



4 Divorcees, experts weigh in as Kuwait divorce rate rises



5 Putin will not attend Mikhail Gorbachev funeral: Kremlin



11 End of the road for New York's horse carriages?



15 Premier League clubs eye transfer record despite cost-of-living crisis



Candidates call for laws to fight rampant corruption

Assembly candidates rise to 264 after 42 new hopefuls register



KUWAIT: Candidate and former minister of public works Jenan Bushehri leaves the electoral department after registering for the upcoming National Assembly elections on Sept 1, 2022. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Forty-two new candidates signed up on Thursday to run for general elections scheduled for Sept 29, bringing the number of candidates after four days of registration to 264, including 15 females. One member of the dissolved Assembly, former MP Khalil Al-Saleh, was among the new candidates, raising the number of hopefuls from the dissolved house to 28. In addition, four former MPs from previous assemblies also registered to contest the polls. They include Askar Al-Enezi, Ali Al-Deqbasi, Dhaifallah Buramia and Abdullah Al-Kandari.

Enezi said after filing his nomination papers that the country is passing through a new era and a period of reforms. He described this as a unique transition. Deqbasi said that too much time has been wasted in disputes and now it is time to work.

Jenan Bushehri, a former minister who resigned after a grilling two years ago, said that the country is passing through a historic and exceptional period that began with the June 22 speech of HH the Amir and the

dissolution of the National Assembly, and eventually changing the voting method by adopting for the first time the use of civil IDs instead of electoral rolls. Bushehri called for legislation to fight rife corruption, charging "we have reached a stage where we see lawmakers backing legislation for corruption".

New candidate Wasm Al-Wasm said true reforms can be achieved through legislation and not only through talk. Some 800,000 eligible voters head to the ballots on Sept 29 to elect a new Assembly after HH the Amir dissolved the previous house over continued political disputes. Registration of candidates ends on Sept 7, while withdrawal from the race will continue until Sept 22.

The country is divided into five electoral constituencies, each electing 10 MPs for the 50-member Assembly. According to electoral lists, there are 408,000 female voters or 51.3 percent of total voters and 388,000 male voters, 48.7 percent. Candidates must be Kuwaiti citizens, male or female, of at least 30 years of age. They must have good conduct and must not have been convicted in a criminal case by court.

News in brief

Songs by Disney princesses at JACC

KUWAIT: For the first time in Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center will showcase Disney princesses in an unforgettable evening of songs, animation, and stories. Iconic songs from Disney films by Disney princesses Belle, Jasmine, Nala, Elsa and Anna will be performed. "Disney Princess, The Concert" will be held from Oct 19 to 22.

Saudi e-visa for GCC residents

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia announced new regulations that enable GCC residents the option to apply for an e-visa and allows residents of the UK, US and the EU to apply for a visa on arrival. Holders of a valid tourist or business visa from the UK, US or one of the Schengen countries can continue to be able to apply for a visa on arrival, provided it has been used at least once to enter the country that granted the visa.

Microsoft to create 36K jobs in Qatar

LUSAIL, Qatar: Technology giant Microsoft announced Wednesday it will create 36,000 jobs in Qatar to boost the Gulf state's efforts to move away from reliance on its oil and gas industry. Created with support from the Qatar government, the new cloud data center will be one of the US firm's biggest international projects. Microsoft Qatar general manager Lana Khalaf said it will help the state become a "digital hub for the region and the world". — AFP

Qatar to build blue ammonia plant

DOHA: Qatar announced Wednesday that it will build the world's biggest plant making blue ammonia - one of the new fuels being touted as a cleaner energy source. Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi said the plant would cost \$1.2 billion and start production in early 2026. State-owned Qatar Energy, a firm that is making huge profits from liquefied natural gas, said the plant would produce 1.2 million tons of ammonia a year "making it the world's largest such facility". — AFP

Tough new rules eyed for visit visas from next year

KUWAIT: The ministry of interior is considering stricter regulations for visit visas, the issuance of which is likely to resume from the beginning of next year. "A security team from the interior ministry

discussed with the Public Authority of Manpower and Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry salaries and specializations in preparation to issue new regulations for visit visas, including medical insurance of KD 1,500 to KD 2,000," sources told Kuwait Times.

"Visit visas will be issued for a duration of only a month. Overstaying will result in the sponsor paying a fine of up to KD 5,000 and will be banned from sponsoring anyone in the future. Moreover, the sponsor will pay for the overstayer's air ticket as well," sources said.

Meanwhile, a visit visa cannot be transferred to a work permit. Work permits will be issued according to required specializations and based on requests submitted by private companies in advance, the sources explained. They said the minimum salary of expats requesting visit visas for parents should be KD 700-800, and a salary of at least KD 500 for visit visas for dependents, while siblings and other relatives are not eligible for visit visas. Visit visa fees will be increased to match the prices in neighboring countries in the Gulf, the sources added.

Grinding crisis erodes Lebanon state sector

BEIRUT: Even as he battles Lebanon's summer heat without air-conditioning, judge Faysal Makki tries not to drink too much water because the toilets at the Justice Palace are broken. His printer still works, but if he wants to use it he needs to bring his own paper and ink cartridges because the ministry can no longer afford office supplies. State institutions have reached a state of disrepair that mirrors Lebanon's broader unravelling amid a political crisis and economic turmoil branded by the World Bank as one of the worst globally in modern times.

Even in the corridors of power, the paint is peeling and the lights are off. "There is no paper or ink or pens or envelopes or functioning bathrooms or even running water," Makki, who has been a judge for 21 years, told AFP. "I try not to drink water on the job so I won't have to go home or to the nearby offices of the syndicate of lawyers just to use the bathroom," he said.

Staff are sometimes trapped in a lift because of power cuts, or are forced to light their way down dark staircases with their mobile phone flashlights. Makki said one colleague broke her arm when she tripped and fell down the stairs. Ever more civil

Continued on Page 6



BEIRUT: A picture shows piled files awaiting disposition in Lebanon's Justice Palace on Aug 30, 2022. — AFP

China slams UN report on Xinjiang

BEIJING: China on Thursday accused the United Nations of becoming a "thug and accomplice of the US and the West" after the global body released a highly anticipated report warning crimes against humanity may have taken place in the Xinjiang region. The landmark report detailed a string of rights violations including torture and forced labor against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in the far-western region,

bringing the UN seal to many of the allegations long brought by activist groups, Western nations and the Uyghur community in exile.

However, it stopped short of calling China's actions a genocide - claims made by the United States and several Western lawmakers - leaving some activists "disappointed". "The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups... may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity," the report said. It said the world must now pay "urgent attention" to the situation in Xinjiang.

Beijing hit back hard against the report - over a year in the

Continued on Page 6



GENEVA: Outgoing UN High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet is greeted by the representatives during a farewell at the United Nations on Aug 30, 2022. — AFP

Local

KU commends Amir's speech for political and electoral reforms

KUWAIT: Kuwait University (KU) academics said that the speech of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivered on his behalf by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah outlines a clear roadmap for political and parliamentary reforms, ahead of the 2022 National Assembly elections.

Referring to the Amiri address, Dr Mohammad Al-Faili, Professor of Law at Kuwait University (KU), said

that the speech recognized the political roadblocks in the country and proposed solutions adding that steps such as voting using the Civil ID and inclusion of new districts in the five electoral constituencies were aimed at streamlining the voting process. In his speech, the Amir also stressed that the government would not interfere in matters related to the welfare and development of Kuwait and spoke about the measures in place to discourage any illegal election activities such as vote

buying and participation in primary elections.

Dr Majed Al-Mutairi, Professor of Social Sciences, welcomed the address as a positive effort to encourage the citizens and protect the interests of the constitution and the country. He added that the country was heading into a new phase that required vigilance as well as a keen interest in pursuing progress and development, affirming that this could be achieved by voting for the right representative to the parliament. Dr Ahmad Al-

Shareef, Professor of Arts, said that the speech called for the elections to be a national effort to elect the best candidates to the parliament.

Referring to the upfront nature of the address, Dr Khodhr Al-Baroun, Professor of Psychology, noted that the tone appealed to the public, adding that the executive and legislative authorities now had the opportunity to rectify the political situation in the country.

MOI stresses on electoral propriety

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Information (MOI) highlighted the need to adhere to proper campaigning and electoral procedures in the upcoming parliamentary elections, so as to reflect a positive image about Kuwait and its political affairs.

Speaking about coverage plans for the elections, Mohammad bin Naji, Acting Undersecretary, MOI added that the ministry would employ traditional as well as digital mediums to cover the elections. He said that the plans were set up as three different phases and were finalized prior to the issue of the Amiri decree for elections.

While the first phase focused on interviews with experts, Bin Naji said that the second phase highlighted the importance of the upcoming elections through the ministry's official campaign slogan- 'correcting the course'.

He said that the final stage would involve election day coverage and updates for viewers, listeners and

followers-voting, counting of ballots and announcements of results adding that special programs on social media were also planned to raise awareness about the significance of voting and selection of the right representative to parliament. Every candidate would be given two-minutes air time to campaign for their views and plans which has to take place soon after the closure of the candidacy registration period and to be continued until the day before the elections. Facilities would also be set up for journalists for the coverage of elections including entry to the ballot stations while the ministry also plans to set up a press center for local and foreign journalists on Sept 26 to provide logistic support for media personnel, added Bin Naji. —KUNA



Mohammad bin Naji

GHC releases report on medical examinations

KUWAIT: The Gulf Health Council (GHC) has released a regional medical report for the general public highlighting the importance of regular medical examinations and routine hospital visits for all ages, with information such as regular blood check-ups and vaccination schedules.

The GHC report states that routine examination discovers illnesses that are not usually symptomatic such as high blood pressure and cholesterol levels based on age group, gender and medical history. The report also explains that there is a difference between routine checkups, medical diagnosis and continuous care.

According to the report, routine checkups are done for healthy individuals, while a medical diagnosis is done to find out what a patient is already suffering from, in order to find a treatment.



Some of the findings from the report were — 80 percent of elderly patients suffer from at least one terminal illness; 95 percent of breast cancer patients have been cured because they were diagnosed earlier; while 46 percent of patients do not know they suffer from high blood pressure until they go to the doctor; 90 percent of colon cancer patients who discover their illness early live longer; 90 percent of patients who discovered their cervical cancer earlier are easier to receive treatment; and 45 percent of cardiac arrests are silent attacks.



KUWAIT: Acting undersecretary at Information Ministry Mohammad bin Naji visits Elections Affairs Headquarters. — KUNA

PM meets Kuwaiti information minister over ties, cooperation

AMMAN: Jordanian Prime Minister Bisher Khasawneh on Thursday met Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, who is visiting the kingdom to head his country's delegation participating in the 21st Amman International Book Fair. During the meeting, which was attended by Minister of State for Media Affairs, Faisal Shboul, Minister of Culture, Haifa Najjar, and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan, Aziz Daihani, Khasawneh stressed the "deep-rooted, distinguished and brotherly" Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations in all fields.

The PM also said bilateral relations are a model, thanks to attention paid from King Abdullah II and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Khasawneh referred to the two countries' shared views on Arab, regional and international issues, especially their "firm, fixed and principled" stance towards centrality of Palestinian cause.

The PM said this position reflects the two coun-

tries' support for the legitimate Palestinian right to establish an independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty on the June 4, 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the framework of the two-state solution that enjoys international community's full unanimity to ensure the region's security and stability.

Hailing the two countries' existing development cooperation, he said Kuwaiti investments, which ranks top place among Arab investments in Jordan, receives appreciation, adding that the Kingdom welcomes more Kuwaiti investments in many vital sectors. The PM also said that the Kuwaiti students enrolled at Jordanian universities and institutions receive attention and care from the Jordanian government and its people.

For his part, the Kuwaiti minister stressed the "historic" bilateral relations and the keenness to strengthen them to serve common interests. The minister also expressed happiness to take part in 21st Amman International Book Fair and to be its honor guest, which brings together hundreds of publishing houses. In addition, Mutairi stressed media outlets' positive role in the two countries, which reflect their "fraternal" relations at the official and popular levels. Lauding Jordanian community's contributions to the process of Kuwait's development, he commended attention paid to Kuwaiti students enrolled at Jordan's universities.



AMMAN: Jordanian Prime Minister Bisher Khasawneh with met Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi.

Al-Mutairi visits Amman Book Fair

AMMAN: Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth, thanked the honoring of Kuwait, at the 21st Amman International Book Fair, saying it was reflective of the deep-rooted bilateral relations held between the two countries.

Speaking at the opening day of the book fair which is to be held until Sept 10, under the title 'Jerusalem-capital of Palestine', the minister said the event would provide a platform for publishers around the globe, including Kuwait, to share their cultural output.

Al-Mutairi, who is heading a Kuwaiti delegation to the book fair, affirmed that the Palestinian issue was central to the State of Kuwait as well as to the Arab and Islamic world. "Eastern Jerusalem will forever remain the capital of the free and independent state of Palestine and that is unnegotiable," added the Kuwaiti minister.

Al-Mutairi also commended the decision to choose Jordanian author Waleed Saif as a primary figure of the book fair for his significant contribution to the world of Arab literature. On the Kuwaiti pavilion, he said that various publishers from government and private companies were partaking in the current event, adding that participants should gain experience and apply what they learnt for the



AMMAN: Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth at the 21st Amman International Book Fair — KUNA

upcoming 45th Kuwait international book fair to be held in Nov 2022.

Haifa Al-Najjar, Jordanian Minister of Culture also appreciated Kuwait as an honorary guest at the Amman International Book Fair, saying that it displayed the strength of mutual ties between the two countries.

On the occasion of the

60th
1961-2021
ANNIVERSARY



Subscribe or renew your subscription
KD 20 instead of KD 30 for 1 year

For individuals only

Tel: 24833199 ext: 353-355-356



kuwaittimes.com

Local

Divorcees, experts weigh in as Kuwait divorce rate rises

‘It is better to leave to live than to die trying to stay’

By Chidi Emmanuel and Sahar Moussa

KUWAIT: Leaning in the back of a car near the Family Court in Mahboula, Sylvia Thomas could not contain her emotions as she narrated her ordeal. “If anyone could have told me I will end up like this, I wouldn’t have believed them. I spent a lot of money to bring him here (in Kuwait). As soon as he started working, things went from bad to worse. The abuses and insults were terrible,” Sylvia, an African expat, told Kuwait Times. When asked why she did not report her husband to the police, she said: “I really don’t want him to be in trouble. They might jail or deport him. Although I still love him, I can no longer live with him. That’s why we are filing for divorce”.

While Sylvia cited abuses as the cause of breakup, Lara, a 35-year-old Kuwaiti woman, cited family interference as the main factor. Lara, who got married at 24, divorced four years ago. She was married to her cousin and has a six-year-old daughter. “I refused to drag him to court, because my parents were divorced and they fought a lot. That affected me and my siblings and I don’t want my daughter to face what I went through,” she said. “The reasons for the divorce were family interference (especially from his mom), miscommunication and stubbornness. I tried hard to fix the problems but couldn’t,” Lara added.

Divorce rate

Kuwait, in 2021, recorded the highest rates of marriage and divorce. There was a 28.9 percent increase in the marriage rate with a corresponding 13.7 percent increase in the divorce rate - the highest in five years. Social scientists and scholars have long studied what leads to divorce. Some have looked at easily measured factors that make divorce more likely, such as the age when people get married. But other researchers have gone right to the source - asking divorced people why their marriages ended.

According to Kuwaiti lawyer Saud Akil Alhalfi, divorce cases are rising after the implementation of the domestic violence law (in 2020). “Domestic violence is a huge problem in Kuwait. There is a high number of domestic violence cases filed in court.



The justice ministry’s recent report has shown a significant increase in divorce cases,” he said.

“There are many reasons why married couples divorce. These include lack of commitment, infidelity, conflicts of interest, marrying too young, financial problems and domestic violence among others. People are more likely to have problems in their marriages when there is lack of understanding, trust issues, communication problems, etc. These issues can be exacerbated,” Hamzat Obodo, a sociologist, told Kuwait Times.

Incompatibility

He highlighted “incompatibility” as the main reason why couples have irreconcilable differences. “Nowadays, people marry for different reasons. Some people marry to please their families and friends, while others marry due to financial reasons. Many married couples are not compatible. They lack shared values, intimacy and friendship. These

make them grow apart, drift apart and finally break up. Most successful marriages are based on a core of shared interests, priorities and values,” he added.

On the other hand, Pastor Millicent E emphasized on the need for couples to communicate effectively. “Various studies have cited poor communication as one of the reasons for divorce. These include arguing too much - and not being able to talk to each other adequately. Problem shared is half solved. We should learn how to communicate with each other more effectively, perhaps through couple therapy,” she advised.

Some divorcees have mixed feelings over their actions. Some feel freer and happier, while others regret the steps they took. Some victims of physical, mental and verbal abuse said they would not want to remarry again because of what they went through. “I was abused. And I cannot say I am happier now - I actually have mixed feelings about it. As a woman, I would like to live with my husband for the rest of my life and build a family together,

but it is better to leave to live than to die trying to stay,” Sylvia said.

“Various studies have listed domestic violence as an important reason for divorce. Women and men tend to have very different views about domestic abuse as a cause of divorce. Abuse victims are more likely to see behavior as the cause of divorce. Many couples suffer different forms of abuse, but physical attacks shouldn’t be tolerated,” Millicent said.

For Layla, a 52-year-old Kuwaiti woman who got married at 19, it is better to stay unmarried than to marry a violent man. “I got divorced 23 years ago. I have two boys and a girl. My ex-husband is a very jealous man and we had many problems and irreconcilable differences. I was subjected to verbal and physical abuse. But I did get married again,” Layla told Kuwait Times.

Social media

A recent study has found a correlation between relationship health and social media use. It states that some people spend more time online than paying attention to their spouses. The study, published in the Journal of Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking, found that people who use Facebook more than once an hour are more likely to “experience Facebook-related conflict with their romantic partners”. That conflict could then lead to a breakup or divorce.

More so, last June, the Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies in cooperation with Kuwait University conducted a field study to survey the opinion of Kuwaiti citizens on the phenomenon of divorce. The study found the leading causes of divorce include weakness of faith, parental interference, lack of responsibility, financial problems, cheating and lack of trust between spouses, uncomfortable residence, beatings and violence, personal status law and sexual problems.

The study, conducted by Dr Faisal Bouslaib, Professor of Political Science, included 887 male and female citizens. It recommended treatment for social media addiction for spouses, strengthening their faith in religion, not allowing anyone to interfere in their marital life and providing family counseling clinics, among others.

Research report finds significant gender pay differences in Kuwait

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Women in Kuwait have long held impressive positions across all sectors and have also successfully gained political and voting rights in the country. However, women’s issues have consistently been raised in the country owing to perceptual differences and lack of adequate legal support.



