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# US stands firmly committed to defense of Kuwait: Pentagon

## Kuwaiti ambassador hails strong relationship with Washington

### Candidates call for change based on Amiri address

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Thirty-seven new candidates filed their nomination papers on Wednesday, raising the total number of hopefuls for the upcoming National Assembly elections on Sept 29 to 222 candidates. The new candidates included two women, taking the number of female candidates to 12. The new candidates include two members of the dissolved National Assembly - Abdulkarim Al-Kandari and Yousef Al-Ghareeb. They also include three former MPs from previous assemblies.

Meanwhile, veteran MP Adnan Abdulsamad said on Wednesday he will not bid for re-election,

while his colleague - former MP Ahmad Lari - is running from the same (first) constituency. Lari called on the next government to prepare a working program that leads to political, economic and administrative reforms.

MP Kandari called for change based on the principles included in the Amiri address delivered by the HH the Crown Prince on June 22. Former MP Abdullah Fahhad said the country is before a crucial and historic era and called for holding to account all those who stole public funds. Fahhad said it is high time to resolve the decades-old problem of stateless people, locally known as bedoons, charging that racists have prevented resolving the humanitarian issue of thousands of bedoons.

The National Assembly was dissolved in July over continued political disputes between the government and opposition MPs. Snap polls have been set for Sept 29. Registration of candidates will continue until Sept 7, while withdrawal from the race will remain open until seven days before election day.

**WASHINGTON:** US Department of Defense Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Ilan Goldenberg has affirmed that the US "stands firmly committed to the defense of Kuwait, something that has been the keystone of our relationship". In remarks at a reception hosted by the National Council on US-Arab Relations (NCUSAR) on behalf of Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Jasem Al-Budaiwi Tuesday, Goldenberg said that "Kuwait remains a critical leader in Middle East and a beacon for regional stability."

He continued that "the defense partnership is one of the most important security relationships that the US has and we will always value that partnership". He also expressed Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin's "gratitude for several key elements of the strong relationship" with Kuwait. Ambassador Budaiwi said in his remarks that Kuwait and the US consider each other as "true and reliable" partners and that Kuwait is "proud" of the relationship it enjoys with the US. "I cannot stress how proud the State of Kuwait is of its relationship with the United States of America," he remarked. "We refer to the US as a true and reliable partner and know that the feeling is reciprocated." — KUNA (See Page 3)



WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Jasem Al-Budaiwi speaks during a reception hosted by the National Council on US-Arab Relations (NCUSAR). — KUNA

### News in brief

#### Customs issues weapons warning

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Customs displayed a variety of weapons that were brought in by airline passengers and air cargo. "We will not allow any violations or smuggling of any type, as our employees will exert all efforts to prevent the entry of illegal weapons through any point of entry," acting Head of Kuwait Customs Sulaiman Al-Fahad said. "The weapons were seized from travelers, as well as from air cargo shipments. They were transferred to the ministry of interior, and legal measures will be taken against any violations that threaten our national security," he added.

#### Schools greatly understaffed

**KUWAIT:** With the start of the new academic year at private schools, the council of private schools revealed huge understaffing in teaching, managerial and other positions. "Most of the employees that we requested have refused to come without their families, especially after some of them lost family members during the COVID pandemic," the council said. "We ask the interior ministry and the Public Authority of Manpower to give educational institutions more leeway and facilitate their work permit applications, because we are greatly understaffed," it added. Even public schools suffer from the same problem. Around 1,200 to 2000 workers are needed to meet staffing requirements.

### Tributes as Gorbachev dies at 91

**MOSCOW:** The death of Mikhail Gorbachev triggered an outpouring of tributes from Western leaders on Wednesday but reaction was muted in Russia, where many blamed the last Soviet leader for the loss of the country's status as a global superpower. Gorbachev, who changed the course of history by triggering the demise of the Soviet Union and was one of the great figures of the 20th century, died on Tuesday aged 91.

Russian news agency reports said he had died in

### UAE woos fans with multi-entry tourist visas

**DUBAI:** The United Arab Emirates will offer multiple-entry visas to football fans at this year's Qatar World Cup, officials announced, as it looks to reap an economic windfall from the tournament. The

### Saudi seizes 47m meth pills in record haul

**RIYADH:** Saudi officers thwarted an attempt to smuggle 47 million amphetamine pills into the country, state media reported Wednesday, describing it as the largest ever drug trafficking operation in the kingdom. Six Syrians and two Pakistanis were arrested in a raid after the pills, concealed in a flour shipment, arrived at a dry port in the capital Riyadh and were taken to a warehouse, the Saudi Press Agency said.

a central Moscow hospital "after a serious and long illness" and that his funeral would be held in the capital on Saturday. His life was one of the most influential of his times, and his reforms as Soviet leader transformed his country and allowed Eastern Europe to free itself from Soviet rule.

While the changes he set in motion saw him lionized in the West, they earned him the scorn of many Russians after the country was plunged into economic chaos and saw its international influence decline. President Vladimir Putin, who called the Soviet collapse the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century, has spent much of his more than 20-year rule reversing parts of Gorbachev's legacy.

By cracking down on independent media and political opposition, critics say, Putin has worked to undo Gorbachev's efforts to bring "glasnost", or

Continued on Page 6



MOSCOW: In this file photo taken on Dec 25, 1991, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev reads his resignation statement shortly before appearing on television to announce his decision to the nation. — AFP (See Page 6)

UAE, whose jewel is the tourism-to-finance hub of Dubai, follows neighboring Saudi Arabia in opening its doors to supporters arriving for the first football World Cup in the Middle East.

Fans with the Hayya Card issued to ticketholders will be eligible for the 90-day renewable visas available for an initial fee of 100 dirhams (\$27). "The program comes within the UAE's initiatives aiming to support the State of Qatar, in hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022," the official WAM news agency said. "Through the multiple-entry tourist visa options, the UAE will be hosting the World Cup fans, allowing them

to enter UAE multiple times over a period of 90 days."

Qatar, with a population of 2.8 million and hosting the biggest event in its history, is expecting 1.2 million visitors for the November 20-December World Cup. With accommodation in short supply in the tiny but wealthy state, the overflow is shaping as an economic boon for Qatar's Gulf neighbors. Airlines Saudia, Kuwait Airways, flydubai and Oman Air will put on more than 160 daily shuttle flights for fans, allowing them to stay outside Qatar and make day trips to watch games.

Continued on Page 6



A handout picture released by the Saudi interior ministry on August 31, 2022 shows handcuffed suspects and bags of amphetamine pills on display at a warehouse in an undisclosed location. — AFP



## Local

# Turkish Embassy marks Victory Day, hails relations with Kuwait

## New Turkish ambassador aims to deepen ties in every field

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The Turkish Embassy in Kuwait marked on Tuesday the 100th anniversary of Victory Day in the presence of senior diplomats, military attaches, envoys, Turkish citizens and other dignitaries. The Turkish Embassy representative said in a speech that Turkey is celebrating the 100th anniversary of a great victory, which is one of the cornerstones of our centuries-old history, praising relations between Turkey and Kuwait have reached an "exemplary" level and continue to grow stronger.

The representative said there is wide cooperation potential ahead, as the new Turkish ambassador in Kuwait will be trying hard to deepen relations with Kuwait in every field. "August 30 is one of our history's most critical milestones, when our nation thwarted the hopes of imperialist intentions on its existence and laid the groundwork for the foundation of our Republic. The spirit, faith and will, which inspired the great victory 100 years ago, guide our nation today, too. We owe a debt of gratitude to all heroes of our War of Independence, first and foremost Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the gallant soldiers of our military," she said.

The representative revealed Turkey has achieved self-sufficiency in defense industry products by 70 percent and currently has seven defense companies among the 100 biggest companies in the world. "We believe that the establishment of peace, security, stability and welfare in our region and beyond depends on the creation of a fair balance in the defense industry. The more we



**KUWAIT:** The Turkish Embassy in Kuwait marks the 100th anniversary of Victory Day in the presence of senior diplomats, military attaches, envoys, Turkish citizens and other dignitaries on Tuesday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

develop our national defense capacity, the more we contribute to regional and global peace," she said.

A message by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was also read at the occasion, in which he said: "Today, we are living the rightful pride of reaching the 100th anniversary of the Great Victory. I congratulate our brothers and sisters in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and all of our citizens living all across the world on the August 30 Victory Day. I thank on behalf of myself, my country and nation all of our friends who share our joy of festival."

"Our nation, whose history is full of glorious victories, ended the liberation struggle, which it waged despite every kind of poverty and deprivation, with a clear and undisputable victory on August 30, 1922. August 30 serves as the

clearest evidence of what the Turkish nation can achieve and what it can sacrifice when forced to choose between slavery and liberty.

"Lastly, the incidents that took place on the night of July 15 have once again shown that the unwavering will that inspired the Great Offensive is still alive in hearts. With the strength it draws from its history, Turkiye determinedly advances on the path to building a bright and prosperous future for it. Our country is now taking steps to turn the global economic crisis into an opportunity as well.

"Turkiye takes the place it deserves in the new world system with its growing production capacity, its exports that break new records every month and the projects it implements in the defense industry, as well as the responsibilities it assumes in the solution of regional prob-



lems. The year 2023, when we will be celebrating the 100th year of our Republic, will inshallah mark a new mile-

stone when we give the good news about building the great and powerful 'Turkiye.'"

## Kuwait's envoy to Switzerland submits credentials, hails ties

**GENEVA:** Kuwait's Ambassador to the Swiss Federation Yaqoub Al-Sanad handed over his credentials to President and Foreign Minister of the Swiss Confederation Ignazio Cassis in Bern. Sanad stressed on the importance of strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, which he said would serve mutual interests and prosperity by the setting up of new initiatives across several sectors. He also conveyed the greetings and wishes of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Cassis for good health and happiness.

The Swiss president conveyed his greetings to HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince and his wishes for the State of Kuwait, government and people, for further development, growth, security and stability, Sanad said. He added that the Swiss president affirmed his country's readiness to provide all possible support for the development and strengthening of Kuwaiti-Swiss bilateral relations in various fields. — KUNA



**BERN:** Kuwaiti Ambassador to Switzerland Yaqoub Al-Sanad submits his credentials to Swiss Confederation President Ignazio Cassis. — KUNA



## UNICEF hails crucial role of Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Representative of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in the Gulf Area Eltayeb Adam underlined the significant role of Kuwait in humanitarian and development fields, especially in childcare, locally and internationally. Speaking to KUNA after meeting Secretary General of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Maha Al-Barjas Wednesday, Adam commended the close partnership and constructive cooperation between UNICEF and KRCS, extolling KRCS' role in supporting children in countries suffering from natural disasters and famine.

Crises and famine in some coun-

tries led to malnutrition of residents including mothers and children, especially in Yemen, Somalia and Sudan, he said, urging concerted international efforts to provide them with humanitarian support. Similarly, Barjas told KUNA that children are the most vulnerable groups impacted in times of crises; therefore, improving living conditions is a priority to galvanize the social development process.

Both sides discussed several joint projects connected to humanitarian relief in deprived countries, and discussed ways to enhance cooperation between KRCS and UNICEF, she added. KRCS and UNICEF have the same message of helping the most deprived groups through various humanitarian relief undertakings, she stressed, hoping to strengthen areas of partnership between both sides and implement joint programs that take into account the needs of children in all fields. — KUNA



**Kuwait Red Crescent Society delivers aid to flood-hit people in Sudan. — KUNA**



## Kuwait's money supply up 0.1%

**KUWAIT:** Figures issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait Tuesday showed that the broad money supply (N2) increased by 0.1 percent in July (monthly) to reach about KD 41.7 billion (\$137.6 billion). The Bank's Economic Research Department said in statistical tables addressed to KUNA that private sector deposits with local banks decreased by 0.2 percent in July to reach KD 37.1 billion (\$122.4 billion). It added that the private sector's deposits in foreign currencies rose 7.6 percent to reach KD 2.8 billion (\$9.2 billion).

In contrast, the total balances of

local banks' demands on the Central Bank in KD, represented by bonds, stabilized at KD 3 billion (\$9.9 billion). However, the total assets of local banks decreased by 0.4 percent to reach KD 81.5 billion (\$268.9 billion). In comparison, the net foreign assets of regional banks rose by 9.4 percent to KD 6.2 billion (\$20.4 billion). It stated that time deposits with the CBK jumped last July by about 18.8 percent to reach KD 3.8 billion (\$12.5 billion), and the balances of cash credit facilities (loans) increased by 0.3 percent to reach KD 44.8 billion (\$147.8 billion). — KUNA

## Kuwait delivers aid to flood-hit areas in Sudan

**KHARTOUM:** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has started the deliv-

ery of humanitarian aid to 1,000 Sudanese families affected by the latest flash floods. "We have already started sending relief, food and sanitary aid in the hard-hit state of Gezira," said Anwar Al-Hassawi, Vice Chairman of KRCS. He added that the charity initiatives would be extended to other affected provinces as well and aid would be dispatched in the order of

those in dire need of supplies.

KRCS' senior officials voiced gratitude to all individuals and bodies that contributed to dispatching relief aid to the affected people in Sudan. Sudanese authorities have recently declared a state of emergency nationwide due to down-pour and flash floods, which have killed at least 99 people and devastated more than 60,000 houses. — KUNA



## Local

# US hails Kuwait as beacon for stability in Middle East

## Kuwait to boost relations with US both bilaterally and multilaterally

**WASHINGTON:** US Department of Defense Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Ilan Goldenberg has affirmed that the US “stands firmly committed to the defense of Kuwait, something that has been the keystone of our relationship”. In remarks at a reception hosted by the National Council on US-Arab Relations (NCUSAR) on behalf of Kuwait’s Ambassador to the US Jassem Al-Budaiwi Tuesday, Goldenberg said that “Kuwait remains a critical leader in Middle East and a beacon for regional stability”.

He continued that “the defense partnership is one of the most important security relationships that the US has and we will always value that partnership”. He also expressed Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin’s “gratitude for several key elements of the strong relationship” with Kuwait. Ambassador Budaiwi said in his remarks that Kuwait and the US consider each other as “true and reliable” partners and that Kuwait is “proud” of the relationship it enjoys with the US. “I cannot stress how proud the State of Kuwait is of its relationship with the United States of America,” he remarked. “We refer to the US as a true and reliable partner and know that the feeling is reciprocated.”

Budaiwi added the Kuwaiti government has entrusted him with “the honorable task” of further boosting relations with the US both “bilaterally and multilaterally”. He noted the challenge facing him is “twofold”. “First, is to protect and nurture what we already share and have accomplished as nation states and as individuals. Secondly, to find innovative ways to maintain momentum to the initiatives already underway, while at the same time searching for new elements and topics to engage in; particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the international community needs to intensify its cooperation to meet the current global challenges as well as those that lie ahead,” he said.

Budaiwi added “of the many ideas that are being discussed between the two sides, the following topics are among the most important elements that the State of Kuwait aspires to move forward in with the United States”, namely cooperation on food security and cyber security and strengthening the health and educational systems, in addition to “opening innovative and new horizons for bilateral economic and environmental cooperation”.

## Kuwait better positioned to fight inflation

By Sajeev K Pater

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait and its Gulf neighbors are better positioned to tackle the global phenomenon of the ‘cost-of-living crisis’ compared to the rest of the world, thanks to bullish oil prices, financial experts told Kuwait Times, predicting the oil market is expected to remain buoyant with crude prices hovering around \$100 throughout 2022 and beyond, in the near term.

“GCC countries are better equipped today to rein in inflation that has ignited a ‘cost of living crisis’ across the world in the aftermath of the Russian war on Ukraine and a post-COVID economic uncertainty,” said Shaheed Ahmad, an oil market expert. High oil revenues are helping Kuwait and GCC countries tame the global phenomenon despite an uncertain geopolitical situation following the Ukraine war, he explained.

Although inflation in Kuwait rose to 4.4 percent annually in the second quarter of 2022, it is expected to trend lower in the second half. “In Kuwait, we are also experiencing the impact of inflation. But we are better off compared to people in other parts of the world, as authorities have to a certain extent succeeded in maintaining the prices of essential commodities - groceries, fruits, vegetables and cooking oil, thanks to high oil prices. Prices are more stable today,” Ahmad said.

Tight market supply, declining spare capacity and low oil inventories could keep the oil demand high over the medium term, although global recession fears could affect crude markets in the short term, experts pointed out. Ironically, rising petrol, food and energy prices have pushed many households around the world into an unprecedented cost-of-living crisis. The cascading effect of the crisis has been felt in the Gulf region as well, albeit moderately, the experts said.

### Inflation-fighting

According to experts, a few official measures intended to control runaway inflation have helped ease prices in the country. It may be recalled that the

He added another aspect is multilateral relations, saying “working through regional coordination with our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab world, the State of Kuwait enjoys an important and strategic position in the field of reconciliation, mediation and preventive diplomacy.” He affirmed “as we continue to work closely and constructively at both the bilateral and multilateral levels and by demonstrating our mutual commitment to the security and stability of the Gulf region and the Middle East, the interests of both our nations will grow and prosper to the benefit of all mankind”.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Benaim said in remarks “our two countries have an incredibly important and enduring relationship” that is being “memorialized” in the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial which is going to be a reminder of the importance of what the two countries achieved. “Our challenge now is to live up to that legacy in real time and to vigorously write the next chapter together for the next generation. The truth is that this is a warm relationship between friends and there’s so much that we are already doing and there’s so much more that we can all do together,” he added. Benaim congratulated Ambassador Budaiwi on his new posting and his “time to carry this partnership and we look forward to carrying it forward with you”.

US Special Envoy for Yemen Timothy Lenderking shed light on the role of Kuwait as “a peacemaker and bridge builder”. He said he looks forward with working with Ambassador Budaiwi “on the really difficult and in fact the wonderful issues that mark the spectrum of our relationship together.” He highlighted Kuwait’s contributions to the humanitarian situation in Yemen, saying that the kind of way that Kuwait functions and that is the way Ambassador Budaiwi functions.

NCUSAR Founding President and CEO Dr John Duke Anthony highlighted Kuwait’s position regionally and internationally, affirming that for over 40 years, he has been working with countries in the Middle East and Kuwait stands out to be a very close partner and true friend to the US as they share many common principles and values. Anthony also shed light on the humanitarian role Kuwait plays internationally. Earlier in August, Budaiwi became the ambassador of Kuwait to the US. — KUNA

Central Bank of Kuwait, in tandem with other central banks around the world, raised its discount rate by 25 basis points to 2.75 percent on Aug 12, 2022 in response to global inflationary pressures. The authorities have also intervened in the wholesale and retail markets to ensure that merchants are not exploiting the situation to their advantage. Gains made by the Kuwaiti dinar in line with a stronger US dollar are also helping the authorities check price pressures through lowering import prices, they point out.

