

The smart XC60, intelligent design at every turn.

volvocars.com

VOLVO

2 Cyberbullying and its effects on teenagers



8 Sudanese starting small businesses to survive war



13 MrBeast, the YouTuber who bit more burger than he could chew



15 Leipzig spoil Kane Bayern debut with German Super Cup win



Naval forces in Gulf warn ships against nearing Iranian waters

Western agencies caution risk of seizure high in Strait of Hormuz

NEWS IN BRIEF

913 licenses suspended

KUWAIT: The traffic department suspended 913 driving licenses of expatriate violators during the second quarter of 2023 for various periods, from three months up to one year and permanent cancellation based on the number of penalty points. It said using the phone is a grave violation with 2 penalty points, with 4 points registered for running the red light or speeding. The first suspension is for those with 14 penalty points, with the license withdrawn for 3 months. If the driver commits additional violations and collects 12 points, the license will be withdrawn for 6 months. After 10 additional points, the license will be withdrawn for 9 months. It will be withdrawn for one year when 8 additional points are recorded. The license will be revoked permanently after 6 more penalty points.

Leave permit on Sahel app

KUWAIT: The interior ministry announced on Sunday the activation of a service to issue a leave permit for more than six months for domestic workers under the sponsorship of citizens on the unified government application Sahel. "A citizen can now issue an absence permit on the Sahel app for a domestic worker for a period not exceeding the period of expiry of the residency in order to avoid canceling the worker's iqama while they are outside the country for more than six months," the ministry said.

Morocco breaks heat record

RABAT: Temperatures in Morocco have for the first time on record topped 50 degrees Celsius, the North African country's meteorological service said Sunday amid a scorching heatwave. The meteorological station in the southern coastal city of Agadir recorded on Friday the new national record of 50.4C, said the General Directorate of Meteorology. Morocco has experienced a series of heatwaves over the summer with record-breaking temperatures. The previous highest temperature, 49.9C in the Western Sahara city of Smara, was recorded on July 13, according to the weather service. — AFP

Iraq lifts Telegram suspension

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi government on Sunday ended a week-long suspension of the Telegram messaging app over "national security" concerns after the move drew criticism from pro-Iran factions. Iraq's ministry of communications said managers of the app had responded to "demands of authorities by detecting the people who divulged the data of citizens and by expressing their full availability to communicate with relevant authorities". — AFP

MANAMA: Western naval forces operating in the Gulf warned ships sailing in the strategic Strait of Hormuz against approaching Iranian waters to avoid the risk of seizure, according to statements issued over the weekend. "Vessels are being advised to transit as far away from Iranian territorial waters as possible" to minimize the risk of seizure, US Fifth Fleet spokesperson Commander Tim Hawkins told AFP.

The International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC), led by Washington, is "notifying regional mariners of appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of seizure based on current regional tensions, which we seek to de-escalate," he added. The alliance, established in 2019, is made up of 11 countries, including the United States, Great Britain, Saudi

Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Its mission, according to its website, is to "provide reassurance to merchant shipping in the Middle East region".

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said late Saturday in a statement that it had been "made aware of an increased threat within the vicinity of Strait Of Hormuz", through which one-third of the world's oil transported by sea passes. The agency advised all vessels to "exercise caution and report suspicious activity to UKMTO".

In a statement released on Saturday afternoon, maritime security company Ambrey said that they have been warned by Greek and US authorities, as well as others, "of an attack on a merchant vessel... in the Strait of Hormuz in the next 12 to 72 hours". "Pre-

viously, after a similar warning was issued, a merchant vessel was seized by Iranian authorities under a false pretext," it added.

There has been no reaction so far from Iranian authorities to the warnings. This comes days after the United States and Iran reached an agreement to release five American prisoners in exchange for the release of Iranian funds frozen for humanitarian purposes, raising hopes of reducing tensions between the adversaries. On Monday, over 3,000 American sailors arrived in the Middle East as part of a plan to enhance their military presence in the region, with Washington stating that it aims to deter Iran from seizing ships and oil tankers.

Continued on Page 6

Bushehri to grill minister; call to boost student aid

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Jenan Bushehri said on Sunday she has decided to grill Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari over "exceptional" salaries given by the government to some ministers and senior officials. The filing and debate of the grilling will be during the month of October when the National Assembly opens its new term after concluding the summer recess.

Bushehri had also threatened to grill Kandari in



Jenan Bushehri



Essa Al-Kandari

the previous Assembly, which was nullified by the constitutional court. The lawmaker said on Sunday that the government did not understand her message and continued its wrong policy in awarding current and former senior officials additional salaries in violation of the law. If submitted, the grilling will be the

first in the Assembly elected on June 6.

Meanwhile, MPs Hamad Al-Alyan and Abdulwahab Al-Essa submitted a draft law calling on the government to bear the expenses of all Kuwaiti master's and doctorate students admitted in authorized universities. The expenses include fees, travel, accommodation, healthcare and other overheads.

Five other MPs also submitted another draft law calling to increase monthly assistance to Kuwaiti university students to KD 300 from the current KD 200. Under the bill, students studying rare specializations and outstanding students will get KD 350 per month. The draft law states that in addition to Kuwaiti students, children of Kuwaiti women and stateless students will benefit from the assistance.

Also, MP Abdullah Fahhad said on Sunday that Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah has agreed to increase the retirement age of bedoons in the army to 65 years from 60.

Anger grows as Hawaii fire death toll nears 100

LAHAINA, Hawaii: The death toll in Hawaii from the deadliest US wildfire in more than a century was expected to cross the 100-mark Sunday, fueling criticism that an inadequate official response contributed to the heavy loss of life. Officials updated the toll to 93 late Saturday, but warned the figure was likely to rise as recovery crews with cadaver dogs continued the grim task of searching burned out homes and vehicles in the epicenter of Lahaina.

The historic coastal town on the island of Maui was almost completely destroyed by the fast-moving inferno early Wednesday morning, with survivors saying there had been no warnings. When asked Sunday why none of the island's sirens had been activated, Hawaii Senator Mazie Hirono said she would

Continued on Page 6



LAHAINA, Hawaii: A resident looks around a charred apartment complex in the aftermath of a wildfire on Aug 12, 2023. — AFP

Biden fights for gain a year after ambitious law

WASHINGTON: If he had it to do over, he would probably choose another name: A year on, Joe Biden is struggling to sell Americans on the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act. The hugely ambitious project is aimed at speeding America's transition to clean energy, rebuilding its industrial might and increasing social justice. On Aug 16, 2022, when the US president signed the \$750 billion plan into law, the country was in the midst of a dramatic surge in prices that

was battering the Democratic leader's popularity. So "the Inflation Reduction Act" seemed a logical name, even though the plan aimed largely — through some \$350 billion in subsidies and tax credits — at speeding the transition to green energy. "I wish I hadn't called it that, because it has less to do with inflation than it has to do with providing alternatives that generate economic growth," Biden said at a recent meeting with donors in the western state of Utah.

The previous day, the 80-year-old Democrat, who is seeking a second term in office next year, had inaugurated a sustainable energy project that he said symbolizes the best of the IRA. That project, in nearby New Mexico, involves the construction of electricity-generating wind turbines on the site where a factory once made plastic dishes — in

Continued on Page 6



REHOBOTH BEACH, Delaware: US President Joe Biden rides his bicycle through Gordons Pond in Cape Henlopen State Park on Aug 13, 2023. — AFP



Cyberbullying and its effects on teenagers

Digital landscape introduces new avenues for aggression

By Ali Hamza

KUWAIT: For today's teenagers, digital spaces have become an extension of their social world. Social media platforms, online gaming and instant messaging are integral aspects of their daily lives, shaping how they communicate, connect and express themselves. However, this digital landscape has also introduced new avenues for aggression and cruelty.

Cyberbullying is a major problem, as it affects the mental health and school performance of teenagers. Cyberbullying comes in many different forms, the most popular of which are social media accounts with no name or any information that might reveal the identity of the owner of the account, and they target people who they do not like.

In most cases, they bully other teens by using a photo of them and writing a vague

caption associated with the photo in the name of "making funny memes and jokes", but it's often without the permission of the teen in the photo. When the anonymous account owners are asked to take down the photos, they refuse to do so.

"My life has been severely impacted by cyberbullying. I was stressed and anxious and could not concentrate on my studies. My grades went down due to online harassment and I pushed myself away from friends and family due to loneliness. It took a lot of time to regain my confidence," a victim of cyberbullying said.

Cyberbullying even gets worse when other teenagers see the posts and start creating more stories, whether they are true or not. Often these stories spread to their school or places they visit, which creates another problem for them, as many people ask them about the rumors spreading about them, and they might not even be aware of them

until someone tells them.

Most victims of cyberbullying don't want to speak up about the problems they are going through, as they are afraid that if they speak out, it might lead to more bullying. As a result, teenagers feel hopeless and fall into depression. Kevin, who once ran a cyberbullying page that targeted his classmates and other students, said he was not afraid of bullying people online because they would not take any action to defend themselves or report it.

If you are a victim of cyberbullying, you should consult an adult who can help you and report all the evidence of legal violations to the department of electronic and cyber crimes, which will investigate and determine the gravity of the information and take the necessary legal action. Call the emergency line at +96597283939 and you will be treated confidentially.



remains enjoyable, accompanied by teasing players when they are worse than him. Abdulwahab, who plays FIFA, described his experience as frustrating when his opponents play slowly and are worse than him, with unreasonable amount of insults hurled at him just for winning the game.

"Most multiplayer games cater towards the e-sports community rather than casual players," said 16-year-old Ryan, who has been an avid gamer since he was 4. Some players like Ryan switched to single player video games as an alternative to multiplayer games because of the issues he faced. Hassan, who has been gaming for 9 years, said single player story games are more enjoyable and less stressful, as online gaming has become a test of skill, as

gamers are constantly competing with each other with factors like a robust online connection and hardware budget playing a major role. He also said some story games teach him new life lessons, as the player is the one making all the choices in the game.

Ammar Soheil, who has been a casual gamer for the past 8 years, views single player games with storylines as pieces of art, pointing out multiplayer games with repetitive gameplay are fun to play but are nothing special. Different gamers view games differently — some view them as boring and repetitive, others consider them as fun, while a few try to find alternatives. However, there is still a popular view that gaming hasn't been the same since the COVID pandemic ended.

In my view

Breaking the chains: Combating land monopoly in Kuwait



Mansour Al-Tamimi

Local@kuwaittimes.com

Kuwait grapples with the challenge of land monopoly as vast tracts of land are held by a select few, casting a shadow over economic growth, social equality, and overall accessibility to land for the average citizen. The nation's path to effectively address this issue lies in two primary strategies: fostering land redistribution and updating inheritance laws, alongside the implementation of land taxation and anti-speculation measures.

A dual approach

The cornerstone of combating land monopoly lies in the implementation of comprehensive land redistribution policies. These policies aim to dismantle large land holdings and equitably distribute them among citizens, thereby achieving a more balanced allocation of land resources. The government can initiate land reform programs to identify and redistribute large landholdings to deserving citizens. These programs can utilize various mechanisms such as land auctions, lease-to-own programs, and cooperative farming initiatives.

In tandem with land redistribution, updating inheritance laws to ensure an even division of land among heirs — regardless of gender — can prevent the concentration of land among wealthy families, further bolstering the equitable distribution of land resources. Public awareness and education form another crucial element of this strategy. By hosting educational campaigns, workshops, and seminars, citizens can become better informed about their rights and the importance of land redistribution and fair inheritance laws.

Land taxation and anti-speculation measures

The second arm of this strategy involves implementing effective land taxation and anti-speculation measures. By discouraging land hoarding and speculative practices, these measures can generate revenue for public welfare and ensure land resources are used productively. A progressive property tax system could incentivize landowners to make efficient use of their land, with higher tax rates on vacant or underutilized plots discouraging speculative holding. In addition, a land value tax — taxing the unimproved value of land — could capture economic gains from community development efforts. This approach discourages land speculation and promotes efficient land use.

Regulations to curb speculative practices, such as setting holding limits, can prevent the accumulation of land for speculative purposes, thereby ensuring land is available for productive use and preventing artificial price inflation. Finally, the establishment of land trusts and the promotion of public-private partnerships can ensure the community at large benefits from land use. These mechanisms can aid in affordable housing initiatives, public infrastructure projects, and sustainable urban planning.

Conclusion

Addressing the issue of land monopoly in Kuwait necessitates a holistic approach focused on promoting land redistribution, fair inheritance laws, and effective land taxation policies. By adopting these strategies, Kuwait can facilitate a more equitable distribution of land resources, stimulate economic growth, and foster a more inclusive society where land is accessible to all its citizens.

Growing discontent towards video games

By Zaid Aboobacker

KUWAIT: Despite the fact that the gaming community and industry have expanded in recent years, there has been a growing dissatisfaction and discontent towards video games, particularly online multiplayer games. Kuwait Times interviewed a range of players from casual to competitive, revealing diverse viewpoints. Gamers differ in opinion, some label gaming as "toxic", while others describe it as a "waste of time". Take Fahad for example, whose perspective shifted towards seeing gaming as a waste of time after he embraced self-improvement influenced by social media.

David, who recently quit gaming, said he cannot play games with his friends as they place in higher ranks and only play competitively, forgetting the purpose of gaming, which is to have fun. He also tells us about smurfing, where players from higher ranks create new accounts to play with lower ranked gamers so they have easier competition, which makes the games unfair and unfun for casual players. "Games like Valorant require effort and skill, such that you can't play it as a pastime, because you have to put in hours to work on your tactics and improve

your aim, but most players do not have time for this," he said.

"The environment has become so toxic to the point where people can't enjoy what they are playing. Everyone plays to win now and ends up cursing the opponent," said Shaheer, who spoke about a case where a student in his school self harmed due to the extreme frustration he and his teammates experienced after not winning a match. Furthermore, he mentioned how getting blamed for losing a match can affect one's mental health due to the fact that one's own friends and teammates curse and blame them for losing.

A study by Unity surveying more than a thousand gamers shows more than 2 out of 3 multiplayer gamers have experienced toxic behavior while playing multiplayer video games, while 42 percent of multiplayer gamers reported experiencing harassment, which include intimidation, coercion or oppression of another player inside or outside the game.

Some competitive players like 13-year-old Asindu have witnessed their enjoyment of games like Fortnite transforming into a pursuit of higher ranks. But other players like Febin maintain that the game



Officials urged to implement security plans

KUWAIT: The First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, directed the ministry's leadership to continue implementing security plans targeting violators and wanted persons and applying the law to everyone. According to a press release from the General Directorate of Security Relations and Media, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled chaired a security meeting with a number of security officials on Sunday in the pres-

Top court upholds 10-year jail term for Qadisiya killer

KUWAIT: The court of cassation upheld the sentence of a murderer to 10 years in prison in what is known as the Qadisiya Cooperative Society crime, where the killer stabbed the deceased several times because of a parking dispute. The events of the case date back to two years, when

ence of the Undersecretary (Interior) Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas in continuation of periodic meetings with the leadership of the ministry to review the latest security developments in the country.

Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled reviewed with the assistant agents the security situation in the country and the plans developed in this regard. He made some remarks to activate the measures so as to address any negative phenomena. He also directed the field staff to exert more effort, work, and full coordination between all security sectors and gave some instructions and directives that helped with the accuracy and completion of the work. He stressed his confidence in the ability of the employees of the Ministry of Interior to perform the tasks assigned to them, calling on them to continue to give with the same efficiency and readiness. — KUNA

security services arrested a young Kuwaiti born in 1995, who stabbed a citizen born in 1986 (Hassan Ashkanani), in front of a pastry shop in Qadisiya. The victim was pronounced dead at Amiri Hospital, and the incident was recorded as a murder.

The criminal security department found the incident resulted due to a fight, during which the accused stabbed the victim. Ashkanani had parked his car in the parking lot of Qadisiya Cooperative Society, and when he got out of his car, he was confronted by the killer, who accused him of taking his parking spot. The victim ignored him and went to the pastry shop. But the killer followed him and stabbed him several times in his back and heart until he died.

Interior minister sponsors student training program

KUWAIT: A student training program to work in the private sector was launched for the Spring-Summer 2023 period with the support of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. It comes within the framework of the state's keenness to take care of young people, train them and pave the way for them to create a generation capable of bearing the trust and raising the status of the country. This is also in continuation of the approach of the Public Authority of Manpower to change mindsets and direct Kuwaiti youth towards work in the private sector, especially those who are still in various stages of education.

"The aim of the student training project lies in attracting the segment of young people who are in school to occupy their free time during the vacation by preparing them professionally through their enrollment in practical training programs aimed at creating awareness of the importance of working in the private sector and its impact on the professional and career development of the individual, because of its effective role in occupying their free time away from negative practices," PAM said.

"We also focus strengthening and building their skills and abilities, and supporting their self-confidence so that they can start working in the private sector, as well as spreading the spirit of challenge and love of work by opening job horizons for them and preparing them technically for the labor market in various fields," PAM clarified. "A large number of our students were included for training during the Spring-Summer 2023 season in cooperation with a number of sectors in various fields such as banking, insurance, retail, law and petroleum, in addition to factories, cooperative societies and other sectors." — KUNA

Local

Kuwait Municipality recognizes Zain for supporting environmental campaign

Company puts environmental sustainability at the forefront of its priorities

KUWAIT: Zain was recognized by the Kuwait Municipality for effectively contributing to raising positive environmental awareness in the community. The recognition came during the special ceremony held to honor the support of all parties that contributed to Kuwait Municipality's recent awareness campaign aimed at promoting public sanitation laws and encouraging the community's support to keep Kuwait clean. The event came under the patronage of Minister of State for Municipality Affairs and Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs Fahad Al-Shula.

During the event, Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous recognized Zain, represented by Corporate Affairs Department Manager Hamad Al-Musaibeeh, for the company's support to the Municipality's recent nationwide awareness campaign. Zain's support and contribution to the campaign reflected the private sector's active role in partnering with the public sector to achieve the nation's various developmental goals.

Zain contributed to the campaign by promoting awareness messages and introducing its customer base, the biggest in Kuwait, to the campaign's goals. Such goals included familiarizing citizens and residents with public sanitation laws, encouraging the public to support the Municipality's efforts in maintaining the health and hygiene of the nation's areas and governorate, as well as removing construction, agricultural, organic and inorganic waste.

The campaign also aimed at informing the public of the Municipality's schedules for collecting waste, how to correctly prepare waste for collection, encouraging general hygiene practices, encouraging the public's support, and shedding light on the continuous efforts exerted by Kuwait Municipality's personnel to serve the community. Zain puts environmental sustainability at the forefront of its priorities, as its social message seeks to create a culture of sustainability within the community by advocating practices like reducing

consumption, recycling, using renewable sources of energy, and more.

The company recently launched a sustainable community initiative to recycle used books and papers by providing containers in 10 different locations at Zain megastores and in Sabah Al-Salem University City in Shadadiya. This initiative aimed at raising social awareness about the crucial topic of environmental sustainability, as well as providing real-world solutions to encourage the community to adopt positive practices that contribute to lessening the effects of climate change. The campaign coincided with the end of the academic year, where tons of books and papers are thrown away in waste bins.

In one of its recent sustainable projects, the company also presented its very own recycled shopping tote bags made entirely out of Zain's outdoor billboard ads. The bags were offered to customers for their shopping needs in place of plastic bags to encourage sustainable shopping and raise environmental awareness.



Al-Dabbous honors Al-Musaibeeh in recognition of Zain's support to the campaign.



KUWAIT: Information Minister Abdulrahman B Al-Mutairi received Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika in his office on Sunday. They held discussions on deepening cultural and media cooperation between Kuwait and India, including participation in cultural events, museum cooperation, media exchanges, tourism potential etc., read a post on India in Kuwait, the official Twitter handle of the Indian embassy in the Gulf country.

Kuwait Municipality launches hygiene awareness campaign

KUWAIT: Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality, Saud Al-Dabbous, confirmed on Sunday the success of the national hygiene campaign launched by the municipality under the slogan "Our country deserves it." The campaign raised community awareness on 'cleanliness' and compliance with its laws. In his speech, delivered on behalf of Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shula, Al-Dabbous stressed the importance of maintaining public cleanliness: "It is the role of every citizen and resident. A clean environment is a human right for all."

In this regard, he pointed to the importance of the contribution of individuals in maintaining public hygiene, saying: "They are the basic element for the development of societies, which is a common



responsibility that ensures the provision of a safe, clean, and sustainable environment." "There was active participation of the governmental, private, and cooperative sectors and civil society institutions in supporting the campaign (Our Country Deserves It), which lasted two months and included the six governorates," he said.

He stated that the launch of the "Our Country Deserves It" campaign in the field coincided with directive by various sectors and in various branches of the governorates to work diligently and seriously, which was reflected in the volume of response to



various complaints in a practical and urgent manner. The campaign left the greatest impact in highlighting the effectiveness of this role.

