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Massive crowds of pilgrims circle Kaaba as hajj begins

More than 2.5 million worshippers expected to attend pilgrimage



MAKKAH: Muslim worshippers and pilgrims circumambulate the Kaaba at the Grand Mosque on June 24, 2023, as they arrive for the annual hajj pilgrimage.— AFP

MAKKAH: Vast crowds of robed Muslim faithful walked solemn circles around the Kaaba, the black cube at Makkah's Grand Mosque on Sunday to begin the biggest hajj pilgrimage in several years, in the heat of the Saudi summer. Islam's holiest site is expected to host more than two million worshippers from 160 countries during the annual rites that could break attendance records, with 1.6 million foreigners already arrived by late Friday.

"This year, we will witness the largest hajj pilgrimage in history," if things go according to plan, predicted an official with the Saudi ministry of hajj and umrah. "The numbers will exceed 2.5 million pilgrims," added the official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak with the press.

The hajj began early on Sunday with the "tawaf" — the circumambulation of the Kaaba, the large cubic structure draped in black cloth with gold trimmings that Muslims around the world pray towards every day. "I am living the most beautiful days of my life," said Saeed Abdel Azim, a 65-year-old Egyptian performing the ritual. "The dream has come true," added the retiree, who had saved for 20 years to pay the thousands of dollars needed to take part.

The hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken at least once by all Muslims with the means. A series of rites are completed over four days

in Makkah and its surroundings in the west of oil-rich Saudi Arabia. On Sunday afternoon, pilgrims started moving to Mina, about five kilometres from the Grand Mosque, ahead of the hajj's climax at Mount Arafat, where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivered his final sermon.

Mina, the world's largest tent city, readied to receive the influx of pilgrims, with food supplies brought in and security forces deployed around the area. More worshippers are expected to head to Mina on Monday, as a vibrant atmosphere takes hold of the tented city with the arrival of pilgrims by foot or via airconditioned buses. Outside the Grand Mosque, thousands prayed on colorful carpets that adorned the pavement, with male pilgrims wearing simple white robes. The area was dotted with ambulances, mobile clinics and fire trucks.

"I cannot describe my feelings," said Indonesian student Yusuf Burhan, 25. "This is a great blessing. I never imagined that I would perform the hajj this year." This year's summer timing for the hajj, which follows the lunar calendar, is testing the endurance of worshippers during the mostly outdoor ritual. Carrying white umbrellas to shield themselves from the scorching sun, policemen in the mountainous city have conducted foot patrols and set up checkpoints to inspect hajj permits.

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Wagner halts revolt but Putin weakened

MOSCOW: Wagner mercenaries were headed back to base on Sunday after Russia's President Vladimir Putin agreed to allow their leader to avoid treason charges and accept exile in Belarus. The agreement ended the immediate threat that Yevgeny Prigozhin's private army could storm Moscow, but analysts said Wagner's revolt had exposed Putin's rule as more fragile than had been thought.

"Anti-terror" security measures were still in place in Moscow on Sunday, although fewer police were visible and passers-by said they were unconcerned, despite Prigozhin's exact whereabouts remaining unclear. He was last seen late Saturday in an SUV leaving Rostov-on-Don, where his fighters had seized a military headquarters, to the cheers of a group of young civilian bystanders, who came to shake his hand through the car window.

Trucks carrying armored vehicles with fighters on them followed his car. His troops had left the Rostov military headquarters, and authorities in the Voronezh and Lipetsk regions northwards to Moscow said more forward Wagner units had also turned back. There were reports that Wagner fighters had come as close as 400 km from Moscow, while Prigozhin himself

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Searing heat and soaring prices at livestock markets

By Shakir Reshamwala

KUWAIT: With Eid Al-Adha around the corner, livestock markets around the country are becoming a hive of activity. But prices are high, with a head of sheep selling for over KD 100. As the scorching heat slightly cools in the evening, the markets get busier with customers, with vendors calling out to the faithful to buy their sacrificial animals.

A vendor at the livestock market in Rai said business has been picking up despite the relatively expensive prices, which usually rise during Eid Al-Adha.

Most sheep at livestock markets are the so-called Arabian variety, including Nuaimi, Shefali and other breeds, mostly from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Jordan and Syria. These are priced between KD 100 and KD 200. Goats are available too, with diminutive Somali goats selling for KD 70, while larger goats raised in Kuwait are priced between KD 100 and KD 140. Those looking for still cheaper options can opt for Australian sheep, which are only available at slaughterhouses via prebooking for KD 65. (See Page 2)



KUWAIT: A vendor waits for customers at a livestock market on June 25, 2023, ahead of Eid Al-Adha. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Ghanem submits draft reform bills

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Marzouq Al-Ghanem on Sunday submitted a number of political reform draft laws, including a bill demanding the interpretation of a law that bars political prisoners from running in elections. Ghanem said that he has sent the draft law to the National Assembly to be sent later to the legal and legislative committee. The bill questions the va-

lidity of the law that bars politicians from elections, which was passed in 2016.

Ghanem said he believes the law does not apply retroactively and also does not apply to crimes that took place before the law became effective. The law bars persons convicted of insulting HH the Amir from running for public office. Ghanem said he has resubmitted a draft law calling for a fundamental solution to the issue of stateless people, known as bedoons, adding the bill provides a durable and fair solution. He also resubmitted another law calling to establish a central body for citizenship in a bid to safeguard national identity.

Ghanem also submitted a draft law calling to

amend the election law to state that female members of parliament must be at least 20 percent of winners in each constituency, which effectively means there will be at least 10 female MPs in the 50-member Assembly. This bill effectively calls for creating a quota for women's seats in the Assembly for the first time in Kuwait since 2005, when Kuwaiti women were granted full political rights.