“The cost-of-living crisis is essentially caused by higher inflation and a low wage growth, pushing many households into abject poverty across the world. Even though the prices of most of the commodities remain elevated in Kuwait, they were largely unchanged from the first quarter of the year. Interestingly, we notice a marginal drop in prices of many items in Kuwait in July and August,” said David Augustine, an economist with an investment firm in Kuwait.

While many of the market observers Kuwait Times spoke to admitted to the fact that the inflation crisis has been compounded by supply chain disruptions in many countries and production stalemates, piling pressure on living standards of people, Gulf countries are managing the crisis effectively as a result of surging oil prices.

Oil prices declined on Wednesday on growing worries that a recession will hit fuel demand even as supply issues linked to the Ukraine crisis and the unrest in Libya and Iraq affected the market. Brent edged lower to \$95.93 a barrel on Wednesday while West Texas Intermediate, the gauge that tracks US crude, was down at \$89.02 a barrel. The recent oil price surge was triggered by rumors of an impending OPEC+ production cut, even though the meeting is a week away.

Kuwait’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Mohammad Al-Fares recently reiterated that “structural supply weaknesses caused by years of underinvestment have led to extremely limited worldwide spare capacity”. While the minister points to the “extraordinary volatility that exists in the oil markets”, he argues that markets need stability like never before so that participants could plan future production capacity increases to meet rising demand. Market watchers expect oil prices will remain at a comfortable level of around \$100 per barrel after OPEC leader Saudi Arabia hinted that OPEC+ has the means to deal with market challenges, including by cutting production.



**WASHINGTON:** Kuwait’s Ambassador to the US Jassem Al-Budaiwi poses for a photo with US Department of Defense Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Ilan Goldenberg, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Benaim, US Special Envoy for Yemen Timothy Lenderking and National Council on US-Arab Relations Founding President and CEO John Duke Anthony. — KUNA

## Competition Protection Agency launches six new online services

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** The Competition Protection Agency announced on Wednesday it is launching six new online services, part of a string of services that facilitate submitting complaints and reports to auditors through its official website. The agency said the new services include submitting complaints, reports, requesting exemptions, filing grievances against the decisions of board directors, economic concentration consultation and objecting to requests for economic concentration.



Agency said work is underway to complete the services that will improve performance, stressing that the six services can be used by accessing the website of the agency. It pointed out that the launch of these services comes within the framework of the government’s approach to making all services available online in a manner that ensures speedy delivery and facilitates the services provided.

The agency affirmed its keenness to develop tools in line with the trend of global economies to keep pace with the information revolution and benefit from its tools in upgrading work and providing services with ease.

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**KUWAIT:** A man shops at a supermarket in this representational file photo. — Xinhua



## Local

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## News in brief

Nutrition authority  
union plans protest

**KUWAIT:** The union of the authority of food and nutrition planned to protest in Sabah Al-Salem to discuss issues regarding workers' allowances and other employee grievances. "It is important that our rights are recognized and we be taken seriously in order to safeguard workers' interests," said a notice issued by the union. Some of the unions' requests include - improvement of system procedures to protect workers at the authority as well as a provision of adequate workplace facilities to support employees.

Distribution of fourth  
govt plots announced

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced the distribution of the fourth batch (N7) of government plots in south Sabah Al-Ahmad City on Sept 1 and 4 respectively. The fourth batch, which includes 243 plots, covers an area of 400 sq m and is allotted to citizens who applied until Oct 6, 2016. The authority is also set to distribute reservation cards on Sept 5, while the corresponding raffle will take place on Sept 7.

MOE announces opening  
of six more new schools

**KUWAIT:** Education Ministry Undersecretary Ali Al-Yaqoub announced a decision to add six new schools to the list of schools scheduled to open this year, taking total new school openings to 17. The new additions include three schools in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak - Fatima bint Al-Munther elementary school for girls, Moudhi Abdulrahman Al-Fares middle school for girls and Al-Athkyaa kindergarten; and three in Ahmadi - Al-Ufoq kindergarten and Al-Mustaqbal kindergarten, as well as Fawzya Yousef Al-Abdelghafour middle school for girls.

Cabinet objects to  
camel rearing location

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet has approved an objection raised by the Municipal Council to designate a location in Shaqaya for rearing camels. "The disapproval of the council to designate the area in Shaqaya was backed by a majority in the council," said Abdullah Al-Mehri, Head of the Municipal Council. "The decision to object was taken as the suggestion for the location was thought to be biased to benefit certain individual interests, a point raised with Municipality Minister Dr Rana Al-Fares," he said.

Government nationalizes  
fish market auctioneers

**KUWAIT:** Following irregularities raised by the Fishermen's Union, the government announced only Kuwaitis can conduct auctions at the fish market. "It has been noted that expatriate workers have violated auction regulations in order to raise prices, which in turn negatively impacts consumers' ability to purchase. The move has also been announced following several illegal agreements made between auctioneers and restaurant owners to control prices," an informed source explained.

Sale of military-like  
uniforms prohibited

**KUWAIT:** The ministry of commerce announced it is illegal to sell, display, export or import any kind of clothing that resembles military or police uniforms. The ban also includes insignias, hats, badges or symbols relating to servicemen. Any such clothing can only be sold with a permit from the ministry.

Kuwait keen on improving  
human rights initiatives

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Justice and Minister of Nazaha Jamal Al-Jalawi said Kuwait is keen on bolstering human rights and humanitarian actions in accordance with the directives of the government. This statement came during Jalawi's meeting with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative in Kuwait Nisreen Rubaia and her accompanying delegation. Jalawi said the meeting was important to boost cooperation between the two sides, adding Kuwait is keen on implementing all tenets of international human rights.

## Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Falcons are seen at the falcon market in Rai, where the trained birds of prey have been sold for over 40 years. —Xinhua

Zain partners with TOD to offer  
movies, TV shows, sports content

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, signed a partnership agreement with TOD, the all-new game-changing entertainment and sports platform in the MENA region. Through this partnership, Zain offers a complimentary two-month subscription to TOD, allowing its postpaid customers to enjoy the best and latest Arabic, Turkish, and Hollywood blockbusters and TV series, as well as the biggest exclusive sports content, housing the unrivaled beIN SPORTS channels on large screen and their smartphones on the go.

The announcement was made during a signing ceremony held at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) at the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, attended by Zain Kuwait Chief Commercial Officer, Meshal Mohammed, on behalf of TOD Director of Research & Analytics Matthew Chrisp, and both partners' executive management teams.

Commenting on the new partnership, Zain Kuwait Chief Commercial Officer Meshal Mohammed said: "We're excited to collaborate with TOD to further expand our strategic partnerships ecosystem with the region's biggest content creators and service providers, giving our customers an extensive library of their favorite entertainment and sports content ready at their fingertips whenever and wherever they are".

Mohammed continued: "This step comes as part of our continuous efforts to keep up with the everchanging digital entertainment industry, by offering a wide range of entertainment options to give our customers the edge with a superior and unmatched experience on Kuwait's fastest and most powerful 5G network".

Mohammed concluded: "Through such digital partnerships, we seek to serve our

customers' needs and offer them the latest innovative services and technologies, as they represent the nation's biggest family of subscribers. We will always be committed to meet the expectations and aspirations of our customers to give them the best and most unique digital lifestyle experience".

Speaking on the partnership, TOD's VP for Marketing and Sales John-Paul McKerlie said, "We are thrilled to partner with Zain Kuwait. Our collaboration expands TOD's outreach to Kuwaiti families who can now access our amazing suite of sports and entertainment content. TOD's extensive streaming line up ensure that our viewers have unprecedented access to live sports, latest blockbusters, thrilling Arabic and Turkish series, i.e., our entertainment options offer unlimited choice to every member of the family."

Zain now offers postpaid customers a Complimentary two-month subscription to TOD, which features exclusive and comprehensive access to the world's best and biggest sports events, including the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The platform also features over 35,000 hours of the best and latest Arabic, Turkish, and Hollywood blockbusters and TV shows, TOD originals, and children's programs.

TOD's content comes in HD quality with Dolby Audio, presenting content in vivid quality and in rich, clear, and powerful sounds. The platform supports the most popular smart devices and operating systems for a chance to enjoy content anytime anywhere, with the ability to connect up to 5 devices. After the offer expires, customers can easily subscribe to TOD via the Direct Operator Billing service, where they can enjoy an easy and secure monthly subscription to one of three plans. The



subscription fee would simply be added to the postpaid customer's bill.

TOD offers three flexible plans that suit customers' different interests and needs. The Entertainment Pack features exclusive access to TOD originals - Arabic & Turkish series, the latest Hollywood blockbusters, series from Warner Bros, HBO MAX, Miramax, Digiturk, Sony Pictures Television, and kids' content, as well as 22 entertainment channels featuring users' favorite cooking shows, drama & kids

shows, starting from KD 3 monthly only.

The Sports Pack features live sport and replays from top leagues, competitions, and access to all beIN SPORTS premium sports channels. The All-in Pack features all TOD originals, latest movies, series, exclusive live sports, and replays in one place, as well as access to 46 of beIN's world class live sports and entertainment channels, and unique features for sports enthusiasts including live stats and interactive timelines.

KFAS organizes  
educational trip  
to South Korea

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences has organized an educational trip for 15 high school students to train in South Korea. In cooperation with research institutes and Korea University, KFAS organized training programs in subjects such as science, engineering, technology and mathematics for two weeks.

KFAS supervised the entire program to ensure a friendly atmosphere to boost discipline and team-

work within a healthy framework for participating students. The trip included a program that helped students creatively solve problems and think critically through finding adequate solutions by scientific and technological means.

The trip started at the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information (KISTI), a South Korean funded institute in Daedeok in Daejeon, where students trained for three days on artificial intelligence skills, along with related subjects. After that, the students trained at Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS), which is also a governmental institution which develops governmental policies and initiatives regarding educational improvement.

The third phase focused on the metaverse, which was organized at Dankook University, which was

founded in 1947, as well as the basics of the Korean language taught by specialized teachers. Over six days, students focused on the basics of design thinking, where they were organized into three different teams, which helped them design their virtual dream city. Moreover, they were able to learn steps to reach solutions that arise from building cities.

After the visit, the Korean panel for research and university institutions expressed their interest in signing a cooperation agreement with KFAS to offer opportunities for training programs and applying to Korean universities for Kuwaiti students. For more than 40 years, KFAS has provided educational and training opportunities for Kuwaiti students on different levels in order to keep up with the latest scientific and technological advancements, who will in turn take part in the development of the country.





BASRA: Supporters of Iraqi Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr are pictured on a road blocked with burning tyres during a demonstration in Iraq's southern city of Basra. —,AFP

# Iraq political gridlock persists

## PM Mustafa al-Kadhemi threatens to resign unless paralysis ends

**BAGHDAD:** A months-long political crisis in Iraq showed little sign of abating Wednesday despite a fresh push for negotiations after nearly 24 hours of deadly violence between rival Shiite factions ended. Baghdad's highly-secured Green Zone returned to normality after 30 people were killed and 570 wounded in the clashes pitting supporters of powerful Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr against pro-Iran factions.

Since elections in October 2021, political deadlock has left Iraq without a new government, prime minister or president, due to disagreement over the formation of a coalition. The tensions escalated sharply on Monday when Sadr loyalists stormed the government palace inside the Green Zone following their leader's announcement that he was quitting politics.

But Sadr's supporters trickled out of the Green Zone in a steady stream on Tuesday afternoon when he appealed for them to withdraw within the hour. A nationwide curfew was lifted, before shops reopened and infamous traffic jams returned to Baghdad's streets on Wednesday as the government announced the resumption of school exams postponed by the unrest.

But the hurdles obstructing a solution to Iraq's political crisis remained firmly in place, with rival powers refusing to budge on their demands. Early elections, less than a year after the last polls, and the dissolution of parliament have been a key demand of Sadr. Iraqi President Barham Saleh said late Tuesday that snap elections could provide "an exit from the stifling crisis".

**Snap polls**  
Under the constitution, parliament can only be dissolved by a majority vote, which can take place at the request of a third of lawmakers, or by the prime minister in agreement with the president. Sadr's rivals in the pro-Iran Coordination Framework want a new head of government to be appointed before any new elections are held.

On Tuesday, they called for the swift formation of a new government, "to prevent a recurrence of the strife" that paral-



Return to violence possible

ysed Baghdad this week. The Framework urged parliament and other state institutions to "return to exercising their constitutional functions and carry out their duties towards citizens".

The statement drew the ire of a senior aid of Sadr, Saleh Mohammad al-Iraqi, who said it overlooked the rightful demands of protesters killed in the Green Zone who want parliament dissolved. "Iran should reign in its Iraqi camels, or else there will be little room left for regret," he said Wednesday, referring to the

Coordination Framework.

Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi, meanwhile, threatened to resign unless the paralysis ends. "If they want to continue to stir up chaos, conflict, discord and rivalry... I will take the moral and patriotic step and vacate my post," he said.

### 'More protests'

Iraqi political analyst Sajad Jiyad said a return to violence was possible in the absence of a longer term solution.

"The biggest loser is the state, standing idly by while two powerful armed parties continue to struggle for control," he said. "Unless a proper solution is reached, more protests and violence are possible." Falah Al-Barzanji, a 63-year-old activist, said he believed the calm would be short-lived. "Today life has returned to normal, but the fire is still burning under the ashes," he told AFP.

"The Iraqi parliament must be dissolved and a reformist government must be installed," Pope Francis, who visited Iraq last year, said he was "following with concern the violent events that have taken place in Baghdad".

"Dialogue and fraternity are the best way to face the current difficulties," Sadr, a longtime player in the war-torn country's political scene, though he himself has never directly been in government-announced he was quitting politics two days after he said "all parties" including his own should give up government positions to help overcome the deadlock. — AFP

## IAEA team in Zaporizhzhia

**ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine:** IAEA inspectors arrived in the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia Wednesday ahead of a visit to a Russian-held nuclear power plant, after fresh shelling near Europe's largest atomic facility.

A convoy brought in the 14-strong team, led by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which had left Kyiv in the morning. The fate of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant which is located on the frontline between Russian and Ukrainian forces has stoked global concern.

The area has been shelled repeatedly in recent days, with Ukraine on Wednesday accusing Russian forces of hitting Energodar, a town with a pre-war population of some 50,000 people which is next to the plant.

Both sides have repeatedly traded blame over attacks in the area. "The Russian army is shelling Energodar," said Evhen Yevtushenko, head of Nikopol district military administration which is located on the northern bank of

the Dnipro River opposite the town and its plant.

"These provocations are dangerous," he wrote on Telegram. One of the shells hit Energodar's city council, Mayor Dmytro Orlov wrote on Telegram, posting pictures of the damaged building with a hole punched into the side and debris littering the ground. News of the strike came after the IAEA team left Kyiv for the southern city of Zaporizhzhia. Although the city is normally about a two-hour drive from the plant, it was far from clear how or when the IAEA team would reach the site given the complexities of crossing into Russian-held areas.

"We are now finally moving," IAEA chief Rafael Grossi told reporters before heading off with his 13-strong team. He said they planned to spend "a few days" at the plant and would report back afterwards.

The plant has been occupied by Russian troops since March and Ukraine has accused Russia of deploying hundreds of soldiers and storing ammunition there. Kyiv has insisted the team access the plant via Ukrainian-held territory, meaning the inspectors will have to cross the front line with security guarantees from both sides. —AFP

## West Bank unrest weighs on Palestine doctors

**NABLUS:** Doctors in the occupied West Bank are struggling to save Palestinians from permanent disability after being shot in an upsurge of violence linked to Zionist entity raids targeting Palestinian militants.

At Rafidia Surgical Hospital in Nablus, in the northern West Bank, a teenager with bandaged legs was carried up the stairs by another boy. He had been shot below the knee in overnight clashes between Zionist forces and Palestinian residents of Balata, a refugee camp on the edge of the city.

The 16-year-old, whose mother soon arrived in the emergency room, was the latest Palestinian to be hit in the near daily rounds of gunfire erupting in the northern West Bank. "There is a lot of pressure on the hospital, as a result of the various injuries and the large amount of injuries," said Dr Fouad Nafaa, head of Rafidia's surgical department.

The spike in violence is tied to raids launched across the West Bank in recent months by Zionist forces, many targeting armed militants in Nablus and the Jenin area further north. The Zionist military says the often lethal raids are necessary to root out extremists involved in carrying out or planning attacks against its citizens, after a spate of deadly rampages inside the Jewish state earlier this year.

On a single day in August, medics from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society



NABLUS, Palestinian Territories: A wounded Palestinian youth is treated at Rafidia Surgical Hospital in the West Bank city of Nablus. Doctors in the occupied West Bank are struggling to save Palestinians from permanent disability after being shot in an upsurge of violence linked to Zionist raids targeting Palestinian militants. —AFP

(PRCS) treated 69 patients with gunshot wounds in Nablus after an army raid. Nablus militant Ibrahim al-Nabulsi was one of four people killed in that raid on August 9. Many of the wounded were taken to Rafidia, where Nafaa said the team has been receiving "very difficult" cases lately.

### Emergency 'day and night'

"In terms of the type of weapons used and ammunition used, and in terms of the places they are shot, for example the head, the neck, the abdomen and the chest, the injuries were more serious," said Nafaa. In Jenin, the director of Ibn Sina Hospital said the scale of casualties is "increasing dramatically". "It's not easy to deal with many casualties at the

same time," said Jani Abu Joukha.

"But we handle (it)... the staff are experts." He described critical days with some 15 casualties arriving within 15 minutes of one another at the hospital. Since April, the World Health Organization has been supporting training for medics dealing with mass casualty incidents in the West Bank. Rik Peeperkorn, WHO's representative in the Palestinian territories, said sudden emergencies put "immense strain on the already fragile health system".

At least 1,380 Palestinians have been shot across the West Bank since the start of last year, in the context of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, according to data from the UN and PRCS. —AFP

## Condolences

Sirish Ramkumar and Family, Sunil Menon and Family, Mathew Thomas and Family

Extend Our Heartfelt condolences to the family of



Bhagwan Udharam Jagtiani  
Date of Birth 3/5/1939

on the sad demise on 30th August, 2022  
May his soul Rest in Peace



## International

# World hails ‘one-of-a-kind’ ex-Soviet leader Gorbachev

## Gorbachev was a politician, statesman who had huge impact on the course of world history

**PARIS:** World leaders paid tribute to Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union who died Tuesday in Moscow aged 91. The man who played a major role in ending the Cold War was praised for being a “rare leader” who helped change the course of world history.

