

3 Interior minister inspects KFF preparations for rainy season



8 Berlin tech show facing up to era of energy scarcity



11 Century on, political fights rage over Turkey's dogs



16 Pacquiao eyes boxing return with Saudi exhibition fight



Ex-speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem will not run in Assembly elections

350 candidates register for polls with a day left to sign up



Marzouq Al-Ghanem

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Former speaker of the National Assembly since 2013 Marzouq Al-Ghanem announced on Tuesday he will not run in the Sept 29 snap elections, adding the move is temporary, as he plans to come back at a later stage. He said in a statement on Twitter that after consultations, "I have decided not to run in the current parliamentary elections".

Ghanem thanked the large numbers of supporters throughout Kuwait who had urged him to contest the polls, adding that he will let coming developments to expose a number of "hidden" facts. The US-educated Ghanem is one of the leading politicians in the country. The 53-year-old ex-parliamentarian had become a strong voice in the National Assembly. He was elected as speaker of the house in 2013, 2016 and 2020, but has been at loggerheads with opposition MPs, allying with the former prime minister HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. "The decision not to run in elections is a temporary decision, which will be followed - God willing - with a stronger return to complete the march of safeguarding the interests of the nation," Ghanem said.

He added the temporary decision does not mean

abandoning the political scene or shunning national duties. Ghanem said that this stage requires all of us to stand united before the political leadership and stay away from personal disputes and political quarrels that are harmful to Kuwait's democratic experience. Ghanem is the fifth member of the dissolved house who have announced they will not run in the upcoming elections.

Meanwhile, the number of candidates who registered to contest the Sept 29 snap polls rose to 350 on Tuesday with just one day remaining for the registration process. Of the hopefuls who filed their nomination papers to contest for the 50-seat National Assembly, there are 44 members of the dissolved house. Of the remaining six, five have said they are not running.

Twenty-four female candidates and 326 men have registered, while three candidates withdrew from the race yesterday, raising those who have withdrawn to six. The registration of candidates ends on Wednesday, while the door for withdrawal will remain open until Sept 22. Among those who registered on Tuesday were former leading opposition MP Mohammad Al-Mutair, former opposition MP Musaed Al-Mutairi and former

MP and minister Hamad Rouh El-din.

Mutair said if the elections produce a majority of reformists, the next speaker will be elected by consensus from among the reformists. Former MP Mutairi called on the new Prime Minister HH Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah to start fighting corruption. Rouh El-din, who left the opposition camp to join the Cabinet several months ago, said he adopted a reformist policy in the Cabinet.

Fresh candidate Saudi Al-Asfour called on opposition candidates to end infighting and unify ranks. Former MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa called on the government in a statement to help pass legislation that allows Kuwaiti courts to look at issues related to Kuwaiti citizenship. Under current law, courts are barred from hearing citizenship cases, claiming they are "sovereign" matters.

In a televised speech to the nation in June, HH the Amir pledged the government will not interfere in the parliamentary elections nor the election of the Assembly speaker. The Assembly was dissolved last month over continued disputes between the government and opposition MPs. Snap polls have been set for Sept 29.

News in brief

Former PIFSS chief Rajaan dies

KUWAIT: Fahad Al-Rajaan, former director of Kuwait's Public Institution for Social Security, died in London on Tuesday. Rajaan had fled to the UK with his family after facing accusations including embezzlement of public funds, betrayal of public trust and money laundering relating to when he was the head of PIFSS. In 2019, Rajaan and his wife Muna Al-Wazzan were sentenced to life imprisonment and fined \$311 million. An international arrest warrant was also issued earlier.



Fahad Al-Rajaan

Gulf states warn Netflix

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and neighboring Gulf countries on Tuesday accused streaming giant Netflix of broadcasting content that "contradicts Islamic and societal values" and threatened legal action if it was not removed. A statement issued jointly by the Saudi media regulator and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council did not specifically identify the offending content. "The platform was contacted to remove this content, including content directed to children," the statement said. Regional authorities "will follow up on the platform's compliance with the directives, and in the event that the infringing content continues to be broadcast, the necessary legal measures will be taken." — AFP

Hummus bowls made of Captagon

DAMASCUS: Syrian authorities announced on Tuesday they had seized 24 kg of Captagon that had been crushed and reconstituted to look like hummus bowls. The amphetamine is produced in pill form but these smugglers had crushed it and used the resulting paste to "mold pottery-like dishes coated with a brown adhesive," the interior ministry said. One man was arrested in Damascus in connection with the thwarted trafficking attempt, the statement said. — AFP

Govt: Hawally might turn into another Jleeb

KUWAIT: A government report shows Hawally might turn into another Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in the next few years due to overpopulation. The infrastructure of the area cannot handle the growth in residents, which necessitates new projects to build designated cities to house thousands of workers currently residing in Hawally, Khaitan, Jleeb and Mahboula, which are overflowing with expatriate 'bachelors'.

This overcrowding is a matter of

social security for the area, which was originally intended for expatriate families. According to the report, "the area is quite large and modern relatively, but its infrastructure is subject to misuse, which will make its collapse easier because of overpopulation, and more specifically marginal workers". Moreover, the report claims the area is populated by iqama violators and wanted people, who mostly live in one- or two-bedroom apartments with more than seven single people in them who consume water and electricity illegally.

These 'bachelors' cause a lot of fires due to the pressure on the grid, which also leads to pressure on fire-fighters and a danger of fire spreading over a large area. Moreover, the sewerage system is also under pressure

Continued on page 6



KUWAIT: Old and new buildings are seen in Hawally in this illustrative file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Truss becomes UK PM, vows to 'ride out' storm

LONDON: Liz Truss on Tuesday promised that Britain would see sunnier days ahead despite the current economic gloom, as she made her first speech as prime minister after taking over from Boris Johnson. Heavy rain and thunder forced supporters of the country's third female prime minister to scramble for cover as they waited for her to arrive in Downing Street.

But the clouds lifted as the 47-year-old former foreign secretary's

motorcade swept in, and she vowed that the country would "ride out the storm" of double-digit inflation and soaring energy prices. "I will take action this week to deal with energy bills and to secure our future energy supply," she said. "As strong as the storm may be, I know that the British people are stronger," she added, outlining her priorities as the economy, energy and health.

Truss was announced winner of an internal vote of Conservative party members on Monday, after a grueling contest that began with Johnson's resignation in July. She arrived in Downing Street after a 1,600-km round trip from London to see Queen Elizabeth II in the Scottish Highlands, where she

Continued on Page 6



BALLATER, United Kingdom: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and new Conservative Party leader and Britain's Prime Minister-elect Liz Truss meet at Balmoral Castle Sept 6, 2022. — AFP

Nod to inhalable vaccine in China, nasal shot in India

BEIJING/NEW DELHI: Chinese drug regulators have approved the world's first inhalable COVID-19 vaccine, made by Tianjin-based manufacturer CanSino Biologics, boosting the company's share price by seven percent on Monday. The National

Medical Products Administration gave the go-ahead for the vaccine for emergency use as a booster, the company said in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Sunday.

Following the announcement, company shares surged 14 percent on Monday morning before closing 7.1 percent higher than their opening value. The needle-free vaccine - which can be stored and administered more easily than intramuscular jabs - will be given through a nebulizer, the company said. "The approval will have a positive impact on the company's performance if the vaccine is subsequently purchased and used by relevant govern-

ment agencies," the statement added.

The company did not offer details on when the adenovirus-vectored vaccine - which a Lancet report in July 2021 said induced strong antibody responses - will be made available for public use. Scientists in several countries including Cuba, Canada and the United States are also trialing inhalable COVID-19 vaccines. China has so far approved eight other locally manufactured injectable vaccines since 2020.

But the country's drug administrator is yet to greenlight any foreign vaccines, including mRNA

Continued on Page 6

Kuwait FM meets Arab League peers



CAIRO: Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah with Libyan Foreign Minister, Dr. Najla El Mangoush. — KUNA Photos



CAIRO: Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah with Lebanon's Foreign Minister, Abdullah Abu Habib.



CAIRO: Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets his Jordanian counterpart, Ayman Al-Safady.



CAIRO: Kuwait's Foreign Minister meets with his counterpart from Bahrain, Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani.



CAIRO: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister meets with his counterpart, Abshar Omar from Somalia.

CAIRO: Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister of Kuwait met with other foreign ministers at the Arab League to discuss bilateral ties as well as the latest regional and international developments. The talks which were held on the sidelines of the 158th Arab League ministerial meeting, took place at the League's headquarters in Cairo. Similar talks were also held, separately, between the Kuwaiti diplomat and Tunisian Foreign Minister, Othman Jerandi; Lebanon's Abdullah Abu Habib; Dr. Najla El Mangoush from Libya, Somalia's Abshar Omar, as



well as his counterparts from Jordan and Bahrain- Ayman Al-Safady and Dr Abdullatif Al-Zayani, respectively. — KUNA

Health minister meets with hospital officials

KUWAIT: Dr. Khaled Al-Saeed, Minister of Health, has conducted a meeting with the heads of medical departments from all hospitals and specialized clinics, in order to discuss the medical procedures carried out across various departments in hospitals in Kuwait.

In the subsequent meeting, the minister and his undersecretary, Mustapha Redha, gave an overview on how to provide state-of-the-art medical services to the public, to be updated with the latest technological advancements in the field and to continue maintaining high standards in hospital administration and service excellence. The Minister, in his directives, also urged medical staff to maintain consistent professional values and morals when dealing with coworkers and patients,



KUWAIT: Dr. Khaled Al-Saeed addressing hospital officials at the meeting.

especially patients with special needs and to give all patients the medical care they deserve.

He also appreciated the strength and resilience shown by the current medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, while reminding them that all staff members should equally be lauded for displaying excellence at work and stressed on the importance of providing employees with the necessary tools to perform their duties.



KUWAIT: The Health Minister with hospital officials at the meeting.

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Kuwait to host next Asian Youth Athletics Championships

KUWAIT: Kuwait will host the fourth Asian Youth Athletics Championships 2022, to be held from Oct 13 to 16, which will see the participation of around 400 athletes and staff from 33 Asian countries.

Speaking about the tournament, Sayyar Al-Enezi, Chairman of the Kuwait Athletics Federation, said that "Kuwait was keen on hosting this prestigious tournament." He added that the federation was ready to host the championships which would showcase the best of youth athletes in Asia, adding that the track and field stadium in Kaifan area would

be the venue where competitions will be held.

Al-Enezi also said that Kuwaiti athletes were ready to take on their peers from other Asian countries, even as he commended the support provided by the state in preparation for the championship. The countries participating the tournament include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Brunei, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, Maldives, Philippines, Singapore, Tajikistan, Vietnam and Kuwait.—KUNA



Sayyar Al-Enezi



KUWAIT: Preparations underway for the Asian Youth Athletics Championships. — KUNA

Kuwaiti troops work with peers at Jordan drills

AMMAN: Brigadier Mohammad Abdulnour, Head of Kuwait's military unit, at Jordan's 'Eager Lion 2022,' spoke about Kuwait's participation at the military drill exercise, which is aimed at boosting cooperation with military forces from other nations.

"The drill would enable the engaged military personnel to acquire more expertise in various military sectors: both at the planning and execution levels. Moreover, the troops also get an opportunity to work closely with government sectors and international organization, said Abdulnour.

The maneuvers depict mock scenarios of possible military threats against the region, namely



wars by other military forces or cyber wars, thus the personnel are trained on resisting such threats with advanced military capabilities and state-of-the-art technologies. The exercises that kicked off on Sept 4 and which will be held till Sept 15 involve 3000 troops from 26 countries including Kuwait.—KUNA

Local

Government requests decrease in sectors

KUWAIT: In a bid to combat bureaucracy issues, better the working relations between government sectors and promote transparency, the government has asked its ministers, to decrease the number of sectors in their administration, by either canceling commissions or by merging sectors of a similar nature. Government sources have said that advanced global research indicate smaller sectors and a lean hierarchical structure would help improve the overall management performance, by making it easier to control inflation and employment.

"Employee wages, which consist of two thirds of expenditure have come at the expense of infrastructure projects, economic development, and efforts to attract foreign investors and diversify the economy," the source noted.

"The increase in the number of sectors has caused previous governments to face issues arising from miscommunication and a lack of productivity. This has further complicated the

merging of some sectors and the refusal of the outbranching of government sectors, which usually causes delays in government procedures."

Sources added that there are also plans, to end some independent commissions, which are considered as ministries with their own structural organizations, but do not contribute any serious benefit to the state. These commissions include the Quran and Sunnah commission, which can fall under the management of the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic affairs and the Road and Land Transportation Commission, which is to be shifted to the Ministry of Public Works.

Other commissions that are going to be merged or removed include independent financial and economic units such as competition protection agencies, which will be shifted to the Ministry of Commerce, financial supervision will be shifted to the Ministry of Finance and the nutrition commission, which will be a part of either the

Ministry of Health or the Kuwait municipality.

The source also revealed that units such as the commission of agriculture and commission of the environment, may also be merged, due to their relation with each other, which could benefit the managerial team, reduce economic spending and boost its production.

"Leaders in these commissions are either going to be retired or they are going to be transferred to the newly merged sectors as per the needs of the sector and based on their productivity previously," sources said, pointing to the fact that most of them, are going to be requested to retire, especially, since they have been serving for over eight years, without any improvement in productivity in the sectors they previously worked in.

Sources have also said that by merging and canceling these sectors, efforts can now be taken to improve the Kuwaitization process, by replacing expatriate workers with Kuwaiti nationals in the vacant positions.



KUWAIT: Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled inspects procedures at KFF.

MoI readies KFF for the rainy season

KUWAIT: Acting Interior Minister and Defense Minister, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled inspected the support unit of the Kuwait Fire Force in Al-Rai, together with the head of the KFF, Khaled Al-Mekrad.

The inspection included overseeing the most advanced hydraulic water pumps which can pump up to 550,000 litres per minute and some electric and mechanical pumps as well.

The minister also reviewed rescue plans, in order to confirm that major accidents would be swiftly dealt with, ensuring that the operations room is equipped with the latest and most technological appliances and that the department will be able to perform successfully, to ensure minimum damage, when dispatching squads to handle any weather instability related incidence.

Al-Khaled also visited the KFF's workshop, in order to review the maintenance of the firefighting equipment and to ensure the proper restoration of expired equipments. The minister also listened to a detailed description of the emergency procedures, given by the central command, to be deployed in case of any emergencies or major accidents.

In my view

Multinational oil companies



By Yousuf Awadh Al-Azmi

local@kuwaittimes.com

"If you are given a command or position, keep the wicked away from you." - Socrates

Sometimes I think about the situation at the administration of Kuwait Oil Company, as far as discovery, exploration, refining, seismic survey and other technical operations related to this matter are concerned, dealing with international companies, or the so-called intercontinental companies or multinational companies, and how the agreements are and what are their effects on the professional standard of Kuwaiti employees at the companies. Also, is the existence of such companies worth it to train local employees and develop their technical performance, and are those companies keen on presenting the best technical training professionally with a high quality?

Maybe the stranger question is that we are so far not a country that exports expertise and oil workers, despite the fact that more than 80 years have passed since the discovery of oil! It is supposed, logically, that expert Kuwaiti employees participate in decision making in major oil companies in the world. But the truth is not as such, rather there is no specialized university for petroleum and its industries. There is only an engineering and petroleum college at Kuwait University, and it is of high academic standard, but not enough, and many graduates are still on the waiting lists for specialized employment. Also, you may find it strange that newly graduated oil engineers have difficulties in getting jobs in state companies such as KOC or KNPC!

Through my follow up of companies working in the field of oil, I found prestigious companies with a history full of achievements. They have valuable contributions in supporting technical oil work and operate with high professionalism, allowing them to get many contracts with KOC, but they do not present distinguished expertise to Kuwaiti workers. There may be some exceptions, but I am talking in general!

The current and future stages need more attention on renewable energy, and what results in the form of safe and cheaper power and low carbon, as well as developing, renewing and having realistic strategies for solutions in energy, financing, construction and land, sea and air cargo, in order to obtain environment-friendly energy and trustworthy security and safety levels.

Maybe many followers of oil affairs know that there are companies with international stature or multinational operations operating in Kuwait, and have been operating since the discovery or oil in our country, such as British Petroleum, Shell, Chevron, Halliburton, Baker Hughes and Schlumberger, which has been operating in Kuwait since 1939, and is still operating and carrying out its contractual work agreed upon with KOC, which qualified it to be always in the lead of companies that are trusted to carry out difficult jobs due to its technical history and qualified employees, making it one of the most trusted private company.