Asrar Hayat

A pressing issue that has been highlighted by activists has been the differences in salaries between working men and women, across both the government and private sectors in Kuwait.

According to a weekly economic report released by Al-Shall Consulting Company, the average monthly wage in 2021 for male Kuwaiti workers in the government sector is KD1,874, while the average salary for Kuwaiti women in the government sector for the same year amounted to KD1,312- a 42.9% increase in salaries received by men in the country.

While in the private sector, the average monthly wage for Kuwaiti males amounted to be KD1,529 in 2021, the average salary for Kuwaiti females was only KD974 for the same year showing an almost 56.9 percent increase in the income received by Kuwaiti men.

In an exclusive with Kuwait times, Kuwaiti social activist and entrepreneur, Asrar Hayat explained that from an official and legal point of view, the average salary for men and women in Kuwait in the government sector is deemed to be equal with no obvious difference. Hayat, however, identified two main areas of concern that created the differences in salaries, saying “the allowances are always given to the men, such as the housing and children while these are not given to the women.”

“Despite one of the neighboring GCC countries giving women an equal stance and pay as men in government jobs, we do not demand that the matter be applied in exactly the same way in Kuwait as well, but at least the allowance should be paid in half”, she said.

“Women now bear equal responsibilities like men, unlike the previous years. Secondly, when divorce cases occur between spouses, there are many instances, where men do not abide by their financial duties towards his wife, resulting in creating a financial burden on the woman who bears the expenses of her family alone, until a ruling is issued in her favor.”

Hayat added that men get job appointments and promotions faster than women owing to a perceptual challenge that exists in the country due to the patriarchal societal culture where men are preferred to women in terms of job advantages and facilities.

Regarding the significance of legislative backing, Hayat said, “We just demand one legislation, which is to divide the allowances between men and women equally,” adding, “We have a problem not only with legislation, we need a change in the societal perception through research and developmental studies as well as governmental support that contribute towards achieving an equal status for women.”

“Professional equality must be legally obtained for women in Kuwait by allocating quotas for women on boards of directors and in leadership positions. For example, European countries allocate 30 percent quotas for women in boards of directors, electoral and administrative positions, in addition to one of the Gulf countries as well, therefore, in order to change this culture, there must be government intervention,” explained Hayat.

Outlining the importance of education in changing the culture of society to be more supportive of women, Hayat said, “Education plays a major role in changing the culture—we see our educational curriculum filled with content that supports the idea that women are expected to only raise children and do household chores, and the man is the one who works and spends for the house.”

“A woman holds a very important position in our society, even the housewife, her role is crucial in supporting the economy and for the development of our country, therefore, women should not be stereotyped.”

the country’s desire to work in close cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Speaking after submitting his credentials to WTO as a permanent representative, Ambassador Al-Hain added that the talks with Dr Ngozi Iweala, Director-General of WTO, were directed towards developing closer ties between Kuwait and the organization over topics of mutual interest.

New Kuwaiti envoys submit credentials

KUWAIT: Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafiri, Kuwait’s Ambassador to Sudan, submitted his credentials to General Abdul-Fattah Al-Burhan, head of the interim sovereign council at the presidential palace in the Sudanese capital.

Ambassador Al-Dhafiri said in a statement that he conveyed to Gen. Burhan greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The envoy said that he assured Gen. Burhan of Kuwait’s keenness on boosting bilateral relations and cooperation, emphasizing on closer coordination between Kuwait and Khartoum. The council chairperson also requested that his greetings be conveyed to the Amir and Crown Prince, welcoming Al-Dhafiri in Sudan and wishing him success.



Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafiri, Kuwait’s Ambassador to Sudan, submits his credentials to General Abdul-Fattah Al-Burhan.



Ali Al-Dhafiri, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Netherlands, submits his credentials to King Willem Alexander.

Meanwhile, Ali Al-Dhafiri, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Netherlands, has presented his credentials to King Willem Alexander. Ambassador Al-Dhafiri was also accompanied by diplomats Jaber Al-Sabah, Hala Al-Gharaballi and Fawaz Al-Rashidi during the credentials’ presentation ceremony, stated Kuwait’s embassy in The Hague. During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to develop bilateral relations, emphasizing on the need to work towards achieving common ground on regional and international issues.

Faisal Al-Adwani, Kuwait’s Ambassador to Bangladesh, also submitted a copy of his credentials to Muhammad Abdul Hamid, President of Bangladesh in an official protocol ceremony.

Ambassador Al-Adwani conveyed to the President, the greetings of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and their wishes to the Bangladeshi people for more progress and prosperity. Both sides reiterated on their countries’ friendly mutual relations and expressed their desire to further strengthen the partnership between both countries across all sectors.



Faisal Al-Adwani, Kuwait’s Ambassador to Bangladesh, submits a copy of his credentials to Muhammad Abdul Hamid, President of Bangladesh. — KUNA photos

Kuwait keen to work with WTO

GENEVA: Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain, Kuwait’s permanent representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, expressed

Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 353/3561
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

News in brief

18 arrested for participating in illegal demonstrations

KUWAIT: The public prosecution has detained 14 Kuwaitis and bedoons, along with four others who were previously detained for participating in illegal demonstrations. The arrests were made following orders from the public prosecution, three days ago, to detain 17 citizens and four others. "The prosecution is currently awaiting the judgement on three more persons under the same charge," sources revealed to Kuwait Times. "Despite the interior ministry's warning to demonstrators to end their protests, the accused persons continued their protests, after which they were detained and transferred to the public prosecution," sources said.

Fine for smuggling subsidized food tripled

KUWAIT: Because of the rising smuggling of subsidized (tamween) foodstuff, fines have been tripled for any violations. "We noticed an increase in smuggling attempts of tamween products and based on instructions by Minister of Commerce and Industry Fahad Al-Shuraian, the fines for such violations have been tripled," said the acting manager of Kuwait Customs Sulaiman Al-Fahad. He also expressed his appreciation for all the efforts made by the employees of Kuwait Customs to safeguard national security.

PAM work ban in open spaces at noon ends

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower announced the end of a ban on working in outdoor spaces from 11 am to 4 pm, that was in place from June to August. "Inspection campaigns ensured that the regulations regarding jobs that require hard work in open spaces were followed, with 603 violations found at 452 locations that were inspected. Upon reinspection, none of the locations repeated their violations. Thirty complaints were also received," acting manager of PAM Iman Al-Ansari announced. "The inspection squads first issue a warning, then revisit the locations. If the violations persist, employers are fined KD 100 to KD 200. Their file is suspended and sent to the general management of investigations to proceed with legal procedures," she added.



Iman Al-Ansari

Kuwait youth minister forms sports legal panel

KUWAIT: Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, has formed a legal panel to examine issues pertaining to sports in the country. While the committee would primarily be tasked with revising documents and files concerning land privatization and contracts between Public Authority for Sports (PAS) and other public departments, the panel would also look into lawsuits, legal verdicts and complaints and explain the legality of procedures for sports clubs, added Meshaal Al-Hadbah, official spokesperson of PAS.

Interior minister calls for stricter customs checks

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled highlighted the importance of working in cooperation with other sectors, across ministries, to counter the dangers of illegal substances smuggled to Kuwait. "It is important that we

primarily focus our attention on the illicit smuggling of drugs, which is dangerous for our youth," he said.

Sheikh Talal inspected the systems in place at the airport customs and appreciated the efforts put in by officials at the customs department and the ministry in the interests of the country. He stressed everyone should increase vigilance for the security of the country. "You are the bulwark to protect the homeland and citizens from the scourge of drugs," he told the officers. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah inspects Kuwait International Airport's air cargo terminal. —KUNA

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: People cool off at the beach near Kuwait Towers. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

KFH participates in NUKS Academic Opportunities Fair

KUWAIT: Under the attendance and patronage of Kuwait University President Dr Yousef Al-Roumi, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the Academic Opportunities Fair as part of its strategic partnership with the New Comers Club (NCC) of the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) in furtherance of its strategy aimed at supporting young national competencies and the educational process, and achieving social responsibility towards the welfare of students and the advancement of education and youth.

KFH's participation stems from the bank's constant keenness to participate in academic fairs to support the young national competencies and contribute to achieving their goals, find ways to open horizons towards more success, in addition to helping in creativity and scientific development, and to motivate young people to move forward and plan a successful future.

Held at Al-Shaheed Park, the three-day exhibition was an opportunity for high school graduates to have all the information and guidance on universities admissions outside and inside Kuwait, which would help them decide their academic future. The exhibition was attended by a large number of students who expressed their thanks to KFH for its continuous support and contributions in building better future that meet their aspirations.

KFH devotes great attention to the youth segment by supporting different activities addressed



KUWAIT: Kuwait University President Dr Yousef Al-Roumi and KFH representatives at the exhibition.

to students and graduates in helping them for a brighter future and direct their potentials into the right educational path.

KFH is always keen to support government-sponsored events and activities, as they aim to

serve students and help them determine the right educational path and provide them with the opportunity to choose between more than one alternative in line with their abilities and future aspirations within a framework of awareness.

13 KAC flights to Doha in early stages of FIFA World Cup

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways announced on Thursday that it would operate 13 daily flights to the Qatari capital Doha to allow football fans to experience the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The number of flights will decrease as the tournament progresses. Kuwait Airways CEO Maen Razouqi said in a press statement that Kuwait Airways Holidays offices and the 171 call center would offer packages that would include tickets for the matches and flights starting from KD 200 (around \$649).

He added that after booking the tickets and flights, clients should enter these details into the Qatari Hayya application to enable them to attend matches. He revealed that Qatar would be handling transportation of fans to and from the venues free of charge through the Hayya application. The FIFA World Cup organizing committee had specified regulations concerning luggage, therefore, travelers



Kuwait Airways CEO Maen Razouqi

are advised to bring only carry-on baggage during their trip, he noted.

Economy class travelers are allowed to carry luggage not exceeding 7 kg, while business and first class are allowed to carry bags not exceeding 10 and 15 kg respectively. Those who have extended stay in Qatar are allowed to bring suitable amount of luggage and can book their tickets on regular flights between Kuwait and Doha, Razouqi said. —KUNA

Kuwait hopes Arab council resolutions will enhance joint action

CAIRO: Kuwait on Thursday expressed hope that resolutions issued by the freshly concluded meeting of the Arab Economic and Social Council would contribute to boosting joint Arab action at the social and economic levels. This came in a statement by the acting assistant finance minister, Talal Al-Nimsh, to KUNA after end of the council 110th session. He noted necessity of preparing for the socioeconomic file that would be presented at the 31st session of the Arab summit, adding that conferees examined recommendations that were approved as resolutions.

Among these resolutions was a report by the Arab League Secretary General on implementation of the 109th council session, social and economic activities by the secretariat general between the 109th and 110th sessions and measures that had been taken to implement the council resolutions in this respect. Moreover, they discussed preparations of the Arab League socioeconomic file, a report regarding implementation of the fourth Arab economic summit held in Lebanon in January 2019 and preparations for the fifth summit to be held at this level.

Nimsh indicated that the participants in the meeting also discussed issues concerning the great Arab trade zone, the Arab Customs Union, investments in Arab states and aid programs for boosting inter-Arab trade. Kuwait took part in the council meeting with a delegation headed by Nimsh and included officials from the ministries of finance, commerce and industry. —KUNA



Wife of Malaysia's ex-leader convicted of corruption

Biden heads to Philadelphia to condemn Trump supporters

Page 6

Page 7



ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi speaks to media in Zaporizhzhia, as UN inspectors prepare to head to the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine. —AFP

UN team pushes ahead with risky mission

'It is high time to stop playing with fire'

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine: UN inspectors pressed on towards a Russian-held nuclear plant in southern Ukraine Thursday despite an early shelling attack, as the ICRC warned the consequences of a strike on the facility could be "catastrophic". As the 14-strong team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) left for the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, Ukraine said Russian troops had shelled the area, forcing the closure of one of its six reactors.

Energoatom, Ukraine's nuclear agency, said it was "the second time in 10 days" that shelling had forced the closure of a reactor. The area around the plant-Europe's largest nuclear facility-has suffered repeated shelling, with both sides accusing the other of responsibility, sparking global concern over the risk of an accident.

"It is high time to stop playing with fire and instead take concrete measures to protect this facility... from any military operations," ICRC chief Robert Mardini told reporters in Kyiv. "The slightest miscalculation could trigger devastation that we will regret for decades."

Energoatom said the plant's emergency protection system kicked in shortly before 5:00 am (0200 GMT) "due to another (Russian) mortar shelling" and that "operating power unit five was shut down". But the backup power supply "was damaged" in the attack, it said. After Russian forces seized the plant on March 4, Energoatom shut two of the reactors, followed by a third after shelling on August 5. With a fourth in repairs, Thursday's incident means only

one of the six is functioning.

'The stakes are immense'

Mardini said it was "encouraging" that the IAEA team was en route to inspect the plant because the stakes were "immense". "When hazardous sites become battlegrounds, the consequences for millions of people and the environment can be catastrophic and last many years," he said.



We have a very important mission to accomplish

On leaving Zaporizhzhia, IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said his team had been updated about the shelling but would press on anyway. "We are not stopping," he vowed, despite being aware that in crossing the frontline into Russian-held territory, there was a security "grey area... where the risks are significant". "We have to proceed with this. We have a very important mission to accomplish." By early afternoon, the team had crossed into the grey

zone after waiting for "several hours at a checkpoint" for permission to cross, Ukraine's Interfax news agency reported, saying "gunfire could be heard" along the road.

Shelling, saboteurs and back-to-school

Earlier, Energodar Mayor Dmytro Orlov said his town had come under sustained attack at dawn on Thursday, saying Russian troops had fired "mortars and used automatic weapons and rockets". Energodar town is located next to the plant on the southern banks of the Dnipro River.

But Moscow accused Kyiv of smuggling in up to 60 military "saboteurs", saying they reached the area near the plant just after dawn and that Russian troops had taken "measures to annihilate the enemy". Grossi on Wednesday said the IAEA would seek to establish a "permanent presence" at the plant to avoid a nuclear disaster at the facility which is located on the frontline of the fighting.

"My mission is... to prevent a nuclear accident and preserve the largest nuclear power plant in Europe," he said. Ukraine has accused Russia of deploying hundreds of soldiers and storing ammunition at the plant.

Both Moscow and Kyiv have accused each other of staging "provocations" aimed at disrupting the work of the IAEA mission. Meanwhile, Ukrainian troops pressed ahead with a counteroffensive in the nearby southern region of Kherson that began on Monday to retake areas seized by Russian forces at

the start of the invasion.

In its morning update, the presidency said "heavy explosions continued for the last 24 hours" across Kherson region, while five people had been killed and 12 others wounded in fighting in the eastern Donetsk region.

Despite the conflict, now in its seventh month, September 1 marked the start of a new school year for children across Ukraine. Figures from Ukraine's education ministry show 2,199 educational institutions have been damaged in the fighting, with 225 of them completely destroyed.

Just over half of the 23,000 schools surveyed by the ministry are equipped with bomb shelters, meaning they can physically reopen, while those without will only offer online learning. But in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second city, all learning will be online due to constant Russian shelling, its mayor said last month, with a British charity charging Thursday that dozens of its schools had been "targeted".

An investigation by the Centre for Information Resilience found 41 institutions had been "partially or completely destroyed" in the northeastern city, with researchers finding the shelling "was targeted, rather than a by-product of indiscriminate attacks on civilian infrastructure". Elsewhere, the foreign ministry in London said a British medic volunteering in Ukraine had died in the fighting on August 24 but gave no further details on the circumstances of his death. —AFP

Putin will not attend Mikhail Gorbachev funeral

MOSCOW, Russia: Russian President Vladimir Putin will not attend the funeral of the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev due to scheduling issues, his spokesman said on Thursday. "The farewell ceremony and funeral will take place on September 3 but unfortunately the president's work schedule will not allow him (to attend)," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Peskov said that Putin had paid his last respects to Gorbachev at the hospital where he died on Tuesday, aged 91. Russian state TV showed Putin placing a bouquet of red roses near Gorbachev's open casket in a big empty hall before pausing for a moment of silence.

Putin bowed his head, briefly laid his hand on the casket then made the sign of the cross. Gorbachev's funeral ceremony will be held on Saturday in the Moscow Hall of Columns, historically used for funeral services of high officials, including Joseph Stalin in 1953.

The same day, Gorbachev will be buried at the prestigious Novodevichy cemetery in Moscow next to his wife Raisa, who died in 1999. Peskov said that there will be "elements of a state funeral" for Gorbachev, including a guard of honour, and that the ceremony will be organised with the help of the state.

Gorbachev changed the course of history by triggering the demise of the Soviet Union and was one of the great figures of the 20th century. 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 lionised in the West, they earned him the scorn of many Russians after the country was plunged into economic chaos and saw its interna-



BERLIN, Germany: Berlin's Mayor Franziska Giffey signs a book of condolences to late former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev at the City Hall in Berlin on September 1, 2022. —AFP

tional influence decline.

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 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. Gorbachev's death triggered an outpouring of tributes from the West but reaction was muted in Russia, where many blamed him for the loss of the country's status as a global superpower.

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".

"He led our country during a period of complex, dramatic changes, large-scale foreign policy, economic and social challenges," Putin added. —AFP

Taiwan shoots down 'civilian' drone over islet off China

TAIPEI, Taiwan: Taiwanese soldiers on a tiny islet just off China's mainland shot down an unidentified commercial drone on Thursday as a local tycoon vowed to train millions of "civilian warriors" to defend the island.

It is the first time Taiwanese forces have downed a drone, and it comes at a time when tensions between the two neighbours are at their highest in decades following a visit to Taipei last month by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Taiwan's 23 million people live under constant threat of invasion by China, which claims the self-ruled democratic island as part of its territory to be taken one day-by force if necessary. Beijing staged unprecedented military drills last month in response to Pelosi's trip.

Taiwan has also reported a sudden spate of drone incursions by small commercially-available devices in recent weeks. The military said on Thursday that a civilian drone had entered a "restricted zone" above Shiyu Islet, a small rock that lies between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan's Kinmen islands.

"The stationed troops followed procedures to warn off the drone but to no avail. The drone was shot down in defensive fire," the defence ministry said. Kinmen lies just a few miles off China's coast-line and Taiwan has previously reported small drones hovering over its military outposts there.

Videos have circulated on both Taiwanese and Chinese social media, with one showing Taiwanese soldiers hurling rocks at a drone to drive it away. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen warned this week that the military might be forced to resort to live fire if the drones ignored warnings to leave.

China has played down the incursions, with for-

eign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian saying Monday they were not "anything worth making a fuss about" as the drones were "flying around Chinese territory".