Ghanem said he also resubmitted a draft law which was first filed by former MP Yusef Al-Fadhlah calling to amend the law of the constitutional court to state that the court must look into decrees dissolving the Assembly and calling for elections

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Modi on first visit to Egypt

CAIRO: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi in Cairo on Sunday on a rare visit during which both sides pledged to deepen their strategic partnership. They agreed to boost investment by India, the world's most populous nation, in Egypt, which has the Arab world's largest population, of 105 million, and which

is now in the grips of an economic downturn.

Modi, in power since 2014, was on his first visit to the north African country and US ally following a four-day trip to the United States where he met President Joe Biden. Modi and Sisi "signed a joint declaration to elevate relations to a strategic partnership", which they had first announced in January when Sisi visited New Delhi, a spokesman for the Egyptian leader said. India and Egypt have pledged to boost bilateral trade by billions of dollars as India is also stepping up investment in Egypt, particularly in renewable energy.



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi grants the Order of the Nile medal to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 25, 2023. — AFP

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Local

Searing heat and soaring prices at livestock markets in Kuwait

Faithful can also buy sacrificial animals online or prebook for slaughter



A vendor waits for customers at a livestock market in Farwaniya. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Shakir Reshamwala



A vendor holds a sheep at a livestock market in Farwaniya.



Sheep stand in the scorching heat under the shade at a livestock market in Al-Rai.



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti man checks a sheep at a livestock market in Farwaniya on June 25, 2023 ahead of Eid Al-Adha, which marks the end of the annual pilgrimage or hajj to the Saudi holy city of Makkah.



Goats are seen at a livestock market in Al-Rai.

By Shakir Reshamwala

KUWAIT: With Eid Al-Adha around the corner, livestock markets around the country are becoming a hive of activity. But prices are high, with a head of sheep selling for over KD 100. As the scorching heat slightly cools in the evening, the markets get busier with customers, with vendors calling out to the faithful to buy their sacrificial animals. A vendor at the livestock market in Rai said business has been picking up despite the relatively expensive prices, which usually rise during Eid Al-Adha.

Most sheep at livestock markets are the so-called Arabian variety, including Nuaimi, Shefali and other breeds, mostly from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Jordan and Syria. These are priced between KD 100 and KD 200. However, those not particular about their sacrificial animal being a ram can buy ewes, which are priced lower — be-

tween KD 70 and KD 100.

Goats are available too, with diminutive Somali goats selling for KD 70, while larger goats raised in Kuwait are priced between KD 100 and KD 140. Goats are preferred by buyers from South Asia, where lamb is not widely consumed.

Those looking for still cheaper options can opt for Australian sheep, which are only available at slaughterhouses. Prebooking must be made, and the animal will be slaughtered, packed in a carton and handed to the customer on the day of Eid, all for KD 65. A major supermarket in Kuwait is also offering ovines to bovines for slaughter, ranging from KD 59 to KD 545, delivered a day after Eid.

Buyers can avoid the heat and crowds of livestock markets and order animals online, sold by multiple vendors, or for a fraction of the cost but still fulfilling their religious obligations, task a charity to slaughter an animal abroad with the meat to be distributed among the needy.

According to a KUNA report, the high prices of sheep are due to high breeding costs, especially feed prices. Abdullah Al-Shemmari, a sheep merchant, said there is high demand for Kuwaiti and Saudi sheep despite their high prices. But he added local cattle cannot cover the needs of the market, forcing traders to import animals from abroad.

Saud Saad, a Kuwaiti, told KUNA he prefers locally raised sheep regardless of the price due to its delicious taste, especially for sacrifice on Eid Al-Adha. Another citizen, Bader Al-Otaibi, said his family always buys Kuwaiti or Saudi sheep due to their high-quality meat. Ahmad Al-Rasheedi, a livestock merchant, said people should have the ability to recognize local sheep to avoid being cheated, since some unscrupulous traders pass off imported sheep as local animals. He said local sheep always have a big head and soft coat of wool.



A vendor sits on a chair as he waits for customers at a livestock market in Farwaniya ahead of Eid Al-Adha. Cows, camels, goats and sheep are traditionally slaughtered on this holy day.

Eid Al-Adha greetings

By US Chargé d'Affaires James Holtsnider

I would like to extend my warmest wishes to the people of Kuwait, all pilgrims on Hajj, and to all those celebrating Eid Al-Adha around the world. Eid Al-Adha is an opportunity to reflect on the contributions that Muslim communities have made around the world as builders of diverse, strong, and inclusive communities. On this special blessed occasion, may we all take the opportunity to reflect on the universal values of peace and compassion. May the Joy of Eid surround you and your loved ones.

Happy Eid and Hajj Mabroor.



Kuwait helped cover deficit in Sudan's medical supplies

KHARTOUM: Sudanese Health Minister Haitham Ibrahim on Sunday commended Kuwait's efforts in providing medical and humanitarian assistance to Sudan, which greatly contributed to bringing medical and drug supply during a time when the crisis faces the country. In an exclusive interview with KUNA, Ibrahim said that Kuwait provided great assistance that contributed to covering Sudan's needs for medicine, noting the high-level coordination with the Kuwaiti side, whether with Kuwait's Ambassador to Sudan Fahad Al-Dhafiri, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health (MoH) or humanitarian organizations in Kuwait.

Kuwait's help covered a large deficit in surgical contributions and kidney medicines in Sudan, he added, thanking and appreciating the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people for standing with Sudan. Kuwait has strong ties with Sudan especially in the health field, as the best evidence for this is

the Kuwaiti institutions and hospitals that provide services to Sudan, Ibrahim explained. He hopes for continued Kuwaiti support to cover the needs of the health system and Sudanese hospitals, especially in medicines for tumors, chronic diseases, anesthesia, and public health supplies to combat epidemics and diseases, as well as rebuilding the health system and rehabilitating hospitals after the destruction of medical equipment.