### Russia

President Vladimir Putin said Gorbachev “was a politician and statesman who had a huge impact on the course of world history,” expressing “deepest condolences” to his friends and family. “He led our country during a period of complex, dramatic changes,” Putin added. “He deeply understood that reforms were necessary, he strove to offer his own solutions to urgent problems.”

Russian winner of last year’s Nobel Peace Prize, Dmitry Muratov, hailed his fellow Nobel laureate as someone who “put human rights above the state, and valued a peaceful sky more than personal power.”

“He gave both the country and the world an incredible gift—he gave us thirty years of peace,” Muratov said. Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny praised Gorbachev for “peacefully” departing from power and “respecting the will of his constituents.”

### United States

President Joe Biden hailed a “rare leader... one with the imagination to see that a different future was possible and the courage to risk his entire career to achieve it.” “The result was a safer world and greater freedom for millions of people,” Biden said.

### Germany

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said Germany was “bound in gratitude with him for his decisive contribution to German unity”. Chancellor Olaf

Scholz hailed Gorbachev’s role in reuniting Germany but lamented he “died at a time in which democracy has failed in Russia”.

Angela Merkel, the former chancellor who grew up in East Germany, said Gorbachev had “fundamentally changed my life” and showed how “one single statesman can change the world for the better”.

### United Nations

“A one-of-a-kind statesman who changed the course of history” and “did more than any other individual to bring about the peaceful end of the Cold War”, UN chief Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

### European Union

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen hailed a “trusted and respected leader” who “opened the way for a free Europe”. His “crucial role” in bringing down the Iron Curtain and ending the Cold War left a legacy “we will not forget.”

### Italy

“His desire for peace, his opposition to an imperialist vision of Russia won him the Nobel (peace) prize,” Prime Minister Mario Draghi said. “These messages are all the more current in the face of the tragedy of the invasion of Ukraine.”

### NATO

Secretary general Jens Stoltenberg said Gorbachev’s “vision of a better world remains an example” and paid tribute to his “historic reforms... (which) opened the possibility of a partnership between Russia and NATO”.

### Estonia

Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu said of

Gorbachev: “It was good he started reforms and it was in a way good that the reforms did not end where he was aiming to end them.”

### Czech Republic

Jan Lipavsky, the Czech foreign minister, said Gorbachev was “a personality that gave freedom to the entire Soviet Union and its satellites with his decisions.”

### Poland

Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau tweeted that Gorbachev had “increased the scope of freedom of the enslaved peoples of the Soviet Union in an unprecedented way, giving them hope for a more dignified life.”

### United Kingdom

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he “always admired the courage and integrity” Gorbachev showed to help end the Cold War. “In a time of Putin’s aggression in Ukraine, his tireless commitment to opening up Soviet society remains an example to us all.”

### France

President Emmanuel Macron described Gorbachev as a “man of peace” who “opened a path of liberty for Russians.”

### Nobel Committee

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said Gorbachev was awarded the 1990 Peace Prize for his role in “the peaceful ending of the Cold War.” The committee praised him for bringing “greater openness in Soviet society and allowing the people of Eastern Europe to regain their freedom.” —AFP



SCHLESWIG, Germany: File photo shows Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) talking to former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (L) prior to a joint press conference of German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Putin at Gottorf castle in Schleswig. —AFP

## Gorbachev’s love, hate relationship with Putin

**MOSCOW:** Mikhail Gorbachev struggled to make up his mind about Vladimir Putin. Over the more than 20 years after Putin came to power, the ex-Soviet leader embraced, then rejected, then embraced again the man who-much like Gorbachev in the 1980s-came to embody Russia in the eyes of the West.

A grudging respect seemed to have developed in the end, with Gorbachev saying ahead of Putin’s 2018 re-election for a fourth term: “Today he is a leader who deservedly enjoys people’s support.” After the chaos of the 1990s and the rule of his nemesis Boris Yeltsin, Gorbachev expressed hope for the former KGB agent who was first elected Russia’s president in 2000.

Putin, he said at the time, was “intelligent, serious, reserved and well-organised. I like people of this kind.” For Gorbachev, Putin represented a chance for stability and economic growth, while continuing the transition to democracy he had set in place. Even in 2006, as activists expressed increasing concern about the tough treatment of civil society under Putin, Gorbachev was able to declare that “those who fear Putin’s authoritarian tendencies are wrong.”

But as the years went by and hopes of democratic development in Russia evaporated, Gorbachev turned to veiled criticism and then to strongly worded attacks. Fraud-tainted 2011 parliamentary elections hardened his attitude against the president, as well as Putin’s decision to stand for an unprecedented third term in office.

Gorbachev backed a protest movement that followed the elections and in 2013 made a stinging attack on Russia under Putin. “Politics is more and more turning into an imitation of democracy. All power is in the hands of the authorities and the president,” Gorbachev said at the time. “The economy is monopolised. Corruption has taken on colossal proportions.” Foreign media often latched on to his comments and he part-owned the proudly anti-Kremlin Novaya Gazeta newspaper, which suspended publication earlier this year after Russia launched its military action in Ukraine. —AFP

## Russians divided over Gorbachev legacy

**MOSCOW:** For some he brought winds of change that could have paved the way for a better Russia, for others economic hardship and bitterness. But despite his controversial legacy, many Russians on Wednesday agreed that Mikhail Gorbachev, who has died at the age of 91, was a key figure in the country’s history.

Gorbachev was in power between 1985 and 1991, stepping down in the final days of the Soviet Union. Some Russians lament the end of the Soviet era, holding Gorbachev personally responsible.

Among them is 70-year-old Vladimir Zavkov, who did not mince words speaking to AFP in central Moscow, calling Gorbachev a “traitor”.

“For me he is some kind of illiterate politician, who let such a great country fall apart. And anything good he may have done is crossed out by that,” said the retired Zavkov.

Another Muscovite, Nadezhda Aleksina, was not so harsh, but did admit that Gorbachev was “controversial”. “For Russia, I think he was a really significant figure. It was thanks to him that Russia appeared. So I think it’s a big loss for many,” said Aleksina, a web designer in her 30s.

Gorbachev was superseded by the younger Boris Yeltsin, who became the first president of modern Russia. Yeltsin’s transition of Russia to a market economy was marked by galloping inflation



MOSCOW, Russia: A picture shows family photos displayed in the study of the last leader of the Soviet Union and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev, at the Gorbachev Foundation headquarters in Moscow, on August 31, 2022. —AFP

and food shortages in the 1990s, a time remembered bitterly by many Russians today.

Some believe that without the collapse of the Soviet Union they would not have had to live through these economic hardships.

### ‘Traitor’ or reformer?

“We may not have been rich then, but we were guaranteed jobs,” said Tatyana Silayeva, a retired 67-year-old. As for Gorbachev, Silayeva said she views him “very negatively”.

“He did a good deed for the United States — he let our country fall apart. And for us, he turned out to be a complete traitor.” Gorbachev was credited with diffusing soaring Cold War-era tensions

between Moscow and Washington, earning him respect in the West. He was awarded the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating a historic nuclear arms control pact with then US president Ronald Reagan.

“He gave both the country and the world an incredible gift — he gave us 30 years of peace. Without the threat of global and nuclear war,” Dmitry Muratov, the editor-in-chief of newspaper Novaya Gazeta, wrote in a tribute to Gorbachev.

During his tenure, Gorbachev championed freedom and change, and in particular used part of his Nobel prize winnings to help set up Novaya Gazeta — a leading independent publication for over two decades. —AFP

## Tributes as Gorbachev....

Continued from Page 1

openness, to the Soviet system. And with the launch earlier this year of a military campaign in Ukraine, he has sought to reassert Russian influence in one of the countries that won its independence when the Soviet Union fell apart.

In a letter of condolences published by the Kremlin, Putin said Gorbachev “was a politician and statesman who had a huge impact on the course of world history”. Other senior Russian officials also described Gorbachev as an important figure, but said little of his political accomplishments. In an hour-long televised meeting of Putin and his cabinet on Wednesday, Gorbachev’s name did not come up.

His daughter Irina and his foundation told news agencies a public memorial service would be held on Sept 3 in the Moscow Hall of Columns, historically used for funerals of high officials, including Joseph Stalin in 1953. Gorbachev will then be buried at the prestigious Novodevichy cemetery alongside his wife Raisa, who died in 1999.

Russian officials had yet to say whether Gorbachev would have a state funeral like previous Soviet leaders or if Putin would be in attendance. On the streets of Moscow many refused to comment on Gorbachev’s death, one young Russian even asking who he was.

Those willing to discuss his legacy, mainly pensioners who fondly remembered the Soviet era, were overwhelmingly negative. “He was some kind of illiterate politician, who let such a great country fall apart. And anything good he may have done is crossed out by that,” said 70-year-old Vladimir Zavkov, as he walked near Red Square. “So to me he is just a traitor.”

But in the West, where Gorbachev was regarded fondly and affectionately referred to as Gorb, he was hailed as an iconic figure. US President Joe Biden credited Gorbachev with creating “a safer world and

greater freedom for millions of people”. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Gorbachev’s “tireless commitment to opening up Soviet society remains an example to us all”, while UN chief Antonio Guterres called him “a one-of-a-kind statesman”.

French President Emmanuel Macron praised Gorbachev as a “man of peace whose choices opened up a path of liberty for Russians,” and former German chancellor Angela Merkel said he demonstrated how “one single statesman can change the world for the better”. Gorbachev was best known for defusing US-Soviet nuclear tensions in the 1980s as well as bringing Eastern Europe out from behind the Iron Curtain.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990 for negotiating a historic nuclear arms pact with US leader Ronald Reagan, and his decision to withhold the Soviet army when the Berlin Wall fell a year earlier was seen as key to preserving Cold War peace. He was also championed in the West for spearheading reforms to achieve transparency and greater public discussion that hastened the breakup of the Soviet empire.

He spent much of the past two decades on the political periphery, intermittently calling for the Kremlin and the White House to mend ties as tensions soared after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and launched the offensive in Ukraine earlier this year. Gorbachev had supported the Crimea annexation, saying that most people in the peninsula “wanted to be reunited with Russia”.

He made no public statements on Russia’s military action in Ukraine, though his foundation called for “an early cessation (to) hostilities and immediate start of peace negotiations”. He spent the twilight years of his life in and out of hospital with increasingly fragile health. He remained a controversial figure and had a difficult relationship with Putin.

Many Russians still look back fondly on the Soviet period, and Putin leans on its achievements to buttress Russia’s claim to greatness and his own prestige. As the USSR collapsed, Gorbachev was superseded by Boris Yeltsin, who became post-Soviet Russia’s first president. From then on, Gorbachev was relegated to the sidelines, devoting himself to educational and humanitarian projects. —AFP

## UAE woos fans with multi-entry...

Continued from Page 1

Last week Saudi Arabia, which is ramping up its tourism industry as part of efforts to reduce its reliance on oil, also announced multiple-entry visas for Hayya Card holders. Hotel and travel packages are on offer in the UAE for World Cup fans, including at a football-themed hotel scheduled for open-

## Saudi seizes 47m meth pills...

Continued from Page 1

Saudi Arabia is the biggest Captagon market, and the kingdom’s customs body seized 119 million of the pills last year. On Tuesday, the Saudi ambassador to Beirut, Waleed Bukhari, told reporters that the kingdom had seized over 700 million narcotic pills that had entered its territory via Lebanon over the past eight years.

Meanwhile, Saudi officials have launched a probe after footage circulated on social media appearing to show security forces beating girls at an orphanage. The government of the southern province of Asir said in a statement early Wednesday it would form a committee “to investigate the incident”, without offering details. Video clips shared widely on social media showed uniformed police and plainclothes officials conducting what appeared to be a raid of the orphanage in the city of Khamis Mushait.

The officers drag one girl on the ground before handcuffing her and beating her with a belt. Another girl has handcuffs placed on her feet

ing on the glitzy Palm resort – a man-made island in the shape of a palm tree.

Fan zones to watch the games are also planned for Dubai, where alcohol is more widely available than Qatar. The World Cup is shaping as a boon for Gulf countries less than two years after a bitter row split the region and left Qatar cut off from its neighbors. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt broke ties with Doha in June 2017, accusing it of being close to Iran and supporting extremist groups, accusations which Qatar denied. The three-and-a-half-year diplomatic, trade and transport blockade was only lifted in Jan 2021. —AFP



A Saudi security officer piles bags of amphetamine pills at a warehouse.

before being flogged. The clips were posted on Twitter on Tuesday night and had been viewed nearly a million times by Wednesday afternoon. The original post was from a Twitter user who claimed to be living at the orphanage, but this could not be confirmed and messages sent by AFP to the account on Wednesday went unanswered.

Orphanages in Saudi Arabia are overseen by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development. Saudi officials did not immediately respond to a request for additional information about the incident. AFP could not independently verify the videos. —AFP



International

# Misery mounts for millions in Pakistan's 'monsoon on steroids'

## Monsoon rains claim at least 1,160 lives

**MINGORA, Pakistan:** Army helicopters flew sorties over cut-off areas in Pakistan's mountainous north Wednesday and rescue parties fanned out across waterlogged plains in the south as misery mounted for millions trapped by the worst floods in the country's history.

Monsoon rains have submerged a third of Pakistan, claiming at least 1,160 lives since June and unleashing powerful floods that have washed away swathes of vital crops and damaged or destroyed more than a million homes.

United Nations Chief Antonio Guterres called it "a monsoon on steroids" as he launched an international appeal late Tuesday for \$160 million in emergency funding.

Officials say more than 33 million people are affected — one in every seven Pakistanis — and it will cost more than \$10 billion to rebuild.

The focus for now, however, is reaching tens of thousands still stranded on hills and in valleys in the north, as well as remote villages in the south and west.

"We appeal to the government to help end our miseries at the soonest," said Mohammad Safar, 38, outside his submerged home Wednesday in Shikarpur in the southeastern province of Sindh.

"The water must be drained out from here immediately so we can go back to our homes." There is so much water however that there is nowhere for it to drain.

Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman described the country as "like a fully soaked sponge", incapable of absorbing any more rain.



More than a million homes destroyed

### 'Burning with pain'

Pakistan has received twice its usual monsoon rainfall, weather authorities say, but Balochistan and Sindh provinces have seen more than four times the average of the last three decades. Padidan, a small town in Sindh, has been drenched with an astonishing 1.75 metres (70 inches) since June.

Pakistan receives heavy — often destructive — rains during its annual monsoon season, which are crucial for agriculture and water supplies, but such intense downpours have not been seen for three decades.

Officials have blamed climate change, which is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather around the world.

Earlier this year much of the nation was in the grip of a drought and heatwave, with temperatures hitting 51 degrees Celsius (124 Fahrenheit) in Sindh province.

The latest disaster could not have come at a worse time for Pakistan, where the economy is in free fall. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif promised aid donors that any funding would be responsibly spent.

"I want to give my solemn pledge and solemn commitment... every penny will be spent in a very transparent fashion. Every penny will reach the needy," he said.

Pakistan was already desperate for international support and the floods have compounded the challenge. Prices of basic goods — particularly onions, tomatoes and chickpeas — are soaring as vendors bemoan a lack of supplies from the flooded breadbasket provinces of Sindh and Punjab.

Makeshift relief camps have sprung up all over Pakistan — in schools, on motorways and in military



JAFFARABAD, Pakistan: Aerial photo shows flood-affected people taking refuge in a makeshift camp after heavy monsoon rains in Jaffarabad district of Balochistan province. —AFP

bases. Displaced people are sweltering in the summer heat with sporadic food aid and little access to water.

In Sindh, doctors treated patients who made their way to a makeshift clinic after walking barefoot through dirty floodwater, mud and streets full of debris and manure. "My child's foot is burning with pain. My feet too," said Azra Bhambro, a 23-year-old woman who had come to the clinic for help.

In the northwestern town of Nowshera, a technical

college was turned into a shelter for up to 2,500 flood victims. The army said its helicopters had flown over 140 sorties in the past 24 hours, plucking people from cut-off areas in the north, and dropping off food and fresh water elsewhere.

Aid flights have arrived in recent days from China, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, while other countries including Canada, Australia and Japan have also pledged assistance. —AFP

## Taleban mark 'versary of foreign troop exit with military parade

**KABUL:** The Taliban celebrated the first anniversary of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan Wednesday with victory chants and a military parade showcasing equipment left behind by US-led forces.

Afghanistan's new rulers—not formally recognised by any other nation—have reimposed their harsh version of Islamic law on the impoverished country, with women squeezed out of public life. Despite the restrictions, and a deepening humanitarian crisis, many Afghans say they are glad the foreign forces that prompted the Taliban insurgency left after a brutal 20-year war.

"We are happy that Allah got rid of the infidels from our country, and the Islamic Emirate has been established," said Zalmai, a resident of Kabul. In a statement, the government said the day marked "the country's freedom from American occupation".

"So many mujahideen were wounded, so many children orphaned, and so many women became widows." The authorities held an official celebration that included a military parade at Bagram Airbase, the nerve centre of US operations during the war.

Groups of Taliban fighters—dressed in traditional shalwar kameez and carrying rocket-propelled grenades—marched as helicopters flew by, video footage aired by state television showed. Minutes later, dozens of military vehicles including humvees and artillery tanks, seized in the war or left behind by US forces during their chaotic withdrawal, were paraded. Foreign media outlets were not given access to the event. Celebrations were also held in several provinces, with locals reading poems and verses from the holy Quran.



KANDAHAR, Afghanistan: Members of Taliban and their supporters take part in a parade during the celebrations to mark the first anniversary of the withdrawal of US-led troops from Afghanistan, in Kandahar. —AFP

### Victory chants

Banners celebrating victories against three empires—the former Soviet Union and Britain also lost wars in Afghanistan—flew in Kabul. Hundreds of white Taliban flags bearing the Islamic proclamation of faith flew from lamp posts and government buildings, while squares in the capital were decorated with lights.

Kabul residents chose to stay indoors after the authorities declared a national holiday, but hundreds of Taliban fighters gathered at Massoud Square, next to the now shut US embassy. "Death to America! Death to occupation! Long live freedom!" chanted the fighters.