Tycoon's 'warrior' donation

Beijing's sabre-rattling towards Taiwan has ramped up under President Xi Jinping, China's most assertive leader in a generation. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has also raised questions about whether China might follow suit in Taiwan-and whether the island is equipped to defend itself.

On Thursday, a colourful Taiwanese tycoon came up with his own proposal to boost Taiwan's defence. Robert Tsao, who made his fortune in Taiwan's semiconductor industry, said he would donate TW\$1 billion (\$33 million) of his own money to help train some three million "civilian warriors" and 300,000 sharpshooters who could work alongside the military in the event of an invasion.

Tsao-who founded major microchip maker United Microelectronics Corp but no longer holds any position in the company-portrayed the risk posed by China as existential. "The Chinese Communist Party's threat to Taiwan is growing and the fight against (it) stands for freedom against slavery, democracy against authoritarianism and civilised against barbaric," the 75-year-old said.

Taiwan remains massively outgunned, with just 88,000 ground forces compared to China's one million troops, according to Pentagon estimates. American and Taiwanese strategists have increasingly pushed Taipei to adopt a "porcupine" strategy of asymmetric warfare, which would include training civilians to fight.

During last month's drills China sent warships, missiles and fighter jets into the waters and skies around Taiwan, its largest and most aggressive exercises since the mid-1990s. But it is not clear who is flying the drones that have buzzed around the island. Given Kinmen's close proximity to the Chinese mainland, it is possible that commercial drones operated by civilians could cover the short distance. —AFP

International

As US midterms loom, Biden heads to Philadelphia to condemn Trump supporters

79-year-old leader will mince no words in his speech attacking his opponents

WASHINGTON, United States: The symbolism is not lost on the White House: US President Joe Biden headed Thursday to Philadelphia, the cradle of American statehood, to deliver a rare primetime speech on what he calls "the battle for the soul of the nation."

His speech, set for 8:00 pm local time (0000 GMT), will take place near the building where the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution were adopted more than two centuries ago. Pennsylvania, the eastern US state that includes Philadelphia, may also prove key to the crucial midterms elections in November. The Democratic president will visit the state three times this week alone.

White House spokesman Karine Jean-Pierre has already signaled that the 79-year-old leader will mince no words in his speech attacking his opponents. "The president thinks that there is an extremist threat to our democracy," she told reporters Wednesday.

decide to run for president.

"We are living through a battle for the soul of this nation," Biden wrote then. After his election in 2020, the veteran politician initially planned to wage this battle through dialogue with moderate Republican lawmakers, and through economic and social policies aimed at the middle class. But the rhetoric of reconciliation has died down, as Biden faced a Republican party still influenced by Trump.



"They just don't respect the rule of law"

'MAGA'

And the threat has a name: "MAGA" or "ultra-MAGA" Republicans who embrace former president Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" ideology. "They just don't respect the rule of law," said Jean-Pierre before she called out several Republican officials and lawmakers by name for urging violence against public figures, a move that is highly unusual for a White House press briefing.

"The president believes, which is a reason to have this in primetime, that there are... a majority of Americans who believe that we need to... save the core values of our country," said Jean-Pierre. The theme of Biden's speech Thursday harks back to an article he published in the influential American magazine *The Atlantic* in 2017, after a deadly white nationalist rally in the city of Charlottesville. The march in the southern state of Virginia made him

Surveys

Instead, opinion polls seem to show that Biden would benefit from being more aggressive towards his opponents. Last week, Biden accused Trump's supporters of being consumed by "semi-fascism." The latest opinion poll from Quinnipiac University, released Wednesday, shows him with a 40 percent approval rating, still very low, but a significant improvement over the 31 percent recorded in July.

Moreover, according to the same survey, 67 percent of Americans now believe that their democracy is in danger, compared to 58 percent in January. The Democrats are hoping for an upset in the November elections, in which all of the seats in the House of Representatives and a third of the Senate seats are on the ballot. Traditionally, the midterms don't favor the ruling party.



WILKES-BARRE: US President Joe Biden speaks on his Safer America Plan at the Marts Center on August 30, 2022 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. President Biden visited Wilkes-Barre to speak on the passage of his bipartisan gun safety legislation earlier this year after massacres in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas. — AFP

Things have been going well for Biden lately, however, with inflation slowing, a series of his landmark reforms finally pushed through Congress, Trump fighting off a series of criminal investigations, and—most importantly—the Republicans' anti-abortion efforts appearing to be turning against them.

This would be enough to give hope to the Democrats, who are battling to keep their hold on the House and preserve their Senate majority or even strengthen it. And Pennsylvania will be crucial for any of that to happen.

Biden already traveled to the battleground state on Tuesday, and he will return there on Monday to celebrate Labor Day with Democratic Senate hopeful John Fetterman. Trump is also planning an appearance in Pennsylvania on Saturday to support his candidate in this race, Mehmet Oz. — AFP

Macron defends Russia dialogue to negotiate peace

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday defended his policy of keeping up a dialogue with Russia after its invasion of Ukraine, saying that Turkey should not be the only power talking to Moscow and preparations should already be made for a negotiated peace.

Macron has repeatedly spoken to Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin since Moscow launched its attack on Ukraine in February, with their latest conversation coming on August 19 following a lengthy pause. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with whom Macron has had a fractious relationship, has meanwhile actively sought to play the role of mediator, meeting in person with both Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

"Who wants Turkey to be the only world power which continues to talk to Russia?" the president told a meeting of French ambassadors at the Elysee Palace. "We must not give in to any form of false morality which would leave us powerless," he added.

"The job of a diplomat is to talk to everyone, especially to people with whom we do not agree. And so we will continue to do so, in coordination with our allies," Macron argued that world powers should already be preparing for a "negotiated peace" to end the conflict that has already lasted over half a year, while emphasizing it was up to Kyiv to decide on the timing and the terms.

"We must prepare for a long war. We must avoid escalation and prepare the peace," he said. "Preparing the peace means talking to all the parties including, as I did just a few days ago and will again, to Russia."

He said such a negotiated peace would not be on the terms "Ukraine would have been subjected to if we had abandoned it to its fate." Macron argued that Western military assistance for Ukraine, including from France, had allowed the country to withstand the Russian invasion far more effectively than many experts and also Russia had predicted. — AFP

Bangladesh activist shot dead during power protests

NARAYANGANJ, Bangladesh: Bangladesh police shot dead a young activist and injured dozens more Thursday after firing on a demonstration against power cuts and food price hikes, officers and protesters said.

Public anger has intensified over lengthy blackouts in the South Asian nation, which is struggling to pay for enough imported diesel and gas to meet electricity demand. The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had called a rally in the industrial city of Narayanganj, near the capital Dhaka, to protest increasing economic hardships.

Party spokesman Shakhawat Hossain said around 5,000 of its supporters were in the crowd when officers attacked. "Police charged batons at our peaceful rally. They then opened fire. One of our youth activists was shot dead," Hossain told AFP, adding that the victim was 25 years old.

Police confirmed the death to AFP but did not offer any further details. A doctor at the city's main state-run hospital told AFP that the man had been brought to the emergency ward and died of gunshot wounds. "The dead person had been shot in his chest," he said, adding that 20 others were being treated for gunshot injuries. According to Hossain, at least 100 opposition demonstrators had been injured in the incident, including one person who



NARAYANGANJ, Bangladesh: Members of Bangladesh police personnel detain an activist and supporter of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) during a rally in Narayanganj on September 1, 2022. Bangladesh police shot dead a young activist and injured dozens more after firing on a demonstration against power cuts and food price hikes. — AFP

had been shot in the eye.

At least two other opposition protesters have been killed in the cost-of-living protests since late July, when the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina raised fuel prices and introduced nationwide power rationing.

Rising grocery costs have hit household budgets hard, with consumer inflation above seven percent in July. The government this week pledged to cap the price of several staples, including rice.

Bangladesh has asked the International

Monetary Fund for \$4.5 billion in support to ride out the financial shock of volatile energy prices, triggered by Russia's February invasion of Ukraine.

Tens of thousands of mosques around the country have been asked to curtail the use of air conditioners to ease pressure on the electricity grid, with power shortfalls compounded by a depreciating currency and dwindling foreign exchange reserves.

Diesel power plants across the country have been taken off the grid, while some gas-fired plants are also idle. — AFP

Grinding crisis erodes Lebanon...

Continued from Page 1

servants have gone on strike or just stay home with their employer's blessing, because the commute to work would eat up their entire salary or more. "The basic requirements for a public institution are no longer available," said Makkki.

Lebanon's downward spiral has been met with inaction from authorities, who have yet to chart a path out of the three-year-old economic crisis they are widely blamed for. Parliament, which has yet to approve a 2022 budget, has rarely convened since it was elected three months ago. Lebanon's president and prime minister have failed to agree on a new government since the outgoing cabinet's mandate expired in May.

With the Lebanese pound losing more than 90 percent of its value against the dollar on the black market in recent years, public sector salaries have slumped as low as \$40 a month. A 50-year-old mother of two who has worked for the interior ministry for 26 years says she now has little incentive to go to work. The civil servant in a district east of Beirut, who asked not to be named for fear of reprisals, says she now only goes into the office once every two weeks, just above the threshold for a de facto resignation.

Without electricity, employees there have to climb seven flights of stairs in the dark to reach the office, the woman said. "The tiles on the stairs are chipped," she said. "Every time you go up or down, your risk breaking your neck." Inside the office, there is no air conditioning or paper or photocopy machines or pens. You have to take a bottle of water with you to the bathroom because there is no running water. "The woman, whose salary dropped



TRIPOLI, Lebanon: This file photo taken on Jan 29, 2021 shows people inspecting a burnt room at the municipality building after anti-government protesters clashed with security forces. — AFP

from \$1,600 a month to about \$75, said she never imagined things would get this bad. "The embodiment of poverty is being an employee of the Lebanese state," she said.

Across Lebanon, decaying institutions have deprived citizens of the most basic services. Power cuts at the parliament have forced lawmakers to postpone sessions, and the General Security agency at one point this year ran out of passports. The Lebanese army can barely afford to pay and feed its soldiers, forcing many to quit or take up second jobs. At the environment ministry, the damage caused by the massive and deadly Aug 2020 Beirut port explosion has yet to be fully repaired. "The doors are still broken, so they don't close," Environment Minister Nasser Yassin told AFP, adding that the dividing walls and false ceilings are also still in disrepair.

Some meeting rooms have no lighting, and employees bring their own toilet paper. The main municipality building in the northern city of Tripoli — which was torched last year by demonstrators angered by the economic crisis — is a standout example of state decay. — AFP

China slams UN report...

Continued from Page 1

making — and maintained its firm opposition to its release, sharing a more-than-100-page document from the Xinjiang provincial government defending its policies. "The so-called critical report you mentioned is planned and manufactured firsthand by the US and some Western forces, it is wholly illegal and invalid," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing Thursday.

"The report is a hodgepodge of misinformation, and it is a political tool which serves as part of the West's strategy of using Xinjiang to control China," he added. Wang also slammed the UN rights office as having "sunk to becoming the thug and accomplice of the US and the West", but said the report's omission in calling China's actions genocide shows their "lies... have fallen apart".

Michelle Bachelet, the UN human rights chief, said she had decided a full assessment was needed of the situation inside the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Bachelet was determined to release it before her four-year term as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expired at the end of August — and did so with 13 minutes to spare at 11:47 pm in Geneva. "I said that I would publish it before my mandate ended and I have," Bachelet said in an email to AFP Thursday. "The politicization of these serious human rights issues by some states did not help."

China has been accused for years of detaining more than one million Uyghurs and other Muslims in the region. Beijing has vehemently rejected the claims, insisting it is running Vocational Education and Training Centers (VETCs), designed to curb extremism. "Serious human rights violations have been committed in XUAR in the context of the gov-

ernment's application of counter-terrorism and counter-'extremism' strategies," the UN report said.

"Allegations of patterns of torture or ill-treatment, including forced medical treatment and adverse conditions of detention, are credible, as are allegations of individual incidents of sexual and gender-based violence," the report said. The UN Human Rights Office could not confirm how many people were affected by the VETCs but concluded that the system operated on a "wide scale" across the entire region.

The number in the VETCs, at least between the years 2017 and 2019, "was very significant, comprising a substantial proportion of the Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim minority populations". Campaigners have accused China of forcibly sterilizing women, and the report cited "credible indications of violations of reproductive rights through the coercive enforcement of family planning policies".

Campaign groups have said the report should act as a launchpad for further action. Human Rights Watch's China director Sophie Richardson said the "damning" findings of sweeping rights abuses showed why Beijing "fought tooth and nail" to prevent its publication. The response from the Uyghur activist community was mixed, with some groups praising its work while others wished it had gone further in its condemnation.

"This is a game-changer for the international response to the Uyghur crisis," said Uyghur Human Rights Project executive director Ömer Kanat. "Despite the Chinese government's strenuous denials, the UN has now officially recognized that horrific crimes are occurring." And World Uyghur Congress president Dolkun Isa said the report paved the way for "meaningful and tangible action" by countries, businesses and the UN.

But Salih Hudayar, a Uyghur-American who campaigns for Xinjiang independence, told AFP the report was "sadly not as strong as we had hoped". "Our people have been waiting years for the UN to speak out," said Hudayar. — AFP

International

Rosmah Mansor, wife of Malaysia's ex-leader convicted of corruption

Rosmah sentenced to 10 years in jail with \$216 million fine

KUALA LUMPUR: Rosmah Mansor, the wife of Malaysia's ex-premier Najib Razak, was found guilty of graft on Thursday and sentenced to 10 years in jail with a \$216 million fine, just over a week after her husband began serving a 12-year term after his own corruption conviction.

The 70-year-old has long been criticised by Malaysians for her reportedly vast collection of designer handbags, clothing and jewellery, acquired on overseas shopping trips. Prosecutors said Rosmah had sought a 187.5 million-ringgit (\$41.8 million) bribe and received 6.5 million-ringgit for helping a company secure a solar power project for rural schools in the Malaysian part of Borneo during her husband's tenure.

"The accused is found guilty of all three charges," High Court Judge Mohamed Zaini Mazlan said as Rosmah sat quietly in the dock. After mitigation, he handed down a sentence of 10 years in jail for each of the three charges. "The sentences are to run concurrently," Zaini said, also imposing a fine of 970 million-ringgit.

During proceedings, a tearful Rosmah said she was "a victim". "My family has suffered. Have some humanity. Have some compassion." "The accused is not a hardened criminal," her lawyer Jagjit Singh said. "She has never been involved in any malpractice. She has never had any convictions."

But prosecutors sought maximum or near-maximum sentences for all three charges, calling corruption "the most vile of all diseases to affect society". Even having been sentenced, Rosmah will not go straight to jail, pending what could be a lengthy appeals process. She remains on bail and still faces 17 other charges involving tax eva-

sion and money laundering.

Born the only child of two teachers in the country's south, Rosmah rose to become one of Malaysia's most influential people. She made headlines a decade ago for setting up a new unit under the prime minister's office known as "FLOM", an acronym for First Lady of Malaysia. The full-fledged department, which set critics' tongues wagging, was tasked with handling Rosmah's operational needs.

Her love for luxury, and in particular Hermes Birkin bags, came under the spotlight after 2018 raids in which police confiscated more than 500 handbags and 12,000 pieces of jewellery estimated to be worth \$270 million.

This drew unflattering comparisons with one-time Philippines first lady and renowned shoe enthusiast Imelda Marcos — a big-spending woman who for years was a lightning rod for anger over alleged corruption.

'Accused found guilty of all three charges'

Multibillion-dollar scandal

On Thursday, dressed in a peach-coloured traditional Malay dress and scarf with a floral print and matching face mask, Rosmah arrived in court escorted by police. Her son and daughter also attended the court proceedings.

Najib was sent to prison nine days ago for an initial batch of charges linked to the multibillion-dollar financial scandal at state fund IMDB that brought down his government in 2018. He is currently on trial over four additional charges. He faces a maximum of 20 years in jail for abuse of power and up to 15 years for money laundering, if convicted.

Rosmah's image had contributed to accusations that the ousted ruling establishment had lost touch with eco-



BUKIT JALIL: File photo shows Malaysia's then-Prime Minister Najib Razak (L) looks on as his wife Rosmah Mansor (R) waves a national flag during a rally to celebrate the country's 55th Independence Day in Bukit Jalil Stadium. Rosmah Mansor was found guilty of graft on September 1, 2022.

nomically struggling and middle-class Malaysians. "I think a lot of Malaysians will be happy that Rosmah has been found guilty," said James Chin, professor of Asian studies at the University of Tasmania.

"Her image among the Malaysian public is bad. Many believe it was her lavish lifestyle that contributed to Najib's downfall and subsequently landing himself in

prison for corruption." The IMDB scandal sparked investigations in the United States, Switzerland and Singapore, whose financial systems were believed to have been used to launder the money.

The US Justice Department has said more than \$4.5 billion was stolen from IMDB between 2009 and 2015 by high-level officials at the fund and their associates. —AFP

Angola's leader faces uphill battle after narrow win

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa: President Joao Lourenco faces Herculean tasks of fixing Angola's economy and winning over its disillusioned youth as he enters his second term with decimated support, analysts say.

Lourenco's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which has been in power for nearly half century, won 51.17 percent of the vote in the August 24 elections for the National Assembly. The leader of the winning party automatically ascends to the presidency, which means Lourenco has earned a second spell at the helm.

But it was also the MPLA's poorest showing since the first democratic vote in the former Portuguese colony in 1992. In 2017, it picked up 61 percent of the ballot. The falloff will hike pressure on Lourenco to deliver on touted economic reforms and will reinvigorate the opposition, Augusto Santana of the non-profit Democracy Works Foundation predicted.

He could face possible street protests and dissent from within the MPLA,

Santana told AFP by phone from Luanda, the capital. "He faces quite a lot of challenges," he said. Lourenco, 68, came to power in 2017 when he took over from long-time ruler Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who bequeathed a country deep in recession and riddled by corruption and nepotism. The former general embarked on an ambitious reform programme to tackle graft, attract foreign investors and diversify the oil-dependent economy.

'No quick fix'

The country eventually emerged from a five-year slump in 2021, but reforms have not translated into better living conditions for most Angolans. Analyst Justin Pearce said that, because of the economic crisis, Lourenco's government had so far not "been able to address the immediate demands from the poor in society".

Now the president will be expected to deliver long-promised economic diversification away from oil. But "there's no quick fix," said the Angola expert at South Africa's Stellenbosch University. The economic crisis, compounded by the coronavirus pandemic and a drought, has squeezed most people, pushing them into the arms of the opposition.

The leading opposition party and former rebel movement, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola



LUANDA, Angola: File photo shows Joao Lourenco, Angola's President and presidential candidate of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) delivers a speech during a campaign rally in Luanda. —AFP

(UNITA), gained 43.95 percent of the vote, up from 26.67 percent in 2017, also winning the capital, Luanda.