Ibrahim referred to the severe damage to the health system in Sudan during the crisis continuing for the third month in a row, especially in Khartoum and Darfur. In West Darfur state, for example, Ibrahim said that the health system was completely destroyed in hospitals and the situation is still unstable. The central hospitals in Khartoum stopped working due to the security situation and the presence of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in many of them, while hospitals on the outskirts of the capital still serve emergency, maternity and basic pediatric services, he stated, noting that North Kordofan state was also affected by the continued military confrontations. Ibrahim indicated that the Sudanese MoH tended to improve services in the states that witnessed an influx of large numbers of displaced people due to the war, especially the island, Nile River and Red Sea. The most vital urgent challenges facing the health sector in Sudan currently are the



KUWAIT: Kuwait sent its sixteenth aid plane to Sudan last week, carrying 20 tons of relief supplies, including clothes, food and two ambulances. — KUNA

security situation and the instability of the banking system, which led to a decline in financial resources to operate free services in dozens of centers for heart diseases, oncology and dialysis, he indicated. Since April 15, Sudan has been witnessing clashes between the army and RSF in Khartoum and other cities, which have so far claimed the lives of thousands and led to the displacement of about two and a half million people. — KUNA

Kuwait Municipality ready for Eid holiday

KUWAIT: As Eid Al-Adha approaches, Kuwait Municipality is intensifying its efforts to prepare mosques and clean public spaces in anticipation of the holiday.

The municipality said in a statement to KUNA Sunday that it plans to dispatch 1,020 hygiene workers across Kuwait's six governorates at dawn of the first day of Eid. The workers will be sent to all mosques and prayer rooms where Eid prayers will be held. The municipality is also providing 23 water tanks to serve worshippers in all governorates.

Officials with all governorates confirmed to KUNA that the Public Hygiene and Road Works Departments in their jurisdictions are prepared for the holiday.

"Field teams cleaned the 13 spaces in which the Eid prayers will be held, in addition to providing 380 cleaners, 13 water disguises and 250 trash containers of different sizes," said Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality, Head of Ahmadi and Hawally governorates Saud Al-Dabbous.

Acting Deputy Director General of the Survey Sector and Director of the Farwaniya Municipality Branch Mohammed Sarkho said field teams have cleaned 10 yards in areas of Kuwait, in addition to providing 10 cleaners and 10 waste containers with a capacity of 240 liters for each prayer room.

National Guard releases detained officers for Eid

KUWIAT: The National Guard is releasing officers who are detained as disciplinary action on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, according to Kuwait's state media agency KUNA.

Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Engineer Hashem Al-Rifai, issued a decision to release the military personnel so that

they can spend the Eid holiday among their families.

The Guard said in a press statement on Sunday that this comes under the directives of the Chief of the National Guard, HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and the Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, according to the statement, offered the highest congratulations and blessings to HH the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Forces Armed Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the commanders and forces of the National Guard on the occasion of the approaching Eid Al-Adha.

Local

Interest-free installments fuel online luxury shopping fever

Shoppers should watch out for hidden penalties, charges

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The option to pay in interest-free installments has recently become popular at online shopping stores, where the terms of installments are simple and easy for shoppers. The service aims to ease the process of online shopping by dividing the total price into three or four installments without added interest. Speaking to Kuwait Times, economist Mohamed Ramadan said the interest-free installment system is not a scam, but rather a means to boost sales.

"The interest-free installment system is approved in several countries around the world and is not a new service. It is well known that the merchant pays the cost of the goods in 120 days, so when he offers those goods without interest, the customer benefits. The main aim of such

a service is to increase profits and facilitate sales, with no cost to the store," he said. Salma Rababah affirmed to Kuwait Times she is shopping more because of the interest-free installments. "I was not a fan of installments, but online installments by some stores allowed me to buy things that were not affordable for me before. I spend now between KD 60-80 per month on installments," she said.

"Usually, I used to allocate KD 50 monthly for new clothes, but the interest-free installment system has allowed me to buy high-value items and gifts from top brands that I could not previously buy because of their prices," she added. Rababah said she has begun to buy clothes, perfumes, bags and gifts which she usually could not buy due to her limited monthly budget.

Interest-free installments have allowed Amer Al-Rashed to afford a fancy look among his peers. "Some online shopping stores offer this service for men's clothing, backpacks, sneakers, glasses and sports equipment. Sport and men's clothing are more expensive than women's items. Women's shops always have sales, but this is not the case for men. This service provided us the ability to afford shoes that may cost up to KD 100. Now people can afford to be in higher societal groups," he pointed out.

However, Rashed warned people that an installment plan that is not charging any interest on the amount they finance may have some hidden fees. "It's important to read the terms and conditions carefully because they may have other charges and fees. For example, there are penalties and charges for delayed payment," he pointed out.



ZainTech, du to drive innovation for net-zero future

DUBAI: ZainTech, the integrated digital solution provider of Zain Group, and du, from Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (EITC), announced on Sunday a strategic go-to-market partnership aimed at unlocking synergies while embracing ESG principles towards a Net Zero future. The collaboration will enable both companies to offer enterprise customers an innovative and comprehensive suite of solutions across various areas, including Sustainability (IoT), Drones-as-a-Service (DaaS), Data Practice, Cloud Managed Services, and App Modernization, as well as international connectivity.

By combining their expertise and resources, ZainTech and du aim to empower businesses and government entities to streamline their digital

transformation journeys. This partnership reinforces ZainTech's and du's commitment to remaining at the forefront of innovation, offering comprehensive solutions that address the evolving requirements of enterprises across industries.

Commenting on the partnership, Andrew Hanna, ZainTech CEO added: "This strategic agreement represents an acknowledgment that ZainTech and du share common values and ambitions. I'm confident that our collaboration will drive innovation and sustainable growth in the UAE by enabling businesses and governments to embrace ESG principles and leverage cutting-edge technologies to accelerate their digital transformation journeys, streamline operations, and achieve tangible business outcomes."