Schlumberger has employed several qualified Kuwaitis in most important jobs, but it must pay more interest in this regard, because what is said above is among its most important duties towards the country that gave it the most valued projects. The same applies to other companies such as Halliburton, Chevron, Shell and others that operate in Kuwait and have valid contracts.



With sorrow, the Montblanc family extends their deepest condolences to the Beidoun Family following the sad passing of their much respected father, grandfather and great-grandfather

Zouheir Jamil Beidoun

May Allah bestow His mercy on his soul, and grant his family patience and serenity during this difficult time.

Local

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Kuwait to participate in international halal exhibition

KUALA LAMPUR: The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) announced the participation of seven factories from Kuwait at the Malaysian International Halal Showcase (MIHAS). The exhibition, which will be held for four days in Kuala Lumpur will see the participation of nearly 400 companies from all over the world.

As per statement from PAI, the national companies participating in MIHAS are, Kuwaiti-Danish Dairy Company (KDD), Al Seedawi Laboratories Company, Ahlia Group Company, Jana Dates Company, Mujizat Al-Shifa Company, Kuwait Packing Materials Manufacturing Company and Organic Honey factory. PAI said that its participation in this exhibition was also aimed at expanding the economic and trade opportunities for Kuwaiti factories and companies and to facilitate the entry of Kuwaiti exports into the Southeast Asian markets, in order to achieve a positive economic return for the state.

On its part, Malaysia has been at the forefront of an initiative, to encourage countries across the globe, to provide a commercial platform for the use and marketing of halal products, with MIHAS touted to be one of the largest international exhibitions for halal foods. —KUNA

Central Bank of Kuwait inspects CI-NET

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait began a broad inspection campaign on Credit Information Network (CI-NET), to ensure the performance and capability of the management of risk operations in the company. This is the first time that an inspection has taken place at CI-Net, since its registration on the list of credit companies on Jan 23 this year.

"Nasser Al-Qaisi, Deputy CEO of the company, has cooperated with the inspection campaign and provided them with all the necessary information that was requested by the investigators," sources revealed exclusively to Kuwait Times. "The Central Bank of Kuwait has also recently confirmed the transferring strategy which the company has provided, in a cooperative effort, with consultancy company, Oliver Wyman."

Sources also added that, "CI-NET must provide a quarterly report starting Sept 30, which show their progress and all the steps the company has taken so far in following the strategy. Care is also taken to make sure suggestions by the Central Bank, involving establishing an independent unit for planning and review as well as a unit designated for digitalization and invention, will be adhered to."

It is worth noting that "it is according to law that credit information network companies must undergo supervision by the central bank in order to ensure that regulations are being followed," the source added.

Weapons and ammunition found in Salmi

KUWAIT: Abandoned weapons and ammunition have been found by the municipality's violation removal commission, in Salmi, in the Jahra governorate.

Sulaiman Al-Ghais, Head of Jahra governorate violation removal department, said that "weapons and ammunition have been found causing violations within the public property in Salmi area."

"The team were in the process of removing some of the illegal objects in the Khayash stables, when they discovered that it had weapons and ammunition marked with the year '2021', upon which they notified the interior ministry immediately," Al-Ghais said.

He expressed his appreciation of the inspection team as well, adding that "they are exposed to all kinds of dangers while doing their job and while dealing with violators, or those in possession of such dangerous weapons."

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A kerb side view of Kuwait City. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh.

Alghanim Industries hosts coding seminar

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries (Kutayba Alghanim Group), one of the largest privately-owned companies in the region, hosted an interactive seminar for young programmers at Kuwait Codes, an initiative launched by CODED Academy and sponsored by Alghanim Industries.

The seminar which was led by Saleem Hammad, Senior General Manager and Ahmed Shahroor, Senior E-Commerce Manager from Alghanim Industries, was also attended by CODED Academy co-founder and CEO, Ahmed Marafi and is aimed at developing the youth in the country and helping them to familiarize themselves with the changing technologies of the digital world.

During the event, Kuwait Codes students attended a brief lecture on multiple topics related to the digital sphere and the importance of coding in the job market. The cohort then participated in a question-and-answer session, where they discussed the challenges and accomplishments of their programming projects. Additionally, the seminar discussion also showcased the business acumen of the cohort's brightest members, as they shared their experiences in turning the coding skills provided by Kuwait Codes instructors into active businesses. Employees from Alghanim Industries' e-commerce sector also spoke at the seminar to give the students an overview about the administrative side of running a company with a strong digital presence.

The team at CODED Academy also expressed a shared goal in developing the youth in the country, with its Kuwait Codes program which offers four distinct programs—iOS programming, Android programming, website design, and videogame development. Beyond the basic programming languages required to set up the digital basis of a coding project, Kuwait Codes also provides guidance from a team of longtime coding professionals and passionate graduates of its programs, to create an overall initiative that is both self-sustaining and centered around the community. Alghanim Industries operates a number of youth focused initiatives throughout the year, from internship programs in business units to the company's flagship Alghanim Academy.



KUWAIT: Alghanim officials with members of the coding program



KUWAIT: Participants at the Kuwait Codes program



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sibi George and Engr. Faisal D Alatel, Chairman of Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE), discuss issues related to Indian engineers residing in Kuwait and ways to enhance institutional cooperation between India and Kuwait in the engineering field.



KUWAIT: Weapons found by the inspection team in Salmi.



Typhoon kills one, several missing in South Korea

'A different Sweden': Gang shootings loom large in vote

Page 6

Page 7

Johnson promises full backing for Truss

Truss faces daunting to-do list, with UK in the grip of its worst economic crisis

LONDON: Boris Johnson on Tuesday promised unwavering support for his successor Liz Truss, as he left Downing Street for the final time as British prime minister to tender his resignation. Johnson, whose tenure was dominated by Brexit and COVID and cut short by scandal, bid farewell to cheers and applause from supporters before heading for an audience with Queen Elizabeth II.

In a typical rhetorical flourish, he likened himself to "one of those booster rockets that has fulfilled its function" and he would now be "gently re-entering the atmosphere and splashing down in some remote and obscure corner of the Pacific".

But he promised: "I will be supporting Liz Truss and the new government every step of the way." And he urged his ruling Conservative party to put aside their differences to tackle the energy crisis that looks set to dominate Truss's immediate future. "If Dilyn (his dog) and Larry (the Downing Street cat) can put behind them their occasional difficulties then so can the Conservative party," he added.

Highlands

Normally the handover of power in Britain is a swift affair, with the outgoing and incoming leaders making a short trip to Buckingham Palace in central London in quick succession. But both Johnson and Truss face a 1,000-mile (1,600-kilometre) round trip to the head of state's remote Balmoral retreat in the Scottish Highlands.

The queen opted not to return from her annual summer break for the brief ceremonial audience, after persistent health issues that have affected her ability to walk and stand. After the formalities with Johnson, she will ask Truss, as the leader of the largest party in parliament, to form a government and be the 15th prime minister of her 70-year reign.

The so-called "kissing of hands" ceremony has not taken place at Balmoral since 1885, when queen Victoria summoned Lord Salisbury to the Highlands. It has only happened once outside London since 1952, when Winston Churchill met the new queen at Heathrow Airport after the death of

her father, king George VI.

Truss, 47, was announced winner of an internal vote of Conservative party members on Monday, after a gruelling contest that began in July. She is expected to make her first speech as prime minister outside 10 Downing Street on Tuesday afternoon-weather permitting.

Heavy rain and storms are forecast, mirroring the gloomy economic situation that she and her new senior ministers will have to tackle from day one. The appointments are due to be finalised before she hosts her first cabinet meeting and faces questions in parliament on Wednesday.



Handover of power is a swift affair

To-do list

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng is expected to become finance minister, with Attorney General Suella Braverman moved to the tricky brief of home secretary, and James Cleverly to foreign affairs. If confirmed, it would mean no white men in any of Britain's four main ministerial posts for the first time ever.

Truss faces a daunting to-do list, with the UK in the grip of its worst economic crisis in decades, with double-digit inflation and sky-rocketing gas and electricity bills. Truss, who touts herself as a free-market liberal, has promised tax cuts to stimulate growth, despite warnings that greater borrowing could make inflation worse.

British media reported on Tuesday that she would freeze energy bills which could cost some



LONDON: Britain's outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson delivers his final speech outside 10 Downing Street in central London on September 6, 2022, before heading to Balmoral to tender his resignation. —AFP

£100 billion (\$116 billion). The contrast to her beaten leadership rival Rishi Sunak's more cautious approach has opened another rift in the Conservative party that was already divided by Johnson's departure.

Recent opinion polls suggest a sizeable chunk of the British public have no faith in her ability to tackle the cost-of-living crisis. A new poll by YouGov said only 14 percent expect Truss to do a better job than Johnson.

Comeback

Johnson, 58, remains popular among grassroots Tories as a charismatic election winner who took the country out of the European Union. Despite

repeated accusations of corruption and cronyism during his tenure, and an unprecedented police fine for breaking his own lockdown rules, Johnson is said to be smarting at having to leave.

Speculation has swirled that he could bide his time for a comeback, particularly if Truss struggles to overcome the country's many problems. On Tuesday, Johnson said he would "return to his plough", like the Roman statesman Cincinnatus, although Latin scholars were quick to point out that he eventually returned to politics.

In her acceptance speech on Monday, Truss ruled out seeking her own mandate from the public at an early general election, vowing victory in 2024. —AFP

Zelensky warns of 'disaster'

KYIV: The last working reactor at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant was disconnected from the grid after shelling caused a fire, with the UN's atomic watchdog due to brief the Security Council about the crisis on Tuesday.

Soon after it invaded in February, Moscow largely took control of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions of southern Ukraine and is now aiming to absorb them into Russia through referendums-as it did with Crimea in 2014.

Russia also blamed Western sanctions for its halting of gas supplies to Germany and on top of the crisis in Europe, there are fears of a nuclear disaster at Zaporizhzhia-Europe's biggest atomic facility. "Today the last power transmission line connecting the plant to the energy system of Ukraine was damaged due to another Russian provocative shelling," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in an address on Monday.

"Due to Russian provocation, the Zaporizhzhia plant is one step away from a radiation disaster." The Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant (ZNPP) has been shelled in recent weeks, with Ukraine and Russia blaming each other for the attacks as fears grow of a possible nuclear incident.

Ukraine's state-run power company Energoatom said Monday that the last working reactor—Power Unit No. 6 — was disconnected from the grid because shelling had started a fire. The IAEA said it was informed by Ukraine that the line would be reconnected when the fire is extinguished.



KHARKIV, Ukraine: Firefighters extinguish a fire after an apartment was hit by a missile strike in Kharkiv, on September 6, 2022, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. —AFP

The atomic watchdog was due to release a report Tuesday on its mission to the plant last week, with its chief Rafael Grossi scheduled to also brief the UN Security Council on the situation. In 1986, Ukraine—a part of the Soviet Union at the time—was the scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster, when a reactor at the Chernobyl plant exploded and spewed radiation into the atmosphere.

The attacks at ZNPP have prompted comparisons with that disaster, and the European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Monday accused Russia of "reckless behaviour". —AFP

Lula voters nostalgic for social gains

RIO DE JANEIRO: Former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's social programs helped lift tens of millions of people from poverty and chip away at deep-rooted inequality and discrimination in Brazil—gains supporters hope will now resume. AFP spoke to Lula voters about the October 2 election pitting the leftist ex-president (2003-2010) against far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro.

Fed-up producer

Writer, producer and cultural commentator Jonathan Raymundo, 33, is fed up with Bolsonaro's Brazil. "I can't take it anymore. Violence against women, blacks has reached alarming levels in this country. We need love, affection, happiness... and Bolsonaro is the opposite of that," says Raymundo, a black history and philosophy teacher with bright pink hair.

Raymundo is the founder of an Afro-Brazilian cultural festival in Rio de Janeiro, "Wakanda in Madureira," inspired by the fictional kingdom of the Black Panther superhero. Explaining his outrage, he cites some of Bolsonaro's most controversial remarks: saying a woman was "not worth raping"



SALVADOR, Brazil: Messias Figueiredo (2-R), 56, pushes his Nano Trio with some friends to attend an event in support of Brazilian presidential candidate for the leftist Workers Party (PT) and former President (2003-2010), Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. —AFP

because she was "too ugly;" talking about weighing black people in "arrobos," a unit of measurement used for animals and, in centuries past, for slaves; saying he could not do anything about Brazil's soaring COVID-19 deaths because he was "not a gravedigger." Raymundo is nostalgic for the "fundamental advances" for historically disadvantaged groups under Lula and his Workers' Party (PT), he says. "Brazil is at a crossroads, with the chance to transform itself into a great country. But that will only happen if it knows how to include its racial diversity in the spheres of power," he says. —AFP

CONDOLENCES

Kutayba Yusuf Alghanim

conveys his deepest condolences to

Al-Sayer family

on the sad demise of

Sayer Bader Mohamed Al-Sayer

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him

International

'A different Sweden': Gang shootings loom large in vote

Violence is primarily attributed to battles over drug and weapons market

RINKEBY, Sweden: Gang shootings have escalated and spread across Sweden, with authorities struggling to contain the war-like violence that now tops voters' concerns ahead of Sunday's general election. "This is my son, Marley, when he was 19 years old", Maritha Ogilvie tells AFP, holding a framed photo of a smiling young man, one of many that adorn the walls of her Stockholm apartment.

"He was shot in the head sitting in a car with a friend", says the 51-year-old. The killing, on March 24, 2015 in Varby gard, a disadvantaged concrete suburb southwest of Stockholm, has never been resolved and the case was closed 10 months later.

Murders like these are usually settlements of scores between rival gangs often controlled by immigrant clans, according to police, and increasingly taking place in public in broad daylight. The violence is primarily attributed to battles over the drug and weapons market and personal vendettas.

It has escalated to the point where Sweden—one of the richest and most egalitarian countries in the world—now tops the European rankings for fatal shootings. According to a report published last year by the National Council for Crime Prevention, among 22 countries with comparable data only Croatia had more deadly shootings, and

no other country posted a bigger increase than Sweden in the past decade.

Shopping mall execution

Despite various measures introduced by the Social Democratic government to crack down on the gangs—including tougher prison sentences and boosting police resources—the number of dead and injured continues to



'Too much immigration and little integration'

mount.

Since January 1, 48 people have been killed by firearms in Sweden, three more than in all of 2021. There are also frequent bombings of homes and cars and grenade attacks. For the first time, crime has dislodged the usual welfare state issues of health care and education and is one of Sweden's main concerns in Sunday's election.

While the violence was once contained to

locations frequented by criminals, it has now spread to public spaces, sparking concern among ordinary Swedes in a country long known as safe and peaceful. On August 19, a 31-year-old man identified as a gang leader in Sweden's third biggest city Malmö was gunned down in the Emporia shopping centre, several months after the death of his brother.

A 15-year-old was arrested for the murder. A week later, a young woman and her son were wounded by stray bullets as they played in a park in Eskilstuna, a quiet town of 67,000 people west of Stockholm.

The right-wing opposition, led by the conservative Moderates and the far-right Sweden Democrats who hope to wrest power from the Social Democrats, have vowed to restore "law and order". Defending the left from allegations of laxism, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson has promised a "national offensive" against the scourge which poses "a threat to all of Sweden".

'Parallel societies'

According to Andersson, the escalating crime numbers are due to the emergence of "parallel societies" following "too much immigration and too little integration". Jacob Fraiman, an ex-gangster who now helps other criminals leave that life behind, says even



RINKEBY, Sweden: Police officer Michael Cojocaru patrols the main square in Rinkeby, Sweden. Gang shootings have escalated and spread across Sweden in recent years, with authorities struggling to contain the war-like violence that now tops voters' concerns ahead of the general election on September 11, 2022. —AFP

he is shocked by the level of violence.

"I'm from another generation, obviously we had weapons too. But it wasn't often you had to shoot someone", he tells AFP in Sodertalje, an industrial town south of Stockholm with a large immigrant population.

"You used to shoot someone in the legs.

Now, they're told to shoot in the head", he says. At the police station in Rinkeby, one of Stockholm's disadvantaged suburbs, 26-year-old patrol cop Michael Cojocaru says he and his colleagues regularly encounter brutal violence reminiscent of war and seize assault weapons, grenades and explosives. —AFP

Navy taking on gangs in Colombia's biggest port

BUENAVENTURA, Colombia: Colombia's Navy put on a show of force at the weekend in a town whose population is at the mercy of two warring gangs. The "Shottas" and "Spartanos" gangs have been fighting for months over control of Buenaventura's drug trafficking trade, and other illegal activities such as micro-trafficking, extortion and kidnappings.