"The flag of Islam is flying high. We are happy to live under the banner of Islam," Taliban fighter Shah Ahmad

Omari told AFP. On Tuesday night, the skies above Kabul were lit up with fireworks and celebratory gunfire from crowds of Taliban fighters.

The plane carrying the last US troops took off from Kabul just a minute before midnight on August 31 last year. That departure ended America's longest war, which began in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

More than 66,000 Afghan troops and 48,000 civilians were killed in the conflict, but it was the deaths of US service members — 2,461 in total—that became too much for the American public to bear. "The burden of the war in Afghanistan, however, went beyond Americans," the US military said Tuesday. —AFP



BEKASI, Indonesia: Rescuers work on the site of an accident that claimed nearly a dozen lives including school children and dozens were injured, in Bekasi on August 31, 2022. —AFP

## Truck crash outside Indonesia school kills 10

**JAKARTA:** At least ten people, including four young children, were killed and more than 20 injured on Wednesday when a truck ploughed into a bus stop outside a school in a city adjacent to Indonesia's capital, police said.

The truck was transporting iron bars in Bekasi, West Java, at around 10:00 am (0300 GMT) when the driver lost control and the vehicle crashed into a bus shelter where a group of students were gathering. "Ten people died in the accident, four of them were children and six others were adults," Latif Usman, the head of Jakarta's police traffic unit, told AFP.

At least 23 others, including 14 primary school students, were injured and taken to two nearby hospitals for treatment, Usman said. Images from the scene of the crash showed twisted metal and debris as rescuers helped the victims.

Police said they were still investigating the cause of the crash. "So far we didn't see any indication of brake failure but we are still investigating the accident," said Usman. The driver had been detained but had not been questioned because he was "still in shock", he added.

Fatal traffic accidents are common in the Southeast Asian nation of 270 million people, where road rules are routinely ignored and vehicles are often poorly maintained. In April, 16 people, including a child, were killed and more than a dozen others injured when a truck descending a remote mountain in Indonesia's West Papua careened into a cliff and crashed. —AFP

## Taiwan vows 'counter attack' if China breaches airspace

**TAIPEI:** Taiwan said Wednesday it would exercise its right to self-defence and "counter-attack" if Chinese fighters and warships were to enter its territorial space, in the wake of Beijing's huge military drills around the island. The self-ruled, democratic island lives under constant threat of an invasion by China, which claims it as part of its territory to be seized one day-by force if necessary. Tensions in the Taiwan Strait have soared to their highest level in decades after China staged an unprecedented show of force in retaliation for

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei earlier this month.

For a week after Pelosi's visit, China sent warships, missiles and fighter jets into the waters and skies around Taiwan, which condemned the drills and missile tests as preparation for an invasion. Asked how Taiwan would respond if Chinese warplanes and naval ships entered its territorial air space and waters, a defence official said "the closer the incursions are to Taiwan, the stronger our countermeasures will be".

"We will use naval and air forces and coastal fire to repel PLA (Chinese People's Liberation Army) forces that enter our 24-nautical-mile or 12-nautical-mile zones," said Major General Lin Wen-huang, director of operations and planning division.

"When the PLA aircraft and ships are in our

12-nautical-mile territorial sea and air space, we will act in accordance with operational orders to exercise the right of self-defence to counter-attack," he said at an online news briefing.

Lin also said Taiwan would "counter-attack" when asked to comment on a recent string of drone sorties from mainland China to Taiwan's offshore Kinmen and Matsu islands. On Tuesday, Taiwan's military fired warning shots for the first time to repel a Chinese drone that flew into a restricted area near Kinmen.

Drone incursions have increased at the same time as Beijing's drills earlier this month, some surveilling military outposts. The military will determine "whether to engage the target and exercise the right of self-defence to counter-attack", if the drones fail to leave after warnings, Lin said. —AFP

## India to unfurl new naval flag

**NEW DELHI:** India will unfurl a new naval flag that retires a British colonial symbol to mark the formal debut of the country's first locally built aircraft carrier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office said. The current ensign features a prominent cross of Saint George, the national flag of England and a legacy from India's nine decades as a crown dependency, which ended with independence in 1947.

Modi will reveal the new design Friday in southern Kerala state at the commissioning of the Vikrant, which his office touted as "a significant step" for military self-reliance. "During the event, the PM will also unveil the new naval ensign, doing away with the colonial past and befitting the rich Indian maritime heritage," his office said in a Tuesday statement.

The Saint George cross has been a feature of the naval ensign since 1928, except for a brief spell between 2001 and 2004, when the Hindu nationalist government of the time replaced it with a blue Indian Navy crest.

It was reintroduced after complaints by service members that the crest could not be easily spotted against the colour of the sky and the ocean, local media reports said. The Vikrant enters service alongside a smaller aircraft carrier bought second-hand from Russia, which has long been a major arms supplier to New Delhi.

Modi's government has sought to wean the country off its dependency on foreign military purchases and build a domestic defence hardware industry. It has been wary of the strategic challenge posed by China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean, raising security concerns this month when neighbour Sri Lanka allowed a port visit by a Chinese research vessel accused of spying activities.

India is a member of the so-called Quad alongside the United States, Japan and Australia, a security alliance focused on the Indo-Pacific and aimed at providing a more substantive counterweight to China's rising military and economic power. —AFP



KOLKATA, India: File photo shows, Indian naval officers raise the naval flag, which features the Cross of Saint George and the Indian national flag, during the commissioning ceremony of the Indian guided missile frigate warship 'INS Beas' in Kolkata. —AFP



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2022

## Business

## Eurozone inflation jumps to new record 9.1% in August

## New data piles pressure on ECB to hike rates

**BRUSSELS:** The eurozone inflation rate hit a new record in August, official data showed on Wednesday, increasing pressure on the European Central Bank to hike rates to tame Ukraine war-fuelled prices. Driven by soaring energy prices caused by Russia's invasion in Ukraine, the yearly inflation rate in the 19-country single currency area reached 9.1 percent, its highest since records began, according to Eurostat.

Consumer prices had accelerated to 8.9 percent in July. The president of Germany's powerful federal central bank, Joachim Nagel, immediately declared that the ECB should plan for a "strong rise in interest rates for September".

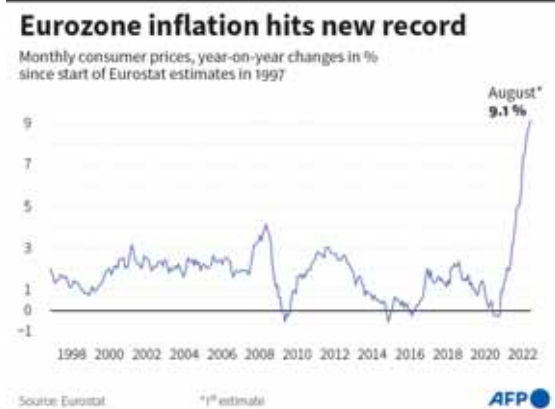
"Otherwise, inflation expectations could become permanently entrenched above our target of two percent," he warned. The headline rate has been rising since November 2021, amid global supply chain stresses. War erupted in Ukraine in February and the European summer was marked by a drought that helped force up food prices.

The ECB is expected to raise interest rates at its next meeting on September 8, after first increasing them in July for the first time in a decade. Rates had been kept low as Europe emerged from its coronavirus slump. France, which has moved to cap energy prices saw the lowest rate within the eurozone, with 6.5 percent in August, according to Eurostat.

But powerhouse Germany was high on 8.8 percent, Italy saw nine percent and Spain 10.3.

Russia's neighbors on the Baltic, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia suffered the most, at 25.2 percent, 21.1 and 20.8 respectively. Economist Jack Allen-Reynolds of Capital Economics warned that the eurozone inflation rate could hit 10 percent by the end of the year, even if the bank hikes rates.

"The balance of probabilities is shifting towards a 75 basis points hike next week," he said. The ECB



raised rates by 50 basis points in July, from a zero interest rate to 0.5 percent.

**Slam on the brakes?**

For Bert Collin, a senior economist at the bank ING, the increase in the price of goods contained within the broader inflation rate should worry observers as much as the hikes in energy. "The increase from 4.5 percent to 5 percent was much larger than expected and fuels worries about second-round effects from the input cost shock lasting longer," he said.

But he noted that wage growth data for the second quarter of the year-salaries rose only 2.1 percent-suggested that Europe was tightening its belt already. "As the economy is slowing rapidly-and perhaps already contracting at this point-the question is how much the ECB needs to slam the brakes," he said.

"Another hike of at least 50 basis points in September seems to be a done deal, with the hawks pushing for 75 basis points, he said. "The big ques-



**BRUSSELS:** The eurozone inflation rate hit a new record in August, official data showed on Wednesday.

tion is how the ECB will respond after this, if indeed signs of economic distress become more apparent, and inflation remains highly driven by supply-side factors."

Among the items in the eurozone inflation basket, energy prices once again experienced the highest annual increase in August, although they slowed slightly to 38.3 percent compared to 39.6 in July.

Food prices including alcohol and tobacco increased by 10.6 percent, from 9.8 in July. Industrial goods and services increased by five percent and 3.8 respectively, also accelerating compared to the previous months.

French annual inflation eased in August from a three-decade high, the first slowdown in over a year, official data showed Wednesday.

Consumer prices hit 5.8 percent in August compared to 6.1 percent in July, which was the highest level since 1985, according to statistics institute INSEE. It was the first time that the annual inflation rate eased off since July 2021, when it was at 1.2 percent. Inflation rose after countries began to lift COVID restrictions and it worsened following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, which led to a massive surge in energy and food prices. —AFP

## India GDP surges 13.5% in June on COVID rebound

**MUMBAI:** A post-pandemic rebound saw India's economy grow 13.5 percent in the June quarter, official figures showed Wednesday, but the expansion was below forecasts thanks to the headwinds buffeting Asia's third-largest economy.

The increase from the same quarter last year reflects a dramatic uptick in activity since mid-2021, when the peak of the country's most devastating coronavirus wave began to recede. That outbreak saw thousands of people dying across India each day, overwhelming hospitals and crematoriums, and came after an extended lockdown that pummeled consumer spending and brought factories to a standstill.

Wednesday's figure was the highest since the 20.1 percent expansion recorded during the same period last year, at a time when business activity was recovering from government shutdown edicts. But the result is well below the 16.2 percent forecast by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the country's central bank, with inflation and other indications of economic weakness dragging down performance.

"The numbers are lower than we expected," State Bank of India chief economic advisor Soumya Kanti Ghosh told AFP. He added that the RBI would most likely revise down its 7.2 percent growth forecast for the year to March 2023, with weakness in the manufacturing sector a cause for concern.



**MUMBAI:** A post-pandemic rebound saw India's economy grow 13.5 percent in the June quarter, official figures showed Wednesday.

Elevated crude oil prices and a seven percent fall in the rupee this year have left India struggling with a deteriorating trade balance.

India's merchandise trade deficit widened to a record \$31 billion in July, compared to \$10.6 billion in the same month last year, provisional data showed. Import costs, led by petroleum products and coal, were more than twice as high as export revenues.

India imports more than 80 percent of its crude oil needs and shocks to the market since Russia's invasion of Ukraine have left its 1.4 billion people

struggling with higher fuel charges.

Consumer inflation has consistently overshot the central bank's two-to-six percent target range this year, hitting an eight-year high of 7.79 percent in April before cooling to 6.71 percent in July.

But Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Sabnavis said household spending had remained resilient because of pent-up demand left over from the shock to the economy during the pandemic. "Normally with high inflation, purchasing power comes down, but that doesn't seem to have played out so far," he told AFP. —AFP

## Crisis-hit Sri Lanka's inflation hits another record

**COLOMBO:** Crisis-hit Sri Lanka's inflation hit an eleventh consecutive monthly record in August, official data showed on Wednesday, rising to 64.3 percent as the International Monetary Fund extended bailout talks by one more day. The benchmark year-on-year Colombo Consumer Price Index (CCPI) in August was more than eight times higher than the 7.6 percent recorded in October 2021. Since then it has set a new record high every month.

According to the department of census and statistics, food inflation in August was even higher, hitting 93.7 percent. Inflation in August was impacted by a more than threefold increase in electricity tariffs and kerosene oil prices that hit in the middle of the month.

The CCPI figures were released hours after the IMF said it had extended by a day official-level talks with the Sri Lankan government on a possible bailout. "The IMF Mission in Colombo has been extended by one day because discussions are still ongoing with the authorities," the IMF said in a brief statement. The IMF had asked Sri Lanka to contain spiralling inflation and address corruption as part of efforts to salvage the troubled economy, which has been ravaged by a foreign exchange crisis. The Sri Lankan rupee has lost more than 45 percent of its value against the US dollar this year. —AFP

## Gazprom halts gas flow in new jitters for Europe

**BERLIN:** Russian energy giant Gazprom suspended gas deliveries to Germany on a major pipeline on Wednesday, the latest in a series of supply halts that have fuelled an energy crisis in Europe.

Gazprom said supplies via Nord Stream 1 were "completely stopped" for "preventative work" at a compressor unit, shortly after European gas network operator ENTSOG announced that deliveries had ceased. Gazprom has also said it would suspend gas supplies to France's main provider Engie from Thursday after it failed to pay for all deliveries made in July.

The latest stop comes as European countries have faced soaring energy prices since Russia invaded Ukraine in late February and subsequently curbed its gas deliveries to the region.

Germany, which is heavily dependent on Russian gas, has accused Moscow of using energy as a "weapon". But Gazprom has said the three-day maintenance work was "necessary" and had to be carried out after "every 1,000 hours of operation". Germany's Federal Network Agency chief Klaus

Mueller has called it a "technically incomprehensible" decision, warning that it was likely just a pretext by Moscow to wield energy supplies as a threat. Experience shows that Moscow "makes a political decision after every so-called maintenance", he said, adding that "we'll only know at the beginning of September if Russia does that again".

**'Much better position'**

With winter around the corner, European consumers are bracing for huge power bills. Some countries like France have warned that rationing is a possibility. The European Union is preparing to take emergency action to reform the electricity market in order to bring galloping prices under control, with energy ministers scheduled to hold extraordinary talks next week. Asked if gas supplies would resume after the three-day works were completed on Saturday, Russian government spokesman Dmitry Peskov said "there is a guarantee that, apart from technical problems caused by sanctions, nothing interferes with supplies." Western capitals "have imposed sanctions against Russia, which do not allow for normal maintenance, repair work", he added, in what appeared to hint at a replay of an earlier round of start-stop rigmarole.

Gazprom had already carried out 10 days of long-scheduled maintenance works in July. While it restored gas flows following the works, it drastically dwindled supplies just days later, claiming a



**LUBMIN, Germany:** Facilities to receive and distribute natural gas are pictured on the grounds of gas transport and pipeline network operator Gascade in Lubmin, northeastern Germany, close to the border with Poland, on August 30, 2022. — AFP

technical issue on a turbine. The Russian company insists that a key turbine could not be sent to Russia because of sanctions on Moscow. But Germany, where the turbine was located, has said Moscow was itself blocking the component's delivery to Russia. —AFP

## Oil prices fall on inflation worries

**LONDON/NEW YORK:** Oil prices continued their slide on Wednesday on investor worries about the ailing state of the global economy, bearish oil demand signals from OPEC+ and increased restrictions to curb COVID-19 in China.

Brent crude futures for October were down \$2.71 at \$96.60 a barrel following Tuesday's \$5.78 loss. The more active November contract was down \$1.26, or 1.3 percent, at \$96.58 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were down \$1.31, or 1.4 percent, to \$90.33 a barrel by 10:43 am EST (1543 GMT), after sliding \$5.37 in the previous session on recession fears. Both contracts fell by more than 3 percent in earlier trade.

Inflation is near double-digit territory in many of the world's biggest economies, a level not seen in close to a half century. This could prompt central banks in the United States and Europe to resort to more aggressive interest rate hikes that could curtail economic growth and weigh on fuel demand. —AFP



## Business

# US job growth slows for second straight month in August: Data

## Survey says American consumer confidence is improving

**WASHINGTON:** American employers ratcheted back their hiring in August, which slowed for the second straight month, according to data Wednesday from payroll firm ADP.

Private jobs increased by 132,000 this month, less than half the pace of July, when firms hired nearly 270,000 workers, ADP said in its newly revamped survey. The data, coming before Friday's all-important government employment report, could be good news for the Federal Reserve which has been aggressively pushing up interest rates to tamp down red-hot inflation, amid fears the strong labor market will cause a wage spiral.

"Our data suggests a shift toward a more conservative pace of hiring, possibly as companies try to decipher the economy's conflicting signals," ADP chief economist Nela Richardson said. "We could be at an inflection point, from super-charged job gains to something more normal."

She noted that despite a slowdown in the housing sector—due to higher borrowing costs—hiring in construction has continued, increasing 21,000 in August, while manufacturing showed no gains.

There was notable strength in leisure and hospitality, which surged 96,000 in the month, "a sign people want to get back to a more normal existence," she told reporters. ADP has added wage information to the monthly report, which showed that pay increased 7.6 percent over the past 12 months. But for workers who changed jobs, the pay gain was a remarkable 16.1 percent, the report said.

However, Richardson said there has been a "stabilization" of wage gains at these high levels, unlike last year when pay was ramping up. American con-

sumers were much happier about the state of the economy in August, as worries about surging prices eased, according to a closely watched survey released Tuesday.

After three months of declines, the consumer confidence index jumped nearly eight points to 103.2 in August from 95.3 in July, The Conference Board said. The result far surpassed the modest pickup economists had expected, as sentiment improved on the current state of the economy as well as the outlook six months ahead. And Americans indicated they are more willing to spend, after retrenching last month, with vacation plans at the highest point this year, said Lynn Franco, senior director of economic indicators at The Conference Board.

The survey showed increased plans to buy homes, cars and appliances as well. Consumers flush with savings and government support money had been a key driver of the recovery of the world's largest economy following the pandemic downturn.

However, Franco cautioned: "Concerns about inflation continued their retreat but remained elevated." The "improvement in confidence may help support spending, but inflation and additional rate hikes still pose risks to economic growth in the short term," Franco said in a statement.

With inflation at a 40-year high, the Federal Reserve is on an aggressive campaign to stamp out surging prices, with steep interest rate increases. And Fed Chair Jerome Powell in a speech Friday doused any hopes the central bank would ease up or reverse course any time soon, a process he said would involve some "pain" to American families.



A "now hiring" sign is posted at a Home Depot store in San Rafael, California.