"The impact of the campaign works in enhancing the community's confidence in the cadres and work teams of the Kuwait Municipality in various governorates, with an emphasis on commitment and performing their roles optimally," he added. Al-Dabbous praised the great cooperation provided by the Kuwaiti media, as the presence of the campaign's activities and the work of the Kuwait Municipality at the media level was clear and influential. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality organizes a hygiene campaign under the slogan 'Our Country Deserves It'.

Education ministry sets for new academic year

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education has completed an integrated plan in preparation for the new academic year with the participation of various sectors, including public education, private and qualitative education, educational facilities, planning and educational research, curricula, financial affairs, administrative affairs, and administrative development.

Six committees from the concerned sectors in the ministry organized the programs for the new academic year. The ministry has formed a committee in each of the sectors to plan, follow up, and prepare for the start of the academic year. Each committee is headed by the Assistant Undersec-

retary of the sector, and the members include the directors of departments as well as a number of sector employees selected by the undersecretary. The total number of members of the committee, including the chairman, does not exceed ten.

Meanwhile, the Educational Facilities and Planning Sector Committee indicated that it has followed up on the radical maintenance work of all kinds in the operating schools and submitted a weekly report on the maintenance work and the completion rates. This is done to ensure the completion of the aforementioned maintenance work in preparation for the new academic year. In addition, the inventories of the academic stages in the Department of Supplies and Stores have been completed, and the Department of Curriculum has been provided with the inventories.

In another development, the Ministry of Higher Education stressed on Sunday the importance of preparing human capital, which constitutes the strong pillar and the main pillar of the country's development and renaissance, pointing out

that it will enhance the academic competitive position of Kuwait.

Acting Undersecretary Lamia Al-Mulhim said: "The ministry is enhancing Kuwait's competitive position under the directives of the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and the Acting Minister of Education, Dr Jassim Al-Ustad, and to provide academic inputs that help state institutions provide the finest services to citizens and residents alike."

"The Minister recently issued a ministerial decision regarding allowing the registration and enrollment of Kuwaiti students in the bachelor's program in human medicine at Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences in the Emirate of Dubai, Gulf Medical University in the Emirate of Ajman, and Khalifa University in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in an effort to increase the opportunities for students wishing to study the bachelor's program in human medicine," Al-Mulhim explained. She affirmed the ministry's keenness to provide medical seats in a number of countries for the current year, 2023-2024. — KUNA

News in Brief

Retired firefighters can return to service

KUWAIT: The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled said the government is working on strengthening the Fire Force with personnel with practical experience and those who have previous service in the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), whether retired or whose service has ended, in order to provide an opportunity for them to return to service and to serve the nation. The Fire Force announced the amendment of the conditions for joining the reinstatement course for members of the KFF (non-commissioned officers and individuals), provided that the age of the retirees does not exceed 55 years - without considering the period spent out of service during the period of retirement or termination of service, in accordance with the procedures and special conditions of the force. — KUNA

Quran workshops 'priority' for Awqaf

KUWAIT: Acting assistant undersecretary for social welfare at the Ministry of Awqaf Hamad Al-Khaldi affirmed the ministry's keenness to teach the Holy Quran (memorizing and understanding) to children in the social care sector through workshops with the support of the General Secretariat of Awqaf. "This project serves special groups in shelters, including the elderly, juveniles and the disabled with a well-thought-out plan that operates according to an organized work mechanism that suits the age, mental and absorptive capacity of attendees," Khaldi said. "The department holds special Quranic activities and programs, providing the appropriate environment, selecting imams and distinguished memorizers, implementing modern methods of teaching memorization to children and preparing them to participate in Quranic competitions throughout the year," he said, pointing to the Kuwait Grand Competition for Memorizing the Holy Quran, held under the patronage of HH the Amir.

Taxi driver arrested over illegal activities

KUWAIT: Officials from the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and the Department of Protection of Public Morals and Combating Trafficking in Persons have arrested a taxi driver of Arab nationality who smuggles workers from the homes of their sponsors in order to transfer them to where they can work per hour. The suspect is accused of taking money and commissions for the smuggling operations.

OIC stresses peace through dialogue

RIYADH: Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hussein Taha on Sunday affirmed endeavors to consolidate the culture of peace and encouragement of mutual respect and understanding values through boosting dialogue and openness to all cultures. The bloc quoted Taha's statement during a conference on international communication and integration, in Makkah. Saudi Arabia's hosting of the conference affirms its status as a real player in backing positive trends of "our nation and work for its development," Taha said. He also commended the role of the Riyadh-based OIC and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in this regard. Meanwhile, OIC Secretariat said in a statement that the conference is being held amid major challenges facing the Islamic world, attempting to distort its image, calling for keeping united in face of such adversarial moves. — KUNA

Kuwait Times
Established 1961THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher

YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief

ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432

ADVERTISING : 24833199 Extn. 301

CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 220

ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.

Email: info@kuwaittimes.com

Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

News in Brief

Cooperative societies
to launch a platform
on its website

KUWAIT: The president of the Federation of Consumer Cooperative Societies, Abdulwahab Al-Fares, announced the intention of the federation to launch a platform on its website that includes the prices of more than 139,000 items approved by cooperative societies to enable everyone to know the real prices of all items.

Al-Fares told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Sunday that the platform allows everyone to see the items approved in cooperative societies, and whoever finds an item contrary to what is approved should notify the Consumer Protection Authority. He stressed that the Federation of Cooperative Societies is fighting high prices and artificial increases in the branches of cooperative societies to protect the middle and working class and support purchasing power. "Our priority is to stabilize prices and enable everyone to be able to buy basic items," he said.

"We are in an open economy, and those who do not have the ability to continue supplying the markets with goods should get out of the market, and other people and agents with the most suitable quality and price should come," he added. Al-Fares stressed that the union will not support any increase in prices until the inflation rate decreases, according to official state data, and that there is comprehensive and fair treatment of citizens and merchants.

Al-Fares said that cooperative societies carry out periodic inspection rounds to check any product that is not approved by the federation, and he urged associations not to support or sell it until it enters the system. He pointed out that the union periodically circulates information so as to comply with the circulars of the union and ministerial decisions to maintain market prices. — KUNA

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Children participate in an activity during a summer camp organized by the Scientific Center. — KUNA

Off the beaten path: Avid
travelers share experiences

Mimi Al-Addin at the village of Kalavryta in Greece.



Abdallah Mahmoud stands in front of a temple in Nepal.



Children at Xinaliq village in Azerbaijan

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Summer is the season of travel in Kuwait, and people are increasingly embarking on journeys to uncharted territories and unfamiliar destinations in search of unique experiences, driven by a curiosity to explore the unconventional and discover the extraordinary. Kuwait Times spoke with travelers in Kuwait to learn more about the interesting and unusual places they have discovered.

Mimi Al-Addin told Kuwait Times about her once-in-a-lifetime experiences in Greece in an area called Kalavryta, where a massacre happened. "In 1943, it was a tragic day for a small Greek village called Kalavryta. During World War II, the German army decided to kill all the males (men and children) of the village. As for the women and girls, they were gathered in a school to be burned alive," she said, adding 13 men survived because they hid under the corpses, and helped revive the village.

"Imagine a village where most of its houses are abandoned and you find a yard filled with the bodies of its inhabitants. All the bodies were buried in the same place where they were killed, and it is truly an indescribable feeling when you stand in the place of their extermination, which is at the same time a mass grave. There is a large memorial with the names of all the 693 victims who died. The village is full of life now," she said.

Addin said there is an ancient Caucasian village in Azerbaijan called Xinaliq, which is considered the highest, remotest and most isolated village in the country, noting that being there is like time traveling back to the '40s. "They are far from technology and still use Soviet-era trucks. I had lunch with a local family there — lentil soup and dolma, and tea served with cherry jam," she said.

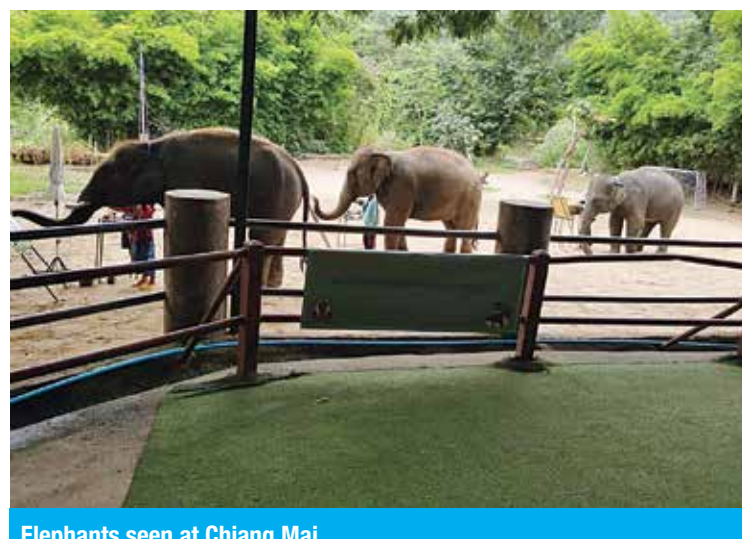
Meanwhile, Mohammed Kadry said most people

of Kuwait visit Thailand's well-known places, but not many know about the city of Chiang Mai, which is located 600 km from Bangkok and one of the highest points in Thailand. Kadry went to Chiang Mai by train with his wife, which took 10 hours. "The train was neat and clean. They have closed sections for families and the train station was very organized."

Regarding the city, he said: "The area is old and historical. We rented a car, and although the area is not as famous as some areas in Thailand, it is a very beautiful place full of tea plantations and mountains. We booked a room in a hotel on a high mountain with an awesome and beautiful view, which only cost KD 10 per day including two meals and a private pool."

"We saw a mix of traditional views of farmers and modern restaurants and cafes. There is a diversity of Thai food and halal food. The city is full of elephants and considered a symbol of the city. There is a medical center dedicated to elephants and they take care of them in terms of food and health-care. Many residents sell fresh fruits directly from farms. Simple, ordinary life is everywhere. There is a wonderful waterfall with amazing sunrises and a free museum about the history of the area. There are many events such as boxing matches, shooting ranges and river cruises. On Saturday and Sunday, there is a market dedicated to handcrafted wooden products," Kadry said.

Abdallah Mahmoud spoke about his spiritual trip to Nepal. "I traveled to Nepal in July — it was fun and filled with many adventures. This country is well-known for travelers to explore the Himalayas and Mt Everest, which are very hard and too far to reach," he said. "My experience started in the capital Kathmandu, where people were very nice. They have a place where they burn their dead, place the ashes in an urn and submerge it in water. Also, they use singing bowls for meditation and healing," he said.



Elephants seen at Chiang Mai.



Mohammed Kadry in a tea farm in Chiang Mai.

Scan & Subscribe
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf

Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



Migrants on France's Channel coast undeterred by latest deaths

Sidelined Arabs fear outcome of Zionist entity's legal overhaul

Page 6

Page 7



SATKANIA: Flood affected people take shelter on a railway track after heavy rains in Satkania on August 13, 2023. At least 55 people have been killed and more than a million affected by two weeks of torrential rains causing floods and landslides. — AFP

55 killed in Bangladesh floods in August

More than a million affected by two weeks of torrential rains

CHITTAGONG: At least 55 people have been killed and more than a million affected by two weeks of torrential rains causing floods and landslides in southeast Bangladesh, officials said Sunday. Administrators of four of the worst-hit districts said floods and landslides since August 1 killed 21 people in Cox's Bazar, 19 in Chittagong, 10 in Bandarban and five in Rangamati.

"These are some of the heaviest rains in recent years," Bangladesh Meteorological Department chief Azizur Rahman told AFP. He said 312 millimetres (12 inches) of rainfall was recorded on August 7 alone. Officials said heavy rains lashed the region until August 11, triggering flash floods that caused rivers to burst their banks and inundate hundreds of villages. It was only possible to confirm how many were

killed after the floodwaters began to recede. The summer monsoon brings South Asia around 80 percent of its annual rainfall, as well as death and destruction due to flooding and landslides.

The rainfall is hard to forecast and varies considerably but scientists say climate change is making the monsoon stronger and more erratic, while deforestation and building on hillsides has made flash floods worse.

Villages swamped

"In Cox's Bazar some 600,000 people were affected by the floods," district administrator Shaheen Ibrahim told AFP. Bangladesh is home to one million Rohingyas who fled a military crackdown in Myanmar and now live in some three dozen camps built on

cleared forest and hill slopes in Cox's Bazar.

"At least 21 people were killed", Ibrahim said. Refugee commissioner Mizanur Rahman said four Rohingyas were killed, including a child and her mother who were buried under a landslide. "We have relocated around 2,000 people to safe places who are at risk of landslides in the camps," he told AFP.

Hundreds of villages were swamped in Chittagong, Bangladesh's second-largest city and home to its biggest port, in what residents said was some of the heaviest flooding in decades. "The flood damaged at least 5,000 thatched houses," district administrator Abul Bashar Mohammed Fakhruzzaman told AFP.

"At least 19 people have died from the floods. We recovered some bodies from the Sangu river after floodwater receded in the past few days. Some

450,000 people were affected by the floods." Transport between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar was cut for a few days and newly laid railway tracks were damaged, he said.

The rains also triggered a major flash flood in the hill district of Bandarban, where administrator Shah Mujahid Uddin said at least 10 people were killed. Five people were killed in the Rangamati hill district, where heavy rains cut off some 23,000 people, administrator Mosharrif Hossain said. Bangladeshi authorities have sent food and relief to the worst-affected region, said Shahina Sultana, a senior government official in Chattogram region, the new name for Chittagong. Five people were still missing, she said. "The government is doing everything in its power to support people," she said. — AFP

China landslide death toll rises sharply to 21

BEIJING: The death toll from a landslide triggered by heavy rains in northern China has risen sharply to at least 21, authorities said on Sunday, with six others missing. China has faced deadly floods and historic rainfall in recent weeks, with dozens killed in storms in the northern part of the country.

"Twenty-one people were found dead so far, and six others are still missing," the Xi'an emergency management bureau said in an online statement about the landslide on Sunday. State media had put the toll at four earlier on Sunday.

A mountain flash flood in the village of Weiziping, south of Xi'an in Shaanxi province, caused a landslide on Friday that swept away two houses and damaged roads, bridges, electricity supply and other infrastructure, national public radio CNR reported earlier.

A hundred soldiers as well as firefighters were mobilized for the relief operations "which are continuing" on Sunday, according to CNR. CNR broadcast images on Weibo showing rescuers clearing rocks and trees from the edge of a river and carrying victims on stretchers.

According to the Xi'an emergency management bureau statement, more than 980 people were mobilized for the rescue effort, using life detectors and search dogs. The landslide "destroyed" two houses and caused power cuts in 900 homes, it said.

"According to experts, the cause of the disaster is a flash flood mud-rock flow caused by short-term torrential rain," the statement said. "Up to now, a total of 186 people have been relocated and resettled... 49 communication base stations in the disaster-stricken area have resumed service, and power supplies have been resumed in 855 homes."

The recent record-breaking downpours followed weeks of historic heat, with scientists saying such extreme weather events are being exacerbated by climate change. State media reported on Friday that 29 people died from flooding in Hebei province after Storm Doksuri — which hit mainland China as a typhoon in late July — brought on the most severe rainfall since records began 140 years ago. — AFP

Climate skeptic Vivek Ramaswamy on fire in White House race

WASHINGTON: He calls climate activism a "religious cult," but White House hopeful Vivek Ramaswamy is enjoying a moment in the sun as his provocative rhetoric heats up the US Republican primary contest. And while some candidates are beginning to aim their fire at former president Donald Trump, the 38-year-old Ramaswamy has moved toward the front of the chasing pack by placing himself firmly in the frontrunner's slipstream.

"I think I'm best positioned to advance our America First agenda, take it even further than Trump did, but also unite the country in the process," the multimillionaire biotech entrepreneur recently told public broadcaster PBS.

Ramaswamy trails Trump by a seemingly unbridgeable gap, but he has spent millions of his own money in his bid to be best placed should the presumptive nominee fall by the wayside amid his growing tangle of legal problems. And the first-time candidate, a father of two young children, has been rewarded with higher poll numbers than most of his more experienced rivals.

A political novice by any measure, Ramaswamy started his campaign with no national profile but has shocked primary watchers by rising to third in the Republican primary field, five months ahead of the first vote in Iowa. He is even snapping at the heels of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who is lagging around 40 points behind Trump but until recently looked relatively secure in the runner-up spot. On the ground, Ramaswamy has styled his politics on the agendas of the two men he hopes to usurp, making his stand against the "woke" ideology of the American left his signature policy issue.

"We are in the middle of a national identity crisis," he says darkly, accusing the country's elites of metastasizing a "cultural cancer" — particularly when it comes to LGBTQ issues. His message has found an appreciative audience, and his book, "Woke, Inc.," in which he develops this thesis, is currently near the top of the New York Times list of bestselling nonfiction.

In an increasingly crowded field - 17 candidates have declared so far - Ramaswamy has been able to grab attention and headlines with a policy program that might be dismissed as too radical were his polling numbers lower.

The vegetarian pianist wants to raise the voting age to 25 and lay off 90 percent of the staff at the US central bank and the Department of Justice. And his ready-made solution for reviving growth in the United States? Burning coal "unapologetically."

Still, he faces a steep uphill fight. "Like all the other candidates, Ramaswamy's only chance is if Trump collapses," political scientist Kyle Kondik told AFP. It is not



DES MOINES: US entrepreneur and 2024 Presidential hopeful Vivek Ramaswamy speaks during a Fair Side Chat with Governor Kim Reynolds, at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, Iowa. — AFP

unusual for Republican presidential candidates to pull their punches when it comes to Trump, who has always managed to retain the loyalty of at least a third of the party regardless of the prevailing political winds.

But Ramaswamy has bumped the deference up a level, turning up at the courthouses in Miami and the capital Washington where Trump was appearing with pledges to pardon the 77-year-old ex-president and demands that his rivals follow suit.

"We fought a revolution in this country, in 1776, for a simple idea that we the people determine how we select our leaders and have a government that is accountable to its people, rather than the other way around," he said in a video filmed this month outside Washington's federal court complex. Trump, who is more accustomed to trampling his opponents underfoot, was quick to notice and showed his appreciation. "He's doing well," the Republican billionaire said recently of his young rival.

Born in working-class Ohio, Ramaswamy is the son of Hindu immigrants from India. Educated in Catholic schools, he studied biology at the prestigious Harvard University, where he honed his rhetorical skills in debates and by performing libertarian rap music as his alter ego, "Da Vek." "If you think that debater-extraordinaire Vivek G. Ramaswamy '07 is intense, you obviously haven't met 'Da Vek,'" his university newspaper enthused in a humorous profile. — AFP

E-Auction – Punj Lloyd Limited (In Liquidation)
Sale of assets of the Company the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

The Liquidator of Punj Lloyd Limited ("Company") is announcing the fresh round of public e-auction for sale of lots of movable assets owned by the Company and located in the Countries of Oman and Kuwait on a collective basis, on 'as is where is basis', 'as is what is basis', 'whatever there is basis', and 'without recourse basis', in accordance with the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, as amended and the rules and regulations made thereunder.

Interested applicants may refer to the detailed E-Auction Process Information Document uploaded on website of the Company <http://www.punjloydgroup.com/liquidation-documents> and also on E-Auction website www.eauctions.co.in.

The Auction Sale will be done through the E-Auction platform: www.eauctions.co.in.

Asset Lot	Asset Description	Manner of Sale	Date and time of E-Auction	Reserve Price (in USD)	EMD Amount (in USD) & Submission deadline
A	Movable Assets owned by the Company and located in the Country of Oman	Collective Basis	18 September 2023, from 10:00 hours GST to 18:00 hours GST	USD 3,694,000/-	USD 369,400/- On or before 14 September 2023
B	Movable Assets owned by the Company and located in the Country of Kuwait	Collective Basis	18 September 2023, from 10:00 hours GST to 18:00 hours GST	USD 4,000/-	USD 400/- On or before 14 September 2023

Further, as per the provisions of the IBCI (Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2016, as amended, all interested bidders are required to submit the Expression of Interest along with the requisite eligibility documents on or before 28 August 2023 as provided in the E-Auction Process Information Document. The Liquidator reserves the right to amend the key terms of the sale process including timelines for the e-auction to the extent permissible under the applicable laws and regulations. Any information about amendments (extension of any of the timelines) will be available on the Company's website and communicated to the Qualified Successful Bidder.

Nothing contained herein shall constitute a binding offer or a commitment for sale of assets of the Company pursuant to this e-auction.

Please feel free to contact Mr. Ashwini Mehra at LQ.PUNJ@in.gt.com or Mehra.ashwini@gmail.com or Mr. Surendra Raj Gang at Surendra.raj@in.gt.com in case any further clarification is required.

