header. Former Liverpool star Philippe Coutinho doubled Villa's lead with a cool finish in the 69th minute. The shell-shocked Guardiola slumped into his seat, but City would not surrender and Ilkay Gundogan headed them back into contention in the 76th minute.

Rodri's low strike from the edge of the area two min-

utes later set up a nerve-jangling finale. And in the 81st minute, Kevin de Bruyne's low cross reached Gundogan at the far post and the substitute tapped home to send City into ecstasy. Having already won the FA Cup and League Cup, Liverpool can still enjoy a memorable season of their own if they beat Real Madrid in the Champions League final in Paris on Saturday.

Spurs back in Champions League

Liverpool trailed City by 14 points in January, but Klopp's side pushed them to the wire, showing the fortitude that earned them the nickname "mentality monsters" from their manager. Liverpool were rocked after just three minutes when Pedro Neto produced a close-range finish from Raul Jimenez's cross. Sadio Mane equalized with a clinical strike from just inside the area after sprinting onto Thiago Alcantara's pass in the 24th minute.

Mohamed Salah poked Liverpool ahead with six minutes left but by then news of City's extraordinary recovery had reached Anfield, which was in subdued mood by the time Andrew Robertson scored in stoppage-time. Tottenham's 5-0 rout of relegated Norwich secured fourth

place at Carrow Road. Just a few weeks ago, Antonio Conte had insisted it would take a "miracle" for Tottenham to finish in the top four, but the Italian has masterminded a superb run that ends his club's two-year absence from the Champions League.

Dejan Kulusevski's 16th minute tap-in from Rodrigo Bentancur's pass put Tottenham ahead before Harry Kane struck with a diving header in the 32nd minute. Kulusevski curled a sublime shot into the far corner in the 64th minute and Golden Boot winner Son Heung-min scored in the 70th and 75th minutes. Tottenham's victory left north London rivals Arsenal in fifth place despite their 5-1 win against Everton.

Burnley's six-season stay in the top tier ended with a 2-1 home defeat against Newcastle, with Leeds staying up after a 2-1 win at Brentford. Leeds started the day below Burnley on goal difference, but the Clarets were beaten by Callum Wilson's brace, while Jesse Marsch's team escaped thanks to Raphinha's penalty and Jack Harrison's last-gasp strike. Manchester United lost 1-0 at Crystal Palace, but qualified for the Europa League thanks to West Ham's 3-1 defeat at Brighton. —AFP



KUWAIT: Photos show opening ceremony of the Third Gulf Games. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, ministers, sports officials and guests attended the ceremony. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait grabs 59 medals at Third Gulf Games

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and in the presence of Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the official opening ceremony of the Third Gulf Games was held on Sunday. In a press statement, His Highness welcomed the Gulf sports delegations in their second country (Kuwait) - the land of friendship and peace, and wished them success. He expressed his hope that the tournament would achieve its noble goals in promoting communication and meeting between brothers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and improving their sports standards, which will enable



them to participate in strong international competitions. Meanwhile, Kuwait teams continued their lead at the Third Gulf Games as they remained on top of the medals table with 59 medals (22 gold, 19 silver and 18 bronze). Bahrain took the second position with 45 medals (17 gold, 16 silver, and 12 bronze); Qatar - third - with 39 medals (12 gold, 15 silver and 12 bronze); Oman - 4th - with 25 medals (11 gold, 5 silver and 9 bronze). Saudi Arabia - 5th - with 34 medals (7 gold, 9 silver and 18 bronze) while UAE remained 6th with 23



medals (7 gold, 9 silver and 7 bronze). The sixth day of competitions had just one medal in the Women's Individual Cycling Time Trial. The gold went to UAE's Safia Al-Sayegh (19:36.31 minutes), followed by Kuwait's Latefa Al-Yassen who took second position with 19:39.40 minutes and Saudi Arabia's Daniah Sembawa (third) with 20:02.34 minutes. Meanwhile, the Women's Individual Road Race will take place on Monday on the Jaber Bridge (7:00 am). The Ice Hockey will kick off at the Winter Games Club

Hall in Bayan area with two matches between UAE and Saudi Arabia (3:30 pm), followed by Bahrain and Kuwait match at 7:00 pm.

Club president Fuhaid Al-Ajmi said the club prepared very well for the sports event. Al-Ajmi lauded the support of the president of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah. He said Kuwait's Ice Hockey team members are ready for the competitions after training in Turkey.

eSports start today

The men's eSports will start on Monday with the participation of the six Gulf countries: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, UAE and Qatar. Players will compete in the FIFA 22 Game at Al-Jumaira hotel starting from 1:00 pm.

Basketball semifinal

Kuwait basketball team will face Saudi Arabia's team at 5:00 pm in the semifinals while UAE will face Bahrain at 8:00 pm in the second match. The fifth and final round of the preliminaries resulted in Qatar defeating UAE 72-61 and Bahrain beating Saudi Arabia 63-51.