Its charismatic leader Adalberto Costa Junior, 60, has proved popular in urban areas and among youth disaffected with a ruling party many think has run out of ideas. Turnout was low, with only about 45 percent of those registered bothering to cast their ballots.

On Tuesday, large numbers of angry onlookers heckled a motorcade of MPLA supporters celebrating the victory in Luanda—something unthinkable only a few years ago, Santana said. "There will be more protests, because this time people think that there's nothing else that the MPLA can still do, that the MPLA should just go and leave space for others to try," he said. —AFP

Pakistan court extends bail for ex-PM Khan

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan: Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Court extended interim bail Thursday for former prime minister Imran Khan in a case surrounding comments he made about a judge involved in the detention of an official in his party.

The extension comes a day after a lower court gave him a week to respond to contempt charges in a separate case related to his comments. The charges are another twist in months of political wrangling that began when Khan was ousted by a vote of no confidence in parliament in April.

Pakistan has a history of those in power using the police and courts to stifle political opponents, and current Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also has several pending cases against him from his time in opposition.

Babar Awan, Khan's lawyer, said the Anti-Terrorism Court extended bail until September 12 and the extension covered several new charges. Khan was in court for the hearing after earlier asking to be excused because of death threats, Awan said.

Asad Umar, a central leader in Khan's Pakistan



ISLAMABAD, Pakistan: Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan (C) arrives to appear before the Anti-Terrorism Court in Islamabad on September 1, 2022. —AFP

Tehreek-e-Insaf party, accused premier Sharif's coalition of orchestrating "fake cases". The political fracas comes as Pakistan deals with devastating

floods caused by record monsoon rains that have left a third of the country under water and affected more than 33 million people. —AFP

Ethiopia, Eritrea forces launch Tigray offensive

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia: Ethiopian and Eritrean forces launched a "massive" joint offensive against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in the northern region of Tigray on Thursday, the rebels said. "The enemy, having already relocated a massive military force to Eritrea, has now begun a joint campaign with the foreign invading force of Eritrea to brutalise and exterminate the people of

Tigray," the rebels' military command said in a statement.

AFP was not able to independently verify the claims. Access to northern Ethiopia is severely restricted and Tigray has been under a communications blackout for over a year. TPLF spokesman Kindeya Gebrehiwot told AFP the attack was coming "from Eritrea".

Another TPLF spokesman, Getachew Reda, described it as a four-pronged offensive. He said on Twitter that the rebels were "defending their positions" and reported "heavy shelling" from some locations. Addis Ababa has not responded to requests for comment about the reported offensive.

Fighting between government forces and the rebels had resumed last week after a five-month lull, with clashes on the ground and air raids over Tigray dashing hopes of peacefully resolving the nearly two-year war.

Combat had been concentrated around the southeastern border of Tigray, with the rebels pushing into the neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions, sending residents fleeing. The government on Wednesday accused the TPLF of launching a wider "invasion" into parts of western Tigray, and other areas west of the initial clashes.

The rebels in turn alleged that the government and its neighbour Eritrea-

which backed federal forces during the war's early phase—were responsible for opening a new front. On Thursday, the government said TPLF attacks "had further continued to intensify".

"Innocent civilians are being killed; many are being displaced and property is being destroyed," the Government Communication Service said in a statement.

Fighting has spread since combat erupted on August 24, while the capital of the war-torn Tigray region has been hit twice by air strikes. The first air raid on Mekele killed at least four people, including children, in a strike the UN children's agency UNICEF said "hit a kindergarten". —AFP

Women's group tackles taboo subject to aid Pakistan flood victims

LAHORE: As aid organisations mobilise to provide relief for victims of Pakistan's catastrophic floods, one group of women is focused on a necessity that is frequently taboo in the conservative Islamic nation—menstrual hygiene products.

Over 30 million people have been affected by floods that cover a third of the country following record monsoon rains, with hundreds of thousands made homeless. Half of the victims are women and girls. "Periods do not stop during floods. Women need this assistance," said Bushra Mahnoor, a university student in eastern Lahore who founded the Mahwari Justice campaign to provide help.

Mahnoor recalled her experience with floods that hit Pakistan in 2010 when she saw a young girl with period stains on her clothes. She learned that women "were using leaves" to manage their periods, so decided to take action.

Since June, Mahnoor and colleague Anum Khalid have mobilised friends and volunteers to raise money to buy, pack and distribute emergency sanitary kits containing pads, underwear and soap. Each kit costs just 200 rupees (\$0.90), but can make an enormous difference for women trying to retain their dignity in desperate times.

Calls to the manufacturers of period products went unanswered, so Mahnoor haggles with wholesalers in Lahore's bazaars to get the lowest possible rates for the kits. Mahwari—which means "period" in Urdu—has already sent thousands of kits to some of the worst-hit areas, but their reach is set to get even bigger.

Dozens of volunteers

After a social media appeal, dozens of girls and women volunteered to help pack the kits. "I put myself in their place and thought this would have been such a huge problem for me if I didn't have these things," said volunteer Nyle Intiaz, describing her motivation.

Similar meet-ups are happening in other cities—including Multan, where the transgender community has taken the lead in the local effort. Mahnoor says she met resistance when she first spoke to men about the kind of specialised help she wanted her group to provide and asked for help in distribution.

"Menstruation is a big taboo in Pakistan and it was not easy," she said. Much of Pakistani society operates under a strict code of honour and speaking openly about women's issues such as menstruation and sexual health is rare.

The reach of the floods includes Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province—the most conservative part of Pakistan, where women are rarely seen in public and often wear the all-covering burqa or shawls.

For many flood victims who have fled their homes for makeshift camps, women are mixing with men who are not their relatives for the first time. The camps have no showers and only a few shared toilets.

Public conversations and campaigns invoking menstruation often provoke disgust and draw public anger. On social media, the campaign has been accused of pursuing a "liberal agenda", taking away funds from more worthwhile causes such as food and medicine.

"I don't understand what is there to hide, and what's there to be ashamed of," said Nimra Akram, another Lahore volunteer. "It would be more shameful in my opinion to see a girl who has her period and doesn't have this kit."

Mahnoor said even her own family has tried to stop her from being so public. "My mother tells me I'm being such a shameless woman for even talking about menstruation so openly," she said. —AFP

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2022

Business

Oil prices continue to decline amid global recession fears

Stocks selloff intensifies as investors brace for more rate cuts

LONDON: Oil prices continued to slide on Thursday on demand concerns as China, the world's second-largest economy and the top importer of fuel, went on enforcing strict COVID-19 related restrictions amid an increase in the number of infections in the country.

Meanwhile, global stock markets sank Thursday, propelled by rampant inflation and growing recession fears. Frankfurt, London and Paris equities each slid about 1.5 percent. That followed losses across Asia as investors braced for more interest rate hikes, which seek to quell runaway inflation yet could derail economic activity.

Brent was trading 1.79 per cent lower at \$93.93 a barrel at 12.32pm Kuwait Time on Thursday. West Texas Intermediate, the gauge that tracks US crude, was down 1.70 per cent at \$88.03 a barrel.

Traders will be closely watching next week's OPEC+ meeting after Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said last week that the group, consisting of the world's top producers, would cut production if required to counter the volatility in oil prices. Soft demand is likely to encounter tighter supply, and this means that in the coming days, oil prices are likely to climb with the new norm between \$90 and \$100, he said.

Recession fears are also growing around the globe amid higher inflation, the pandemic and the Ukraine conflict. The International Monetary Fund lowered its growth forecast for the global economy to 3.2 per cent this year, from its previous projection of 3.6 per cent in April, owing to the Ukraine war and the slowdown in China.

The OPEC+ alliance of 23 producers, including Saudi Arabia and Russia, will meet on September 5 to decide on its future output policy. Oil prices have

been extremely volatile this year. Brent rose by more than 20 per cent since the start of the year, having fallen from a 14-year high when it was within touching distance of \$140 a barrel in March after Moscow's invasion in Ukraine began, resulting in sanctions being imposed by the US and the UK on crude imports from Russia.

Europe's stocks also fell Wednesday as record-high eurozone inflation fuelled fears that borrowing costs are set to climb even higher, as the region faces rocketing winter energy costs due to Russia's war on Ukraine. The European Central Bank will announce its latest monetary policy decision next Thursday, after delivering its first rate hike in a decade in July.

"Markets remain unable to snap their recent losing streak, with investors still positioning for tougher times ahead," said Interactive Investor analyst Richard Hunter. "Central to current concerns are recessionary fears in the US and a beleaguered China. "With the world's two largest economies under pressure, the immediate outlook is poor."

Asian equities weakened further Thursday as traders continued to digest shrinking factory activity in powerhouse economy China. Shanghai also dropped after news that the Chinese city of Chengdu would effectively lock down around 16 million people in a bid to contain a COVID-19 outbreak, likely dealing another blow to a stuttering economy. Wall Street slid Wednesday as Treasury yields — a key gauge of future interest rates — rose further, as a broadly healthy report on US private jobs showed there was room for the Federal Reserve to continue tightening monetary policy.

Another top Fed official signaled the bank was determined to keep lifting borrowing costs, mirroring



TOKYO, Japan: An electronic quotation board displays the share price of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (top right) at a foreign exchange brokerage in Tokyo on September 1, 2022. —AFP

recent comments by the US central bank's head Jerome Powell that there would be no let-up in the fight against inflation. US interest rates are currently at 2.25-2.5 percent, and there is a growing expectation they will be hiked by a bumper 75 basis points for a third successive meeting later this month. A government jobs report Friday will be closely

watched by traders hoping for an idea about the next move by the bank. The prospect of more US rate hikes continued to push the dollar higher, with 140 yen within reach for the first time since 1998. The greenback was also at its strongest level against the pound since the height of the pandemic in 2020, with sterling buying less than \$1.16. —AFP

Yellen 'optimistic' on deal to set price cap on Russian oil

WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Wednesday she was "optimistic" about the possibility of an international agreement to set a price limit on Russia's oil exports. "I'm really optimistic about the substantial progress that's been made by our teams and the entire G7 for making the price cap a reality," Yellen said.

The US official met with her British counterpart, Chancellor of the Exchequer Nadhim Zahawi, and noted that "the United Kingdom has been a key ally in the G7's work to put in place a price cap on Russian oil." The leaders of the Group of Seven advanced nations agreed in late June to work towards implementing the ceiling on crude sales, to choke off Moscow's war chest, as well as bring down global energy prices.

Yellen said the goal is to deny Vladimir Putin the funds to continue the war in Ukraine and to prop up the Russian economy. A G7 official late last month explained that the maximum price would remain above the cost of the production, so it would not make economic sense for Moscow to deny oil to importing countries.

"We know that there's a great deal of room between the price of production, and what Russia is making today," the official told reporters, noting the goal is to "create economic incentives for Russia to continue to produce oil, but at the same time, deny them the excess revenues."

The official acknowledged that the plan must be finalized by December 5, when a European ban will take effect on insurers and reinsurers covering Russian oil transport.

Washington is seeking an "exemption" from the insurance ban for any oil sold below the price cap. The challenge is to get as many countries as possible to agree to the cap, and the issue is expected to be a key topic for discussion by leaders at the G20 summit in Bali on November 15 and 16. —AFP



Janet Yellen

Britain's house prices cool amid high inflation

LONDON: Britain's house prices cooled only slightly last month, a key survey showed Thursday, but remain vulnerable to rising interest rates and the cost of living crisis.

The average value of a home in Britain rose 10 percent to £273,751 (\$318,627) in August from a year earlier, home-loans provider Nationwide said in a statement.

Annual growth remained in double digits with the average property costing £50,000 more than two years ago. Yet that marked a modest slowdown from 11-percent expansion in July.

Nationwide warned the housing market would slow further on soaring domestic energy bills and rising interest rates. "There are signs that the housing market is losing some momentum, with surveyors reporting fewer new buyer inquiries in recent months and the number of mortgage approvals for house purchases falling below pre-pandemic levels," said Nationwide economist Robert Gardner.

"We expect the market to slow further as pressure on household budgets intensifies in the coming quarters, with inflation set to remain in double digits into next year." Consumer price inflation rocketed in July to a 40-year peak of 10.1 percent, worsening a cost-of-living crisis as Britain faces the prospect of recession. Goldman Sachs analysts have forecast inflation could hit 22.4 percent next year under a worse-case scenario, if domestic energy prices continue to rocket.

The Bank of England last month hiked rates by 0.5 percentage points, the biggest hike since 1995, taking borrowing costs to 1.75 percent as it sought to tackle runaway inflation. Rising interest rates drive up mortgage repayments for households but boost savers.



Meanwhile, UK household incomes are set to fall 10 percent in real terms in the next two years in the steepest such drop for a century, an influential think tank forecast Thursday. Inflation is currently at a 40-year high of 10.1 percent with dire predictions that rates could climb to 18 percent or more next year due to soaring energy tariffs. The Resolution Foundation, which focuses on improving living standards for low and middle-income families, published projections that median real household incomes will fall 10 percent between 2021-22 and 2023-2024. That equates to a loss of £3,000 (\$3,475).

It blamed "global supply shocks and war in Ukraine" but also low productivity and earnings growth over the last decade. The drop in real income "is likely to be the worst for at least a century", the report said.

"With high inflation likely to stay with us for much of next year, the outlook for living standards is, frankly, terrifying," said one of the report's authors, Lalitha Try. The finding comes as politicians vying to be the UK's next prime minister, face

mounting pressure to come up with sweeping plans to help ordinary families. Frontrunner Liz Truss wrote in The Sun newspaper that she would offer "immediate support", without giving details.

The Resolution Foundation is urging the new government, which will be announced next week, to implement policy change, proposing a lower "social tariff" for the most vulnerable.

The foundation said the predicted drop in real spending power "looks likely to be the worst fall in 100 years", worse than seen in the 1970s or during World War II. It warned of a "grim winter".

The drop comes as the average gas and electricity household bill is projected to go up from £1,500 in 2021-22 to £3,750 in 2022-23, the foundation said, although many households spread heating costs over the year. Its forecast finds that some recovery is likely 2024-2025 but not enough to compensate for income losses since 2019-2020. The number of those living in "absolute poverty" is projected to rise by 3.1 million to over 14 million people by 2024. —AFP

Unemployment in eurozone at historic low

BRUSSELS: Unemployment in the eurozone stood at its lowest recorded level in July, 6.6 percent of the active population, the EU statistics agency announced Thursday. The proportion of job hunters in the single currency bloc was reported at the same level in April, May and June, but Eurostat has since revised its figures slightly.

Eurozone unemployment has fallen from 7.7 percent a year ago, with an estimated 12.96 million out of work in the full 27-nation EU. In the EU as a whole, including countries that have not adopted the euro, June unemployment stood at 6.0 percent, also a slight drop after a revision.

Youth unemployment, job seekers under 25, ticked down slightly between June and July, to 14 percent in the EU and 14.2 percent in the eurozone.

Meanwhile, 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. —AFP

IMF agrees to conditional \$2.9bn bailout for bankrupt Sri Lanka

Acute food, fuel and medicine shortage plague country amid soaring inflation

COLOMBO: Bankrupt Sri Lanka will receive a conditional \$2.9 billion bailout, the International Monetary Fund said Thursday, following a bruising economic crisis that saw the island nation's president chased from the country. Months of acute food, fuel and medicine shortages, extended blackouts and runaway inflation have plagued the country after it ran out of dollars to finance even the most essential imports.

The country has defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt and incensed protesters stormed the home of then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in July, with the leader subsequently fleeing the island and issuing his resignation from Singapore.

"Sri Lanka has been facing an acute crisis... disproportionately borne by the poor and vulnerable," the IMF said in a statement after nine days of talks in the capital Colombo. The IMF board will need to ratify Thursday's staff agreement, which is conditional on the government striking a deal with creditors to restructure its borrowings.

But the lender's head of mission, Peter Breuer, said creditors also needed to help Sri Lanka extricate itself from a "deep crisis" and return to servicing its debt. "It really is in the interest of all creditors to work with Sri Lanka on this front," Breuer told reporters.

"If creditors are not willing to provide these assurances, that would indeed deepen the crisis in Sri Lanka and would undermine its repayment capacity." China-the country's biggest bilateral lender, accounting for more than 10 percent of borrowings-has so far not publicly shifted from its offer of issuing more loans instead of taking a cut on outstanding loans.

'The crucial issue'

Breuer could not say when the IMF financing would become available, but stressed that Sri Lanka's needs were "urgent" and must be addressed immediately, with additional support from other lenders. "Additional financing from multilateral partners will be needed to close financing gaps," Breuer said.

The IMF's announcement of a \$2.9 billion package, spread over four years, is short of the \$3-4 billion sought by Sri Lanka. The government welcomed the announcement but warned the public that painful economic reforms were still necessary.



COLOMBO, Sri Lanka: This handout photograph taken and released on September 1, 2022 by Sri Lanka President's Office shows Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe (right) meeting with the senior mission chief for Sri Lanka of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Peter Breuer (second left) in Colombo. —AFP

"In the future, we will have to make major sacrifices in order to find solutions to the factors that led to this economic debacle," Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena told parliament Thursday.

Financial analyst W.A. Wijewardena, a former central bank deputy governor, said the government would need to implement more painful reforms to secure funding.

"This shows that Sri Lanka should do a lot more to satisfy IMF requirements," he told AFP. "Debt sustainability is the crucial issue." He said raising government revenue, currently one of the world's lowest, would be a serious challenge given the current state of the economy. The central bank expects a record eight percent GDP contraction this year, slightly below the IMF's forecast of 8.7 percent.

More taxes

The IMF said Sri Lanka had agreed to increase revenues, remove subsidies, ensure a flexible exchange rate and rebuild its foreign reserves, which had hit rock bottom. President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who took office after his predecessor fled, this week announced further tax hikes and sweeping reforms as part of efforts to bring debt under control.

His government had already raised prices on fuel and electricity more than threefold and removed energy subsidies, a key precondition for the IMF bailout. The coronavirus pandemic was a hammer-blow to the island's tourism industry and dried up remittances from Sri Lankans working abroad-both key foreign exchange earners.

Rajapaksa's government was criticized for introducing unsustainable tax cuts that drove up government debt and exacerbated the crisis. Inflation hit a fresh monthly record in August, with the country's main benchmark showing price average rises of 64.3 percent, while the rupee has lost more than 45 percent of its value against the greenback this year. Authorities resisted approaching the IMF for relief until the country's ballooning debt burden forced a default in April. At the peak of Sri Lanka's petrol shortages, motorists had to wait for weeks to top up, although strict fuel rationing has since shortened queues. —AFP

Spain to slash tax on gas as energy bills soar

MADRID: Spain will temporarily slash the sales tax on gas to help consumers facing soaring bills, the prime minister said Thursday, as Russia's war in Ukraine has sent European energy prices rising.