Fahad Al Hassawi, du CEO said: "This strategic partnership with ZainTech underscores our commitment to delivering innovative and comprehensive solutions that address the evolving needs of our customers. By combining our strengths, we will empower organizations to make data-driven decisions, harness the potential of the cloud, and



DUBAI: Andrew Hanna, ZainTech CEO and Fahad Al Hassawi, du CEO are seen in this photo.

leverage advanced technologies like IoT and DaaS to drive transformative growth in the UAE."

This unique and strategic partnership will enable government entities and corporations to benefit from a single source for their digital transformation needs across the UAE.



Eid Al-Adha greetings

By Ambassador of France to Kuwait Claire Le Flecher

As we prepare to celebrate Eid Al-Adha, I am very delighted and honored to extend my sincere wishes and warm greetings to the Amir His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti people and Muslims around the world.

Eid Al-Adha marks the culmination of Hajj, celebrated by Muslims around the world. I would like to congratulate on this occasion the pilgrims who performed the Hajj this year, including French and Kuwaiti citizens.

Eid Al-Adha is a special time to reflect on service, selflessness, and charity. It is a reminder of Islam's commitment to equality and mercy.

May these blessed days bring peace and tranquility to the region and to the world.

On behalf of the French people and the team at the French Embassy in Kuwait, I wish everyone celebrating a wonderful and safe holiday. Blessed Eid.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a celebration on Sunday marking International Day of Women in Diplomacy. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti diplomat Amal Al-Hamad speaks at the event.



Foreign Ministry Advisor Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah is seen during her speech.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber Al-Sabah gives a speech.

Foreign ministry celebrates women diplomats' successes

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday marked International Day of Women in Diplomacy with a lavish ceremony recognizing the increasingly significant role of women in the realm of diplomacy, which brought together a bevy of Kuwaiti diplomats. Citing some of the most notable achievements of women diplomats in Kuwait, Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber Al-Sabah spoke of the recent influx of women in Kuwaiti diplomacy and the ministry's decision to send the largest number of women in its histo-

ry to work as diplomats across the world.

He applauded the move as a shrewd one given their dedication and commitment. He went on to say that his ministry backs all initiatives to support women as they seek to establish parity with their male counterparts, the minister underlined. Addressing the gathering, renowned Kuwaiti diplomat Amal Al-Hamad spoke of her prolific career that spanned decades, attributing her success as a diplomat to the overwhelming support the Kuwaiti foreign ministry has given her. In her speech, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Development and Cooperation Tahani Al-Nasser spoke of the "evolution" of the Kuwaiti foreign ministry, citing a raft of significant international deals sealed as of late. Foreign Ministry Advisor Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah was grateful for the ceremony to mark such a pivotal occasion, saying women have



Assistant Foreign Minister for International Development and Cooperation Tahani Al-Nasser.

left an "indelible mark" on Kuwaiti diplomacy with their numerous achievements. — KUNA

Whiteleg shrimp farming project yields second harvest

KUWAIT: The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development participated in attending the second harvest of the whiteleg shrimp farming project, a government initiative provided by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khalid Mahdi said in a press statement on the sidelines of his attendance that the results of this project come within the framework of the implementation of the New Kuwait Vision 2035 through the support and development of aquaculture techniques in marine life,

stressing that such a project has an important impact on supporting food security in the State of Kuwait.

Mahdi added that the general secretariat of the Supreme Council for planning and development supports such projects due to their important contributions to the economy and because it uses environmentally friendly technologies. The project will also help attract investment opportunities to the aquaculture sector, he said.

He praised the continuous work carried out by the national cadres to make this project a success, explaining that the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research has benefited from the previous research projects it carried out in this field to reach optimal economic sustainability.

Mahdi pointed out that the culturing experiment began in May last year and the first harvest of the project was in August last year, indicating that there are several steps to enhance food security, including expanding the production of farmed shrimp, the cultivation of more fish species and enhancing scientific research in the field of food production.



KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khalid Mahdi and other officials tour the facilities where the shrimp is farmed.

Housing authority begins plans for South Qairawan project

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare said Sunday that it has started preparing a detailed plan for the South Qairawan residential area project. The authority said that it received the site of the South Qairawan project from Kuwait Municipality on April 6. The total area of the land allocated for the project provides approximately 400 housing units with an area of 400 squared meters per unit, according to initial studies done by the authority. Housing Welfare added in a statement that the total area of the project's land free of obstacles amounted to 67 hectares.

The authority said it is now coordinating with relevant government agencies to conduct the necessary studies to prepare the detailed plan of the project. In the end of May, former Housing Minister Mutlaq Al-Otaibi called for holding a meeting with all government agencies working on the South Qairawan housing project to determine the measures needed to speed up the project's completion. The authority, he said at the time, would work with the agencies to overcome any obstacles they face as soon as possible, following directives from the Council of Ministers. The meeting the minister called for was aimed at discussing an estimated cost of consulting services for the environmental and traffic studies required for the project. — Agencies

Do-over exams for grades 10-12 to begin July 5

KUWAIT: The education ministry has decided the exam dates for students in grades ten, 11 and 12 who are repeating their finals. Students will be starting their do-over exams on July 5 and take their last test on July 16. Those in the religious will begin their exams on July 3 until July 17. Students who wish to file grievances with the ministry regarding their final results, released Saturday, can do so on the ministry's website over the coming two days. Each student can protest the results of no more than three subjects.

Electricity ministry issues record of 90 violations in June

KUWAIT: The judicial police team of the Ministry of Electricity and Water this June broke the record number for the largest number of violations handed out per month.

The team issued 90 violations in extensive campaigns carried out in the six governorates targeting infringements on the electrical grid and water network. The tour aimed at finding and removing illegal electricity wiring to reduce electrical loads, Deputy Team Head Ahmed Al-Shammari said.

