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New residency law stiffens penalties on visa traders

MP insists duration of visit visas remains limited to three months

Russia firm on boosting ties with Kuwait

MOSCOW: Russia has affirmed its determination to pursue elevating the level of “traditional and friendly relations with Kuwait in diverse sectors”. The Russian foreign ministry said in a statement, posted on its website, that the Special Representative of the President of Russia for the Middle East and North Africa, Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, affirmed Moscow’s stance toward Kuwait during a celebration held by the ministry in honor of Kuwaiti Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Adwani on the occasion of his tenure’s conclusion.

The statement affirmed the two countries’ resolve to evolve the traditional and friendly

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MOSCOW: Kuwaiti Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Adwani receives the Order of Friendship in appreciation for his efforts to bolster Kuwait-Russian relations. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Head of the National Assembly’s interior and defense committee MP Saadoun Hammad said on Sunday that the main purpose of the sweeping amendments to the residency law is to toughen penalties on visa traders. Hammad said that the new draft law, approved by the committee on Thursday, raises jail terms for visa traders to up to five years from three years currently and increases the fine to KD 10,000 from KD 3,000.

The lawmaker added that the penalty is repeated for each case of visa trading and is doubled in case of repetition or in case the convict is a civil servant. Authorities in Kuwait have been cracking down on visa traders who recruit expat laborers to Kuwait against illegal fees and then fail to provide them with jobs. In recent months, the government has referred several cases of suspected visa trading to courts, which have passed various verdicts.

Hammad said that according to the bill, the maximum duration of visit visas for foreigners is three months, and not one year as claimed by some MPs. Visitors must then leave the country unless they manage to obtain a

legal residence permit, the lawmaker said.

Hammad stressed that the duration of a normal residency permit is for five years, which can be renewed on expiry, denying reports that such residencies cannot be renewed, forcing expats to leave the country. He said the same applies to residency permits valid for 10 years given to children of Kuwaiti women and owners of real estate.

Hammad said the bill grants for the first time foreign investors with residency permits valid for up to 15 years, and the guidelines and conditions for such visas will be set by the government. The new bill also regulates the residency of domestic helpers and limits its duration with the duration of the work contract, which can be renewed, Hammad said.

He added that domestic helpers are not allowed to change their work without the approval of the sponsor. Domestic helpers are not allowed to stay outside Kuwait for more than four months, otherwise they will lose their residency. According to the draft law, sponsors or employers will bear the cost of deporting expats unless they are illegally employed or given shelter by others, who will then pay the cost.

Resident tries to smuggle Captagon from Lebanon

BEIRUT: Lebanese authorities on Sunday arrested a Saudi man at Beirut airport who attempted to smuggle 18.3 kilograms of the illegal stimulant Captagon out of the country, the interior ministry said. Lebanon’s interior ministry said in a statement that the drugs were destined for Kuwait. The ministry added that the man is a Saudi citizen and a Kuwait resident who holds documents saying he works in “security” there. Under its normal practice, it did not name the suspect.

Trade in Captagon in the Middle East grew exponentially in 2021 to top \$5 billion, posing an increasing health and security risk to the region, a report by the New Lines Institute said in April. Syria is the main producer of the amphetamine-type drug, and Saudi Arabia the main consumer.

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Tensions over Zionist march in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: Thousands of Zionists on Sunday started the annual nationalist “flag march” through Jerusalem that regularly stokes Palestinian anger, a year after tensions in the disputed Holy City exploded into war. Some 2,000 police were deployed for the event that marks the Zionist entity’s 1967 capture of east Jerusalem, home of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Across annexed east Jerusalem, many Palestinian flags flew from rooftops ahead of the “Jerusalem Day” march, which began at 4:00 pm (1300 GMT) in west Jerusalem, with participants heading towards the Old City. Earlier Sunday, flag-waving Jewish nationalists chanting pro-Zionist slogans, among them a far-right lawmaker, visited Al-Aqsa.

Isolated clashes broke out at the Old City’s Damascus Gate where dozens of Zionist nationalists danced in front of Palestinians, one of whom raised his shoe in an Arab insult. Police reported more than

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JERUSALEM: A Palestinian man raises a shoe against Zionists waving their national flags at Jerusalem Gate on May 29, 2022. — AFP

Jordan’s plastic trash turned into art with message

AMMAN: Jordan-based artist Maria Nissan is on a mission: To rid the world of single-use plastics and to raise public awareness about the environmental scourge through eye-catching art. One of her best-known murals graces the side of a building in the capital Amman, a giant work made from more than 2,000 plastic bottles, almost 1,000 shopping bags and over 150 hookah pipe hoses.

A US citizen of Iraqi origin, Nissan said she became enchanted with Amman when she first visited three years ago, but also felt “frustration and anger” at the piles of garbage on the streets and in areas of natural beauty. “Despite the beauty of the city, walking its streets can be a journey filled with all kinds of trash,” the 35-year-old said.

“My eyes cannot turn away from the abundant shiny plastic bags, glass bottles, soda cans, candy bar wrappers,” said Nissan, who occasionally sports



AMMAN: Maria Nissan, an environmental activist and artist, creates an art installation from plastic waste collected from the streets on May 17, 2022. — AFP

a dress made from a sturdy blue Ikea bag. Trained in painting and drawing in the United States and Italy, Nissan decided to collect and repurpose the trash to create art - often collages themed on women’s faces, flowers and Oriental motifs. — AFP (See Page 12)

Fatal nosebleed fever shocks Iraq as cases surge

NASIRIYAH, Iraq: Spraying a cow with pesticides, health workers target blood-sucking ticks at the heart of Iraq’s worst detected outbreak of a fever that causes people to bleed to death. The sight of the health workers, dressed in full protective kit, is one that has become common in the Iraqi countryside, as the Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever spreads, jumping from animals to humans.

This year Iraq has recorded 19 deaths among 111 CCHF cases in humans, according to the World Health Organization. The virus has no vaccine and onset can be swift, causing severe bleeding both internally and externally and especially from the nose. It causes death in as many as two-fifths of cases, according to medics. “The number of cases recorded is unprecedented,” said Haidar Hantouche, a health official in Dhi Qar province.

A poor farming region in southern Iraq, the



DHI QAR, Iraq: A worker from the health department disinfects calves at a small farm near a house in the village of Al-Bojari on May 25, 2022. — AFP

province accounts for nearly half of Iraq’s cases. In previous years, cases could be counted “on the fingers of one hand”, he added. Transmitted by ticks, hosts of the virus include both wild and farmed animals such as buffalo, cattle, goats and sheep, all of which are common in Dhi Qar.

In the village of Al-Bujari, a team disinfects animals in a stable next to a house where a woman was infected.

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Local

Social norms, stereotypes still stand in women entrepreneurs' way to success

'Society still lacks full confidence in women leaders'

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: According to the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs for 2019, opportunities for a woman to become an entrepreneur are closely related to where she was born and reached adulthood. Meanwhile, the World Economic Forum revealed in "The Gender Gap" report for 2021 that Kuwait dropped 21 places in the index, which measures equality between women and men in the areas of health, education, economy and politics.

As for sub-indicators, Kuwait ranked 137th globally in economic participation and employment opportunities among both sexes. Bedour Al-Sumait, President of the Business and Professional Women Federation, told Kuwait Times about the difficulties Kuwaiti entrepreneurs face locally.

"Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs face many challenges according to social traditions - finishing paperwork at government authorities such as the General Administration of Customs and the Ports Authority is one of them," she said, adding "there is no law preventing women from visiting such places, but the social pressure that does not accept the

presence of women in these places is more powerful."

Lack of confidence

Sumait rued that the local society still does not have full confidence in women entrepreneurs, mostly in leadership positions, explaining that women entrepreneurs are facing difficulties getting other companies' attention due to the stereotypical image of the lack of women's ability to run businesses compared to men. "Men dominate most leadership positions in Kuwaiti government departments. Meanwhile, if a woman manages to reach such a position, she will face excessive scrutiny on her work, until she is removed from the position," Sumait said. "We have seen many examples of women leaders who succeeded to upgrade their organization to a better position, but they were fought."

On the role of local women's societies to achieve women entrepreneurs' goals, Sumait said regular monthly meetings help a lot in exchanging experiences between entrepreneurs, although "until this day, the government did not open a way to benefit from our experiences," she lamented.



Bedour Al-Sumait

Sumait called on the Kuwaiti government to give more powers and confidence to women to take leadership positions. "In Kuwait, we lack commercial and financial facilities for Kuwaiti women entrepreneurs that other GCC and Arab countries provide through their chambers of commerce, such as reduced fees on imports and exports and rapid processing of paperwork for women," Sumait said.

"One of the main obstacles that all Kuwaiti entrepreneurs are facing in Kuwait is red tape in issuing electronic licenses and other documents, which

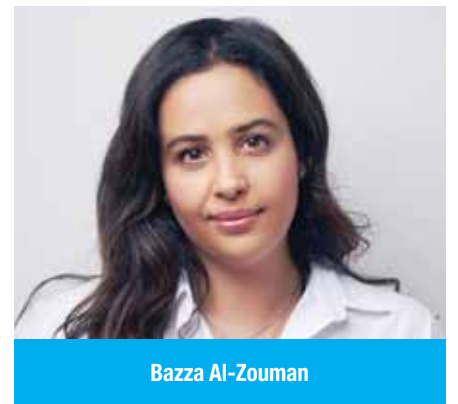


Dalal Al-Rayes

affects our business' performance," she said, adding "high rents also do not help the small entrepreneur to start their business."

No difficulties

Conversely, business entrepreneur Dalal Al-Rayes thinks there are no difficulties facing women in the business field. "When women enter a field that is confined to men, the opportunities for her to succeed are more than in other fields, because she will stay in people's minds," she said. "However, there are different challenges between men and



Bazza Al-Zouman

women, but I don't think they are holding us back. As long as we have a strong background, nothing will stop us," she assured.

Another business entrepreneur, Bazza Al-Zouman, believes women in Kuwait are empowered by the government with lots of opportunities. "Despite the difficulties women entrepreneurs are facing, Kuwait has the economic stability, purchasing power and a well-educated society that understands the success of a woman," she said. "We should focus on opportunities to take advantages of, and not just focus on the challenges."

'Company Program' announces 2022 competition winners

KUWAIT: Under the sponsorship of Gulf Bank, a panel of judges at INJAZ Kuwait's "Company Program" announced the winners of this year's competition. This year's event was held on May 27-28 in the presence of representatives from both Gulf Bank and the INJAZ Foundation, as well as a large number of male and female students, their parents, volunteers, and school teachers, in addition to other supporting and sponsoring companies affiliated with INJAZ.

This year, the award of "Best Student Company for the year 2022" was given to Eco International in the high school students' category and Zabeel in the university students' category.

The award for the best innovative product in the schools category was won by the Khutwa team and the universities category Haqibat. The winners of the best social impact product in the high schools category were the Active team, and the G Pharmacy team in the universities category. Finally, the winner of the best display booth from the high schools category went to Envo Char and the winner from the universities category went to Tafarudi.

This year's panel of judges included Gulf Bank's Head of Investment Management, Dalya Al-Qassem, with multiple Bank volunteers also playing a major role in guiding and assisting competing youth at all stages of their projects. This year, Gulf Bank's team also provided mentorship programs and mock interviews to the students.

Gulf Bank's activities

On this occasion, the Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Lujain Al-Qenaei, said: "We would like to congratulate the winners of this year's competition, and we would like thank the INJAZ Kuwait foundation and our panel of judges for their role in yet another successful edition of our annual competition. We are wishing the winning teams the utmost success in the upcoming regional competition."

Qenaei expressed her pride in Gulf Bank's continuous collaboration with the INJAZ Kuwait foundation over seventeen consecutive years of strategic partnership that have resulted in the launch of multiple innovative ideas and companies, some of which have become part of the world's economy and local business industry in Kuwait.



Winners of the "Best Student Company for the year 2022" award.

She pointed out that both local and global market requirements are changing rapidly, emphasizing the importance of Gulf Bank's strategic partnership with the INJAZ Foundation in providing local youth with the support and expertise they will need to ensure their competitiveness in the market.

She also explained that Gulf Bank's volunteer team played a major role in guiding and assisting competing youth at all stages of their projects. This year, Gulf Bank's team also provided mentorship programs and mock interviews to Kuwait University and Box Hill College students.

Qenaei also emphasized Gulf Bank's keenness to support and develop professional work skills among local youth as part of its social responsibility program, heading various educational initiatives throughout the year that have a sustainable impact on the lives of youth and society. INJAZ Kuwait's Company Program is extremely popular among local high school and university students, as it provides an unprecedented opportunity for students to practice establishing and managing companies, from developing a business idea to conducting feasibility studies, selling shares, working as management teams, developing business plans, producing and selling products and services and eventually liquidating the company with profit/loss statements.

Laila Al-Mutairi, the CEO of INJAZ Kuwait, added that the faith of private sector institutions, companies and supporting bodies in these initiatives is one of the drivers behind the continuity and success of the INJAZ Kuwait Foundation. Al-Mutairi noted that their partnership with Gulf Bank is an extraordinary one, as it is a strategic partnership that has extended over multiple years. Gulf Bank is considered a primary supporter of the foundation's activities, regularly providing volunteers at INJAZ events and participating in training programs for students.

She added that INJAZ Kuwait has trained more



KUWAIT: Dalya Al-Qassem from GBK with Laila Al-Mutairi from INJAZ.

than 100,000 male and female students across various training programs that aim to refine youth skills in three areas: workplace readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. Al-Mutairi also noted that INJAZ Kuwait continues to look forward to providing local youth with the necessary skills and preparation needed to face any challenges the future may hold.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Kuwaiti inventor wins silver medal at invention exhibition

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwaiti inventor Nuha Al-Mae won the silver medal at the 33rd International Exhibition of Inventions and Technological Innovations "Malaysia ITEX 22" in Detecting radioactive contamination. The Kuwaiti Ambassador to Malaysia Dr Hamad Burahma congratulated Mae on her achievement, wishing all success to Kuwait and GCC countries' delegation, who had a distinguished participation in the annual scientific event. Mae stated, "I appreciate Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, as they turned my idea into a patent with full support and guidance from them." She commended the efforts of the Patent Office in the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for its support and dispatch for inventors to attend international exhibitions. Mae added that the obtained innovation includes radioactive contamination detection of (TC.99.M) in nuclear medicine facilities such as hospitals, laboratories and factories. The ITEX International Exhibition of Invention, Innovation and Technology is a professional marketplace for ideas and inventions, bringing together the best ideas from all over the world. —KUNA



KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwaiti inventor Nuha Al-Mae receives the silver medal at Malaysia ITEX 22. —KUNA



AMMAN: A group photo of officers participating in Shields of Al-Nashama 2 military exercise. — Defense Ministry photos

Kuwait Army takes part in military drill in Jordan

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Army, represented by the Amiri Guards, participated in the joint "Shields of Al-Nashama 2" military exercise for security and protection held in Jordan. The Army's Chief of the General Staff command said in a press release on Sunday the exercises included shooting from different types of weapons, protection operations, storming and evacuating buildings, using motorcades' vehicles and helicopters to evacuate important personalities in danger or under attack.

It added that attendees praised the personnel's top combat performance, their efforts to attain



Distribution of certificates to the participants at the end of the exercise.

maximum readiness, noting that certificates and memorial shields were distributed to the participants at the end of the exercise. The drill was attended by Kuwait's Amiri Guard Commander Major General Hamad Al-Saleh; from the Jordanian



Officials exchange memorial shields at the end of the exercise.

Armed Forces and Arab Army Assistant for Operations and Training, General Abdullah Shdeifat, and the Commander of the Royal Guard Colonel Hamad Al-Jaafrah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri meets Qatari Assistant Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Khlaifi. —KUNA

Deputy FM, Qatari official discuss global happenings

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri held talks on Sunday with the visiting Qatari Assistant Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Khlaifi, focusing on current developments in the region and around the world, in addition to bilateral relations. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait focuses on students' weak points instead of talents: Consultant

Effort to make homeschooling an approved option for parents

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The focus of education in Kuwait is on the weak points of the students instead of focusing on their talents and developing them, a parenting consultant said. Speaking during a seminar on the future of education in Kuwait, the educator revealed that she and other parents are trying to persuade the ministry of education to make homeschooling an approved option for parents.

Parenting consultant Duaa Al-Edrees made those remarks while participating in a seminar held Saturday at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre. The session, titled 'children's education, future and upbringing', took place as part of the Kuwaiti Women's Week that highlighted Kuwaiti women's roles in various fields.

Edrees said social media helped her to communicate with parents during the coronavirus pandemic. "Social media helped to reach parents and speak with them about how to deal with children during the e-learning period and how to fill the gap that schools did not achieve," she said. Edrees is a mother of two who is committed to spreading awareness of good parenting on social media. She is an avid reader who is passionate about topics related to parenting, the environment, natural foods and maintaining a healthy domestic life.

During the event, she noted that academically, Kuwait did not stop educating students, but because of the education gap, many parents noticed the deficiency in dealing with differences between students. "Every student is a unique individual, different in learning, needs and interests. There are also other factors underlying differences between students. The focus in Kuwait is on the weak points of the students instead of focusing on what he or she is talented in and developing that. There must be an intellectual change for parents to cultivate values in children and teach them how to deal with bullying, and sympathize with the situation," Edrees said.

Edrees revealed that she and other parents are trying to persuade the ministry of education

to make homeschooling an approved option for parents. "There is a defect in education. I notice creativity is getting less and less once the student registers for school, because of the traditional methods of education they use that depends only on grades. Schools in Kuwait need years of development," she added.

System flaws

Meanwhile, Ghada Khalaf, Co-founder of Education First, said after the pandemic, the education system showed its flaws, since online learning was new to Kuwait. "That is when our campaign 'Education First' started, where a group led by parents, educators and teachers



Social media helped reach parents during e-learning period

worked to prioritize the educational strategy in the country and reopen schools in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic," she said.

"During the pandemic, we noticed the education gap between students. Children did not have the same opportunities in education due to their learning differences. The pandemic highlighted that the education system and parents must give every student their right and distinguish between their abilities. Learning should be equal at all levels because a stumbling student has troubles dealing with e-learning," she explained.

On the other hand, Khalaf noted the pandemic allowed some students who have social anxiety to become more productive during online learning, where each student has their own personality and character. "Kuwait must accept students' diversity and allows all kinds of education. Therefore, parents and students can choose



KUWAIT: (From left) Duna Al-Mashaan, Ghada Khalaf and Duaa Al-Edrees attend the seminar at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

what suits them. The approval of various kinds of educational methods is the responsibility of the decision-makers and the state policy to keep pace with the developments and to be part of the fourth revolution," Khalaf pointed out.

Social interaction

Duna Al-Mashaan, Co-founder of Education First with a PhD in Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership, said: "The COVID-19 curfew affected children on the social interaction level. A study indicated there is a decrease in students' motivation to study. Children do not want to interact in the traditional way anymore. We must stop the traditional teaching methods and memorization system. The method of teaching must develop to make children have their own thinking, skills, language and communication, which

will make their brains more acceptable to arithmetic, science and studies."