The present situation index rose for the first time since March, while the expectations index—which surged nearly 10 points to 75.1 —"improved from July's nine-year low, but remains below a reading of 80, suggesting recession risks continue," Franco said. And the survey showed a bit less optimism about the labor market, with a declining share of

respondents rating jobs as "plentiful."

Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics called the improvement "a positive development."

"However, in terms of consumer spending, momentum is likely to moderate as the Fed continues to raise rates over coming months," she said in an analysis. —AFP

## Will take 'a few years' to get US inflation back to 2%: Fed official

**WASHINGTON:** The Federal Reserve is committed to bringing soaring US inflation back down to two percent, but that will take "a few years," a top central banker said Tuesday.

The Fed this year has moved aggressively to raise interest rates to try to rein in price surges that have hit American families, and central bankers, notably Fed chief Jerome Powell, have doused any hopes they would alter course anytime soon.

New York Federal Reserve Bank President John Williams echoed Powell's tough comments, saying the benchmark lending rate will have to remain high for some time to bring demand back into line with supply. US annual inflation ebbed slightly in July to a still-painfully high 8.5 percent, and Williams said the Fed is "absolutely committed" to achieving the two-percent goal.

"The situation is very challenging. Inflation is very high. The economy has a lot of crosscurrents. I

do think it will take a few years, but we're going to get that done," Williams said in a discussion with The Wall Street Journal. The Fed has increased the key lending rate four times this year, including two supersized 0.75 percentage point hikes in June and July, and Powell said Friday another similar increase is possible next month as well.

Inflation was already high at the start of the year and spiked globally following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but gas prices at the pump have been moving down in recent weeks, taking some of the pressure off American consumers.

That in turn led to a jump in consumer confidence in August, according to The Conference Board's monthly survey released Tuesday. But the US labor market remains very strong, which the Fed fears will add fuel to the inflation fires as wages rise. New data from the Labor Department Tuesday showed that after dipping in June, job openings rebounded slightly in July, which means there are about two positions available for every unemployed person in the country.

The Fed on Friday will get a look at one more employment report before its September 20-21 policy meeting, and will look for a slowdown after the surprise surge in July. Williams said the



**WASHINGTON:** In this file photo taken on July 27, 2022 Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference in Washington, DC. — AFP

September policy decision will depend on the data, but added "it's clear that we need to get interest rates significantly higher by the end of the year." Inflation is "far too high. And that's really what we're focusing on." —AFP

## European stocks drop on record eurozone inflation

**LONDON:** European stock markets slid Wednesday as record-high eurozone inflation fanned fears that more interest rate hikes could herald recession. Frankfurt, London and Paris stocks dropped as data showed eurozone inflation hit 9.1 percent in August on surging fuel prices, raising pressure on the European Central Bank to tighten its monetary policy.

Wall Street opened down 0.1 percent, while most Asian markets closed lower on concerns the US Federal Reserve's rate-hiking policy would send the world's biggest economy into recession, with oil prices diving on demand jitters. "Traders aren't just ready to back riskier assets and losing their appetite for them because there are concerns about the Fed's hawkish monetary policy," said Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst for Markets.com.

"The data from the EU has confirmed that inflation is moving in one direction only, and the ECB has a long way to go before it can put a leash on inflation," he said. The ECB is set to lift borrowing costs next week, having increased them in July for the first time in a decade to help tackle rampant inflation.

### Recession risk

"The reality is that a more aggressive (ECB) tightening is going to be needed, and when the economy is already as fragile as it is, the situation quickly starts to look quite problematic," OANDA analyst Craig Erlam told AFP. "That's not good for stocks as it's extremely difficult for companies to prosper if the bloc is in a deep recession made worse by higher interest rates, which is now a real risk." Major central banks are rushing to contain runaway consumer price inflation that has largely been prompted by fallout from key energy supplier Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

State energy giant Gazprom suspended gas deliveries to Germany on a major pipeline on Wednesday. It was the latest in a series of supply halts that have fuelled Europe's energy crisis and sent gas and electricity prices soaring before the peak-demand winter.

European gas prices, however, fell on Wednesday after flirting with a record high last week. Markets have struggled since Fed chief Jerome Powell warned last Friday that the US central bank would need to tighten policy much more to tackle sky-high inflation. "Inflation remains the key issue, with commentary from both the Fed and ECB serving to highlight the fact that controlling prices will remain the central target irrespective of economic suffering," IG analyst Joshua Mahony told AFP. —AFP

## Sunak: Truss economy plan 'risks losing confidence of markets'

**LONDON:** An emergency economic package drawn up by Conservative leadership frontrunner Liz Truss risks the financial markets losing confidence in the British economy if she becomes prime minister, opponent Rishi Sunak has said.

Former chancellor Sunak raised concerns about her economic competence, saying that he "struggled to see" how Ms Truss' tax and spending commitments added up. Speaking as the bitter Conservative leadership contest comes to an end with its final political hustling in London on Wednesday night, Mr Sunak also told the Financial Times that it would be "complacent and irresponsible" for the next prime minister "not to be thinking about the risks to the public finances".

If, as polls suggest, Truss beats Sunak in the race to become prime minister, then she will be forced to make decisions during an economic crunch. Inflation in the UK is running at about 10 per cent, with some analysts predicting it could rise as high as 22 per cent in the coming months.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to spiraling energy costs, and British households face annual bills of about £4,000. Owners of small businesses including restaurants, pubs and hotels said that they risk going bust with a 400 per cent increase in their fuel and heating costs.

Hospitals and schools said they might have to cut staffing levels to be able to afford energy. Energy companies could reportedly make profits in excess of £170 billion in the next two years, but Ms Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng, the man who is likely to become her chancellor if she wins the leadership,



**SOUTHAMPTON, UK:** Rishi Sunak, former chancellor to the exchequer and contender to become the country's next prime minister and leader of the Conservative party, visits his family's old business Bassett Pharmacy in Southampton. — AFP

oppose any further windfall taxes.

This could become a major political battlefield, especially if Britain has a cold and difficult winter.

While Sunak has a proven economic track record and was praised for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, Ms Truss' monetary experience comes from her two years as Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Her answer to tackling the cost of living crisis has been to cut taxes and provide financial support for households in an emergency budget next month.

But Sunak and leading economists fear that her plan for unfunded spending commitments would create uncontrollable state debt that would further

fuel inflation. "I have been consistent, clear and honest throughout this contest that we must fix inflation first," he said in statement before Wednesday's hustling. "Only by supporting people through this winter and gripping inflation can we lay the foundations for growth and prosperity." Sunak, who is unlikely to take a post in a Truss government, urged her to stick to fiscal rules to allow debt to fall and to tackle inflation as a priority.

Should Ms Truss take up residence in Downing Street, it is possible that she will ditch her free market economics and seek to bail out households and companies, perhaps a scheme similar to pandemic financial assistance. —AFP

## Canada economy accelerates, posts 3.3% growth in Q2

**OTTAWA:** Canada's economy accelerated in the second quarter of 2022, benefitting from higher commodity prices after emerging from pandemic lockdowns to post annualized growth of 3.3 percent, the government statistical agency said Wednesday. This fourth quarterly increase in gross domestic

product (GDP), however, was lower than analysts expected. A dip in July also signaled a slowdown with interest rate hikes aimed at taming inflation becoming a drag on the housing sector.

Quarter to quarter, the economy grew 0.8 percent. "Canadian growth numbers were nothing to sneeze at, but the latest data were still underwhelming relative to lofty expectations," commented Desjardins analyst Royce Mendes in a research note.

It may, however, be enough to slow the pace of Bank of Canada interest rate hikes, he said, forecasting a 50 basis point hike when its governors meet next week.

July data, he noted, points to the upcoming third quarter "beginning on soft footing, which reinforces our view that the economy is set to cool even more as the lagged effects of prior rate hikes become more pronounced." According to Statistics Canada, business investment and household spending was up in the second quarter.

Spending on garments and footwear notably jumped largely due to a return to offices and a pickup in travel, which also meant larger outlays on airfare and hotel accommodations.

Canadians also spent more on aircraft, trucks, buses, and other motor vehicles. Housing prices and real estate transactions, meanwhile, dipped

from record highs. The quarter saw the largest increase on record in agricultural inventories, notably wheat and canola, with crop production forecast to increase this year due to better weather conditions.

A new liquified natural gas terminal under construction in westernmost British Columbia and higher investment in the Alberta oil sands helped push up business investment. But higher imports—led by travel services and passenger cars and trucks, particularly electric and hybrid models that reflect increased gas prices—outpaced an uptick in exports, which was fuelled in part by strong demand for aluminum from the United States. —AFP



## Business

# China's factory activity contracts for 2nd straight month in August

## Sector hit by strict zero-COVID restrictions and extreme heat

**BEIJING:** China's factory activity shrank in August for the second month in a row, official data showed Wednesday, as the sector was hit by strict zero-COVID restrictions and extreme heat. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a key gauge of manufacturing in the world's second-biggest economy, came in at 49.4, up from July's 49.0 but still below the 50-point mark separating growth from contraction, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed.

Sporadic COVID-19 lockdowns around China have dampened consumer enthusiasm and business confidence, while searing temperatures across large parts of the country this summer prompted power rationing for factories. The economy faced "unfavorable factors including the epidemic and high temperatures" this month, NBS senior statistician Zhao Qinghe said in a statement. Zhao said the data showed "the recovery of manufacturing production and demand still needs to be strengthened", though he noted an uptick in activity in agricultural product processing and food producers ahead of the mid-Autumn festival on September 10.

China's manufacturing PMI has been in contraction territory for five out of the past six months, in the wake of a disruptive months-long lockdown in Shanghai and COVID-related restrictions elsewhere. But officials show few signs of relaxing

strict pandemic curbs, with the southern tech hub of Shenzhen sealing off the world's largest electronics market this week despite just dozens of daily cases in the city of more than 18 million. Chinese leaders had originally set a full-year GDP growth target of around 5.5 percent, but with economic expansion of just 0.4 percent in the second quarter, analysts believe it is unlikely to hit that goal.

Zhao noted that while larger businesses saw an expansion in activity this month, small and medium-sized enterprises reported contractions, dragging the overall PMI down. "China's economic weakness is increasingly becoming demand-driven," ANZ's Greater China chief economist Raymond Yeung, said. "Consumption and investment sentiment among households and enterprises are weak, increasing the risk of a deflationary spiral."

China's non-manufacturing PMI came in at 52.6 points in August, down from 53.8 in July, NBS data showed. Statistician Zhao said that the accommodation, food and beverage and telecommunications industries saw "sustained rapid growth" in the past month. But ANZ's Yeung noted that weak expansion in the service sector "bodes ill for China's overall growth outlook". He said authorities were likely to continue their tough COVID approach in the leadup to a key political meeting in October—the 20th Communist Party Congress. —AFP



FUYANG, China: Employees work on an assembly line producing speakers at a factory in Fuyang city, in China's eastern Anhui province on August 31, 2022. —AFP

## California law would make tech firms think of children

**BEIJING:** California legislators on Tuesday passed a bill to require tech firms to put the well-being of children over profits when designing apps or other online products.

The bill is heading to the desk of Governor Gavin Newsom whose signature is needed for the Age-Appropriate Design Code Act to become law in the state that is home to Silicon Valley titans such as Meta, Google, and Apple. The office of Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks said the bill - AB 2273 - passed by a unanimous vote. If signed into law, firms making apps or websites would have to build protections for children into products, even if they are intended for adults, according to the bill.

"Businesses that develop and provide online services, products, or features that children are likely to access should consider the best interests of children when designing, developing, and providing that online service, product, or feature," the bill read.

"If a conflict arises between commercial interests and the best interests of children, companies should prioritize the privacy, safety, and well-being of children over commercial interests."

The law would stop tech firms from profiling children; selling their data; estimating their ages, or designing features that are detrimental to their well-being, Wicks said in a tweet.

The bill was modeled on the Age Appropriate Design Code passed in Britain last year, according to 5Rights Foundation, an advocacy group for children's online rights.

"With this bill, California is not only setting the standard for children who live in the tech sector's backyard, but it also paves the way for the rest of the United States and for the world," 5Rights founder Beeban Kidron said in a release. Trade association NetChoice, whose members include Google, Meta and TikTok, called for the California governor to veto the bill, along with two others that seek to regulate how online platforms operate.

One of the bills requires social media platforms to publicly disclose their policies regarding online hate, disinformation, extremism, and harassment, as well as key metrics and data regarding the enforcement of those policies. "California has been a leader in technology development, but the legislature's actions would give innovators yet another reason to leave the Golden State to avoid overly burdensome regulation that harms families and violates the First Amendment," said NetChoice policy counsel Jennifer Huddleston.

NetChoice argued that there are better policies the state could employ to help parents keep children safe online and support the mental health of teenagers. —AFP

## Chinese EV maker BYD plummets after Buffett sale

**TOKYO:** Shares in Chinese electric carmaker BYD plunged on Wednesday after its largest backer, Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, reduced its stake amid speculation of a potential exit. Hong Kong-listed shares of the EV manufacturer fell by as much as 13 percent, a day after a regulatory filing showed Berkshire reducing its holdings from 20.04 percent to 19.92 percent.

It ended the day 7.9 percent lower, while its Shenzhen-listed stock finished 7.4 percent down. The

## Italy picks bid by US fund, Delta and Air France for ITA Airways

**MILAN:** Italy announced Wednesday it chose a bid by US investment fund Certares, in partnership with Delta Airlines and Air France-KLM, for exclusive talks to take over national carrier ITA Airways. The decision came as a surprise, as Swiss-Italian shipping group MSC and its ally, German airline Lufthansa, had appeared frontrunners in the race to buy Alitalia's successor.

The offer by Certares and its partners "was deemed to be the most in line with the objectives set" by the state, which owns 100 percent of the company, the Italian economy ministry said in a statement, without disclosing the amount on the table. "At the end of the exclusive negotiations, binding agreements will only be signed if their content is fully satisfactory for the public shareholder," the ministry said.

According to the Italian daily Il Messaggero, the Certares fund, which specializes in tourism, has pro-

posed to buy nearly 56 percent of ITA for around 600 million euros (\$599 million).

The Italian state would retain a 44 percent stake and have two of the five seats on the future ITA board. MSC and Lufthansa had proposed at the end of August to pay 850 million euros for 80 percent of ITA, a lower offer than a previous one of 1.3 billion to 1.4 billion euros made in January, due to the expected decline of the airline market after the summer.

Soaring energy prices, the war in Ukraine, a lack of staff and the resurgence of coronavirus all contribute to a hazy outlook. Lufthansa said: "From our point of view, our joint offer with MSC was the better solution for ITA."

"Evidently, a path is now being chosen that allows more state influence and does not envisage the complete privatization of ITA. "Even without a cooperation with ITA, the Lufthansa Group remains excellently positioned in Italy."

The travel agency network controlled by Certares will enable ITA to expand its presence in the United States. French-Dutch airline Air France-KLM has previously set its sights on Alitalia — in 2009, it acquired a 25 percent stake in the Italian company before gradually withdrawing from it from 2013.

Its hands are tied by EU conditions set in return



for state aid it received during the coronavirus pandemic. It was prevented from taking a stake of more than 10 percent in another company in the sector. The Italian government gave the green light in February to the privatization of the state-owned airline, which took to the skies in October last year.

ITA Airways replaced the loss-making national carrier Alitalia, which was put under state administration in 2017, after years of fruitless attempts to find a buyer. The Italian state has spent more than 13 billion euros trying to get the national airline back on its feet. —AFP



## LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Ponnonam 2022' promotion

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket, the retailer of choice for discerning buyers in Kuwait, is celebrating Onam 2022, one of the main cultural festivals of Kerala, India, with a spate of amazing special discounts and promotional offers. The traditional ten-day Onam festival, often referred to as 'Ponnonam' or 'Golden Onam', is being celebrated across all outlets of the hypermarket with colorful competitions and captivating programs, along with alluring dishes prepared especially for the festival being a highlight during the promotion.

A delightful array of dishes will feature in the main 'Onam sadiya' menu that will be available

from 7 September at all outlets of LuLu Hypermarket, along with a variety of irresistible 'payasams' (sweet porridges) at very special prices that will be available a day ahead, from 3 September onwards. In addition, Onam flowers imported specifically for the occasion will also be available at all LuLu stores.

Onam festival is also marked with the purchase of new garments and to cater to this need LuLu Hypermarket has arranged one-time special offers on a range of clothing outfits. Stylish sarees and churidars are available with a KD 5 free LuLu Shopping voucher on every KD 10 worth of purchase, while a variety of curated ethnic wear 'dhawanis' will be offered exclusively through LuLu outlets.

Underscoring the cultural aspects of the Onam festival, there will be a slew of programs arranged to engage shoppers throughout the 'Ponnonam' period. This includes a variety of cultural programs at the Al-Rai outlet on 8 September that



will be accented with a distinctive 'chenda melam' performance on traditional drums to welcome 'Maveli', the festival's mascot. A dazzling fashion show of kids in traditional Onam outfits will also be held on 8 September at the Al-Rai branch.

Adding to the festivities, on 9 September there will be a spirited 'vadamvali' (tug of war) competition between selected teams at the Al-Rai outlet. On 10 September, the last day of the PonnOnam festivities, the Al-Rai store will again witness a 'pookalam' (floral designs) competition, which will display the talents of competitors in arranging flowers in various geometric designs. Also, on the same day and venue, a 'payasa mela' (payasam cooking) competition will be held to demonstrate the payasam cooking capabilities of competitors.

The Ponnonam 2022 promotion will no doubt prove to be an exciting, enticing and engaging 'Golden' Onam for all shoppers to any of the LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait.

over a decade, especially on his highest-returning investment, percentage-wise."

Some analysts have argued that BYD's strong fundamentals, coupled with Beijing's push to develop its domestic green energy sector, means the company still has room to grow.

"Despite the short term share price struggle, there is value to invest in the company with its solid business model in the medium to long term," Andy Wong, fund manager at LW Asset Management Advisors in Hong Kong, said.

Last month, a stake identical to the size of Berkshire's holdings was entered into Hong Kong's Central Clearing and Settlement System. Hong Kong requires anyone who owns more than five percent of a listed company to notify the stock exchange when initiating a trade that changes the stake percentage into the next whole number. —AFP



## Lifestyle | Features

# Amazon to unveil its \$1bn bet with ‘Lord of the Rings’ prequel launch

Stanley Kubrick once famously said J.R.R. Tolkien’s “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy of novels was unfilmable. It is hard to imagine what the great director would have made of Amazon’s \$1 billion gamble on “The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power,” a 50-hour television series based on the dry historical footnotes published at the end of book three. The show, out Friday globally on Prime Video, aims to tap into the huge and enduring appeal of books still regularly voted the world’s best-loved novels of all time, as well as Peter Jackson’s Oscar-winning film adaptations.