Pressure on the power grid, which the ministry has consistently attributed to violations in power connections, is expected to reach an all-time high this summer. Electrical loads will likely reach 17,000 megawatts, only 1,000 megawatts less than the grid's capacity. Shammari said that the inspection campaigns will resume after the Eid Al-Adha holiday in cooperation with the ministry's sectors and with the joint committee to combat the phenomenon of bachelors in private housing areas.

"The committee will spare no effort in controlling encroachments in direct extensions on slums and shantytowns in private housing areas, which are inhabited by overcrowded workers and bachelors," he added. Shammari said that the summer heat will not prevent judicial officers from performing their duties and implementing ongoing campaigns to put an end to violations.

Elders struggle to get jobs, promotions as ageism festers in a society that favors youth

Discrimination leaves people over 50 feeling isolated, worthless

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Ageism has a considerable impact on the lives of older adults. It is a form of discrimination that manifests in various aspects of life, such as psychological stress, workplace discrimination and societal stereotypes and negative attitudes, where individuals are treated unfavorably due to their age. This destroys elder individuals' self-esteem and their ability to participate in their communities and maintain their mental health. Kuwait Times spoke to two Lebanese women in their early 50s — Olivia and Zainab — to learn more about the problems they face.

Olivia said her struggles with finding a job have become harder due to her age. "I applied for a job at a bank I used to work for before the COVID pandemic. However, my application was rejected despite my experience and qualification, and the fact that I used to work there. I have been told straight to my face that I am no longer suitable for the position due to my age. I had to work in another place, which gave me a minor position because they have a preconception, I will not be able to be as active as the job requires due to my age," she told Kuwait Times.

Discrimination and negativity associated with

ageing individuals and their abilities leads them to fear being viewed as a burden to society. This can lead to depression, anxiety and feelings of loneliness and isolation, which significantly impact their quality of life. Concurring with Olivia, Zainab said many workplaces often perceive older adults as less productive and less efficient. This belief leads to employers not hiring older employees or dismissing them.

"Sometimes at the workplace, older workers do not get the promotions they might be qualified for, which can be demotivating and impact their financial security in retirement," said Zainab. According to her, at some workplaces, elder adults are often viewed as outdated and less valuable, which results in decreased job opportunities, decreased job satisfaction, lower salaries and promotions and increased negative emotions such as stress and anxiety.

"Employers often prefer young and fresh talent over older and more experienced ones, assuming they would not fit into the workplace culture. Unfortunately, this creates a disadvantage for older employees who are overlooked despite having the necessary skills and expertise to perform the job," Zainab added. Negative attitudes and stereotypes that society holds towards elder adults can have a significant impact on an individual's psychological



well-being, resulting in decreased quality of life, as they may experience social isolation and exclusion from their communities, which can lead to feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness and loss of purpose and meaning in life.



LAPA launches 5th edition of theater program

KUWAIT: For the fifth consecutive year, the LOYAC Academy of Arts (LAPA) continued to attract amateur theater lovers and professional artists to participate in the "Theatrical Haven" program, which began in May with workshops and training sessions, under the supervision of a group of Gulf, Arab and foreign playwrights and academics.

The program, which runs until next November, is concerned with three basic and pivotal elements of theater taught through ten theoretical and practical intensive and all-inclusive workshops: the "Playwriting Lab", "Scenography" and "Acting Lab".

The first training course began with the "Preparing the Actor" workshop with the specialist in dramatic

theater and performing arts, Dr Antoine Al-Ashqar, who supervised the workshop for beginners.

The workshop concluded with three short theatrical scenes adapted from well-known plays by classical playwrights, namely "The Engagement by Antoine Chekhov, The Disease of Forgetfulness and the Difficult Customer by Max Rene", produced by the participants, each of which ranged in duration of 12 minutes.

Ashqar expressed his happiness to participate in the "Theatrical Haven" program for the first time, and his gratitude to LAPA Academy and Fareeh Al-Saqqa for their interest in art, culture and theater.

"I was honored to hold the first workshop which included 12 students because it was an opportunity to put our expertise and experience of over 25 years at the service of young talents, in order to prepare professionals in the field of theater and arts of all kinds," he said.

Speaking about his passion for the world of acting and theater directing, he pointed out that "an actor must be honest and real and persevere in developing themselves by participating in specialized training courses."

He added: "There is no doubt that the arts, in their various forms, are considered a haven for expressing feelings. They also contribute to refining one's skills, fostering self-discipline and building character, thus raising the level of awareness and culture."

Professional and amateur participants praised the outputs of the training workshops, which allowed them to familiarize themselves with the basics and tools of acting, mastering performance skills and embodying roles with high accuracy. The workshops have also enriched their knowledge and put them on the right path towards professionalism.

They thanked the LAPA Academy for this opportunity and exceptional experience, as they were supervised by Dr Al-Ashqar, and his long and dis-



tinguished experience in the field of acting and theater directing.

They expressed their pride in their short theatrical performances, through which they said they were able to innovate and create, despite the short two-week time frame and the performances being the first acting experience for some of the participants.

It is worth mentioning that the "Theatrical Haven" program comes as part of LAPA's efforts to enrich the cultural scene in Kuwait, activate the role of theater in building civilization and emphasize the role of the arts in the advancement of society, thus providing professional and exceptional training opportunities to empower young talents in Kuwait and the Arab world.

As part of its ongoing efforts to support and empower young people, the LAPA Academy will provide talented young people with an 18-month training grant with each "Theatrical Haven". The grant will allow for the trainee to receive adequate attention and training in various elements of theatrical art by senior academics and theater artists. It also provides the trainee with the opportunity to participate in artistic work or professional training opportunities inside and outside Kuwait.



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Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



Kuwait Fire Force extinguishes blaze in Fintas building

KUWAIT: Fire crews controlled a fire that broke out in a warehouse made of kirby steel within the yard of a building in Fintas. According to the fire forces' Department of Public Relations and Media, a report was received from the Central Operations Department on Sunday morning about the blaze. The Central Operations Department directed fire teams from the centers of Mangaf and Al-Bayraq to the site of the incident.