Mashaan pointed out that children in Kuwait have psychological and physical problems, and do not want the boring traditional methods; rather they want change, adding many types of curricula motivate the child to think, make mistakes and complete, away from the curricula of indoctrination.

"Parents must say their children prefer one form of education over the other. We are now stuck between going back to traditional methods and what changed during the coronavirus period. We must follow the child's curiosity and develop the curriculum. There must be a change even in universities, as exams cause panic and stress, not only for students, but also among parents," she said.



KUWAIT: A woman browses on a phone as she walks amidst a severe dust storm in Kuwait City on May 23, 2022. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Strong winds to cause poor visibility in Kuwait this week

KUWAIT: Kuwait Meteorological Center said on Sunday the weather is forecast to be affect-

ed with 55 km/h northwesterly winds as of midday Monday. Chief forecaster Yasser Al-Bloushi said that the winds were expected to pick up sporadically, causing visibility to drop less than 1,000 meters, particularly in uninhabited regions. At sea, waves will elevate to more than six feet. Bloushi added that the conditions would begin to improve, gradually, starting Wednesday morning. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Firemen responded to a blaze reported in two warehouses in Abdali that belong to the farmers union. No injuries were reported in the incident, Kuwait Fire Force said, adding that an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

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News in brief

Amir congratulates
Philippine President

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a cable of congratulations to the newly elected President of Philippines Ferdinand Marcos Jr, wishing the friendly country further progress and prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables.

Crown Prince
receives officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Sunday Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. His Highness Sheikh Mishal also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Domestic helpers
could lose residency

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry issued a reminder that domestic helpers' residency visas (article 20) would be terminated if they stay outside Kuwait for more than six months. The period of absence is calculated for helpers located outside Kuwait from December 1, 2021. The ministry urged employers to submit a request for extension if required at the MOI service centers and Residency Affairs Departments before May 31, 2022; otherwise, the visa will be terminated after that date.

US Dollar
at KD 0.305

KUWAIT: The US Dollar traded Sunday at KD 0.305 and the Euro climbed by 0.30 percent to reach KD 0.327 compared with Thursday's rates. The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin the British sterling pound rose by 0.27 percent to reach KD 0.358, the Swiss franc increased by 0.046 percent to KD 0.317 and the Japanese Yen climbed by 0.19 percent to KD 0.0024. The CBK publishes daily average exchange rates that do not necessarily reflect actual prices of the currencies' trade for the day.

KFH: 25,000+
plastic bottles
collected in 5 hours

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House "KFH" participated in an awareness initiative to encourage the culture of recycling and preservation of environment as part of its social responsibility, sustainability strategy and "Keep It Green" campaign. The campaign acts as an umbrella covering several environmental projects and initiatives.

The initiative, held at Assima Mall in collaboration with PUFF, witnessed unprecedented attendance by society members from different ages including children. Environment friendly PUFF bottle was distributed for every 5 plastic bottles.

Group DGM, Public Relations and Media, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, said that the initiative has participated in the collection of more than 25,000 plastic bottles within five hours for recycling, thus depicting the significant social awareness on the need to maintain environment and enhance the recycling culture. Also, it reflects society's interest in taking part in environmental and sustainability initiatives.

He noted that the initiative has witnessed tremendous praise and admiration by Assima mall visitors who participated in exchanging plastic bottles for environment friendly PUFF bottles. They expressed the need to execute such initiatives to enhance the spread of the environment sustainability development culture as part of the world's tendency in this respect.

"Keep it green"

Ruwaieh said that KFH has launched several environmental initiatives under the umbrella of "Keep it green" campaign including signing a strategic partnership with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: This file photo shows the minaret of a Kuwait City mosque as the Liberation Tower is seen in the background. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Handloom expo at Sadu House
showcases textile crafts of India

Indian embassy, NCCAL open three-day exhibition



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Sibi George and NCCAL's Assistant Secretary-General for Cultural Affairs Dr Bader Al-Duwaish jointly inaugurate the handloom exhibition at Sadu House on Sunday.



Dr Bader Al-Duwaish, accompanied by Sibi George, takes a look at a product on display at the exhibition.

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Indian Embassy, Kuwait, in association with National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), on Sunday inaugurated a three-day exhibition of Indian handlooms at Sadu House, showcasing the vibrant textile crafts of India that reflect the country's cultural richness and diversity. The exhibition was jointly inaugurated by Indian Ambassador Sibi George and NCCAL's Assistant Secretary-General for Cultural Affairs Dr Bader Al-Duwaish.

"The Sadu House museum is a place where one could see the strong connect between India and Kuwait in textiles industry particularly in the handloom sector. For many generations, Kuwaiti weavers were importing dyes from India. I am happy that this exhibition is held at Sadu House today. I thank NCCAL and Sadu House for the support," the Ambassador said in his opening remarks.

The exhibition is organized as part of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kuwait. The handloom industry in India has a long tradition of excellent craftsmanship, representing and preserving the vibrant Indian culture. Each region of India has its own textile tradition. Handloom products in diverse variety and style from Jammu and Kashmir to Kerala and Tamil Nadu, from North East to Rajasthan and Gujarat, are on display at the exhibition. "It is both culture and business in action together in this exhibition. In its economic transformation, India considers all the GCC countries including Kuwait as our natural partners. In our relation with Kuwait, there exists an opportunity to enhance our presence in sectors where we have been traditionally strong," the ambassador pointed out.

He identified many sectors such as food materials, textiles, chemicals, gems and jewelry, engineering machinery etc, where Kuwait and India are traditionally partners. "In the long-term, we could move up the value chain in several sectors such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, design outsourcing, development of cutting-edge technologies, ICT and AI across several sectors. It is in this context that this exhibition gains significance. It is part of our efforts to celebrate our cultural connect and at the same time enhance our economic engagement with Kuwait," he added.

One of the oldest industries, Indian handloom sector is varied, with hand-spun and hand-woven textiles sectors at one end of the spectrum, while the capital-intensive sophisticated mills sector on the other end. India is the world's second largest exporter of textiles and clothing. The Indian textiles and apparel industry contributes 12 percent to export earnings and holds five percent of the global trade in textiles and apparel. It is expected to grow to \$190 billion by financial year 2026. The industry has a strong infrastructure with about 2.4 million looms of varied designs and construction. The export of handloom products from India is valued at around \$350 million annually. Nearly 15 percent of cloth production in India is from the handloom sector, he informed.

with Kuwait," he added.

"I invite our Kuwaiti friends to be partners in India's economic progress and try out more Indian products," he added. In June last year, the Indian embassy launched yearlong celebrations, holding a series of joint events with NCCAL covering the entire spectrum of culture, art and letters to mark the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and India.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh

KFH has signed a strategic partnership with the Sedra initiative and the voluntary green dream team which includes various environmental projects and activities in the field of plantation and mitigation of carbon emissions. He emphasized that the "Carbon Offset" platform, designed by "Sedra", is the first platform in Kuwait through which carbon emission may be mitigated and other future environment projects may be launched. Ruwaieh added saying "To crown the strategic partnership between KFH, Sedra and the green dream team, KFH has participated in supporting the initial stage of the project which comprises the plantation of 500 trees and providing 3 years care which is the average care period required for the tree to be self-sufficient.

Cleaning Kubbar Island

KFH voluntary team has participated in cleaning Kubbar island in collaboration with the Public Environment Authority and the Coast Guard. KFH is the first bank at the private sector level to support the Agrivage initiative which was established by Kuwaiti youth to transform vegetables and fruits leftovers into manure for the soil.

Environment Friendly Banking Cards

KFH provides 5 products of KFH smart plastic bank cards which are 85.5 percent made of recycled plastic of high global quality and specifications according to the highest environment sustainability standards and certified by specialized global organizations e.g. Visa, MasterCard, IDEAMIA card industry. This industry is the first of its kind in Kuwait as environment friendly initiatives and banking cards compli-



KUWAIT: Large turnout in response to the initiative.

ant to global sustainability practices.

KFH owns an environment friendly KFH Auto showroom fully compatible with green buildings' standards and global sustainability standards. It is the largest auto showroom in the Middle East covering a total area of 38,000 square meters.

Sustainability Report Release

KFH released the sustainability report as part of its group integrated sustainability strategy. The report covers environment, society, financial inclusiveness, employees' rights, customer protection and governance manual in KFH activities, management, and operations at the operational and business continuity levels to achieve an added value for shareholders, customers, partners and interested persons.

Ruwaieh affirmed that KFH is continuing its efforts in "Keep it green" campaign to support various environment initiatives while ensuring to go ahead in its sustainable development strategy. He highlighted that KFH group has the means to be on the right track of

sustainable strategy according to the latest international standards, calibers, and frameworks.

From his side, the CEO of "PUFF" company, Abdullah Al-Habib said that the company is keen on supporting the initiatives related to environment preservation, plastic materials usage codification and benefiting from all available resources.

He added that "We at 'PUFF' are proud to have organized this initiative. We have participated in the collection of more than 25,000 plastic bottles with a wide support from the public who are the essence of this success. We shall donate these materials to specialized companies to recycle the plastic and use it in manufacturing different materials that would benefit society and the world in general."

Habib indicated that PUFF is continuing to support the initiatives that would bring benefit to environment and society. He urged all companies and individuals to participate and support such healthy events that have a positive impact on human beings and all creatures on the face of this earth at present and in the future.



Ex-mayor eyes historic leftist conquest of Colombian presidency

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Pacific ‘very positive’ on Australian re-engagement: PM



POKHARA, Nepal: Family members and relatives of passengers on board the Twin Otter aircraft operated by Tara Air, weep outside the airport in Pokhara on May 29, 2022. —AFP

Nepal flight missing with 22 on board

‘Search operations have been hampered by bad weather’

POKHARA, Nepal: Nepali rescuers scoured a remote area of the lower Himalayas by helicopter and on foot Sunday after a passenger plane with 22 people on board went missing. Nepal’s air industry has boomed in recent years, carrying goods and people between hard-to-reach areas as well as foreign trekkers and climbers. But it has a poor safety record.

The Twin Otter aircraft operated by Tara Air took off from the western town of Pokhara for Jomsom on Sunday at 9:55 am (0410 GMT) but air traffic control lost contact after 15 minutes, the airline said. There were 19 passengers on board and three crew members, airline spokesman Sudarshan Bartaula told AFP. The passengers included two Germans and four Indians, with the remainder Nepali. The aircraft’s last known location was in an area around Ghorepani, a village at 2,874 metres (9,429 feet) above sea level, according to the aviation authority.

The Civil Aviation Authority said that in addition to two choppers, personnel from the army, police and the Himalayan Rescue Association had been deployed to conduct search operations on foot. “Right now we cannot say where exactly where the aircraft is and in what condition. There has not been any reporting or information from locals

about a big fire or any other such indications,” said Dev Raj Subedi, a spokesman for Pokhara Airport. “Search operations have been hampered by the weather. Three helicopters have had to return. An army helicopter is now trying to reach the area,” he told AFP as light began to fade in the region.

Poor record

Jomsom is a popular trekking destination in the Himalayas about 20 minutes by plane from Pokhara, which lies 200 kilometres (120 miles) west of the capital Kathmandu. Tara Air is a subsidiary of Yeti Airlines, a privately owned domestic carrier which services many remote destinations across Nepal.

It suffered its last fatal accident in 2016 on the same route when a plane with 23 on board crashed into a mountainside in Myagdi district. Nepal’s aviation industry has long been plagued by poor safety due to insufficient training and maintenance.

Emotional breakdown

The European Union has banned all Nepali airlines from its airspace over safety concerns. The Himalayan country also has some of the world’s most remote and tricky runways, flanked by snow-capped peaks with approaches that pose a chal-

lenge even for accomplished pilots. The weather can also change quickly in the mountains, creating treacherous flying conditions.

In March 2018, a US-Bangla Airlines plane crash-landed near Kathmandu’s notoriously difficult international airport, skidded into a football field and burst into flames. Fifty-one people died and 20 miraculously escaped the burning wreckage but sustained serious injuries. An investigation found that the captain suffered an emotional breakdown during the flight, distracting the freshly qualified co-pilot who was at the controls when it crashed.

That accident was Nepal’s deadliest since 1992, when all 167 people aboard a Pakistan International Airlines plane died when it crashed on approach to Kathmandu airport. Just two months earlier a Thai Airways aircraft crashed near the same airport, killing 113 people.

In 2019 Nepal’s tourism minister Rabindra Adhikari was among seven people killed when a helicopter crashed in the country’s hilly east. This month Nepal’s second international airport opened at Bhairahawa, aiming to give Buddhist pilgrims from across Asia access to the Buddha’s birthplace at nearby Lumbini and easing pressure on Kathmandu airport. —AFP

Ex-VP Pence steps out of Trump’s shadow

ATLANTA: Sixteen months after the US Capitol was sacked by a pro-Trump mob chanting “hang Mike Pence,” the target of its fury is making nice with the Republican right — and hinting at a bid to rival his old boss for the 2024 presidential nomination.

The former vice president has begun setting aside years of unswerving loyalty to Donald Trump and is showing a newly defiant, independent side as he looks increasingly likely to mount a challenge for the White House. It has been a torrid sabbatical for the 62-year-old evangelical Christian, who became a pariah in Trumpworld after rejecting the Republican leader’s demands that he overturn the 2020 election in his role as president of the Senate.

Berated constantly by Trump after Joe Biden’s victory — and even heckled with chants of “traitor!” at a conservative conference in Florida — Pence continued to praise his assailant in public.

But more recently he has begun to push back, saying Trump was “wrong” to insist vice presidents could overturn elections and emphasizing his differences with Trump on issues ranging from the handling of Russian leader Vladimir Putin to abortion rights.

On Monday, Pence made his most emphatic break yet with the ex-president when he headlined a rally for Trump foe Brian Kemp on the eve of the Georgia governor’s landslide victory over a Trump-backed primary challenger.

“In a little more than a year — think about it — the Biden-Harris administration has unleashed a tidal wave of left-wing policies,” Pence told the crowd, sounding distinctly like a man looking toward the next election.

“It has eroded our standing in the world and stifled the American economy. You know, frankly, Democrats have moved so fast, sometimes I don’t think the left hand knows what the far-left hand is doing.”



ATLANTA: File photo shows former US Vice President Mike Pence takes a selfie with a supporter at a campaign event for Georgia Governor Brian Kemp on the eve of the general primary election in Atlanta, Georgia. —AFP

‘Lost relevance’

Pence’s swing from deference to defiance is uncharacteristically bold given Trump’s record of swatting away fellow Republicans with memorable sobriquets that often stick. Just ask his 2016 primary opponents “Lyn” Ted Cruz, “Low Energy” Jeb Bush or “Liddle Marco” Rubio. Trump has refrained from nicknaming his erstwhile deputy — but expect that to change.

Ahead of the Kemp rally, Trump unleashed his spokesman Taylor Budowich to tell The New York Times that Pence was “desperate to chase his lost relevance” and had been heading for obscurity “before he was plucked up and his political career was salvaged” in 2016. Whether Pence can successfully distance himself from Trump while peeling off the ex-president’s loyal base remains to be seen. But the runes were not encouraging in Georgia, where followers of the former commander-in-chief were picketing the Kemp rally to promote Trump’s fictions of a stolen 2020 election and show their distaste for Pence’s apostasy.

“He didn’t stand up for Trump when the time came,” said Helen Allen, 50, from the Atlanta suburb of Marietta, dismissing the prospect of a President Pence.

“Good luck with that,” scoffed another local Trumpist, 66-year-old Jan Sheffield. “I just hope he can stay out of jail... he’s a traitor because he should have stopped the elections.” —AFP

Downpours in Brazil leave at least 34 dead

BRASILIA, Brazil: Torrential rains that have plagued Brazil’s northeastern Pernambuco state since Tuesday have left at least 34 dead, 29 of which occurred over the previous day, according to the latest official update. “From last Wednesday until midday this Saturday, 34 deaths were recorded in the state,” said the Civil Defense in a statement.

The most dramatic event occurred early Saturday morning when 19 people died in a major landslide in the Jardim Monteverde community, on the border between state capital Recife and the municipality of Jaboatao dos Guararapes.

Six others were killed in another landslide in the municipality of Camaragibe. Two died in Recife and another in Jaboatao dos Guararapes. Five others died earlier in the week, according to the Civil Defense.

Local press reports said three were killed by a landslide in Olinda, and a fourth person died after falling into a canal, also in Olinda. The heavy rains have also forced almost 1,000 people to flee their homes due to the flooding and landslides. President Jair Bolsonaro, in a tweet, expressed his “sorrow and solidarity to the victims of this sad disaster” and said his government will do everything possible “to alleviate the suffering.” He added that teams from the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Citizenship are being deployed “to assist in relief operations and provide the necessary aid to affected families.”

Videos posted on social media show wide flooded avenues in several municipalities, collapsing houses and landslides. According to meteorologist Estael Sias, of the MetSul agency, the heavy rains lashing Pernambuco and, to a lesser extent, four other northeastern states, are the product of a typical seasonal phenomenon called “eastern waves.” —AFP



GUANGZHOU, China: Handout image taken and released by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) shows UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet (L) attending a virtual meeting with Vice Minister Du Hangwei of China’s Ministry of Public Security in Guangzhou, as Bachelet begins a long-awaited and controversial trip to Xinjiang. —AFP

US concerned after UN human rights chief visits China

WASHINGTON: The United States expressed concern on Saturday over China’s “efforts to restrict and manipulate” the UN human rights chief’s visit to the Xinjiang region where Beijing is accused of detaining over a million people in indoctrination camps. Michelle Bachelet’s long-planned trip this week took her to the far-western Xinjiang region, where the United States has labeled China’s detention of a million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities a “genocide.”

“We are concerned the conditions Beijing authorities imposed on the visit did not enable a complete and independent assessment of the human rights environment in (China), including in Xinjiang, where genocide and crimes against humanity are ongoing,” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

The top US diplomat reiterated his country’s stance that Chinese authorities would not allow Bachelet full access during her long-planned trip, saying the United States was “concerned” about China’s “efforts to restrict and manipulate her visit.” Bachelet defended her visit earlier on Saturday while still inside China, saying it was “not an investigation” but called on Beijing to avoid “arbitrary and indiscriminate measures” in its crackdown in Xinjiang. She said the trip was a chance for her to speak with “candour” to Chinese authorities as well as civil society groups and academics. Her visit was the first to China by a UN high commissioner for human rights in 17 years and comes after painstaking negotiations over the conditions of the visit.