Ashwini Mehra
Liquidator
(Regn No: IBB/PA-001/1P-P00388/2017-18/10706)
Punj Lloyd Limited - In Liquidation
Authorization for Assignment valid till 23 March 2024
Correspondence Address:
Mr. Ashwini Mehra, Liquidator
Punj Lloyd Limited
C/O Mr. Surendra Raj Gang,
GT Restructuring Services LLP
L-41, Connaught Circus, New Delhi - 110001, E: LQ.PUNJ@in.gt.com

Date: 14 August 2023
Place: New Delhi

International

Sidelined Arabs fear outcome of Zionist entity's legal overhaul

With limited oversight, 'the right wing will have... broader powers'

HAIFA: Members of Zionist's Arab minority fear they will bear the brunt of the hard-right government's judicial overhaul, but have remained largely on the margins of a raging debate over the sweeping changes. Zionists have rallied weekly since the controversial reform package was announced in January by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ruling coalition, dubbed "the worst ever" by Samira Kanaan Khalaylah, 57, who lives in the northern Arab town of Majdal-Krum.

Arab or Palestinian citizens of Zionist entity, who make up around 20 percent of the population, are already "on the sidelines" of Zionist society and politics, said Khalaylah, a school secretary. Moves by the coalition — which includes extreme-right leaders with a history of anti-Arab rhetoric — to restrict judicial oversight of government decisions and to weaken watchdogs "will be very bad for us", she said.

Zionist protesters have staged mass demonstrations against the government's legislative agenda they view as a threat to democracy. But Arabs have been largely absent from these rallies, often heavy with Zionist flags which some find alienating. They have organized their own rallies for equality.

The broader protest movement has been spearheaded by activists and army reservists largely unwilling to highlight messages relating to the plight of the Arab minority or of Palestinians, fearing it would harm their cause in the eyes of Zionist's Jewish majority. In the northern city of Haifa, Arab demonstrators have rallied in relatively small numbers, carrying banners against the legal overhaul and demanding rights.

Yousef Jabareen, a lawyer and former lawmaker, told AFP the proposals might hand the government "authoritarian powers" which threaten Arab citizens and their elected representatives. With limited oversight, "the right wing will have... broader powers," said Jabareen.

'Settlement projects'

The first key clause of the reform package passed through parliament on July 24, amending the "reasonableness" clause which was used by the Supreme Court to overturn government decisions deemed unconstitutional. The court is set to hear petitions against the legal change in September. Other proposals include handing the government a greater say in the appointment of judges and downgrading the status of legal advisers attached to ministries.

Netanyahu's government which took office last year has been set on expanding settlements in annexed east Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, both seized in the Six-Day War of 1967. "The extreme right wants to get rid of" the few objections "presented by the Supreme Court against settlement projects", Jabareen said. Leah Tsemel, a lawyer who has represented many Palestinians in Zionist courts, said multiple rulings have failed to protect minority rights even before the "reasonableness" amendment. The Supreme Court has upheld the 2018 Nation State Law which enshrined Zionist's primary status as a state for Jews and downgraded Arabic as an official language. The court has also signed off on handing east Jerusalem properties to settler organizations who hold deeds proving past Jewish ownership, prompting the eviction of Palestinian residents.

Tsemel noted the court had failed to recognize Palestinians' ownership claims over properties in west Jerusalem. The court has ruled "in favor of the state or settlement associations, and ignored the 'reasonableness' argument", she said.

Little 'hope' lost

Studies by leading rights groups have concluded that Zionist's legal system and policies amount to apartheid, which Zionist entity denies. The Haifa-based



TEL AVIV: Activists march with placards denouncing the violent crimes against Arab communities in Tel Aviv. Members of Zionist's Arab minority fear they will bear the brunt of the hard-right government's judicial overhaul. — AFP

Mossawa Center advocacy group has warned the judicial overhaul will only worsen "the rights violations of the Arab minority" and further the occupation of Palestinian territories.

Despite widespread reservations concerning Zionist entity's legal system, there had been "hope in Palestinian society that the court will intervene in unreasonable government decisions", said Mossawa's director, Jafar Farah. He said the erosion of the court's powers will "deepen institutional corruption", affect-

ing both Arab and Jewish Zionists. But the minority wields far less political power, with an independent Arab party only once being part of a coalition government, in 2021-22. With parliament now in recess until October 15, Netanyahu has said the door remains open for talks with his detractors.

But after his allies pressed ahead with the July vote — which opposition lawmakers boycotted — protesters have vowed to stay on the streets as hopes for a compromise fade. — AFP

Migrant deaths are 'open wound' for humanity: Pope

VATICAN CITY: The number of migrants dying in the Mediterranean is an "open wound" for humanity, Pope Francis said Sunday after a week marked by a string of deadly shipwrecks. At his weekly Angelus prayer, the 86-year-old pontiff offered his prayers for the 41 people reported missing on Wednesday by four survivors brought to safety on the Italian island of Lampedusa.

He recalled "with pain and shame" UN figures showing more than 2,000 migrants have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea since the start of the year. "It is an open wound in our humanity," he told pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square.

"I offer encouragement to the politicians and diplomats who are seeking to heal it, in a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood." He also hailed "the commitment of all those who work to prevent shipwrecks and rescue sailors".

Francis — who regularly urges better treatment of those who flee their homes for a better life elsewhere



Pope Francis

— had this week already warned against becoming "indifferent" to the deaths. A spokesman for the UN migration agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said Saturday that "at least 2,060" migrants had lost their lives in the Mediterranean since January 1.

Of those, more than 1,800 died in the Central Mediterranean, the route from North Africa to Italy and Malta, he said — more than twice as many as in the same period last year. In the latest incident, two Tunisians including a baby died when their boat sank Saturday shortly after leaving the shores of the North African country, the coastguard said. — AFP

Father of Colombian children charged with sexual abuse

BOGOTA: The father of two of the four Indigenous children who survived for 40 days in the Amazon has been charged with sexually abusing his stepdaughter. Colombian prosecutors announced. The siblings were the only survivors after their plane crashed in the jungle in May, killing all three adults onboard, including their mother.

During judicial proceedings on Saturday, the Colombian Prosecutor's Office accused Manuel Ranoque of "abusing his stepdaughter" Lesly since she was 10 years old. Lesly, now 13, was credited with keeping her siblings alive during their five-week ordeal using her deep knowledge of the jungle and its many dangers — including snakes, predatory animals and armed criminal groups.

The children, members of the Huitoto Indigenous group, managed to subsist on a package of cassava flour they found on the plane and wild fruits. Ranoque, who was arrested Friday and denies the charges, is to remain in custody, prosecutors said.



FLORENCIA: Handout picture shows Indigenous man Manuel Ranoque, father of two of the four Indigenous children who were found alive after being lost for 40 days in the Colombian Amazon rainforest following a plane crash, after being captured for allegedly committing sexual crimes against his 13-year-old stepdaughter. — AFP

He participated in the massive search operation to track down Lesly, nine-year-old Soleiny, five-year-old Tien Noriel, and Cristin, who is one. After the children were miraculously discovered about five kilometers (three miles) from the crash site, a custody battle ensued between their maternal grandparents and Ranoque, who is the biological father of the two younger siblings. — AFP

Anger grows as Hawaii fire death...

Continued from Page 1

wait for the results of an investigation announced by the state's attorney general. "I'm not going to make any excuses for this tragedy," Hirono, a Democrat, told CNN's "State of the Union. We are really focused, as far as I'm concerned, on the need for rescue, and, sadly, the location of more bodies."

More than 2,200 structures were damaged or destroyed as the fire tore through Lahaina, according to official estimates, wreaking \$5.5 billion in damage and leaving thousands homeless. "The remains we're finding are from a fire that melted metal," said Maui Police Chief John Pelletier. "When we pick up the remains... they fall apart." Among the ruins in Lahaina, a town of more than 12,000 and former home of the Hawaiian royal family, an iconic, 150-year-old banyan tree remained standing but severely burned, AFP journalists saw. President Joe Biden said on Sunday he was "looking at" the possibility of visiting the island.

The wildfire is the deadliest in the United States since 1918, when 453 people died in Minnesota and Wisconsin, according to the non-profit research

Biden fights for gain a year after...

Continued from Page 1

a state suffering the harsh effects of climate change in the form of wildfires and extreme temperatures. The White House says the IRA has spurred \$110 billion in private investments in the clean energy sector since it became law — raising concern among Europeans and other allies with its stated ambition of industrial independence. "This is the most significant climate and clean energy legislation in US history," said Lori Bird of the World Resources Institute, an environmental group.

The incentives it provides "are designed to last for a decade", and their effects "should last beyond that," she said. A study by nine teams of American researchers found that the IRA should reduce US emissions by between 43 percent and 48 percent by 2035 compared to 2005 levels. That falls short of the official objective of halving emissions by 2030.

group the National Fire Protection Association. The death toll surpassed 2018's Camp Fire in California, which virtually wiped the small town of Paradise off the map and killed 86 people. Maui suffered numerous power outages during the crisis, preventing many residents from receiving emergency alerts on their cell phones.

No emergency sirens were sounded, and many Lahaina residents have spoken of learning about the blaze because of neighbors running down the street. "The mountain behind us caught on fire and nobody told us jack," resident Vilma Reed, 63, told AFP. "You know when we found that there was a fire? When it was across the street from us." Reed, whose house was destroyed by the blaze, said she was depending on handouts and the kindness of strangers, while sleeping in a car with her daughter, grandson and two cats.

In its emergency management plan last year, the State of Hawaii described the risk wildfires posed to people as being "low". Some residents who fled the flames have also expressed anger at a roadblock put up preventing them from returning to their homes. Maui police said members of the public would not be allowed into Lahaina while safety assessments and searches were ongoing — even some of those who could prove they lived there. Some residents waited for hours hoping to be allowed in to comb through the ashes or look for missing pets or loved ones. — AFP

Reaching that goal, many activists say, will require not just the enticements of financial "carrots" but the threat of regulatory "sticks" — which could, however, face a major obstacle if they reach the conservative Supreme Court. For now, Biden's urgent concern is finding ways to capitalize before the November 2024 presidential elections on what he calls "Bidenomics". That term is meant to embrace both the current vigor of the US economy and a promising future built partly on the IRA but also on major investment programs in technology and infrastructure.

Most Americans are only vaguely aware of the varied promises of these programs — supporting the development of quantum computing in the face of Chinese competition, building millions of electric cars while creating jobs, lowering the price of insulin and democratizing access to the Internet. "People don't know the changes that are taking place are a consequence of what we did yet," Biden told the Utah donors on Thursday. "And it's going to take a little time for that to break through." The Republican Party has pushed back against Biden's campaign, recently issuing a statement deriding his "desperate attempt to sell the so-called Inflation Reduction Act," which it blasted as a "scam". — AFP

Ecuador mobster transferred to max security

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador: Ecuador transferred a powerful gang leader, accused of threatening a presidential candidate before he was slain, to a maximum security prison via a massive military and police operation on Saturday, officials said. At dawn, around 4,000 heavily armed agents entered Prison 8 in Guayaquil in southwestern Ecuador, where the head of the powerful Los Choneros criminal group, Jose Adolfo Macias, alias "Fito", has been held since 2011.

Images shared by security forces showed a bearded man in his underwear, with his hands on his head in some shots and lying on the floor with his arms tied in others. Ecuadoran President Guillermo Lasso announced on social media site X, formerly known as Twitter, that Fito had been transferred to La Roca, a 150-person maximum security prison that is part of the same penitentiary complex where the gang boss was already being held.

Ecuador has been under a state of emergency since the shock assassination Wednesday of journalist-turned-politician Fernando Villavicencio. The anti-corruption crusader — up to then second in polls — was gunned down as he left a campaign rally in the capital Quito. A week before the 59-year-old was killed, he had said that Fito was threatening him. On Saturday, Villavicencio's party announced that his running mate, Andrea Gonzalez, would take his place in the August 20 election. Gonzalez, 36, is an environmental advocate who has fought for the protection of oceans, forests and mangroves.

Villavicencio's widow, Veronica Sarauz, blamed the state for her husband's death, accusing police of not adequately protecting him. "This is a state crime because he was under the custody of the state through



GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador: Adolfo Macias, aka Fito, leader of the Los Choneros criminal gang, is transferred to The Rock maximum-security complex inside the Zonal Penitentiary No 8 on Aug 12, 2023. — AFP

the police," she said during a press conference on Saturday. She also blamed supporters of ex-president Rafael Correa, who was sentenced in 2020 to eight years in prison after Villavicencio had investigated him for corruption.

The day before his assassination, Villavicencio had filed a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office alleging irregularities in oil contracts negotiated during Correa's administration, estimating a loss to the country of around \$9 billion. Sarauz, who was escorted by police and wearing a bulletproof vest and helmet, said that she and her three children were "also in danger". President Lasso has blamed the murder on organized crime.

Six Colombians have been arrested in suspected connection with the murder, while a seventh was killed in a shootout with his bodyguards. Authorities have not said who hired and paid the hitmen. Before his murder, Villavicencio told a local program that an "emissary" for Fito had contacted him and told him to stop talking about the gang. "If I continue... mentioning Los Choneros, they are going to break me," he said. — AFP

Naval forces in Gulf warn ships...

Continued from Page 1

In recent years, Washington and Tehran have been in a war of words over a series of incidents

in the Gulf waters, including mysterious attacks on ships, the downing of a drone, and the seizure of oil tankers. In July, the US Navy announced that Iran's Revolutionary Guards had detained a commercial ship "suspected of being involved in smuggling activities" in international waters in the Gulf, a day after accusing the Iranian navy of attempting to seize two commercial oil tankers off the coast of Oman. Earlier this year Iran seized two oil tankers within a week in Gulf waters. — AFP

International

Migrants on France's Channel coast undeterred by latest deaths

Young Afghans hoping for a better life in Britain

LOON-PLAGE: "Crossing the Channel, it's playing with our lives," Hajji Mahmud acknowledged. But despite the dangers, the Afghan migrant remained determined to attempt the crossing, even after the deaths of at least six of his countrymen early Saturday when their vessel sank.

In the makeshift camp at Loon-Plage on the north coast of France, some 15 tents were scattered behind an embankment near a pile of burning rubbish.

Mahmud lives there with a group of other Afghans, some of them very young, and hoping for a better life in Britain.

"If we had a good life in Afghanistan, a good government, a good education system..." he said. He entered the European Union through Croatia. What he would like, he says, is for the French and English police to help him cross the Channel without having to risk his life.

But he knows he won't get that. "We'll suffer until we manage to cross," he said. The French and English coastguard said two people were still missing late Saturday after this latest disaster, when the boat carrying more than 60 people capsized.

Many of those on board - most of the around 60 people rescued - were Afghans, like him, plus a few Sudanese people with them. A few of those on board were minors.

'We will try again'

For France's State Secretary for the Sea Herve Berville, it was "a terrible human tragedy", adding to what is already a grim toll. Five migrants died at sea and four went missing while trying to cross to Britain from France last year.

In November 2021, 27 migrants died when a boat capsized in the Channel.

But many migrants are still willing to risk the crossing. According to the authorities on the north coast of France, there are currently around a thousand people waiting to take their chance.

Bilal and Basir are two of them, camped out on an old canopy installed under a tarpaulin sheet. If their

families knew about the latest sinking, they would never let them attempt the crossing, they said.

They had in fact meant to try to get across the previous night but they had missed the boat, they said. Nevertheless, they insisted they will try again.

"My sister, my uncle, are in England," said Basir, aged 22. "My dream is to learn because we know English and we (would) like to learn in their universities, or college," said 20-year-old Bilal.

But 36-year-old Kurdish Iraqi exile Abu Mohamed admitted he was having second thoughts about risking the journey. "If I see that it's very risky, I'm going to try to stay in France," he told AFP.

'There will be other tragedies'

Some 30 kilometres away, at the French channel port of Calais, two 16-year-old Sudanese were among the survivors. "In France, it's complicated for us," said one of them. "There's racism, nobody wants us, we sleep in the street and nobody cares, we can't work."

They will keep trying to make the crossing to England, they told AFP, hopeful of reaching there safely and studying computing. Saturday's deaths were "a predictable and avoidable drama", says Pierre Roques who works at the L'Auberge des Migrants ("Migrants Inn") - an alliance of associations offering migrants support.

"The United Kingdom is moving towards completely extreme solutions to stop the crossing, which will have no effect apart from increasingly endangering people," he added.

He cited Britain's controversial plans to outlaw asylum claims by all arrivals via the Channel - transferring them instead to third countries, such as Rwanda - or the plan to house some migrants on barges off the coast, also fiercely by rights groups.

For the people he was working with, these policies add to their worries, but will not stop them risking the crossing. "There will be other tragedies," said Regis Holy, captain of a lifeboat that brought five of the survivors back to Calais.



DOVER: Migrants picked up at sea while attempting to cross the English Channel, are brought by a UK Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) lifeboat into the Marina in Dover, southeast England. — AFP

The migrants who had given everything to get this far, would keep risking everything to make the crossing. "It will never stop," he warned. The groups working with the migrants have repeatedly denounced the policy of the local authorities to regularly force the migrants from their makeshift camps, to keep them moving.

Jean-Claude Lenoir, who runs one such group, Salam, said 12 vans of riot police had dismantled at least four camps around Calais on Saturday.

Given what had happened, he argued, they might have spared them that - especially since in his opinion those operations were pointless. "The migrants go back to their places as soon as the police have left," he noted. — AFP

Chinese engineers attacked in Pakistan's Gwadar

QUETTA: Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) separatists attacked a convoy carrying Chinese engineers to the Beijing-financed Gwadar Port in Pakistan's southwest on Sunday, the group said. Various Baloch militant groups have claimed attacks on projects linked to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project in the past, with thousands of security personnel deployed to counter threats against Beijing's interests.

"BLA Majeed Brigade today targeted a convoy of Chinese engineers

in Gwadar. The attack is still ongoing," the separatist group said in a statement. Security sources confirmed an attack, but there was no immediate official response. However, Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, a senator and former provincial interior minister, said on Twitter, now rebranded as X, that no Chinese nationals were killed in the attack. "I strongly condemn the heinous terror attack on Chinese workers convoy in Gwadar," he posted.

"Thankfully, no loss of life happened, but there are reports that the ambush has been repulsed and the attackers have been killed," State Radio Pakistan, citing the military's public relations wing, said the situation was under control.

"One terrorist was killed and three others injured in exchange of fire be-

tween security forces and terrorists in Gwadar," it said. Baloch separatists frequently exaggerate their battlefield successes, while the Pakistan military's public relations department also plays down attacks, or delays reporting them. Three Chinese academics and their Pakistani driver were killed when a woman suicide bomber detonated her device as they were driving into the University of Karachi's Confucius Institute in April 2022.

The BLA claimed responsibility for that attack. A year earlier, five people were killed in an attack claimed by Pakistan's Taliban at a luxury hotel hosting the Chinese ambassador in Quetta. Also in 2021, 12 people - including nine Chinese workers - were killed by a blast aboard a bus carrying staff to the Dasu dam site.

Islamabad blamed that explosion on a "gas leak" but Beijing insisted it was a bomb attack. Balochistan is Pakistan's least populous province but rich in mineral resources. Baloch people have long complained they do not get a fair share of the province's profits, giving rise to more than a dozen separatist groups. The CPEC project is the cornerstone of Beijing's massive Belt and Road Initiative and seeks to link China's western Xinjiang province to Gwadar port in the southwest. Since its initiation, CPEC has seen tens of billions of dollars funnelled into massive transport, energy and infrastructure projects.

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng was in the Pakistan capital last month to mark the 10th anniversary of the project. — AFP

Malaysia's PM thwarts opposition challenge in state polls

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's ruling coalition thwarted a challenge by an opposition alliance in state elections, official results showed Sunday, with analysts saying the win would buy him time to consolidate power in the largely Islamic Southeast Asian nation.

Saturday's vote in six states had been the toughest political challenge yet to Anwar, who was appointed prime minister in November last year to head a unity government after an indecisive general election. The election of state assembly members does not affect Anwar's current two-thirds majority in parliament.

It was, however, widely seen as a barometer of support for Anwar, including his push for a more inclusive society in which minority ethnicities could be allowed greater participation in the largely Malay Muslim nation, which also has large Chinese and Indian populations.

Results released by the Election Commission showed that Anwar's Pakatan Harapan coalition retained three states: Selangor, Penang and Negeri Sembilan. The opposition alliance Perikatan Nasional - whose key member the PAS party aims to create a theocratic state in Malaysia - kept its hold on Kedah, Terengganu and Kelantan.

Retaining Selangor, which hosts the country's biggest port, and Penang, home to Malaysia's thriving semiconductor industry, are prized wins for Anwar, analysts said. The ruling coalition, however, lost its two-thirds majority in Selangor, as the opposition made strong inroads.

Perikatan is backed by the Malaysian Islamic Party, or PAS, whose strong performance in last year's general elections had sparked ruling party concerns it could spring a surprise and flip one or two states to the opposition.