But the military has tried to assert some state control by coming out in force in several neighborhoods in Colombia's main port city. Buenaventura is where 40 percent of the country's international trade takes place and the departure point of most of the cocaine destined for the United States.

In recent years, it has become one of the most violent cities in the country, with 576 murders between 2017 and 2021, according to the Pares foundation, along with forced disappearances and kidnappings. On August 30, the two gangs were involved in a shoot-out using automatic weapons that lasted several hours.

It was a "night of terror," said local media. Surrounded by mangroves, Buenaventura is a city of between 350,000 and 500,000 people, with 90 percent claiming African descent. The city extends along an avenue flanked by poor neighborhoods down to the port at the end of a lagoon. Those are places where it is too unsafe to venture alone due to the kidnapping risk. Shottas and Spartanos share control of these neighborhoods of modest brick homes, unfinished buildings surrounded by steel fences, wooden huts on stilts and metal shacks perched over water and garbage.

'New urban war'

The gangs swept in and replaced the right-wing paramilitaries and left-wing guerrillas that used to reign here and were already self-financed by drug trafficking and terrorising the local population.

Formed from a schism in the La Local criminal



BUENAVENTURA, Colombia: Members of the Colombian Navy patrol a street in Buenaventura, Colombia. —AFP

group, these two gangs markedly stepped up their actions from the end of 2020 and their territory extends to the marshlands on the edge of town. Buenaventura has since been a hive of shoot-outs, kidnappings and extortion.

Locals speak too of sinister so-called "slaughterhouse" homes, where the bodies of kidnap victims are dismembered before being disposed of in the lagoon, far from prying eyes. "The two groups made themselves with legal businesses, above all food: eggs, cheese, fruit... nothing got away from them. They were even prepared to fix prices on certain basic foods," Juan Manuel Torres, a researcher at the country's peace and reconciliation commission, told AFP.

"What we're living through now is a new urban war, one in which control of the neighborhoods is at play," With new left-wing President Gustavo Petro due to visit Buenaventura on Tuesday to implement his "total peace" policy aimed at negotiating with, rather than crushing, criminal groups, police and the military patrolled the city's streets night and day.

They were most present in streets known for being conflict zones between the rival gangs, known as "invisible borders." In one such neighborhood, Jean XXIII, shootings are a near-daily occurrence and terrified residents barricade themselves inside their homes once night falls. —AFP

time, despite the ministry of public works maintaining them continuously.

The government report also said most violators fled from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh to Hawally because of continuous inspection campaigns there. "These violators find Hawally an easy spot to commit crimes such as stealing manhole covers, using electricity illegally from streetlights, and setting up unneeded baqalas. Many stores sell contaminated food or stolen items, while there has been a rise in beggars around mosques," the report added.

COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use, in a boost to the country's homegrown pharmaceutical industry. The new inoculation was developed by Bharat Biotech, which had already developed an intravenous product greenlit by the World Health Organization last November.

India's drug regulator gave the new product emergency authorization on Tuesday, which will allow it to be used as a primary dose by any unvaccinated or partially vaccinated adult, but not as a booster. "This step will further strengthen our collective fight against the pandemic," health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Twitter.

Bharat Biotech conducted third-phase trials in 14 sites around India and found that its safety was "highly comparable" to other vaccines, the company said in a statement. Development data would be submitted to peer-reviewed journals and released publicly, the statement added.

"Despite the lack of demand for COVID-19 vaccines, we continued product development in intra nasal vaccines to ensure that we are well prepared with platform technologies for future infectious diseases," Bharat Biotech chair Krishna Ella said. It remains unclear when the product will be available for public use, with the company saying it would be rolled out in "due course". — AFP

173 civilians killed in South Sudan clashes

JUBA, South Sudan: Scores of civilians were killed in political clashes in South Sudan between February and May this year, a UN report said Tuesday, with women and children subjected to brutal assaults, including gang rape.

The clashes between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and his rival, Vice President Riek Machar, in oil-rich Unity State affected at least 28 villages across three counties, with 173 people killed and 37 women and children kidnapped.

"Many of the abductees were subjected to sexual violence, including girls as young as eight-years-old and a nine-year-old girl who was gang-raped to death," the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said.

Both sides committed severe abuses, the report said, adding that pro-government forces and militias loyal to Kiir appeared to be "the main perpetrators of the human rights violations".

The violence caused 44,000 people to flee their homes across 26 villages, with a total of 131 cases of rape and gang-rape documented.

South Sudan has been wracked by instability since independence in 2011 and is still struggling to draw a line under a civil war between pro-Kiir and pro-Machar fighters that claimed the lives of almost 400,000 people.

The joint report covered the period between 11 February and 31 May 2022, with researchers travelling to the pro-Machar strongholds of Koch, Leer, and Mayendit as well as surrounding areas to document the aftermath of the violence.

It said that there were "reasonable grounds to believe that these attacks were consistently pre-



JUBA, South Sudan: South Sudan's President Salva Kiir (C, on the car) attends the graduation ceremony of the new members of Unified Forces who have been on training since the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement in 2018 at Dr John Garang Mausoleum in Juba. —AFP

meditated and carried out with a degree of organisation mainly by the joint Government forces and allied militias/groups operating in these areas."

In a press statement accompanying the report's release, Nicholas Haysom, the UN envoy to the country, said that "human rights violations were committed with impunity."

"The government is duty-bound under international law to protect civilians, investigate allegations of human rights violations, and hold suspected perpetrators accountable," he added.

The UN has regularly criticised South Sudan's leadership for its role in stoking violence, cracking down on political freedoms and plundering public coffers.

It has also accused the government of rights violations amounting to war crimes over deadly attacks in the southwest last year.

Since the five-year civil war ended in 2018, the country's lumbering peace process has run into multiple delays, with violence regularly breaking out between Kiir and Machar's forces.

In July, the United States pulled out of two peace process monitoring organisations in South Sudan due to the government's failure to meet reform milestones, citing a "lack of sustained progress". —AFP

Govt: Hawally might turn into...

Continued from Page 1

due to overcrowding in the area, which means these stations are at risk of breaking down at any

Nod to inhalable vaccine in China...

Continued from Page 1

shots produced by Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna that have better efficacy rates compared to other types of vaccines. China is the only major economy sticking to a zero-Covid policy, disrupting travel and businesses.

Officials across the country are now under pressure to curb local virus flare-ups ahead of a key political meeting next month. The southern tech hub of Shenzhen, with more than 18 million residents, imposed a weekend lockdown in most parts of the city on Saturday, while more than 21 million people in the southwestern metropolis of Chengdu are undergoing mass testing from Monday through Wednesday. China has administered over 3.4 billion COVID shots, the National Health Commission said Monday without offering details on the percentage of the population vaccinated.

Meanwhile, India on Tuesday approved a locally developed, needle-free and nasally administered

Truss becomes UK PM, vows to...

Continued from Page 1

accepted the invitation to form a government. The 30-minute audience was held at the head of state's remote Balmoral retreat as the queen, 96, was deemed unfit to return to London due to ill health. As soon as Thursday, Truss is expected to sanction a freeze on household energy bills to prevent steep hikes this winter, and possibly beyond, at a cost of tens of billions of pounds.

Her new team is due to be assembled in time for a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday morning before her first appearance in parliament as prime minister. Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng is expected to become finance minister, with Attorney General Suella Braverman moved to the tricky brief of home secretary, and James Cleverly to foreign affairs. If confirmed, it would mean no white men in any of Britain's four main ministerial posts for the first time ever.

The incoming prime minister faces a daunting to-do list, with the UK in the grip of its worst economic crisis in decades. Hard-pressed households facing 80-percent increases in electricity and gas bills from October have demanded immediate action to prevent millions being forced to choose between heating and eating this winter. Businesses have also warned they could be forced to close because of even steeper hikes in energy costs.

Truss, who touts herself as a free-market liberal, has promised tax cuts to stimulate growth, despite warnings that greater borrowing could make inflation worse. The contrast to her beaten leadership rival Rishi Sunak's more cautious approach has opened another rift in the Conservative party that

was already divided by Johnson's departure. Recent opinion polls suggest a sizeable chunk of the British public have no faith in her ability to tackle the cost-of-living crisis. A new poll by YouGov said only 14 percent expect Truss - the fourth Tory prime minister in six years - to do a better job than Johnson.

Johnson, whose tenure was dominated by Brexit and Covid and cut short by a succession of scandals, earlier promised Truss his unwavering support as he made a farewell speech in Downing Street. "I will be supporting Liz Truss and the new government every step of the way," he said, before leaving for Balmoral to tender his resignation to the queen.

He urged the Tories to put aside their ideological differences which have seen the party fight like cats and dogs over how best to tackle the energy crisis. "If Dilyn (his dog) and Larry (the Downing Street cat) can put behind them their occasional difficulties then so can the Conservative party," he added. But former newspaper polemicist Johnson failed to dampen speculation that he is eyeing a potential return to the political front line. "Like Cincinnatus, I am returning to my plough," he said. Latin scholars were quick to point out that the Roman statesman eventually returned to politics.

Johnson, 58, remains popular among grassroots Tories as a charismatic election winner who took the country out of the European Union. Despite repeated accusations of corruption and cronyism during his tenure, and an unprecedented police fine for breaking his own lockdown rules, Johnson is said to be smarting at having to leave. Speculation has swirled that he could bide his time for a comeback, particularly if Truss struggles to overcome the country's many problems. In her acceptance speech on Monday, Truss ruled out seeking her own mandate from the public at an early general election, vowing victory in 2024. — AFP

International

China logs hottest August since records began: State media

Shanghai switched off outdoor decorative lighting to mitigate power crunch

BEIJING: China has logged its hottest August since records began, state media reported Tuesday, following an unusually intense summer heat wave that parched rivers, scorched crops and triggered isolated blackouts. Southern China last month sweltered under what experts said may have been one of the worst heat waves in global history, with parts of Sichuan province and the megacity of Chongqing clocking a string of days well over 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

The average temperature nationwide was 22.4C in August, exceeding the norm by 1.2C, state broadcaster CCTV reported, citing the country's weather service. Some 267 weather stations across the country matched or broke temperature records last month, the report said. It was also China's third-driest August on record, with average rainfall 23.1 percent lower than average.

"The average number of high-temperature days was abnormally high, and regional high-temperature processes are continuing to impact our country," CCTV reported the weather service as saying. Scientists say extreme weather like heat waves, droughts and flash floods is becoming more frequent and intense due to human-induced climate change.

Last month, temperatures as high as 45C prompted multiple Chinese provinces to impose power cuts as cities battled to cope with a surge in electricity demand partly driven by people cranking up the air conditioning. Images from Chongqing showed a tribu-

lary of the mighty Yangtze river had almost run dry, a scene echoed further east where the waters of China's largest freshwater lake also receded extensively.

'Severe threat'

Chongqing and the eastern megacity of Shanghai switched off outdoor decorative lighting to mitigate the power crunch, while authorities in Sichuan imposed industrial power cuts as water levels dwindled at major hydroelectric plants.

As local authorities warned that the drought posed a "severe threat" to this year's harvest, the central government approved billions of yuan in subsidies to support rice farmers. "This is a warning for us, reminding us to have a deeper understanding of climate change and improve our ability to adapt to it in all respects," said Zhang Daquan, a senior official at China's National Climate Centre, in comments carried Monday by the state-run People's Daily newspaper.

"It is also necessary to raise awareness across all of society to adapt to climate change... and strive to minimise social and economic impacts and losses," Zhang said. Higher-than-usual temperatures are also expected across China throughout September, CCTV cited the weather service's deputy director Xiao Chan as saying.

Coal boost

Scientists have said a rapid reduction in global carbon dioxide emissions is needed to avert potentially disastrous global heating and its associated climate impacts.



SHANGHAI, China: File photo shows a pedestrian crossing a road while holding an umbrella to shelter from the sun amid record high temperatures in Shanghai. —AFP

China, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, has pledged to bring its carbon emissions to a peak by 2030 and cut them to zero by 2060.

But the record-busting summer heat and drought, combined with a power crunch last year, have pushed authorities to pivot back towards carbon-rich coal use in

what they have portrayed as a bump on the road towards a more sustainable future.

Beijing said earlier this year it would raise coal mining capacity by 300 million tonnes and has stepped up approvals of coal plants and related infrastructure. —AFP

Typhoon kills one, several missing in South Korea

BUSAN: Typhoon Hinnamnor killed one person and left nine missing on Tuesday, before heading back to sea with few reports of major property damage. The typhoon, one of the most powerful to bear down on the country in decades, hit the southern island of Jeju overnight before making landfall near the port city of Busan, which was battered by huge waves and heavy rain which damaged beachfront roads and shops.

Early Tuesday in the eastern port city of Pohang, an elderly woman in her 70s was swept away in flooding and killed, the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters said. Death tolls could climb later in the day, authorities having identified at least nine people missing as of Tuesday afternoon, including seven people at a submerged underground parking lot in Pohang.

More than 60,000 households nationwide lost power because of the typhoon. As a precaution, authorities closed more than 600 schools nationwide, and local carriers grounded some 250 domestic flights—but service gradually resumed Tuesday as Hinnamnor headed towards Japan.

North Korea had also been bracing for the storm, with leader Kim Jong-un overseeing a meeting in Pyongyang to assess the country's preparedness, state media reported Tuesday. Kim said boosting Pyongyang's disaster response was crucial as "nothing is more precious... than the people's life and safety", news agency KCNA reported.

Experts say North Korea is particularly vulnerable to flooding and heavy rains due to deforestation and



CHANGWON, South Korea: A man walks under the wreckage of a damaged signboard at a shopping street in Changwon on September 6, 2022, as Typhoon Hinnamnor hit South Korea's southern provinces. —AFP

poor irrigation. On Tuesday morning, the typhoon was over the Sea of Japan, known as the East Sea in Korea, 100 kilometres (62 miles) off Tsushima island, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

Bringing gusts of up to 180 kilometres per hour, it was moving northeast at a speed of 45 kph and was expected to bring heavy rains to western Japan on Tuesday. More than 35,000 households were without

power in Japan's southwestern Kyushu region, Kyushu Electricity said in a statement.

Some of Japan's bullet trains were suspended due to strong winds and rain, and many local trains also paused service, operator JR Kyushu said. At least 120 flights departing and landing at Kyushu's airport were cancelled, public broadcaster NHK reported. —AFP

Taiwan: Chinese drone entered air defence zone

TAIPEI, Taiwan: Taiwan said a Chinese military reconnaissance drone entered its air defence zone on Monday, the latest incursion as relations between the two neighbours remain tense. The drone, identified by Taipei's defence ministry as a BZK-007 vehicle, crossed into the southwest corner of the island's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) along with eight Chinese warplanes.

Taiwan's ADIZ is much larger than its airspace and overlaps with part of China's ADIZ and even includes some of the mainland. China has dramatically increased incursions into Taiwan's southwestern ADIZ over the last two years, but the use of military drones is rare.

The last time Taiwan's military reported one was October 2020, one month after it started making data on the frequency of Chinese sorties public. Monday's incursion came after Taiwanese soldiers on a tiny

islet just off China's mainland shot down an unidentified commercial drone last week.

That was the first time Taiwanese forces have downed a drone, following a sudden spate of incursions by small, commercially available drones in recent weeks. In contrast, the BZK-007 is a much larger, military drone built by the Guizhou Aircraft Industry Corporation that can carry out long-distance flights and boasts much more sophisticated reconnaissance devices.

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's sabre-rattling has grown more pronounced under President Xi Jinping, China's most authoritarian and internationally assertive leader in a generation.

Last month China sent warships, missiles and fighter jets into the waters and skies around Taiwan, its largest and most aggressive exercises since mid-1990s. Those exercises were a protest against a visit to Taipei by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Taiwan also saw a record 446 air incursions by Chinese warplanes in August.

Rescuers search for survivors in China quake

BEIJING, China: Rescuers scoured through the rubble of remote villages in mountainous southwestern China Tuesday in a race to find survivors of an earthquake that claimed dozens of lives, with hundreds of people believed stranded or missing.

The magnitude 6.6 quake hit about 43 kilometres (26 miles) southeast of the city of Kangding in Sichuan province at a depth of 10 kilometres on Monday, according to the US Geological Survey.

At least 66 people were killed, state media reported, with more than 200 still cut off from rescuers in a remote scenic area. Scores were reported missing elsewhere.

State broadcaster CCTV showed firefighters pulling a bruised and bloodied woman from the rubble and carrying a survivor on a stretcher

across a river on a makeshift bridge. It also showed damaged buildings and streets strewn with debris.