It is central to Amazon’s bid to stand out in the “streaming wars” with Netflix, Disney+ and HBO Max—whose own “Game of Thrones” prequel just launched—and is bankrolled by multi-billionaire founder Jeff Bezos, a Tolkien mega-fan. But populated by heroes and villains who are barely—if at all—referenced in Tolkien’s trilogy and its “Appendices” of fictional mythology, and featuring a largely unknown cast and creators, there is no doubting the scale of the gamble.

“It is quite nerve wracking—we’re building something from the ground up that’s never been seen before,” said Sophia Nomvete, who plays Princess Disa, the first female and first Black dwarf depicted on screen in Tolkien’s world. “There’s definitely a few nerves. We want to get it right,” she told AFP at the Comic-Con fan event last month. “The Rings of Power” is set in Tolkien’s “Second Age”—a period of history in his fictional Middle Earth world thousands of years before the events of “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings.”

So while a handful of characters from Jackson’s films reappear in Amazon’s show—mostly younger versions of elves such as Galadriel and Elrond, who are of course immortal—there is no Frodo, Gollum or Aragorn in sight. Most characters from Tolkien lore are appearing on screen for the first time, and some have

even been created entirely from scratch for the show. “Tolkien hasn’t really written much about who he is as a person,” said Maxim Baldry, whose character Isildur was briefly seen fighting the evil lord Sauron in a flashback at the start of Jackson’s trilogy. Here, Baldry plays a younger version of the tragic hero, struggling with the death of his mother, over-bearing pressure from his father, and a romantic yearning for adventure. “What a gift, firstly, to explore someone’s beginnings,



finding their true colors, understanding who they really are,” said Baldry. He added: “Season one is purely about setting up characters and introducing new characters to the family... fleshing out a pretty skeletal world that Tolkien just created in the Second Age.”

### ‘Wonderfully crazy’

The fate of the series rests in the hands of creators—or “showrunners”—Patrick McKay and J.D. Payne, who pitched their concept to Amazon after it bought the rights in 2017, but had only a handful of previous projects credited on their CVs. “We wanted to find a huge Tolkienian mega epic. And Amazon were wonderfully crazy enough to say ‘yes, let’s do that,’” McKay said at Comic-Con. At the London premiere Tuesday, Bezos admitted that “some people even questioned our choice” to bring in “this relatively unknown team.”

“But we saw something special,” he said, according to Variety. Amazon has also put on glitzy premieres for “The Rings of Power” in Los Angeles, New York and Mumbai. The show’s lavish globe-trotting promotion is just a drop in the ocean compared to the astonishing cost of actually making a series dubbed the most expensive ever for television. Amazon splurged \$250 million buying the rights from Tolkien’s estate, and some \$465 million on the first season alone. It has committed from the start to making five full seasons, meaning the final cost is expected to pass \$1 billion.

With high stakes has come considerable secrecy. Plot details and reviews were strictly embargoed until Wednesday, just two days before the series’ launch, and even its actors have not been told the fates of their characters. “No idea! I don’t even know what’s happening next season,” said Megan Richards, who plays Poppy Proudfoot, a character whose Harfoot race are ancestors of the hobbits. “There’s an arc that Tolkien has given us for the Second Age. So there are certain things we know,” Daniel Weyman, who plays a mysterious man billed simply as “The Stranger,” told AFP. “The thing that I hold on to is that our showrunners, they definitely know their arc. They know their arc already.” —AFP



## Netflix in row over inspiration for Mexican drug ‘queen’ show

A Mexican woman whose links to drug traffickers earned her the nickname “Queen of the Pacific” is demanding compensation from Netflix for an award-winning show that she says is based on her life. Sandra Avila Beltran has filed a claim with Mexico’s intellectual property agency alleging that the character Teresa Mendoza in “La Reina del Sur” (Queen of the South) is inspired by her own story.

Avila Beltran wants 40 percent of the royalties from Netflix and Spanish-language television network Telemundo, her lawyer Israel Razo told Milenio TV, saying the show had hurt the 61-year-old’s reputation. “Living with the nickname of a drug trafficker is very difficult,” he said. In response, Netflix and Telemundo argued that Avila Beltran’s life is “a matter of public interest” so there are no grounds for a complaint, according to documents published by Milenio’s sister newspaper.

A source close to the matter confirmed to AFP that Avila Beltran had taken her case to the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property, but declined to give details. She was first arrested in Mexico City in 2007 with her boyfriend, Juan Diego Espinosa, who was accused of being a go-between for the infamous Sinaloa drug cartel and Colombian traffickers. Avila Beltran was acquitted of charges of handling illicit funds in 2012 and extradited to the United States to face accusations of conspiring to import cocaine.

She struck a plea bargain that resulted in a conviction on charges of helping Espinosa to avoid arrest, and a judge sentenced her to time served and deported her back to Mexico in 2013. Avila Beltran, whose nickname comes from a drug ballad written in her honor, was released in 2015 after a Mexican judge ruled that she could not be tried twice for the same crime.

“La Reina del Sur” is based on the novel with the same name by Spanish writer Arturo Perez-Reverte about a Mexican woman with links to drug lords. The second season of the television series won an International Emmy Award for Best Non-English Language US Primetime Program in 2020. —AFP



Cambodian psychiatrist Sotheara Chhim (right), 54, receives flower from members of his staff at his office in Phnom Penh. —AFP

## Cambodian psychiatrist helping genocide survivors wins ‘Asia’s Nobel Prize’

A Cambodian psychiatrist treating victims of the Khmer Rouge and a French environmentalist cleaning up Indonesian rivers were among the winners Wednesday of the 2022 Ramon Magsaysay Award—considered Asia’s Nobel Prize. The annual award, established in 1957 and named after a Philippines president who died in a plane crash, honors those who have performed “selfless service to the peoples of Asia”. The foundation that runs the award announced four winners in an online announcement. Among them was Sotheara Chhim, 54, a psychiatrist and survivor of the murderous, ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge regime that killed nearly a quarter of Cambodia’s population through starvation, overwork and mass executions in the 1970s.

He was cited for devoting his life to helping people who suffered under the Khmer Rouge, with a focus on treating “baksbat”—“broken courage”—a syndrome seen in Cambodia that is similar to post-traumatic stress disorder. The Magsaysay Award organizers praised “his calm courage in surmounting deep trauma to become his people’s healer”. Sotheara Chhim also testified as an expert witness before a United Nations-backed tribunal trying senior Khmer Rouge leaders. “I’m... traumatized myself as a victim under the Khmer Rouge, but working to help survivors of the Khmer Rouge helped me heal myself too,” he said in a 2017 interview.

French environmental activist and filmmaker Gary Benchehib, 27, was given the award for his efforts to clean up Indonesia’s polluted waterways. Benchehib and his brother have built kayaks made of plastic bottles and bamboo to pick up trash in the Citarum river, one of the most polluted rivers in the world. Filipino doctor Bernadette Madrid, 64, got the award for setting up child protection centres across the Philippines to help domestic abuse victims. Japanese ophthalmologist Tadashi Hattori, 58, was honored for providing free eye surgeries in Vietnam, where such specialists and facilities are limited. His generosity, the Magsaysay Award foundation said, was “the embodiment of individual social responsibility”. An in-person ceremony honoring the winners will be held in Manila in November. —AFP

# Venice film fest launches with Netflix’s Adam Driver flick ‘White Noise’



(From left) US actor Adam Driver, US director Noah Baumbach, US actor Don Cheadle, US actress Greta Gerwig, British actress Jodie Turner-Smith, British actress May Nivola, British actress Raffey Cassidy and British actor Sam Nivola pose on August 31, 2022, during a photocall for the film “White Noise”, presented in the Venezia 79 competition on the opening day of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido. —AFP photos



(From left) Director of the 79th Venice International Film Festival, Alberto Barbera, Spanish director Rodrigo Sorogoyen, Italian director Leonardo Di Costanzo, Japanese-British author Kazuo Ishiguro, French director Audrey Diwan, President of the Venezia 79 International Jury, US actress Julianne Moore, Argentine director Mariano Cohn and Iranian actress Leila Hatami pose on August 31, 2022, during a photocall on the opening day of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido.



French actress Catherine Deneuve, wearing a flag of Ukraine on her shirt, during a photocall for the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement she is to be awarded, on the opening day of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido.

decades ago—as a morbidly obese man trying to reconnect with his daughter. Its director, Darren Aronofsky, won the Golden Lion in 2008 for “The Wrestler” and launched his Oscar-winning “Black Swan” in Venice. Hollywood and Western Europe dominate the selection of 23 films competing for the hearts of a jury led by US actress Julianne Moore. One notable

exception is Iran’s award-winning filmmaker Jafar Panahi, whose “No Bears” is premiering barely a month after he was imprisoned in Tehran amid a crackdown on dissident directors.

### Styles fever

Also bound to stir political controversy is a new documentary from Laura Poitras, who follows her films about whistleblowers Edward Snowden and Julian Assange with “All the Beauty and the Bloodshed” about the family pharma group behind the US opioid epidemic. But the movie most likely to get tongues wagging is “Don’t Worry Darling”, playing out of competition on Monday, which features music megastar Harry Styles in his first leading role.

The tale of sinister goings-on in a seemingly idyllic 1950s community has so far been overshadowed by buzz about its sex scenes and supposed clashes between co-star Florence Pugh and director Olivia Wilde (also Styles’ girlfriend). Wilde has dismissed them as “invented click-bait”. —AFP



(From left) Italian actor Salvatore Striano, Nigerian actress Glory Kevin, Italian director Roberto De Paolis, Italian actor Lino Musella and Italian actor Maurizio Lombardi pose during a photocall for the film “Princess”, presented in the Orizzonti competition on the opening day of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido.



(From left) President of the Orizzonti competition jury, Spanish director Isabel Coixet, member of the Orizzonti competition jury, Italian director Laura Bispuri, member of the Orizzonti competition jury, US director Antonio Campos, member of the Orizzonti competition jury, French film critic Edouard Waintrop and member of the Orizzonti competition jury, Algerian director Sofia Djama pose on August 31, 2022, during a photocall for the Orizzonti Competition Jury, on the opening day of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido.





These photos taken by Vshine/Humane Society International show cats among 150 cats rescued by police from cat meat trade in Jinan, in China's eastern Shandong province. — AFP photos

# Chinese police rescue 150 cats headed for dinner tables

Nearly 150 cats bound for slaughterhouses have been rescued by police in eastern China, an international animal welfare organization said. The animals were crammed into rusty cages when they were found by police in the eastern city of Jinan in Shandong province, Humane Society International (HSI) said in a statement Tuesday. A gang placed sparrows in cages as bait and used a remote control to shut the traps as soon as each cat entered, an activist with local animal rights group VShine said.

"It was shocking to see the state they were in, many of them emaciated and

crying out," an activist, who only offered their last name Huang, said in a statement to HSI. "Our discovery of dozens of live sparrows used as bait to lure the cats was also a big shock." Most of the rescued felines are believed to have been household pets and have been sent to local animal shelters, the statement added. Activists also found 31 sparrows—a protected species in China—at the scene and released them back into the wild.

China has no animal cruelty prevention laws, but the suspects could face penalties for hunting the birds, property theft and for violations of animal epidemic prevention

rules. Around 10 million dogs and four million cats are killed for human consumption each year in China, according to HSI. Dog and cat meat is considered a delicacy in some parts of China, and the trade in their flesh remains lucrative enough to spur criminal gangs to steal pets, though the habit has seen a steady decline as pet ownership has risen.

Every June, the city of Yulin in southern China hosts a dog meat festival, where live canines and cats are sold for eating. The tradition of eating dogs and cats in south China's Guangdong and Guangxi provinces dates back thousands of years. "These are

China's two main cat meat eating hotspots," Dr Peter Li, HSI China policy specialist, said in a statement.

"Throughout the rest of mainland China, cat meat is not part of the food culture at all." The COVID-19 outbreak appears to have further reduced the appetite for cat and dog meat, after the disease was linked to a market in the central city of Wuhan selling live animals for food. China banned the consumption and trade of wildlife in 2020. The Guangdong cities of Shenzhen and Zhuhai banned the consumption of dogs and cats in April that year, becoming the first cities in China to do so. —AFP

## Between the covers: Librarian reveals left-behind treasures

Family photos, a Public Enemy backstage pass, a weekend to-do list ("Saturday: file taxes, Sunday: chill, watch game") and unused vouchers from 2002: it's amazing what people leave in library books. For years, one US librarian has made a collection of the flotsam she found between the pages of borrowed titles. Now Sharon McKellar is opening her trove for visitors to the library in Oakland, California, in a special exhibition called "Found in a Library Book". "I wanted to share something that was really interesting to me that I had a feeling would be interesting to other people," said McKellar, supervising librarian for teen services at Oakland Public Library. It "tells a story of our community and our city in a different and sort of unexpected way and ties back to the library."

Among the make-and-make-do bookmarks of children's art and Christmas snapshots, there are letters written but never sent, notes from lovers, and postcards of thanks—"I got your check," it says on the back of an illustration from "Alice in Wonderland." Each of them offers a snapshot-tantalizing or mundane-of the life of the person who left it there. "There are some that are letters or



Sharon McKellar, supervising librarian at the Oakland Public Library, poses for a portrait next to a portion of the display 'Found in a Library Book', a collection of ephemera found in returned library books, at the Oakland Public Library in Oakland, California. —AFP photos

cards or postcards that were sent between people-or maybe not actually sent-that feel really personal," McKellar told AFP. "There are some notes and letters that feel very unfinished. Or I really want to know what happened next."

### 'INCREDIBLY HOT!!!'

McKellar began collecting the apocrypha around 10 years ago and has blogged about her hobby for several years, but the chance to curate an exhibition came when the library launched a new website. This allowed her to group the ephemera by theme or category—including notes, art, photos, cards and letters, artifacts, bookmarks, creative writing, lists, and kids' items. Some entries overlap and fit into two or more boxes, like an interview that a child carried out with their grandmother about how and why she immigrated from Vietnam decades earlier.

Others defy easy categorization—a print of



Photographs are seen on display in 'Found in a Library Book'.

a 2008 recipe for pot roast has the admonition "Behave" in the large blank space before the ingredient list begins. Some letters are meditative, like that thanking its anonymous recipient for "all that you do," but acknowledging "We do have a tendency to argue. I'm working on stopping that." Others, including "Ruminations from an O.G." are filled with regret:

"27 years in this madhouse / my fate sealed long ago / if you are young, get out now / you can do better / Go back to school. Learn a skill. / The Post Office is no place to be somebody / It is high school with a paycheck. "You will not grow here / you will stagnate, losing your soul, mind and body / Listen to your heart / Hear what it says!" The glimpses of lives lived and preserved in between the pages of a book are special to McKellar.

"There are... some that really sound like somebody's... inner thoughts, like, you know, (they're) trying to talk themselves through a really hard time or trying to give themselves



Family pictures, handwritten letters, and drawings represent just a few of the ephemera to be added to the 'Found In A Library Book' collection.

a pep talk," she said. "There's obviously no way of knowing who wrote them, which is probably for the best." — AFP

## Japan further relaxes border controls for tourism

Tourists will be able to visit Japan from next week on package tours without a guide, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Wednesday, as the country moves to ease strict Covid-19 controls. From September 7, Japan will also raise its daily cap on the number of people allowed to enter the country to 50,000, Kishida told reporters. Japan has kept strict border restrictions in place longer than many other major economies, and only in June began allowing tourists to visit on the condition they came in four groups accompanied by guides.

"As international exchange becomes more active worldwide, Japan will join this movement—also from the viewpoint of taking advantage of a cheap yen," said Kishida, who has himself just recovered from Covid-19. From the same date, "we'll also make it possible for tourists from all countries to enter the country on package tours without tour guides, and we will pro-

ceed with making entry procedures smoother at airports", he added.

But the measures fall short of a full reopening and visitors are still required to book their trips through agents and obtain visas. Public broadcaster NHK and other local media have reported that tourists will be asked to follow isolation guidelines if they test positive for Covid-19 in Japan.

Kishida said he hoped to ease border restrictions further, with industry officials keen to see the return of a waiver program that allowed tourists from much of the world to visit without a visa. Japan hopes to eventually "enable smooth entry" in line with other Group of Seven countries, he added. The country has never imposed a strict lockdown, and it has recorded total deaths from the disease of around 39,000 — far lower than many other countries.

Around 64 percent of the population and more than 90 percent of people aged 65 and over have received three vaccine

shots. But the country has maintained strict border rules throughout the pandemic, barring foreign residents from re-entry for several months at the height of the first waves of infection. Group tours have been allowed since June, but only around 144,500 foreign tourists are estimated to have entered the

country in July, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization. The nation welcomed a record 31.9 million foreign visitors in 2019, and had been on track to achieve its goal of 40 million in 2020 before the pandemic struck. —AFP





## Lifestyle | Features



A woman leaves a note as people gather to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the death of Lady Diana Spencer on Wednesday at the "Flamme de la Liberté" monument in Paris. —AFP photos



A man wrapped in the British national flag and wearing a hat covered with pins of the British royal family holds a photo portrait of Britain's Princess Diana in front of Kensington Palace.



A man wearing a hat covered with pins of the British royal family takes part in a gathering to pay a memorial tribute on the 25th anniversary of the Princess of Wales's death.

# Tributes paid to princess Diana, 25 years after her death

Flowers and other tributes were laid on Wednesday at princess Diana's former London home and above the Paris road tunnel where she lost her life, to mark the 25th anniversary of her death. The former Lady Diana Spencer, whose fairytale marriage to Prince Charles captivated the world until it publicly unraveled with infidelity and divorce, died in a car crash in the French capital on August 31, 1997. A trickle of well-wishers left flowers, flags and photographs for the self-styled "queen of people's hearts" at the gates of Kensington Palace, and at the Place Diana, above the Pont de l'Alma tunnel.

At the Spencer family home, Althorp House, where Diana is buried in a lead-lined coffin on a secluded island on the estate, her brother Charles Spencer lowered the Union Jack to half mast. "She was a global celebrity," retired camera operator Claude Gautier, 79, who came to pay his respects at the makeshift memorial in Paris, told AFP.