"This is a decision of the people. We have to respect this decision," Anwar said of the results at a late-night press conference as he also appealed for unity after a divisive campaign. "The federal government remains strong after this poll and we will continue to promote a prosperous Malaysia," he added.

Oh Ei Sun of the Pacific Research Center of Malaysia think tank said "it was a nail-biting win for Anwar after he thwarted the challenge from the powerful Islamic party PAS". Bridget Welsh, a Malaysia expert from the University of Nottingham, said retaining the three states was a "victory for Anwar" as "he had gone into this campaign defensively".

"It was in many ways a stress reliever for Anwar



SELANGOR BARU UTARA: Selangor's chief minister Amirudin Shari (C) of Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope) and his wife Masdiana Muhamad (L) gesture before casting their vote at a polling station during the state election in Selangor, Malaysia's Selangor state. — AFP

not to be confronted with any major political shifts that could alter the status quo," said Mustafa Izzuddin, a political analyst with consultancy Solaris Strategies Singapore.

But the outcome was also a disappointment in that "his coalition did not make much significant inroads" at the polls, he told AFP. Anwar "has more than enough time" before the 2027 general elections "to shore up support including the complex political bargaining that may need to happen within the coalition", according to Mustafa.

'No guarantee'

James Chin, a Malaysia expert at the University of Tasmania in Australia, had warned earlier Saturday of "dire" consequences if Anwar lost even a single state, including shifting allegiances that could have threatened his future as prime minister.

Anwar became prime minister last November after a long struggle as an opposition leader. His party had won the most seats in the general election but fell short of the outright majority needed to form a government.

That forced him into an alliance with former foes in the United Malays National Organization to secure a two-thirds parliamentary majority and approval from Malaysia's king to form a "unity government".

The coalition has so far held together in a country that had seen three leadership turnovers in as many years after scandal-tainted Najib Razak was voted out as prime minister in 2018 over massive corruption at state fund IMDB.

But Oh, the analyst, said Anwar "must remain vigilant" even as he pushes for reforms. "There is no guarantee that his government will stay until the next general elections," he said. — AFP



TOKYO: Pedestrians walk with their umbrellas in the rain in Ginza district of Tokyo on August 13, 2023, as Typhoon Lan heads for Japan's main island Honshu. — AFP

Typhoon Lan set to crash Japan holiday week

TOKYO: Japanese authorities on Sunday warned residents in much of the country to prepare for a strong, slow-moving typhoon set to hit during the peak summer travel week. Typhoon Lan is on course to make landfall Tuesday on Japan's main island of Honshu, bringing heavy rain and violent gusts, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

Some areas may see as much as 50 centimetres (20 inches) of rain in 24 hours to 6:00 am Tuesday (2100 GMT Monday), followed by more rain as the typhoon churns across the nation, the agency said. "The slow speed of the typhoon could mean that its impact may last for a long time," Shuichi Tachihara, chief forecaster at the agency, told a media briefing Sunday.

"It is possible that some areas will receive more rainfall in one day than their average monthly rainfall in August," he said. Lan approaches Japan as the nation kicks off the traditional "obon" holiday week when millions of families return to their hometowns for annual gatherings.

National television broadcasters have called on viewers to consider changing their travel plans to avoid the typhoon. Airlines and train operators have warned about possible service cancellations and delays until the typhoon passes.

As of noon Sunday (0300 GMT), Lan was 350 kilometres (220 miles) south of Hachijo-jima island in the western Pacific. Packing gusts up to 198 kilometres (123 miles) per hour, it was moving northwest and was on track to make landfall on the Kii Peninsula on Tuesday. — AFP

News in Brief

Three killed in building fire

NICE: Three people died in a fire that broke out early Sunday in a residential building in the centre of the French Riviera city of Grasse, firefighters said. Three others were seriously injured and four had lighter injuries, they said, adding that the fire had been extinguished. "The condition of the victims can always change," Aymeric Soufflet from the firefighting service told AFP. The origin of the fire in the historic centre of Grasse, considered the world's perfume capital, was not immediately clear. It affected the top three floors of the five-storey building, whose facade was partially blackened by the flames. "The fire mainly affected the stairwell," Jean-Christophe Demarte, head of the rescue operation, said, adding the flats mostly sustained smoke damage. Firefighters were alerted by local residents at around 3:00 am (0100 GMT). They found the body of a person who had jumped out in front of the edifice and two other corpses inside. — AFP

Blasts rock missile stocks

BEIRUT: Violent explosions were heard from missile stockpiles of pro-Iran militias east of Syria's capital Damascus before dawn on Sunday, a war monitor said. Residents of the Damascus region heard the blasts which came from "the warehouses of pro-Iran militias" in a mountainous area east of the capital, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which relies on a wide network of sources inside Syria. "We don't know if it was from an air strike or ground operation," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP. During more than a decade of war in Syria, neighboring Zionist entity has launched hundreds of air strikes on Syrian territory, primarily targeting Iran-backed forces and Hezbollah fighters, as well as Syrian army positions. Syria's official news agency SANA said during the night that "the sounds of explosions" had been heard on the outskirts of Damascus. — AFP

One dead in Thai boat accident

BANGKOK: One person has died and another remains missing after a boating accident in southern Thailand, police said Sunday. The tourist boat struck a waterspout and capsized, throwing seven Thai passengers into Ban Laem district's Bangtaboon river in Phetchaburi province on Saturday evening. Four women and a man were pulled from the waters, sustaining mild injuries, with rescuers searching until midnight for the two other passengers. On Sunday morning local police said they had recovered the body of a man in his early twenties. There was no information on the seventh passenger, also believed to be a man in his twenties. Thailand has a poor health and safety track record on the water. Tourist hotspots have seen serious accidents, such as the deaths of almost 50 Chinese tourists in 2018 after their boat capsized off holiday island Phuket. — AFP

14 killed in DR Congo village

BANDUNDU: At least 14 people have been killed in an attack on a village in southwestern Democratic Republic of Congo near the Angolan border, authorities said on Saturday. Kwango provincial government spokesman Adelard Nkisi said the victims in Ipongi were killed by bullets and "machete blows". A religious leader in the village, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the toll and said the attack on Friday followed the recent arrest of militiamen, who sent another team to "free four members" of their group. Symphorien Kwengo, a civil society leader in Kwango province, blamed the armed Mobondo movement, formed in neighboring Mai-Ndombe province last year. Measures were being taken "to try to bring the situation under control", the provincial spokesman said. Conflict broke out in Mai-Ndombe province in June 2022 over a land dispute between the Teke people and groups not originally from the area. The fighting spread to the neighboring provinces of Kwango, Kwilu and Kinshasa. — AFP

Business

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023



(Left) A girl prepares food outside at a camp for the internally displaced in Al-Suwar, about 15 kilometers north of Wad Madani, on June 22, 2023. (Right) A street vendor sells tea at a bus station in Madani on May 16, 2023 as violence between two rival Sudanese generals continues. — AFP photos



As war rages, Sudanese start small businesses for survival

War leaves at least 3,900 people dead and displaces four million

WAD MADANI, Sudan: Sudan's war has left university lecturer Ali Seif without pay for months. To make ends meet, he has turned to making soap in his room at a makeshift displacement camp. Out of work as fighting rages between the forces of rival generals, many Sudanese have been forced to find creative ways to support themselves and their families.

Until April 15, when the conflict erupted between the army headed by General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Daglo's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, Seif had worked at a Khartoum university. Now the engineering lecturer and his family live in Wad Madani, a city where most of the nearly three million people displaced from the capital fled for safety with the few belongings they could bring.

Wad Madani has been spared the violence so far, but air strikes and fighting are taking place around 150 kilometers (95 miles) to the north. Like many others,

Seif said his house was "robbed" by paramilitaries, and he told AFP he has not received a salary since March with banks closed. In order to survive, he has started selling soap. "Misfortune makes you creative," said Seif. "I noticed there was no soap left on the market even though everyone wanted some, so I decided to make soap bars," he recalled, surrounded by plastic pots he uses to mix soap paste before pouring it into ice cube trays to mould the bars.

'No choice'

Like Seif, Michelle Elia Moussa used to stand in front of a classroom full of students. But since the war turned her life and country upside down, she has spent her days standing in front of a stall at Al-Hasaheisa market, halfway between Khartoum and Wad Madani. "I've given up hope and shelved my ambitions of being a brilliant teacher," she said, glasses on her nose and

apron around her waist, as she looks over her cakes.

"Without a job, I can't support myself," she said, in a poverty-stricken country where the spectres of famine, epidemics and widespread war crimes now loom large.

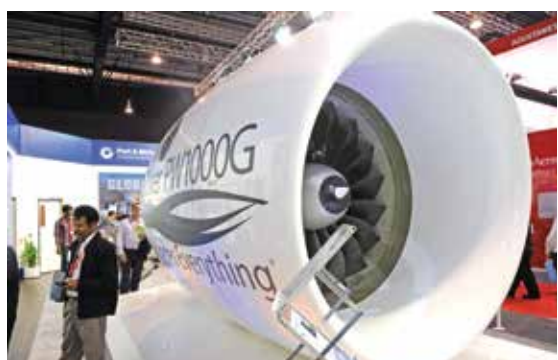
"It's the first time I've worked in a market," she told AFP. "I'm not comfortable, I'm ashamed, but it's a war. I have no choice," she added, expertly spreading a light dough on cast-iron plates to make thin wafers with holes. Eshraqa Mousa, another woman who fled Khartoum, has opened a small stall to sell tea. Without it, she said, she could "only provide one meal a day" for her children.

Leaving 'everything behind'

Her family's hasty departure from the capital at the start of a war that has killed at least 3,900 people and displaced four million is still fresh in Mousa's memory. "We left everything behind... so I came here and

bought this little stall to sell tea," she said, draped in her long, multicolored veil. In a conservative society where tea sellers, though numerous, are often stigmatized and harassed, the move was an act of bravery she had never imagined she would achieve. But with the war, such taboos were shattered, and survival and resourcefulness took over.

"We were forced to find alternatives," said Mohamed Ali. A former civil servant in the capital, he "teamed up with some colleagues to open a small mobile food stall", he said. Made of white sheet metal and powered by a generator, it's "in the style of those you find in Khartoum, which don't exist in Wad Madani." Every day, he now sells mashed beans, falafel and other snacks loved by his compatriots, and he makes enough to feed his family. That is, until the next storm: the streets of Wad Madani are buzzing with speculation that the war could soon come to this city. — AFP



SINGAPORE: A Pratt and Whitney PurePower PW1000G-JM engine is displayed at the Singapore Airshow in Singapore. — AFP

Pratt & Whitney engine issue adds to airline challenges

NEW YORK: Commercial airlines have faced a tricky balancing act this summer, ramping up service to meet torrid travel demand in a period of labor shortages and supply chain constraints. Adding to the challenges: new inspections needed on a class of Airbus planes that may suffer from microscopic "contamination" of metals used to manufacture Pratt & Whitney engines.

Pratt & Whitney's parent company, RTX, formerly Raytheon, announced on July 25 that a "significant portion" of the Airbus A320neo fleet will "require accelerated removals and inspections within the next nine to 12 months." Company officials described the issue as one of quality control, stressing that there is no immediate risk to flight safety. They blamed a "rare condition in powder metal used to manufacture certain engine parts." The defect could affect 1,200 Pratt engines made between late 2015 and mid-2021. In total, the company has produced 3,000 of the engines.

"We're aware of the issue," Airbus said, "and we will be working with Pratt & Whitney and our customers to implement all required inspection plans." The Federal Aviation Administration told AFP this week that it "is aware of the issue and is in contact with Pratt & Whitney and the affected US operators," an agency spokesperson said.

"The agency will ensure that the appropriate steps are taken." But more than two weeks after the original announcement by RTX, airlines are still grasping for details on the inspections, as they work in an already stressed operating environment. The FAA reiterated in early August that it would continue to permit airlines to reduce flights at New York airports amid shortages of air traffic controllers that have led to fewer flights on bigger planes. RTX said it will begin inspecting 200 jets by mid-September. It did not say how long the inspections would require. — AFP

Travelers frustrated as Lithuania tightens border with Belarus

SUMSKAS, Lithuania: Under the clear skies of Sumskas nestled at Lithuania's border with Belarus, several dozen cars lined up on Saturday, awaiting passage. But what for years has been a convenient journey to get cheaper goods and pay family visits will likely soon turn into a more challenging endeavor. Next week, Lithuania will shut two of its six border checkpoints with Belarus, including the crossing in Sumskas. The decision came as a response to escalating tensions between the neighbors, with Vilnius warning of a provocations threat by Minsk — and the Wagner fighters now based in Belarus following their short-lived rebellion in Russia.

For casual travelers, the move will mean extended waiting times at the remaining checkpoints, which will now also be shared with buses and trucks. Some Lithuanians say they would need to abandon their excursions to the neighboring state completely.

Among them is 73-year-old pensioner Jadvyga, who crosses the border on her bicycle several times a year to buy cheaper medication. "They sell this drug for one and a half euros (\$1.64), while here (in Lithuania) it costs from 10 to 12 euros," she told AFP while she queued at the Sumskas checkpoint. "But now I won't go," she added.

'Fail to come back'

Lithuanian authorities say around 230,000 Lithuanian citizens went to Belarus in the first half of 2023 despite political tensions and multiple warnings from the government to stay away from the authoritarian

state. The surge in illegal migration from Belarus to the European Union, coupled with Minsk hosting Russian tactical nuclear weapons and letting Moscow use its territory to conduct strikes on Ukraine, has left Lithuania uneasy. This week, the government installed banners at all border checkpoints with Belarus bearing the inscription "Do not risk your safety — do not travel to Belarus. You may fail to come back."

"By granting shelter to the Wagner military group, Belarus has become a state that harbors a terrorist organization," Lithuanian Deputy Foreign Minister Mantas Adomenas told reporters. "New security challenges have emerged and we must take them into account," he added. The officials in Vilnius say Minsk may be trying to recruit some travellers to Belarus for espionage, exert psychological pressure, or even blackmail the Lithuanian citizens by performing checks on their phones and social media. "Every citizen of Lithuania who goes to Belarus must assess all the risks, including those to their health and life," said Rustamas Liubajevs, head of the border guard service.

'People will suffer'

But for many Lithuanians travelling to Belarus, the new restrictions only cause anger and disappointment. Sergey, a construction worker who declined to give his full name, used to go shopping in Belarus once a month — and said he had never encountered anything that Lithuanian authorities warn of.

"What can happen there? It's nonsense, it's funny," he told AFP. The middle-aged man said political tensions are "useless" to ordinary people. "It would be more beneficial to foster friendly relations with our neighbors, but for some reason they make a confrontation. Who is it good for?" Sergey added.

33-year-old Violeta Porsatovic said she didn't back the new restrictions, but felt there was nothing she could do about it. "Regular people will suffer. How can we support this if we are suffering?" she said. — AFP



SUMSKAS, Lithuania: People with bicycles stand at the border crossing point Sumskas between Lithuania and Belarus on August 12, 2023 next to a sign reading "Do not risk your safety - do not travel to Belarus." - AFP



Lula launches \$348bn public works program

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Friday announced the re-launch of a major \$348 billion infrastructure investment program, saying he hopes it will help Latin America's biggest economy get back on the path to growth.

Projects under the public-private Growth Acceleration Pact (PAC) will target energy, road construction, access to water and sewage, healthcare, Internet access and education.

"Our country needs credibility, stability and predictability, and this program provides these three ingredients," the leftist Lula said as he presented the PAC in Rio de Janeiro. "I am sure that with the new program, the country will return to growth and take the correct path," Lula said, adding that "all the capacity of the state" will be employed. "Today my government begins. Until now, what we have done was to repair what had been damaged," Lula said. Previous versions of the program, in 2007 and 2010 during Lula's first and second terms (2003-2010), had mixed success since a number of planned projects had to be stopped due to lack of financing.

The government now plans to invest 1.3 trillion reais (about \$265 billion) until the end of Lula's four-year term in 2026, and an additional US\$83 billion thereafter. Nearly one-third of the announced investments are to come from partnerships with the private sector and one-fifth from funds provided by public companies, such as oil giant Petrobras. Lula said respect for the environment remained one of his top priorities. "We have a great opportunity to become the world's great sustainable power, and the PAC will help with this. More than 80 percent of the energy (needed for the planned work) is clean," he said.

One of the priorities of the new PAC is to resume work on projects that were halted due to lack of financing. The largest investment is planned in the construction sector (about \$125 billion), of which more than half will go to financing social housing for the Minha Casa Minha Vida program, a flagship program of Lula's previous terms in office. For the funds to be released, the government needs final approval from Congress of the new "fiscal framework," a law that replaces the spending cap in place since 2016 and designed to keep free-spending governments in check. — AFP

NBK Money Markets Report

US Fed officials continue to debate rate hike conundrum

British economy reports surprise growth

KUWAIT: "The debate is really about: Do we need to do another rate increase, or not?" That is the question on everyone's mind as markets anticipate the next move by the Federal Reserve, and those are also the exact words to come out of New York Fed President John Williams' mouth in an interview with the New York Times. The debate remains between the Fed's policymakers as to whether to continue increasing interest rates or to pause for the time being. Williams believes that as the US economy "has moved to an environment already where the underlying inflation rate has come down quite a bit," it is arguable that inflation could reach 2.5 percent at the end of the year, on an annual basis, a fraction short of the Fed's intended 2 percent inflation target.

On the other hand, Fed Governor Michelle Bowman, a supporter of the previous interest rate hike in July, believes that high inflation along with continued economic growth are enough for her to believe that "additional increased will likely be needed to lower inflation to the [Fed's] goal." The debate continues to heat up between Fed officials, with each aiming to get the public to side with their respective reasoning while the market anxiously waits for the next meeting.

CPI and PPI

The latest US consumer price inflation report came in at 0.2 percent on a month-to-month basis for both the headline and core figures, matching last month's figure. On an annual basis, headline inflation rose 3.0 percent in June, marking the smallest year-on-year gain since March 2021. This was reciprocated in July's year-on-year CPI figure of 3.2 percent, indicating that inflation is indeed slowing down. Meanwhile, the producer price index rose 0.3 percent last month, after economists had predicted a 0.2 percent increase. This increase was driven by strong services, with portfolio management fee accounting for 40 percent of the rise in services. Encouraging numbers are the trend with US data at the moment, and that could not have come at a better time for Fed doves as they are looking for an end to the vicious interest rate hike cycle.

Rates – August 13th, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1016	1.0927	1.1064	1.0944	1.0700	1.0110	1.0996
GBP	1.2751	1.2664	1.2818	1.2694	1.2400	1.2900	1.2703
JPY	141.79	141.51	145.03	144.96	142.00	147.00	142.901
CHF	0.8717	0.8689	0.8782	0.8767	0.8600	0.9000	0.86861

Unemployment claims

The latest number of Americans filing for unemployment claims was at 248K, an increase from the previous reading of 227K, and even greater than the expected number of 231K, marking a four-week high. Moreover, the month of July saw an increase of 187K jobs, allowing the unemployment rate to fall from 3.6 percent in June to 3.5 percent.

Prelim UoM consumer sentiment

The Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index came in at 71.2, a slight decrease from July's 71.2 figure. Consumers showed belief in the current economic conditions, with the sub-index showing an increase to 77.4 from 76.6 previously. As for consumers' belief in year-ahead inflation expectations, there was a decrease from 3.4 percent to 3.3 percent. However, the expectations for long-term inflation remained at 2.9 percent.

Over in the eurozone, the latest German Industrial Production figure came in at -1.5 percent on a monthly basis, way below the expected 0.4 percent drop. This decline was largely facilitated by a drop in both the automotive and construction industries. With the eurozone's largest economy in decline, markets are now expecting the ECB to stop adding more pressure onto the economy, and in fact pause interest rate hikes in their next meeting.

With the eurozone's largest economy in decline, markets are now expecting the ECB to stop adding more pressure onto the economy, and in fact pause interest rate hikes in their next meeting.

UK economic growth


In what is certain to be the week's most surprising news, the British economy grew by 0.2 percent for the second quarter of 2023, creating a major shock for economists with expectations being at 0.0 percent growth. This increase was largely aided by the monthly growth of 0.5 percent, which was noticeably greater than the expected 0.2 percent increase. These figures will almost certainly give the Bank of England something to think about. If members of the BoE had been thinking of pausing interest rate hikes, they will most definitely have a

tough time implementing it, especially with the latest data to come out.