“We are further troubled by reports that residents of Xinjiang were warned not to complain or speak openly about conditions in the region, that no insight was provided into the whereabouts of hundreds of missing Uyghurs and conditions for over a million individuals in detention,” Blinken said. “The High Commissioner should have been allowed confidential meetings with family members of Uyghur and other ethnic minority diaspora communities in Xinjiang who are not in detention facilities but are forbidden from traveling out of the region.” —AFP

International

Ex-mayor eyes historic leftist conquest of Colombian presidency

Many Colombians are pinning their hopes on Gustavo Petro

BOGOTA: Colombians vote Sunday in a first round of presidential elections, with a leftist poised for victory for the first time in the country's troubled history. The vote takes place in a tense atmosphere, a year after a brutal security crackdown on street protests that were fueled by deepening socioeconomic woes.

Polls show that many Colombians are pinning their hopes on Gustavo Petro, an ex-guerrilla and former mayor of Bogota, to address poverty, rural violence, urban crime and endemic corruption. Petro, 62, is hoping to avoid a June 19 run-off against 47-year-old Federico Gutierrez, a former mayor of second city Medellin who represents an alliance of right-wing parties.

To do so, he would need to garner more than 50 percent of first-round votes cast. About 300,000 armed police and soldiers will keep the peace at 12,000 polling stations countrywide, under the watchful eye of observers from the Organization of American States and the European Union. Just under 39 million of Colombia's 50 million people are eligible to cast a vote between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm (1300-2100 GMT), though the recent abstention rate has been high at around 50 percent. "I do not vote because it is always the criminals who win," 30-year-old street vendor Andrea Perez told AFP.

Colombia 'needs change'

Ivan Duque—who beat Petro in a runoff election in 2018 — is leaving with record disapproval numbers. Colombian presidents serve only one four-

year term. Around 40 percent of Colombians today live in poverty, and the country has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, according to the World Bank.

The economy was hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic, and one in six city dwellers is unemployed. The Duque government's image was not helped by its internationally denounced response to weeks of anti-poverty protests last year that saw dozens of civilians killed.

"Colombia needs change," office cleaner Petrona Guzman, 43, told AFP on the eve of the vote, in



"Colombia needs change"

which she will make her mark for Petro. "The rich have priority over us, the middle class. It has always been like that. The majority of people are lost."

Petro has promised to address poverty and to make Colombia's economy more environmentally friendly, partly by phasing out crude oil exploration. Gutierrez's focus has been on a "strong



CUCUTA, Colombia: People cross the Simon Bolivar International Bridge to return to San Antonio del Tachira, Venezuela, before the closing of the Colombia-Venezuela border, in Cucuta, Colombia on May 28, 2022, on the eve of the Colombian presidential election. —AFP

state" response to crime in the world's biggest cocaine producer. A key voter concern is a flare-up of rural violence, despite a 2016 peace agreement that officially ended a near six-decade civil conflict. Areas abandoned by the now-defunct FARC guerrilla group became battlegrounds for control of drug and illegal mining resources between other armed groups, with civilians in the crossfire.

Petro, a former member of the M-19 urban rebel group which laid down arms in 1990, has vowed to pursue peace talks with the last remaining guerrilla group, the ELN, which were suspended under Duque. Crime is a problem in the cities too, where residents complain of a rise in robberies they blame in large part on an influx of nearly two million migrants from neighboring Venezuela. —AFP

Worshippers break ranks with Orthodox church

KYIV: Ordinary members of the branch of Ukraine's Orthodox church, until now loyal to Moscow, drove the decision to break ranks with the Russian leadership, its spokesman told AFP Saturday. Archbishop Kliment said the church's congregation felt it could no longer remain silent.

He was speaking inside Kyiv's Pechersk Lavra monastery—one of the most ancient and holy sites in Ukraine—a day after the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow patriarchy declared "full independence". The clerics condemned Russian Patriarch Kirill's vocal support for the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine, in a historic move against Moscow's spiritual authorities.

Bearded and black-robed, Kliment said his church "does not accept, condemns and completely dissociates itself from those statements about Russian aggression in Ukraine that came from the lips of Patriarch Kirill". Kirill is a staunch supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin and has spoken out in support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine several times.

For Kliment, the situation was clear. "The commandment 'thou shall not kill' has

no other interpretations," he said. "It is difficult for me to (understand) the explanation or silence of the representatives of the Moscow patriarchate on the tragedy that is happening today," he added, as tens of thousands are killed and millions displaced.

His wing of Ukraine's church is one of the last links to Russia. It remained loyal despite a 2019 schism that saw the creation of a rival Kyiv patriarchy—a huge blow to Moscow. Kliment acknowledged that his church had "always felt pressure from the state" to break from Moscow—and the authorities here have welcomed the decision of the Kyiv patriarchy.

But this time, he said, the appeals had come from their own worshippers. "There was a need for this, a demand in church society," Ukrainian priests had tried to "reach the patriarch and those directly responsible for the Russian aggression" in Moscow before their decision, he said, but had received no response.

Kliment stressed that clerics from all over Ukraine—including territories controlled by separatists—took part in the council, priests from the war zone in the east joining online. "The council was attended by representatives of almost all the dioceses, including those of the East", he said. Their decision, he said, "will be relayed in (Moscow-annexed) Crimea and in the Donbas". Moscow patriarchy clerics play an important role in territories not under Kyiv's control, he said, often acting



KYIV, Ukraine: Kliment, Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, walks in the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra in Kyiv. — AFP

as a "bridge" with Ukrainian authorities.

They have been involved in negotiating "the return of prisoners or their exchange and the delivery of humanitarian aid", he said. But this week's decision will be testing for priests working in rebel areas, he added. "This requires from these priests a certain courage and wisdom in order to preserve unity in the church and at the same time not to lose the flock in these areas."

Archbishop Kliment played down hopes for broader unity inside Ukraine's Orthodox circles, which was divided by the 2019 schism. "This largely depends on them, because the position held by the representatives of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine is not constructive," he said. —AFP

More than 30 die in stampede at Nigeria food event

ABUJA, Nigeria: More than 30 people were killed in southern Nigeria Saturday after a stampede erupted during a crowded church charity event where food was being distributed. Shoes and slippers lay scattered on the ground after the disaster in Port Harcourt city in southern Rivers State when people tried to force their way into the event, police and witnesses said.

A local Kings Assembly church organisation was offering food and gifts for the impoverished at the Port Harcourt Polo Club when a "mammoth" crowd got out of control, Rivers State police said. "Unfortunately, the crowd became tumultuous and uncontrollable, and all efforts made by the organisers to bring sanity proved abortive," the police said in a statement.

"A total of 31 persons lost their lives in the stampede." Images posted on social media and verified by AFP showed families crying and attending to injured people, many of them children, outside the city's military hos-

pital. Witnesses described frantic pushing and trampling as people trying to get into the entrance were forced back.

"They were telling people 'Go back, go back, go back,'" said witness Chisom Nwachukwu. "Some people that were pushing from backwards were marching on those people." Police said a criminal investigation was underway.

National Emergency Management Agency southern region coordinator Godwin Tepikor told AFP church members had been seated inside when the crowd of people rushed in. "A huge crowd from outside surged into the club through a narrow gate, resulting in the stampede," he said.

Representatives of the church could not immediately be contacted for comment. Nigeria has seen several stampede tragedies over food distribution in recent years, including an aid agency food programme in north Borno State where seven women were trampled to death last year.

Saturday's early morning disaster happened as the opposition People's Democratic Party leaders were gathering in the federal capital Abuja to select their candidate for the 2023 presidential race, with Rivers State governor Ezenwo Nyesom Wike among the hopefuls. —AFP

Tensions over Zionist march...

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20 arrests over "disorderly conduct". The march comes a year after tensions and unrest in Jerusalem led the Islamist armed group Hamas to fire rockets at the Zionist entity from the blockaded Gaza Strip, triggering an 11-day war.

Hamas warned last week that marchers must not pass through the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, saying it would use all means to confront them. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Sunday the march follow "the regular route" and urged participants to be "respectful".

Police said that some 2,600 people had ascended to the compound during Sunday's regular visitation windows - a figure that is higher than normal and includes tourists. Some Jews had "violated visitation rules" and several people were detained, police said without providing further details, before the day's visits concluded.

One group sang pro-Zionist chants, including "Yerushalayim rak shelanou" or "Jerusalem belongs to

us only". Far-right nationalist lawmaker Itamar Ben Gvir, who was among those who went to Al-Aqsa, later said his visit aimed "to reaffirm that we, (the Zionist entity), are sovereign" in the Holy City. Most of the international community does not recognize Zionist control over east Jerusalem, which Palestinians see as the capital of a future state.

Some participants in Sunday's march were set to pass through Damascus Gate on their way to the Western Wall, a controversial route for which police force Palestinians businesses to close. Despite recent violence, tensions have been more muted in the run-up to Sunday's rally compared to last year.

Security analyst Shlomo Mofaz judged that Bennett was betting on the likelihood that for now "Hamas does not have any interest in another war". Some observers believe unrest could be fueled by fallout from the killing last week in Tehran of Iranian Revolutionary Guards colonel Sayyad Khodai.

According to The New York Times, the Zionist entity has informed the United States that the Zionist state's operatives were responsible for gunning him down. Without addressing Khodai's killing, Bennett said that "the era of the Iranian regime's immunity is over ... Whoever arms terrorists ... will pay the full price". — AFP

inside bags that were "stitched in clothing".

Security forces have intensified efforts to thwart smuggling operations after Riyadh suspended fruit and vegetable imports from Lebanon in April last year. It said shipments were used for drug smuggling and accused Beirut of inaction. Lebanese authorities have arrested several Captagon smugglers over the years, most notably a Saudi in 2015 who, along with four Saudi accomplices, tried to smuggle about two tons of pills on a private plane headed to the kingdom from Beirut. — AFP

logue toward international affairs".

Bogdanov, during the ceremony, decorated the outgoing Kuwaiti ambassador with the Order of Friendship, in appreciation for his efforts to bolster Kuwait-Russian relations. Adwani, in remarks to KUNA, expressed gratitude to Bogdanov for the gesture, also manifesting deep appreciation to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov for organizing the honoring ceremony, which depicted the depth of cordial relations between the two states, due to celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties next year. — KUNA

Fatal nosebleed fever shocks Iraq...

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Wearing masks, goggles and overalls, the workers spray a cow and her two calves with pesticides. A worker displays ticks that have fallen from the cow and been gathered into a container. "Animals become infected by the bite of infected ticks," according to the World Health Organization. "The CCHF virus is transmitted to people either by tick bites or through contact with infected animal blood or tissues during and immediately after slaughter," it adds.

The surge of cases this year has shocked officials, since numbers far exceed recorded cases in the 43 years since the virus was first documented in Iraq in 1979. In his province, only 16 cases resulting in seven deaths had been recorded in 2021, Hantouche said. But this year Dhi Qar has recorded 43 cases, including eight deaths.

The numbers are still tiny compared with the COVID-19 pandemic - where Iraq has registered over 25,200 deaths and 2.3 million recorded cases, according to WHO figures - but health workers are worried. Endemic in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Balkans, CCHF's fatality rate is between 10 and 40 percent, the WHO says.

The WHO's representative in Iraq, Ahmed Zouiten, said there were several "hypotheses" for the country's outbreak. They included the spread of ticks in the absence of livestock spraying campaigns during Covid in 2020 and 2021. And "very cautiously, we attribute part of this outbreak to global warming, which has lengthened the period of multiplication of ticks," he said. But "mortality seems to be declining", he added, as Iraq had mounted a spraying campaign while new hospital treatments had shown "good results".

Since the virus is "primarily transmitted" to people via ticks on livestock, most cases are among farmers, slaughterhouse workers and veterinarians, the WHO says. "Human-to-human transmission can occur resulting from close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected persons," it adds. Alongside uncontrolled bleeding,



DHI QAR, Iraq: A worker from the health department disinfects the area around a house in the village of Al-Bojari in Iraq's southern Dhi Qar province — AFP

the virus causes intense fever and vomiting. Medics fear there may be an explosion of cases following the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha in July, when families traditionally slaughter an animal to feed guests. "With the increase in the slaughter of animals, and more contact with meat, there are fears of an increase in cases during Eid," said Azhar Al-Assadi, a doctor specializing in hematological diseases in a hospital in Nasiriyah. Most of those infected were "around 33 years old", he said, although their age ranges from 12 to 75.

Authorities have put in place disinfection campaigns and are cracking down on abattoirs that do not follow hygiene protocols. Several provinces have also banned livestock movement across their borders. Near Najaf, a city in the south, slaughterhouses are monitored by the authorities. The virus has adversely hit meat consumption, according to workers and officials there.

"I used to slaughter 15 or 16 animals a day - now it is more like seven or eight," said butcher Hamid Mohsen. Fares Mansour, director of Najaf Veterinary Hospital, which oversees the abattoirs, meanwhile noted that the number of cattle arriving for slaughter had fallen to around half normal levels. "People are afraid of red meat and think it can transmit infection," he said. — AFP

Resident tries to smuggle Captagon...

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A security official at the airport told AFP the man had placed an estimated 110,000 Captagon pills

Russia firm on boosting ties...

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relations between the two countries in various spheres, namely with respect of expanding bilateral economic, commercial, cultural and humanitarian relations as well as boosting "the vital political dia-

International

Pacific ‘very positive’ on Australian re-engagement: PM

‘For our Pacific Island neighbours, issue of climate change is an absolute national security issue’

SYDNEY: Australia's newly elected prime minister has said Pacific leaders have been “very positive” about his government's renewed engagement, even as Beijing continues its diplomatic blitz across the increasingly contested region.

The comments from Anthony Albanese-aided Sunday in an interview with Sky News-came as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Fiji for closely watched meetings with the island nation's leaders and other Pacific foreign ministers.

Wang, who began his South Pacific tour Thursday in Solomon Islands, is expected to discuss with his fellow foreign ministers a wide-ranging draft agreement and five-year plan, which was leaked last week. The leaked drafts, obtained by AFP, were circulated to at least 10 Pacific nations ahead of the Fiji meeting, sparking concern about Beijing's ambitions to dramatically expand security and economic cooperation within the South Pacific.



boost in aid and a plan to set up a defence training school in the Pacific.

During Australia's recent election campaign, Albanese's centre-left Labor party said the school would involve forces from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. Albanese said Australia's renewed diplomatic push in the Pacific, which began with a visit to Fiji by new foreign minister Penny Wong, had been well-received.

“The response has been very positive,” he said. Australia and China have been locked in a tense duel for influence in the Pacific, after Beijing last month surprised Canberra by securing a wide-ranging security pact with the Solomon Islands. Foreign Minister Wong urged South Pacific nations to spurn China's attempts to extend its security reach across the region while in Fiji on Friday. “We have expressed our concerns publicly about the security agreement,” Wong told reporters in the capital of Suva.

Renewed diplomatic push

Australia ‘dropped the ball’

Albanese was scathing in his assessment of the former Australian government's Pacific plan, saying it had “dropped the ball” in the region-blaming both foreign aid cuts and “a non-engagement on values”. “For our Pacific Island neighbours, the issue of climate change is an absolute national security issue,” he said. In addition to increased action on the environment, Albanese touted a

Climate change a key focus

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang is expected to remain in Fiji's capital until at least Tuesday, meeting with the country's leaders and hosting the second China-Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers' meeting.

Wang met Sunday with Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General Henry Puna, who said economic



Australia's new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

recovery from the pandemic and “urgent and ambitious climate change action” were key issues for their discussion. “We welcome China's climate change commitments,” Puna said.

Wang's whistle-stop tour of the Pacific previously took him to Kiribati, where he signed 10 memorandums of understanding covering climate change,

economic cooperation and other issues-although a security agreement was not among them.

He also visited Samoa, where he signed a bilateral agreement on Saturday promising “greater collaboration”. Wang is expected to visit Tonga, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea to round out his tour. —AFP

Afghan women demand education, work at protest

KABUL: About two dozen Afghan women chanting “bread, work, freedom” protested in the capital on Sunday against the Taliban's harsh restrictions on their rights. Since seizing power in August, the Taliban have rolled back the marginal gains made by women during the two decades of US intervention in Afghanistan.

“Education is my right! Reopen schools!” chanted the protesters, many of them wearing face-covering veils, as they gathered in front of

the ministry of education. Demonstrators marched for a few hundred metres before ending the rally as authorities deployed Taliban fighters in plain clothes, an AFP correspondent reported.

“We wanted to read out a declaration but the Taliban didn't allow it,” said protester Zholia Parsi. “They took the mobile phones of some girls and also prevented us from taking photos or videos of our protest.” After seizing power, the Taliban had promised a softer version of the harsh Islamist rule that characterised their first stint in power from 1996 to 2001.

But many restrictions have already been imposed. Tens of thousands of girls have been shut out of secondary schools, while women have been barred from returning to many government jobs. Women have also been banned from travelling alone and can only visit public gardens and

parks in the capital on days separate from men.

This month, the country's supreme leader and Taliban chief Hibatullah Akhundzada said women should generally stay at home. They were ordered to conceal themselves completely, including their faces, should they need to go out in public.

The decree, which triggered international outrage, carried echoes of the Taliban's first reign, when they made the all-covering burqa mandatory for women. The Taliban have also banned protests calling for women's rights and dismissed calls by the United Nations to reverse their restrictions.

Some Afghan women initially pushed back against the curbs, holding small protests. But the Taliban soon rounded up the ringleaders, holding them incommunicado while denying they had been detained. —AFP



ABUJA, Nigeria: Different banners of Nigeria's opposition party (Peoples Democratic Party) is seen on a wall at the Central Area, Abuja before its National Convention in Abuja, Nigeria on May 28 2022. —AFP

Nigeria's opposition names former VP as 2023 election candidate

ABUJA, Nigeria: Nigeria's main opposition party on Saturday named former vice president Atiku Abubakar as its candidate for the 2023 election to replace President Muhammadu Buhari. Abubakar, 75, a northern Muslim and stalwart of the People's Democratic Party or PDP, has made numerous bids to capture the presidency of Africa's most populous country.

He won most ballots from PDP party delegates who voted in a primary election in Abuja on Saturday, beating a challenge from Rivers State Governor Ezenwo Nyesom Wike. “Today, we are making another history, history which we believe will bring about fundamental changes,” Abubakar told supporters in a national arena in Abuja where the primary took place.

“PDP, PDP, power to the people.” In his acceptance speech he accused Buhari's party of dividing Nigeria along ethnic and religious lines and promised to tackle insecurity and the country's economic woes.

The PDP and Buhari's ruling All Progressives Congress party (APC) were both scheduled this weekend to select candidates for the presidential race in February. But a day before its primaries were to start, the APC announced that it had pushed its party convention back a week to June 6 through June 8.

Buhari, 79, leaves office with Nigeria still struggling to end a more than decade-long jihadist conflict in its northeast and a wave of violent banditry and mass kidnapping in its northwest. Africa's largest economy is also still recovering from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and fallout from the Ukraine war that has pushed up fuel and food prices across the continent.