"She was classy, sporty, elegant. Everyone's sad today. My flowers for her are on the inside," he said, touching the badge of his England football shirt. "The flowers here will wilt but mine will never die." "It makes the hairs on my skin stand on end to think that she died underneath us," added German tourist Ulrike Plank, 64, from Munich. "We're really missing someone like her today. If you look around the world, there's no one like her."

### Legacy

Diana, who was just 36 when she died, remains widely revered as a fashion icon and for having cut through stuffy royal convention, particularly after her very public divorce. She was also praised for charity work highlighting the scourge of landmines and encouraging a change in attitudes to people with HIV/AIDS. In a sign of the enduring fascination with the royal, last weekend a sporty Ford Escort she once



Visitors cut a cake depicting late Britain's Princess Diana in front of Kensington Palace.

owned was sold for £737,000 (\$864,000) at auction. Her marital troubles will also feature in the latest series of the hit Netflix drama "The Crown" later this year.

Joe Little, managing editor at Majesty Magazine, said Diana had influenced her sons, princes William and Harry, to be less formal than traditional royals. "They are much more 'touchy feely' than they ever would have been," he said, pointing to William's hugs for England's women footballers after their Euro 2022 victory this month. "William can see there is no need for much of the formality in royal life that existed when his father was of a similar age."

Last week, Harry, who has admitted to mental health struggles because of his mother's death, said he would "share the spirit of my mum with my family, with my children, who I wished could have met her". "Every day I hope to do her proud," he told a fundraising dinner in the United States for his Sentebale charity, which supports young people in Africa with HIV. "I want it to be a day filled with memories of her incredible work and love for the way she did it," he added.



Portraits of Princess Diana and presents are displayed in front of the Flamme de la Liberté, in tribute to Princess Diana.

### Rift

Last year, the brothers unveiled a statue of her at Kensington Palace on what would have been her 60th birthday, remembering "her love, strength and character" and as a "force for good" around the world. This year, the brothers will not take part in any official commemorations, preferring instead to mark the occasion in private with their own families. William, 40, recently announced a move from London to the Windsor estate west of London with his wife, Catherine, and their three young children.

Harry, 37, now lives in California with his wife, Meghan, and their two children, after the couple quit the royal family in early 2020. The Daily Telegraph said on Saturday that the brothers had "agreed to draw a line under their public commemorations" at the 20th anniversary five years ago. But the brothers, who at the age of just 15 and 12 walked, heads bowed, behind Diana's coffin at her funeral, are also reportedly on non-speaking terms.

William has angrily hit back at claims in a television interview from Harry and Meghan of racism in the roy-



A man wrapped in the British national flag bearing a photograph of Britain's Princess Diana takes part in a gathering to pay a memorial tribute on the 25th anniversary of the Princess of Wales's death.



People have a rest as they gather to pay a memorial tribute on the 25th anniversary of the death of Britain's Princess Diana, in front of Kensington Palace.

al family. The couple are due at a series of charity events in Britain next week, staying near William and Kate on the sprawling Windsor estate. There are reportedly no plans for the brothers to meet, nor for Harry to visit his ailing 96-year-old grandmother at her Balmoral retreat in Scotland. —AFP



In this file photo Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex (left) and Britain's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge attend the unveiling of a statue of their mother, Princess Diana at The Sunken Garden in Kensington Palace, London, which would have been her 60th birthday. —AFP photos



In this file photo taken on July 1, 2021 Britain's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge (left) and Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex unveil a statue of their mother, Princess Diana at The Sunken Garden in Kensington Palace, London, which would have been her 60th birthday.

## William and Harry to mark Diana anniversary in private, apart

Princes William and Harry on Wednesday marked the 25th anniversary of the death of their mother Princess Diana, in private but apart as a feud between the brothers shows no sign of ending.

The former Lady Diana Spencer, whose fairytale marriage to Prince Charles captivated the world until it publicly unraveled with infidelity and divorce, died in a car crash on August 31, 1997. Five years ago, her sons attended a series of public commemorations of her life, and spoke of the enduring effect of her death on them. This year the brothers did not take part in any official commemorations, preferring instead to mark the occasion in private with their own families.

William, 40, recently announced a move from London to the Windsor estate west of London with his wife, Catherine, and their three young children. Harry, 37, now lives in California with his wife, Meghan, and their two children, after the couple quit the royal family in early 2020. The Daily Telegraph said on Saturday that the brothers had "agreed to draw a line under their public commemorations" at the 20th anniversary. Spokespeople for both couples confirmed they would spend the day privately. Diana's shock death aged just 36 saw a sea of floral tributes laid at the gates of her former London home, Kensington Palace. —AFP



In this file photo taken on August 19, 1995 Prince Charles (right), Princess Diana (left) and their children William (second right) and Harry (second left) watch the march past on a dais on the mall as part of the commemorations of VJ Day.

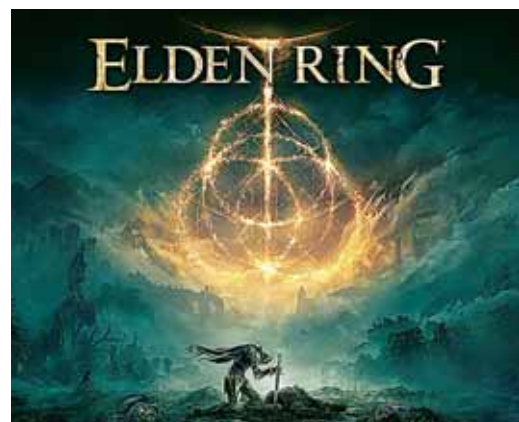
## Tencent buys stake in Japanese gaming firm behind Elden Ring

Chinese gaming giant Tencent has bought a minority stake in Japanese game developer FromSoftware, maker of the smash-hit fantasy title Elden Ring, the Tokyo-based firm said Wednesday. Tencent, the world's largest games publisher by revenue, has performed dismally since Beijing imposed a limit on gameplay for children of three hours per week last year in a bid to stamp out addiction. The number of new video game licenses granted by Chinese regulators has lagged behind previous years after a nine-month freeze on approving titles was lifted in April. FromSoftware's "unique set of values and self-initiative... will not change in any way going forward", the Japanese company said in a statement announcing the sale of the stake, which was bought by a Sony subsidiary as well as Tencent.

"The funding received will help us take an even more assertive stance towards investment into in-house game development," Tencent has not had a new gaming title approved for over a year, with most of this year's licenses in China granted to smaller developers, according to official data.

Beijing has strict content censorship rules for all media including video games, which have been pulled in the past for including gore, cleavage, political and paranormal elements. Tencent, which is behind China's biggest mobile games Honor of Kings and PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, posted its first ever year-on-year revenue decline this month.

China's gaming industry has been swept up in a tech regulatory crackdown which has seen record fines, long investigations and the suspension of IPOs. Tencent, which also operates the ubiquitous messaging app WeChat, was fined six million yuan (\$870,000) by antitrust regulators in July for anti-competitive behavior. —AFP





## Sports

# India's top player says 'LIV can be IPL of golf'

## British Open champion Smith joins LIV Golf

### News in brief

#### Sunderland hire Mowbray

**LONDON:** Sunderland hired Tony Mowbray as their new manager on Tuesday after Alex Neil quit to take charge of Championship rivals Stoke. Mowbray has agreed a two-year contract with Sunderland just three months after leaving fellow second-tier club Blackburn when his contract expired. Neil led Sunderland back into the Championship through the League One play-offs last season, but left for the Stoke job after less than a year in charge at the Stadium of Light. Mowbray, 58, oversaw Sunderland's preparations for their game against Rotherham on Wednesday as he finalized his move to Wearside. "I grew up in the north east and I always remember my experiences at Roker Park with great fondness - the emotion, passion and size of Sunderland," Mowbray said. "This is a huge opportunity to continue the good work that has taken place over the past two years and I hope the supporters can see that this football club is on its way back.

#### PSG, Fabian seal deal

**PARIS:** Spain midfielder Fabian Ruiz has joined French champions Paris Saint-Germain on a five-year deal from Napoli, the Ligue 1 club announced Tuesday. Fabian is the fifth signing of the summer by PSG and will further strengthen their midfield following the arrival of Portugal duo Vitinha and Renato Sanches. "I am delighted to join Paris Saint-Germain. It is great for me to start this new stage of my career in this country," Fabian told the club website. "I am proud to be joining one of the best clubs in Europe with the best players in the world. It's a really exciting challenge." The 26-year-old spent four seasons with Napoli and won the Italian Cup in 2020. Fabian is a former European Under-21 champion with Spain and has 15 international caps. The ex-Real Betis player was part of the Spain squad that reached the semi-finals of Euro 2020.

#### Renewed Richardson wins

**PARIS:** American sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson, who has not appeared in competition since the end of June, saw off Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah to win the 100m at the meet in Lucerne on Tuesday. On a wet track and sprinting into the wind (two meters per second), Richardson won in 11.29 seconds, just 0.01sec ahead of the Jamaican double Olympic champion Thompson-Herah. It marked a major triumph for the 22-year-old Richardson - the 11th fastest woman of all time over the distance with a best of 10.85sec - after she failed to qualify for the world championships team at the US Trials in June. It made for an American double in the sprints as Marvin Bracy, who won the silver at the world championships in Eugene in July, took the men's 100m in 10.17sec, ahead of Kenya's African champion Ferdinand Omanyala who clocked 10.18sec.

#### Singapore swimmer apologizes

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore's former Olympic swimming champion Joseph Schooling apologized on Tuesday for taking cannabis while overseas, according to a statement, an offence that carries strict penalties in his home country. Singapore has some of the toughest drug laws in the world, and its citizens and permanent residents face up to 10 years in prison if found to have consumed illegal substances outside the city-state. "I gave in to a moment of weakness after going through a very tough period of my life," Schooling said in a statement. The swimmer, who has been performing his two years of mandatory military service, tested negative for drugs but confessed to consuming cannabis overseas in May, the defence ministry said in a separate statement late Tuesday. At the time of the offence, Schooling had been allowed to pause his national service to train and participate in the Southeast Asian Games in Hanoi, where he won two golds and a bronze.

#### Chelsea sign Wesley Fofana

**LONDON:** Chelsea have completed the signing of France Under-21 international central defender Wesley Fofana from Leicester City, the two clubs announced on Wednesday. Fofana, 21, has signed a seven-year deal at Stamford Bridge, the London outfit said. The transfer fee is undisclosed but reports in the UK said Chelsea would pay their Premier League rivals £70 million (\$81.3m) plus bonuses for the former Saint-Etienne player. "Wesley is a hugely promising defender who has already proven his quality in the Premier League at a young age," said Chelsea chairman Todd Boehly. "We are delighted we were able to bring one of Europe's most exciting talents to Chelsea and further strengthen that area of our squad, both for this season and many more to come." Fofana is the latest player signed in this transfer window to bolster Chelsea's defense, following the arrivals of Kalidou Koulibaly from Napoli and Marc Cucurella from Brighton and Hove Albion. — From AFP

**NEW DELHI:** The breakaway LIV series can do for golf what the IPL did for cricket, India's top player Anirban Lahiri has said after joining the lucrative Saudi-backed tour. The new circuit has sparked a bitter split that threatens to tear golf apart and sparked accusations of "sportswashing" of Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

Saudi Arabia has drawn major criticism over the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and for cracking down on rights activists, many of whom have been jailed or banned from travel. Despite that and the vast financial rewards being offered to lure players away from the more established US PGA and European tours, the defecting Lahiri said that LIV would benefit others along the way too.

Lahiri, runner-up at the Players Championship in March, was one of six new recruits-along with world number two Cameron Smith-announced on Tuesday for the LIV Golf Invitational Boston this week. "I look at the Indian Premier League and T20. When it started, I remember the almost vehement opposition it received," Lahiri told Wednesday's Hindustan Times. "But it had the potential of changing the way we consumed cricket.

"Look at it now. The Board of Control for Cricket in India is laughing all the way to the bank and so are the players. The broadcasters are delighted because they get off-the-chart ratings," he said. Lahiri said that he was a "big fan" of traditional, five-day Test cricket but that the shorter Twenty20 format that the IPL pioneered was "so much fun". "LIV can be the IPL of golf," the 35-year-old world number 92 said.

## 'Quality' Afghanistan ready for Asia Cup heavyweights

**SHARJAH:** Skipper Mohammad Nabi said Afghanistan is ready for the big guns after they became the first team to qualify for the Super Four stage of the Asia Cup following victories over Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. "As a team in this Asia Cup we are showing that Afghanistan have quality batsmen, quality bowlers and quality fielders," said all-rounder Nabi after Afghanistan thrashed Bangladesh by seven wickets on Tuesday.

"In these two games we showed we can chase totals. Earlier opposition used to say that Afghanistan cannot chase. "But we were quite good (in the two chases), were not under pressure and had proper balance and hopefully we do well in the next round against big teams," added the 37-year-old. Afghanistan's victory over Bangladesh in Sharjah put them into the next round of the six-nation Twenty20 tournament.

Najibullah Zadran smashed six sixes in his 17-ball unbeaten 43 chasing down a target of 128 with nine balls to spare, accompanied by Ibrahim Zadran (42). The two stood out after spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Rashid Khan took three wickets each to flatten the fancied Bangladesh batting in a tournament which acts as a tune-up to the T20 World Cup in October-November in Australia. Fast bowler Fazalhaq Farooqi starred in his team's opening win against Sri Lanka last week with figures of 3-11 and Nabi said the team has covered all the bases going to the Super Four where they are expected to meet India and Pakistan. "We are not targeting anyone, we are just playing proper cricket," said Nabi. Since

## Evenepoel stretches Vuelta a Espana lead

**VALENCIA:** Remco Evenepoel won stage 10 of the Vuelta a Espana on Tuesday, extending his overall lead in the race by dominating a flat 30.9km individual time-trial from Elche to Alicante. The 22-year-old Belgian not only won his first stage on the race but also extended his overall lead on defending champion Primož Roglic by 48 seconds. Last down the ramp at the Elche start line, Evenepoel was already in the race leader's red jersey ahead of a time-trial that suited his strengths.

The Quick-Step leader timed 33min 18sec on the day while three-time defending champion Roglic was a distant second. After speeding across the line with an average speed of 55.7 km/h, Evenepoel was kissed by his team director before leaving flat on his bike frame for around a minute. He came into the race claiming a stage win was his target. "Now we're going to fight to try to win this Vuelta," Evenepoel vowed Tuesday.

"It was actually really hard," he said. "The pressure is off. I won a stage. Now the whole team is super confident, I think. Everybody is performing so well and now we just have to fight to keep this jersey and take it home to Wevelgem." Evenepoel is now 2min 41sec ahead of Slovenian Roglic in the overall standings with Spain's Enric Mas of Movistar third at 3min 03sec. Rounding out the top five are Carlos Rodriguez of Ineos at 3min 55sec and Simon Yates at 4min 50sec.

Touted in Belgium as the 'new Eddy Merckx' before he plunged into a ravine in Italy in 2020 and broke a hip, Evenepoel has won 11 races this season. In Spain, he has the world champion Julian Alaphilippe to guide his every move and given his current advantage, the Vuelta should be his to lose if he plays his cards right. Sam Bennett became the highest profile rider to pull out with Covid so far as the Irishman failed to start. The Bora rider had been in the running for the sprint jersey and won two

#### Smith joins LIV

Meanwhile, British Open champion Cameron Smith has become the latest leading player to sign up to the breakaway LIV Golf Series, which on Tuesday announced that he was in the field for its next event. The Australian was one of six new recruits for the Saudi-backed tour for the LIV Golf Invitational Boston, from September 2-4.

As the world's number two, the 29-year-old Smith will become the highest-ranked player to compete in a LIV Golf event. Smith was linked repeatedly to LIV Golf shortly after winning the 150th British Open, at St Andrews, last month, but avoided discussion of the subject while playing in this month's PGA FedEx Cup playoffs. A LIV statement issued Tuesday said Smith would be among five other players making their debuts among a field of 48 at the International in Massachusetts, including compatriot Marc Leishman, leading Chilean golfer Joaquin Niemann, Harold Varner III (world no 46), Cameron Tringale (55) and India's top-ranked pro Anirban Lahiri (92).

LIV Golf's record \$25 million purses and 54-hole format have attracted several big-name players, including Phil Mickelson, Bryson DeChambeau, Brooks Koepka, Sergio Garcia, Henrik Stenson, Lee Westwood, Ian Poulter, Patrick Reed and Dustin Johnson. Smith told Golf Digest on Tuesday that money "was definitely a factor" in his decision. "I won't ignore that or say that wasn't a reason," he said. "It was obviously a business decision for one and an offer I couldn't ignore.

"The biggest thing for me joining is (the LIV) schedule is really appealing. I'll be able to spend



**BEDMINSTER:** A pin flag is displayed during the pro-am prior to the LIV Golf Invitational - Bedminster at Trump National Golf Club Bedminster in Bedminster, New Jersey. —AFP

more time at home in Australia and maybe have an event down there, as well. I haven't been able to do that, and to get that part of my life back was really appealing." Varner said in an Instagram post that the chance to join LIV Golf "is simply too good of a financial breakthrough for me to pass by." But the creation of the new circuit has sparked a bitter split with the established US PGA tour and a flurry of lawsuits. — AFP



**SHARJAH:** Bangladesh's Mohammad Saifuddin (center) celebrates with teammates after dismissing Afghanistan's captain Mohammad Nabi (right) during the Asia Cup Twenty20 international cricket Group B match between Afghanistan and Bangladesh on August 30, 2022. —AFP

overcoming the odds to compete in the 2010 World T20 in England, the Afghan team, which was awarded Test status in 2017, has managed to qualify for all the major international tournaments.

#### No surprises

The one-time nomads-many of whom were born or brought up in exile-have changed bases from Sharjah and Dubai to cities around India and Abu Dhabi. "From the last 15 years most of the times we have played in Dubai and Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, we know the conditions better," said Nabi. "Sometimes in Sharjah a low total is tough to chase, that's why in a low chase the batsmen didn't throw away early

wickets and at the end we targeted the bowlers and won the game."

Players including Rashid, Nabi and Mujeeb have sharpened their skills while playing cricket around the world including in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Nabi praised the 21-year-old Mujeeb, a spinner who rattled Bangladesh with an opening spell of 3-9 in his first three overs, for his bowling in the powerplay, the first six overs when only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle. "He has always bowled brilliantly in the first six overs," said Nabi. "He is a mystery bowler and bowls in the top leagues and against top opposition. He is a good spinner." —AFP



**NAVA:** Team Quick Step's Belgian rider Remco Evenepoel, wearing the overall leader's red jersey, crosses the finish line during the 9th stage of the 2022 La Vuelta cycling tour of Spain. —AFP

stages in this year's race.