The Chinese economy continues to struggle in its quest for revival, and the latest data to come out adds more pressure on the government to release more direct stimulus. The latest CPI data shows a 0.3 percent fall on annual basis, slightly above the expected 0.4 percent decrease, marking the first annual decline since February 2021. Meanwhile, the Chinese producer price index fell by 4.4 percent on a year-on-year basis, after it had fallen 5.4 percent the previous month, marking the tenth consecutive month of decline. As both PPI and CPI are within negative territory and in a state of deflation, it is evident that the pressure continues to mount on the authorities to take more steps in supporting the economy.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30740.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 10 AUGUST 2023

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

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	33,771	7,860.65	-0.9%	-2.5%	-3.1%	559,676,902	164,679,600	36,166	17.2	1.2	78.2%
Main Market	9,431	5,781.78	3.9%	2.7%	3.3%	490,280,391	42,456,055	18,882	13.8	0.7	21.8%
All Share	43,201	7,147.93	0.0%	-1.5%	-2.0%	1,049,957,293	207,135,655	55,048	14.7	0.8	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	25,939	1,741.40	0.3%	-1.6%	-2.9%	185,162,262	83,435,302	16,096	20.0	1.1	60.04%
Basic Materials	480	850.72	-1.8%	-3.7%	-1.7%	3,880,176	2,575,576	1,063	8.0	2.0	1.11%
Consumer Discretionary	1,137	1,696.07	-1.5%	-1.4%	14.1%	194,033,326	15,566,360	6,862	13.3	0.9	2.63%
Consumer Staples	172	565.15	-8.0%	-9.1%	17.8%	3,709,303	1,849,166	550	70.8	1.1	0.40%
Energy	211	1,009.09	1.2%	1.0%	-11.4%	835,661	95,009	84	9.5	0.7	0.49%
Financial Services	4,472	1,275.50	0.2%	-1.1%	1.5%	439,244,544	59,393,929	13,983	25.3	0.8	10.35%
Health Care	226	455.49	0.3%	0.3%	-1.4%	5,016	2,311.81	6	10.0	1.0	0.52%
Industrials	3,438	987.75	0.2%	-1.4%	-8.4%	40,451,783	15,812,061	5,929	16.4	0.9	7.96%
Insurance	897	2,197.08	-0.6%	0.8%	41.7%	3,188,056	546,163	248	10.8	0.9	2.08%
Real Estate	2,645	1,233.53	-0.5%	-1.3%	2.1%	162,637,024	19,726,013	6,862	15.6	0.6	6.12%
Technology	8	595.82	0.1%	3.3%	-14.4%	111,038	8,751	32	NM	0.7	0.02%
Telecommunications	3,362	1,100.27	-0.4%	-1.2%	-6.9%	14,753,093	7,749,175	3,023	11.0	1.3	7.78%
Utilities	213	510.53	0.0%	-4.0%	3.2%	1,946,011	375,839	310	15.9	1.9	0.49%

Top Gainers

Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
THURAYA	185	43.41%	2,586	429	16
CBK	730	32.25%	41,044	26,430	34
AGHC	393	18.02%	5,312,517	1,933,439	538
EKTTITAB	22.9	13.93%	18,790,380	422,592	345
KRE	169	13.42%	68,224,577	10,824,889	1,640

Top Losers

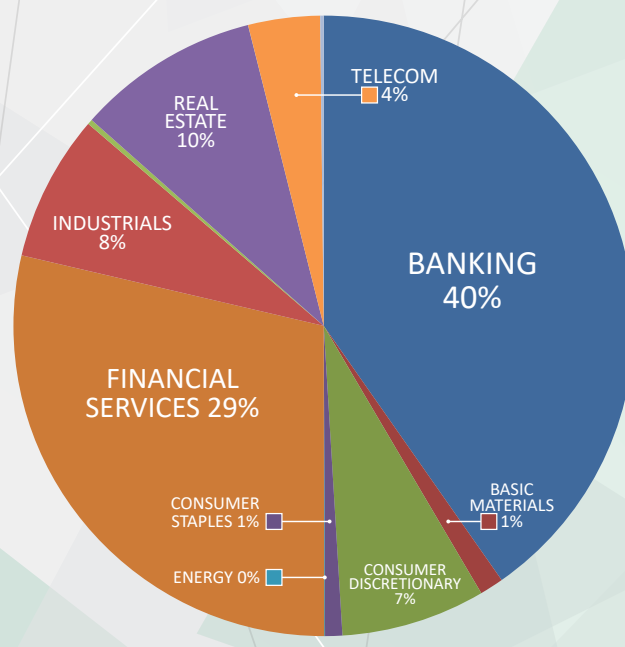
Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
JYAD	20	-28.06%	172,275,231	4,075,330	3,640
ARGAN	85	-10.53%	161,594	13,775	43
EMIRATES	36.9	-10.00%	124,764	4,488	39
KCIN	1,077	-9.42%	4,018	4,687	6
MEZZAN	480	-8.57%	3,680,504	1,846,231	538


Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
JYAD	20	-28.06%	172,275,231	4,075,330	3,640
ARZAN	155	9.15%	87,793,118	13,119,302	1,509
GFH	86.1	4.36%	68,900,814	5,820,932	2,399
KRE	169	13.42%	68,224,577	10,824,889	1,640
IFA	173	6.13%	63,292,388	10,737,690	1,173

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	765	-0.65%	38,564,150	29,759,203	4,770
NBK	930	-2.31%	17,925,561	16,915,277	3,798
BOUBYAN	624	-0.16%	21,509,954	13,577,619	2,357
ARZAN	155	9.15%	87,793,118	13,119,302	1,509
WARBABANK	200	-3.38%	60,943,658	12,369,043	2,532





All Share Price Index YTD

Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value dropped by 3% and 7%, while Main Market dropped by 10% and 13%, respectively.
- The Premier index is still declining while the Main index showed strength and has overcome a critical resistance level.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7147, with support levels at 7105, 7085, and 7041, while resistance at 7162. The Premier index closed at 7860, with support levels at 7827, 7767, and 7730, while resistance at 7916. The Main index closed at 5781, with support levels at 5723, 5696, and 5675, while resistance at 5780.

Biden battles for political gain a year after ambitious climate law

Inflation Reduction Act plan involves \$350bn in subsidies and tax credits

Tight supply adds fuel to crude rally

By Ole Hansen

Overall, the Bloomberg Commodity Index, which tracks a basket of 24 major commodity futures, trades down 1.3 percent on the month and 3.3 percent on the year. The energy sector which includes crude oil, fuel products and natural gas trades up 3.8 percent on the month and 16 percent on the quarter, supported by a tight supply outlook for crude as OPEC+ curbs production while demand is scaling record highs, boosted by strong summer air travel activity and increased demand for power generation amid a global heatwave. Even natural gas prices have picked up to meet increased demand for power amid the aforementioned heatwave which has seen temperatures across the US exceed seasonal averages.

Supply constraints

The energy sector, including natural gas, has risen strongly this quarter with sentiment experiencing a major positive turnaround as aggressive voluntary production cuts from Saudi Arabia continue to tighten the market. In addition, concerns about the global economic outlook have yet to impact demand which, according to the IEA, hit a record and could move even higher in August, potentially prolonging the current rally until OPEC decides to increase production by tapping into the estimated 5.7 million barrels a day of spare capacity.

These developments have seen WTI and Brent reach four-month highs, and just like last year, when prices shot higher following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the rally has been led by tight diesel markets which have sent prices for gas oil futures in London and Ultra-light Sulphur Diesel (ULSD) in New York surging to \$123 and \$131 respectively per barrel, the highest levels since January. In WTI crude oil, the premium the prompt futures contract, currently CLU3, commands over the next month reached a November high and the tightness or backwardation of this magnitude highlights the current bullish sentiment.

According to IEA's latest Oil Market Report, global fuel demand averaged 103 million barrels a day for the first time in June and may soar even higher in August. With Saudi Arabia and its OPEC+ partners keeping supply constricted, the market looks set to tighten further, resulting in a 1.8 million barrels a day deficit during the second half.

Crude oil production from the OPEC+ group of producers fell to a two-year low in July according to the latest Platts OPEC+ Survey carried out by S&P Global Commodity Insights. While OPEC pumped 27.34 million barrels/day, non-OPEC allies produced 13.1 million barrels/day, with the bulk of the reduction being driven by Saudi Arabia's aggressive voluntary production cut which has so far been extended to include September. The one million barrel-a-day cut has seen the Kingdom's production slump to a two-year low and some two million barrels below what it pumped last September.

Gold weighed down

During the past couple of months, gold prices have settled into a \$1900 to \$1980 range with the market struggling for direction amid uncertainty surrounding the timing of peak rates in the US. The yellow metal traded near a one-month low on Thursday, despite the latest CPI print reiterating the current disinflationary theme, after Fed's Daly said the Fed despite the easing inflation had "more work to do", not least considering the latest spike in energy prices which could make the August print look even uglier.

Looking at correlations to other markets, the biggest input currently is coming from movements in the dollar, and the greenback has seen broad strength this past week supported by higher bond yields adding downside pressure to the Japanese yen while other Asian currencies have struggled amid the aforementioned weakness in Chinese economic data. Apart from dollar strength hurting sentiment, we continue to see asset managers and long-term investors reducing their exposure to gold through ETFs. Since the May peak that followed the March banking crisis, total holdings in ETFs have slumped by 109 tons to 2821 tons and the lowest since January 2000.

Part of the reduction has been driven by headwinds triggered by the cost of carry or opportunity cost in holding gold relative to the interest received on a short-term government bond. Recently the futures roll between the expiring August contract and December, meant that the new front month contract attracted some attention given the 34-dollar premium that the December contract traded above the August contract. The bulk of the difference reflects the current level of interest rates. It's clear that the bulk of the increase from next to nothing back in 2021 to the current 5.8 percent has been driven by the rising funding cost of holding a position in gold.

While we maintain a bullish outlook for gold, these developments also highlight the risk gold may continue to struggle attracting demand from investors until rates peak and begin to turn lower. For now, traders will primarily focus on whether gold can maintain support around \$1900, the 200-day moving average, or whether a break may trigger an extension towards \$1865. Note: Ole Hansen is head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank.

WASHINGTON: If he had it to do over, he would probably choose another name: A year on, Joe Biden is struggling to sell Americans on the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act. The hugely ambitious project is aimed at speeding America's transition to clean energy, rebuilding its industrial might and increasing social justice.

On August 16, 2022, when the US president signed the \$750 billion plan into law, the country was in the midst of a dramatic surge in prices that was battering the Democratic leader's popularity.

So "the Inflation Reduction Act" seemed a logical name, even though the plan aimed largely — through some \$350 billion in subsidies and tax credits — at speeding the transition to green energy.

"I wish I hadn't called it that, because it has less to do with inflation than it has to do with providing alternatives that generate economic growth," Biden said at a recent meeting with donors in the western state of Utah. The previous day, the 80-year-old Democrat, who is seeking a second term in office next year, had inaugurated a sustainable energy project that he said symbolizes the best of the IRA.

That project, in nearby New Mexico, involves the construction of electricity-generating wind turbines on the site where a factory once made plastic dishes — in a state suffering the harsh effects of climate change in the form of wildfires and extreme temperatures.

Private investment

The White House says the IRA has spurred \$110 billion in private investments

in the clean energy sector since it became law — raising concern among Europeans and other allies with its stated ambition of industrial independence. "This is the most significant climate and clean energy legislation in US history," said Lori Bird of the World Resources Institute, an environmental group.

The incentives it provides "are designed to last for a decade," and their effects "should last beyond that," she said. A study by nine teams of American researchers found that the IRA should reduce US emissions by between 43 percent and 48 percent by 2035 compared to 2005 levels.

That falls short of the official objective of halving emissions by 2030. Reaching that goal, many activists say, will require not just the enticements of financial "carrots" but the threat of regulatory "sticks" — which could, however, face a major obstacle if they reach the conservative Supreme Court.

For now, Biden's urgent concern is finding ways to capitalize before the November 2024 presidential elections on what he calls "Bidenomics." That term is meant to embrace both the current vigor of the US economy and a promising future built partly on the IRA but also on major investment programs in technology and infrastructure.

'Going to take time'

Most Americans are only vaguely aware of the varied promises of these programs — supporting the development of quantum computing in the face of Chinese competition, building millions of electric cars while creating jobs, lowering the price of insulin and democratizing access to the internet.

How has climate plan affected trade ties?

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's landmark climate action plan may have been trailed by billions of dollars in clean energy investment, but its potential to reshape trade lines has strained ties with allies.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), signed into law on August 16 last year, directs some \$370 billion in subsidies toward America's energy transition, including tax breaks for US-made electric vehicles and batteries. But the incentives, which boost American manufacturing after years of offshoring, have triggered fears that they could draw businesses out of other countries. "This was really the United States coming into the game in a big way," said Joshua Meltzer, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Europe had been subsidizing the development of clean technologies since before the IRA, as had China and others, Meltzer noted. But Washington's entry "meant that for these subsidies to remain competitive they had to be continued or raised," he told AFP.

'Unintended consequences'

The legislation had some "unintended consequences" in constraining trade with key US allies, said Jeffrey Schott, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. A sticking point was a consumer tax credit of up to \$7,500 for the purchase of electric vehicles (EVs) assembled in North America.

To qualify for the full credit, vehicle batteries should also have a percentage of critical minerals sourced from America or countries with which it has free-trade pacts, leaving the European Union and, initially, Japan in the cold. This drew ire from those countries, and US officials eventually expanded access to the clean vehicle subsidies, noting in March that the free trade agreement

requirement could also include newly negotiated critical minerals deals.

This includes one that Japan had inked with the United States just shortly earlier — opening doors to benefits from some subsidies. "Part of the initial friction was because... the last revisions of the IRA were done in haste and in secret," said Schott. There appeared to be a "lack of understanding that US allies were not all US free-trade partners," he added, leading to some "creative accounting" by the Treasury Department in defining how the law would be implemented.

Meltzer said that the United States "quite quickly tried to respond to these concerns by negotiating these kind of bilateral deals," referring to Japan's pact and the EU's efforts toward a similar accord. This alleviated many concerns, he said.

Partnerships and relocations

Canada, which warned about the risks of a subsidy war, has since responded by matching certain IRA incentives with those of its own. In April, it announced up to 13.2 billion Canadian dollars (\$9.8 billion) in subsidies over 10 years for Volkswagen's first overseas battery plant in Ontario.

Elsewhere, South Korea's largest automaker Hyundai is hoping to produce US-assembled electric cars eligible for subsidies at a site under construction in Georgia. Other South Korean companies have forged partnerships with US ones to build assembly lines meeting IRA requirements, such as battery maker Samsung SDI's joint venture with General Motors to build an EV battery plant in the US. "The IRA would benefit the US through additional output and lower strategic dependence vis-a-vis China," said an analysis by three European Central Bank economists in July.

"The US would gain from positive relocation effects, increasing production by six percent to 30 percent in electrical and optical equipment," the economists said in a column on the Centre for Economic Policy Research's policy portal. This comes mainly at China's expense, and to a smaller degree the EU's, the economists said.

While the relocation involves a relatively small share of total output, losses in specific sectors can be more

Guinea signs new rail, port deals for iron mining site

DAKAR: Guinea's government has signed new agreements to build a port and railway to serve the mammoth Simandou iron deposit, one of the companies working on the project has announced.

Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto Simfer and the Chinese Winning Consortium Simandou have been contracted to mine the site in southeastern Guinea, one of the largest iron deposits in the world.

The parties have agreed to build a 670-kilometre (416-mile) railway to connect the mining corridor to a port south of the capital Conakry. "Signing these (new) agreements is a decisive step, establishing a comprehensive framework for the major infrastructure

of the Simandou project," Rio Tinto Simfer said in a press release dated Thursday.

"Establishing infrastructure will facilitate the export of iron ore and the transport of passengers (and) goods," the statement said. The project is scheduled for completion by December 2024 and is expected to create several thousand direct jobs.

Disputes over mining rights and allegations of corruption have for years delayed the exploitation of the site. A lack of infrastructure in the landlocked region has also proved a challenge.

The head of Guinea's ruling junta has made the Simandou project a key priority since seizing power in September 2021. — AFP

SriLankan Airlines eyes Gulf buyers

COLOMBO: SriLankan Airlines should be a target for takeover by carriers in the Gulf once it is privatized, after making an operating profit for the first time in 15 years, reports said quoting the airline's chief executive. Talking to the media, Richard Nuttall said Gulf operators could substantially benefit from the airline's easy access to its Asian neighbor. "The big prize for everybody is India," he said.

He suggested that Emirates, which previously owned 40 per cent of SriLankan, might be among those carriers who respond to the Colombo government's wish to privatize the airline. It was part-owned by Emirates for 10 years until the Sri Lankan government bought all the airline's shares in 2008. In that year SriLankan made a profit of nearly \$30 million but under government administration over the next seven years it lost \$875 million.

Asked if the Dubai-based airline was among likely bidders Nuttall said he could not "speak for either Emirates or anybody else in the Gulf" but the government's plan was "to look for expressions of interest in the coming months and they want to do that fast".



President Joe Biden delivers a speech Friday at the COP27 summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

"People don't know the changes that are taking place are a consequence of what we did yet," Biden told the Utah donors on Thursday. "And it's going to take a little time for that to break through." The Republican Party has pushed back against Biden's campaign, recently issuing a statement deriding his "desperate attempt to sell the so-called Inflation Reduction Act," which it blasted as a "scam."

Biden, however, has seemed to take pleasure in pointing out that Republican lawmakers don't seem to have any prob-

lem accepting IRA funding when it pays for projects in their own districts. On Wednesday, he even singled out a particularly virulent supporter of Donald Trump, Congresswoman Lauren Boebert.

Biden noted, with clear sarcasm, that the Inflation Reduction Act was helping pay for a huge wind-turbine factory in the Colorado district of this "very quiet Republican lady" who, like others of her party, had opposed the IRA. "She railed against its passage," Biden said, adding with a smile, "That's OK, she's welcoming it now." — AFP



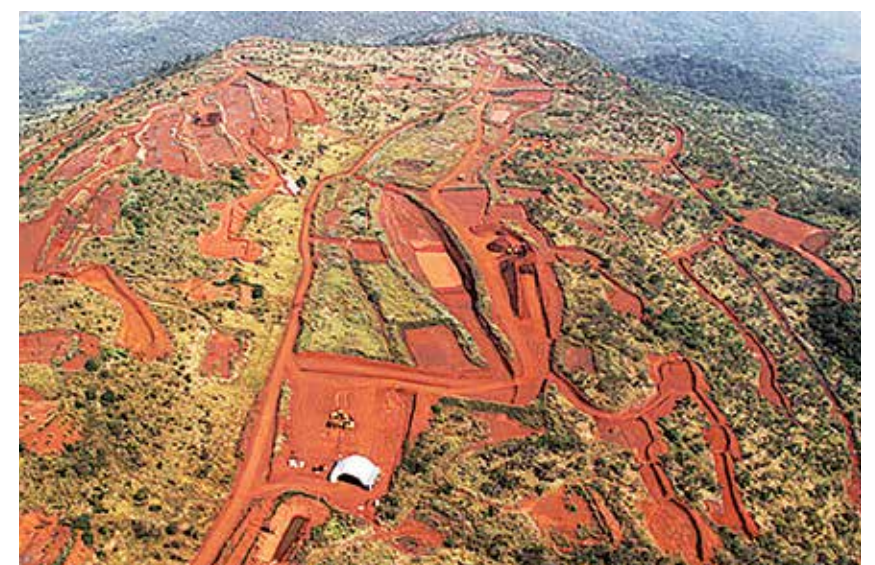
Solar panels are installed on the roof of a Florida house. — AFP

substantial. Since the climate law was signed, at least \$75 billion in new manufacturing investments has been announced, according to policy analyst Jack Conness of think tank Energy Innovation: Policy and Technology.

IRA green subsidies may be "of similar size" to those available in the EU, but the US clean-tech subsidies are "simpler and less fragmented," said European think tank Bruegel in a report this year.

Such factors could make the US subsidies more attractive to businesses, at a time when Europe also faces rising energy costs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

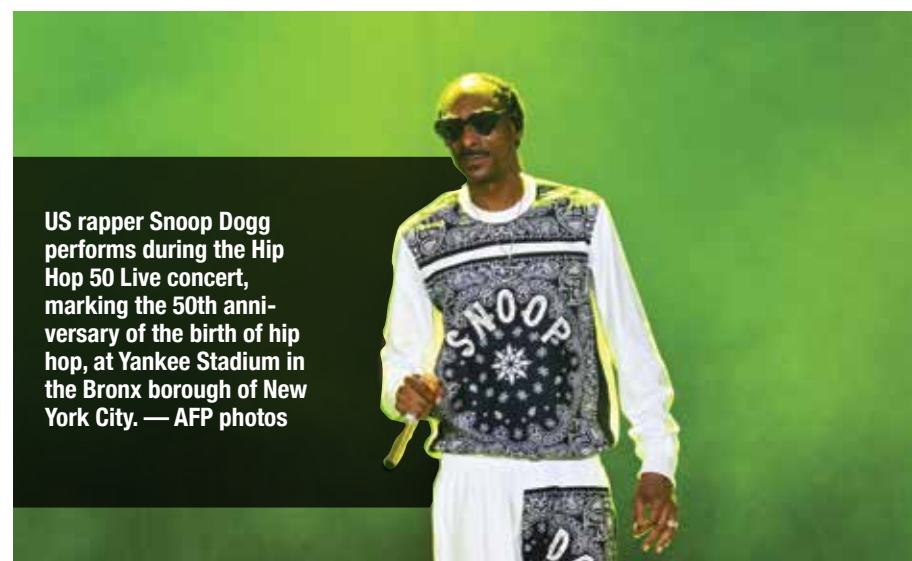
"If you're in an energy-intensive sector such as chemicals... the US looks increasingly attractive," Meltzer said. "It's a broader set of factors, I think, that are creating competitive challenges in Europe," he said. "The IRA is a part of that... but it's not everything." — AFP



Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto Simfer and the Chinese Winning Consortium Simandou have been contracted to mine the site in southeastern Guinea, one of the largest iron deposits in the world.