At least 27 civilians killed in DR Congo massacre

BENI: At least 27 civilians were killed by members of a notorious rebel group in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on Saturday, the army and Red Cross said. The Kivu Security Tracker (KST), which monitors vio-

lence in the region via a team of experts on the ground, posted on Twitter to say that at least 27 civilians had been killed in the attack.

“We heard bullets at dawn in the village of Beu Manyama,” army spokesman Anthony Mualushayi told AFP earlier Saturday. “When we arrived, it was already too late because the enemy ADF had already killed more than a dozen of our fellow citizens with machetes.”

Described by the so-called Islamic State as its local affiliate, the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) have been accused of killing thousands of civilians in DRC's troubled east.

APC wrangling

The APC said the delaying of its own primaries decision followed a ruling by electoral authorities to extend the deadline for the submission of candidates' names. The APC gave no further details, but the ruling party has been caught in fierce wrangling over who should run, with former Lagos governor Bola Tinubu and current Vice President Yemi Osinbajo among the possibles.

Buhari has not endorsed any candidate to succeed him and some analysts expect him to attempt to find a consensus nominee to keep the APC's factions together ahead of the February 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections.

An alliance of smaller parties drawn together for Buhari's 2015 election win, the APC has often struggled to contain internal divisions. “It clearly means the APC is going the consensus route, which requires more backroom dealing than the usual primaries,” SBM Intelligence analyst Tunde Ajileye said of the ruling party delay.

“It also means the consensus candidate is one that many are not accepting easily.” Local media have been discussing a possible return by former president Jonathan as an APC candidate after a group of supporters bought him a

nomination form. Jonathan himself denied any part in the move.

Under an informal agreement among the political elite, Nigeria's presidency is usually alternately “zoned” between candidates from the north and the south. After eight years under northerner Buhari, many agree the presidency should now go to a candidate from the south.

Rotating power at the national government level has been seen as a balancing force in a country almost equally divided between the mostly Christian south and predominantly Muslim north.

Most top PDP candidates like Abubakar were from the north. Most APC top candidates, including Tinubu and Osinbajo, are also from the south of Nigeria. Former president Jonathan is a southerner.

Since its return to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has held six national elections, which were often marred by fraud, technical difficulties, violence and legal challenges. In 2019, when Buhari was re-elected, the Independent National Electoral Commission was criticised for delaying the initial vote by a week. Abubakar, who lost to Buhari, challenged the results in court. —AFP

After the attack early Saturday, in the Beni region in North Kivu province, soldiers pursued the attackers and “neutralised seven ADF” and captured another, Mualushayi said.

Earlier Saturday, local Red Cross head Philippe Bonane had put the civilian death toll at 24 and was supervising the transfer of bodies to the morgue. The massacre comes after almost a month of relative calm in Beni, where the Congolese and Ugandan armies have been conducting joint military operations against the ADF since late November.

On Friday another Red Cross representa-

tive said that soldiers in the neighbouring Ituri province had found 17 decapitated bodies, also believed to be victims of the ADF. More than 120 armed groups roam eastern DRC and civilian massacres are common. —AFP

Both Ituri and North Kivu have been under an official “state of siege” since May last year, and the army and police have replaced senior administrators in a bid to stem attacks by armed groups. Despite this, authorities have been unable to stop the massacres which are regularly carried out on civilians. —AFP

News in brief

Two killed in anti-coup protests

KHARTOUM: Sudanese security forces killed a protester Saturday during the latest mass demonstrations against last year's military coup, medics said. One protester, yet to be identified, died after “taking a bullet to the chest” during rallies in the capital Khartoum, the pro-democracy Central Committee of Sudan Doctors said. Another was killed after suffering “suffocation by tear gas”, the committee said. The latest deaths bring to 98 the toll from a crackdown on anti-coup protests, which have taken place regularly since the October 25 military putsch led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the committee said. Thousands took to the streets on Saturday in several parts of Khartoum to protest the military power grab and renew demands for civilian rule. The coup upended a transition to civilian rule after the 2019 ouster of autocratic president Omar al-Bashir, following mass protests against his three decades of iron-fisted rule. —AFP

Seven fishermen missing

MANILA: Rescuers searched waters off the Philippines on Sunday for seven people missing after a collision between a fishing boat and a cargo ship, authorities said. The Philippine fishing vessel and Marshall Islands-flagged MV Happy Hiro collided Saturday east of Palawan Island, the Philippine Coast Guard said. The fishing boat capsized and sank in the Sulu sea, coast guard spokesman Commodore Armando Balilo said. Thirteen of its 20 crew members were plucked from the water by another fishing boat before being transferred to the Happy Hiro. They suffered minor injuries. The coast guard deployed rescue teams from nearby stations to scour the waters for the seven missing crew members. The Philippines, an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, has a poor maritime safety record. Mishaps and overcrowding are common on vessels that are often wooden-hulled outriggers used for fishing or transporting people. —AFP

Ex Sao Tome president dead

LISBON: Evaristo Carvalho, a former president of the tiny archipelago of Sao Tome and Principe, died late Saturday at the age of 80 in a Lisbon hospital after a long illness, his family told Portuguese media. Carvalho held the largely ceremonial post of president from 2016 to 2021 in the former Portuguese colony of 210,000 people in the Gulf of Guinea off West Africa. Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo presented his condolences following the announcement, in a statement on the presidency's website. The president in Portuguese-speaking Sao Tome has largely ceremonial powers, authorised to arbitrate in political disputes but not to govern, although the tiny island chain has a long tradition of strong democracy. Power lies with the prime minister, a post that Carvalho also held twice, from July-October 1994 and from September 2001 to March 2002. Sao Tome exports cocoa and coffee and also lives on subsistence farming, fishing and tourism, but it remains overwhelmingly dependent on international aid. —AFP

MONDAY, MAY 30, 2022

Business

Despite some sharp wage rises in US, low-paid workers have far to go

Facing labor shortages, many companies push base hourly wage past \$15

NEW YORK: Fast-food employees in Manhattan demonstrating for a wage of \$20 an hour: a demand unthinkable before the COVID-19 pandemic has become unexceptional, as short-handed companies offer big wage increases without, however, doing much to narrow a yawning income gap.

The upward wage pressure has come from several sources, including an unusually tight labor market and child-care challenges linked to the pandemic, as well as chronically underpaid workers unwilling to return to pre-pandemic conditions. Employers have not only had to raise wages but in some cases have offered improved health care insurance and bonuses.

"The country's major employers have understood that they need to bring wages up to scratch if they want to attract reliable workers who can help them navigate this period of major uncertainty," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at Ernst & Young Parthenon.

Apple, after announcing it was raising its hourly minimum wage to \$22, said in a statement, "Supporting and retaining the best team members in the world enables us to deliver the best, most innovative products and services for our customers." The tech giant said that in addition to sector-leading wages, it was providing "a robust range of benefits" for full- and part-time employees.

Higher wages may also help Apple in its efforts, like Amazon, to discourage unionization efforts. Apple's \$22 hourly minimum represents a 45 per-cent increase from the company's min-

imum in 2018, the group said.

Winning workers' loyalty

In the summer of 2021, facing serious labor shortages, several major companies including Amazon, Target and Chipotle pushed their base hourly wage past \$15, more than double the federal minimum of \$7.25, a figure unchanged since 2009. Bank of America announced this week that it was lifting its hourly minimum to \$22, a figure set to rise to \$25 by 2025. Across the US, some of the biggest wage increases have gone to some of the lowest-paid workers-people unafraid in the COVID era to make their demands known.

While there have been wage increases at all salary levels, only the lowest-paid workers saw rises big enough to compensate for today's high inflation rates, according to Mahir Rasheed, an economist with Oxford Economics. Put another way, he said, "Even with stronger incomes, most consumers are actually seeing wages down in real terms."

Deceptive wage hikes

So even if the increases might appear significant-particularly for restaurant and hotel employees-workers in that sector are still earning less than the national median salary. "The increases look huge, with some workers going from \$7 to \$10, from \$10 to \$12, from \$12 to \$15 or even from \$15 to \$20," said Daco. And yet, he added, "\$15 an hour is \$30,000 a year, considerably less than the (US) median salary of \$50,000 to \$60,000."

What's more, the increases might be a



NEW YORK: A person walks down 5th Avenue past a man asking for money in New York, May 27, 2022. Fast-food workers protesting in New York City to demand \$20 an hour would have been unthinkable prior to the pandemic, but amid worsening US labor shortage more companies are granting huge pay hikes. — AFP

one-time affair. "It's unlikely that these wage gains will continue to increase at a persistent clip over the next year," said Rasheed, even if some companies make occasional raises in a bid to attract qualified workers.

The increases are bound to slow, he added, as more and more people return to work. As the labor market opens up, workers' negotiating power will erode,

Daco said. "Unfortunately, I don't expect those gains to be durable in the long term, because we haven't seen increases in the federal minimum wage," said Elise Gould, an economist with the Economic Policy Institute, an American think tank.

She predicted "a decided slowdown in wage gains." In a study published last month, she noted that average wages

rose by 4.4 percent in the first year of the pandemic in the US, but declined by 1.7 percent in the second year. And despite the recent increases, "wage levels remain vastly unequal across the US labor market, with disparities among workers by wage level, gender and race/ethnicity remaining stark," Gould wrote. — AFP

Gulf Cable to sell \$66m worth stake

KUWAIT: The board of directors of Gulf Cable and Electrical Industries Company has approved selling its stake of 45,034,346 shares in the Egypt-Kuwait Holding at 420 fils per share at a total value of KD 18.9 million (\$66.15 million). The company in a statement posted on Boursa Kuwait website on Sunday forecast earnings amounting to KD 14.8 million (\$41.8 million). The selloff will be conducted according to regulations adopted by Boursa Kuwait and the Capital Market Authority. The company, established in 1975, was listed on the bourse in 1984 with a capital of KD 20.9 million (\$73.15 million). It is specialized in electric cables manufacturing and invests in various portfolios. — KUNA

Serbia secures new gas deal with Russia

BELGRADE: Serbia, which has been trying to tread a delicate balancing act between East and West since Moscow invaded Ukraine, said Sunday it has secured a new long-term contract with Russia to ensure that it has sufficient gas supplies next winter. As energy prices soar across the globe, the exact terms of the deal-which will ensure Serbia has "a safe winter when it comes to gas supply"-will be announced in the coming days, said President Aleksandar Vucic.

Vucic insisted the contract would give the Balkan country "by far the best terms in Europe". "At the moment, this is almost a third of what everyone else in Europe will pay, and in winter it will represent than one tenth" of what other countries pay, he said.

Serbia is currently almost wholly reliant on Russian energy supplies and imports about six million cubic meters of gas daily from Russian giant Gazprom. Moscow also owns a majority stake in Serbia's oil and gas company, NIS. But the deal comes at a time when the European Union is trying to reduce its dependence on Russia for energy following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, and is scheduled to discuss a possible embargo on Russian oil at an emergency summit on Monday.

Vucic also said that he had discussed with Russian President Vladimir Putin the possible expansion of gas storage facilities in Serbia. While Belgrade has condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine at the United Nations, it has refused to take part in sanctions against Moscow. — AFP

UAE, Egypt and Jordan to boost sustainable growth

ABU DHABI: The UAE, Egypt and Jordan have reached an industrial partnership aimed at boosting sustainable growth and exploring opportunities for joint investments in key sectors, in a move to bolster Arab economic integration, according to a WAM report.

A \$10 billion investment fund has been allocated and managed by Abu Dhabi's holding company ADQ to accelerate work on the partnership across five priority sectors, Dr Sultan Al-Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, said in a joint conference on Sunday in Abu Dhabi. This is based on the directives of the President, Sheikh Mohamed, he said.

The partnership identified five sectors of mutual interest to the three countries, including petrochemicals; metals, minerals and downstream products; textiles; pharmaceuticals; and agriculture, food and fertilizers.

The new initiative will establish large joint industrial projects, create job opportunities, contribute to increasing economic output, diversify the economies of the three countries, support industrial production, and increase exports.

The partnership was announced in the presence of Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs. "Developing the industrial sector in the participating countries will enable industrial growth in the three nations, diversify the economy and increase the sector's contribution to the gross domestic product," he said, according to the Wam



ABU DHABI: The joint conference where details of the Industrial Partnership for Sustainable Economic Growth were revealed.

report. "This partnership also reflects the ability of the countries in the region to strengthen their relations and launch new projects and industries within the framework of an integrated industrial system that provides promising opportunities for future generations." In his speech, Dr Al-Jaber said the "ambitious partnership will lead to the creation of industrial opportunities worth billions of dollars by identifying joint industrial projects in the future, focused on creating world-class competitive industries with the highest standards of quality, especially in priority sectors."

The deal comes amid the UAE's efforts to support the growth of the local industrial sector, enhance its role in stimulating the national economy, and double its contribution to gross domestic product to \$82 billion by 2031. UAE, Jordan and Egypt collectively have a GDP of about \$765bn and more than 60 million young people, Dr Al-Jaber said.

In the agriculture and food sector, there is an oppor-

tunity to increase the production of wheat and corn in the three countries to about 30 million tons annually, from 16.5 million tons currently, he added.

The metals sector - specifically aluminum, iron, silica and potash - provides opportunities for projects worth \$23bn through high-value manufacturing of products such as glass, electrical wires, automotive components and solar panels, Dr Al-Jaber said.

The combined contribution of the petrochemical industry to the GDP of the UAE, Egypt and Jordan economies was \$16 billion in 2019. "We will now create promising opportunities for the development of this sector and its related industries, which are valued at more than \$21 billion," Dr Al-Jaber added. The joint conference was also attended by Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly and Jordan's Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh in Abu Dhabi, where details of the Industrial Partnership for Sustainable Economic Growth were revealed. — Agencies

Toxic smoke and plastic plant fires in Turkey

KARTEPE, Turkey: The number of fires breaking out in plastic recycling plants has soared in Turkey. Experts and activists suspect it's not a coincidence, believing that some entrepreneurs want to get rid of unwanted rubbish sometimes imported from Europe.

In Kartepe, an industrial town in the country's north-west, one of these sites was closed by the authorities in December after the outbreak of three fires in less than a month. One burned for more than 50 hours, spewing toxic black smoke over the area wedged between the mountains and the Sea of Marmara.

"We don't want our lakes and springs to be polluted," said Beyhan Korkmaz, an environmental activist in the city. She is concerned about the polluting dioxin emissions from a dozen similar fires within a five-kilometre (three-mile) radius in less than two years.

"Should we wear masks?" she said. There was a fire every three days in Turkey's plastic reprocessing plants on average last year. The number rose from 33 in 2019 to 121 in 2021, according to Sedat Gundogdu, a

professor specialising in plastic pollution at Cukurova University in the southern city of Adana.

Over the same period, Turkey became the leading importer of European plastic waste-ahead of Malaysia-after China banned imports at the start of 2018. Nearly 520,000 tonnes arrived in Turkey in 2021, adding to the four to six million tonnes the country generates each year, according to data compiled by the Turkish branch of the NGO Greenpeace.

Much of this waste ends up in the south of the country, especially in Adana province, where companies operating illegally have been closed down in recent years. Other waste containers arrive at the ports of Izmir in the west and Izmit, not far from Kartepe.

"The problem is not importing plastic from Europe, the problem is importing non-recyclable or residual plastics," said Baris Calli, professor of environmental engineering at Marmara University in Istanbul.

"My feeling is that most of these fires are not just a coincidence," he said. He explained only 20 to 30 per cent of imported plastic waste is recyclable. "The remaining residues should be sent to incineration plants but the incineration plants charge some money... that's why when some companies have significant amounts of residues on their hands they try to find some easy way to get rid of them," he said.

Gundogdu finds it curious that "most of these fires are happening at night" and in outlying storage sections of reprocessing centres, away from the machines. In a report published in August 2020, international



KOCAELI, Turkey: A worker sorts out plastic waste collected at a plastic recycling factory in Kartepe, district of Kocaelion. — AFP

police organisation Interpol expressed concern about an "an increase in illegal waste fire and landfills in Europe and Asia", citing Turkey in particular. Following an October 2021 regulation, companies in the sector found guilty of arson can have their permits withdrawn.

The environment ministry and the vice-president of the waste and recycling branch of the Union of Chambers of Commerce of Turkey did not respond when asked by AFP how many companies have been sanctioned. — AFP

Business

Despite high gas prices, US refiners struggle to meet summer demand

US energy system comes under strain ahead of summer driving season

NEW YORK: Only time will tell how much record US prices at the pump will dent driving demand this summer, but don't expect a significant increase in gasoline supply from American refineries.

The reason: Several US gasoline refineries have shut down in recent years, or been converted to make other fuels, crimping America's refining capacity and exacerbating the hit from high crude oil prices in the current energy crunch. US refineries operated at 93.2 percent last week, the loftiest level since December 2019 and an exceptionally high rate for a season normally associated with plant maintenance.

It all points to a stressed US energy system ahead of the summer driving season, which kicks off this weekend with the Memorial Day holiday. "We're set for failure," said Robert Yawger an analyst at Mizuho Securities. "Basically, we're set for high prices, increasing inflation, and it doesn't bode well."

But limited refining capacity is also a global problem, according to a note from the Eurasia Group that described a tight fuel market with little relief in sight. "Increased demand is outstripping both storage and production capacity, leading to shortages," Eurasia Group said.

"Right now, demand is drawing down that storage much faster than it can be replaced, depleting inventories and driving refined product prices higher. While International Energy Agency data from this week shows global refinery throughput capacity increasing, it still remains below pre-pandemic levels." Besides lifting crude prices, the Ukraine invasion has also pinched supplies of some refined products exported from Russia, especially low-quality gasoil.

Plants are converted, closed

Gasoline prices in the United States have soared more than 70 percent in last year to record levels, nationally averaging about \$4.60 per gallon. Analysts at JPMorgan Chase believe prices go higher still this summer, surpassing \$6.00 a gallon. The number of active US refineries has fallen 13 percent in the last decade and now stands at the lowest level in the modern era.

The list of closures includes the Philadelphia Energy Solutions plant, which had been the largest in the northeastern United States prior to being shuttered in June 2019 following an explosion.



This group includes some refineries that were suspended early in the pandemic as fuel demand sank. Some, such as Marathon Petroleum's refinery in New Mexico, were never restarted.

The issue has "become a greater concern here in the United States as we've shut down a million barrels a day of refining capacity over the last year," said Andy Lipow of Lipow Oil Associates.

Large US refineries have also been shifting some of their capacity to biofuels and other renewable fuels in light of policies to address climate change favored by investors who prioritize environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals. At its Cheyenne, Wyoming refinery, HollyFrontier is converting a 52,000 barrel a day refinery from gasoline production to renewable diesel.

Dwindling market share

But many in the oil industry are loath to undertake significant new refinery projects in light of the heavy investments by automakers like General Motors and Ford building electric vehicles that will lower gasoline's market share as a transport fuel.