Footage shared by the China Earthquake Networks Center (CENC) on Monday showed boulders thundering down mountainsides in Luding county, kicking up clouds of dust as the tremors swayed roadside telephone wires.

At least seven hydropower stations were damaged by the quake, the Ministry of Water Resources said.

And CCTV reported that more

than 11,000 people have been evacuated from areas prone to landslides or building collapse. "Most buildings (in our village) are dilapidated, some of them have not collapsed, but all of them have cracks," Yang Qing from Moxi town, one of the worst affected areas near the epicentre of the quake, told AFP.

"You can't get in and live in them, police have cordoned off all these buildings." "It's hard to say how long we'll have to stay in these tents," Chen Ling, a restaurant owner from Moxi, told AFP. —AFP



PINGTAN, China: File photo shows Chinese military helicopters fly past Pingtan island, one of mainland China's closest points from Taiwan, in Fujian province ahead of massive military drills off Taiwan following US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the self-ruled island. —AFP

Solomons: Australian offer to fund election 'inappropriate'

HONIARA, Solomon Islands: Solomon Islands on Tuesday said an Australian offer to fund its next election was "inappropriate", dismissing Canberra's latest effort to strengthen ties with the Pacific nation as it increasingly courts Beijing.

In a statement, the Solomons government accused Australia of trying "to influence how Members of Parliament will vote" on an upcoming bill that would delay national polls by seven months. It comes after Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare signed a landmark security pact with Beijing in April, sparking intense diplomatic jostling between China, the United States and its allies including Australia.

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong revealed the funding offer during an interview with ABC radio on Tuesday morning. With the vote on an election delay due as early as Thursday, the Solomons government took umbrage at the timing, saying it "was in the process of replying when the Australian Foreign Minister made an announcement to the Australian media".

Sogavare has argued the Pacific nation must delay the poll until after it hosts the 2023 Pacific Games because of high costs. But critics have accused him of trying to "bulldoze" democracy by rushing the bill through parliament.

Australia's government has attempted in recent months to reset its relationship with Sogavare, who has grown close to Beijing since violent riots against his leadership broke out in the capital of Honiara last year.

'Historical commitment'

The Solomons government said it received the offer from Wong on September 1 and would formally respond after the election bill was dealt with. While the amount offered by Australia was not revealed, Sogavare's secretary Jimmie Rogers previously told the Solomons state broadcaster that the election would cost more than US\$49 million.

In her Tuesday interview, Wong denied Australia's offer had come in response to calls for support from the Solomons opposition. "(It) reflects our longstanding and historical commitment to supporting democracy and democratic processes in Solomon Islands," she said.

The bill to delay the election was "domestically controversial", Wong added, "(but) that's ultimately a matter for their parliament to resolve". She sought to tamp down suggestions the funding was unusual, citing Australian support for recent elections in Papua New Guinea.

The Australian government last week updated its travel advice for Solomon Islands, warning citizens to exercise "a high degree of caution due to the possibility of further civil unrest" ahead of the vote on the election delay.

'Sad moment'

Solomon Islands MP John Maneniaru said Tuesday that he was "very disheartened" with a decision by Sogavare to fast-track the election bill, skipping the scrutiny of his Bills and Legislation Committee. "This is for me a sad moment indeed. And for our democracy," he said. "A deliberate decision was made to bulldoze into our parliament and democracy."

Sogavare, a four-time prime minister, is expected to visit Australia soon, with discussions ongoing about the timing. He recently accused Western media organisations in the Solomons of "spreading anti-China sentiment".

Sogavare's office threatened to ban or deport reporters for "disrespectful and demeaning" coverage, and said some foreign media were trying to "engineer regime change". —AFP

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

Business

Boursa Kuwait wins 'Most Sustainable Practices in ESG' award for 2022

Global Business Outlook recognizes and rewards Boursa Kuwait's excellence in business

Prestigious accolade reflects company's enduring commitment to promoting corporate sustainability

KUWAIT: Global Business Outlook magazine announced on its website that Boursa Kuwait is the recipient of the "Most Sustainable Practices in ESG" award for 2022, increasing the exchange's prizes for the year to three, after it was awarded "Sustainable Stock Exchange of the Year in the Middle East" by Pan Finance and "Most Sustainable Company in the Financial Services Industry" by World Finance.

The Global Business Outlook Awards seek to recognize and reward excellence in businesses around the world and are designed to facilitate the outstanding work of businesses and business leaders across industries. The magazine hailed the sustainability of the Kuwaiti capital market and described the exchange as a model issuer and a company that has adopted and followed the best standards and practices in its operations, as well as being a key cog in the adaptability and sustainability of Kuwait's capital market.

Boursa Kuwait's awards are a key indicator of the company's commitment and constant efforts to develop and enhance its operations, specifically in the area of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting and implementation, as the company has continued to build on its award-winning 2021, when it garnered five awards, including "Sustainable Stock Exchange of the Year in the Middle East for 2021" by Pan Finance.

At the end of 2021, Boursa Kuwait published its ESG Reporting Guide, which helps support listed

companies to report on Environmental, Social, and Governance issues, and to meet the growing needs of various stakeholders, including investors, customers, suppliers, and regulators for transparent and regular information.

The company continues to find new ways to better serve our various stakeholders and ensure that the country's capital market is run efficiently and with efficacy, while keeping the health and safety of our employees and all market participants at the forefront of what it does.

Additionally, and as part of its commitment to implement its Corporate Sustainability strategy, the company published its first standalone Sustainability Report, which detailed its strategy, partnerships, and initiatives in the field of ESG reporting and implementation for the year 2021.

Boursa Kuwait continually strives to ensure that it is committed to the sustainable development of the community in which it operates, adopting a comprehensive Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy built on the three pillars of Education, Community and the Environment. With a view to creating long-term value for the company's stakeholders in the economic, social and environmental dimensions and ensuring that all corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are aligned with its sustainability objectives.

The company has put in place a three-phased strategy to align, create and integrate as well as ensuring that its initiatives apply and fall in line with



the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support

for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, as well as environmental protection.

Since its inception, Boursa Kuwait has implemented many steps in accordance with international practices and standards to enhance the position of the exchange regionally and globally, as well as transform Kuwait into a regional and global investment destination, by focusing on creating an attractive issuer base and broadening its investor base, increasing the depth and breadth of its products, as well as upgrading its infrastructure and business environment to international standards.

Berlin tech show facing up to era of energy scarcity

BERLIN: From portable solar panels to smart thermostats and "intelligent" radiators, exhibitors at the IFA tech show in Berlin are touting smart solutions for an energy-starved world.

But the clever gadgets sometimes belie their hefty carbon footprint. The motto for the 2022 edition of the German fair for cutting-edge technology—the first since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic—is "energy efficiency", a timely mission with prices for electricity soaring.

One such exhibitor which believes it has the answer is Busch-Jaeger, whose stand is carpeted in switches and small blank screens. The German company, owned by the Swiss group ABB, has become a specialist in "smart home" technologies. Their idea: to regulate energy consumption at home on the basis of a stream of data, including the current ambient temperature, the light in the room and the quality of the air. Such devices are "more and more sought after" as the cost of energy skyrockets in Europe, says Ulf Ehling, who is tasked with presenting the company's technology at IFA.

'Crazy'

A few hundred meters away, the Norwegian company Mill is offering black and white "intelligent" radiators. Thanks to a smartphone app, users can control the temperature in their homes over the course of the day.

According to Bashir Naimy, Mill's technical director, the device can help save "37 percent of a household's energy". IFA also boasts regular displays of eccentric gadgets, among them a fridge that cools a drink in "two minutes" or an odor generator for buying perfume online.

The French company Y-Brush has descended on IFA to tout a "sonic" toothbrush that looks like dentures, which is "capable of brushing all teeth at once in 5, 10, or 15 seconds".

Visitors to the fair, which closes on Tuesday, are, however, preoccupied by the question of energy



BERLIN: A visitor walks past a multi-screen display advertising products of German household appliance manufacturer Bosch at the Internationale Funkausstellung (IFA), the international trade show for consumer electronics and home appliances at the fair grounds in Berlin. This year's IFA edition will be running from September 2 to 6, 2022. — AFP

usage. "When you see how much all these devices consume it is crazy," says Justin, 23, a tech enthusiast, who came to Berlin specifically for the show.

"We're always thinking about that," says Christoph Boettger, 39, who has come with his partner. European energy prices have soared over recent months in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent throttling of gas supplies to Germany from Moscow.

The German government has launched an energy-saving campaign and tried to lead by example by reducing the temperature in public buildings, among other moves. The energy conundrum worsened last week, as Russian energy giant Gazprom said it would not restart gas deliveries via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline after a planned three-day maintenance, pinning the blame on Western sanctions.

'Internet of things'

"Smart home technologies can help save energy," Sara Warneke, the director of IFA's organisers, said

ago, the pilots said they would walk out from Wednesday 00h01 to Thursday 23h59, while the industrial action for those operating cargo flights would last a day longer to Friday 23h59.

Faced with the threat of new chaos, Lufthansa's management immediately said it would put forward a "better offer" to the union at urgent talks during the day.

The airline was forced to cancel almost all its flights on Friday due to a one-day strike by the pilots, affecting 130,000 passengers. No details were provided as yet about the wage deal, and Lufthansa has declined comment.

But the pilot union has been seeking a 5.5 percent wage increase by the end of the year, automatic compensation for inflation and adjustments on its salary grid.

Friday. But what is the real toll of these new energy technologies?

According to a 2020 report by the French Senate the "growth in greenhouse gas emissions" from digital technologies is driven by "the internet of things"—household electronics connected to the web—and the "storage of data". The two together could lead to a 60 percent leap "in the carbon impact of digital technologies by 2040".

Despite the individual energy saving potential, the total impact of these technologies may be bigger than they first appear. The Chinese company Ecoflow, which has offices across Europe, hopes to resolve the contradiction with mini solar panels. The long, foldable rectangles that are carried around in a special case can be used to charge a lithium battery. Their portability means users "do not need administrative authorization to install them", says Franko Fischer, Ecoflow's spokesman. The panels can generate 2,700 Wh, enough to charge a computer, a mobile phone or a hairdryer. — AFP

Lufthansa has said the entire package sought by Cockpit would raise pilot personnel costs by 40 percent or 900 million euros (\$900 million). With inflation soaring, collective salary bargaining is expected to be tense in the coming months across Europe.

Union IG Metall has called a demonstration on Saturday to kick off the collective wage bargaining for the metals and electrical industry. Its "Mitte" chapter, which represents workers in the regions of Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Thuringia, said it would be seeking eight percent more wages for 12 months for the 400,000 workers it represents. German consumer prices rose by 7.9 percent in the year to August, according to data published last week by the federal statistics agency Destatis. — AFP

Saudi infrastructure projects top \$1.1tn since 2016

RIYADH: The aggregate value of property and infrastructure projects since the launch of Saudi Arabia's National Transformation Plan in 2016 has crossed \$1.1 trillion as the kingdom continues to diversify its economy, according to reports. The \$500 billion futuristic Neom city remains the biggest project on the list of 15 big developments at various phases of construction.

The kingdom plans to have more than 555,000 residential units, in excess of 275,000 hotel rooms, more than 4.3 million square meters of retail and 6.1 million square meters of new office space by 2030. "A bold new vision is unfolding in Saudi Arabia. The phenomenal transformation taking place in the world's fastest-growing economy is clearly visible across the entire urban landscape."

Saudi Arabia, Opec's biggest crude producer, is diversifying its economy away from oil, with the development of the housing, infrastructure and tourism sectors among the central planks of the kingdom's overarching Vision 2030 economic reform agenda.

The kingdom has set an ambitious target of raising home ownership rates to 70 per cent by 2030 under the Sakani program - a joint initiative between the Ministry of Housing and the kingdom's Real Estate Development Fund.

The country is also developing a number of mega tourism projects as it seeks to raise the economic contribution of the sector from 3 per cent of gross domestic product to 10 per cent by the end of this decade. These include Neom, which includes a nature reserve, coral reefs and heritage sites on a number of islands along the Red Sea, and Diriyah Gate, a seven-square-kilometer site with the At-Turaif Unesco World Heritage Site at its core. Last month, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman revealed the master plan for the Rua Al-Madinah project on a site to the east of the Prophet's (PBUH) Mosque. Once completed, the development will boost the area's capacity, allowing it to host up to 30 million Umrah pilgrims.

Many of the developments are "stand-alone super-cities in their own right", with Neom set to house nine million residents upon the completion of about 300,000 new homes, Harmen de Jong, head of Real Estate Strategy and Consulting for Saudi Arabia at Knight Frank, said. "Super-cities like Neom will redefine urban living ... [while] sub-cities like The Octagon, Trojena and The Line will set new benchmarks for luxury living in the region," Durrani said. "With close to 30 per cent of homeowners in Saudi prepared to spend upwards of \$800,000 on a second home in the kingdom, developers have their work cut out to satisfy this pent-up demand."

Lufthansa avoids strike as pilots reach wage deal

LUFTHANSA: Pilots of German airline Lufthansa have called off a planned strike later this week following a last-minute deal in wage negotiations with the carrier, their union Cockpit said Tuesday.

The pilots of both passenger and cargo aircraft were due to begin their industrial action from Wednesday, but "an agreement has been reached," said a spokesman from Cockpit, adding that the walkout "would therefore be cancelled". Just hours

Business

Pakistan's brick workers need kilns reignited after floods

Floods have destroyed nearly two million homes or business premises

ISLAMABAD: The brick kilns that dominate the small village of Aqilpur in Pakistan's Punjab province now lie abandoned, furnaces extinguished by weeks of torrential rain that have caused the worst floods in the country's history. Though the floods that engulfed Aqilpur and its surrounding fields have receded from the highs of a week ago, the kilns are still surrounded by water.

Most of those who lived on-site—part of the country's millions-strong workforce known as "daily wagers" because of their piecemeal salaries—abandoned their homes for higher, dry ground.

"I come here daily on my bicycle and go from one kiln to another to look for work but find nothing," said Muhammad Ayub, an itinerant laborer.

Now, a road that runs through the village has become a kind of town square for the kiln workers, who find themselves both homeless and out of work. Ayub, 40, has a sick mother and an eight-year-old daughter to provide for.

When his home was destroyed in the torrential rains that preceded the flood, he sent them to a relative's house close to the village. But once the flood hit, his family was forced to take refuge at a makeshift campsite on higher ground outside the village. More than 33 million people in Pakistan have been affected by the flooding, brought on by record monsoon rains that have swamped a third of the country, causing at least 1,300 deaths.

The floods have destroyed or badly damaged nearly two million homes or business premises, and for the rebuilding process to begin, kilns like those in Aqilpur will have to fire up again.

Earning less than \$3 a shift

There are thousands of small brick factories and kilns scattered across much of Pakistan—a vital supplier of building materials for the nation of 220 million. For now, mounds of bricks that should be making their way to building sites across the country lie partially submerged in floodwater.

Ayub worked 12 hours a night making bricks, earning less than \$3 (600 rupees) a shift for his labors.

He would spend the mornings working the fields surrounding the village, and was only able to sleep briefly in the afternoon before his shift began again. With the kilns shut down and the fields submerged, his daily wage is gone. "Where should a laborer go? he asked AFP. "Wherever the workers go to look for work, they come back empty-handed."

Daily wagers make up one of the poorest segments of Pakistan's society and many in rural areas are exploited by unscrupulous large-scale farmers and factory owners who keep them in virtual servitude. The brickworks in particular are notorious for hiring child labor—illegal under Pakistan law.

One of the youngest among the 50 or so kiln workers camped near Aqilpur is Muhammad Ismail, who joined his father at the brickworks almost a year ago when he turned 12. He helped mould the clay that makes the bricks before they went into the furnace, hoping his labors would help his parents feed his six younger siblings.

After fleeing their home in the flood, Ismail's father had to borrow money to buy flour and other necessities for his family. "But now we are in



Though the floods that engulfed Aqilpur and its surrounding fields have receded from the highs of a week ago, the kilns are still surrounded by water. —AFP

debt," Ismail said.

"I have been searching for work with my father every day. We need to pay off our debt, but I'm losing hope." It is not uncommon in parts of Pakistan for those who incur debt and fail to pay it back to be forced into bonded labor for years, as interest on the original sum keeps mounting.

This debt can often be handed down from one

generation to another.