Upon arrival, the teams found that the warehouse which caught fire contained electrical appliances. The fire was extinguished and no injuries were reported.





Kuwait Airways Job Vacancies Announcement

Kuwait Airways announces the opening of applications for the jobs listed below in accordance with the following specific requirements and specifications:

Required Job	Required Experience	Qualifications
Deputy Legal Director (Local)	15 years' experience in local general law. Preferably in an airline practice with at least 6-8 years in a senior supervisory position.	Bachelor's Degree in Law.
Deputy Director Information Technology (Development & Support)	15 years' experience in systems development and technical support within aviation or a related field, including 4 years in a supervisory position.	Bachelor's Degree in computer engineering or computer science.
Head of Development Research & Employee Relations	15 years' experience in Development Research & Employee Relations.	Bachelor's Degree Law.
Sr. Expert Planning & Technical Research	14 years' experience in data validation and control, including 5 years in a supervisory capacity with major airline plus 10 years extensive experience in operational IT application inclusive of Software Development and Hardware Maintenance.	Bachelor's Degree in computer science.
Head of Legal Cases & Investigations (International)	10 years' experience in legal affairs preferably with a major airline.	Bachelor's Degree Law.
Instructor (I), Engineering	6 years' experience in teaching of type courses preferably in Part-147 environment, minimum of 3 years maintenance experience gained in civil aviation environment.	Bachelor's Degree in engineering preferably in Aeronautics or Aircraft Maintenance or Diploma in Aeronautical Engineering with Part-66 AME B1 or B2 License.
Superintendent Reservation Operation	6 years' experience in airline reservations, sales, and flight control as lead flight controller.	Bachelor's Degree in business administration or Equivalent.
Coordinator Reservation Operation	6 years' experience in airline reservation, ticketing, or sales, including 2 years' as Senior, Officer Sales.	High school Degree
Superintendent Personnel Affairs	6 years' experience in related field or 4 years for higher degree holders preferably with major airline.	Bachelor's Degree in human resources.
Superintendent Social Security & Government Documentation	6 years' experience in related field plus knowledge in Kuwait Labor Law.	Bachelor's Degree in business administration or Accounting or equivalent.
Instructor (III), Aviation Security	5 years' experience in aviation security field, including 1 year as Instructor, Aviation Security Training.	Diploma in aviation security
Instructor (III), Cargo	5 years' experience in Cargo.	Highschool Degree or university level education preferable. Holding Diploma in Air Cargo or certificates in Advanced Cargo and Dangerous Goods Regulations.
Sr. Researcher Network Planning & Evaluation	5 years' experience in airline market research and planning activities in airline field.	Bachelor's degree in Administration of Science or Marketing or Economics or Statistics plus course reservations, sales, and related computer programs.
Sr. Researcher Pricing & Revenue Management	4 years' experience in pricing and Revenue Management.	Bachelor's Degree in business administration or Marketing or Economy.
Sr. Researcher Planning & Budget	4 years' experience in crew scheduling and budget control including 1 year on the job training.	Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Economics or equivalent.
Instructor (II), Engineering	4 years' experience in teaching of type courses preferably in Part-147 environment, minimum of 3 years maintenance experience gained in civil aviation environment.	Bachelor's Degree in engineering preferably in Aeronautics or Aircraft Maintenance or Diploma in Aeronautical Engineering with Part-66 AME B1 or B2 License.
Inspector (II), Quality Control & Technical Development Training	4 years' relevant experiences as Engineering Ground Instructor or Quality Control Engineering plus knowledge of Airworthiness Regulations Part-147, Part-66 and Part-145.	Bachelor's Degree in engineering preferably in Aeronautics or Diploma in Aeronautical Engineering with Aircraft Maintenance Engineer License (B1 or B2).
Instructor (III), Engineering Aerospace, Avionics	3 years' post-apprenticeship experience in maintenance including 1 year as an Instructor on KAC utilized equipment or to have one full Engineering Approval on the respective trade on KAC Operated Aircraft types.	High school degree, plus 3 years' formal apprenticeship training and certification in applicable discipline.
Instructor (III) Emergency Procedures Training	Current or former Pilot or Flight Engineer with minimum (3 years) of experience in flying and minimum (1 year) of experience in emergency procedures training. Or A person with high education in Aviation Safety with a minimum (3 years) of experience in Aviation Instructional field and / or in emergency procedures training. Or Current or former cabin crew member with minimum (8 years) of experience in flying of which (3 years) experience as a cabin crew leader and (1 year) of experience in emergency procedures training.	High school degree.
Instructor (III), Management	2 years' experience in airline management, including 1 year as Instructor, Management plus attending professional training programs in the subject for 6 months.	Bachelor's degree in Business Administration or equivalent.
Instructor (III), Computer	2 years' experience in computer systems training field, preferably in airline industry, including 1 year as Computer Instructor, plus attending professional training program in the subject for 6 months.	Bachelor's degree in Computer Science or equivalent.
Instructor (III), Financial	2 years' experience in accounting field, preferably in airline industry, including 1 year as Finance instructor plus attending professional training programs in the subject for 6 months.	Bachelor's degree in accounting or equivalent.
Researcher Planning & Budget	2 years' experience in crew scheduling and budget control including 6 months' on-the-job training.	Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Economics or equivalent.
Researcher Pricing & Revenue Management	2 years' experience in Pricing and Revenue Management in Airline field.	Bachelor's Degree in business administration or Marketing or Economy.
Officer Rostering	2 years' experience in Rostering.	Diploma in Business Administration.
Officer, Coordination & Follow Up Cabin Crew	2 years' administrative or training experience, especially in Operations Staff.	Diploma in Business Administration
Officer Flying Hours Cabin Crew	2 years' experience as cabin attendant or briefing or scheduling or any similar cabin services.	Diploma in Business Administration or equivalent.