Pedro Sanchez said his government will cut the value-added tax on gas to five percent from 21 percent from October until the end of December. "As we enter autumn and winter, it seems reasonable to us to try to lower the heating bill," Sanchez said during an interview with radio Cadena Ser.

The government may extend the measure into next year "for as long as the very difficult situation we are facing lasts," he added. European gas and power prices have spiked this year as Russia limits supplies, in what has been seen as retaliation to European Union sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine.

Spain's inflation rate hit 10.4 percent in August, down for the first time in four months as fuel prices eased, but it remained high due to rising electricity and food prices.

Inflation has remained in double digits in the eurozone country since June, a level not seen since the mid-1980s. Economy Minister Nadia Calvino said consumer prices were on a "downward slope" that will continue "over the course of the next months".

But she called for "caution" as "uncertainty is very high due to the war". Sanchez's leftist government has rolled out aid packages in recent months to help households and businesses weather the inflationary pressure, including free train travel and fuel subsidies. Nearly 500,000 people have signed up to receive free travel on commuter trains and medium-distance trains, the government said Tuesday. —AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2022

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

No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance											Valuation Multiples *			
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	1,069	1,040	1,070	1,040	30	22,594,704	-30	-2.80%	9.53%	1,038	1,055	19.1	2.04	2.3%	0.99
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	355	342	355	342	13	20,656,039	-16	-4.47%	28.71%	338	346	19.8	1.64	1.9%	1.19
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	218	212	218	212	6	6,085,228	-7	-3.20%	1.14%	212	217	34.2	0.68	1.8%	1.18
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	244	243	247	241	6	25,228,900	-5	-2.02%	1.65%	242	246	20.6	0.89	2.0%	1.32
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	900	900	917	888	29	52,671,565	-4	-0.44%	18.99%	890	902	30.6	3.85	1.2%	1.18
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	858	832	862	832	30	4,446,087	-28	-3.26%	16.80%	826	847	55.0	3.37	0.5%	1.08
204	National Investments	Financial Services	295	284	299	282	17	2,637,079	-12	-4.05%	29.68%	283	289	10.8	1.14	15.6%	1.76
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	156	155	163	155	8	17,679,485	-4	-2.52%	9.15%	153	161	89.4	0.85	3.1%	0.96
252	Al Intiaz Investment	Financial Services	93	93.0	94	92.0	1.8	2,150,277	0.2	0.22%	-21.19%	90	95	-	0.55	9.6%	1.17
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	124	124	127	122	5	12,930,362	-2	-1.59%	-28.65%	124	132	15.2	0.91	2.3%	1.01
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	818	821	836	814	22	2,901,566	-4	-0.48%	9.74%	809	825	17.5	1.89	1.6%	1.14
501	National Industries	Financial Services	283	272	285	272	13	22,298,070	-14	-4.90%	12.88%	264	274	6.4	1.18	4.0%	1.43
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,460	1,446	1,477	1,415	62	402,877	-34	-2.30%	66.02%	1,390	1,450	13.4	1.35	4.1%	0.85
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	921	906	924	905	19	1,244,945	-15	-1.63%	6.34%	900	915	10.4	1.88	6.5%	0.92
526	Al Qurain	Basic Materials	313	315	320	313	7	2,406,072	0	0.00%	-9.22%	313	323	12.1	0.78	5.7%	1.02
603	Agility	Industrials	849	819	860	817	43	31,953,316	-46	-5.32%	4.00%	810	824	64.7	1.44	2.0%	1.44
605	Zain	Telecommunications	619	600	620	598	22	24,997,849	-20	-3.23%	0.84%	599	602	14.3	2.20	5.5%	0.84
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,481	3,400	3,490	3,380	110	354,248	-81	-2.33%	5.46%	3,350	3,440	8.0	3.82	11.6%	0.69
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	195	192	196	192	4	620,557	-3	-1.54%	-11.93%	184	195	NULL	0.72	0.0%	1.14
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,940	1,896	1,945	1,870	75	1,526,377	-34	-1.76%	46.98%	1,880	1,939	15.1	13.54	2.5%	1.35
818	Ahli United Bank	Banking	302	305	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.68%	-	-	17.9	2.04	2.8%	1.78
821	Warba Bank	Banking	248	248	252	245	7	23,383,298	-1	-0.40%	-9.49%	243	249	29.6	1.37	0.0%	1.08
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	413	420	426	407	19	6,205,122	4	0.96%	-27.27%	405	432	43.5	1.25	3.7%	0.45
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	414	410	416	409	7	2,039,752	-9	-2.15%	2.30%	410	415	31.5	1.70	2.4%	0.75
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	197	202	208	196	12	15,979,993	4	2.02%	-11.40%	201	205	15.4	2.26	9.0%	0.51
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,380	2,335	2,395	2,301	94	190,259	-45	-1.89%	15.59%	2,300	2,350	24.6	7.93	2.8%	0.76
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	867	856	867	853	14	2,187,785	-11	-1.27%	-	830	860	13.4	3.95	-	0.99

* As of end of week closing

Business

Greenhouse gas, sea levels at record in 2021: US agency

Climate change keeps surging ahead despite renewed efforts to curb emissions

WASHINGTON: Earth's concentration of greenhouse gases and sea levels hit new highs in 2021, a US government report said Wednesday, showing that climate change keeps surging ahead despite renewed efforts to curb emissions.

"The data presented in this report are clear—we continue to see more compelling scientific evidence that climate change has global impacts and shows no sign of slowing," said Rick Spinrad, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "With many communities hit with 1,000-year floods, exceptional drought and historic heat this year, it shows that the climate crisis is not a future threat but something we must address today," he said in a statement.

The rise in greenhouse gas levels comes despite an easing of fossil fuel emissions the previous year as much of the global economy slowed sharply due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The US agency said that the concentration of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere stood at 414.7 parts per million in 2021, 2.3 parts higher than in 2020. The level is "the highest in at least the last million years based on paleoclimatic records," the annual State of the Climate report found.

The planet's sea levels rose for the 10th straight year, reaching a new record of 3.8 inches (97 millimeters) above the average in 1993 when satellite measurements began. Last year was among the six warmest on record since the mid-19th century, with the last seven years all the seven hottest on record, it said.

The less headline-grabbing average temperatures were in part due to La Niña, an occasional phenomenon in the Pacific that cools waters, which

took place early in the year and contributed to February being the coldest since 2014. But water temperatures were also at records, with exceptionally high recordings documented in particular in lakes in Tibet, an environmentally crucial region as a water source for many of Asia's major rivers.

Rising disasters and fears

Tropical storms, which are expected to increase as the planet warms, were sharply up in 2021, the report said. They included Typhoon Rai, which killed nearly 400 people in the Philippines in December, and Ida, which swept the Caribbean before becoming the second strongest hurricane to hit Louisiana after Katrina. Among other extraordinary events cited in the report, the celebrated cherry trees in Kyoto, Japan, bloomed at their earliest since 1409.

Wildfires, also expected to rise due to climate change, were comparatively low following recent years although devastating blazes were witnessed both in the American West and Siberia. The 2021 report comes days after a study said Greenland's ice sheet is already set to melt at dangerous levels, even without any future warming, with major effects for low-lying areas around the globe that are home to hundreds of millions of people.

The planet remains far off track from an ambition set by the Paris climate accord in 2015 to aspire to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels to avoid the worst effects of climate change. In August, the United States under President Joe Biden pushed through the most expansive government package ever to address emissions from



GENERAL LUNA, Philippines: In this photo taken on December 29, 2021, young residents carrying their surf boards, walk past houses destroyed by super Typhoon Rai, as they head for the beach in General Luna town, Siargao island, more than a week after the super typhoon devastated the island. —AFP

the world's largest economy.

The effort will invest heavily in clean energy and comes as California moves to require all

cars to be zero-emission by 2035, a decision with far-reaching consequences for the automobile industry. —AFP

Europe's fiery summer: A climate 'reality check'?

PARIS: Wildfires and storms. Rivers at record lows. Parched crops withering in the fields. For many Europeans, this year's scorching summer means climate change is increasingly hard to ignore.

After months of cloudless days and drought, the weather has been one of the major themes of media coverage and discussions during family gatherings—over the annual August holiday period.

"This summer has seen a series of extreme weather events," French government spokesman Olivier Veran told a first press conference after he and the government returned to the office last week.

It had been a "complete reality check, even for the most skeptical," he said. France experienced its second-hottest summer on record, its driest since 1976 and the worst in terms of the loss of forestry to wildfires since 2003, he said. In recent months, some French villages have needed to be supplied with water trucks as their usual sources have dried up. Fires have repeatedly ravaged pine forests near Bordeaux.

Even in the normally verdant Alps, cheese makers complain that their cows are producing less milk than usual because their pastures are dried up. The picture is similar across Europe. In Italy, the collapse of the country's largest Alpine glacier in July sparked an avalanche that killed 11 people. "The year 2022 in terms of extreme climate events is code red," said the head of environmental group Legambiente, Stefano Ciafani, in an August report.

After a punishing drought, around 400 Spanish wildfires destroyed 290,000 hectares (72,000 acres) of forest—way above the recent average of 67,000 hectares a year.

As reservoir water levels plunged, a previously flooded centuries-old church and a huge megalithic complex emerged from their depths. And a year after shocking major floods that claimed more than 180 lives in Germany, the country saw the Rhine river—a crucial trade route—shrink to levels that were barely navigable.

Jets and steak

The question for experts and campaigners is how much the sweltering summer of 2022 will translate into political change and lifestyle shifts from consumers. As people return to work, France's green EELV party has been setting the news agenda with eye-catching proposals to crack down on executive jets as well as private swimming pools. "We've just lived through a summer when we've seen the real impact of climate change for the first time and what are we doing? What are we prepared to do?" said leading MP Sandrine Rousseau.

She found herself at the centre of a national furor this week after suggesting men needed to cut down on emissions-heavy barbecued steak which they saw as a "symbol of virility." "What has become quite obvious is that climate impacts and climate hazards are happening throughout Europe to differing degrees and with differing hazards," Carolina Cecilio from the E3G think-tank told AFP.

"It's not limited to southern Europe, which is more used to periods of drought and forest fires," she added. Greater awareness in big EU member states such as France, Germany and Italy could help "shape the political agenda," Cecilio said. —AFP

Snap confirms cutting 20% of staff

PARIS: Snapchat's parent company confirmed Wednesday it is cutting 20 percent of staff, as the troubled messaging app attempts to dig itself out amid competition and revenue woes, as well as recent quarterly losses. A hit with young internet users in its early days, Snapchat has remained a small player in the social networking space as competition from other apps, such as TikTok, has grown ever more intense.

"We must now face the consequences of our lower revenue growth and adapt to the market environment," Snap CEO Evan Spiegel said in a note to employees Wednesday announcing the decision "to reduce the size of our team by approximately 20 percent." In July, the company reported that quarterly losses nearly tripled to \$422 million amid conditions "more challenging" than expected.

Tech news website The Verge first reported the southern California-based company would be making the steep cuts to its approximately 6,400 staff. Restructuring, Spiegel said, would focus on "three strategic priorities: community growth, revenue growth and augmented reality" with unrelated projects to "be discontinued or receive substantially

Moscow approves Japan stakes in Sakhalin project

MOSCOW: Two Japanese trading houses will maintain stakes in a Russian energy project despite Tokyo joining sanctions on Moscow over the war in Ukraine, as the Asian country looks to secure its power supply.

Moscow is transferring operation of the Sakhalin-2 oil and gas project to a new Russian firm, with foreign stakeholders required to apply for approval to maintain their interests.

Like other countries that have joined sanctions, Japan is seeking to reduce its reliance on Russian energy imports but struggling to find alternatives.

Motorcyclists vow to fight parking fee in Paris

PARIS: The city of Paris on Thursday introduced fees for parking motorbikes and motorized scooters in the capital, sparking outrage and defiance among bikers.

Riders of motorized two-wheeled vehicles had previously been allowed to park them for free, but city officials said the measure was necessary to control high levels of noise, air pollution and congestion caused by the bikes. Bikers parking their ride in the historic centre of the capital will now have to pay three euros (dollars) per hour—two in surrounding neighborhoods—for a maximum stay of six hours.

City residents get a cheaper deal, as do some businesses. Electric motorbikes can still be parked for free. Fines for non-compliance start at 25 euros, going up to 135 euros if a motorbike is parked outside a designated space. But on Thursday, bikers who talked

reduced investment."

Snap said it would discontinue its Snap Originals show programming, third-party app integration known as Minis, its games, and its lightweight drone offering called Pixy.

It also said it was "winding down" its standalone geolocation app Zenly and music creation app Voisey, which it acquired through takeovers. Like other social networks, Snap has taken a hit as advertisers have tightened their belts, as well as from new privacy changes by Apple that have bitten into firms' sales of costly but highly-targeted ads. "The company is facing layoffs as it works to restructure its ad business and cut costs," said Insider Intelligence principal analyst Jasmine Enberg.

"Even so, I wouldn't count Evan Spiegel out." Snap has a growing and loyal user base, and is well-positioned to capitalize on advertising and commerce in its augmented reality offerings over the long-term, the analyst reasoned.

Enberg expected Snapchat to end this year with nearly \$5 billion in net ad revenue worldwide in a 43 percent increase from 2021. Insider Intelligence projected that ranks of Snapchat users would be up more than 10 percent to 493.7 million by the end of this year.

"We are encouraged by stabilizing user trends, as well as the large shopping and e-commerce advertising opportunity, healthy margins, and perspective and experience from recent upgrades to the management team," Baird analysts said of Snap in a note to investors.

The resource-poor country faced a power crunch during a summer heatwave this year, and is looking ahead to a potentially difficult winter.

Mitsubishi Corp said Thursday that its 10 percent stake in the Sakhalin-2 project had been approved by Moscow, a day after Mitsui said its 12.5 percent interest had also been given the green light. The Japanese government had backed both firms continuing in the project.

Russia supplies around nine percent of Japan's liquefied natural gas (LNG) demands, almost all of which comes from Sakhalin-2. "This decision is extremely significant for our nation's stable energy supply," government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno said at a regular briefing on Thursday.

"We will continue to monitor the situation to ensure stable LNG supplies, together with the public and private sectors." Japan is heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels, in part because many of its nuclear reactors have been offline since the 2011



PARIS, France: In this file photo taken on June 17, 2022, Snapchat founder and CEO Evan Spiegel attends a session during the Viva Technology (Vivatech) show in Paris. —AFP

Snap announced a new chief operating officer, Jerry Hunter, who is being promoted from senior vice president of engineering. Google executive Ronan Harris will become president of the company's Europe, Middle East and Africa division in October. Meanwhile, Snap's chief business officer Jeremi Gorman and Peter Naylor, the vice president of ad sales for the Americas, will be going to work for streaming television titan Netflix in September, according to the companies.

Snap shares were up more than 10 percent in mid-day trading on the New York Stock Exchange. —AFP

Fukushima disaster.

The country had previously ruled out withdrawal from the Sakhalin-2 project, despite joining Western-led energy sanctions on Russia.

Last week, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida called for a push to revive the country's nuclear power industry in a bid to tackle soaring imported energy costs linked to the war. Before the Fukushima meltdown, around a third of Japan's power generation came from nuclear sources, but in 2020 the figure was less than five percent.

"LNG accounts for over one-third of electricity generation in Japan, while the recent closure of ageing thermal power plants has further constrained policymakers' options," wrote James Brady, vice president of Teneo consultancy, in a note. "The Sakhalin decisions reflect the pragmatic realities of keeping the country's heat and lights on during the most challenging international energy market environment for decades." —AFP



PARIS, France: A photo shows two-wheeled motor vehicles parked in a paying parking zone in Paris on August 31, 2022. Two-wheeled combustion engine motor vehicles will have to pay for parking in Paris starting September 1, 2022. —AFP

get some public spaces back".

The French Federation of Angry Motorcyclists (FFMC) meanwhile slammed the measure which it said discriminated notably against "poor people who live in the suburbs".

They could not be expected "to commute 40 kilometers (25 miles) on a bicycle" said FFMC Paris region

boss Jean-Marc Belotti. "This is a social problem," he told AFP.

The association has called for a protest outside Paris city hall on Saturday.

The French administrative court has yet to rule on a legal challenge to the measure which was filed last September. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features

French rapper arrested for kicking his dog on Snapchat

French rapper Timal was arrested east of Paris on Wednesday after posting a video to Snapchat showing him kicking a dog, police and prosecutors told AFP. The clip showed the 25-year-old musician, real name Ruben Louis, kicking one of his two dogs three times around the head, and bore the caption "you moron".

Timal was arrested on Wednesday morning in Champs-sur-Marne and his two dogs confiscated, prosecutors in nearby Meaux said, adding that he faced charges of "cruelty towards a domestic animal". Several animal rights groups, including France's oldest, the Society for the Protection of Animals (SPA) said they had filed complaints.

The latest high-profile animal cruelty case

comes after French footballer Kurt Zouma was in June sentenced to 180 hours' community service by a British court for abusing his cat, which also came to light in a viral video. Timal first broke through in February this year with "Filtre" ("Filter"), recorded alongside fellow rapper Gazo and which was number one in the charts for a week in March.

The song has been played more than 52 million times on the world's top music streaming service Spotify, and almost the same number of times on YouTube. Five days ago, Timal released a new single, "Cameleon" ("Chameleon") alongside veteran rapper Booba. —AFP



Dutchwoman Lotte de Beer, the new director of the Vienna Volksoper opera house, poses for pictures in Vienna, Austria. —AFP photos

De Beer becomes first female director of Vienna's Volksoper

Dutch opera director Lotte de Beer takes over on Thursday as artistic director of the Volksoper opera house in Vienna, the first woman to hold the post. De Beer, 41, won the International Opera Award in the Newcomer category in 2015 and has been sought after ever since. She co-founded Amsterdam company Operafront, which seeks to introduce opera to young people, and told AFP in 2021 she hoped to use her five-year stint at the helm of the Volksoper to "set my own rules".

"I want to build bridges," she wrote on the opera house website. "I want to leave behind this strange distinction between high art and entertainment and instead make music theatre that connects." Art, she said, was more relevant now than ever. "Music theatre that touches the head, heart and belly in equal measure plays an important role in coping with the turbulent times we are all living in right now."

De Beer plans to stage several projects per year, including, this autumn, a fusion of Tchaikovsky's opera Iolanthe and his ballet, the Nutcracker. The Volksoper opened in 1898 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Emperor Franz Joseph I's accession to the throne.