Major airlines have also pledged to use more renewable fuels, lowering demand for jet fuel, another product at petroleum refineries. Experts also pointed to policies such as ban on the sale of new gasoline-fired cars after 2035 that is being considered by the European Union. "Laws like that

are a clear signal that demand for your product at some point is going to go down," said Bill O'Grady of Confluence Investment Management. "There is very little incentive to invest."

Building a new refinery requires extensive capital, years of planning and regulatory approvals and would not pay off for 10-20 years, said Richard Sweeney, a professor of economics and the economy at Boston College. "Gas prices are very, very high and diesel prices are very, very high," said Sweeney, adding, "I don't think anyone thinks that's going to last years."

Many refiners are steering extra cash made from today's strong market towards dividends and shareholder buybacks, which are favored on Wall Street.

The last major US refinery in the United States opened in 1977 and there have only been five new plants in the last 20 years, all smaller refineries. When refiners have added significant capacity, it has been through expansions of existing plants rather than greenfield projects. "No community wants a refinery," said O'Grady. "They're dirty. They explode. They smell bad."

The current global refining predicament is built on a "false assumption that we can do without refining," said Phil Flynn of the Price Futures Group. "We're going to have to balance our ESG dreams versus the reality of trying to keep the market supplied with the products." —AFP

Russia expects \$14bn in additional energy revenue this year

MOSCOW: Russia expects to receive one trillion rubles in additional oil and gas revenues this year, the finance minister said Friday, adding that part of the windfall will be spent on Moscow's offensive in Ukraine. "We expect to receive up to a trillion rubles (\$14.4 billion) in additional oil and gas revenues, according to the forecast that we have developed with the ministry of economic development," Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said in remarks broadcast on state television.

Siluanov said the government planned to spend the additional revenue this year rather than put it aside. He said the money will be spent on "additional payments" to pensioners and families with children and conducting a "special operation" in Ukraine, referring to Moscow's offensive in the pro-Western country.

"There are resources for this," Siluanov added. The West has introduced a barrage of unprecedented sanctions against Moscow to punish the Kremlin for sending troops into Ukraine on February 24 but has not touched Russian oil and gas supplies.

President Vladimir Putin has recently derided the sanctions, saying Europe's "chaotic actions" have led to an increase in oil and gas revenues for Russia.

Russia may escape defaulting on its debt on Friday, but the tightening noose of Western sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine is inexorably drawing the nation towards a default. A \$71 million payment due Friday may have already been made before US authorities removed this week an exception that allowed Russia to pay its debts in dollars using currency it held outside US financial institutions. —AFP

AL SAFAT

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KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 26 MAY 2022

(965) 22 675 140
Al-Safat Tower, Hawalli, Beirut St.
alsafatinvest.com
research@alsafatinvest.com
alsafatinvestment
al-safat-investment-company

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	35,050	8,439.35	-3.0%	-9.3%	10.5%	569,537,577	296,094,496	50,447	28.8	2.8	77.8%
Main Market	10,021	5,982.58	-1.0%	-6.4%	1.6%	637,385,176	84,293,049	30,140	14.4	1.4	22.2%
All Share	45,071	7,632.02	-2.5%	-8.7%	8.4%	1,206,922,753	380,387,545	80,587	25.5	2.4	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	26,712	1,785.38	-2.9%	-8.8%	10.0%	380,253,692	196,185,395	26,692	28.8	2.7	58.57%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,040	1,166.75	0.1%	0.6%	13.9%	8,973,454	7,778,050	1,071	14.6	1.5	2.28%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	777	1,522.90	-0.3%	-5.7%	13.9%	17,719,052	6,542,496	2,577	18.7	8.6	1.70%
CONSUMER STAPLES	196	644.23	-3.1%	-9.3%	-11.9%	1,735,653	833,086	342	20.8	1.3	0.43%
ENERGY	251	1,204.51	1.1%	-3.6%	-15.7%	12,624,690	564,786	500	12.6	1.2	0.55%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,338	1,490.53	-2.3%	-10.0%	4.7%	534,369,058	79,974,620	23,078	14.6	2.1	9.51%
HEALTH CARE	238	480.40	-2.4%	-0.3%	-39.7%	1	1	1	16.1	2.3	0.52%
INDUSTRIALS	4,524	1,272.16	-2.9%	-10.9%	11.4%	68,489,281	44,094,188	11,687	41.2	1.5	9.92%
INSURANCE	626	1,499.69	-1.7%	-2.7%	-2.2%	1,281,211	234,038	158	7.3	1.0	1.37%
REAL ESTATE	2,784	1,293.29	0.2%	-5.6%	-2.5%	140,167,715	20,011,229	8,522	14.3	1.4	6.10%
TECHNOLOGY	9	654.75	6.4%	-2.2%	-4.3%	156,320	14,197	33	-	0.8	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,875	1,263.88	-2.9%	-10.5%	16.0%	37,052,208	23,280,507	5,468	15.7	2.3	8.50%
UTILITIES	236	565.79	0.0%	-3.2%	-5.7%	4,100,418	874,952	458	16.6	2.7	0.52%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFIC	77	10.00	928,808	69,191	69
GIH	263	9.58	810,879	205,443	145
MASHAER	67	7.72	388,733	24,192	85
RASIYAT	128	6.67	1,096,119	136,687	134
ASC	90	6.38	156,320	14,197	33

Top Losers

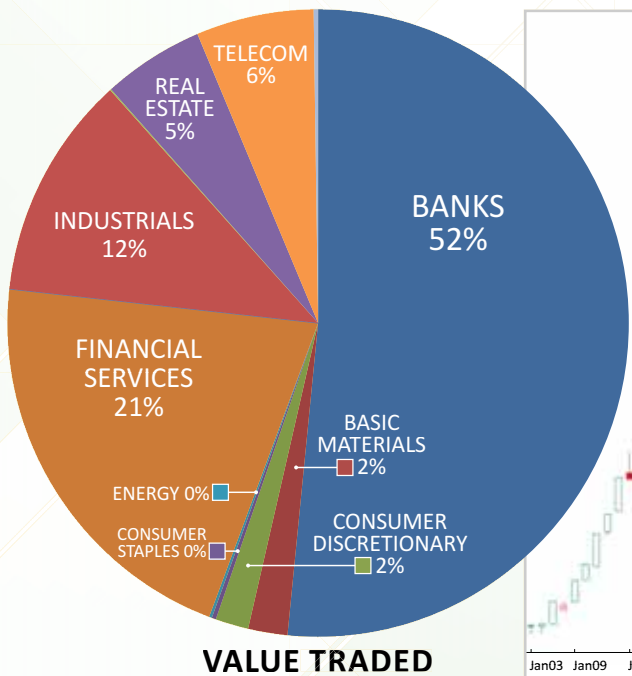
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KINV	160	-15.79	28,408,570	4,844,557	1,922
EQUIPMENT	47	-14.23	172,717	8,205	38
KUWAITRE	268	-13.83	22	6	3
ALSAFAT	137	-12.18	116,229,160	15,554,203	4,238
FIRSTDUBAI	65.5	-11.61	4,557,982	302,605	384

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	95.7	3.13	137,651,242	12,899,436	3,680
AUB	269	-2.54	117,817,116	31,416,196	3,093
ALSAFAT	137	-12.18	116,229,160	15,554,203	4,238
KFH	860	-4.44	108,972,806	93,972,132	11,615
GBK	341	-8.58	57,988,437	20,417,139	3,026

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	860	-4.44	108,972,806	93,972,132	11,615
AUB	269	-2.54	117,817,116	31,416,196	3,093
NBK	1,006	-1.37	29,442,954	29,659,314	3,789
AGLTY	1,101	-2.57	22,351,477	24,776,587	5,407
ZAIN	616	-4.05	34,746,297	21,801,786	4,520



VALUE TRADED



All Share Price Index YTD

Market Summary:

- Premier market volume increased by 3% while value decreased by 6%, this shows the reduction in stocks' price. Main market volume and value increased 12%.

- Premier and Main indices bounced back from the support levels. Constancy will determine whether the index will continue to draw a new upward trend or fall back to previous support.

- Technically, the All-Share index closed at 7632, with support levels at 7635, 7574, and 7503, while resistance at 7677. Premier index closed at 8439, support levels at 8335, 8273, and 8184, while resistance at 8527. The Main index closed at 5982, with support levels at 5970, 5959, 5925, and 5902, while resistance at 5990.

Business

Cost-of-living crisis forces more Brits to foodbanks

Bradford locals rely on 'lifesaver' during the worst crisis in a generation

BRADFORD, UK: On an overcast morning in Bradford, northern England, a steady stream of locals arrive at a foodbank to collect produce parcels described as "a lifesaver" during the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. Bradford Central Foodbank is helping twice as many people compared to pre-pandemic, as spiraling prices for energy, food and other basics leave a growing number of Britons struggling.

"The numbers since I've been a volunteer have only multiplied and I can only see it getting worse," said Karl Carroll, 33, who has relied on the parcels since 2019 and is now volunteering at the foodbank.

"I've barely got £40 (\$50, 47 euros) by the time I've paid everything out, so I imagine families are struggling in more ways," he said. Simon Jackson, 43, an unemployed former supermarket worker who is accessing long-term government sickness benefits, has been a foodbank user since February.

"It is a tougher time at the minute... the cost of living's skyrocketed to a point of we're having to use foodbanks a bit more," he said. Jackson currently gets around £900 a month in various government support payments but, like Carroll, once his bills are paid, there is little left over for food.

Rising prices are exacerbating the situation. "Places like (this) here in Bradford are a lifesaver. They can really help balance your decisions-sometimes between the heating and eating," he said.

Survival

One of the clearest signs of the crisis is the surge in foodbank use. The Trussell Trust charity says its more than 1,400 affiliated sites handed out 2.1 million parcels in the past year — 830,000 of them to children-in a 14 percent increase on pre-pandemic levels.

Its central Bradford operation is hosted three days a week by a local church organization, and can supply people with only three parcels within six months to manage demand. They contain basics

such as cereal, tinned soup, meat and fish, pasta, sauces, vegetables, biscuits, sugar, tea and coffee.

Started in 2011, it is one of around 30 free food providers now in the city of just over half a million residents, and currently helps around 1,000 people a month, said manager Josie Barlow.

Greater Bradford's population-the sixth biggest metropolitan area in England-is the fifth most income-deprived and sixth most employment-deprived nationwide, according to the government's last poverty index published in 2019. That leaves it particularly vulnerable in the current climate.

"It's people that are on the lowest incomes that'll suffer the most... they have to buy the essentials but they're the things that are really going up by a lot," Barlow explained.

She greets arrivals with a warm smile and upbeat energy, directing them to collection tables as well as welfare, housing and other advisors. "We want to give a food parcel, but we also really want to help people with the root causes of their food crisis," Barlow noted.

She said they receive "a whole spread of society", which includes working as well as unemployed people. "You do a budget with people and you're like: 'yeah, you just can't live on that, can you?' And there's no real way out of that," she added.

"You can't expect people to live like that, in crisis, just trying to survive in the long-term."

Winter fears

The government announced Thursday a new £15 billion support package aimed at the most vulnerable, ahead of an expected 42 percent jump in energy bills in October-which follows a 54 percent hike last month. Three-quarters of the money is directed at government benefits recipients, with a £650 "cost-of-living payment" to most alongside £300 for pensioners and an extra £150 for those on disability support.

But in Bradford, as elsewhere, it cannot allay fears that worse to come.



Volunteers work in the kitchen of Bradford Central Foodbank in Bradford, northern England on May 24, 2022.

The current nine percent inflation rate is predicted to surge even higher, which would swamp any additional support. "I'm quite scared by this winter coming up," admitted Barlow, noting summer allows people to get by without heating.

"Come this winter, when you really do need it on... I just don't know how people are going to survive."

Jackson predicted the biggest squeeze could come at Christmas, as families in particular grapple with giving presents as well as putting food on the table.

"It might not be so much for me, because I'm on my own-I'll just put an extra blanket on or something," he said. "But for those with small kids that

have Christmas presents and other needs... it's really going to be tough." Simone Hillhands, 34, is one. She has three children aged 10, 13 and 15. One of them has a disability, which prevents her from working full time.

Her children's school directed her to the foodbank.

"I need to care for them," she explained. Reluctant to reveal too much of her personal circumstances, Hillhands confided that her sister had recently been made homeless and the wider family's situation was "really, really hard" with prices rising. "They've gone through the roof... it's crazy!" she said, adding that despite the pandemic, "last year was a lot easier". —AFP

S&P maintains KIPCO's rating

KUWAIT: S&P has maintained its rating of KIPCO - Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - at BB- and placed it on CreditWatch negative pending the successful completion of the merger with Qurain Petrochemical Industries (QPIC). In its report, S&P highlighted the management's engagement and commitment to major initiatives to ensure secured funding to service its debt maturities over the next 12-18 months. It also said that the pending merger with QPIC would be a highly transformative event.

Eman Al-Awadhi, Group Senior Vice President - Corporate Communications & Investor Relations at KIPCO, said: "In parallel with the management's efforts to secure the necessary funding to meet our obligations and maintain our financial standing, we continue to work towards successfully closing the merger with QPIC. With the due diligence process well underway, the merger is progressing according to the set timeline and we are confident that it will be completed before year-end. In addition to creating a larger and stronger entity with a diversified portfolio of assets, the successful completion of the transaction would enhance KIPCO's overall credit profile."



Eman Al-Awadhi

ABK calls attention to safe and secure banking

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait continues its support for the nationwide awareness campaign - "Let's Be Aware", launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). The campaign aims to raise awareness about customers' rights and duties when dealing with banking products and services.

The "Let's Be Aware" is geared towards educating consumers about the best use of banking products and services. Enhancing customers' knowledge of the precautions they must take to preserve their funds is a key priority. The campaign also helps users avoid any misuse of banking products and services, breaching their responsibilities, and utilizing banking facilities to manage their savings. 'Diraya' also provides tips on cyber safety and security, familiarizing people with special needs with their rights and services, in addition to clarifying the process for raising complaints about banking services and products.

The campaign spotlights banks and their role in providing banking services and highlights clear and specific policies related to the borrowing process; types of bank cards and tips for using them; products and services related to investing and saving; and personal finance. The campaign also aims to

increase financial inclusion awareness to stimulate monetary and economic stability.

The rise in e-commerce services coupled with the rise of applications on smartphones has the adoption of contactless and digital payments. Recent studies have shown a continued increase in the adoption of e-wallets and mobile banking in 2021 in the Middle East. Unfortunately, with this rise in contactless and digital payments, Kaspersky Digital Payments Survey experts have noted that financial Trojan attacks in Kuwait increased by 65 percent in 2021 compared to the previous year. Customers are prone to cyber-attacks, including identity theft, phishing, vishing, skimming, and a host of malpractices at ATMs.

A component of the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign is educating customers on safeguarding their details and protecting themselves from identity fraud. For instance, banks never request personal information, including online credentials and passwords, PINs or the three-digit CVV number. Consumers must remain alert about fraudulent emails, links, websites or calls to defend themselves against potential fraud.

As ABK is committed to raising awareness about the importance of safe and secure banking and is encouraging customers to refresh their knowledge of online best practices to protect their personal information against highly deceptive tactics fraudsters employ, ABK recommends the following:

- Do not store any confidential information such as debit card numbers, credit card numbers, or personal identification numbers on a mobile phone.
- Do not write your password on the card or

share it with anyone. This also applies to the One Time Password (OTP).

● Log out of the application or the bank's website once the transaction is completed.

"Digitalization provides incomparable convenience and access to banking services for customers. However, these conveniences bring risks of cyber fraud. Cybercriminals are constantly looking for vulnerable customers. It is vital for customers to be vigilant and mindful of their online habits. Customers must safeguard their wealth and savings by following and adhering to certain rules. For instance, avoid answering unknown calls; handle electronic links with caution when received unknown recipients; don't share confidential information such as OTPs, card numbers, passwords or PINS," said Loai Muqames, CEO of ABK - Kuwait.

"At ABK, we continuously invest in enhancing our technology, process and systems to mitigate advanced cyber security threats. Raising awareness is a vital step in this journey, and we are proud to participate in the country-wide 'Let's be Aware' campaign, educating customers on best practices when conducting digital transactions. We urge all customers to be vigilant when conducting banking transactions online", added Muqames.



Loai Muqames

Grand Hyper opens its 27th store in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Grand Hyper, the leading retail network in GCC opened its 81st branch at Al-Muthanna Street, Hawally on Thursday. Captain Saad Muhammed Al-Hamdah along with Ayyoob Kachery - Regional Director, MK Aboobacker - Group Director, Thehseer Ali - Director of Retail Operations, Muhammed Suneer - CEO, Rahil Bassim - COO, Sanin Basim - BDM, Kubera Rao, DGM Operations and other management representatives and well-wishers, attended the inaugural ceremony.

Grand Hyper has added yet another feather to its crown of glory by opening stores at Qatar and Kuwait back to back on consecutive days as a part of its aggressive expansion in the GCC region. Grand currently has 80 outlets in GCC and 26 outlets in Kuwait. There are three outlets in Hawally area at Bin Khaldoon Street, Tunis Street and Al-Adsani Complex and Al-Muthanna Street Hypermarket has been inaugurated as the 4th store in the area and 27th in the country, situated at Block 7, Hawally.

MK Aboobacker, Group Director said "It gives us much pleasure to open of our 4th outlet in Hawally region which is yet another milestone achievement of Grand Hyper. Kuwait has always been the favorite country for the group and the group has big plans of expansion just for this country there by recalled as the most preferred brand partner of any customer for their domestic purchase at any point of time."

Ayyoob Kachery, Regional Director said "With 27 stores in count, the vision and mission of the



KUWAIT: Grand Hyper's 81st branch is being inaugurated at Al-Muthanna Street, Hawally on Thursday.

brand remain focused on unparalleled customer service and customer delight, there by yielding equal acceptance by both Kuwaiti nationals and expats. This has inspired the group to further expand its reach in Kuwait. Few more projects in different regions of Kuwait are in progress and it will be completed June-July months, he added.

Mohammed Suneer, Chief Executive officer - Kuwait region said, "This new store will make residence of Hawally Block 7 a new and convenient shopping experience. And, he expressed his gratitude to the residence of Hawally region for the support rendering to other three branches located in the region."

Thehaseer Ali, Director of Retail Operations, Said "This is indeed a part of our expansion plan with a vision to have the store presence at every nook and

corner of the country enabling customers to reach the Grand store for their convenient purchase."

Rahil Bassim, Chief Operating Officer, said "The new milestone achieved is just because of the focus we have in fetching the best products around the globe under one roof and making it available to the customers at a much competitive price. Grand Hyper recently launched their online delivery and Mobile App to make shopping easier. The application is available on both App-store and PlayStore; he added. Grand Hypermarket has a strong reputation and trust in Kuwait market as a brand, and has been working towards extending a strong presence across the GCC and continues striving towards being the most preferred retailer among customers.