Income could be further enhanced with an ambition to double the fleet from 23 aircraft to 40 in the next three to five years. Significant rewards then await with the India market a vastly untapped resource, argued the 57-year-old chief executive from Yorkshire, England.

"The big prize for everybody is India," he said speaking at his office in Colombo. "If you work with us then you start being relevant to the Indian market in all directions. So, I think that's the big interest for the Gulf carriers." Despite being the world's most populous nation of 1.4 billion, India has just 0.5 commercial aircraft per million people whereas China has three and American 30. — Agencies



US rapper Snoop Dogg performs during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert, marking the 50th anniversary of the birth of hip hop, at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx borough of New York City. — AFP photos



US rappers Snoop Dogg and Wiz Khalifa perform during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US rapper Lil Wayne performs during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.

Nas, Run-DMC, Snoop helm marathon birthday party for hip-hop

Thousands of people partied deep into the night Friday as part of an all-star Bronx bash celebrating 50 years of hip-hop, featuring trailblazers including Run-DMC, Nas, Lauryn Hill and Snoop Dogg. The pops were on lock and the joy absolute at a packed Yankee Stadium, where New Yorkers and tourists alike commemorated five decades of the music whose vast influence irrevocably shook the culture. "I didn't know how monumental it was gonna be growing up," said Kiesha Astwood, 50, who, like hip-hop, was born in 1973 and on Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx. It was there that DJ Kool Herc's younger sister Cindy threw a back-to-school party in the rec room of a high-rise apartment building, and the DJ spun the same record twice, into the first documented breakbeat.

"It's very invigorating," Astwood told AFP moments after Kool Herc received accolades for his role in birthing the genre. "Here we are 50 years later." None other than Run-DMC -- one of hip-hop's most influential acts -- headlined the evening, playing hits including the beloved "It's Tricky," which had the arena crowd screaming along despite the post-1:00 a.m. start time. Prior to that performance Nas, the mammoth concert's ringleader, played a string of songs off his seminal album "Illmatic," including "The World Is Yours" and "N.Y. State of Mind."

The crowd roared when the New York icon closed his set by inviting fellow legend Lauryn Hill onstage to sing the track they collaborated on "If I Ruled the World (Imagine That)" as well as her own smash single "Doo Wop (That Thing)" and her rendition of "Killing Me Softly," that she originally performed as part of The Fugees. That was preceded by none other than Snoop Dogg, who also played fan favorites including "The Next Episode," "Nuthin' But A 'G' Thang" and "Gin And Juice."

The 51-year-old G-funk pioneer wore heart-shaped glasses and lit up onstage, as is his custom, vibing to his own legend as remarkably agile pole dancers harmonized alongside. Lil Wayne was also among the performers smoking weed, whose scent hung heavy in the summer air.

The trap artist from Louisiana was a showstopper as he bounded across the stage, giving hit after hit including "A Milli" and "Lollipop" before thanking his adoring fans and walking off to Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You." Antoine Crossley had traveled all the way from Chicago to catch the



US rappers Method Man (left) and Ghostface Killah (center) perform during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US rapper Doug E. Fresh performs during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US rapper Common performs during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US rapper Nas performs during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US rapper T.I. performs during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US singer/songwriter Lauryn Hill performs during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.

history-spanning show, which began with hip-hop's founding fathers including Melle Mel and Scorpio along with Grandmaster Caz.

"I think hip-hop is something that really has brought a voice to people that originally didn't have a voice," he told AFP as he filed into the stadium. "It speaks to me. I think growing up, it was something that was always special to me. So we were willing to make that trip and make it happen."

'Our bloodline'

The marathon concert was the crown jewel of celebrations that have reverberated throughout the city to

commemorate the 50th anniversary. Clocking in at more than eight hours long, it also included performances from The Sugarhill Gang, members of the Wu-Tang Clan and Ice Cube. For some critics and fans, pinpointing a date to mark the development of a style of music -- which was rumbling well before August 11, 1973 -- seems arbitrary.

But perhaps no type of music has deserved a reason to celebrate more. Hip-hop was for decades maligned, ignored and censored by the industry it eventually shaped in profound ways, in a country where rappers have churned out massive pop hits and heavily impacted everything from music to fash-

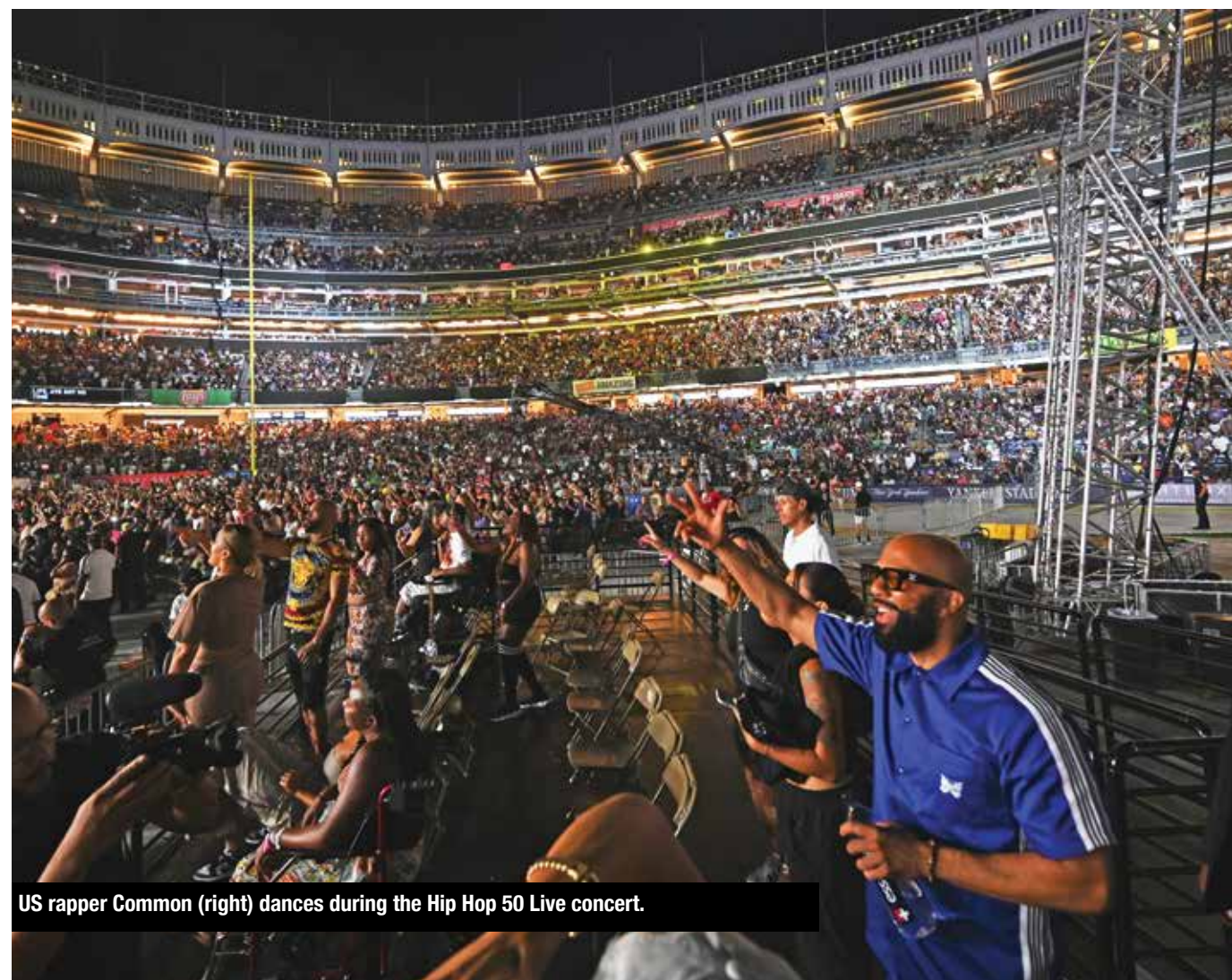
ion, language to dance.

The quintessentially Black American art form has traveled from block parties in the Bronx to every corner of the globe; these days, most countries host a regional hip-hop scene of their own. Speaking near the concessions Julio Casado, 42, said "I love to travel, and I kind of have a competition with hip-hop."

"I try to visit places where hip-hop hasn't been to yet. But the reality is, hip-hop has been all over, and hip-hop's actually got me beat." Everyone from children to grandparents danced, cheered, and illuminated the 46,000-capacity baseball venue with

their phones. But there was no shortage of jokes referencing that fans were aging right along with hip-hop itself.

"Everyone sitting is over thirty, we got some knees hurting out there," joked one emcee. The fans who had the endurance to stay to the end got to see Nas bring Kool Herc back onstage for another round of thanks: "This is our love, our bloodline," Nas said. "I'm fifty years old with hip-hop this year," Nas said. "Hip-hop was born for you and me, and this is where we supposed to be." "In N-Y-C." —AFP



US rapper Common (right) dances during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US rappers Joseph Simmons (right) and Darryl McDaniels (left) from Run-DMC perform during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



Former baseball player Derek Jeter (left) and DJ Kid Capri perform during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.



US rappers Method Man (second left), Ghostface Killah (right), Cappadonna and Inspectah Deck (left) perform during the Hip Hop 50 Live concert.

Lifestyle



This picture shows a foreign tourist (center) putting on a sumo costume before sparing with a former sumo wrestler at the Yokozuna Tonkatsu Dosukoi Tanaka restaurant in Tokyo.—AFP photos



This photo shows a group of people, many of them tourists, trying to watch a sumo training session through the glass windows at the Arashio-beya sumo stable in Tokyo.



This photo shows the "top-knot" of a sumo wrestler during a training session at the Arashio-beya sumo stable in Tokyo.



This photo shows a sumo wrestler standing in the window of a shop across from the Arashio-beya sumo stable following a training session in Tokyo.



This photo shows a tour guide looking at a list of sumo wrestlers as he trains to become a sumo guide, before going to the nearby Tamanoi-beya sumo stable in Tokyo.

RENEWED INTEREST IN SUMO PROVES BIG PULL FOR TOURISTS

Their interest piqued during COVID lockdowns and by a new Netflix drama, a fresh rush of foreign tourists are flocking to Japan for a look inside the insular world of sumo. Japan's national sport—hundreds of years old and steeped in tradition—has long been a source of fascination outside the country, but those in the industry say interest has spiked in recent years, with some making the most of the new attention.

At a recent lunchtime "performance," two imposing sumo practitioners strutted their stuff in a Tokyo restaurant full of cheering tourists. Afterwards, the spectators took selfies with the hulking athletes and donned padded sumo costumes and wigs to try their hand at the ancient art in a bout against retired professionals. "The kids had a blast. I had a blast getting up there and fighting with them," said Kieran Riley, 42, from Arizona. "They put on a good show. Definitely one of the highlights of the trip."

Tickets for the thrice-weekly event, which includes commentary in English and a slap-up meal, go for 11,000 yen (\$76) each and were sold out for the following six weeks.

One of the stars is former top professional wrestler Takayuki Sakuma, aka Jokoryu, who stands six foot two inches (1.87 meters) tall and weighed 170 kilos (375 pounds) at his peak. "When you're a professional, your life depends on sumo," the now-retired 35-year-old told AFP. "And it's not to be taken lightly." "But to entertain people we add humor. The most important thing is to make people appreciate sumo as culture."



This photo shows sumo wrestlers during a training session at the Arashio-beya sumo stable in Tokyo.

Netflix effect

Former amateur sumo wrestler John Gunning, who competed for his native Ireland and commentates—in English—on Japanese television, said there has been a "huge increase" in the sport's popularity abroad over the last five to 10 years. But that popularity grew even more during COVID, when people stuck in lockdown explored new interests.

And the release this year of "Sanctuary," a new Netflix series set in the world of sumo, also helped to introduce the sport to a new audience. "I'm seeing a lot of people saying that that was their first exposure to sumo," Gunning told AFP. The Japan Sumo Association last year also launched an English-language YouTube channel, "Sumo Prime Time," whose videos rack up tens of thousands of views.

Ken Miller, 68, shows groups of American tourists the area of Ryogoku, a mecca for the sport, including the Kokugikan arena. Each one pays several hundred dollars for the experience, and he says he is booked up for the next year. Three times a year, in January, May and September, Kokugikan hosts the top stars of sumo in national tournaments in front of more than 10,000 cheering fans. "I try to explain to them (the tourists) that sumo is not just a sport, it's part of the culture. And it's very much connected to Buddhism, Shinto," Miller told AFP. "It's a way of life."

'Stables' swamped

Tourists have long been able to visit the hallowed interior of a "heya," one of the traditional "stables" where sumo wrestlers live and train according to strict

traditions. But because of the growth in interest, many stables have banned individual visits and only allow group tours booked through an agency, said guide Yuriko Kimura.

"When we started sumo stable training tours, it was maybe held once or twice a week, people didn't know about sumo. But then it surged around 2018-2019," she told AFP. "I tell them that what is important is to show respect towards the stable and sumo wrestlers. If people from other countries know the dos and don'ts, they won't do something wrong." Inside, visitors must stay seated and quiet so as not to disturb the wrestlers while they train.

One stable, Arashio in central Tokyo, has a large bay window where dozens of people gather every day to watch the training sessions. Yuka Suzuki, 61, the wife of the former master who installed the window, said that the original aim was to chip away at the reputation of sumo being "secretive".

"But instead of locals, it's people from all over the world who have started to come," she said. She added that she hoped that as a result, Japanese people would start to rediscover their national sport, which she said was essential for its survival. "Young wrestlers came into this world (of sumo) to test themselves, but if there are fewer and fewer Japanese people who feel that way, sumo wrestling will also disappear," she said.—AFP

Norway's record-breaking climber defends feat after Sherpa death

A Norwegian climber who last month became the joint-fastest person to summit the world's 14 highest peaks said her team did everything they could to help a dying sherpa as they completed their quest on K2. A huge row has broken out in the climbing community after video emerged showing a long train of climbers stepping past a fallen sherpa on July 27 to reach the top of the world's second highest mountain.



Norwegian climber Kristin Harila gestures upon her arrival at the Tribhuvan International airport in Kathmandu after she and her Nepali guide Tenjin Sherpa set the record for the fastest summit of all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre (26,000-feet) mountains.—AFP

Kristin Harila, who with her Nepali guide Tenjin "Lama" Sherpa that day became the fastest people to summit all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre (26,000-feet) mountains, has faced the bulk of the criticism despite spending 90 minutes trying to help. The fallen porter has been identified as 27-year-old Pakistani Mohammed Hassan, who was not part of Harila's team. Karar Haidari, secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, told AFP around 100 climbers summited K2 that day.

Tourism authorities in Pakistan's Gilgit Baltistan, who are responsible for issuing climbing permits, said Friday

they had opened an inquiry into the incident. In a lengthy Instagram post on Thursday, Harila, 37, said she and her team "did everything we could for him at the time".

'Heartbreaking'

Harila said she felt the need to give her side of the story due to "all of the misinformation and hatred that is now being spread", including "death threats". Britain's Daily Mail headlined its story: "Egotistic mountaineer is pictured celebrating reaching the summit of K2 just moments after climbers 'walked over dying porter'." Harila said she, her cameraman and two others spent "1.5 hours in the bottleneck trying to pull him up".

She then continued her ascent following a distress call from the fixing team ahead, leaving others behind with Hassan. Her cameraman, identified only as Gabriel, was among those who stayed with Hassan, sharing his oxygen and hot water with him "while other people were passing by. Considering the amount of people that stayed behind and had turned around, I believed Hassan would be getting all the help he could, and that he would be able to get down." Gabriel left after another hour when he needed "to get more oxygen for his own safety", she wrote. When he caught up with Harila, "we understood that he (Hassan) might not make it down. It was heartbreaking." On their descent, they discovered that Hassan had died.

'We had done our best'

Her team of four "was in no shape to carry his body down" safely, she added, noting that it would have required at least six people. His death was "truly tragic... and I feel very strongly for the family", she said, but "we had done our best, especially Gabriel". Hassan was "not properly equipped for the climb", wearing neither a down suit nor gloves, she noted.

There was harsh criticism for Harila on social media despite dozens of other climbers being in the same situation. "Nobody will remember your sporting success, only your inhumanity," wrote one critic on Instagram. "The blood of sherpas is on your hands," said another. Other Instagram users defended Harila's actions, however, noting the dangers involved.—AFP

Ashes and sadness under scorched Lahaina's banyan tree

For three days since a hurricane-fueled wildfire tore through his town, Anthony Garcia has swept a square normally packed with tourists, but now filled with charred debris and the scorched remains of animals, trying to make sense of a catastrophe that came from nowhere. "I can't believe that God allowed this to happen," he told AFP, after losing everything in the fire that devoured Lahaina, a picturesque harbor on the Hawaiian island of Maui. Garcia came to Lahaina from California for a weekend in 1993 and never left, building his life in the laid-back town that was once home to Hawaii's royal family.

His apartment looked down on a busy tourist street, where visitors packed bars, restaurants and trinket shops. All of that is now gone, subsumed in flames that killed at least 80 people and destroyed hundreds of houses. The 80-year-old has slept rough in the burned out shell of the town for the last few nights, unable to

process the scale of destruction and absence in what was once a vibrant, joyful place.

He clings now to the area underneath a huge spreading banyan tree, the spiritual center of the town, and—until this week—a symbol of its stability. "This tree? Standing for more than a century," he said. "And there? Lahaina's first courthouse. Beyond? The Pioneer, opened in 1901, Hawaii's first hotel!" The wildfire was first reported early Tuesday morning, but seemed distant enough from the town. It flared later in the day, and then powerful gusting winds blew it suddenly through the streets.

Many residents knew almost nothing of the flames until they saw them coming, consuming homes, cars and public buildings. "It took everything, everything! It's heartbreaking," Garcia said. Under the still-spreading but blackened branches of the banyan tree, Garcia piles scorched debris and dead animals that he has collected in

an almost futile effort to put things right.

In his mind's eye, he can still see turquoise waves breaking on the boardwalk, as visitors take selfies and lick their ice creams. "In the mornings, this place was full of birds singing, exchanging stories," said Garcia.

Now only the occasional pigeon scuttles through the ashes, pecking uselessly at the baked ground. Some of those who have returned to find their houses in cinders stop to greet him. For many, there is no reason to stay; nothing left to find among the ruins of their lives. "I'm sad for everyone," said Garcia, staring out to sea as a truck hauling rubble rumbles past. "But I'm staying here. I don't want to go to another place, I want to help rebuild." "This place gave me so much joy, it made me a happy man," Garcia added. "So I'm going to start over. We have to try again."—AFP



Anthony C Garcia stands among the charred historic Banyan tree in the aftermath of a wildfire in Lahaina, western Maui, Hawaii.—AFP photos



Lifestyle

MrBeast, the YouTuber who bit more burger than he could chew

It's September 4, 2022, and around 10,000 people are shouting "Beast, Beast, Beast" in a shopping mall in New Jersey: YouTuber MrBeast is on his way to launch his first burger restaurant, and the crowd is hysterical. MrBeast, real name Jimmy Donaldson, was building out his global MrBeast Burger business from its origins as a product made in "ghost kitchens" available only on delivery apps. But he has since had a dramatic change of heart.



US YouTube personality Jimmy Donaldson, better known as MrBeast, arrives for the 36th Annual Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles.—AFP

Donaldson, 25, recently crowned the world's most popular YouTuber with more than 170 million subscribers, launched a legal case in late July against the suppliers of the burgers to end the deal. The court filings include choice quotes from customers: "One New York reviewer, echoing the sentiments of thousands, stated that MrBeast Burger was 'the absolute worst burger I've ever eaten in my entire life! It was like eating spoonfuls of garlic powder'."

The ghost kitchen firm, Virtual Dining Concepts, countersued last week for \$100 million in damages. "This court case is a signal for a lot of other influencers," said Jess Flack, founder of influencer marketing agency Ubiquitous. She said it marked the fizzling out of influencers' relationships with ghost kitchens, forged during the pan-

dem when lockdowns kept millions at home and closed restaurants across the world.