It is less high-brow than the Vienna National Opera House and stages operetta and musicals in addition to opera and dance. It has had 23 artistic directors over 124 years. De Beer takes over from Germany's Robert Meyer, who led the theatre for a record 15 years. —AFP



Dutchwoman Lotte de Beer, the new director of the Vienna Volksoper opera house, poses for pictures in Vienna, Austria.

End of the road for New York's horse-drawn carriages?

A charming, must-do tourist attraction or a cruel, outdated commercial activity? New York's horse-drawn carriages have operated since the 1800s, but lawmakers now want to replace them with electric vehicles. For some, the equine-driven rides around Central Park are part of the fabric of the Big Apple, like yellow taxis and Broadway shows. But for others, the horses-for-hire are not in keeping with the ethos of a leading progressive city in 21st century America.



A worker prepares a carriage horse at a barn in the borough of Manhattan.

"Manhattan is probably the worst place in the world to have a horse work, in traffic, in noise, with pollution, in terrible heat and terrible conditions," says council member Robert Holden, who has introduced a bill to replace the animals with horseless e-carriages by June 2024. Animal rights activists have for years tried to shut down the industry, which comprises 130 drivers sharing 68 licenses for roughly 200 horses that live in stables in the city.

Their latest push was given impetus this month by the collapse of a horse on busy Ninth Avenue

that sparked anger after a video showing the driver shouting at the animal to get up went viral on social media. On Instagram, supermodel Bella Hadid urged lawmakers to pass Holden's legislation, calling the tourist rides "barbaric." Opponents say the horses live in cramped conditions, are often malnourished and dehydrated, get spooked by cars en route to the park, and are worked against their will.

"They're literally treated as machines, and they're not machines," says Edita Birnkrant, executive director of anti-horse carriage group NYCLASS. "This shouldn't be happening in modern-day New York City." Operators say the horses are well looked after, noting that the industry is regulated by the city, with the equines and stables subject to inspections by the health and sanitation departments.

"They're happy and healthy. You can't make a 1,500-pound animal do something they don't want to do," insists Christina Hansen, who has been driving carriages in New York for 10 years. The horses are required by law to work no more than nine hours a day and don't operate when temperatures hit 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit) or fall below minus 7 C.

Migrant drivers

Forty-two-year-old Hansen, who wears a top hat when steering her horse Oreo, says each horse gets at least five weeks "vacation" on a farm every year. She says New York would not be the same if the carriages are banned. "We've been in movies and television. We're as iconic as the Empire State Building and Statue of Liberty," she tells AFP. In Central Park, where 45-minute-long rides cost upwards of \$160, views are mixed among tourists.

"It's absolutely immoral," says Briton Cailey Tyler, agreeing with a ban. Marina Perry, from Argentina, doesn't have a problem with the rides as long as the horses are treated well. "It's a cultural aspect of New York City that has been going on for generations," she says. Hansen says the industry is "predominantly

South Korean Netflix hit 'Extraordinary Attorney Woo' sparks autism debate

A hit Netflix K-drama about a high-functioning autistic lawyer is prompting soul-searching in South Korea, where some on the spectrum say they can feel invisible. The endearing "Extraordinary Attorney Woo", featuring a neurodivergent attorney, has been Netflix's most-watched non-English show for over a month, following a path blazed by fellow Korean smash "Squid Game".

Even K-pop sensation BTS are fans of the global hit, with band members posting a video performing the signature greeting between Woo and her best friend—a dance step-slash-dab that is tearing across social media. But the 16-episode series, which follows a rookie lawyer whose condition helps her find brilliant solutions to legal conundrums but often leaves her socially isolated, has gone beyond memes to trigger a serious debate in South Korea about autism.

Star lawyer Woo Young-woo is fiercely intelligent, with an IQ of 164, but also has visible autistic traits such as echolalia—the precise repetition of words or sentences, often out of context. Lead actress Park Eun-bin, 29, who has received rave reviews, said she initially hesitated to accept the role, aware of the power of the story to impact perceptions of autistic people in South Korea and beyond.

"I felt I had a moral responsibility as an actor," she told AFP. "I knew (the show) was inevitably going to have an influence on people with autism and their families," she said, adding that she had questioned whether she would be able to pull off the complex character. "It was the first time that I had absolutely no idea what to do, when it came to how to express things, while I was reading the script," she added.

'Erased' in South Korea

But in South Korea, some families of autistic people have described the show as pure "fantasy", saying her character is unrealistic. For many on the spectrum, achieving like Woo would be equivalent to "a kid winning an Olympic medal for cycling without being able to walk yet", Lee Dong-ju, the mother of an autistic child, told a local broadcaster. But while Woo is clearly "a fictional character that has been created to maximize the dramatic effect", there is actually more truth to her story than many South Koreans

realize, said psychiatry professor Kim Eui-jung of the Ewha Womans University Mokdong Hospital.

About a third of people on the spectrum have average or above-average intelligence, she said, and may not have any noticeable autistic characteristics—or even realize they have the condition. This was the case for Lee Da-bin, who is on the spectrum but was not diagnosed until later in life.

"People don't recognize the mild forms of autism at all," she said. "I feel that I'm being erased." Lee shares many traits with the fictional Woo, from hypersensitivity to taste to



This undated handout image obtained from Netflix in Seoul shows South Korean actress Park Eun-bin playing a role of the high-functioning autistic lawyer Woo Young-woo in K-drama "Extraordinary Attorney Woo". —AFP

academic excellence despite suffering from bullying. She grew up knowing she was different but blamed herself for not being able to fit in. It was only after she had dropped out of school and began seeing a psychiatrist for depression that she was diagnosed with autism and her teenage struggles to connect with others began to make sense.

"It was a life where you would not even speak 10 words a day," Lee told AFP of her time at school. "I'd lived my whole life thinking that I'm just a weird person... and it's my fault that I can't get along with other people." —AFP



Horse-Drawn carriage driver Christina Hansen rides her carriage through the borough of Manhattan. —AFP photos

an immigrant business," with drivers from 20 countries, including Italy, Ireland, Turkey, Brazil and Mexico. They can earn around \$100,000 a year.

Holden's bill has 14 sponsors and needs 26 votes to be adopted. Activists hope a vote will be held by October. Passing the law will be difficult though, with the drivers backed by the city's powerful trans-

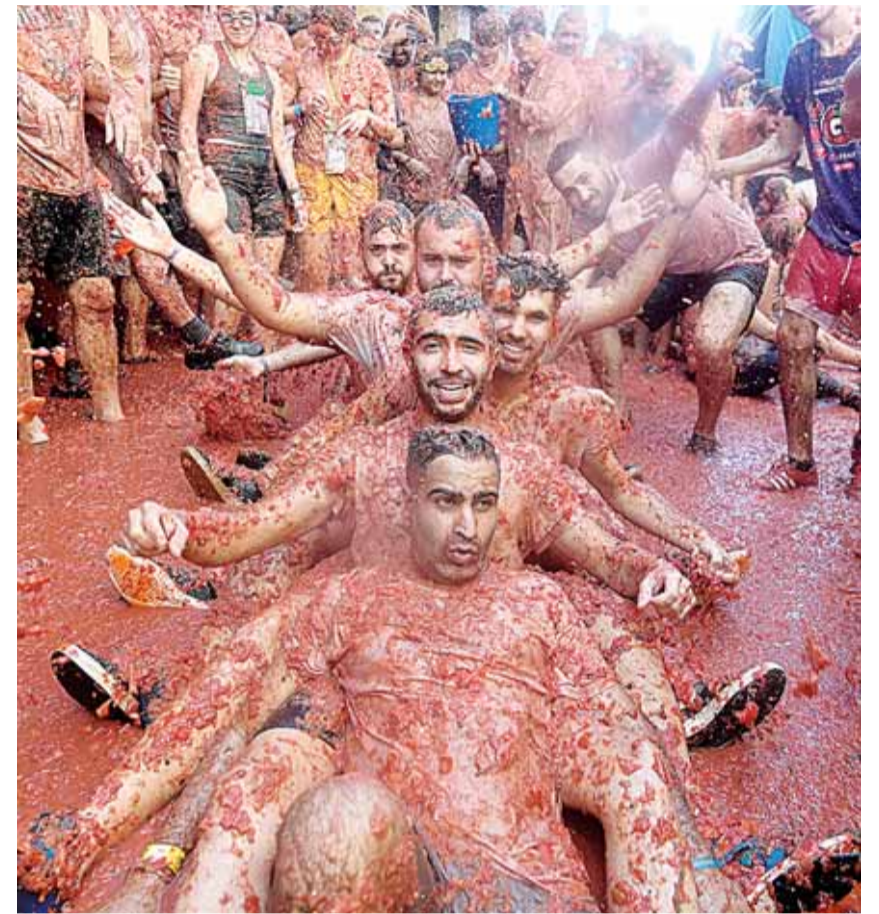
port workers union. Hansen says "nobody wants to drive an electric golf cart," but Holden insists the drivers will earn more with e-carriages because they will be able to work in all weather. "It's clean technology. It's win-win," he says. —AFP



A Horse-Drawn carriage is parked in the borough of Manhattan.

Lifestyle | Feature

Spain's tomato food fight fiesta returns after pandemic



Revelers covered in tomato pulp take part in the annual "Tomatina" festival in the eastern town of Bunol. —AFP



Thousands of revelers splattered each other with tomatoes on Wednesday in the Spanish town of Bunol celebrating the return of the annual "Tomatina" food fight after a two-year absence due to the COVID pandemic. A convoy of six trucks carrying 130 tons of ripe tomatoes rolled through the eastern town's narrow streets, as teams on board distributed the load among the baying crowd for an hour-long frenzy. The festival—billed as "the world's biggest food fight"—has become a major draw for foreigners, in particular from Australia, Britain, Japan and the United States.

But this year only 15,000 of the 20,000 available tickets sold as fewer people from Asia made the trip due to lingering COVID-19 travel restrictions, local officials said. The bang of fireworks set off the free-for-all at noon and within minutes the streets were bathed in red goo. Revelers, some wearing goggles to protect their eyes, bent down to pick up tomatoes from the ground to throw while others lay in the pulp.

"We have come to the 'Tomatina' because it's the craziest thing we have seen here," Patricio, a tourist from Mexico, told local television station A Punt. The town of around 9,500 people has since 2013 charged a participation fee to control the growing numbers who had flocked to the festival last held in 2019 before COVID curbs. "We were really eager to resume our beloved party, to once again be able to throw tomatoes at each other and release all the adrenaline we built up these last two years," said Maria Valles, Bunol's town councillor for tourism. The food fight is followed by festivities including concerts and contests which last into the night. The "Tomatina" started in 1945 when locals brawling in the street at a folk festival grabbed tomatoes from a grocer's stall and let loose. In 2002 Spain's tourism secretary named the event a "festivity of international tourist interest" because of its popularity. The "Tomatina" has inspired similar celebrations in Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile and the United States. —AFP



Sports

SKY is the limit: Suryakumar redefines Twenty20 batting

Suryakumar smashes 68 off 26 balls to lift India

DUBAI: India's Suryakumar Yadav makes unconventional look cool and his attacking instincts makes him a force to reckon with for the Twenty20 World Cup later this year in Australia. Suryakumar smashed 68 off 26 balls to lift India from 94-2 in 13 overs to post a mammoth 192-2 against minnows Hong Kong in the Asia Cup Twenty20 tournament on Wednesday.

India's bowlers restricted Hong Kong to 152-5 as they won by 40 runs to sail into the Super Four of the six-nation tournament, which acts as a precursor to T20's showpiece event in October-November. Suryakumar's batting blitz stood out and was acknowledged by star batsman Virat Kohli who had the best seat in the house at the non-striker's end as the two put on 98 runs off 42 balls.

Kohli, who is enduring a long batting slump, made 59 off 44 balls but looked amazed with Suryakumar's show as he allowed the batsman to lead the walk back after the innings ended. "He came in and completely changed the momentum of the game on a pitch that was not as easy as he made it look to bat," Kohli said in a chat with Suryakumar for India's cricket board website. "It was a brilliant knock. I have seen so many from a distance when we played the IPL, but this was my first experience of watching it very closely. I was completely blown away."

Suryakumar struck six sixes including four in the last over to pulverise a hapless Hong Kong attack, who had India on the defensive early on. A product of the Indian Premier League, Suryakumar, who loves his tattoos and carries a soothing smile under his gelled hair, made his debut for India last year and quickly became the team's go-to man in crunch situations with his aggressive approach.

'Fearless' batting

But on Wednesday his freakish display of batting with audacious shots including the sit-down lap hit over the fine-leg region for six to the flick-of-the wrist hit over deep mid-wicket were jaw dropping. "Some of the shots are pre-determined because this format is about how you prepare when you go into bat," a smiling Suryakumar, known as SKY for his initials, told reporters after the win. "But it's important to stay in the present when you go out there."

The 31-year-old batsman, who has hit six half-centuries and one hundred in his 25 T20 matches at a strike rate of 177.51 for India, said he is "flexible" to bat at any position his team wants. "I've told the captain and coaches I'll play anywhere, just play me," said Suryakumar, who was named man of the match. Skipper Rohit Sharma, who fell for 21, also praised Suryakumar's "fearless" batting. A powerful striker of the cricket ball, Suryakumar made his debut in India's top domestic competition - the Ranji Trophy - in 2010 with an impressive 73 for Mumbai.

But it was his IPL pyrotechnics with Mumbai Indians that got him recognition and a place in the national side and there has been no looking back. "I have seen it before, that's why I am not surprised. But he is doing that at the international level to world class bowlers," former India opener Wasim Jaffer, who was Suryakumar's captain at Mumbai domestic side, said on ESPNcricinfo. "It's just that he hits to so many different parts (of the ground) from third-man to the other end makes it so hard for the bowlers to bowl. So I am happy he comes at three-or four and not any lower." —AFP



DUBAI: India's Suryakumar Yadav plays a shot during the Asia Cup Twenty20 international cricket match between India and Hong Kong at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai on August 31, 2022. —AFP

Smith's jump to LIV, biggest blow yet in golf power struggle

HONG KONG: Cameron Smith's defection to the Saudi-funded LIV Golf circuit is the biggest blow yet to the US PGA and European Tours in a power struggle threatening to rip the sport apart. Before the capture of the 29-year-old world number two on Tuesday, LIV Golf had been derided as a place for players past their prime to swell their pension funds. No longer. Australia's Smith is enjoying the best year of his career and is one of the biggest draws in golf after winning the 150th Open Championship at St Andrews in July for his first major.

The colorful Smith, who sports a mullet and moustache, will make his LIV debut in Boston on Friday after reportedly banking more than \$100 million to leap across the widening rift between the old and new forces in the sport. The new circuit has been accused of "sportswashing" Saudi Arabia's human rights record, backed by the almost unlimited resources of the kingdom's sovereign wealth Public Investment Fund.

Saudi Arabia has drawn major criticism over the murder and dismembering of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in its Istanbul consulate, and for cracking down on rights activists, many of whom have been jailed. Smith, who will now be kicked off the International team for September's Presidents Cup, admitted to Australian Golf Digest that money was a motivator.

"It was obviously a business decision for one and an offer I couldn't ignore," he said. Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy has been one of LIV's fiercest critics and reportedly spoke to Smith to make sure that the Australian knew exactly what he was getting in to.

Japan's Hataoka out to defend crown at LPGA Dana Open

WASHINGTON: Defending champion Nasa Hataoka of Japan leads a field of returning moms, major winners and a teen prodigy when the LPGA Dana Open tees off Thursday. Hataoka fired a career-low 61 in the opening round last year at Highland Meadows in Sylvania, Ohio, and won an event trimmed to 54 holes by bad weather.

"This course is very challenging," Hataoka said. "Fairways are narrow, greens are pretty small, so it's really important to hit a good tee shot. I was able to do that last year. I think that's the key." Hataoka won her sixth career LPGA title in April at the Los Angeles Open and hopes the event's move from the heat of July to the relative September cool will help her repeat bid.

"The win in LA definitely gave me a boost of confidence, especially on a very difficult golf course," Hataoka said. "Recently I haven't been in contention, but I feel like fall is my season. So I will try my best, and maybe two wins is a good number." Spain's Azahara Munoz and American Paula Creamer will make their returns to LPGA play after

Foster urges fearless All Blacks display to avenge Pumas loss

HAMILTON: All Blacks coach Ian Foster said Thursday that New Zealand will need to play without fear against Argentina in Hamilton on Saturday to avenge their shock defeat last weekend and prevent the humiliation of losing a fourth successive home Test. The under-fire Foster surprised critics by naming the same starting players who lost 25-18 in Christchurch as the Pumas made history with their first victory over the All Blacks in New Zealand.

Argentina coach Michael Cheika made four changes to his side, who he still labeled as "underdogs", despite successive victories over Australia and New Zealand that took

"Any decision you make in your life purely for money usually doesn't end up going the right way," McIlroy said earlier this year. "I just don't see the value in tarnishing a reputation for extra millions."

Norman coup

The brainchild of Australian former world number one Greg Norman, the LIV Golf Invitational Series is gathering momentum after a stuttering start that only drew more attention to where the money was coming from. Norman drew scorn after dismissing the 2018 murder of Khashoggi as a "mistake". Amnesty International called the remarks "seriously misguided".

It is not only golf. Saudi Arabia has piled huge sums into hosting Formula One, world heavyweight championship boxing and buying Premier League Newcastle United, as it bids to use sport to improve the country's image. Norman knows that he has now pulled off a major coup in snaring Smith along with the likes of 19th-ranked upcoming talent Joaquin Niemann.

"The best and the brightest continue to embrace the excitement and energy of LIV Golf and what we're building," Norman declared. Until now, multiple major winners Dustin Johnson, Phil Mickelson, Bryson DeChambeau and Brooks Koepka had been the most notable LIV signings, but all are battling poor form or fitness, or advancing years. Other well-known LIV recruits such as Lee Westwood, Ian Poulter and Sergio Garcia are past their best, but Smith is credible, with a game that can help LIV counter jibes that it is just an exhibition circuit.

Who's next after Smith?

The US PGA Tour has been quick to ban players who jump ship. But it has been slow to counter LIV's megabucks and innovative 54-hole shotgun start format, where a day's play is condensed into a TV-friendly four-hour window. After an elite players-only meeting last week hosted by Tiger Woods and McIlroy, the tour announced new events featuring all its top players for \$20 million purses, bigger than any

maternity breaks. Creamer gave birth to Hilton eight months ago while baby Lucas arrived to Munoz in February.

"It has been amazing to be back," Munoz said. "I was a bit nervous coming to the course on Monday actually. Feels like it has been forever. I've enjoyed being home so much." Lucas has been a helpful new member of the team so far. "He's incredible. He's such a good little boy," Munoz said. "He has the best temperament, so he literally never cries. He's so easygoing. So it's been super enjoyable."