Orascom consortium signs second phase of Egypt's high-speed rail

CAIRO: Egypt-based contractor Orascom Construction and its consortium partners Siemens Mobility and The Arab Contractors have signed a contract with the National Authority for Tunnels (NAT) to expand the network of Egypt's new high-speed rail system to 2,000 kilometres. The consortium had signed the first phase of the network covering a 660km line in September 2021. The second phase, signed on Sunday, comprises two new lines for a total length of 1,325km. This brings the total network size to almost 2,000km and creates the sixth-largest high-speed rail system worldwide, Orascom Construction said in a statement.

Orascom Construction's share of the second phase is \$1.2 billion, which brings the company's total share of all three lines to \$1.8 billion. Siemens Mobility's share of the combined contract is \$8.1 billion (\$8.7 billion), the German transport company said in a separate statement. The project is set to elevate Egypt's entire infrastructure, industrial and tourism sectors, said Osama Bishai, chief executive of Orascom Construction. "Our involvement in this landmark project reaffirms our position as a leading partner of choice not only on transportation projects, but also on mega projects as a whole." —AFP

Business

Boubyan Bank releases its 2nd Sustainability Report for 2021

Report highlights Boubyan's ESG Metrics, reflects group's steady journey to ESG

KUWAIT: To continue highlighting the international and regional developments of sustainability and ESG metrics, Boubyan Bank has issued its second sustainability report for 2021 that tackles sustainability indicators as well as its impact on environmental, social, and economic criteria in addition to corporate governance, which are all considered crucial aspects to evaluate the Group's performance and positioning in ESG and sustainable development locally and regionally.

On this occasion, Boubyan Bank's CEO - Private, Consumer & Digital Banking, Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, stated: "As sustainability is gaining grounds and becoming a necessity, and as it has become one of the most significant factors in evaluating organizations of all sectors locally and internationally, today Boubyan Bank releases its second sustainability report for 2021, which highlights the effective role of accounting for Boubyan Bank's sustainability indicators in facing the challenges of the crisis, which helped us achieve high service and performance levels."

"The year 2021 was exceptional and was no less challenging than 2020. After what we went through in 2020 and our success in overcoming its obstacles and difficulties, we were faced with a new challenge, namely returning to the business market which is no longer having the same levels of performance we had before the crisis, but rather a stronger market where competition has significantly grown among organizations of the financial and banking sector per se," he added.

With regards to governance aspects, Al-Tuwaijri elaborated: "We are keen on monitoring and measuring the Group's ESG metrics, and we ensure to report and communicate our commitments transparently to our concerned stakeholders. Boubyan Bank always seeks to safeguard shareholders' rights, protect its investment value, and avoid any conflict of interest through complying to all ethical standards and strengthening its shareholders' roles, specifically in decision-taking processes that are related to their investments."

The bank's vision

Al-Tuwaijri pointed out that Boubyan considers sustainability as one of the main drivers of the bank's vision, which aspires to become one of the largest Islamic banks in the industry. He added: "2021's sustainability report is based on the Group's

evaluation and disclosure of all its sustainability related performance metrics, especially covering various aspects that concern our customers, shareholders, employees, and the society as a whole; thus, reflecting the Group's steady that is focused on laying solid sustainability foundations."

"Our target is to become one of the leaders in terms of exhibiting sustainable performance, and we further aim to enhance such practice and to maintain transparent communication with our stakeholders by disclosing the Group's performance of non-financial and ESG indicators," he stressed.

Digital transformation development and customer service excellence

The report tackles Boubyan Bank's successful journey towards digital transformation as Boubyan Bank is one of the most prominent Kuwaiti banks that invested heavily in digital banking services over the past years, thus placing the bank as a leader among Islamic banks locally and globally, evidenced by being named the World's Best Islamic Digital Bank by Global Finance for seven consecutive years.

The report also dwells on Boubyan Bank's journey of digital transformation which went through many phases with one ultimate goal, namely to offer a competitive and an exceptional experience to our customers that keeps pace with digital developments across the banking and financial sector.

The attempts and changes have become fruitful, thereby making access to the group's services and products in a much faster and easier manner, while at the same time resulted in enhancing our operational and productive efficiency and in effectively minimizing the Group's paper transactions thus, improving our environmental footprint.

Numbers show a great annual growth in the number of Boubyan Bank's customers who use digital banking services. We can say that more than 90 percent of customers use such services whether through smart phones or the bank's website.

Al-Tuwaijri went on to stress that "The management of the bank spares no effort to evaluate and improve our customers' experience. Boubyan Bank remained atop the pyramid of customer service across the Kuwaiti banking sector, which was evidenced by earning the Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service award for the twelfth consecutive year since 2010 by Service Hero, the international

consumer-driven customer satisfaction index."

"Owing to those efforts, we scored 95 percent in the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), which confirms that we deserve to be the best in customer service atop the Kuwaiti banking sector", he added.

Youth empowerment and supporting SMEs

The year 2021 was exceptional for our human resources, and the report dedicates a section to the role played by the bank and its leadership position among local banks and the private sector in terms of implementing several important initiatives towards the growth and development of its employees, the enhancement of their skills and through training programs and special workshops; this instilled more loyalty in our staff to their organization and has attracted several fresh graduates to seek a job opportunity at Boubyan. At the level of women empowerment in leadership positions, 52 female employees were hired in management positions while 1 female employee is a board member in BLME. We have also increased our Kuwaitization percentage by 2.1 percent compared with the bank's performance in 2020, while the Kuwaitization in management levels has increased to 4.5 percent.

Since 2012 and until the end of last year, more than 110 of our employees of both genders enrolled in the MBA program in collaboration with GUST, while the number of e-learning programs exceeded 10,000 training programs in areas related to banking, finance, technical, and management skills needed by the bank's employees. 635 employees of the bank successfully completed these programs by enrolling in LinkedIn platform for digital learning and development as well as the training platform of Euromoney, the renowned international institution. It is worth noting that a total of 20,846 training hours were earned in 2021.

In cooperation with the Institute of Banking Studies "IBS", the bank offered training to 134 employees during 2021. These training programs focused on specialized banking skills as well as



Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri



other technical and technological capabilities. Furthermore, the report has a special section dedicated to Boubyan Bank's commitment to supporting SMEs as well as the growth of the Kuwaiti economy through the bank's products and services, which cater for the needs of the bank's SME customers, whose number grew by 22 percent compared with last year.

Moreover, Boubyan has its own Incubation Program to help SMEs' entrepreneurs; the program serves as an initiative that assists and incubates entrepreneurs by providing the knowledge, training, networking facilities, workshops, and everything needed by SMEs to help them grow, innovate, and become established.

Environmental impacts

From an environmental performance level, we managed to reduce our GHG emissions of Scope III by 34 percent. This highlights our contribution and responsibility towards climate change issues. We have also reduced our water consumption by 44.2 percent and ensured to recycle 731 electronic devices, which led to the reduction of approximately 11.5 GHG by MT CO2e.

"We are pleased to release Boubyan Bank's Second Sustainability Report 2021, where we have shed the light on Boubyan's ESG journey, and our way forward to reaching excellence and leading by example, as a benchmark in the banking and financial sector, and as a shariah-compliant entity", Al-Tuwaijri concluded.



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Sibi George inaugurates the mango festival, in the presence of top management officials of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait.

LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Kingdom of Mangoes' festival

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the leading regional retailer, launched the 'LuLu Kingdom of Mangoes' festival on 26 May at the hypermarket's Fahaaheel outlet. The week-long celebration of mangoes from around the world was inaugurated by Indian Ambassador Sibi George, in the presence of top management officials of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait, and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers, as well as top bloggers and vloggers in Kuwait.

The 'Kingdom of Mangoes' festival, which runs

concurrently at all outlets of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait from 25 to 31 May, features over 60 varieties of mangoes and a multitude of mango products from eight of the leading mango-producing countries in the world.

A major highlight of the festival is the enticing offers and promotions available throughout the week-long festival on mangoes and mango products. Among the unique mango products on promotional offer during the festival are delectable and delicious mango cakes, mango puddings, mango halvahs, mango payasams, and mango curries, all based on different varieties of mangoes.

Adding to the visual appeal and providing a background theme to the festival are large cutout displays of mango trucks, mango trees and other mango-related items. The LuLu Kingdom of Mangoes festival once again underscores LuLu



Hypermarket's novel and innovative approaches to marketing and engaging with customers. The festival also reiterates and buttresses the brand's leading position as the retailer of choice for discerning shoppers in Kuwait.

UK taxes oil giants to help tackle inflation fallout

LONDON: Britain's finance minister Rishi Sunak on Thursday unveiled a sizeable support package for consumers hit by soaring energy bills, with help from a temporary windfall tax on oil giants. A government package worth £15 billion (\$19 billion) will be funded in part by an exceptional levy on soaring profits enjoyed by the likes of BP and Shell that have benefitted massively from surging oil and gas prices.

That marked a U-turn for embattled Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who previously insisted such a move would hinder efforts by oil majors to invest in greener energy. But Sunak told parliament on Thursday: "It is possible to both tax extraordinary profits fairly and incentivize investment."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer acted after British annual inflation surged to a 40-year high on rocketing energy costs, squeezing household budgets and leaving many struggling to make ends meet. "We need to make sure that for those whom the struggle is too hard and for whom the risks are too great they are supported," Sunak added.

"This government will not sit idly by while there is a risk that some in our country might be set so far back they might never recover. This is simply unacceptable and we will never allow that to happen." Countries around the world are experiencing decades-high inflation as the Ukraine conflict pushes up energy and food prices, in turn forcing the Bank of England and other central banks to ramp up interest rates. Sunak said the new energy tax would be charged on profits of oil and gas companies at a rate of 25 percent. —AFP



theft in the garment industry had exploded during the pandemic as clothing orders declined.

He estimated garment workers worldwide were owed \$500 million as a result of factory closures and unpaid severance.

Some workers at the Samut Prakan factory had received the equivalent of more than four years' wages last week, he said. "It's like the equivalent of a worker's life savings... and it's simply stolen. What it means to lose that and get it back is difficult to capture in words," Nova added. —AFP

Victoria's Secret pays \$8.3m settlement to sacked Thai workers

BANGKOK: More than a thousand sacked Thai garment workers who made bras at a factory supplying lingerie giant Victoria's Secret have received a landmark \$8.3 million settlement, labor rights activists said Saturday. Brilliant Alliance Thai closed down its Samut Prakan factory in March 2021 after going bankrupt.

But the 1,250 laid-off workers—many of whom had worked at the factory for over a decade—did not receive severance payouts mandated under Thai law. The factory also produced underwear for plus size American brands Lane Bryant and Torrid, owned by Sycamore Partners—but only Victoria's Secret contributed to the settlement via a loan arrangement with the factory's owners.

Victoria's Secret confirmed in a statement that an agreement had been reached, but did not

mention the amount involved. "Over several months we had been in active communication with the factory owners to facilitate a resolution," the company said.

"We regret they were not ultimately in a position to conclude this matter on their own so to ensure the workers received their full severance amounts owed, Victoria's Secret agreed to advance the severance funds to the factory owners," it added. Former worker Jitnawatcharee Panad had clocked up 25 years at the factory and said more than two thirds of the sacked workers were women aged 45 or older.

"If we hadn't fought for fair compensation, we wouldn't have received anything," Jitnawatcharee, who is also president of the Triumph International Workers' Union of Thailand, told AFP.

"The doors of the labor ministry were locked when we went there to seek help and the minister didn't seem to want to listen to our problem." The agreement is the largest ever wage theft settlement at an individual garment factory, the international workers rights group Solidarity Centre said.

"I think it's extremely unprecedented and represents a new model—the scale of severance and interest paid on it... as well as direct engagement by the brand," Solidarity Centre Thailand country director David Welsh told AFP. For the past year, sacked workers and Thai union representatives have protested outside Government House in Bangkok calling for their pay.

Confederation of Industrial Labor of Thailand president Prasit Prasopsuk said some protesting workers had been charged with criminal offences, including violating public gathering rules during the pandemic. "This case serves as a lesson in the future for the government... to ensure that foreign companies doing business in Thailand allocate some portion of monthly profit for fair compensation when these companies cease domestic operations," he said.

A Worker Rights Consortium report from April last year said it had documented similar wage theft cases at 31 garment factories in nine countries. Worker Rights Consortium executive director Scott Nova said those cases were just the "tip of the iceberg" and the issue of wage

KUWAIT'S FIRST SUSTAINABLE FASHION CONFERENCE LAUNCHES MAY 31

Organized by 3oud and in partnership with Gulf Bank, and under the sponsorship of Zain, Tamdeen Group, Ali Alghanim & Sons

- **Ahmed Al-Ameer:** We seek to consolidate our sustainability initiatives, and maximize Kuwaiti designers' global reach
- **Waleed Al-Khashti:** The objectives of the conference are closely aligned with Zain's sustainability strategy; Zain is keen to support various environmental initiatives, a critical issue in all of our lives.

In partnership with Gulf Bank, 3oud.com is launching OUD Fashion Talks, the first sustainable fashion conference in Kuwait. The conference is set to take place from May 31 to June 1 at the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center and will highlight the work of a group of international and Kuwaiti designers, as well as a large number of fashion investors, interested parties and specialized journalists. The conference will be held under the sponsorship of Zain, Tamdeen, and Ali Alghanim & Sons.

The event will include four discussion sessions between international and local designers on fashion and sustainability in the clothes industry, in addition to an exhibition promoting the participating Kuwaiti designers' brands.

During today's press conference, the Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Ahmed Al-Ameer, noted that the fashion industry plays a major role in the global economy. Al-Ameer also added that, despite being one of the largest industries in the world, the fashion industry is also one of the most environmentally harmful industries, producing 10% of the world's carbon emissions and polluting the oceans with microplastics.

He added: "According to global reports, between 80 billion and 100 billion pieces of clothing are consumed annually, which represents 12 or 14 pieces per person. Of course, the massive production of clothes leads to substantial environmental repercussions, in addition to the fact that the fashion industry is the second largest consumer of water on Earth."

He continued: "These reports expect that total global fashion waste will reach 148 million tons by 2030. This is what gave rise to the idea of sustainable fashion or environmentally friendly fashion, an emerging philosophy in the world of fashion design that aims to find an environmentally friendly approach to fashion and introduces recyclable, low-pollution, and low-water consumption textiles. This, of course, is in addition to efforts to implement ethical principles in the fashion industry and prevent the exploitation of workers in textile factories, including giving employees their fair wages, and providing healthy and safe working conditions for all."

Al-Ameer continued: "The idea to organize a conference on sustainable fashion in Kuwait emerged in light of the backdrop against which the fashion industry is currently operating, and as part of Gulf Bank's commitment in the importance of implementing the principles of environmental sustainability. This is also where the idea to partner with 3oud.com was born, as 3oud.com is one of the most prominent fashion, beauty and lifestyle websites in the region."

On a similar note, Al-Ameer also added that this year's conference is an opportunity to support Kuwaiti talents and fashion



Representatives at the press conference.

designers, as well as encourage a cultural diffusion of experiences from world-class designers, all of which will assist local designers in keeping up to date with the latest trends in the world of sustainable fashion and the clothes industry. The event also represents an opportunity for Kuwaiti designers to showcase their creativity to international designers and investors at the exhibition that will be held at the same time as the conference.

Al-Ameer also revealed that Gulf Bank's corporate management team will have an active presence at the conference, and is set to present advisory and financing services to Kuwaiti designers. In doing so, Gulf Bank is assisting local designers by helping them to develop their ideas and ensure their projects have a global reach - all as part of Gulf Bank's continuous efforts to support entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises.

Zain

On his part, Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief of Corporate Communications & Relations at Zain Kuwait, said: "At Zain, we are well aware of the role of private sector institutions in encouraging the creative efforts of Kuwaiti youth in the local market, especially those that provide tangible, added value to our community, and whose creativity has had a global reach. Today, I am proud to be among my fellow sponsors - local, national companies - to announce our support for this incredible initiative."

He stated: "Today, we are proud to

announce that Zain is a main sponsor of the OUD Fashion Talks event, an event which will include a diverse program of cultural activities that will be held in the presence of international guests who are visiting Kuwait specifically to attend this conference. Supporting various initiatives that serve the sustainability cause and the environment is



Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Ahmed Al-Ameer.

a priority and critical issue for all of us."

Al-Khashti continued: "Zain's social message seeks to preserve natural resources, enhance environmental awareness, and promote every individual's role in reducing consumption, implementing recycling, and other sustainable practices that will contribute to reducing the effects of climate change."

He concluded: "I am proud to affirm Zain's interest and commitment in supporting these meaningful national initiatives. The Kuwaiti society is full of passionate

and creative youth who have innovative ideas that provide credible solutions to local market needs. We are wishing our fellow event organizers all the best."

Ali Alghanim & Sons

Shahad AlSabeeh, Business Development Manager at Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive Company, noted that Ali Alghanim and Sons was proud to sponsor this event as it aligns closely with the company's belief in supporting events that highlight the multiple talents of our local youth - whether they be in the field of design and fashion or other areas of society.

AlSabeeh confirmed that Ali Alghanim and Sons has been sponsoring multiple conferences and events that support local youth as part of its social responsibility program, noting that the company provides multiple facilities and assistance aimed at preparing the youth segment with the skillset to not only overcome challenges, but also chart their future aspirations.

AlSabeeh praised the role of 3oud.com website in holding this event, explaining that the conference will encourage skilled people in the field of fashion to present their talents and concepts to conference participants and international designers, creating a rich cultural exchange of ideas and talents.

AlSabeeh noted that she hoped that the designers would come up with design ideas that are environmentally friendly and low on pollution, pointing out that fashion

is an industry with plenty of room for innovation and renewability. Fashion designers are famous for translating various color schemes and raw materials into a modern design that reflects cultural trends in a beautiful and sophisticated manner.

AlSabeeh thanked everyone who helped to make this conference a reality, noting that she hoped to witness the participation of Kuwaiti designers who are set to put their creative ideas and talents on display.

Tamdeen Group

Muath Al Roumi, General Manager of Corporate Marketing Group at Tamdeen Group, said, "At Tamdeen Group, we are pleased to be a supporter and partner of this youth initiative. OUD Fashion Talks aspires to start a much-needed dialogue on the importance of sustainability in the world of local and regional fashion, creating bridges between local talent and international designers."

He continued: "This initiative emerged with the aim of creating a platform to empower designers in Kuwait and the region, highlighting their talents and skills, and giving them the opportunity to present their creative ideas to the most prominent names in the world of fashion and design. We are excited to support this conference as a starting point to create local change and keep pace with global developments in this field."

Al Roumi also noted, "Tamdeen Group has long been a pioneer in project development in Kuwait and the region, with multiple shopping centers and retail outlets under the Group's umbrella. Therefore, supporting this conference falls under our social responsibility program, and highlights the importance of institutional and community partnerships in developing and consolidating the culture of sustainable fashion among all members of our society and bringing about the necessary change in this sector."