General Terms:

- Priority in appointment shall be for eligible Kuwaitis.
- Must have a great command of English (Spoken & Written) and good knowledge with computer use. A minimum of 70% is required to pass the English language test, with the exception for specific jobs.
- For Kuwaitis, the applicant must have performed the mandatory military service or be exempted from it in accordance with Law No. 20/2015 and submit a Completion Certificate of the mandatory military service or present an exemption from it.
- Applicants shall be subject to the necessary conditions for appointment in accordance with the rules and regulations at Kuwait Airways.
- University degrees not recognized by the official authorities in Kuwait will not be considered.
- Compliance with Cabinet Resolution No. 914 issued on 29/06/2010, which includes: (Retired persons are only permitted to apply in the narrowest of limits. For the categories of pilots and flight engineers, they shall be requested, as needed, to ensure continued safe operations).
- For some announced job completing the necessary training courses is mandatory.
- Applicants shall be subject to the necessary interviews and tests and are required to pass the tests to proceed to the interview.
- The applicant has the right to apply for a maximum of two positions.

How to apply:

- Applications shall be submitted on the website: careers.kuwaitairways.com. the last day to apply is July 17th, 2023.

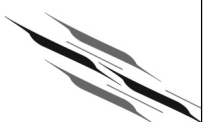
- Documents to be attached to the website:

- CV.
- Academic certificate and equivalency approved by the official authorities in the State of Kuwait.
- Copy of civil ID and passport.
- A certificate from the General Organization for Social Insurance (career progression certificate) and an experience certificate, if any.

- A copy of licenses, technical certificates required if any, certificate of previous supervisory experience (based on the job).

- Non-compliant and incomplete applications will be excluded, and such exclusion shall itself be a formal apology without the need to notify the applicant.

- Receipt of the application does not mean acceptance and the company reserves the right not to accept any applicant for the vacancies mentioned above.





US aircraft carrier arrives in Vietnam

‘God’s guests’: Saudis safeguard hajj hospitality tradition

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Future of Shoigu on line after Wagner revolt

Wagner chief accuses Shoigu of being responsible for deaths of tens of thousands of Russians



ROSTOV-ON-DON: A member of Wagner group speaks with a local resident in Rostov-on-Don. President Vladimir Putin said an armed mutiny by Wagner mercenaries was a “stab in the back” and that the group’s chief Yevgeny Prigozhin had betrayed Russia, as he vowed to punish the dissidents. — AFP

PARIS: They have sun-bathed bare-chested together in remote Siberia, shared fishing holidays and played on the same ice hockey team. Russia’s long-serving Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has long been seen not just as a political ally of President Vladimir Putin but one of the Kremlin chief’s few friends within the Russian elite.

But their bromance and Shoigu’s decades-long political career now face their biggest test after the revolt led by Wagner mercenary group chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, who had lambasted the defence minister’s handling of the invasion of Ukraine. Putin appears to have for now survived the revolt after a surprise mediation led by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. But Shoigu’s position remains deeply precarious due to the unprecedented severity of the attacks by Prigozhin against him and his ministry.

Prigozhin succeeded in capturing the Russian army’s southern command headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, the nerve centre of the invasion of Ukraine, and accused Shoigu of fleeing “like a coward” and vowing he “will be stopped”.

The minister of defence was nowhere to be seen at the time and has, for the moment, completely vanished from the public view. The Wagner chief had previously accused Shoigu and Russia’s top Gen-

eral Valery Gerasimov, his other bete noire, of being responsible for the deaths of “tens of thousands of Russians” in the conflict and the “surrender of territory to the enemy”.

‘Big loser’

“The big winner of the night was Lukashenko,” said Arnaud Dubien, director of the Franco-Russian Observatory think tank. “The big loser was Shoigu.” But even before the revolt broke out on Friday night, Shoigu had been under immense pressure due to Prigozhin’s attacks and the failure of the Russian armed forces to make progress. On June 12 a video was widely shared, with Putin and Shoigu attending a handing out of medals at a military hospital, where the Russian president was shown turning his back on the defence minister in apparent disdain.

Shoigu has had a career of unmatched political longevity in post-Soviet Russia and his presence at the centre of power in Moscow predates that of Putin himself. Hailing from the Tuva region of southern Siberia, Shoigu is among the few non-ethnic Russians to have occupied a top post in government after the collapse of the USSR. He began his ascent in 1994 when he was appointed emergency situations minister in the early years of the presidency of Boris Yeltsin.

Shoigu became a familiar and unflappable presence for Russians, as well as one of the country’s most popular politicians, as he raced around the country to deal with disasters ranging from plane crashes to earthquakes. Serving under a dozen prime ministers, he held that post until 2012, when he was appointed governor of the Moscow region before swiftly being named defence minister by Putin the same year after a corruption scandal felled his predecessor Anatoly Serdyukov.

‘Verge of collapse’

He was immediately named a general, despite having no high-level military experience, but successfully oversaw operations including the 2015 intervention in Syria which has kept Moscow’s ally Bashar al-Assad in power.

For his 65th birthday, Putin had a special present for his friend, one of Russia’s highest decorations, the “For Merit to the Fatherland” medal to add to a chest already stuffed with decorations. But the far less successful invasion of Ukraine – which the Kremlin initially hoped would see Russian tanks roll into Kyiv — has persistently raised questions about his future.

“Prigozhin wanted to send the message that

Shoigu and Gerasimov must be fired because they are incompetent and a change of strategy is needed,” said Pierre Razoux, academic director of the France-based Mediterranean Foundation of Strategic Studies (FMES).

There are no more expressions of macho friendship or pictures as in 2017 of the two men with their shirts off bronzing their chests by a river on the Siberian taiga. Instead, Shoigu has been reduced to mumbling encounters reporting to Putin or simply consigned to a video screen as the Kremlin chief oversees a video conference.