A local teen hero in the field is 14-year-old Gianna Clemente, who played in last week's LPGA Canadian Open and won the Monday qualifying event to play this week near her hometown of Warren, Ohio. "Super lucky for this opportunity," Clemente said. "I probably should be going up to people, but I'm a little too nervous to do that. I'm not as stressed out as I was before. I'm just going to go out there and have fun with dad on the bag again."

It wasn't so many years ago that she was watching her rivals at this event while a fan walking with her dad outside the ropes. "It's kind of crazy to me," she said. "This is definitely a special one to play in so I'm really excited." The field features this year's five women's golf major winners in Australia's Minjee Lee, who withdrew due to illness last week; South Korean Chun In-gee, American Jennifer Kupcho, Canada's Brooke Henderson and South African Ashleigh Buhai. —AFP

them top of the Rugby Championship table. "For those that want blood, I guess we haven't given it have we?" Foster said, explaining he doesn't want his players to feel their places are constantly under threat after a four defeats in six Tests in 2022, including a home series loss to Ireland.

"If you play under fear, you restrict your options, you restrict your thinking and what actually happens is you don't get your game going," Foster said. "We believe the best way to build confidence in those pressure moments is put the guys out there who have just been through it, have felt it." Foster has overhauled his bench, recalling 298 caps worth of experience through hooker Dane Coles, lock Brodie Retallick, flanker Dalton Papali'i and fly-half Beauden Barrett.

Cheika dropped his lone Christchurch try-scorer, flanker Juan Martin Gonzalez, to the bench along with lock Matias Alemanno, wing Lucio Cinti and scrum-half Gonzalo Bertranou. Forwards Santiago Gronдона and Matias Alemanno are recalled, along with experienced back Tomas Cubelli and Santiago Cordero.



ATLANTA: Cameron Smith of Australia putts on the eighth green during the third round of the TOUR Championship at East Lake Golf Club in Atlanta, Georgia. —AFP

of this year's majors.

It wasn't enough to sway Smith or any of the five other new LIV recruits announced this week, also including India's number one Anirban Lahiri and another Australian, Marc Leishman. There could be more to come after the Presidents Cup, with the 2021 Masters winner Hideki Matsuyama and Japan's massive golf market a prime target. —AFP



Nasa Hataoka of Japan

Cheika laughed off suggestions that the Pumas would start as favorites, with last week's historic result following a 48-17 dismantling of Australia in San Juan. "Mate, we're in New Zealand, playing against New Zealand," he told reporters. "I know that you guys like to manoeuvre the story around, but we're about as underdog as you get. You win once, and then no one expects you to win again." "There's absolutely no benefit for any of us to think about anything like that," though he conceded that Ireland's successive wins in July "gives us some hope".

Foster said New Zealand's command of possession and territory, primarily off the dominance of their scrum, had made the historic defeat all the more difficult to accept. In front after 50 minutes, Foster said his side repeatedly ran into Argentina's wall of defenders with a lack of attacking variety. "It's an area where I think great All Blacks teams have always been great - in that last 15 minutes - backing themselves and doing the right thing," he said. —AFP

'All dead': Munich Olympics massacre 50 years ago

PARIS: September 5, 1972: Palestinian gunmen storm the Olympic Village at the Summer Games in Munich and take a group of Zionist athletes hostage, triggering a standoff that ends in a massacre. AFP was the first news outlet to report on the tragic climax of the attack that shocked the world 50 years ago. Here's a look at how it unfolded.

'Games of Peace and Joy'

It is the 11th day of the Munich Olympic Games, dubbed the "Games of Peace and Joy" by organisers eager to erase memories of the 1936 Games in Berlin, presided over by Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. At dawn, eight men wearing tracksuits and carrying sports holdalls scale the fence of the Olympic village enclosure and head for 31 Connollystrasse where the Zionist delegation is staying. Those running into them think they are athletes returning from a night on the town. Masked in black scarves and touting handguns, they burst into the apartments.

Two men who try to stop them are killed: wrestling coach Moshe Weinberg and weightlifter Yossef Romano. Some escape, but nine others are taken hostage, hands bound behind their backs. Two cleaning ladies working nearby raise the alarm after hearing gunfire. "It was between 4 and 5 am... when I opened my door I saw in the stairwell a man in plain clothes wearing a cap and brandishing a machine gun," a witness living in the same building as the Zionists, tells AFP.

Black September

"Shortly after 0700 GMT (8 am local time) nearly 3,000 police officers are deployed in and around the Olympic Village. Elite marksmen arrive and surround the building," AFP reporters at the scene write. In the course of the morning, the operation is claimed by the radical Black September militant group, already notorious for the assassination of Jordanian Prime Minister Wasfi Tal and the hijacking of a Belgian airliner a few months before the Olympics.

They demand the release of more than 200 Palestinian prisoners held in Zionist entity - a demand refused outright by the government of Golda Meir. In negotiations with the West German authorities they threaten to execute the hostages if their demands are not met. Meanwhile, several thousand people congregate around the Olympic Village to wait for news of the hostages. The competitions continue as normal from early morning. At 3:50 pm local time, authorities halt the Games for 34 hours - a first in Olympic history.

Gunbattle at airport

After 11 hours of talks, the German negotiators manage in the evening to convince the gunmen to leave for Cairo with the hostages onboard a plane placed at their disposal. At around 10 pm the eight militants and their nine hostages are taken by helicopter from the Olympic Village to the Fuerstenfeldbruck military air base, where German police had decided to mount a rescue operation.

Five police snipers open fire on the group soon after they land. A gun battle erupts, in which a Palestinian fighter throws a hand grenade into a helicopter which explodes. Towards midnight the West German government spokesman Conrad Ahlers says the rescue operation has been a success and the hostages freed. AFP journalists at the scene, however, report that "a battle is raging. Machine gunfire can be sporadically heard, isolated gunfire also, no doubt from the elite marksmen". —AFP

Sports

Groves wins frantic sprint, takes stage 11 of the Vuelta a Espana

Alaphilippe becomes latest Vuelta casualty

MADRID: Australian Kaden Groves won a frantic sprint to take stage 11 of the Vuelta a Espana on Wednesday as Remco Evenepoel maintained his overall lead on a day dominated by further rider casualties. After more big names failed to start following positive COVID tests, Julian Alaphilippe crashed out with less than 70 kilometres to go, dealing a blow to his hopes of a world title hat-trick and to the Vuelta chances of team-mate Evenepoel. "It's sad on such a quiet stage to lose Julian," said Evenepoel. "It's a stupid fall. I hope he's okay and that he doesn't suffer too much."

"He was in great shape, but I have confidence in all my teammates for the coming weeks," Groves gave BikeExchange their first victory of this year's Vuelta on the day they lost British team leader Simon Yates following a positive COVID test. "This morning with the news of Simon going positive for COVID all the boys were pretty disappointed," said Groves after the 191.2km run along the windy Andalusian coast to Cabo de Gata.

"It was the best way to bounce back after such news." "I'm really happy to celebrate but also wish he was here," said Groves after his first major tour stage victory. Evenepoel finished safely in the peloton to preserve his 2min 41sec lead over Primoz Roglic but the Belgian lost a key ally in Alaphilippe. The double world champion left the course in an ambulance after dislocating his right shoulder in a fall with less than 70km to go.

He will fly to Belgium for further scans to rule out

any further damage, his Quick-Step team said in a statement. The crash puts 30-year-old Alaphilippe's chances of winning three straight world championship road races in doubt. This year's event is in Wollongong, Australia, on September 25. Among the COVID casualties was Irish sprinter Sam Bennett of Bora, who dropped out Tuesday. He had been a close second in the points competition after winning two stages earlier in the race.

Sprint leader Mads Pedersen suddenly had a big advantage but needed to collect as many points as possible on flat finishes with second-place Evenepoel a threat in the coming mountain stages. Pedersen collected maximum points in an intermediate sprint with 10km to go, but was outmanoeuvred in the massed charge for the finish line. The Dane ended up fifth after being boxed in. "It was pretty fast, a lot of guys everywhere," the Trek rider said. "I misjudged it a little bit." Groves outpaced Dutchman Danny van Poppel and Belgian Tim Merlier to the line.

'Paranoia'

Alaphilippe was the latest casualty in a Vuelta that has been hit unusually hard by crashes and COVID positives. Quick-Step had lost another rider, Pieter Serry, to a positive COVID test on Sunday. After Yates, the 2018 Vuelta champion, Pavel Sivakov of Ineos, who was also in the top 10, and three Kern Pharma riders withdrew before Wednesday's 11th stage, the day's racing began



CABO DE GATA: Team Bikeexchange's Australian rider Kaden Groves (center) celebrates as he wins the 11th stage of the 2022 La Vuelta cycling tour of Spain on August 31, 2022. —AFP

with only 154 of the 184 starters. "There is a little paranoia among the riders," said Colombian Miguel Angel Lopez.

"We see that every day several teams are starting without all their riders. We have to be pay a lot

of attention and wear the mask and continue to respect the rules." On Thursday, riders traveled 192.7km through Andalusia on a stage that is mostly flat until a demanding 19km finishing climb up Penas Blancas. —AFP



NEW YORK: USA's Serena Williams celebrates her win against Estonia's Anett Kontaveit during their 2022 US Open Tennis tournament women's singles second round match on August 31, 2022. —AFP

Battling Serena powers into US Open 3rd round

NEW YORK: Serena Williams roared into the third round of the US Open on Wednesday, overpowering second seed Anett Kontaveit with a battling performance to extend her Grand Slam singles career in dramatic fashion. The 40-year-old tennis icon, who has signaled she plans to retire after the tournament-drew on all her reserves of resilience and sheer fighting spirit to take down Kontaveit with a 7-6 (7/4), 2-6, 6-2 at an electric Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Kontaveit appeared to have gained the upper hand over the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion after leveling the match at 1-1 with a dominant second set display. But Williams showed her champion's mentality to yank back momentum in the decider, breaking Kontaveit twice before closing out victory to leave a sell-out crowd featuring the likes of golf superstar Tiger Woods on its feet.

"You know this is what I do best," a delighted Williams said after her win. "I love a challenge and love rising to the challenge. I haven't played many matches but I've been practicing really well and my last few matches it just wasn't coming together...But the last couple of matches here in New York it's really come together."

'This could be it'

Williams admitted she had feared the worst after she was unable to respond as Kontaveit upped her game to take the second set. "I thought 'Oh my goodness, I've got to give my best effort because this could be it,'" Williams said. "I just wanted to keep trying and see what I could do and do my best." Williams, who won the first of her Grand Slam singles titles as a 17-year-old at the US Open in 1999, said she was now playing with no pressure with the finish line of her remarkable career in sight.

"I don't have anything to prove, I don't have anything to win. I have absolutely nothing to lose," she said. Williams will return to Arthur Ashe on Thursday to take part in the women's doubles, where she will reunite with elder sister Venus for the first time since 2018. Kontaveit meanwhile admitted she had been rattled by a ferociously partisan New York crowd. "I expected it but it was really hard," Kontaveit said. "I knew it was coming. It was something I'd never experienced before." Serena's victory once again stole the show on day three of the tournament.

In other women's draw action on Wednesday, China's Wang Xiyu upset third seed Maria Sakkari of Greece, winning 3-6, 7-5, 7-5. The 21-year-old had never been past the second round of a Grand Slam tournament before, but uncorked 35 winners while saving 12 of 17 break points to secure her win. Wang, ranked 75th in the world, has happy memories of New York, having won the junior US Open title at the venue in 2018. —AFP

Kyrgios advances after F-bombs and marijuana rant

NEW YORK: Nick Kyrgios claimed fans were smoking marijuana and unleashed a volley of expletives at members of his entourage before advancing to the US Open third round in typically tempestuous fashion on Wednesday. The volatile Australian was given a code violation during an ugly flashpoint in the third set of his victory over France's Benjamin Bonzi on Louis Armstrong court.

Kyrgios appeared to aim a mouthful of spit in the general direction of his box and then dropped several F-bombs at his team after suffering a break of serve. Kyrgios went on to drop the set but subsequently recovered his composure to secure a 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 victory. Kyrgios later said he had been taken by surprise by the resistance of world number 50 Bonzi. "I was literally hanging by a thread. His level today was incredible," Kyrgios said during an on-court interview.

"Honestly I was not expecting an absolute war. That could have gone either way. I played some really risky tennis in that fourth set to get the win. I'm just really happy to get through. "It's been a very stressful time. Me and my team have have high expectations to go deep this week and I'm just glad I got through."

Kyrgios said he was still adjusting to the pressure of expectation after a year which saw him reach his first Grand Slam final at Wimbledon. "It's made life more stressful," he said. "Every tournament I play



NEW YORK: Nick Kyrgios of Australia in action against Benjamin Bonzi of France in their Men's Singles Second Round match on Day Three of the 2022 US Open at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on August 31, 2022. —AFP

now I'm expecting to play amazing tennis every time.

"But I'd rather have that pressure and the expectation to go far. And compared to last year I'm much more confident. I feel like I'm playing some of the best tennis in my life." Earlier, during the second set, Kyrgios had complained about being able to smell marijuana in the stadium. "If it was food smells, I wouldn't be complaining," Kyrgios told umpire Jaime Campistol. "It's marijuana. When an athlete has asthma, it's obviously not ideal." Campistol responded by making a plea to the spectators.

"As a courtesy to the players, please refrain from smoking around the court," he said. Kyrgios is no stranger to getting upset with Grand Slam crowds. In July's Wimbledon final, he demanded a fan be ejected from Centre Court at the All England Club for consuming "700 drinks" and being "drunk out of her mind." The woman who was the target of the Australian's anger said she intended to sue over the "baseless and reckless allegations". Kyrgios was also fined \$10,000 for spitting in the direction of fans during a first round match at Wimbledon. —AFP

Verstappen expecting 'pretty crazy' festival

ZANDVOORT: Max Verstappen is expecting an emotional and "pretty crazy" festival as he heads into his first home race as world champion, seeking his 10th win of the season, at this weekend's Dutch Grand Prix. Buoyant after a run of spectacular triumphs including a masterclass for Red Bull at last Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix, the runaway leader of the title race warned the clamour of a capacity crowd could be distracting as he faces a much tougher contest. "It will be harder for us to be as dominant and I expect Ferrari to be strong," said the 24-year-old Dutchman. "There's a lot more downforce required at Zandvoort."

"Of course, I want a good result, but it's important to score points, always, so let's hope we can do a good job. My family will be there to support me, and I will enjoy the weekend with the fans. "It's going to be pretty crazy." Verstappen will pay tribute to his father Jos, a former F1 driver who guided his son through his early career, with a new helmet design. "I thought it would be a good time to show appreciation of my dad's efforts made for me when I was a little kid to bring me to where I am today," he said.

"It's a bit emotional, but I think it's just special too because it shows how I started in karting—and the old pictures of me in go-karts are with this design. I hope a lot 'Dutchies' and my dad's fans appreciate this." Verstappen will be seeking to repeat his stirring win last year, when the Dutch event returned after a 36-year absence, to increase his 93-point lead ahead of team-mate Sergio Perez in the championship and 98-point advantage on Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

The Monegasque was left crushed by last Sunday's result, but Ferrari believe Red Bull were heavily favoured by the nature of the circuit and can bounce back this week ahead of their own home race at Monza a week later. "Zandvoort should be a lot better for us," said Carlos Sainz, who was third in Belgium behind the two Red Bulls. "Monza should be advantageous to Red Bull, but we will try to win this one."



SPA: Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen competes in the qualifying session for the Belgian Formula One Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps race-track in Spa. —AFP

Hamilton 'fired up'

Mercedes will also seek to recover from a disappointing weekend that saw seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton retire on the opening lap for the first time since 2016 after colliding with Fernando Alonso's Alpine. "We're working to understand our struggles and then to utilize those learnings," said team boss Toto Wolff, who last Sunday labelled the team's efforts as "unacceptable".

"It was a challenging weekend for us as a team, but those weekends are the ones that really fire you up and make you dig deeper. There were such big extremes across the weekend—from the pace differences on Saturday and Sunday to Lewis's first lap and then George's late bid for a podium."

Mercedes' history and depth of talent suggests that they should mount a more serious challenge with Ferrari, similarly stung by last Sunday's Spa result, also set to give Red Bull a much closer challenge. For Verstappen, it may require patience and a cool head as he bids for a fourth straight win and the 30th of his career en route to his second title. A pragmatic approach may be needed before any party begins in the Zandvoort sand dunes. —AFP

HK cricketers shine on the big stage

DUBAI: Hong Kong batsman Kinchit Shah usually handles the family diamond business and he sparkled in a losing cause against India, studding an innings of 30 with two fours and a six in the T20 Asia Cup. The Mumbai-born vice-captain, who proposed to his girlfriend after the match in Dubai on Wednesday, is part of an eclectic mix of pizza delivery men and university students representing Hong Kong against Asia's cricket giants in the UAE this week.

The talented band of expatriates have been on the road since June, culminating in a berth in the main draw of the six-nation Asia Cup after winning all three qualifying matches. They lost to top-ranked India by 40 runs on Wednesday, but only after a fight in their chase of 193. Their next match against Pakistan on Friday in Sharjah could be their last in the tournament, but skipper Nizakat Khan said they had been flooded with praise from loved ones in their adopted home. "We have lots of support back in Hong Kong. We have lots of messages from family and friends," said Pakistan-born Nizakat. "It's a big learning curve for us to play against India and Pakistan. We take something out of these two games and hopefully the players learn a lot."

The team's media manager Smita Chhetri told AFP that three players, Babar Hayat, Ehsan Khan and Yasim Murtaza, have recently become fathers but have only seen their newborns on video calls. For most players in Hong Kong, cricket is not the only means of livelihood as opportunities for the national team are few and far between. "A few of our players are doing food delivery service part time," Chhetri said. "And few of them are teachers as well as handling family businesses like Kinchit Shah." —AFP

Sports

EPL eye all-time transfer record despite cost of living crisis in UK

Gross spending by 20 Premier League teams stands at £1.5 billion

LONDON: The cost of living crisis in England has passed Premier League clubs by with the all-time record for an entire season, £1.86 billion (\$2.15 billion) from 2017-18, under threat of being broken come the closing of the transfer window later on Thursday. Cristiano Ronaldo's 37-year-old legs and sky-high wages have deterred Europe's aristocracy from signing him from Manchester United and granting his wish for Champions League football.

However, in contrast United and their domestic rivals have found no outlandish fee or wage demands beyond them. As of last Thursday, gross spending by the 20 Premier League teams stood at £1.5 billion, surpassing the 2017 record of £1.43 billion spent by English clubs in the close-season window. It was also more than the £1.44 billion spent in the whole of last season.