In conclusion, Asma Al-Mulla from the management team OUD Fashion Talks, noted that OUD Fashion Talks is the first conference of its kind in Kuwait, consisting of a series of discussions with experts in the fashion industry who have shaped the fashion world in Kuwait and the region.

The objectives of the conference are to engage the public on vital topics, including the growth of the sustainable fashion industry. The discussions aim to create a bridge between Kuwait and the international fashion world, allowing participants to delve into the topic of sustainability and learn about the challenges and opportunities of the sustainable fashion industry. The conference aims to create an integrated creative community, as well as encourage investment in local and regional creators



Maria Nissan, an environmental activist and artist, poses with an installation from plastic waste collected from the streets, in the Jordanian capital Amman. —AFP photos



Maria Nissan creates an art installation from plastic waste collected from the streets, in the Jordanian capital Amman.



Maria Nissan sorts out bags used for creating art installations from plastic waste collected from the streets.

JORDAN'S PLASTIC TRASH TURNED INTO ART WITH A MESSAGE

Jordan-based artist Maria Nissan is on a mission: to rid the world of single-use plastics and to raise public awareness about the environmental scourge through eye-catching art. One of her best-known murals graces the side of a building in the capital Amman, a giant work made from more than 2,000 plastic bottles, almost 1,000 shopping bags and over 150 hookah pipe hoses. A US citizen of Iraqi origin, Nissan said she became enchanted with Amman when she first visited three years ago, but also felt "frustration and anger" at the piles of garbage on the streets and in areas of natural beauty.

"Despite the beauty of the city, walking its streets can be a journey filled with all kinds of trash," the 35-year-old said. "My eyes cannot turn away from the abundant shiny plastic bags, glass bottles, soda cans, candy bar wrappers," said Nissan, who occasionally sports a dress made from a sturdy blue Ikea bag.

Trained in painting and drawing in the United States and Italy, Nissan decided to collect and repurpose the trash to create art-often collages themed on women's faces, flowers and

Oriental motifs. Her home, where she has a rooftop workspace under a large canopy, is filled with every imaginable kind of discarded plastic object, from razors and toothbrushes to lighters, pens and plastic spoons. "Art made of



Maria Nissan creates an art installation from plastic waste collected from the streets, in the Jordanian capital Amman.

plastic is a concrete and powerful way to raise concerns on environmental issues that affect Jordanians, their children, their communities and natural environments in the kingdom," she said.



Maria Nissan works on one of her art pieces created from plastic waste collected from the streets.

'Everybody's problem'

"A bottle littered in a valley will take up to 450 years to decompose," said Nissan, pointing out that the effect is "micro-plastics polluting the soils, water and the wildlife. "Because plastics are littered indiscriminately in fields and water, livestock and fish feed themselves indirectly with plastic pieces that we will ultimately find on our plates." Nissan's work has been exhibited in 12 shows in Jordan as well as in Italy and Greece, and features on her Instagram channel @marianissanart, all with the purpose of changing minds and habits.

Jordanians use three billion plastic bags every year, part of the country's annual solid waste load of 2.2 million tons, of which only seven percent is recycled, according to the UN Development Program. Nissan urges people to avoid buying plastic products and to go shopping with reusable bags, and also advocates a tax on single-use plastics. "The consequences of single-use plastic pollution are often delayed, and therefore it is difficult to have people feel accountable and responsible for their own acts," she said. "Plastic comes back to us in one way or another ... It's nobody's responsibility until it becomes everybody's problem." —AFP

Lifestyle | Awards



Swedish film director Ruben Ostlund (fourth right) poses on stage with his trophy, surrounded by fellow winners (from left) British director and screenwriter Gina Gammell, Chinese director Jianying Chen, South Korean director Park Chan-Wook, Polish director Jerzy Skolimowski, Swedish director Tarik Saleh, South Korean actor Song Kang-Ho, French actor and President of the Jury of the 75th Cannes Film Festival Vincent Lindon, Iranian actress Zar Amir-Ebrahimi and French film director Claire Denis at the end of the Closing Ceremony of the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos



Chinese director Jianying Chen attends a photocall after she won the Palme d'Or - Short Film for the film "The Water Murmurs".



Belgian film director Felix Van Groeningen (left) and Belgian director Charlotte Vandermeersch pose during a photocall after they equally won the Jury Prize for their film "The Eight Mountains (Le Otto Montagne)".

Brutal class satire 'Triangle of Sadness' wins Cannes Palme d'Or

A viciously sharp satire about class conflict, with an already-infamous vomiting and pooping scene, won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday, the second time Swedish director Ruben Ostlund has won the prize. "Triangle of Sadness" puts Ostlund among a select group of two-time winners of the top prize at Cannes. He first scooped the Palme in 2017 for "The Square".

Now firmly established as cinema's king of cringe, Ostlund, 48, takes a scalpel to bourgeois niceties. This time he turned his gaze on fashion models and the ultra-rich, who find their status suddenly undermined when disaster strikes a cruise ship. An extended sequence of projectile vomiting and violent diarrhoea on the ship quickly became the talk of the festival after its premiere last week, leaving viewers either howling with laughter or turning green. Accepting the award, Ostlund said he wanted audiences to be entertained but also "to ask themselves questions, to go out after the screening and have something to talk about".

'Come a long way'

The most moving part of the ceremony was the best actress award that went to Iranian Zar Amir Ebrahimi, forced to flee her country 16 years ago following a smear campaign over her love life. She played a journalist in "Holy Spider", tracking a man who murders prostitutes in the holy city of Mashhad. "I have come a long way to be on this stage tonight," said Ebrahimi, who now lives in Paris. "It was not an easy story."

"This film is about women, it's about their bodies, it's a movie full of faces, hair, hands, feet - everything that is impossible to show in Iran," she added. It was a strong night for Asian cinema with best director going to South Korea's Park Chan-wook for "Decision to Leave", about a detective falling for his murder suspect. The best actor award went to Song Kang-ho-world-famous as the father in the Oscar-winning "Parasite"-for his performance in the touching adoption drama "Broker" by Japan's Hirokazu Kore-eda.

The runner-up Grand Prix was split between 32-year-old Belgian Lukas Dhont and French veteran Claire Denis. Dhont's "Close" is a tender portrait of two boys facing bullying as they grapple with their budding sexuality, while Denis won for "Stars at Noon", a love story set against politi-



Swedish film director Ruben Ostlund (sixth right) poses on stage with his trophy surrounded by fellow winners (from left) British director and screenwriter Gina Gammell, Chinese director Jianying Chen, South Korean actor Park Yong-Woo, Polish director Jerzy Skolimowski, Swedish director Tarik Saleh, South Korean actor Song Kang-Ho, French actor and President of the Jury of the 75th Cannes Film Festival Vincent Lindon and Iranian actress Zar Amir-Ebrahimi at the end of the Closing Ceremony of the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



Swedish film director Ruben Ostlund poses during a photocall after he won the Palme d'Or for the film 'Triangle of Sadness' during the closing ceremony of the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



(From right) Belgian director Lukas Dhont, Belgian actor Eden Dambrine pose with his trophy during a photocall after he won equally the Grand Prix for the film "Close" and with French film director Claire Denis for the film "Stars at Noon".

cal tensions in Central America. The third-place Jury Prize was shared between "The Eight Mountains", about a lifelong friendship in the Italian Alps; and the festival's most radical entry, "EO", a movie told entirely from the point of view of a donkey, from 84-year-old Polish legend Jerzy Skolimowski.

'Wickedly funny'

The 12-day festival saw plenty of Hollywood glitz, kickstarted by Tom Cruise with his first trip to Cannes in 30 years to launch "Top Gun: Maverick", accompanied by a French Air Force display team. There was also the world premiere of Baz Luhrmann's rock'n'roll biopic, "Elvis". In a crowd-pleasing twist, Elvis Presley's granddaughter Riley Keough won the Camera d'Or, the prize for best first film, for "War Pony" with co-director Gina Gammell. The war in Ukraine cast a shadow over proceedings from the start with a video message from President Volodymyr Zelensky at the opening ceremony.

Several Ukrainian films received special screenings, and there was bitter debate over

the inclusion of Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov in the main competition, despite his condemnation of the war. Critics found it impossible to agree on the entries this year, with many being loved and hated in equal measure.

"Triangle of Sadness" also proved divisive, with Variety finding it "wickedly funny" while The Guardian calling it a "hammy, unsubtle, easy-target satire". But the final word went to the nine-strong jury, this year led by French actor Vincent Lindon and including two-time Oscar-winning Iranian director Asghar Farhadi and Indian superstar Deepika Padukone. Lindon said they struggled to agree on a winner, but "the entire jury was extremely shocked" by "Triangle of Sadness". To mark the 75th jubilee edition of the festival, a special prize was awarded to Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, who have twice won the Palme d'Or and were back in competition with the well-received migrant drama "Tori and Lokita". —AFP



Swedish film director and screenwriter Ruben Ostlund poses with the trophy during a photocall after he won the Palme d'Or for the film "Triangle of Sadness".



South Korean director Park Chan-Wook poses during a photocall after he won the Best Director prize for the film "Decision to Leave (Hogil Kyolshim)".



South Korean actor Song Kang-Ho poses with his trophy during a photocall after he won the Best Actor Prize for his part in "Broker (Les Bonnes Etoiles)".



Iranian actress Zar Amir-Ebrahimi poses with her trophy during a photocall after she won the Best Actress Prize for her part in "Holy Spider".



Polish director Jerzy Skolimowski poses on stage after he was equally awarded with the Jury Prize for the film "Eo (Hi-Han)".

The winners at the 75th Cannes Film Festival

The 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival ended Saturday in the South of France with the awarding of its top prize, the Palme d'Or. Here is a list of the winners:

Palme d'Or: Ruben Ostlund for "Triangle of Sadness" (Sweden-Germany-France-Britain)

Grand Prix: Shared by Lukas Dhont for "Close" (Belgium-Netherlands-France) and Claire Denis for "Stars at Noon" (France)

Best director: Park Chan-wook "Decision to Leave" (South Korea)

Best actress: Zar Amir Ebrahimi for "Holy Spider" (Denmark-Germany-Sweden-France)

Best actor: Song Kang-ho for "Broker" (South Korea)

Best screenplay: Tarik Saleh for "Boy from Heaven" (Sweden-France-Finland-Denmark)

Jury prize: Shared by Jerzy Skolimowski for "EO" (Poland) and Charlotte Vandermeersch and Felix van Groeningen for "The Eight Mountains" (Italy-Belgium-France-Britain)

Camera d'Or for best first film: Riley Keough and Gina Gammell for "War Pony" (United States)

Best short film: Jianying Chen for "The Water Murmurs" (China) —AFP



Swedish director Tarik Saleh delivers a speech on stage after he was awarded with the Best Screenplay prize for the film "Boy From Heaven (Walaad Min Al Janna)".

Sports

Bromell, Thompson-Herah bag 100m wins in Eugene

World record-holder Crouser wins the shot put

EUGENE: Trayvon Bromell and Elaine Thompson-Herah grabbed 100m Diamond League victories Saturday in Eugene, where eight world-leading performances highlighted the action at Hayward Field. America's Bromell, the fastest man in the world last year, bounced back from a false start disqualification in Birmingham last weekend to win a star-studded men's 100m in 9.93sec. Jamaica's Thompson-Herah, who won back-to-back Olympic 100m-200m doubles in 2016 and last year, captured the women's 100m in 10.79.

Neither was a world best for 2022, but Thompson-Herah said she was just pleased to hit the line first and healthy on a rainy day in Eugene at the same venue that will host the World Championships on July 15-24. "I'm excited I crossed the line healthy," Thompson-Herah said. "I don't care about the time. The rain was falling. It was a little cold. "It shows I'm on a great path," added the Jamaican star, who pulled out of the Birmingham Diamond League meeting with a shoulder injury, testing herself in a lower-level meeting in Kingston last Saturday instead.

"I'm getting into shape," added the Jamaican, who said on Friday that her training had also been disrupted by a nagging Achilles injury. "I'm getting where I need to be." Thompson-Herah made a smooth start on the damp track and took control at the 50m mark. Rising US star Sha'Carri Richardson won a close battle for second place ahead of Jamaica's Shericka Jackson, both credited with a time of 10.92.

Richardson, 22, shot to prominence last season at the US Olympic trials with a wind-aided 10.64 in the final. But she missed the Tokyo Games after a positive test for marijuana. Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce made it a women's sprint double for Jamaica with a victory in the 200m in 22.41. Bromell, who clocked a wind-aided

9.75 in Florida earlier this month, said his race left plenty of room for improvement as he looks toward the US World Championship trials in Eugene next month and the Worlds themselves.

"I was happy to come out with a win, but I felt like there was a lot of technical stuff I messed up on," he said. "I'm pretty sure I'm already getting messages from my coach." Compatriot Fred Kerley, silver medalist at the Tokyo Olympics last year, was second in 9.98 and reigning world champion Christian Coleman, still working his way back after an 18-month suspension for violating doping whereabouts rules, completed a US podium sweep in 10.04. "It went pretty well, just considering the elements and where I'm at in the season," Coleman said.

Norman impresses in 400

Despite intermittent rain, the day included a host of world-leading performances, starting with Brazilian Alison dos Santos's 400m hurdles victory in 47.23, which shaved one-hundredth of a second off the world leading mark he posted in winning at the Doha Diamond League meet. The Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist said it was "amazing" to get a chance to test the World Championships venue. "It's so nice, because you can feel the energy, you can feel the track, you can feel everything before the championships." American Michael Norman shattered a 22-year-old meet record set by Michael Johnson with his 400m triumph in 43.60.

Norman's fastest performance in more than a year was the best in the world in 2022 and carried him to victory over Grenada's 2012 Olympic champion Kirani James (44.02) and Britain's Matthew Hudson-Smith (44.35). Britain's Keely Hodgkinson backed up her victory in Birmingham with a gritty win in the



EUGENE: Trayvon Bromell of United States wins the 100m during the Wanda Diamond League Prefontaine Classic at Hayward Field on May 28, 2022 in Eugene, Oregon. —AFP

women's 800m in a world-leading 1:57.72. Kazakhstan's Norah Jeruto won the women's 3,000m steeplechase in a world-leading 8:57.97. Winfred Mutile Yavi of Bahrain became just the seventh woman to break nine minutes in the event with her second-place finish in 8:58.71.

World record-holder Ryan Crouser won the shot put with a season's best 23.02 ahead of compatriot Joe Kovacs (22.49) and New Zealand's Tomas Walsh

(21.96). Two-time Olympic gold medalist Faith Kipyegon of Kenya won the women's 1,500m in 3:52.59. Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen won the men's mile in 3:49.76 and Ethiopia's Berihu Aregawi won the men's 5,000m in 12:50.05. Aregawi's victory improved on the world leading time of 12:57.99 set by Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Joshua Cheptegei on Friday night in a separate 5,000m race billed as a world record attempt by the Ugandan. —AFP

Record-breaking Derby winning jockey Lester Piggott dies

PARIS: Legendary flat race jockey Lester Piggott who rode a record nine Epsom Derby winners has died aged 86 his son-in-law said on Sunday. Piggott was admitted to hospital in Switzerland last weekend. "Sadly we can confirm that Lester died peacefully in Switzerland this morning," said his son-in-law Williams Haggas.

"I really don't wish to add much more than that at this stage, although Maureen (Piggott's daughter) will be making a statement later." Piggott is widely regarded as one of the greatest jockeys in the sport's history, and had been previously admitted to intensive care in 2007 due to a heart problem. 'The Long Fellow' as he was nicknamed—due to being unusually tall for a flat jockey—had lived near Geneva since 2012.

Piggott rode in a golden era for jockeys numbering Willie Carson, and the late duo of Pat Eddery and 'Smokin Joe' Mercer. Carson described Piggott as "an iconic figure in the racing industry". "He was magical on top of a horse," Carson told The Racing Post. "He had this confidence about him and didn't care about what people were going to think about him—he just got on and did what he thought was the right thing on a horse and it normally was."

"He had an empathy for the animal and knew what a horse was thinking. He knew what a horse wanted, be it tough, soft, holding up or using his stride, and he always seemed to get it right." Statues of Piggott adorn nine racecourses in England and only a week ago one was unveiled at Ireland's premier racetrack The Curragh. The 11-time British champion jockey rode 16 Irish classic winners at the track largely due to his partnership with trainer Vincent O'Brien.

'An aura about him'

The three-time Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe winning jockey was once known as the housewives' favourite when it came to picking an Epsom Derby horse to back. His first Derby winner came when he was just 18 on Never Say Die in 1954 with his ninth and last Teenoso in 1983. He retired from the saddle in 1985 to train. However, that was brought to an abrupt halt by the conviction for tax fraud in 1987 that saw him serve a year in prison, and made a shock return after his release to what he knew best, riding. He rode on for another four seasons with his most notable success when he memorably reunited with O'Brien to win the prestigious Breeders' Cup Mile on Royal Academy at the age of 54 in 1990. —AFP

Dominant Blues end on a high; Brumbies stunned by Pasifika

SYDNEY: A second-string Auckland Blues edged NSW Waratahs with a last-gasp drop goal to extend their win streak to 13 as Moana Pasifika shocked the ACT Brumbies in the final round of the regular Super Rugby Pacific season. The dominant Blues lost their season opener, but have since rattled off 13 straight victories—a franchise record—to seal top spot in the 12-team table.

Assured of a home quarter-final, coach Leon MacDonald rested his top players, including superstar Beauden Barrett, from their finale against the Waratahs in Sydney, but the Blues still managed to win 20-17. Two tries in six minutes from winger Mark Nawaqanitawase midway through the second half earned the Waratahs a 14-3 lead.

Replies from Cameron Suafoa and Luke Romano put the Blues back in front before a 78th-minute penalty from Tane Edmed leveled the score, setting up fullback Zarn Sullivan to be the hero, slotting a drop-goal after the final siren.

O'Gara trumps Sexton in Euro final subplot

MARSEILLE: Ronan O'Gara had the last laugh as the former Ireland fly-half coached La Rochelle to European Champions Cup victory over a Leinster side skippered by his successor Johnny Sexton. La Rochelle's first-ever piece of silverware is the latest feather in the cap for O'Gara, who is fast establishing himself as one of world rugby's most successful coaches.

The nail-biting 24-21 victory in Marseille on Saturday saw O'Gara become just the third person to win the European Cup as a coach and player after current Leinster coach Leo Cullen and Toulouse's Ugo Mola. After cutting his teeth as defence coach at Racing 92 — when Sexton was also a player there—O'Gara touched down at La Rochelle after a successful coaching stint with the Crusaders in Super Rugby with the bold idea of targeting not only the Top 14 title, but also the European Champions Cup crown.

The Top 14 is such a demanding league, only teams with big budgets and squads are really capable of competing on two fronts.