The 156 remaining riders from the 184 who started out take on a flat run on Wednesday. But on Thursday the race intensifies with a relentless 20km climb after a flat run though the province of Malaga on the Costa del Sol. The biggest test still facing Evenepoel is the stage 15 run to Alto Hoya de la Mora in the Sierra Nevada, a pure mountain stage with over 40km of tough climbing in the Jaen province where sizzling temperatures are expected.

Alaphilippe is unlikely to be with him on the upper slopes, and it is there an alliance of fortune between the other contenders could see a series of attacks challenge the young Belgian. Even then one last test on stage 20 with a hard summit finish remains before the run into Madrid on stage 21. —AFP

## Eagles cut Olympic hurdler Allen as NFL rosters trimmed

**LOS ANGELES:** The Philadelphia Eagles released Olympic hurdler Devon Allen as NFL teams faced the Tuesday deadline to reduce their squads to 53 players for next week's start to the season. Allen, 27, was a wide receiver with the University of Oregon but had not played gridiron since 2016 as he focused on his athletics career. He was fifth in the 110m hurdles at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics and fourth at the Tokyo Games last year.

Allen clocked the third-fastest 110m hurdles time in history in June, but was disqualified from the final of the event at the World Championships in July. By then Allen was already looking forward to battling for a spot with the Eagles, and the club reportedly plans to re-sign him to the practice squad if he is not claimed on waivers. He made progress in the later stages of training camp and pulled in a 55-yard touchdown pass in a pre-season game against the Cleveland Browns.

"I'd like to give it a good go," Allen said of pursuing an NFL career in July. "It's not a one-and-done thing. This is a commitment from me. As long as I feel comfortable playing and feel like I can play good football, I'll play." Among other cuts on Tuesday, the Kansas City Chiefs released veteran wide receiver Josh Gordon. Gordon shot to prominence with Cleveland in 2013 when he led the league with 1,646 yards. He helped the New England Patriots to a Super Bowl, but multiple violations of the NFL substance abuse policy brought multiple suspensions. He joined the Chiefs in 2021 but ended up the odd man out with Kansas City adding newcomers JuJu Smith-Schuster, Marquez Valdes-Scantling and rookie Skyy Moore. —AFP



## Sports

# Dybala fires Roma to the top as Inter see off Cremonese

## Milan held to goalless draw at Sassuolo as takeover nears completion

**MILAN:** Paulo Dybala shot Roma top of Serie A on Tuesday with a brace which sank Monza 3-0 while Inter Milan are one point behind Jose Mourinho's side after their 3-1 home win over Cremonese. Argentina forward Dybala brought up his goal century in the Italian top flight after netting twice in the first 32 minutes at the Stadio Olimpico to put unbeaten Roma on 10 points from their first four games.

Roma, who also scored just after the hour through Roger Ibanez's header from a Lorenzo Pellegrini corner, are two points ahead of third-placed AC Milan after the champions were held to a drab goalless draw at Sassuolo. "I really wanted to get a goal, and thankfully it happened here in front of our fans so I'm really happy," Dybala told DAZN, who added that it was "too early to talk" of a title challenge.

When asked which was his favorite of his 100 goals in Italy's top flight, Dybala broke out into a wide grin and said: "The next one." Napoli and Lazio both have the chance to draw level with Roma in Wednesday's respective fixtures against Lecce and Sampdoria, while Atalanta and Torino-also both on seven points-face off on Thursday.

### Inter on Roma's heels

Dybala's goals came thanks to good work from Tammy Abraham, who sent the 28-year-old on his way to opening his Roma account in the 18th minute with a looping flick onto which his strike partner charged before rifling home. The pair linked up again for Roma's second, this time Abraham forcing a good save from Michele Di Gregorio before Dybala showed a more aggressive side to his game by beating the Monza defenders to the ball and bundling it home.

Inter are hot on Roma's heels after bouncing back from their weekend defeat at Lazio despite having to do without star striker Romelu Lukaku. Belgium's Lukaku will miss Saturday's Milan derby and most likely Inter's Champions League opener against Bayern Munich next week. But Joaquin Correa tapped the hosts ahead in the 12th minute and Nicolo Barella

doubled their lead with a stunning volley seven minutes before half-time. Substitute Lautaro Martinez drilled home his third of the season with 14 minutes remaining to make sure Cremonese, who scored late through David Okereke, stayed second-bottom and stuck on zero points.

### Maignan saves Milan

Milan had Mike Maignan to thank for their unbeaten record staying intact, the France goalkeeper diving brilliantly to his right to keep out Domenico Berardi's penalty midway through the first half. "We lacked a bit of lucidity and cutting edge in certain situations and that is what we need to work on tomorrow," Milan defender Simon Kjær told DAZN in the aftermath of his first appearance after nine months out with a serious knee injury. The 33-year-old lasted 79 minutes and will be hoping to stay fit for the World Cup starting in November in Qatar where his national side Denmark will face France, Tunisia and Australia in Group D. "It's been a lot of hard work and a lot of sacrifice. I'm very happy to get back on the pitch and lend a hand to my team," Kjær added.

Milan underwhelmed on their return to Reggio Emilia 100 days after winning the Scudetto there, while their sale to RedBird from fellow US investment fund Elliott Management is expected to formally go through by the end of the week. Among the investors backing RedBird's acquisition, according to a Financial Times report on Tuesday, are baseball's New York Yankees and Main Street Advisors, a California-based investment firm whose partners include the likes of basketball star LeBron James and rapper Drake.

### AC Milan held

AC Milan were held to a goalless draw at Sassuolo on Tuesday while the acquisition of the club by American investment fund RedBird drew near to completion. Champions Milan moved top of Serie A with the stalemate in Reggio Emilia, returning after 100 days to the site of their Scudetto triumph. But they



ROME: AS Roma's British forward Tammy Abraham (right) challenges Monza's Italian goalkeeper Michele Di Gregorio (Bottom) during the Italian Serie A football match between AS Roma and Monza on August 30, 2022. —AFP

have five teams lurking just one point behind them, including Roma who host Monza later on Tuesday.

Sassuolo sit 10th on five points but will be concerned over the condition of talisman Domenico Berardi, who missed a first-half penalty and was carried to the dressing rooms not long after half-time with what appeared to be a thigh injury. "We lacked a bit of lucidity and cutting edge in certain situations and that what we need to work on tomorrow," Milan defender Simon Kjær told DAZN in the aftermath of his first

appearance after nine months out with a serious knee injury. Milan's sale to RedBird from fellow US fund Elliott Management is expected to formally go through by the end of the week, with rumours circulating that baseball's New York Yankees will also take a stake in the club. Among the investors backing RedBird's acquisition according to a Financial Times report on Tuesday is Main Street Advisors, a California-based investment firm whose partners include the likes of basketball star LeBron James and rapper Drake. —AFP

## Kuwait's Premier League wrap-up

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Arabi and Salmiya football clubs met earlier than scheduled yesterday because Arabi will play an international match on Saturday. The match was different and was filled with action and excitement. Arabi player Ali Khalaf opened the score seven minutes into the match. In the 14th-minute, Arabi's Mohammad Al-Soula received a pass from Al-Sanousi and was able to score the second goal.

Arabi pressed harder in the first half, but was not able to get past Salmiya's goal keeper Abdelrahman Al-Fadhly. In the second half, Salmiya's players took control and it was not long before Salmiya's Alex Lima headed a goal. Arabi's Lamine Diakite scored the third goal but was disallowed after a VAR review. Salmiya was able to snatch a point as after Carlos Rivas scored the equalizer in the very last minute of the match. Salmiya now tops the table with four points, while Al-Arabi remained fifth - with two points. The match saw the referee Ahmad Al-Ali showing 12 yellow cards, and a red card.

This second round match raised hope that Zain football premier league may be better than previous one, after a scary start. In the first round, Champions Kuwait lose to the newly promoted Jahra team. Only 12 goals were scored in the first round. The supposedly weaker teams showed more resilience and were not afraid to attack. Arabi were lucky to grab draw, as Nasr's Mohammad Duham missed a penalty kick that could give his team a win. Qadisiya squeezed through, at the very end when player Patrick Malo scored the winning goal. Jahra's players were more disciplined than their opponents and kept their opponents at bay, bearing in mind that their goal keeper Bader Al-Saanoon had his own heroics.



### Zain Football Premier League Standings

Rank	Team	Played	Won	Tie	Loss	For	Against	Points
1.	Salmiya	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
2.	Kazma	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
3.	Qadisiya	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
4.	Jahra	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
5.	Arabi	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
6.	Nasr	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
7.	Sahel	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
8.	Tadhamon	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
9.	Kuwait	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
10.	Fahaheel	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

### Next Fixtures:

Thursday September 1st  
Sahel vs Nas 18:40  
Tadamon vs Kuwait 21:00

Friday September 2nd  
Fahaheel vs Qadisiya 18:40  
Jahra vs Kazma 21:00



## Classifieds

### CHANGE OF NAME

**I, MUFADDAL LIMDIWALA** currently holder of Indian passport No. T8280260 issued in Kuwait on 26-11-2019 and expiry on 25-11-2024, I want to

change my name to MUFADDAL ISMAIL LIMDIWALA. (#2049-31/8-2/9/22)

I Hatim Shabbir Bhai holder of Passport No. V6128276 have Changed my name to Hatim Shabbir Hamid Address: 33

Chandan Gardens NIBM Road Undri Kondhwa Pune Pune-411048 affidavit dated 4 Aug 2022 Notary Jagannath Gopinath Ghuge (C# 2048-30/8-1/9/22)

### 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

### REQUIRED

#### Male Executive Secretary

- At least 10 years of experience required
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English
- Proficiency in Word, Excel, Outlook etc.
- Short Hand typing will be an advantage

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## Southampton inflict fresh misery on 'soft' Chelsea 2-1

Leeds frustrate Everton • Fulham end Brighton's unbeaten start



SOUTHAMPTON: Southampton's Irish goalkeeper Gavin Bazunu (right) dives to make a save during the English Premier League football match between Southampton and Chelsea on August 30, 2022. — AFP

**LONDON:** Thomas Tuchel urged "soft" Chelsea to toughen up after a shock 2-1 defeat against Southampton plunged his spluttering team into Premier League turmoil on Tuesday. Tuchel's side blew the lead at St Mary's after Raheem Sterling put them ahead midway through the first half. England forward Sterling bagged his third goal in two games with a close-range strike in the 23rd minute.

But Chelsea had squandered a host of chances before Sterling's opener and, not for the first time in Tuchel's reign, their profligate finishing came back to haunt them. Romeo Lavia equalized in the 28th minute with his first goal for Southampton, curling home from the edge of the area after Chelsea failed to clear a corner. Adam Armstrong put Southampton ahead on the stroke of half-time as he took Romain Perraud's pass and drilled a deflected shot past Chelsea keeper Edouard Mendy.

Chelsea, beaten 3-0 at Leeds in their previous away fixture, were unable to muster a response as

they slipped to a second defeat from their last three games. "Soft, soft, soft defending. There is no need to give shots away. Just toughen up as a team and show a different mentality," Tuchel said. With just two wins from their first five matches, the Blues are already five points behind leaders Arsenal, who play their game in hand against Aston Villa on Wednesday.

Despite a significant close-season spending spree, which is set to continue with several more signings mooted before Thursday's transfer deadline, Chelsea are struggling to find any sustained momentum at present. While it is too early to write them out of the title race, Tuchel will be concerned by his team's latest sloppy display - with key mistakes at both ends of the pitch - having already criticized them publicly after the Leeds loss.

"It is too easy to put us off balance, to beat us, to confuse us. It is too easy. It happened against Leeds. We need to understand why and find solutions," Tuchel said. "We lose concentration, we lose

our plan and lose consistency. I don't understand why we have so many injuries. "In a match where you are in the lead there is no need to give away half-chances. To have no answers in the second half was disappointing."

### Everton frustrated

Everton's wait for a first win this season goes on after Luis Sinisterra's first league goal for Leeds earned a 1-1 draw at Elland Road. Frank Lampard's team went ahead when Alex Iwobi's incisive pass was flicked through the legs of Diego Llorente by Anthony Gordon, whose clinical finish capped a superb move in the 17th minute. But Colombia winger Sinisterra marked his first start for Jesse Marsch's men in memorable fashion with a composed finish from Brenden Aaronson's pass in the 55th minute.

Fulham ended Brighton's unbeaten start to the season with a 2-1 win at Craven Cottage that lifted

them to sixth place. Fourth-placed Brighton had won three of their first four games, but Marco Silva's promoted side broke the deadlock in the 48th minute through Aleksandar Mitrovic's fifth goal this season. Neeskens Kebano provided the pass and Serbia striker Mitrovic tapped in at the far post for his 100th league goal for the Cottagers. Fulham doubled their lead seven minutes later as Brighton defender Lewis Dunk diverted Andreas Pereira's cross into his own net.

Alexis Mac Allister converted a 60th minute penalty for Brighton after Pervis Estupinan fouled Bobby De Cordova-Reid. Yoane Wissa's late leveler rescued Brentford in their 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace. Wilfried Zaha showed why Arsenal and Chelsea have been linked with him as the Ivory Coast forward gave Palace the lead with a brilliant strike from the edge of the area after 59 minutes. But Wissa was left unmarked to equalize with a close-range header in the 88th minute. — AFP

## Raducanu out of US Open as Nadal survives scare

**NEW YORK:** Emma Raducanu became only the third defending champion to exit the US Open in the first round on Tuesday while four-time winner Rafael Nadal overcame an early scare against a player ranked 198 in the world. Raducanu, 19, slumped to a 6-3, 6-3 defeat to veteran French player Alize Cornet who is competing in a record 63rd consecutive Grand Slam. Nadal saw off Australian wildcard Rinky Hijikata 4-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-3 to register his 65th career win in New York. Also going through to a politically-charged clash were three-time runner-up Victoria Azarenka of Belarus and Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine.

Raducanu has struggled in the spotlight of being a Grand Slam winner, failing to get beyond the second round of any of the previous three majors in 2022. "In a way I'm happy because it's a clean slate. The target will be off my back," said the teenager. World number three Nadal, who is chasing a 23rd Grand Slam title and third of 2022, arrived at the tournament having played just one match since an abdominal injury forced him to forfeit his Wimbledon semi-final.

He next faces Fabio Fognini, the Italian who famously defeated him from two sets down in the third round in 2015. "I'm very happy to be here. It's a long time that I played here. I thought that maybe I'd never be back," said 36-year-old Nadal whose last appearance in New York saw him win the 2019 title.

Two-time champion Naomi Osaka was knocked out in the opening round for the first time in seven visits, losing 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to Australian Open runner-up Danielle Collins.

Four-time major winner and former world number one Osaka has won just twice on tour since April. "I tried as hard as I could. I wanted to play without my back being in pain. I only really started serving two days ago," said Osaka. Thursday's action is likely to be dominated by the clash between former world number one Azarenka and Kostyuk, a vocal critic of the presence of Russian and Belarusian players on tour. Only last week, Azarenka was axed from an exhibition on the eve of the US Open aimed at raising money for Ukraine.

Kostyuk, 20, said she turned down the chance to play in protest at the presence of Azarenka and the 33-year-old Belarusian was swiftly dumped from the event. Belarus is a close ally of Russia and has allowed Moscow to use its territory to launch attacks into Ukraine during the ongoing war. World number one and French Open champion Iga Swiatek eased past Italy's Jasmine Paolini 6-3, 6-0 in just 67 minutes. Victory was a relief for the 21-year-old Pole who had suffered early losses at warm-up events in Toronto and Cincinnati.

Swiatek next faces 2017 champion Sloane Stephens. Carlos Alcaraz, the 19-year-old world number four, was made to sweat by Sebastian Baez, winning the first two sets 7-5, 7-5 before the Argentine retired injured 0-2 down in the third. As the temperature soared beyond the 30-degree mark, 42-year-old Venus Williams and Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina were high profile casualties. After seeing Serena Williams stave off impending retirement by reaching the second round on Monday, big sister Venus was eyeing an 80th career win



NEW YORK: Emma Raducanu of Great Britain reacts against Alize Cornet of France in their Women's Singles First Round match on August 30, 2022. —AFP

at the tournament.

However, Venus, who first played the US Open in 1997, was defeated 6-1, 7-6 (7/5) by Belgium's Alison van Uytvanck. "Three letters is W-I-N. That's it. Very simple," said two-time champion Venus, now ranked 1,504, when asked to explain why she keeps playing. However, she remains without a victory since Wimbledon last year. Rybakina lost 6-4, 6-4 to French qualifier Clara Burel, ranked a lowly 131, on the back of 37 unforced errors. Britain's Cameron Norrie, the seventh seed, raced past France's Benoit Paire 6-0, 7-6 (7/1), 6-0. — AFP

## Osaka bundled out of US Open

**NEW YORK:** Naomi Osaka's hopes of a third US Open title were dashed in the first round Tuesday as the Japanese star slumped to a straight sets loss against Danielle Collins. Four-time Grand Slam champion Osaka, a winner at Flushing Meadows in 2018 and 2020, was beaten 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 by 19th-seeded American Collins in a battle of two big hitters. Collins, finalist at this year's Australian Open, now advances to a second round clash with Spain's Cristina Bucsa. The 28-year-old right-hander from Florida will head into that assignment brimming with confidence after showing great composure to put away Osaka on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

No one was more surprised at the victory than Collins, who had skipped tournaments in Silicon Valley and Toronto to allow herself time to recuperate from a neck injury. "I'm just really still kind of speechless in a way because I took the summer off," Collins said. "To kind of come out here, play a tough opponent first round, someone that's won two Grand Slams here, it's not easy. "Just really over the moon about being able to get through this first round because I don't think most players want to face Naomi in the first round."

Former world number one Osaka, whose ranking has fallen to 44 after an inconsistent year, made a smooth start with an early break to take a 3-0 lead.



NEW YORK: Japan's Naomi Osaka hits a return to USA's Danielle Collins during their 2022 US Open Tennis tournament. — AFP

But Collins battled back into the match and took the first set after winning a hard-fought tie-break.

With both players producing some booming groundstrokes, the second set was a question of who would blink first. Collins put herself on the threshold of victory after breaking Osaka for a 5-3 lead in the eighth game. Osaka, 24, came within touching distance of securing the break of serve needed to keep the match alive after taking a 15-40 lead in the ninth game. But Collins rallied back to deuce and then seized victory on her first match point when Osaka hit a return long. — AFP