'Implode' the brand

Analysts predicted ghost kitchens were the next big thing. Market research outfit Euromonitor International suggested the sector could be worth \$1 trillion by 2030. Forecasts like this might have egged on Donaldson, especially as the path from entertainment to catering is well trodden. Arnold Schwarzenegger and others had a pop with the Planet Hollywood restaurant chain, George Clooney flogs his own tequila and Eminem hawks spaghetti from a hole-in-the-wall in Detroit.

But Flack points out that Donaldson's position is more tricky than those other luminaries. "For someone like MrBeast, his entire career is based off of his brand," she said. "He's not like an actor or a singer, or a rapper like Eminem who has a career to fall back on." From that point of view, she said, it made perfect sense for him to "implode" MrBeast Burger over the bad reviews.

'Loyal fanbase'

In any case, Donaldson has another food empire spanning cookies and chocolate bars that gains more positive reviews. And his social media peers are proving that the food industry still is a viable outlet. Lifestyle YouTuber Emma Chamberlain has a successful coffee business and viral stunt-creator Logan Paul's energy drinks are doing just fine, to mention only a few.

The phenomenon is not limited to the United States. Popular French YouTuber Mister V and Spanish internet celebrity Carlos Rios both have their food brands splashed across supermarket shelves. "Many YouTubers are creating quite a loyal fanbase due to the seeming intimacy of their relationship with their audiences," said Vince Miller of the University of Kent in Britain.—AFP



Miss Universe cuts ties with Indonesia chapter after harassment allegations

The Miss Universe Organization has cut ties with its Indonesia franchise, it announced days after allegations of sexual harassment, and will cancel an upcoming Malaysia edition. In the complaint, more than a half dozen women said all 30 finalists for Miss Universe Indonesia were unexpectedly asked to strip for a supposed body check for scars and cellulite two days before the pageant's crowning ceremony in Jakarta. Their lawyer said Tuesday that five of the women had their pictures taken. "In light of what we have learned took place at Miss Universe Indonesia, it has become clear that this franchise has not lived up to our brand standards, ethics, or expectations," the US-based Miss Universe Organization posted Saturday night on social media site X, formerly known as Twitter.

It said that it had "decided to terminate the relationship with its current franchisee in Indonesia, PT Capella Swastika Karya, and its National Director, Poppy Capella." It thanked the

contestants for their bravery in coming forward and added that "providing a safe place for women" was the organization's priority. Jakarta police spokesman Trunoyudo Wisnu Andiko said Tuesday that an investigation into the women's complaint has been launched.

The Indonesia franchise also holds the license for Miss Universe Malaysia, where there will no longer be a competition this year, according to the New York-based parent organizer. In a lengthy statement posted to Instagram, Indonesia franchise director Capella denied involvement in any body checks.

"I, as the National Director and as the owner of the Miss Universe Indonesia license, was not involved at all and have never known, ordered, requested or allowed anyone who played a role and participated in the process of organizing Miss Universe Indonesia 2023 to commit violence or sexual harassment through body checking," she

wrote. She added that she is against "any form of violence or sexual harassment."

The Jakarta competition was held from July 29 to August 3 to choose Indonesia's representative to the 2023 Miss Universe contest, and was won by Fabienne Nicole Groeneveld. Miss Universe said it would make arrangements for her to compete in the finale, scheduled for November in El Salvador. This year's Indonesia pageant also came under fire for announcing a "significant change in this (year's) competition guidelines" with the elimination of its minimum height requirement after it had crowned a winner.

In its statement, the Miss Universe Organization said it wanted to "make it extremely clear that there are no measurements such as height, weight, or body dimensions required to join a Miss Universe pageant worldwide."—AFP

Just before lunch at the height of the summer season, the narrow alleys of France's iconic Mont-Saint-Michel are thronged with a crush of people. But come late afternoon, the same steeply ascending lanes are almost deserted. This is the dilemma for the famed abbey monastery on an islet off the Normandy coast that is France's most visited tourist destination outside of Paris and a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1979. Can measures that it is implementing, such as cheaper or even free parking in the evenings, help it better regulate the influx of tourists?

It's a dilemma shared by dozens of other sites popular with tourists in France and elsewhere in Europe, which during the summer are filled to bursting with visitors, but empty out in the evenings and during the off season, often to the detriment of the local economy. The Mont's reputation as a tourist magnet puts off some visitors, as it celebrates the 1,000th anniversary of the foundation of the abbey on the site.

It welcomes three million visitors every year, including a million in the summer. On August 18, 2022, the Mont, which has a total area of less than four square kilometers (1.5 square miles), saw a peak in attendance for the season with more than 36,000 visitors in one day, the equivalent of an entire small French city descending on the site. However, most of these tourists organize their visit in the same way: they arrive before lunch, have a picnic or go to restaurant, visit the site and then return home or to their accommodation in the middle of the afternoon. This pattern leads to an overcrowding of the site from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, keeping some potential visitors away. They are barely aware that the site, which has only 132 hotel rooms within the walls, is almost empty in the evening.

'Incentive measures'

To try to remedy this, the foundation responsible for the upkeep of the Mont-

France's Mont-Saint-Michel grapples with overtourism



Saint-Michel is implementing several "incentive measures" from this summer, some of which will come into force next month. "The first measure is communication, encouraging visitors on social networks, in the press, to come before 10:00 am in the morning and after 4:00 pm," said Thomas Velter, director of the foundation. Regulating the frequency of shuttle buses to the site can also help as

well as other incentive measures such as free parking from 6:30 pm except in July and August.

"We rather encourage people coming out of season," he added. He said some 30 percent of tourists come in the peak summer months alone, with only 4.5 percent of all the days of the year seeing peak crowds. "The rest of the time Mont-Saint-Michel is a place of

calm and contemplation." Visitors have for some years already been required to take a shuttle bus or walk to the site after parking their cars in the mainland, rather than park outside as was the case in the past. Between 2005-2015, around 230 million euros was spent on returning the site to the sea, including flushing out excessive sand and silt and replacing the road with a wooden footbridge.

'Stay until the evening'

Emmanuel Conan, who manages the Les Mouettes gift shop said: "If people arrive earlier, they will be the first to go up to the abbey, without the crowds". Tourists who are following this advice agree it's the way to go. "We wanted to stay until the evening and to take some photos when the sun goes down. And we hoped that the most people left the area already in the evening, so we came late today," said Matthias, 56, a tourist from Dortmund in Germany.

France in June unveiled a plan to regulate visitor flows at the most popular sites and lay out a strategy against "overtourism". Some other sites are already taking measures: the Calanques national park near Marseille has said it will maintain for the next five years a free reservation system for visiting the renowned Sugiton coves that was first implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. And officials are capping day visits to the gorgeous Brittany island of Brehat at 4,700 during the peak summer months.—AFP



Tourists stand in line to catch buses and reach parking lots as they leave the site of Le Mont-Saint-Michel, northwestern France.



Sports

PSG kick off Ligue 1 title defense with 0-0 draw

Mbappe reinstated in first team

PARIS: French superstar Kylian Mbappe was reinstated in Paris Saint-Germain's first team on Sunday after being sidelined for several weeks amid an ongoing contract dispute. PSG opened their Ligue 1 title defence with a goalless draw at home against Lorient on Saturday as the team's prize asset watched from the stands. "After very constructive and positive discussions between Paris Saint-Germain and Kylian Mbappe before the PSG-Lorient match, the player was reinstated in first team training this morning," PSG said in a statement.

After a summer of flux at the Parc des Princes filled with new arrivals and Lionel Messi's departure, it is the Mbappe stand-off that continues to dominate the headlines. The France captain has refused to sign an extension to his PSG deal, meaning he can leave for free next year, with Real Madrid long seen as his preferred destination.

Qatari-owned PSG want to sell him now and bring in a significant transfer fee for a player who cost 180 million euros (\$198 million) from Monaco in 2017. "The position is very clear. If Kylian wants to stay, he must sign a new contract. We can't let the best player in the world today leave for free. It's impossible," PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi said last month. Mbappe has not been allowed to train with the first team and played only one of

PSG's five warm-up games and was not invited to the pre-season tour in Japan and South Korea.

New coach Luis Enrique on Friday said he hoped a solution could be found, but Mbappe has not been allowed to train with the first team and was left out of the squad to face Lorient. Instead he sat alongside fellow 2018 World Cup winner Ousmane Dembele, who completed his transfer from Barcelona earlier in the day, as Luis Enrique handed debuts to six players. Despite his sidelining Mbappe was one of the first to welcome Dembele. "Welcome home my brother, so happy to see you here, the adventure begins," Mbappe posted on social media.

The two friends then appeared smiling together in the stands while Brazilian star Neymar, whose future is also in doubt, was absent because of a "viral syndrome". With his reinstatement, Mbappe has partly won his case, even if it is too early to know if it will lead to the contract extension the club are demanding. Saturday's offensive weaknesses against Lorient may have prompted PSG to soften their attitude towards the top scorer in the club's history. The 24-year-old forward is now available for the trip to Toulouse on August 19, even if he has played just once, a friendly against Le Havre, in the past two months. — AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Moroccan defender #02 Achraf Hakimi attempts to control the ball during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Lorient at the Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris on August 12, 2023. — AFP

News in Brief

Panathinaikos fans banned

PARIS: Fans of Greek club Panathinaikos have been banned from travelling to Marseille on Tuesday for the third qualifying round of the Champions League, according to an order issued Sunday by the French Interior Ministry. The order states that "from midnight to midnight" anyone purporting to be a Panathinaikos supporter or behaving like one is "prohibited between French road, rail, port and airport border points on the one hand and the municipality of Marseille on the other". The ministry believes there is "a real and serious risk of confrontation" between supporters of the two clubs, adding that away trips by Panathinaikos "are regularly a source of public disorder" due to the "violent behaviour of some of the team's supporters". The ministry is particularly concerned by brawls and the throwing of pyrotechnic devices as has happened at previous matches. — AFP

Namibia overpower Chile

VALPARAISO: Namibia fought back to edge Chile 28-26 in a Rugby World Cup warm-up on Saturday. The Namibians, who conceded three tries in the first half, trailed by 12 points at the break (19-7), but turned the game around with three late tries. Namibia are the second African nation in the September 8-October 28 World Cup in France along with reigning champions South Africa. It is their seventh successive tournament but Namibia have failed to win any of their previous 22 World Cup matches. They are in Pool A alongside New Zealand, France, Italy and Uruguay. Debutants Chile are drawn in Pool D with Argentina, Japan, Samoa and England. — AFP

Hull and Vu share lead

WALTON-ON-THE-HILL: Home favorite Charley Hull seized a share of the lead with American Lilia Vu heading into the final round of the Women's British Open at Walton Heath on Saturday with a four-under-par 68. The 27-year-old finished on nine-under par for the tournament and level with Vu, who is aiming for a second major of the season following her Chevron Championship triumph after carding a 67. Ally Ewing, who held a five-shot lead overnight, slumped to a 75 but is still in touch at two behind the leaders on seven under. Angel Yin (67) and Kim Hyo-joo (68) are tied for third place on eight under. England's Hull is still chasing a first major title after several near misses in her career so far. Hull is staying at home this week—she lives less than half an hour from the course—and she has played Walton Heath many times with male friends from the furthest back tees. — AFP

Glover grabs one-stroke

WASHINGTON: Lucas Glover fired a four-under par 66 to seize a one-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the St Jude Championship, the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup playoff opener. The 43-year-old American, trying to win for the second consecutive week, birdied four of the first six holes on his way to finishing 54 holes on 14-under 196 at TPC Southwind in Memphis, Tennessee. That put Glover, the 2009 US Open champion, one ahead of countryman Taylor Moore, who shot 65, with England's Tommy Fleetwood third on 198 after a third straight 66. "Scrappy would be how I would describe that day. Parts of it you could remove the 'S,'" Glover said. "It was a little bit of smoke and mirrors today, just to be honest. I got a lot out of what I had. "Short game bailed me out a lot early, and missed a couple putts I thought I should have made coming in. But I'm still in a good spot." — AFP

Pegula stuns Iga Swiatek

MONTREAL: Jessica Pegula of the United States upset world number one Iga Swiatek on Saturday before wet weather left the American waiting to discover the identity of her WTA Montreal Open final opponent. Fourth-seed Pegula took advantage of an error-strewn display by Poland's Swiatek to complete a 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4 victory in 2hr 30min. But heavy rain over the Montreal region washed out Saturday's second semi-final between third seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan and 15th seed Liudmila Samsonova. Rybakina, who battled through weather delays on Friday before clinching her semi-final berth in the early hours of Saturday morning, or Samsonova will now face a gruelling double-header on Sunday with a well-rested Pegula awaiting in the final. "It feels great," Pegula said after her win over Swiatek. "No better way to earn it, right? It was tough match. I felt like I was in control." — AFP

NBA's Popovich, Parker, Wade, Gasol, Nowitzki join Hall of Fame

SPRINGFIELD: Retired NBA stars Tony Parker, Dirk Nowitzki, Dwyane Wade and Pau Gasol and legendary San Antonio Spurs coach Gregg Popovich were among those inducted Saturday into the Basketball Hall of Fame. The Class of 2023 paid tribute to global talent with French guard Parker, German forward Nowitzki, Spanish center Gasol and US guard Wade joined by 74-year-old Popovich, coach of the Spurs since 1996.

"It's a powerhouse class, really," Gasol said. "I'm humbled and very lucky to be a part of this class with all these amazing people." "I feel like I made it somewhere," Wade said. "I'm just enjoying the moment." Parker was a four-time NBA champion with San Antonio, a six-time NBA All-Star and the 2007 NBA Finals Most Valuable Player.

"It was an unbelievable journey," Parker said. "I never thought somebody like me can experience some-

thing like that. For all the kids who are watching, keep dreaming big." Parker choked up thanking his family and paid tribute to his US and French heritage saying, "I felt like I had the best of both cultures and it helped me on my journey." "When I was in France, they would say, 'You're too small. You're too skinny. You'll never make it.' Well, I'm the one who is laughing now."

Parker was a star for Popovich's Spurs from 2001-2018 and finished his NBA career at Charlotte in 2019. To Popovich, Parker said, "You're unbelievable. You threw me in the fire at 19 years old... You've always been a second dad to me, Pop. Everything you did for my family and me I appreciate it. Thank you, I love you." Popovich said of Parker: "I was very tough on him and expected a lot out of him. I'm very proud of what he has accomplished."

Popovich, the longest-tenured of all North American pro sports coach-

es, has guided the Spurs to five titles and was named the NBA Coach of the Year three times. He also coached the US gold medal team of NBA stars at the Tokyo Olympics. Nowitzki played his entire 21-year career for the Dallas Mavericks, leading them to the 2011 NBA title as the NBA Finals MVP. He was the 2007 NBA MVP and a 14-time All-Star before retiring in 2019. "I just want to say thank you my closest people," Nowitzki said. "I just want to make sure the people who were with me on this journey get their flowers and then I can ride off into the sunset."

Gasol recalls Kobe

Gasol was a two-time NBA champion with the Los Angeles Lakers and a six-time NBA All-Star who played from 2001 to 2019 with Memphis, the Lakers, Chicago, San Antonio and Milwaukee. "This moment is a testament to the support, guidance and inspiration I've received from so many on my basketball journey," Gasol said.

Gasol thanked European NBA pioneers who paved the way for his arrival, saying, "I want to give a special

mention to those first Europeans that came here, that crossed the ocean, that took a chance and opened doors for players like myself." Gasol choked up recalling the late Kobe Bryant, his former Lakers teammate who died in a 2020 helicopter crash along with his daughter Gianna. "I wouldn't be here without you brother," Gasol said. "I wish more than anything that you and Gigi were here with us. We miss you and love you."

Wade won three NBA titles with the Miami Heat and also played for Chicago and Cleveland. He was the 2006 NBA Finals MVP and a 13-time NBA All-Star. "I believed in hard work, putting my head down, keeping my ears open and just going to work," Wade said. "I had a dream and I didn't want nothing to get in the way of my dream. I made sure I put the work in and had every opportunity to be as great as I can be." Other inductees included six-time WNBA All-Star Becky Hammon, the 1976 US Women's Olympic team and former coaches Gene Keady, Gary Blair, David Hixon, Gene Bess and Jim Valvano. — AFP

India power to 9-wicket win to level T20 series

LAUDERHILL: India powered to an emphatic nine-wicket victory in their T20 international against the West Indies on Saturday thanks to a magnificent opening partnership from Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill as they leveled the five-match series at 2-2. West Indies set India a target of 179 to win, which looked challenging on a slow surface but the opening pair made short work of the task, rattling up 165 before Gill finally departed for 77 in the 16th over.

Jaiswal, the 21-year-old left hander, ended unbeaten on 84 after some outstanding strokeplay, producing 11 fours and three sixes to the delight of the heavily pro-India crowd at the Broward County Stadium in South Florida. The series decided concludes at the USA's recognized international cricket venue on Sunday and India will now fancy their chances of a comeback from trailing 2-0. Shimron Hetmyer struck a lively 61 as West Indies recovered from a shaky start to reach 178-8.

Arshdeep Singh had removed West Indies openers Kyle Mayers (17) and Brandon King (18)

and fans bedecked in India's blue shirts, including supporters who had travelled from across the United States, were lapping it up as West Indies struggling to 57-4 with left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav picking up two wickets. But then Shai Hope steadied the innings with 45 from 29 balls before he holed out to Axar Patel off Yuzvendra Chahal. But it was Hetmyer who took on India's attack, hitting four sixes as he put up his 61 off 39 balls, combining some power hitting with strategic patience.

Odean Smith's last-ball six, smiting Arshdeep Singh over extra cover, helped West Indies set a respectable total but their bowling attack was soon being pulled to pieces. India skipper Hardik Pandya was delighted to see his young opening batsmen deliver. "Brilliant. As we've seen, there's no doubt in their skillset. They just needed to spend some time between the wickets. Going forward we have to take more responsibility as a batting group and support the bowlers. I've always believed bowlers win matches. Yashasvi and Shubman were brilliant. Very pleasing to see," he said.

While the dominating nature of India's win suggests they have a strong chance of clinching the series, Pandya warned against complacency. "In T20 cricket no one is favorite. You have to turn up and play good cricket. You have to respect the opposition. They were 2-0 up because they played better cricket than us. (On Sunday) we have to turn up and do exactly what we did today," he said. — AFP



LAUDERHILL: India's Yashasvi Jaiswal hits 4 during the fourth T20i cricket match between India and West Indies at Central Broward Regional Park in Lauderhill, Florida. — AFP

Pidcock wins world mountain bike gold

GLASGOW: Olympic champion Tom Pidcock won the world championship cross country mountain bike marathon on Saturday as a crash ended Mathieu van der Poel's dream of a unique treble. It was a first world title in the mountain bike event for Britain's Pidcock who raised a Yorkshire flag with a white rose above his head as he crossed the line after breaking away with two laps left. He finished the undulating dirt track course in Scotland in 1hr 22min 09sec, ahead of Sam Gaze of New Zealand and Nino Schurter of Switzerland who was aiming for an 11th world title.

"My gears were not working on the last lap, they were jumping on every climb - and Gaze was coming behind. I thought it could all go in the bin at any moment," he said. "In front of my home crowd, it's pretty special. Coming down the final straight, I could finally soak it all in," he added. The 24-year-old has also won a cyclo-cross world title and an iconic

stage on the Tour de France at the Alpe d'Huez mountain.

Pidcock claimed cross-country short track bronze this week in what he called a warm-up race. A year ahead of the Paris Olympics the cross-discipline rider started on row five of a mass start along with van der Poel, who crashed at the end of the first lap. Van der Poel's first lap slip cost him a historic treble as the Dutchman was winner of February's world cyclo-cross championships and added the road race world title to his trophies in Glasgow this week. "My front wheel just went, the mental pain is bigger than the physical pain and it takes away some of the joy from Sunday because it was my own fault," he said.

Earlier, Pauline Ferrand-Prevot won the cross country mountain bike world title to cement the Frenchwoman's status as favourite for the Paris Games next year. The 31-year-old defending champion was 1min 14sec faster than her compatriot Loana Le-



PEEBLES: Great Britain's Thomas Pidcock takes part in the men's Elite cross-country Olympic mountain bike race during the Cycling World Championships in Glentress Forest, Scotland on August 12, 2023. — AFP

combe in the Glentress forest where 13 world championships events are being played out. The Netherlands' pre-race favorite Puck Pieterse came third at 1min 27sec. Ferrand-Prevot now has 15 world titles in various

disciplines and recently became the first female cyclist to join Ineos Grenadiers. She has so far been cursed at the Olympics however coming 26th at London 2012, pulling out at Rio and finishing 10th in Tokyo. — AFP

Sports

Sorry Harry! Kane suffers 3-0 defeat in Bayern debut

RB Leipzig thrash Bayern in German Super Cup

MUNICH: Harry Kane endured a losing debut with Bayern Munich on Saturday when his new team crashed to a 3-0 defeat to RB Leipzig in the German Super Cup, just hours after sealing a move from Tottenham. Dani Olmo was the star of the show, producing a virtuoso performance and scoring a hat-trick in Munich as Kane's dream of clinching his first major silverware was shattered. Kane came on as a 64th-minute substitute with Bayern already trailing 2-0 with Olmo completing his hat-trick soon after.