Manchester United helped reduce the gap further early on Thursday as Erik ten Hag was reunited with another of his former Ajax proteges, Antony. The 22-year-old was prised away for a reported 95 million euros, making the Brazilian forward the fourth most expensive player in Premier League history. "This is an incredible moment in my career to be joining one of the most iconic clubs in the world," Antony said in a statement on United's website.

His fee is a record for an Eredivisie player, demoting former Ajax team-mate Frenkie de Jong's 86-million-euro move to Barcelona to second. Ironically, United have pursued the latter throughout the close season without success. Antony is likely to be United's last big money signing of this window, with a reported £60 million for 30-year-old Brazilian midfielder Casemiro their other eye-catching capture. "As a manager you always want more," said Ten Hag. "You always want to maximize but at a certain point you also have to be satisfied with what is there."

'Best for the club'

His spending pales into insignificance compared to that of Chelsea, whose indifferent start to the campaign mirrors that of United's. Thomas Tuchel has outlaid around £250 million of the American owners' money, receiving similar backing to that of former owner Roman Abramovich in the transfer market.

Bayern dispatch third-tier German Cup opponents

BERLIN: Sadio Mane was one of five different goalscorers as Bayern Munich qualified for the next round of the German Cup with a 5-0 win away at Viktoria Cologne on Wednesday. "You want to see these players stand out," said Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann said after the win, lauding the star quality in his squad. "I'm not a fan of the first round of the cup, because as favorite you've got everything to lose."

Mane's goal, scored in the 53rd minute, was his fifth in six games this season since his summer arrival from Premier League side Liverpool. Former Arsenal forward Serge Gnabry held up the ball, drawing in Cologne goalkeeper Ben Voll to find Mane unmarked in front of goal. Two further summer arrivals in Ryan Gravenberch and 17-year-old starlet Mathys Tel both scored first-half goals, breaking down a stubborn but outgunned Cologne defence.

Teenager Jamal Musiala scored his side's fourth in the 67th minute just four minutes after replacing Mane from the bench, controlling a pass from Thomas Mueller from the penalty spot. Bayern added a fifth through Germany midfielder Leon Goretzka, playing his first game of the season after returning from a knee injury. This was only the second ever meeting between these two clubs, with the previous encounter in 1979-80 ending in a 3-1 win for the Bavarians.

Viktoria manager Olaf Janssen praised his team's



Cristiano Ronaldo

Having finally got French defender Wesley Fofana for a reported £70 million on Wednesday, Tuchel is still keen to sign veteran Gabonese striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang from Barcelona. The 33-year-old would cost around £7.5 million with Chelsea defender Marcos Alonso also part of the package. This despite Aubameyang being sidelined for several weeks after having his jaw broken in a break-in at his house earlier this week. There are also rumors that Tuchel is keen to denude Ajax of another star, Edson Alvarez, who would be considerably more expensive than Aubameyang.

Liverpool have been relatively parsimonious in the transfer market, but Jurgen Klopp is known to want a midfielder—even more so with Jordan Henderson going off injured in the 2-1 win over Newcastle on Wednesday. Klopp is a known admirer of Aston Villa's

Brazilian midfielder Douglas Luiz, who has a year left on his contract. Villa could do with him as they have made a poor start to the season—they are second from bottom after five matches—but their manager and former Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard admits the matter is out of his hands.

"There's more than two people that are in control of that but I'm certainly not one of them," said Gerrard. "That will be Douglas, that will be his agent and that will be what happens around that. "We are not in a position where we need to lose top players. "But at the same time, Douglas has got a year to go and it is really one of those really touchy situations where the club has to do what is best for the club, not necessarily what is best for me." Liverpool are also trying to bring in Brazilian midfielder Arthur Melo on loan from Juventus. —AFP



COLOGNE: Bayern Munich's German forward Thomas Mueller (center) and Viktoria Koeln's German midfielder Moritz Fritz vie for the ball during the German Cup (DFB Pokal) first round football match FC Viktoria Koeln v FC Bayern Munich on August 31, 2022. —AFP

effort against one of Europe's most in-form teams. "I knew how brutal it could be for a third-division side to play against Bayern in this type of form," Janssen said. "We defended everything we could and we can be incredibly proud of ourselves." Bayern, who meet Union Berlin in a top-of-the-table Bundesliga clash on Sunday, have now scored 26 goals in six matches since the departure of striker Robert Lewandowski.

Bayern have twice been eliminated in the early

rounds from the German Cup over the past two seasons. In the 2020-21 campaign the Bavarians lost on penalties to second-division Holstein Kiel in the second round of the Cup, while in the 2021-22 season the 20-time winners were ousted 5-0 at the hands of Borussia Moenchengladbach. On Tuesday, current German Cup holders RB Leipzig thrashed fourth-division side Teutonia Ottensen 8-0 thanks to a hat-trick from former Chelsea striker Timo Werner. —AFP

Chelsea's boss fined for referee criticism

LONDON: Thomas Tuchel was fined £20,000 (\$23,000) and warned about his future behaviour on Wednesday after the Chelsea manager suggested referee Anthony Taylor should not be allowed to take charge of the club's matches. Tuchel admitted a Football Association charge of improper conduct following his comments about Taylor after Chelsea's stormy 2-2 draw with Tottenham in the Premier League in August.

"An independent regulatory commission has ordered Chelsea's Thomas Tuchel to be fined £20,000 and

warned about his future conduct for breaching FA Rule E3.1 during a post-match press conference on Sunday, August 14 2022," an FA statement said. "The manager admitted that his comments after their Premier League match against Tottenham constitute improper conduct as they imply bias, question the integrity of the match referee, and bring the game into disrepute."

Tuchel was furious after two key decisions by Taylor went against Chelsea and led to Tottenham goals in the London derby. Taylor failed to award a free-kick for a foul on Chelsea forward Kai Havertz in the build-up to Tottenham's first equaliser by Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg, whose shot was allowed to stand despite a strong case for offside against Richarlison.

Harry Kane's stoppage-time equalizer for the visitors

came after Tottenham defender Cristian Romero had avoided punishment for pulling Chelsea's Marc Cucurella to the ground by his hair despite a VAR check. Tuchel and Tottenham boss Antonio Conte were both sent off after the final whistle following a pair of touchline clashes, with the German given a one-game ban.

Asked if Taylor should not referee the Blues again, Tuchel said: "Maybe it would be better, maybe it would be better. "I don't think that just some of the fans think that; I can assure you that the whole dressing room of us, every person thinks that. "Not only the fans. You know the players, they know what's going on when they are on the pitch. They know it." VAR official Mike Dean later admitted he should have asked Taylor to review the Romero-Cucurella incident. —AFP

News in brief

Leicester sign defender Faes

LONDON: Leicester moved quickly to replace Chelsea-bound defender Wesley Fofana by signing Wout Faes from Ligue 1 side Reims on Thursday, their first major acquisition of the summer just hours before the transfer window closes. The 24-year-old Belgian international signed a five-year contract for an undisclosed fee, although it will be significantly less than the reported £70 million (\$81 million) Chelsea paid for Fofana on Wednesday. Faes joins fellow former Anderlecht youth academy product Youri Tielemans at the club. "It's an amazing feeling (to be here); it's not sunk in yet," Faes told LCF TV. "This is the dream step in my career and I'm very happy to be here. "I'm progressing year after year, and I hope to continue doing the same here. "All the facilities and knowledge is here to help me to get even better. "I will have to work hard, but I will give 100 per cent to help the team."

Man City bolster defense

LONDON: Manchester City strengthened their injury-hit defense on Thursday by signing Swiss international Manuel Akanji on a five-year deal from Borussia Dortmund. Akanji will provide the Premier League champions with extra defensive depth after recent injuries to centre-backs Aymeric Laporte and Nathan Ake. "I am delighted to be here, and can't wait to get started," Akanji, who cost City a reported £17 million (\$19.7 million) told the club's website. "City have been one of the best teams in Europe over the last few seasons. They are brilliant to watch, play an exciting brand of football and compete for trophies year in, year out, so coming here feels like the perfect next step in my career." The 27-year-old spent four-and-a-half seasons with Dortmund after joining from Basel in 2018. Akanji is City's fifth summer signing after former Dortmund team-mate Erling Haaland, Kalvin Phillips, Sergio Gomez and Stefan Ortega Moreno.

Balotelli joins Swiss club

PARIS: Mario Balotelli signed a two-year contract Wednesday with Swiss side Sion, the 11th club of the mercurial Italian striker's career. "FC Sion is delighted about the arrival of a world-class forward," the club said in a statement. Balotelli, 32, has scored 14 goals in 36 appearances for Italy but won his last cap in September 2018. He played at Euro 2012 and the 2014 World Cup. The former Manchester City and Liverpool forward arrives after a season in Turkey's top flight with Adana Demirspor. He bagged 18 goals in 31 league games last term but then fell out with the coach. Balotelli previously played for both Milan clubs, winning three league titles with Inter, but disciplinary problems have dogged much of his career. Sion will become Balotelli's fifth club since January 2019, when he attempted to relaunch his career with Marseille after two successful seasons at Nice. He has also had spells at Brescia and Monza in that time. —From AFP



Chelsea's German coach Thomas Tuchel

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMMAD holder of Indian Passport No. T8766760 change my new name MARRIPATI RAJENDRA REDDY and my Wife name ASHA MOHMED change new name MARRIPATI RAJESWARI.

(C# 2401) — 02-09-2022.

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)

Automated enquiry about the Civild card is 1889988

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSALHOTLINE 128

Man City crush Forest 6-0 as Liverpool gather momentum

Record-breaking Haaland hits City treble, Arsenal stay perfect



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland (right) shoots to score the opening goal of the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Nottingham Forest on August 31, 2022. — AFP

LONDON: Erling Haaland hit a second successive hat-trick as Manchester City crushed Nottingham Forest 6-0, while leaders Arsenal extended their perfect start to the Premier League season with a 2-1 win against Aston Villa on Wednesday. City and Arsenal have set the early pace, but Liverpool are gathering momentum after snatching a last-gasp 2-1 victory against Newcastle.

Haaland has made a blistering start since his £50 million (\$58 million) move from Borussia Dortmund in the close-season and the Norway striker's latest goal spree set a Premier League record. Haaland's tally of nine goals after his first five appearances is a new high in the Premier League era, beating the previous mark of eight set by City great Sergio Aguero and Micky Quinn.

Inspired by Haaland's first-half treble, Pep Guardiola's unbeaten side ran riot at the Etihad Stadium, reaching 19 goals from just five games. "I know he's happy scoring goals, but I think what he wants is to win. The records are OK, but I'm pretty sure he would not like it if we did not win,"

Guardiola said of Haaland. "He is a special talent. He smells the box like no one else, his first touch of the game is a goal. That's Erling." City went ahead in the 12th minute when Phil Foden's cross reached Haaland, who poked home from close range.

Haaland, whose father Alfie played for Forest between 1993 and 1997, struck again from close range in the 23rd minute and sealed his treble eight minutes later with a header from virtually on the goal-line. Even with Kevin De Bruyne starting on the bench, the champions were unstoppable and Joao Cancelo curled into the top corner from 20 yards in the 50th minute. Argentine forward Julian Alvarez celebrated his first Premier League start following his move from River Plate with a brace to seal City's biggest win since a 7-0 rout of Leeds in December.

Perfect Arsenal

City are two points behind Arsenal after Mikel Arteta's side once again showed a tenacity so often missing from Gunners teams in recent seasons. Arsenal struck in the 30th minute thanks to a gift

from their former keeper Emiliano Martinez, who pushed a tame Gabriel Martinelli cross straight to Gabriel Jesus for a simple finish.

Second-bottom Villa were level when Douglas Luiz's corner flew straight past Arsenal keeper Aaron Ramsdale in the 74th minute despite the hosts' appeal for a foul. But Arsenal, who came from behind to beat Fulham on Saturday, responded impressively as Martinelli restored their lead three minutes later from Bukayo Saka's cross. "The first half was probably one of the best we have played, then we conceded a goal and it's game on. But the team again reacted incredibly well," Arteta said.

Villa boss Steven Gerrard, jeered off after losing at home to West Ham on Sunday, will come under renewed pressure following his side's fourth defeat in five games this season. Asked if he worried about his future, Gerrard said: "Of course I do. I am really honest and critical of myself." At Anfield, Liverpool left it late to secure a second win this season as Fabio Carvalho's 98th-minute goal saw off Newcastle.

Away striker Alexander Isak rocked Liverpool in the 38th minute of his debut following his £60 million move from Real Sociedad, netting with a composed finish from Sean Longstaff's pass. But, building on the momentum from Saturday's 9-0 rout of Bournemouth - which equaled the record for the Premier League's biggest win - Liverpool equalised when Roberto Firmino slotted in Mohamed Salah's 61st-minute pass. And, well past the original five minutes of stoppage time, Carvalho - a day after his 20th birthday - fired home to spark wild celebrations.

"The perfect moment to win because it was a difficult game. What a wonderful goal from the birthday kid. It's massive. We will remember it for years," Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp said. Third-placed Tottenham had to settle for a 1-1 draw at West Ham, with an own goal from Hammers defender Thilo Kehrer cancelled out by Tomas Soucek's leveller. Managerless Bournemouth drew 0-0 with Wolves at Dean Court in their first game following Scott Parker's sacking after the humiliation at Liverpool. — AFP

Qatar launches media portal for World Cup

DOHA: The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) has launched the Qatar Media Portal, a new digital platform that will give media and broadcasters attending the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 access to a wide range of resources compiled by the Host Country to help them operate at this year's tournament. The new website - media.qatar2022.qa - will host and deliver exclusive Host Country content and facilitate a range of services for those attending this year's tournament, including interview requests with SC and government spokespeople, studio bookings and media tours.

The portal will provide a one-stop shop for Hayya entry permits and filming/photography permits for all media and broadcast representatives attending the tournament (both Host Country-Accredited Media and FIFA-Accredited Media and FIFA MRLs and NRHs). Host Country media accreditation for non-FIFA Accredited Media is also available on the portal, as well as facilitation of hand-carry equipment clearance procedures (excluding drones).

Registered users will also be granted access to Qatar's Host Country video and photography archive, making it an

ideal content resource for media and broadcast representatives attending the tournament in Qatar, as well as for those who do not travel but still wish to cover the tournament remotely.

Fatma Al-Nuaimi, Communications & Media Executive Director, SC, said: "The Qatar Media Portal will provide a valuable resource for media, broadcasters and digital influencers from around the world as they cover the first FIFA World Cup in our region. We look forward to welcoming thousands of media professionals, broadcasters and content creators to Qatar for the tournament as we showcase the very best our country has to offer."

Thousands of media and broadcast representatives are expected to attend Qatar 2022 - with a significant number set to be accredited by the Host Country. Alongside FIFA-Accredited Media and FIFA MRLs and NRHs, Host Country-Accredited Media will have the opportunity to focus on the social and cultural context of the tournament, local news and events, and development aspirations, including those related to the legacy of the FIFA World Cup 2022.

While Host Country-Accredited Media will not have access to official tournament-specific sites, such as FIFA World Cup stadiums, training sites, the Main Media Centre and International Broadcast Centre, they will have access to high-quality media facilities, including the Host Country Media Centre in Msheireb Downtown Doha and centrally-located broadcast studios.

Neymar, Mbappe score as PSG see off Toulouse

PARIS: Goals from Neymar and Kylian Mbappe helped Paris Saint-Germain stay top of the Ligue 1 table with a 3-0 victory at Toulouse on Wednesday. Christophe Galtier's reigning champions were never seriously threatened by their newly-promoted opponents and remain above Lens and Marseille on goal difference.

The fearsome front three of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Mbappe have now scored 18 times between them already this term. "MMN"? We can only be satisfied with their performances," said PSG coach Galtier. Toulouse frustrated PSG early in the game, with goalkeeper Maxime Dupe making two smart stops from Mbappe and tipping a Messi shot wide. But the away side did take the lead in the 37th minute, as Neymar raced onto Messi's through ball and slotted into the bottom corner.

The Brazilian's ninth goal of the season was initially ruled out for offside, but that decision was overturned after a lengthy VAR review. PSG did not take long to score again after half-time, as Messi broke clear into the area before laying the ball off for Mbappe to slot home through the legs of Dupe. The capital side eased off later in the second half, with Neymar and

Messi both substituted. Summer signing Hugo Ekitike almost grabbed his first goal for the club, but was denied by Dupe, who finished the match with 10 saves.

But he was beaten again in the 90th minute when Juan Bernat powered a left-footed strike high into the top corner. Lens, who also have 13 points from five games, continued their fine start with a 5-2 home thrashing of Lorient to move into second place above Marseille on goals scored. Florian Sotoca scored his first goals since an opening weekend hat-trick against Brest with a double, while Wesley Said, Salis Abdul Samed and Lois Openda also found the net.

Marseille remained level on points with the top two as Senegalese midfielder Pape Gueye netted the only goal in a 1-0 win over Clermont. They could have stayed in second spot, but Alexis Sanchez missed a late penalty. Nice finally claimed their first victory of the campaign as Nicolas Pepe scored a match-winning penalty on his second appearance since joining on loan from Arsenal.

Monaco beaten again

Earlier Wednesday, Monaco slumped to a surprise 4-2 home defeat against Troyes. Philippe Clement's Monaco have only mustered five points from five matches so far this term after last weekend's impressive draw at PSG proved to be a false dawn. Guillermo Maripan put Monaco ahead early on before Troyes hit back through Florian Tardieu's 22nd-minute

French Ligue 1 table

French Ligue 1 table after Wednesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Paris SG	5	4	1	0	21	4	13
Lens	5	4	1	0	14	6	13
Marseille	5	4	1	0	11	3	13
Lyon	4	3	1	0	9	4	10
Montpellier	5	3	0	2	15	9	9
Rennes	5	2	1	2	7	6	7
Lorient	4	2	1	1	7	8	7
Lille	5	2	1	2	10	12	7
Auxerre	5	2	1	2	7	9	7
Nantes	5	1	3	1	6	5	6
Troyes	5	2	0	3	10	13	6
Clermont	5	2	0	3	6	10	6
Toulouse	5	1	2	2	7	9	5
Reims	5	1	2	2	9	12	5
Nice	5	1	2	2	4	7	5
Monaco	5	1	2	2	7	11	5
Brest	5	1	1	3	7	15	4
Strasbourg	5	0	3	2	4	6	3
Angers	5	0	2	3	6	12	2
Ajaccio	5	0	1	4	3	9	1

penalty. Maripan was sent off for a second yellow card shortly before half-time to leave Monaco playing with only 10 men for the third time in four league outings. Teenage forward Wilson Odobert gave the visitors the advantage in first-half stoppage time - the 17-year-old scoring his first Ligue 1 goal after joining the club from PSG last month. — AFP