The La Rochelle squad can do just that, featuring a burgeoning group of younger French players alongside France No 8 Gregory Alldritt, All Blacks Victor Vito and Tawera Kerr-Barlow, fellow Kiwi Ihaia West, France props Uni Atonio and Dany Priso, Wallaby Will Skelton and Springboks Raymond Rhule and Dillyn Leyds. O'Gara introduced a game-plan called 'KBA' (keep the ball alive), but was savvy enough to realise that that is only possible with the presence of some experienced, heavyweight forwards. "Without, I hope, any resemblance of arrogance, we genuinely believed that we'd win," said O'Gara, who won the Cup twice as a goal-kicking fly-half with Munster, in 2006 and 2008. "Otherwise, what happened throughout the game, there were ample opportunities to jump ship: 18-10, yellow card. "Teams with bottle, belief, a vision, find a way to win. The boys deserve immense credit for staying on task."

Second-half team

Sexton kicked six penalties to put Leinster into that 18-10 lead, but even then O'Gara said he was not overly concerned. "We're a second-half team, the data says that and as a coach you have to get into that," he said. "We knew then that Leinster's last 20 minutes was where we can get them." O'Gara's plan was shown to be right as La Rochelle dominated the final quarter, Arthur



MARSEILLE: La Rochelle's players run past La Rochelle's Irish coach Ronan O'Gara during the warm-up session before the European Rugby Champions Cup, rugby union final between Stade Rochelais (La Rochelle) and Leinster at the Velodrome Stadium in Marseille. —AFP

Retiere darting over for the decisive try in the 79th minute. After the defeat by Toulouse last year and another loss in the 2019 Challenge Cup, the Irish coach said his players had been ready to secure a maiden European trophy. "You lose two finals and it's a desperate place. They had had enough of competing,

they wanted to win," he said. "Leinster may have had one or two opportunities, but I don't think there was eight or 10 points left out there." Sexton, nine years O'Gara's junior, enjoyed keen rivalry in both their battle for the Ireland fly-half shirt and as leaders of their respective Irish provinces. —AFP

Zheng: Things to know about China's new tennis sensation

BEIJING: Teenager Zheng Qinwen has lit up the French Open as the newest star to emerge from China, where the coronavirus pandemic and the Peng Shuai scandal has put top-level tennis on hold for more than two years. The 19-year-old beat 2018 French Open winner Simona Halep in the second round at Roland Garros. Zheng faces world number one Iga Swiatek on Monday for a place in the quarter-finals after her third-round opponent Alize Cornet retired with a thigh injury. But who is Zheng Qinwen? AFP Sport picks five things to know about China's world number 74:

Early starter

At the age of six, Zheng's father

encouraged her to try different sports and commit to one of them. She had a go at basketball and badminton before choosing tennis. Zheng was enrolled in a special residential coaching program at the age of eight, moving away from her family home in Shiyan, in central China's Hubei province, to an academy in Grand Slam winner Li Na's home city of Wuhan. In 2013, US talent scouts spotted Zheng at an open junior tournament in Florida and she signed her first contract with leading sports management agency IMG at the age of 11.

Federer 'weapon'

Zheng is one of the "Li Na generation" of young players who took up ten-

nis after the success of China's first Grand Slam singles champion, who won the French Open in 2011 when Zheng was eight. She watches 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer at every opportunity. "I remember sitting in front of the TV watching Federer when I was a child, enjoying every shot... inspiring me," Zheng wrote on China's twitter-like Weibo in August. She uses the same type of Wilson Pro Staff tennis racquet as Federer, once calling it on Weibo a "must-have weapon for killing enemies".

Trains in Spain

Zheng has been based in Barcelona for the past two years and is coached by former top-100 men's player Pere Riba. Before moving to Spain she trained at an elite tennis academy in Beijing run by Carlos Rodriguez, the Argentine-Belgian coach who worked with Li Na and Justine Henin.

Dream-chasing foodie

The outspoken teenager has adopted the nickname Ana and she calls herself a "foodie" who likes to "chase dreams" and a video on Weibo in 2019 shows her to be a dab hand at making dumplings. "The future cannot be predicted, the past cannot be changed," she wrote on Weibo on the eve of the French Open. "The present is just chasing dreams."

Rising star

Zheng has been racing up the WTA rankings since the start of 2021 having won 60 of her last 79 matches at all levels. She has reached five second-tier ITF finals in that time and won them all, without dropping a set. Zheng broke into the top 100 in February and is projected to move inside the top 70 for the first time after the French Open. —AFP



PARIS: China's Zheng Qinwen returns the ball to France's Alize Cornet during their women's singles match on day seven of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament on May 28, 2022. —AFP

Sports

Kuwait grabs 77 medals at the Third Gulf Games

Kuwait maintains lead; Bahrain remains second



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait added silver and bronze medals to its tally at the end of the 13th day of the Third Gulf Games hosted by Kuwait. The Ladies Padel team won the silver medal while the men's team won bronze. Kuwait maintained its lead in the medals table with a total of 77 medals (28 gold, 22 silver, 27 bronze); Bahrain remained in second with 56 (20 gold, 21 silver, 15 bronze); UAE moved to third place with 42 medals (17 gold, 14 silver, 11 bronze); Qatar is fourth with 46 medals (14 gold, 19 silver, 13 bronze); Oman moved to fifth place with 29

medals (12 gold, 5 silver, 12 bronze) while Saudi Arabia dropped to sixth with 53 medals (11 gold, 18 silver and 24 bronze).

In the women's Padel matches, Kuwait lost its final match (1-2) to gold medalist Oman. The bronze went to UAE as they beat the Saudi team with the same result. Meanwhile, the men's team took the bronze medal, after losing to gold medalist Qatar 0-3 as UAE claimed the silver medal.

Sports media

President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

lauded the efforts of the Gulf sports media in covering the events which contributed to the success of the games at the media level. Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser who visited the media center in the presence of the heads of the Gulf media delegations on Saturday said the outstanding job of journalists and media crew in covering all competitions had a good effect in promoting the games.

Handball

Qatar continues to lead the handball standings after defeating Kuwait 24-23 in their match on Saturday in the third round. Bahrain defeated UAE

26-25. Qatar team raised their points total to 6; Bahrain grabbed 4 points and Kuwait took the third place with one point. Saudi Arabia secured the fourth place with 1 point while UAE remained pointless.

Tennis

Kuwait Tennis Team defeated UAE 3-0. In the first singles match, Essa Qabazard beat Abderahman Al-Janahi 6-4, 7-6 while Abdelhameed Mubarak defeated Fahad Al-Janahi 6-1, 6-3. The doubles match saw Kuwait's Ali Al-Shatti and Bader Antar winning their match 6-0, 6-0. Saudi Arabia defeated Bahrain 3-0. Ammar Al-Haqbani defeated Yousuf Qaed 6-1, 6-3.

Djokovic cruises closer to Rafael Nadal clash

PARIS: World number one and defending champion Novak Djokovic reached a 16th French Open quarter-final on Sunday where old rival and 13-time winner Rafael Nadal could be waiting. Djokovic, bidding to equal Nadal's record of 21 Grand Slam titles, eased to a 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 last-16 victory against 15th seed Diego Schwartzman of Argentina. "I have a lot of respect for him (Schwartzman). He's a good person off the court," said Djokovic who has now beaten Schwartzman seven times in seven meetings.

Djokovic is still to drop a set at Roland Garros after cruising through the first week. He has also won 22 sets in a row, stretching back to his Italian Open title triumph in Rome earlier this month. "I've made a good start but I have a lot of work to do," added Djokovic who will face Nadal for the 10th time at Roland Garros and 59th overall if the Spaniard defeats Felix Auger-Aliassime later Sunday.

In an interesting twist, Auger-Aliassime has

Nadal's uncle and former long-time coach Toni working with him. Toni coached his nephew for the best part of three decades during which time Nadal won 16 of his record 21 Slam titles. When asked if he will divulge to Auger-Aliassime the secret of how to become just the third man to defeat Nadal at Roland Garros, the 61-year-old coach was unequivocal.

'Ethics'

"Of course not. I told Felix that my ethics do not allow me to give him advice on beating my nephew. It's as if I were telling someone how to defeat my own son," said Toni ahead of his first meeting with Rafael since their split. Toni said he would not sit in Auger-Aliassime's player box for the match, taking his place instead in the presidential box on Court Philippe Chatrier.

In the wide open women's event, which saw nine of the top 10 seeds fall before the second week, Canadian teenager Leylah Fernandez reached the quarter-finals for the first time. Fernandez, seeded 17th, and who was US Open runner-up last year, fired an impressive 40 winners past 2019 semi-finalist Amanda Anisimova to secure a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win. The 19-year-old has made the quarter-finals on the back of an impressive 23 service breaks over four rounds at Roland Garros. —AFP

Ahly seeking historic third straight African title amid venue fury

JOHANNESBURG: Egyptian outfit Al Ahly go into the CAF Champions League final against Moroccan hosts Wydad Casablanca on Monday thrilled to be on the verge of creating history but furious at the choice of venue. Ahly are among four teams who have won the marquee African club competition twice in a row since its 1964 debut, but all of them failed when attempting to secure a third straight success.

Having flopped in 2007 and 2014, the Cairo Red Devils have a third chance after victories over fellow Egyptians Zamalek and South Africans Kaizer Chiefs in the previous two title deciders. But hopes of further glory suffered a huge blow when the Confederation of African Football (CAF) controversially decided to stage the final at the Stade Mohammed V, the home ground of Wydad.

CAF said Morocco and Senegal were the only countries who applied to host the high-

light of the African club calendar and the west Africans later withdrew, without offering an explanation. Angry Ahly officials asked the Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) - the highest legal body in sport - to force CAF to choose a neutral venue instead, but the appeal failed. Playing in Casablanca means Wydad will have the backing of about 35,000 supporters in a crowd limited to 45,000 - two thirds of the capacity.

Wydad fans rank among the most passionate and partisan in Africa with their limitless energy enabling them to sing, cheer and dance whenever their heroes have the ball, and boo when opponents have it. However, South Africa-born Ahly coach Pitso Mosimane believes Ahly can succeed and win the competition a record-extending 11th time since first conquering the continent 40 years ago. "I want to win every competition Ahly are involved in. Our millions of supporters expect nothing less," he told the Egyptian media.

"(Portuguese coach) Manuel Jose had several spells as Ahly coach and achieved a great deal-but he could not win every competition. "I do not know whether I can surpass him in terms of the number of titles Ahly win, but I am certainly going to try." —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9
Clinics	
Kaizen center	25716707

Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
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Old Name - Modhineni Sivaiah, New name - Madineni Sivaiah Passport No. U0610193 (C 0868)



SAINT-DENIS, France: Real Madrid's Brazilian defender Marcelo lifts the Champions League trophy after Madrid's victory in the UEFA Champions League final against Liverpool at the Stade de France north of Paris on May 28, 2022. —AFP

Real Madrid crowned 'King of Europe'

Vinicius strikes as Real beat Liverpool in Champions League final

PARIS: Vinicius Junior scored the only goal of the game as Real Madrid beat Liverpool 1-0 in Saturday's Champions League final in Paris to become kings of Europe for a record-extending 14th time after a night marred by problems outside the ground that led to the kick-off being delayed by over half an hour. Brazilian winger Vinicius turned in Fede Valverde's low cross in the 59th minute at the Stade de France and Liverpool could not find an equaliser as Jurgen Klopp's side lost to the Spanish giants in a Champions League final for the second time in five seasons.

Liverpool will wonder what might have been had the outstanding Thibaut Courtois not pushed Sadio Mane's shot onto the inside of a post when they were on top in the first half, as they fell short of a trophy treble. Winners of the English League Cup and FA Cup this season, they just missed out to Manchester City for the Premier League title and were denied a victory here which would have put them level with AC Milan on seven European Cups. "These boys played an outstanding season. The two competitions we couldn't win, we didn't win for the smallest possible margin," said Klopp.

Instead Real have a fifth Champions League in nine seasons to go with their Spanish title, as Carlo Ancelotti becomes the first coach to win European club football's greatest prize for a fourth time.

Ancelotti was also in charge of Real when they won the 2014 final having triumphed with AC Milan in 2003 and in 2007, the latter victory coming against Liverpool. "We managed the game very well," said Ancelotti, who called himself "a record man". "I had luck to come here last year and have a fantastic season. A fantastic club, a really good squad with a lot of quality and mental character," he said.

Delayed kick-off

The match kicked off 35 minutes later than the planned 9:00 pm start in the French capital after chaos at entrances to the stadium led to thousands of Liverpool fans being unable to get to their seats. UEFA blamed the build-ups of supporters at the gates of the stadium on "thousands of fans who had purchased fake tickets which did not work in the turnstiles".

Police also fired tear gas as a handful of younger fans could be seen trying to scale fences around the perimeter of the stadium. The final was only moved to the French capital after Saint-Petersburg was stripped of the game following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The delayed kick-off may have been responsible for the slow start to the game, as it was 16 minutes before there was an incident of note, Mohamed Salah turning a low Trent Alexander-Arnold cross towards goal only for Courtois to save.

Liverpool were seen as favorites to avenge their loss to the Spanish giants in the 2018 final in Kyiv and they began to take control of the game. Mane came agonizingly close in the 21st minute as he skipped his way into a shooting position inside the box only for Courtois to tip his net-bound shot onto his right-hand post. Klopp's side, with Fabinho and Thiago Alcantara starting in midfield after overcoming fitness worries, were in control but could not turn their superiority into a lead.

Outstanding Courtois

Real, meanwhile, created almost nothing in the first half with Karim Benzema quiet, but their captain briefly thought he had got the breakthrough two minutes before the interval. The Frenchman prodded home after the ball broke back to him inside the area but the off-side flag was raised. The decision to disallow the goal was upheld after a lengthy VAR check, despite Fabinho deflecting Valverde's touch through to Benzema. Yet Ancelotti's side kept their nerve and were rewarded with the goal as the hour mark approached. Valverde drove forward down the right before firing a low ball across the face of goal for Vinicius to turn it in at the far post past his Brazilian national team colleague Alisson. Just like in 2018, Real had drawn first blood, but this time there was no need for them to send on Gareth Bale in order to ensure victory. — AFP

British politicians and fans condemn final chaos

LONDON: British politicians and fans on Sunday condemned the treatment of fans around the stadium before Saturday's Champions League final, when French police sprayed tear gas on Liverpool supporters. Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis told Sky News on Sunday: "It is concerning to see that people either didn't get into the stadium or were ... treated with a very aggressive approach."

Earlier the politician who oversees the sector, the Secretary for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Nadine Dorries, tweeted of "troubling reports" from the stadium. A Liverpool MP from the opposition Labour Party, Ian Byrne, tweeted that "I've just endured one of the worst experiences in my life. Horrendous security and organization putting lives at risk". Merseyside Police said in a statement that there were "distressing scenes at the match," where its officers were deployed.

The force insisted "the vast majority of fans behaved in an exemplary manner". Liverpool players were set to take part in an open-top bus parade through the city on Sunday afternoon despite losing in Paris. Police said the city would be "very busy". Liverpool Mayor Joanne Anderson tweeted: "I know many have had a distressing time," adding that she supported the club's "call for an explanation into what happened before kick off."

Liverpool supporters' association Spirit of Shankly wrote on Twitter that "Last night was totally shambolic & extremely dangerous - we are gathering evidence from fans & @FansEurope and will be making a statement later." One fan, Paul Machin said in a YouTube video that what he witnessed in Paris was "unlike anything I've seen at a football match before", condemning "totally and utterly reprehensible behavior from the French police who were an absolute disgrace".

Another fan, Andrew Whittle, told Sky News that "Everyone was just funnelled into one place" and the crush "was a real Hillsborough sort of moment", referring to the 1989 stadium disaster at a Liverpool match. Former Liverpool defender Jim Beglin tweeted that after the match "organised gangs set about mugging departing fans" with "not a police officer in sight".

Another former Liverpool star Kenny Dalglish said on Twitter that "the way they (fans) were treated by authorities was an absolute joke. Nobody should ever be afraid to go to a football game." European football governing body UEFA blamed "fake tickets which did not work in the turnstiles" for a 35-minute delay to the final between Liverpool and Real Madrid. UEFA said French police had fired tear gas to disperse thousands of frustrated fans who were building up outside the Stade de France as a result of the fake tickets issue. — AFP

Salah's Egyptian fans share in Champions League misery

CAIRO: Donning Liverpool jerseys, Egyptian soccer fans cheered "Mo Salah! Mo Salah!" even as they struggled to hide their disappointment over the Reds' loss to Real Madrid in the Champions League final. It was another blow for Mohamed Salah who was reduced to tears twice earlier this year following Egypt's losses to Senegal in both the African Cup of Nations final and the World Cup play-off. To rub salt into his wounds Salah missed a penalty in the penalty shootout defeat to Senegal in the World Cup play-off. In those matches, Liverpool's African stars Salah and the Senegalese Sadio Mane were on opposing camps.

On Saturday, they suffered in defeat together. "It's really not the year of Salah," said Youssef Mohammed, a 21-year-old accounting student, wearing a Liverpool jersey, at a Cairo park where a giant screen was installed for the match. "We had more chances, better ball possession, but less luck, so in the end, Real stole the victory from us," says 37-year-old Khaled Youssef. Youssef, a leading member of the official Egyptian Liverpool supporters club, which has 215,000 followers on Facebook, says supporting the Reds and being Egyptian makes him "the least fortunate fan in the world."

'Disaster'

For many in Egypt, where public gatherings are effectively prohibited, football offers a rare avenue for distraction away from daily struggles including a heightened inflation rate which Moody's warned could raise instability and social tensions. On Saturday, fans filled cafes across Cairo, sporting red scarves, waving flags to the Liverpool anthem



SAINT-DENIS: Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah reacts on the pitch after a foul during the UEFA Champions League final football match between Liverpool and Real Madrid on May 28, 2022. —AFP

of "you'll never walk alone" hoping for a victory against the Spanish side. All prayed, danced, and chanted in the hopes of another Liverpool win similar to that of the 2019 Champions League when they beat Tottenham Hotspur. Salah wished that "the 2022 final will be different from that of 2018," when he went off injured and Real Madrid beat them 3-1.

"We have a score to settle," Salah said on social media moments after Real Madrid set up a re-match with Liverpool. Heads slumped in Cairo as the referee signaled the match's end with Real Madrid winning 1-0. "It is the latest disaster in a repeat scenario," said Amr Said, a 35-year-old engineer who is also a member of Liverpool's

Official Egyptian Supporters' Club. Liverpool were hoping to win their seventh European Cup which would have been the ideal pick me up a week after they narrowly lost out to Manchester City in the Premier League title race.

Salah and Liverpool will have to be content with lifting the FA and League Cup. Salah is still an icon for millions in Egypt where he often features on giant billboards across the capital, Cairo. He often springs up on TV ads for everything from a national anti-drugs campaign to promotions for soft drinks and luxury residences. Despite the disappointment over Salah's loss, Egypt is gearing up for Monday's African Champions League final pitting Cairo giants Al Ahly against Wydad Casablanca. — AFP