The kiln workers of Aqilpur have petitioned the owner to spark up the furnaces so they can resume work, but Ayub thinks they are asking for the impossible. "The water collected here isn't going to dry up for at least three months," he said. "And after the water dries, it will take another two or two-and-half months for the repairs." —AFP

European energy firms get state aid as prices soar

CAIRO: Finland and Switzerland offered financial backing to utility companies on Tuesday, the latest energy firms in Europe to receive state support as gas prices have spiked since Russia invaded Ukraine. The conflict has created a cash crunch for power companies in Europe, prompting governments in several countries to open credit lines in recent months.

The Swiss Federal Energy office said Tuesday that Axpo, a publicly-owned Swiss electricity group, will have access to four billion Swiss francs (\$4.1 billion) in credit to ensure liquidity after it requested the temporary aid last week.

"The government responded favorably to avoid putting Switzerland's energy supply in jeopardy," the office said in a statement, adding that Axpo was an electricity firm of "systemic importance" for the country. In Finland, utility group Fortum said it had agreed on a bridge financing arrangement with the state—which is also the majority owner—to "ensure access to sufficient liquidity resources" if power prices continue to rise.

The liquidity facility gives Fortum access to 2.35 billion euros (\$2.34 billion) through state-owned holding company Solidium, but Fortum said "utilization of the arrangement is a last resort."

"The European energy crisis is a result of Russia's decision to use energy as a weapon," Fortum CEO Markus Rauramo said, adding that this has put his company and other Nordic energy suppliers "in a difficult situation." "There is great uncertainty in the market and energy prices have been record high," Rauramo said. Gas prices have soared since Russia



The Ukraine conflict has created a cash crunch for power companies in Europe, prompting governments in several countries to open credit lines. —AFP

invaded Ukraine.

Utilities rely on futures markets to guarantee a certain price for their supplies. Under the contracts, they are required to put collateral upfront. But if prices rise, a company is required to put up more collateral, creating a potential cash crunch.

Fortum said the collateral tied up Nordic commodities exchange Nasdaq amounted to around 3.5 billion euros as of September 5. "Regulatory changes are urgently needed to curb the unreasonably high margining and collateral requirements," Rauramo said.

Europe-wide problem

Other governments in Europe have offered billions of euros in loans to energy firms. German energy giant Uniper said last week it would need an

additional four billion euros in state-backed loans after already having used a nine-billion-euro credit line, following a July deal.

Fortum, which is the majority owner of Uniper, clarified in its statement that its arrangement with the Finnish state could not be used to cover Uniper's needs. Also last week, Austria announced a two-billion-euro loan for Wien Energie, the country's main electricity provider.

At the weekend, Sweden said it would provide liquidity guarantees to Nordic and Baltic energy companies worth up to \$23 billion in a bid to prevent a financial crisis sparked by Europe's energy crunch. Independently of the agreement with Fortum, the Finnish government also proposed Sunday a rescue package of up to 10 billion euros in loans and guarantees for energy companies facing insolvency. —AFP

bring inflation back to target", more rises were expected in the coming months. "Inflation in Australia is the highest it has been since the early 1990s and is expected to increase further over the months ahead," the policy board said.

The central bank estimates inflation will peak at 7.75 percent this year, before dropping to four percent next year. Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers said the rate hike will be "very difficult news for a lot of Australians with a mortgage".

"The fact we knew it was coming doesn't make it any easier for people. This is tough.

"This will tighten the screws on family budgets," he said. The move comes as central banks around the world are forced to ramp up rates with inflation at multi-decade highs. The European Central Bank is tipped to announce a second lift on Thursday, while the US Federal Reserve is seen tightening further later in the month. — AFP

Australian central bank hikes rate to seven-year high

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank hiked interest rates to a near eight-year high Tuesday as it joined others in trying to bring down sky-high inflation and warned further increases that would hit families' pockets were likely. The Reserve Bank of Australia lifted borrowing costs 50 basis points to 2.35 percent, the highest since the start of 2015.

The path to bring prices back into balance was a "narrow one and clouded in uncertainty, not least because of global developments", the bank said in a statement. It added that while the hike would "help



MELBOURNE: A billboard advertises a home for sale in Melbourne on September 6, 2022 as Australia's Reserve Bank lifted interest rates to 2.35 per cent, the highest levels seen since December 2014, in an attempt to cool the country's overheated economy. —AFP

Splits emerge in Italy's far-right over energy crisis

ROME: First it was Russia sanctions and now the budget deficit—just weeks before Italian elections, splits are emerging between the two far-right parties tipped to win power. Giorgia Meloni's post-fascist Brothers of Italy is leading opinion polls, putting her on course to take office after September 25 as part of a coalition that includes Matteo Salvini's anti-immigrant League.

The pair are campaigning on a shared populist, eurosceptic, hard-right agenda, but in recent days have been at odds on how to respond to the energy crisis gripping Europe. Salvini has called for more help for companies and workers facing soaring electricity and gas bills this winter, either at a European or Italian level—even if it means borrowing more.

"I prefer to put 30 billion in debt on the table today, than put 100 (billion) in two months time to pay for a million unemployed or redundant people," he told Radio Capital Tuesday.

He noted this put him at odds with outgoing Prime Minister Mario Draghi and also Meloni, who has sought to reassure international investors that the eurozone's third largest economy will be safe in her hands.

"Going into further debt is the last resort, because Italy is already indebted out of control," the Brothers of Italy leader said last week. Salvini, who in the past was open in his admiration of Russian President Vladimir Putin, has been critical of Western sanctions against Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine, saying they are not working. —AFP

Porsche to enter stock market before end of 2022: VW

FRANKFURT: German auto group Volkswagen on Monday said it would go ahead this year with a highly anticipated stock market entry for its premium sports brand Porsche, despite less than perfect financial conditions. "The Board of Management of Volkswagen AG today resolved... to pursue an initial public offering of the preferred shares of Porsche AG with the target to list them on the regulated market of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange... at the end of September/beginning of October 2022," a statement said.

"In the event of a successful IPO, Volkswagen AG will convene an extraordinary general meeting in December 2022 at which it will propose to its shareholders that a special dividend amounting to 49 percent of the total gross proceeds from the placement of the preferred shares and the sale of the ordinary shares be distributed," it added.

The auto giant officially signalled its intention to go ahead with the IPO on February 24, the day that Russia began its invasion of Ukraine. "This is a historic moment for Porsche," new Volkswagen CEO Oliver Blume said, adding that Porsche could have "greater independence" and be one of "the richest sports car makers in the world".



WOLFSBURG, Germany: This combination of pictures shows Herbert Diess, chief executive officer of Volkswagen and Oliver Blume, then chairman of German luxury sports carmaker Porsche AG in Stuttgart. — AFP

The outbreak of the war has sown uncertainty in financial markets, sending stocks tumbling and clouding the outlook for the economy.

But the luxury brand continues to attract the attention of investors, who value Porsche between 60 and 85 billion euros, according to Bloomberg News. Suitors including the Qatari sovereign wealth fund and luxury brands group LVMH have registered an interest in the high-end carmaker, according to the news agency.

Shift towards electric vehicles

Under the spin-off plan, Volkswagen's main shareholders—the Porsche-Peich family—would take a share of 25 percent plus one share in the luxury carmaker. In doing so, the family would hold a blocking minority that will allow them to steer the future of the group that bears their name.

Market investors would be given the opportunity to buy preferential shares in Porsche that have no voting rights but receive a boosted dividend. The potential spin-off of the iconic carmaker, named for the Porsche family, from the larger group would help Volkswagen finance its own shift towards electric vehicles. The Wolfsburg-based group is pumping tens of millions into the strategy, including building a clutch of battery factories across Europe and the US. The potential gains from the IPO would give Volkswagen "greater flexibility to accelerate the transformation" of the group, chief operating officer Arno Antlitz said in an interview on Monday. —AFP

Business

Russia pockets \$158 billion in energy exports after war

China to pay for Russian gas in yuan, rubles: Gazprom

PARIS/MOSCOW: Russia has raked in a whopping 158 billion euros (\$158 billion) in energy exports in the six months following its invasion of Ukraine, with the EU accounting for more than half, a think tank said Tuesday.

The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air called for more effective sanctions against Moscow after the invasion sent oil, gas and coal prices soaring. "Surging fossil fuel prices mean that Russia's current revenue is far above previous years' level, despite the reductions in this year's export volumes," said the Finland-based organization.

Natural gas prices have recently soared to record levels in Europe as Russia chokes off supplies. Crude oil prices also jumped following the invasion, although they have since pulled back.

"Fossil fuel exports have contributed approximately 43 billion euros to Russia's federal budget since the start of the invasion, helping fund war crimes in Ukraine," said CREA. The figures concern the six months following Russia's February 24 invasion of Ukraine.

During this period, the CREA estimated that the European Union was the top importer of Russian fossil fuel exporters, at 85.1 billion euros. China followed at 34.9 billion euros and Turkey at 10.7 billion euros.

While the EU has stopped purchases of Russian coal, it is only progressively banning Russian oil and it has not adopted any limits on the imports of natural gas, upon which it is highly dependent.

The CREA said the EU ban on Russian coal imports has been effective. After the ban went into effect Russian coal exports fell to their lowest levels since the war began.

"Russia failed to find other buyers to replace

falling EU demand," said the CREA.

But it called for stronger rules and enforcement concerning Russian oil exports, urging the EU and the UK use their leverage in global shipping. "The EU must ban the use of European-owned ships and European ports for shipping Russian oil to third countries, while the UK needs to stop allowing its insurance industry to participate in this trade," said the CREA.

The G7 countries, meanwhile, vowed Friday to push forward urgently to impose a price cap on Russian crude, a move that would deprive Russia of much of the revenue it now makes from its oil exports.

The United States has been arguing for the imposition of a price cap for months, arguing that Western bans on Russian energy products were contributing to the price hikes that helped Moscow finance its war effort.

Meanwhile, Russia's energy giant Gazprom said Tuesday that China will start paying for Russian gas in rubles and yuan instead of US dollars, as Moscow seeks closer ties with Beijing in the wake of Western sanctions over Ukraine.

"A transition was made to making payments for Russian gas supplies to China in the national currencies of the countries — the ruble and yuan," Gazprom said in a statement. "The new payment mechanism is a mutually beneficial, timely, reliable and practical solution." Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller said as quoted in the statement following a video conference meeting with the head of China's oil group CNPC, Dai Houliang.

Miller added that it will "simplify calculations" and "become an excellent example for other companies".

Miller informed his Chinese counterpart of



In this file photo taken on April 27, 2022 the logo of Russia's energy giant Gazprom is pictured at one of its petrol stations in Sofia, Bulgaria. —AFP

the "status of work on the project for gas supplies via 'the eastern route' — the 'Power of Siberia' gas pipeline" which connects the Russian and Chinese gas networks, Gazprom added. The energy giant said gas from the under-developed Kovykta field will start flowing through Power of Siberia "before the end of the year", allowing for the "increase (in) the volume

of gas deliveries to China in 2023".

Following the imposition of economic sanctions over the Kremlin's offensive in Ukraine, Russia has reduced or halted supplies to different European nations, causing energy prices to soar. It has also sought to bolster ties with allies in Asia — especially China — and boost natural gas deliveries to markets outside Europe. —AFP

US services sector expands in August as prices ease: Survey

NEW YORK: The American services sector expanded at a slightly faster pace in August amid signs of easing supply issues and slowing price gains, according to an industry survey released Tuesday. The Institute for Supply Management's services index rose to 56.9 percent, just slightly above the July level, defying expectations of a slowdown.

The new orders index jumped 1.9 percentage points, and employment rose 1.1 points, ISM said, while prices slipped 0.8. "The services sector had a slight uptick in growth for the month of August due to increases in business activity, new orders and employment," ISM survey chair Anthony Nieves said in a statement.

Firms responding to the survey noted "some supply chain, logistics and cost improvements; however, material shortages remain a challenge," he said. On the plus side, "employment improved slightly despite a restricted labor market."

The sector accounts for two-thirds of the US economy and comprises a wide variety of services, from education to IT to medicine. Even amid soaring US inflation, the sector has grown steadily for 151 months, except for a two-month contraction as the United States grappled with the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in April and May 2020. In contrast, growth in the manufacturing sector was flat in August. The Federal Reserve is on an aggressive campaign to combat the highest US inflation in four decades, fueled by global supply chain challenges, raising interest rates to cool demand.

Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics said despite the upside surprise in the services sector, "momentum is likely to moderate as economic activity continues to adjust to Fed rate hikes." —AFP

US stocks hit by worries over Fed policy; Euro sinks

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks opened lower Tuesday, extending a rough patch for equities amid Federal Reserve monetary tightening and worries over a European energy crunch. The declines come on the heels of reports on consumer confidence and manufacturing that have shown a still-solid US economy, but contributed to the "good news is bad news" narrative in markets over the likelihood that the Federal Reserve will announce more large interest rates hikes.

The difficult energy picture for Europe is also adding to pressure after Russia kept suspended natural gas deliveries to Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline. About 30 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.7 percent at 31,089.28. The broad-based S&P 500 dropped 0.8 percent to 3,893.84, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index shed 1.1 percent to 11,499.53.

Among individual companies, Signify Health rose 0.2 percent after announcing a deal to be acquired by CVS Health for about \$8 billion. CVS dipped 0.2 percent. Tuesday's session is the first of the week after markets were closed Monday for the Labor Day holiday. —AFP

Huawei MateBook D16: 16-inch high performance laptop

KUWAIT: Selecting your next laptop might seem like a daunting task as you have to consider so many things, including your needs and workload. Are you looking for a laptop with a big screen or do you prefer the smaller and lighter ones? Or, do you want something with loads of innovative smart features? Well, most people would go for the one with all the latest and greatest features if their wallets allowed for it. But with the launch of Huawei MateBook D 16, it seems like you can have your cake and eat it too. The desire for 16-inch lightweight laptops is on the rise. With a global move towards remote working and studying, there is an increased demand for large-screen, high-performance, lightweight laptops. The new Huawei MateBook D 16 is set to meet and even exceed these demands.

The new laptop comes with a comfortable and immersive 16-inch display, thin and light metal body, 12th Gen Intel Core processor, Super Device experience, and more. Here's a deeper look at it.

A display that doesn't tire your eyes

Huawei MateBook D 16 features a 16-inch Eye Comfort Huawei FullView Display. So, you know what to expect here: ultra-narrow bezels and a high screen-to-body ratio. On either side of the display are two 4.6mm ultra-narrow bezels, resulting in a high screen-to-body ratio of 90 percent. This allows the laptop to house a large screen in a compact body, delivering an immersive viewing experience. The novel 16:10 aspect ratio also aids productivity. Compared to the traditional 16:9 aspect ratio,

CMA developing system to regulate general assemblies

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Capital Markets Authority (CMA) decided recently to implement the first phase of its project to develop a mechanism for participation in the general assemblies of companies listed on Boursa Kuwait. In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, Ahmad Al-Melhem, Chairman of Capital Markets Authority, Board of Commissioners, Managing Director, discussed in detail the new mechanism and elaborated on the purpose of implementing it.

Some companies do not have an option whether to implement the new system or not, Melhem said. "This new mechanism is optional for companies at the first stage although an article has been formulated in the CMA regulation list which allows the Authority to make it mandatory for a company to hold an online general assembly meeting in case the Authority thinks it necessary to intervene to protect the rights of minority shareholders in the general assembly," he said.

"CMA will obligate some companies to hold its general assemblies with the new system due to the existence of internal disputes with shareholders of their companies, which we were informed by their actions, in addition to companies that have a clause of voluntary withdrawal from the stock exchange, as we received objections from a minority of shareholders of these companies. The authority will receive a recorded copy of the general assembly meeting to be published in the stock exchange," Melhem said.

"The new mechanism aims to record and archive these meetings to keep them for future review of the

the 16:10 aspect ratio gives a 10 percent taller display area allowing more screen real estate to view web pages, documents, and charts more effectively. The display also supports a 100 percent sRGB color gamut to show richer details and vivid colors for greater visual enjoyment.

Talking about eye comfort, Huawei MateBook D 16 display has TÜV Rheinland Low Blue Light (Hardware Solution) certification. In addition, the display adopts DC dimming to help alleviate eye fatigue. Interestingly, the whole laptop only weighs 1.7kg with a thickness of just 18.4mm, making it one of the sleekest 16-inch laptops out there.