The England skipper was largely anonymous but earned the sympathy of Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel. "I'm just sorry for Harry Kane, he probably thinks that we haven't trained for four weeks," said Tuchel who admitted he was at a loss for words for the German champions' limp performance. "It's frightening, unexplainable," he said. "It was the case last season and clearly we have completely disintegrated to that frequency again today."

Record England goalscorer Kane joined from Tottenham for a fee in excess of 100 million euros (\$109.6 million) earlier Saturday. Bayern fans had lined up hours before kick-off to get their "Kane 9" shirts printed at the club store. Kane, who was given the number nine vacated by Robert Lewandowski, had indicated on social media that he was "feeling good" and "looking forward to the match" after taking part in his first training session as a new Bayern player.

But he couldn't turn the tide as Leipzig were awarded a penalty three minutes after his introduction. Olmo converted the spot-kick to seal a first Super Cup title for Marco Rose's side. Kane, who has lost three finals with Tottenham and one with England, must wait for his first ever trophy. Leipzig had earlier stunned the Allianz Arena, taking the lead inside three minutes. David Raum's free-kick wasn't dealt with by Bayern and Olmo

calmly stroked the ball beyond Sven Ulreich.

The goal shook the hosts into action and Bayern's best chances of the first half were crafted by Serge Gnabry and spurned by French teenager Mathys Tel. The best of them came after a beautiful reverse pass by Gnabry that sent Tel clean through but he could only shoot straight at Leipzig goalkeeper Janis Blaswich. Things went from bad to worse for Bayern when Olmo scored a fabulous second to double Leipzig's advantage a couple of minutes before half-time. The Spaniard's deft pivot around Bayern defender Matthijs de Ligt allowed him the space to slot it calmly beyond Ulreich.

'Time to leave'

Kane, 30, has moved to Bayern after two decades at Tottenham where he was constantly thwarted in his bid for trophies. "I felt like it was the time to leave. I didn't want to go into the season with a lot of unresolved future talk," said Kane in a message on social media. "Obviously a lot of emotions going through me right now; sad to be leaving the club I've spent nearly 20 years of my life at, from 11-year-old boy to a 30-year-old man now. "There's been so many great moments and special memories, memories that I will cherish forever." After protracted negotiations between Bayern and Spurs' chairman Daniel Levy a deal was finally struck on Thursday. "It's been a long process, but now we're all the happier that Harry Kane will be wearing the Bayern Munich shirt with immediate effect," said Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen.

'Dream player'

He added: "Harry Kane was our absolute dream player right from the start. He is a perfect fit for us and the club's DNA in terms of both football and character." Levy said Tottenham had "reluctantly agreed to



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen (right) and Bayern Munich's English forward #09 Harry Kane pose with Kane's new jersey during a press conference on his presentation after signing a four-years deal with German first division football club FC Bayern Munich on August 13, 2023. — AFP

the transfer". Six-time European champions Bayern were in desperate need of a striker after struggling to replace Lewandowski who left for Barcelona last season. The club won the Bundesliga in each of Lewandowski's eight seasons in Munich, with the Pole averaging 30 goals per season. In 2022-23, not one Bayern player hit the 15 league goal mark. Kane had scored more than 20 league goals in all but three of the past nine Premier League seasons, winning the Golden Boot on three occasions.

Kane, who was out of contract next summer, left

Tottenham having scored 280 goals in 435 games to become the club's all-time leading goalscorer, but without a trophy. He is also England's all-time top goalscorer with 58 international goals. Silverware is all but guaranteed at Bayern, who have won 11 straight Bundesliga titles. However, Bayern were eliminated by eventual winners Manchester City in the quarter-finals of the Champions League last season and only won the Bundesliga title on goal difference thanks to a final-day capitulation from Borussia Dortmund. — AFP

United spend big in pursuit of EPL title

MANCHESTER: Manchester United kick-off their season at home to Wolves on Monday with fresh hope they can end a 10-year wait to win a Premier League title despite the lingering uncertainty over the club's future. Nine months on from an announcement by owners, the Glazer family, that they were exploring a sale of the club, the process has stalled. Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe appeared locked in a battle for control of the club during several rounds of bidding. However, supporters' hopes that a new owner could be in place by the start of the new season have been dashed.

Deeply unpopular with fans since they saddled the club with debt in a

£790 million (\$1 billion) leveraged takeover in 2005, the Glazers are reportedly seeking a world record £6 billion for a sports club. Protests are planned at Old Trafford on Monday, but they have consistently fallen on deaf ears during the Americans' nearly two decades in charge. Despite the uncertainty, United manager Erik ten Hag has again been backed heavily in the transfer market to try and build on a positive first season in charge.

The former Ajax boss overcame a disastrous start to his reign 12 months ago to guide United back into the Champions League and end a six-year trophy drought by lifting the League Cup back in February. Ten Hag has addressed key positions in a near £200 million outlay on goalkeeper Andre Onana, midfielder Mason Mount and striker Rasmus Hojlund. Onana, who previously worked under Ten Hag at Ajax, is a more natural fit for the Dutchman's preference for a ball-playing goalkeeper than David de Gea, who departed United after 12 years as number one.

Mount was both a fans' favorite

at Chelsea and trusted by a series of coaches at Stamford Bridge only to exit his boyhood club over a contract dispute. But in spending up to £72 million on 20-year-old Dane Hojlund, there are doubts over whether United have overspent on potential rather than prioritizing the present. An expected offensive to try and land Harry Kane never materialized, as the England captain instead headed to Bayern Munich from Tottenham in his quest for silverware.

United already chasing

Hojlund's size and speed have earned comparisons to Manchester City superstar Erling Haaland. But whereas City knew they were already getting one of the world's most clinical strikers in signing Haaland last year, Hojlund still has much to prove. Atalanta banked an enormous profit on the player they had signed from Sturm Graz for just £17 million 12 months ago and who scored only nine times during his spell in Serie A.

"We have chosen a striker and we

are really happy with our choice," said Ten Hag as he defended the decision to go for Hojlund over Kane. "There is a strategy in every decision and we are happy with the squad we have now." Hojlund will be missing for the first few weeks of the season due to a back injury, but United can ill afford to let the chance of a flying start go by if they are to wrestle the title back across Manchester from City.

The defending champions cruised to a 3-0 win at Burnley to open their quest to win a fourth straight English title - a feat no one has ever managed. Arsenal and Newcastle were also victorious on the opening weekend to leave United already chasing. But Wolves go to Old Trafford in turmoil after losing their manager just days before the campaign started. Julen Lopetegui stepped down on Tuesday, to be replaced by Gary O'Neil, due to a lack of available funds in the transfer market. That is not something Ten Hag can complain of, even if the United fans remain unhappy with the owners' reluctance to let go. — AFP

Southampton and Norwich share points in eight-goal thriller

LONDON: Southampton's Adam Armstrong scored a late penalty to rescue a point in a dramatic 4-4 draw in an English Championship match at St Mary's on Saturday. Josh Sargent put the Canaries ahead, before Jan Bednarek equalized for hosts Southampton. Armstrong's first penalty gave the Saints the lead only for Gabriel Sara to equalize just two minutes later. But Norwich were ahead again before half-time through Jonathan Rowe. Che Adams then levelled for the Saints, relegated from the Premier League last season.

Christian Fasnacht looked to have won the game for Norwich six minutes from time but Armstrong's second penalty, in the seventh minute of added-on time, gave south coast club Southampton a share of the points. In other matches in English football's second-tier, Ozan Tufan's hat-trick helped Hull post their first win of the season with a 4-2 victory against Sheffield Wednesday. Juan Delgado put the Owls ahead but Tufan equalized from the penalty spot late in the first half and the midfielder scored two more goals after the break.

Aaron Connolly added a fourth goal before Michael Smith pulled one back late on for Wednesday. Coventry too posted their first win of the season beating Middlesbrough 3-0. Matty Godden opened the scoring before USA international Haji Wright grabbed his first goal for Coventry, with Darragh Lenihan's late own-goal putting the result beyond doubt. West Bromwich Albion defeated Swansea 3-2, but only after surviving a late scare. The Baggies went 3-0 ahead through goals from Semi Ajayi and John Swift, along with Carl Rushworth's own-goal. — AFP

Australia's WCup exploits will leave legacy, coach says

BRISBANE: Co-hosts Australia are "on a mission" to inspire and unite the nation as they head into a Women's World Cup semi-final against England on Wednesday, coach Tony Gustavsson said. The Matildas came through a penalty shootout crammed with twists and turns to beat France 7-6 on Saturday in Brisbane and set up a clash with the Lionesses. It propelled Australia into the first semi-final in their history and followed 120 minutes of seesawing football that ended deadlocked at 0-0. National broadcaster ABC called it the game that "stopped the nation" with fans enthralled by Australia's exploits and packing out the stadium, as well as pubs around the country.

Big screens were also erected in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. "I genuinely really believe that this team can create history in so many ways, not just winning football games," said Gustavsson, who was assistant to USA coach Jill Ellis when they won the World Cup in 2015 and 2019. "The way that they can inspire the nation, how they can unite the nation, how they can leave a legacy that

is much bigger than 90 minutes of football. "That is also why I believe in them so much. "When that drives you, that is a powerful tool that is very difficult to stop, and I have sensed that from day one working with this team, the inner drive is what gets them to where they are today."

Kerr to start?

Australia have been a tight unit under the Swede and he fielded the same XI for the third game in a row against France in their quarter-final. That could change in Sydney when they meet European champions England, who battled from behind to edge Colombia 2-1. Australia skipper Sam Kerr played 65 minutes against France on her return from a calf injury, making an immediate impact, and the prolific striker is looking increasingly likely to start.

Gustavsson said he toyed with starting the Chelsea forward against France despite her limited match fitness, but believes he made the right decision to hold her back. "When Sam came in we really had them on the hook. We really got the momentum and from the fans as well, and we were very close to scoring two goals in that period," he said. While Kerr made a difference and scored in the shootout, goalkeeper Mackenzie Arnold was anointed the country's "cult hero" after stoically standing in France's way.

The West Ham stopper made three saves in the penalty shootout, keeping her composure after taking a spotkick herself and hitting the woodwork. "To see the girls rally around me after I missed that and



BRISBANE: Australia's coach Tony Gustavsson celebrates his team's victory in the Australia and New Zealand 2023 Women's World Cup quarter-final football match between Australia and France on August 12, 2023. — AFP

to keep going with the shootout and still have each other's backs through the whole thing, I think that's really what got us over the line," she said. "I would say it's up there with the best days of my life," she added. "But the biggest feeling is immense pride. I'm so proud to be Australian right now, both for the team and for the fans." — AFP

Today's Matches

English Premier League
Man United v Wolverhampton 22:00
 beIN Sports 1 HD Premium
 beIN Sports HD 1 English
 beIN Sports HD 3

Spanish League
Cadiz v Deportivo Alaves 20:30
 beIN Sports HD 1
 beIN Sports HD 2 English
 beIN Sports 2 FR
Atletico de Madrid v Granada 22:30
 beIN Sports HD 1
 beIN Sports HD 2 English
 beIN Sports 2 FR

Classifieds

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707	Qadsiya	22515088
Rawda	22517733	Dasmah	22532265
Adaliya	22517144	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Khaldiya	24848075	Shaab	22518752
Kaifan	24849807	Qibla	22459381
Shamiya	24848913	Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Shuwaikh	24814507	Mirqab	22456536
Abdullah Salem	22549134	Sharq	22465401
Nuzha	22526804	Salmiya	25746401
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764		

Change of Name

- I, Ramandeep** S/o Chaman Lal R/o Vpo. Muthada Kalan Teh-Phillaur (Jalandhar) changed my name to Ramandeep Mehmi. (3843) 14/8/2023
- I, Mahamad Abid Chand Saheb** S/o Abdul Qadir Chand Saheb R/o D. No. 240-3, Main Road, Gandlapenta, Ananthapur, Pin Code : 515521 Andhra Pradesh, India corrected my name from Mahamad Abid Chand Saheb to Muhammad Abid Chand Saheb S/o Abdul Qadir Chand Saheb. (3844) 14/8/2023
- I, KASHIM** holder of Indian. Passport No. R5455215 having permanent address H. No. 559, Gali. No. 19, Saurabh - Vihar, Jaitpur, South- Delhi-110044, residing in Kuwait at present do hereby change my name to (given name) Kashim and (Surname) Khan for all future purposes. (3845) 14/8/2023
- I, Regene Roki Cuthino**, holder of Indian Passport No. R8110803 having permanent address R/o Cross Wada, Angadi Karwar Taluka, Karnataka, do hereby change my name as **Regina Rocky Coutinho** for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name **Regina Rocky Coutinho**, and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. 11/8/2023

Spurs held by Brentford 2-2

Tottenham begin life without Kane



LONDON: Brentford's German midfielder #09 Kevin Schade (top) and Tottenham Hotspur's Italian goalkeeper #13 Guglielmo Vicario collide during the English Premier League football match between Brentford and Tottenham Hotspur on August 13, 2023. — AFP

LONDON: Tottenham began life without Harry Kane with an entertaining 2-2 draw at Brentford on Sunday to start Ange Postecoglou's reign in charge. Cristian Romero headed Spurs in front early on, but the Bees bounced back to lead through Bryan Mbeumo's penalty and Yoane Wissa. Emerson Royal's strike levelled the scores again before half-time and both sides had to settle for a point to begin the Premier League season. Kane's departure to Bayern Munich on Saturday had overshadowed the build-up to Postecoglou's first competitive game as Spurs manager. The Australian's daring, front-foot approach that has won league titles in his homeland, Japan and, most recently, in Scotland with Celtic was already in evidence.

However, so were a series of defensive deficiencies that Brentford could have made more of. For the second time in two days the start to a Premier League game was delayed. After Arsenal's problems with an e-ticketing system ahead of their game against Nottingham Forest on Saturday, this time the delay was caused by no running water at the GTech Community Stadium. When the action did get underway, Spurs settled the better despite a disruptive weekend dominated by Kane's emotional farewell.

In his absence and with Hugo Lloris' future also seemingly elsewhere, Postecoglou named Son Heung-min as Tottenham's new captain on Saturday with James Maddison and Romero his deputies. The vice-captains combined for the opening goal as Maddison's wicked delivery was headed home from close range by the Argentine centre-back. That was Romero's final involvement as he

was replaced due to suspected concussion and his presence at the back was missed. Brentford were also without their talismanic number nine as Ivan Toney began an eight-month ban for breaking betting on football rules.

Mbeumo took over penalty duties in his absence to slot home the equalizer after a VAR review spotted a trip by Son on Mathias Jensen inside the box. Tottenham's debutant goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario was beaten again moments later as Wissa's shot deflected in off another Spurs new boy Micky van de Ven. Emerson was the unlikely scorer of Tottenham's equaliser four minutes into 10 added at the end of the first half when he blasted home a loose ball from outside the box.

Yet, Brentford should still have gone in ahead at the break as Mbeumo somehow turned Rico Henry's inviting cross over from point-blank range. Tottenham dominated the second half in terms of possession but struggled to make it count as they already felt the absence of Kane. Richarlison fired too close to Mark Flekken and saw a late effort blocked after more fine work from Maddison teed up the Brazilian.

In Sunday's other Premier League clash, Chelsea and Liverpool took their battle for midfield talent in the transfer market onto the field at Stamford Bridge. Liverpool had a British record £110 million (\$140 million) bid for Brighton's Moises Caicedo accepted on Friday. But Chelsea are still looking to hijack that deal for the Ecuadorian, who reportedly favours a move to the Blues. Chelsea are also keen on long-term Liverpool target Romeo Lavia from Southampton to bolster new boss Mauricio Pochettino's squad. — AFP

Pace and power: Paralluelo gives Spain an X factor

AUCKLAND: Women's World Cup semi-finalists Spain might be defined by technique and a mesmerizing passing game, but the player who gives them that precious something different is Salma Paralluelo. The 19-year-old took Spain to this stage of the World Cup for the first time with her brilliant winner against the Netherlands in the quarter-finals. The Barcelona ace, who was once a promising athlete before concentrating on football, struck on the counter-attack in extra time after coming off the bench.

A starter in every round before that, she also played a big part in the 5-1 demolition of Switzerland in the last 16 with her deliveries from the left wing, two of which led to goals for Aitana Bonmati. With Alexia Putellas still recovering full fitness following a serious knee injury, midfielder Bonmati has been the leader in Jorge Vilda's team that will face Sweden in the last four in Auckland on Tuesday. But Paralluelo could have a big role to play against a physically imposing Swedish side thanks to her pace, direct running and power on the flank.

"She is a player with enormous potential and she is a long way from touching the ceiling in terms of what she can do," Vilda said. "She is very young and has only been focusing fully on training for football for a year. We will see the best of Salma in the future. "She is already shining now, but I am sure that in the future she



AUCKLAND: Spain's players Alexia Putella (left) and Salma Paralluelo take part in a training session at the North Harbor Stadium in Auckland on August 13, 2023. — AFP

will do so even more." Vilda must consider whether to recall Paralluelo from the start or whether to focus first on passing Sweden into submission in a clash of styles at Eden Park. Spain have completed 3,171 passes in their five games so far at the tournament, compared to under 2,000 for Sweden.

Athletics star

Born in the northeastern city of Zaragoza to a Spanish father and a mother from Equatorial Guinea, Paralluelo grew up combining football with athletics. "I started doing both when I was seven. At first it was just a game for me but little by little as I grew up I started to realise I could go further," she said of her early footballing days in an interview with FIFA.com last

year. Paralluelo won medals in several different track disciplines, taking part in hurdles and triple jump. She also competed in the 400 metres at the 2019 European Indoor Championships in Glasgow, when aged 15.

Paralluelo's budding football career took her to Villarreal, where she suffered a ruptured ACL in her left knee in April 2021 that kept her out for nine months. In July last year she joined Barcelona, the emerging superpower of European women's club football, just after another injury ruled her out of the Spain squad for the European Championship in England. That move meant giving up athletics once and for all. "It was difficult to give up one sport, but it was a step I had to take and I couldn't be in a better place," she said at the time. — AFP

Real Madrid blank Bilbao 2-0



BILBAO: Athletic Bilbao's Spanish forward #10 Iker Muniain (left) vies with Real Madrid's Spanish defender #02 Dani Carvajal during the Spanish Liga football match between Athletic Bilbao and Real Madrid on August 12, 2023. — AFP

BARCELONA: Jude Bellingham said "it was really special" to score on his Real Madrid debut in a 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao on Saturday in their opening La Liga match. Despite concerns at both ends of the pitch, Carlo Ancelotti's side earned a convincing victory at the San Mames to kick off their title bid, with Rodrygo Goes opening the scoring.

Madrid, who lost Ballon d'Or holder Karim Benzema to big-money Saudi football in the summer, are still heavily linked to Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe as a replacement, as the transfer saga drags on. Brazilian duo Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo worked well as a strike duo, with Bellingham in the No 10 role at the tip of a diamond midfield offering ample support. "It's really special, the most important thing is the win," Bellingham told Real Madrid TV.

Los Blancos goalkeeper Andriy Lunin started in place of regular stopper Thibaut Courtois, who is set to miss the majority of the season with a cruciate ligament injury. The Ukrainian was solid, although he may soon be behind Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga in the pecking order, with the Spaniard set to join on loan according to various reports. Ancelotti, who will take over the Brazilian national team at the end of this campaign, handed defender Fran Garcia his second Madrid debut after his return from Rayo Vallecano.

However it was Bellingham's name

that stood out and the 20-year-old demonstrated why Madrid paid over 100 million euros (\$110 million) for him. "I'm very happy to play with (Bellingham), he's a great player, and I'm sure he'll help us a lot this season," said Rodrygo. Ancelotti also hailed the England international on his fine debut. "(He was) very good, he's got personality, being here motivates him a lot," said Madrid's coach. "He's a fantastic player, a very important signing - he's out of the ordinary."

Madrid took the lead before the half-hour mark when Dani Carvajal hooked the ball back to Rodrygo, who slotted past Unai Simon at his near post. The goalkeeper managed to force David Alaba's header onto the post and thwarted Vinicius after he burst into the box, but Bellingham soon added Madrid's second. The England international netted in unorthodox fashion, volleying Alaba's corner into the ground and over Simon.

Bellingham stood still, facing the home fans with arms wide in celebration, as if announcing his arrival to La Liga - drawing a rebuke from Athletic captain Iker Muniain. "I've always been taught if you try and hit the target you can score," said Bellingham. "I didn't make the best contact with it, I was a little bit lucky, but it worked." The midfielder nearly carved out another for Rodrygo with an inviting cross, but the Brazilian narrowly failed to make contact with an attempted bicycle kick. — AFP