Next-level performance

The Huawei MateBook D 16 is powered by 12th Intel Core H-series processors, with the highest edition running on the i7-12700H Processor that has 14 cores and 20 threads. It offers a TDP of up to 40W, and the multi-thread performance is 97.3 percent better than the previous generation. That means even heavy tasks such as data analysis, technical drawing, and code compilation are going to run smoothly. All variants in the Huawei MateBook D Series come with a PCIe NVMe high-speed solid-state drive. This gives a remarkable boost in loading apps and games, ultimately delivering a smoother user experience. The laptop comes with two modes of operation. The Standard Mode is designed for users to handle daily office tasks, while the Performance Mode is suitable for performing heavy-duty work and professional software. By pressing the Fn and P keys at the same time, the user can easily select the optimal mode for the current tasks.

Super device delivers a multi-device experience

The Huawei MateBook D 16 takes multi-device collaboration to a whole new level, thanks to Super Device, bringing super productivity with a cohesive multi-device experience. It lets you effortlessly connect to other Huawei devices nearby, and col-

laborate between them all. Simply place your Huawei earphones, mice, keyboards, speakers and printers close to the Huawei MateBook D 16, and the laptop will automatically discover them and provide a prompt for quick and easy pairing.



laborate between them all. Simply place your Huawei earphones, mice, keyboards, speakers and printers close to the Huawei MateBook D 16, and the laptop will automatically discover them and provide a prompt for quick and easy pairing.

Superior video conferencing experience

The 1080P camera with an 88° wide field of view at the top of the Huawei MateBook D 16 screen is a huge step up from traditional 720P cameras. This is further enhanced by the AI Camera smart feature that processes the video with AI algorithms at the system level, adding video effects like Virtual Background, FollowCam and Eye Contact, which are even supported by third-party video calling applications.

During a video call, the AI Camera's FollowCam adjusts the screen in real-time to keep the speaker in the centre of the shot; so even if they are moving around, you never get distracted from what they are saying. The Eye Contact function uses AI to intelligently adjust to the user's line of vision. So, rather than seeming like they're looking into the camera, their eyes will be looking into yours on the screen for a more natural and comfortable conversation.



Ahmad Al-Melhem speaks during the interview. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

with rules of impartiality and objectivity and avoid conflict of interests," he pointed out.

Regarding the implementation of the new system for unlisted companies on the stock exchange, he said: "The companies listed on the stock exchange are subject to the supervision of the CMA. Therefore, the implementation of this new mechanism will be through us. But it is permissible for the Ministry of Commerce, as it is the supervisor of unlisted companies, and keeps the register of shareholders with Kuwait Clearing Company to benefit from this system. Our system was developed in the consultation with the Ministry of Commerce, Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company, in addition to the Capital Markets Authority. A joint effort was previously approved by the aforementioned authorities and they can implement it."

Lifestyle | Feature



A woman strokes a stray dog in front of Hagia Sophia mosque in Istanbul. —AFP photos

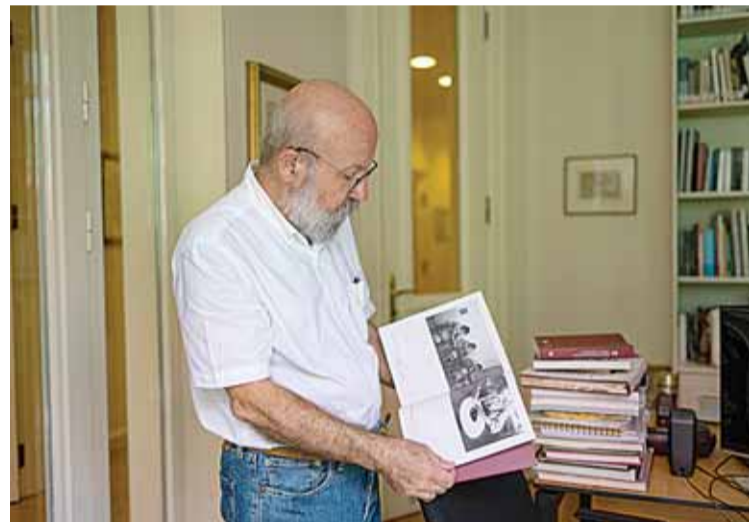


A stray dog walks in front of the Hagia Sofia Mosque in Istanbul.

Century on, political fights rage over Turkey's dogs



A girl, frightened by the stray dogs, runs away near the Blue Mosque, in Istanbul.



Ekrem Isin, a researcher who authored "The Four-Legged Municipality: The Street Dogs of Istanbul" poses with a book during an interview with AFP, in Istanbul.



Gulsaniye Ekmekci of the Istanbul Bar's Animal Rights Commission poses during an interview with AFP, in Istanbul.

Ubiquitous and iconic, Istanbul's street dogs have been swept up in a political storm involving President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and an app that helped get them killed. The sheer number of stray animals—dogs and cats both—darting between people and lounging on public squares jumps out at most visitors to Turkey's ancient cultural capital. They could well be descendants of the dogs glorified in the first grainy photos of the city, in which they roam in packs near landmarks such as the Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque.

This is no accident, according to Ekrem Isin, a researcher who wrote "The Four-Legged Municipality: The Street Dogs of Istanbul". "We are a society that coexists with animals. Actually it's an eastern tradition. Every neighborhood has its dogs and people who take care of them," he said in an interview. In some Islamic cultures, the faithful see dogs as innocent creatures that will speak on judgment day and open the believers' way to heaven. But until then, they are viewed as unclean and best kept out on the streets.

"So although our people loved dogs, they did not take them home but fed them on the street," Isin said. It has been a love-hate affair of late that, like most things in the painfully polarized country, has taken on political life of its own.

Erdogan casts blame

Late last year, a four-year-old girl was attacked and seriously injured by a pair of pit bulls in Gaziantep, a large city in the southeast. The pit bulls were pets rather than strays but Erdogan seized on the incident, declaring: "Stray animals belong in shelters, not the streets." The seemingly innocuous comment was in fact a jibe aimed at his great rival, Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu. Politically ambitious and media savvy, Imamoglu beat Erdogan's ally in highly controversial polls in 2019, handing the city the Turkish leader himself once headed to the secular opposition CHP party.

Two months before the girl's mauling, Imamoglu had launched one of his many social media campaigns—this one featuring the travels of a stray called Boji on Istanbul's trains and ferries. Erdogan's message was clear—the government was trying to make the streets safe of dogs let loose by the opposition. CHP's deputy leader Ali Oztunc, who oversees animal welfare, accused the government of failing to give opposition-



A man pets a stray dog near Taksim Square in Istanbul.

led cities enough funding to neuter and shelter strays. "It acts as if (cities) should take care of their own business," Oztunc told AFP.

'Heart-rending wails'

The arguments grew more urgent with the emergence of an app called Havrita—made up of the words "woof" and "map" in Turkish—which allowed users to report the exact location of strays. Dogs began dying in droves after Havrita's launch in May. "We began to hear more about poisoning cases or mass killings," said lawyer Gulsaniye Ekmekci of the Istanbul Bar's Animal Rights Commission. This month, an Ankara court sided with Havrita's critics, blocking access to both its website and the app. "We cannot solve the problem by killing animals," Ekmekci said.

Istanbul has tried eliminating its dogs before. In 1910, the Ottomans exiled 80,000 strays to a deserted island in the Sea of Marmara as part of a modernization drive aimed at giving the empire's then-capital a more European feel.

"There wasn't a drop of water to drink and the

dogs killed each other out of hunger and thirst," wrote French novelist and navy officer Pierre Loti, who frequented Istanbul at the time. "Whenever a boat passed near the island, all of them would run to the shore and you could hear heart-rending wails."

Settling scores

Director Serge Avedikian, whose "Barking Island" about the experiment won the Short Film Palme d'Or in Cannes in 2010, thinks dogs have once more become victims of politics. "A century later, dogs are again being used as scapegoats," Avedikian told AFP. "Since there's no dialogue in society and no agreement on hardly any issue, they settle scores through dogs," he said.

But Volkan Koc, founder of the Patilikoy shelter in the modern Turkish capital Ankara, takes a more optimistic view. "Europeans have solved this problem by sterilizing dogs and offering them up for adoption," he said. "We may be behind on this but our people have good hearts. We will never let a minority harm animals." —AFP



Dogs relax at the Patilikoy dog shelter in Ankara.



Stray dogs lie on the grass in front of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.



A stray dog sits under the Galata Tower in Istanbul.



A stray dog in front of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.



Volkan Koc, founder of the Patilikoy dog shelter in Ankara, checks the dogs he rescued.



Volkan Koc, founder of the Patilikoy dog shelter in Ankara, is seen with several dogs he rescued.



This photo shows students cutting vegetables in the garden with Cambodia's school meals program at a school in Siem Reap province. — AFP photos



Students having breakfast before classes with Cambodia's school meals program at a school in Siem Reap province.



Students having breakfast before classes with Cambodia's school meals program at a school in Siem Reap province.

School gardens a lifeline for hungry Cambodian children

Among the spinach crops at a rural Cambodian school garden, children test their maths skills while weighing produce—but as food prices rise, the vegetable patch has become a safety net for struggling families. Long before COVID restrictions ravaged the economy, malnutrition and poverty stalked Cambodia's youth—the legacy of decades of conflict and instability following the Khmer Rouge's genocidal rule in the 1970s. Food insecurity has worsened since Russia's invasion of Ukraine stoked global shortages and inflation.

The World Food Program (WFP) says the prices of local staples have shot up in the past year: duck eggs by more than 20 percent and cooking oil by almost 40 percent. Noodle seller Chhon Puthy, 31, has lost half her income during the pandemic and worries about her children's health. "We parents had to reduce our rations sometimes," said the mother-of-two from the village of Chroy Neang Nguon, about two hours from Siem Reap. In recent months, her family has come to rely on the garden and free breakfast programme at her children's school to ease the financial pressure. "This community depends on the meal because every morning parents are busy with farming and could not cook for their kids," she said.

Garden lifeline

Remote schools in Siem Reap province use the gardens to teach pupils life skills such as cultivation and cooking. "I learn about growing vegetables, making organic fertilizer, how to work in soil," 12-year-old Seyha told AFP, adding that the know-how has helped improve her family's own vegetable patch.

More than 1,000 schools around Cambodia have meal programs supported by the WFP, with around 50 learning gardens set up with help from global rights group Plan International. Before each day's lessons, students are served a free breakfast of rice and fish soup with vegetables grown in the garden.

Long Tov, principal of the school in Chroy Neang Nguon, said the garden and meal program helped improve students' concentration levels, memory and test results. "It (also) hugely reduces the school dropout rate," he told AFP. Vireak, 12, said he was happy to eat at school with his classmates. "I feel stronger and smarter and I can learn things much easier than before," he said.

Impact

Malnutrition costs the Cambodian economy more than \$400 million a year—about 2.5 percent of GDP—according to a study



A student having breakfast before classes with Cambodia's school meals program at a school in Siem Reap province.

backed by UNICEF. The country has made progress on tackling the issue—chronic malnutrition in children under five fell from 32 percent in 2014 to 22 percent—but there are fears that inflation could stall momentum.

"Rising food prices are likely to exacerbate the already high levels of childhood malnutrition, just as the country started showing signs of recuperating from the pandemic's economic impacts," the United Nations Nutrition office in Cambodia said in a statement. At Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap, nutrition team leader Sroeu Phannsy told AFP that some poor families were being forced to water down infant milk formula, which can have devastating consequences for a baby's health.

The fight against malnutrition takes her team of health workers into remote areas, where they treat children with ready-to-eat, energy-dense snacks. "We worry about their growth in the future, particularly their brain development will be weakened as they prepare to go to school at the age of five or six," she said. Children and infants not receiving enough nutrients can go on to suffer low IQs, blindness, stunted growth and weak immune systems.

Back at the learning garden, a teacher shows a class, with full bellies after breakfast, when vegetables are ready to harvest. "In the learning garden, we are happy and learn important skills... Back home I grow morning glory, cucumber, beans and tomatoes," 12-year-old Vireak said. —AFP



Nutrition team leader Sroeu Phannsy (right) showing parents how to cook a nutritious meal for children at Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap.



A teacher serving up breakfast to students before classes with Cambodia's school meals program at a school in Siem Reap province.



Students preparing vegetables for cooking with Cambodia's school meals program at a school in Siem Reap province.



A student pouring water on the vegetables in a garden at a school in Siem Reap province.



China Fashion Show

Models display creations from the "A Life On The Left" collection by designer Lin Qi during the China Fashion Week in Beijing. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Colin Farrell on his 'painful, violent' new Irish film



(From left) British producer Graham Broadbent, British director Martin McDonagh, Irish actress Kerry Condon, Irish actor Colin Farrell and Irish actor Brendan Gleeson arrive for the screening of the film "The Banshees of Inisherin" presented in the Venezia 79 competition as part of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Lido di Venezia in Venice, Italy. —AFP photos



Irish actor Colin Farrell goes to sign autographs as he arrives for the screening of the film "The Banshees of Inisherin".

Colin Farrell's new film, starring alongside old friend Brendan Gleeson, takes the pitch-black humor of their much-loved "In Bruges" to even darker, stranger places. "The Banshees of Inisherin", which won gushing reviews as it premiered in competition at the Venice Film Festival on Monday, reunites Farrell and Gleeson with writer-director Martin McDonagh following their 2008 gangster comedy.

Set on a remote Irish island during the civil war of the 1920s, it is a macabre tale of an ageing man (Gleeson) who one day decides he cannot waste any more time with his younger friend (Farrell) who is distracting him from making music. "It was both very familiar and completely singular," Farrell told AFP. "In Bruges" was a friendship being built between this odd couple. This is the opposite... such a painful, violent dissolving of a friendship.

Good friends in real life, the two actors were unsure if they should keep apart during the filming. "We cleared it at the start-do we need to keep a distance? But it wasn't like that," Gleeson told AFP. Still,

the tension does "bleed into the way you are," he added. "We were both conscious that would happen and we gave each other enough space."

Horse and cart

The film raises the debate of whether artists need to isolate themselves to get work done. Gleeson said: "It took me a while to understand the need for a bloody trailer (on film sets), to get the hell away from everybody-the amount of energy being expanded just chatting to people, being nice to them..." Filming on the beautiful island of Inishmore certainly helped in that respect. "The island gave us life. The distance (the people) gave us was astonishing," said Farrell. But Gleeson interjected to remind him about a group of tourists who followed him on a horse and cart. "He went for a run and tried to out-run it, but no," he said, as both broke out laughing. "You had a great conversation with the horse-you were neck-and-neck!"

'Suppressed rage'

The movie got strong reviews across the board

following its premiere on Monday, with Variety calling it McDonagh's "richest, most moving film" and Farrell's performance praised as one of the best of year by Time. McDonagh, whose "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" won Best Screenplay in Venice five years ago, is known for kicking against cinematic cliches. "It's so easy not to follow the usual tropes, not to be boring," he told AFP.

"As long as the characters are truthful... you can go from an odd starting place to odd places, and still have it be an exciting, funny, dark story. "But definitely I always kick against cliches-I'm never going to be making a Marvel film," he added.

The civil war is only briefly mentioned, but serves as a fitting backdrop to the events on the island. "It's a sad reflection of exactly what was going on in the civil war where brothers were fighting each other," said Kerry Condon, who plays Farrell's sister. "But Martin's humor comes in with the fact that the people on the island don't care too much about the war." Her character's exasperation with the self-important men and their arguments is something Condon could



Irish actor Colin Farrell arrives for the screening of the film "The Banshees of Inisherin" presented in the Venezia 79 competition as part of the 79th Venice International Film Festival.

understand. "Of course it's something I could relate to!" she said, laughing. "And the suppressed rage. Though I don't suppress my rage." —AFP



(From left) Italian actor Vincenzo Amato, Italian actress Luana Giuliani, Spanish actress Penelope Cruz and Italian director Emanuele Crialese pose during a photocall for the film "L'Immensita" (Immensity) presented in the Venezia 79 competition.

'Top Gun' soars back to surprise lead in N American theaters

In a reflection of Hollywood's deep late-summer slump, "Top Gun: Maverick" first released 15 weeks ago, climbed back to the top of the North American box office this weekend despite a relatively slim four-day take of \$7.9 million. The Paramount action thriller, starring a graying but still flight-ready Tom Cruise, has now soared to a domestic total of \$701 million and \$740 million internationally, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Monday.

That gravity-defying success came amid a generally abysmal patch for Hollywood films, with few major new releases. A lone bright spot was the record 8.1 million US moviegoers who took advantage of \$3 tickets on Saturday's National Cinema Day. Second place on the long Labor Day weekend-celebrated in both the United States and Canada-went to last weekend's No. 2: Sony's action thriller "Bullet Train," at \$7.3 million. Brad Pitt stars.

Seeking to fill the late-summer vacuum, Sony re-released superhero film "Spider-Man: No Way Home," hoping that 11 minutes of added footage would draw viewers. Nine months after its original release, the Tom Holland vehicle placed a surprising third, earning \$6.6 million.

In fourth place, up two spots from last weekend, was Warner Bros.' family-friendly animation "DC League of Super-Pets," at \$6.4 million. And in fifth, slipping from



last weekend's No. 1 spot, was Sony's horror flick "The Invitation," at \$6 million. Hollywood's problems stem partly from COVID-related scheduling chaos, said analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.

"Moviegoers have shown that they are willing and able, but without big, regular franchise releases to anchor the schedule, the box office is going to drift lower, before climbing back in the fourth quarter." He noted that 2022 will finish with 32 franchise films, down from 58 in 2019. Forty-two are set for next year.

Rounding out the weekend's top 10 were:

- "Beast" (\$4.7 million)
- "Minions: The Rise of Gru" (\$4.2 million)
- "Jaws" (re-release) (\$3.1 million)
- "Thor: Love and Thunder" (\$3.1 million)
- "Dragon Ball Super: Super Hero" (\$2.8 million) —AFP

Gender identity gets starring role at Venice Film Festival

Transgender issues have taken centre stage at the Venice Film Festival this year, with Italian director Emanuele Crialese even using the platform to reveal he was born a woman as he presented his new film starring Penelope Cruz. The revelation by Crialese came at a press conference for his new film, "L'Immensita", which is inspired by his difficult adolescence. "I am never going to be like any other man... I was born biologically a woman," Crialese said. He added that, despite his transition, there was still a "huge part of my character that is female".

In the film, Cruz's character attempts to protect her teenage daughter, who identifies as a boy, in a bourgeois household dominated by an abusive, unfaithful husband. It is not alone at this year's festival in embracing artists who reject traditional gender roles or tackle issues around sexual identity. Another film in the main competition, "Monica" by Italian director Andrea Pallaoro, stars a transgender actress in the leading role—a first in 79 editions of the festival.

Trace Lysette, known for her role in Amazon Prime series "Transparent", plays a transgender woman who returns to Ohio after a long absence to care for her dying mother. "It's very rare that you see a script where there's a trans character at the centre and the



Italian director Emanuele Crialese poses during a photocall for the film "L'Immensita" (Immensity) presented in the Venezia 79 competition as part of the 79th Venice International Film Festival.

movie is told through her lens," Lysette told reporters.

"Usually trans characters are more a sidebar vehicle for someone else's story." Besides exploring the title character's emotional and psychological world, the movie reflects on "the precarious nature of each of our identities when faced with the need to survive and transform", said Pallaoro. —AFP

Lake Urmia risks fully drying up: Iran wetlands chief

Iran's Lake Urmia will dry out completely if rescue efforts are not prioritized over the needs of farmers in the drought gripping the region, an environment official said Tuesday. The warning comes just four years after a Japanese government-funded program had raised hopes of stabilizing what was once the Middle East's largest lake and turning around one of the worst ecological disasters of recent decades. "If the water quotas are not delivered and the approved plans are not fully realized, the lake will definitely dry up and there will be no hope of its recovery," said the head of the environment department's wetlands unit, Arezoo Ashrafzadeh.

"According to the law, the energy ministry is obliged to provide the environmental water needs of Lake Urmia," she told Iran's ISNA news agency.

"But the lake has not received its water entitlement due to a decrease in rainfall among other reasons," Ashrafzadeh said there needed to be a halt to all new dam construction and measures to "stop agricultural activities" if the lake is to be restored. Situated in the mountains of northwestern Iran not far from the Turkish border, Lake Urmia is designated as a site of international importance under the United Nations Convention on Wetlands that was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971.

The lake has no outlet to the sea and its former size was the result of the volume of water flowing into it



matching or exceeding the volume being removed by humans or evaporating off. The lake once covered 5,000 square kilometers (1,930 square miles). Since 1995, it has been shrinking, according to the UN Environment Program, due to a combination of rising temperatures, reduced rainfall, dam-building and over-farming.

The drying out has threatened the habitats of shrimp, flamingos, deers and wild sheep and caused salt storms that pollute nearby cities and farms. Ashrafzadeh said the lake "has not yet completely dried up, but its northern and southern parts have been separated and about 1,000 square kilometers (386 square miles) of the lake remain." In 2013, Iran and the UN Development Program launched a campaign to save the lake with funding from the Japanese government. —AFP

Sports

Nadal stunned by Tiafoe at US Open as Alcaraz survives epic

Swiatek becomes first woman to reach US Open quarters

NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal fell to his earliest US Open loss in six years on Monday when he was knocked out by Frances Tiafoe while Carlos Alcaraz survived a five-set epic to reach a second successive quarter-final in a tie which finished at 02:23 am Tuesday. Four-time US Open champion Nadal, bidding for a 23rd Grand Slam title, lost 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in the last-16 to 26th-ranked Tiafoe. The American's big-hitting performance conjured up 18 aces and 49 winners past a sluggish Nadal.

For Australian and French Open champion Nadal, it was a first Grand Slam loss of 2022 after an abdominal strain forced him to forfeit his Wimbledon semi-final. His defeat came just a day after world number one and defending champion Daniil Medvedev was knocked out by Nick Kyrgios. "I wasn't able to push him back. Tennis is a sport of positions a lot of the time," said 36-year-old Nadal. "Something special happened today. Honestly when I first came on the scene I wasn't ready for it mentally and mature enough. I've been able to develop and I have a great team around me. With you guys, it's been great."

"I don't know what to say, I'm so happy. He's one of the greatest of all time and I played unbelievable tennis today," said Tiafoe who had only previously reached one Slam quarter-final in Australia in 2019. "Something special happened today. Honestly when I first came on the scene I wasn't ready for it mentally and mature enough. I've been able to develop and I have a great team around me. With you guys, it's been great."

Alcaraz defeated 2014 champion Marin Cilic 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 in a match which was just three minutes short of equalling the record for the latest finish at the tournament. In a gruelling three-hour and 54-minute encounter, Cilic was under siege, having to save 12 of 18 break points while committing 66 unforced errors. The 19-year-old Alcaraz, seeded three and seen as the title favorite after the elimination of Nadal, will face Jannik Sinner of Italy for a semi-final place. Sinner holds a 2-1 advantage over Alcaraz with both wins coming this year at Wimbledon and Umag. "I believed in myself, it was



NEW YORK: Poland's Iga Swiatek celebrates defeating Germany's Jule Niemeier during their 2022 US Open Tennis tournament women's singles third round match on September 5, 2022. — AFP photos

pretty tough," said Alcaraz.

"I was a break down in the fifth set. It was tough to come back after losing the fourth set." Italian 11th seed Sinner reached his third Slam quarter-final of 2022 with a 6-1, 5-7, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 win over Ilya Ivashka of Belarus. The pair served up 27 double faults between them and 119 unforced errors. Seventh seed Rublev breezed past Cameron Norrie to reach the quarter-finals for the third time with a 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 win.

Swiatek history

Rublev, who also made the last-eight in New York in 2017 and 2020, will be playing in his sixth quarter-final at the majors but has yet to progress further. French Open champion and world number one Iga Swiatek became the first woman to reach



NEW YORK: Frances Tiafoe of the United States reacts after defeating Rafael Nadal of Spain during their Men's Singles Fourth Round match on Day Eight of the 2022 US Open at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on September 05, 2022.

the US Open quarter-finals. Swiatek recovered from a set and a break down to see off 108th-ranked German opponent Jule Niemeier, 2-6, 6-4, 6-0. In a mistake-riddled clash on Louis Armstrong Court, there were a total of 15 double faults, 12 breaks of serve and 76 unforced errors. "It's really satisfying. This is my first quarter-final in New York so I am really proud of it," said Swiatek.

Wimbledon quarter-finalist Niemeier hadn't won a hardcourt match in her career before coming to New York. However, she went into Monday's match not having dropped a set and fired up to repeat her Wimbledon journey where she had also beaten world number two Anett Kontaveit. The 23-year-old from Dortmund swept through the opener and broke to lead 2-1 in the second set before Swiatek recovered to take control and reach her

third Slam quarter-final of 2022.

Sabalenska stranglehold

Swiatek will face US eighth seed Jessica Pegula for a place in the semi-finals. It will be the pair's third meeting this year with Swiatek coming out on top on both occasions in Miami and at the French Open. Pegula became the second American woman into the last-eight after brushing aside two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova 6-3, 6-2. World number six Aryna Sabalenka reached the quarter-finals for a second successive year with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 win over Australian Open runner-up Danielle Collins. Sabalenka has now beaten the American in New York three times in the last five US Opens. The Belarusian will face 2016 runner-up Karolina Pliskova who downed three-time finalist Victoria Azarenka 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2. — AFP

Vakatawa devastated by premature end to career

PARIS: France international centre Virimi Vakatawa said in an emotional press conference on Tuesday it was hard to wake up and accept he would never train with his team-mates again having had to retire due to a heart defect. The 30-year-old Fiji-born player's problem had surfaced prior to the 2019 Rugby World Cup revealed the doctor from his Top 14 club Racing 92 Sylvain Blanchard at the press conference. Vakatawa—who sat alongside France head coach Fabien Galthie, Racing handler Laurent Travers and club owner Jacky Lorenzetti—said it was hard to come to terms with.

Whilst Lorenzetti said it was "almost like losing a son" Vakatawa was more restrained in his comparisons even if he was as emotional. "It is tough for me to talk," he said. "This morning, I got up at eight o'clock and I knew I would not be running out onto the training ground with the others. "But the hardest thing was yesterday: when I told my team-mates I had to stop. "I spent a lot of time with them both on and off the pitch...it is not easy."

Vakatawa had not featured in Racing's season opener on Saturday, a 25-19 win over Castres, and on Monday the club had announced his career was over for unspecified medical reasons. Blanchard added the necessary detail on Tuesday. "He has to finish his career in France due to a cardiological problem," said Blanchard. "A heart defect was detected before the 2019 World Cup in Japan. "This defect which was not connected to rugby, has been constantly kept under



Virimi Vakatawa

observation but it is progressively deteriorating.

"However, this is not the end for him, it is the beginning of something new," Galthie said the 32-times-capped Vakatawa would be sorely missed—he last played in France's 20-15 victory in Japan in July but due to injury was not a member of the Six Nations Grand Slam winning squad. "Virimi allowed a lot of children to dream of what could be achieved," said Galthie, who took over the France job after the 2019 World Cup.

"He was a key player in our adventure, in our his-

tory and a wonderful man. "What he is experiencing now, by sharing with us he can continue to be a role model to all." He scored 49 tries for the club he joined aged 17 with his 145th and last club game Racing's 20-13 loss to La Rochelle in the European Champions Cup semi-final in May. "He is still here, he will be present on the touchline: instead of being an actor, he will do something else but he will be part of the project," said Travers. "His life is rugby, it is Racing 92. "We will do our bit to aid him, that he will always be part of the club that he gave so much to." —AFP

Bavuma back to lead South Africa at T20 World Cup

JOHANNESBURG: Temba Bavuma will captain South Africa at the International Cricket Council's T20 World Cup in Australia in October after recovering from an elbow injury. Bavuma was injured during a T20 international in India in June and was forced to miss South Africa's multi-format tour of England which ends next week. He made a return to action during a low-key T20 tournament currently being played in Namibia.

The squad announced by Cricket South Africa selection convener Victor Mpitsang on Tuesday includes explosive batsman Tristan Stubbs, 22, who hit eight sixes in scoring 72 off 28 balls against England in his first international innings in Bristol in July. "He's young, he's exciting and he's fearless and he plays the brand of cricket that (coach) Mark Boucher wants the team to play," said Mpitsang.

There was no place, though, for Dewald Brevis, 19, who set a run-scoring record in the Under-19 World Cup in the West Indies in January. Brevis, nicknamed "Baby AB" for his similarities to retired star AB de Villiers, has been signed up by T20 franchises in India, the Caribbean and South Africa — but has yet to play a first-class or List A match. Middle order batsman Rassie van der Dussen was a notable omission. Mpitsang said Van der Dussen needed six weeks to recover from a broken finger suffered in the second Test against England.

Bavuma, 32, was appointed South African white-



South Africa's Temba Bavuma

ball captain in March 2021 — the first black African to lead the country — but critics have pointed out that his batting strike rate of 120.60 is lower than that of other specialist batsmen competing for a place in the starting line-up. Mpitsang said Bavuma would open the batting at the World Cup and said it was "difficult" to envisage a situation where Bavuma might not be in the playing eleven. Mpitsang said the World Cup squad of 15 players as well as three travelling reserves for the global event

would play in a three-match T20 series in India, starting on September 28.

South African T20 World Cup squad: Temba Bavuma (captain), Quinton De Kock (wkt), Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaassen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Wayne Parnell, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Rilee Rossouw, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs. Travelling reserves: Bjorn Fortuin, Marco Jansen, Andile Phehlukwayo. — AFP

African players shine in Europe

PARIS: Nigerians Kelechi Iheanacho and Umar Sadiq were among the Africans who scored in the major European leagues at the weekend. Iheanacho celebrated a return to the starting line-up with a goal 53 seconds after the kick-off for Leicester, but Brighton stormed back for a 5-2 Premier League victory. Sadiq netted on his debut for Real Sociedad with a close-range header to earn a 1-1 La Liga draw against Atletico Madrid. Here, AFP Sport highlights African headline-makers in Europe:

Kelechi Iheanacho (Leicester)

Iheanacho had a dream start against Brighton, opening the scoring in the first minute after turning in a cross from Patson Daka. But bottom of the table Leicester still succumbed to a heavy defeat. Patson Daka (Leicester) After being the provider for the Foxes' opener, the Zambian equalised before half-time to make it 2-2 in the 33rd minute when he ran onto a lofted pass from Youri Tielemans and beat goalkeeper Robert Sanchez.

Cheikhhou Kouyate (Nottingham Forest)

All looked good for Forest against fellow newly promoted strugglers Bournemouth when Senegal star Kouyate gave them an early lead with a powerful header from six yards. But even though Forest doubled their advantage from the penalty spot, the Cherries — without a full-time manager having sacked Scott Parker following a 9-0 thrashing by Liverpool — produced a superb second-half display to win 3-2.

Yoane Wissa (Brentford)

The Democratic Republic of Congo forward celebrated his 26th birthday in style by rounding off the scoring in a thrilling 5-2 win over Leeds when, on as a substitute, he dispossessed Diego Llorente and rolled the ball into the net.

Umar Sadiq (Real Sociedad)

The Nigeria striker scored after joining Sociedad from Almeria on transfer deadline day. The 25-year-old headed a second-half equaliser in a 1-1 draw at home to Atletico Madrid. Sadiq was signed as a replacement for Sweden forward Alexander Isak after he moved to Newcastle for a reported £58 million (\$68 million).

Christian Kouame (Fiorentina)

The Ivorian equalized during the opening half in a 1-1 draw at home against 36-time Serie A champions Juventus. A Fiorentina counter-attack after a Juve corner set up Kouame to beat goalkeeper Mattia Perin with a low shot.

Sadio Mane (Bayern Munich)

Senegal striker Mane was repeatedly frustrated by Union Berlin goalkeeper Frederik Ronnow as his side were held to a 1-1 draw in the capital. Ronnow thwarted the Bayern attack with a string of superb saves, including a brilliant reflex stop to keep out a Mane header in injury time. — AFP

Sports

Nagelsmann hopes Bayern 'wake up' ahead of Champions League game

Manager blames lack of energy for stuttering Bundesliga form

BERLIN: Bayern Munich manager Julian Nagelsmann has blamed a lack of energy for his side's stuttering Bundesliga form, bristling at suggestions the six-time Champions League winners are missing departed striker Robert Lewandowski. After an explosive start to the season which saw them score 20 goals in their opening four competitive matches, two consecutive 1-1 draws against Borussia Moenchengladbach and Union Berlin see Bayern occupy an unfamiliar third spot in the table. Bayern remain overwhelming favorites to win their 11th consecutive Bundesliga title this season, but the Champions League remains their true yardstick, after a disappointing quarter final exit to Villarreal last season.

While Lewandowski's replacement Sadio Mane has scored three goals in five Bundesliga matches since arriving in the summer, Nagelsmann said his side were lacking "energy" rather than the departed Pole and drew both games despite a "proliferation" of chances. "Against Gladbach we had 31 shots on goal-I think that's creative enough," Nagelsmann said ahead of Wednesday's Champions League clash with Inter Milan. "How many goals have we scored? (Our goal difference) is plus 14, I think."



FRANKFURT: Bayern Munich's German head coach Julian Nagelsmann reacts during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Eintracht Frankfurt and FC Bayern Munich in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany on August 5, 2022. —AFP

'Not awake in our heads'

Nagelsmann said his side would be able to break down the defense of last year's Serie A champions Inter provided they recaptured the energy they brought in the opening league matches. "Our energy level needs to be the same as before," Nagelsmann said in reference to his team's draw in the German capital. "We were not 100 percent awake in our heads in certain situations." While the departed Lewandowski, who has scored five goals in four La Liga games since joining Barcelona, topped the Bundesliga scoring chart in six out of his eight seasons at the club, he also had a knack of scoring crucial goals in close games to give Bayern narrow victories.

Mane, who had a track record of scoring big goals in important matches for Liverpool including when his opening goal helped eliminate Bayern in the Reds' Champions League-winning season in 2018-19, has so far only scored his goals in games when Munich has won by at least five goals.

Worryingly for Bayern, their opponents on Wednesday are also known for employing similar defensive tactics to Gladbach and Berlin. "Inter play a bit differently (to Berlin)," Nagelsmann said, keeping his cards close to his chest. "There are similarities, but I won't go into that now otherwise they may do something different."

'They always play the same'

Former Juventus defender Matthijs de Ligt, who played three seasons in Serie A including Inter's championship year, suggested the Nerazzurri may not have as much tactical flexibility as his manager expects. "Inter are a difficult opponent. They have a team with a lot of experience and physically very strong players," said de Ligt. "They always play the same way, in a 3-5-2 system."

Domestically, Inter's much vaunted defense has

failed to keep pace with its reputation this season, with the 19-time Serie A winners having conceded eight goals in five games—the highest in the top 12 of the Italian tables. Inter will welcome Bayern to the San Siro after a painful 3-2 defeat by bitter rivals and current Italian champions AC Milan, which manager Simone Inzaghi blamed on "a half-hour blackout in which we conceded twice".

While Bayern have few injury woes, Inter will be missing their talismanic striker Romelu Lukaku, who is out with a thigh injury. Inzaghi however welcomed the challenge, promising the three-times Champions League winners would showcase their European pedigree on the big stage. "It will be a very difficult game for which we will prepare as best we can. We're challenging one of the strongest teams in Europe, but we're Inter and we will play like (Inter)." —AFP

France's golden boy Mbappe in firing line after rare faux pas

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe is France's golden boy, a sporting icon in his country at the age of still just 23 and someone who can usually do no wrong. But the Paris Saint-Germain striker was facing criticism on Tuesday for a rare faux pas. The World Cup-winning striker has always appeared mature beyond his years, at ease speaking to the media even when still a teenager breaking through at Monaco. He comes across as intelligent, thoughtful and funny in interviews and already speaks fluent English and Spanish. Yet on Monday he slipped up.

Mbappe burst out laughing along with his coach Christophe Galtier in a press conference when a question was put to them about PSG's decision to travel by private jet to a game in the western city of Nantes. That journey, a modest 380 kilometers from Paris, has been met with a backlash in France, with the choice of travel coming under increased scrutiny over the carbon footprint. The head of the country's state-owned railway company took to Twitter to point out that Nantes is just a two-hour journey on the high-speed TGV. The topic was bound to come up as Mbappe and Galtier faced questions ahead of Tuesday's Champions League game at home to Italian giants Juventus.



PARIS: (From left) Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian defender Marquinhos, Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti, Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe and Paris Saint-Germain's Spanish defender Sergio Ramos take part in a training session on the eve of the UEFA Champions League football match between Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus. —AFP

Galtier ironically replied that PSG had asked their travel organizers if they could travel to games "by sand-yacht". "I have no thoughts," added Mbappe when asked for his view. "The reaction of Christophe Galtier and Kylian Mbappe shows how detached they are from climate change issues," said Agnes Pannier-Runacher, France's Minister for Energy Transition, on

the news channel Cnews. Contacted by AFP, Mbappe's entourage did not offer a comment.

Such a misstep in the media is unusual for Mbappe, a player with a carefully crafted image and 75 million followers on Instagram, who has his own charitable foundation, "Inspired by KM", and who speaks out against racism in football. —AFP

PSG face backlash for 'inappropriate' mockery of train

PARIS: French football giants Paris Saint-Germain faced an angry backlash Tuesday after coach Christophe Galtier and star player Kylian Mbappe mocked a suggestion that they should take the train rather than private planes for short-haul travel. PSG notched up an easy 3-0 away victory against

Nantes to stay top of Ligue 1 on their trip to the western French city, which is a modest 380 kilometers from Paris.

The Qatar-owned side boasted on social media that they had made the return trip with shirt sponsors Qatar Airways but their travel choices have come under increased scrutiny over the carbon footprint. "Paris-Nantes is less than two hours by TGV," said Alain Krakovitch, the head of state-owned railway company SNCF's TGV high-speed passenger trains, on Twitter. "I renew our proposal for a TGV offer adapted to your specific needs in line with our common interests - safety, speed, services and eco-mobility," he added.

'The wrong moment'

But during Monday's press conference ahead of the Parisians' Champions League home game against Juventus, Galtier made light of the criticism while Mbappe bent double in uncontrolled laughter beside him in apparent incredulity over the controversy. "We had a chat with our travel organizers earlier to see if we can travel by sand-yacht," Galtier said, of the sailed beach buggies popular on certain French beaches.

"Mr Galtier - we have become accustomed to more relevant and more responsible answers from you. Shall we talk about it?" Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera said on Twitter. Commenting on

'Kvaradona' leads Napoli's charge against Liverpool

MILAN: Khvicha Kvaratskhelia is the name dancing around Napoli fans' lips thanks to a stunning start to life in Italy which has swept away the summertime blues ahead of Wednesday's visit of Liverpool. Kvaratskhelia has been nicknamed "Kvaradona" after scoring four times and setting up another goal in the first five rounds of Serie A fixtures.

The Georgian will be leading Napoli's bid for a big win in their Group A opener at the Stadio Maradona, especially as Nigeria forward Victor Osimhen is a doubt with a muscular problem. And while comparing him to Napoli's and possibly football's greatest ever player might seem like blasphemy, it is testament to how well he has slotted into a team which until the first day of the Serie A season appeared to be deep in crisis.

Such has been his impact he has also been called the "new KK" after Kalidou Koulibaly, one of four big players to leave the club since their league title challenge collapsed at the tail end of last season. Napoli coach Luciano Spalletti has been keen to dampen expectations of the 21-year-old, who arrived from Dinamo Batumi in his home country but who had already impressed over three years at Rubin Kazan before leaving following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"He's a really sweet kid, a good kid, one of those who at times doesn't want to be in certain situations because he's so timid," said Spalletti on Saturday after his latest match-winning display at Lazio. "When you see him walk about he's all floppy like he's on springs, but when you give him the ball he knows how to move. He's got a quality in how he strikes the ball and brings down anything you throw at him."

Bad feeling banished

Kvaratskhelia smashed home the decisive second in Napoli's 2-1 win at Lazio which put them two points behind Serie A leaders Atalanta, and he could easily have had more. His beautifully struck effort from distance cannoned off the post in the first half and he should have put Napoli ahead moments before his 61st-minute winner, shaving the bar from an almost identical chance. His instant impact and obvious delight at playing for such a storied club have been the perfect antidote to the negative vibes which had been almost as suffocating as the heat of a Neapolitan summer.

Fans were livid after seeing some of their crown jewels sold off with few of the replacements seen as adequate for a team who were in last season's exciting Scudetto race until April. They implored owner Aurelio De Laurentiis to sell the club, using the hashtag "A16" on social media as a reference to the motorway which connects Naples with Bari, another southern city where the film mogul owns the club.

During a summer training camp event organised to present the team Spalletti was interrupted by an enraged supporter who shouted at him to "wake up" from his supposed torpor. But nine goals from their first two games, Kvaratskhelia's sparkling form in both and the subsequent arrival of Italy starlet Giacomo Raspadori, Giovanni Simeone and Tanguy Ndombele swept away the ill feeling. A fresh league title bid looks on the cards, but the question is now whether Kvaratskhelia and Spalletti's exciting side can make the sort of impact on the Champions League that Italian clubs have failed to do for too long. —AFP

how Mbappe guffawed after the journalist asked the question about taking the train, Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire said: "I adore Mbappe and it can happen to all of us that we burst out laughing at the wrong moment. And I think this was the wrong moment to burst out laughing."

"We must all take climate change seriously," he told BFM-TV. "It is serious, it is about our planet and about our ability to live on this planet." He added that Galtier's ironic response was also "inappropriate". Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo, who is waging a crusade to reduce vehicle traffic in the capital's centre, tweeted: "It's not on to answer stuff like that???? Wake up guys??? This is Paris." —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I Murtuza holder of Indian Passport number M1041934 issued in Kuwait on 18th September 2014 have changed my given name from "Murtuza" to "Murtuza Shabir Kadarbhai" with Surname : Dudhwala. My full name now should read as "Murtuza Shabir Kadarbhai Dudhwala (C# 2403) - 06-09-2022

Ravinderjit Singh currently holder of Indian Passport No. S9734510 issued in Kuwait on 17/09/2018 and expiry on 16/09/2028, I want to change my name to JOHAL (as a Surname) Ravinderjit Singh. (C# 2402) - 05-09-2022

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

MOHAMMED change new name MARRIPATI RAJESWARI. (C# 2401) — 02-09-2022.

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Young gun Hojlund fires Atalanta past Monza and two points clear

Salernitana draw 2-2 with Empoli; Torino beat Lecce



MONZA: Atalanta's Turkish defender Merih Demiral (2nd right) heads the ball during the Italian Serie A football match between Monza and Atalanta at the U-Power stadium in Monza on September 5, 2022. — AFP

MILAN: Rasmus Hojlund helped move Atalanta two points clear at the top of Serie A on Monday after opening his account for the club in a 2-0 stroll against bottom side Monza. Dane Hojlund, 19, has been compared to Manchester City star Erling Haaland and began to repay the 17 million euro fee paid to Sturm Graz late last month by netting 56 minutes into his first start from Ademola Lookman's low cross.

Nigeria international Lookman then forced in the away side's second via a big deflection off Marlon Santos eight minutes later to put Gian Piero Gasperini's side, who had been top at the start of this round of matches, on 13 points. They are on their own at the summit for the first time since 1964 thanks to Roma being thrashed 4-0 by Udinese on Sunday night. Unbeaten Atalanta lead Napoli and champions AC Milan and do not have any European football on their schedule after finishing eighth last season.

Monza have had a dismal start to their first ever Serie A season despite a summer spending spree and remain on zero points after their first five games in Italy's top flight. Torino are three points behind Atalanta thanks to Nikola Vlasic's strike which earned them a 1-0 home win over promoted Lecce. Vlasic netted the winner in the 40th minute to move Torino a point above their local rivals Juventus. Salernitana, who escaped relegation thanks to a miracle run at the end of last season, are 10th after their 2-2 draw with Empoli. — AFP



MONZA: Atalanta's Danish forward Rasmus Hojlund celebrates after scoring a goal during the Italian Serie A football match between Monza and Atalanta on September 5, 2022. — AFP

Italian Serie A Table

Italian Serie A table after Monday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Atalanta	5	4	1	0	9	2	13
Napoli	5	3	2	0	12	4	11
AC Milan	5	3	2	0	10	5	11
Udinese	5	3	1	1	9	5	10
Roma	5	3	1	1	6	5	10
Torino	5	3	1	1	6	5	10
Juventus	5	2	3	0	7	2	9
Inter Milan	5	3	0	2	11	8	9
Lazio	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Salernitana	5	1	3	1	7	4	6
Fiorentina	5	1	3	1	4	4	6
Sassuolo	5	1	3	1	3	5	6
Verona	5	1	2	2	6	9	5
Spezia	5	1	2	2	5	9	5
Empoli	5	0	4	1	4	5	4
Bologna	5	0	3	2	5	8	3
Lecce	5	0	2	3	3	6	2
Sampdoria	5	0	2	3	2	9	2
Cremonese	5	0	1	4	4	9	1
Monza	5	0	0	5	2	13	0

Fury offers Joshua 'Battle of Britain' heavyweight bout

LONDON: Tyson Fury has offered Anthony Joshua the chance to fight for his WBC crown before the end of the year in a blockbuster British heavyweight title fight. Fury suggested he was retiring from boxing after beating Dillian Whyte in April but is now searching for a high-profile opponent after rival champion Oleksandr Usyk said he does not intend to fight again until 2023.

Joshua suffered a second consecutive defeat to the Ukrainian in Saudi Arabia last month and his promoter, Eddie Hearn, is considering options for a return to the ring for the 32-year-old. The unbeaten Fury announced he was retiring on his 34th birthday last month, having previously performed a number of U-turns over his future in the sport.

In a video posted on social media on Monday he appeared to confirm he had reversed his decision again. "You've all heard that I'm going to be fighting within the next few months, and before I announce an opponent I need to do this just in case," said Fury. "Anthony Joshua, I know you've just lost a fight to Usyk, and I know you're belt-less at the moment, and I'd like to give you an opportunity to fight me for the WBC heavyweight championship of the world and the lineal championship in the next few months.

"You're coming off a 12-round fight so you're match fit, you're ready, I'm giving you a few months' notice. "If you're interested I'll send you the date over and we can rumble-a battle of Britain for the WBC heavyweight championship of the world. Let me know if you're interested. If not, I will select another opponent."

Joshua responded on Twitter by telling Fury to contact his management team. "I don't do the online discussions just for clout," wrote Joshua, before adding: "I'll be ready in December." Former champion Joshua fell to 24-3 with his latest defeat to Usyk but a clash with Fury would ignite huge interest in Britain. Usyk, who retained his WBO, IBF and WBA titles against Joshua, said on Friday he hoped to set up a unification bout against Fury next year. — AFP

Saudi Arabia set to host MotoGP race

PARIS: Saudi Arabia moved closer to hosting a race in the motorcycling world championship series after signing an agreement with MotoGP promoter Dorna. Dorna Sports and the Saudi Motorsport Company on Monday "confirmed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding outlining their shared intention to bring the world's premier motorcycle racing series to the Kingdom". "The addition of Saudi Arabia to the MotoGP calendar on an annual basis will see the sport expanding further into the Middle East, with Qatar currently hosting the only round in the region."

MotoGP said the proposed event will take place on a newly-built circuit approved by the International Automobile (FIA) and Motorcycling (FIM) Federations. The circuit could be in Qiddiya, a huge "entertainment city" under construction near Riyadh. Saudi Arabia is displaying a growing desire to make a name in the world of sport, as it pushes to improve its image on the international scene. The country has hosted the Dakar Rally since 2020 and staged a Formula One Grand Prix on a street circuit in Jeddah for the first time last year. — AFP

Pacquiao eyes boxing return with exhibition fight in Saudi

MANILA: Manny Pacquiao, who retired from boxing last year for a tilt at the Philippines presidency, told AFP on Tuesday that he is considering an exhibition fight in Saudi Arabia in January. The 43-year-old legendary former world champion is to hold talks over a fight against French former sparring partner Jaber Zayani in Riyadh. "We will just start discussions," Pacquiao, who previously ruled out a return to professional boxing, said by telephone from his home city of General Santos where he is preparing for a charity bout against a South Korean YouTuber.

Pacquiao ended his 26-year boxing career with a points defeat to Cuban Yordenis Ugas in August 2021 and, as well as being a former senator, made a failed bid earlier this year to be president of his country. "I will prepare in the same way I train for a real fight," Pacquiao said of his charity match against martial arts YouTuber DK Yoo on December 10 in Seoul.

The fight over six rounds has no agreed weight limit, potentially putting Pacquiao at a physical disadvantage against the bigger Yoo. Yoo has more than 650,000 subscribers on YouTube, where he promotes his self-styled form of martial arts called



MINDANAO: Philippine boxing legend and Senator Manny Pacquiao training at his gym in the city of General Santos in southern island of Mindanao. — AFP

"warfare combat system". "I know I will not win against him but I will try my best to surprise Manny Pacquiao," Yoo said previously. Most of the money raised from the event will go towards rebuilding homes in conflict-ravaged Ukraine, organizers said.

Pacquiao is set to join other retired boxing greats who have ventured onto the exhibition circuit. Floyd Mayweather, who has called himself the "pioneer of exhibitions", dominated YouTuber Logan Paul in a fight last year and knocked out Japanese kickboxer Tenshin Nasukawa in two minutes in December 2018. Both fights were widely ridiculed. Mayweather, Pacquiao's rival from their boxing days, will fight Japanese mixed martial arts star Mikuru Asakura in Japan later this month. — AFP