Prigozhin has also taken aim at Shoigu’s family, in particular the husband of his daughter Ksenia, Alexey Stolyarov, a fitness blogger who has steered well clear of the war and has been accused by opposition media of liking a post opposing the invasion.

Russian-language Telegram channels have fizzed with speculation over who could succeed Shoigu, with the governor of the Tula region Alexei Dyumin, who has held top army and presidential security posts, seen as favourite.

“Shoigu’s group is on the verge of collapse, and Sergei Kuzhugotovich himself is in disgrace and, most likely, will resign,” said the widely followed Telegram channel Preemnik. — AFP

Aircraft used for ‘death flights’ returns to Argentina

BUENOS AIRES: A cargo plane used by military henchmen during Argentina’s “dirty war” to fly leftists over the ocean and push them to their deaths has been brought back to the country, where it may go on display in a museum on the horrors of dictatorship.

The Belfast-built Skyvan PA-51 cargo plane landed in Buenos Aires on Saturday, AFP confirmed, after sleuths traced it to the United States, where for much of the last decade it had been ferrying skydivers with few aware of its gruesome history. An official ceremony on Monday will mark the plane’s return, amid a push to exhibit it at the Museum of Memory dedicated to victims of the rightist military regime that convulsed the country from 1976 until 1983.

Flight records and other documentation show that a military crew took the aircraft up on the night of December 14, 1977. Among those aboard, bound and drugged, were three members of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a group that protested the disappearance of their children by the military, two French nuns and seven other people.

All were shoved out the door of the aircraft into Atlantic waters. “The plane is something dark for us, but having found and identified it, we cannot allow it to continue flying,” Mabel Careaga, one of the promoters of the repatriation of the aircraft that be-



BUENOS AIRES: Members of human rights organizations, relatives and victims of the dictatorship, are given access to the Short SC-7 Skyvan aircraft used in the last Argentine military dictatorship (1976-1983) by the Naval Prefecture under registration PA-51, as it sits on the tarmac upon landing at Jorge Newbery International Airport in Buenos Aires. — AFP

longed to the Naval Prefecture, told AFP.

Careaga is the daughter of Esther Ballestrino, who was thrown into the ocean from the plane, along with the other founders of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, Azucena Villaflor and Maria Ponce. “It is too horrifying to imagine my mother there,” says Careaga, who together with Cecilia de Vicenti, 62, Villaflor’s daughter, hopes the aircraft will be exhibited on the grounds of the Navy Mechanics School in Buenos Aires, the site of a clandestine death camp where some 5,000 prisoners were held and which today is the Museum of Memory.

es which back President Bashar al-Assad’s regime were responding to rebel drone strikes over the past week that killed four civilians including two children, according to the Observatory.

Saad Fato, a 35-year-old laborer who survived the strike on the market, told AFP he helped efforts to try to rescue the wounded. “Russians shells rained on us,” he said, recounting that he was unloading tomatoes and cucumbers at the time of the attack.

“It was indescribable, seeing the dead, the wounded,” he said, his hands still covered with the blood of casualties. An AFP correspondent at the scene saw plumes of black smoke rising from the site and ambulances, their sirens wailing, rush the wounded from the market to hospital.

‘Direct attack’

Six civilians died in Jisr al-Shughur and three rebel fighters were killed nearby by Russian air strikes,

The initiative has the support of the government but some human rights organizations object, saying it’s too gruesome. “The airplane is part of the story, which is painful, but it has to be told as it was,” De Vicenti said. All the victims of that flight were singled out by a former sailor, Alfredo Astiz, who infiltrated the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. He’s now serving life in prison. A survivor of the Navy Mechanics School, journalist Miriam Lewin, helped launch the campaign to comb military flight records to reveal the history of the “death flights.” The premise, she said, was “if there were ‘death flights,’ there had to be airplanes.” — AFP

That fighter was a member of the Turkistan Islamic Party, a Uyghur-dominated jihadist group, he said, adding that the parents of the dead children also belonged to that group. At least 30 civilians were wounded in Sunday’s strikes, said Abdel Rahman, who added that the death toll was likely to rise.

Ahmed Yazigi of the civil defence in Jisr al-Shughur earlier reported that the strikes killed nine people, without specifying whether the toll included fighters. Yazigi called the assault “a direct attack on the popular market which provides a basic source of income for farmers”. Syria’s war has killed more than half a million people and forced around half of the country’s pre-war population from their homes. — AFP

Canada opens investigation of sub implosion

MONTREAL: Canadian authorities on Saturday began a probe into the implosion of the Titan submersible, whose disappearance near the wreckage of the Titanic with five men aboard had set off a multinational search-and-rescue operation.

“Our mandate is to find out what happened and why and to find out what needs to change to reduce the chance or the risk of such occurrences in the future,” said Transportation Safety Board (TSB) chair Kathy Fox.

“We know everybody wants answers, particularly the families and the public,” she told reporters in St. John’s, Newfoundland. The full probe could take between 18 months to two years. TSB investigators on Saturday boarded the Canadian-flagged Polar Prince cargo ship, which had set sail from St. John’s last weekend to bring the ill-fated Titan to its launch point in the north Atlantic.

The Transportation Safety Board routinely probes air, rail, marine and pipeline accidents with the aim of improving transportation safety. It does not assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability. The US Coast Guard said Thursday that all five people aboard the submersible had died after the vessel suffered a “catastrophic implosion.”

A debris field was found on the seafloor, 1,600 feet (500 meters) from the bow of the Titanic. Meanwhile, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was looking into whether any criminal laws had been broken in the chain of events that led to the deaths of the Titan adventurers.

The investigators’ job is to determine “whether or not a full investigation by the RCMP is warranted,” said Newfoundland and Labrador Superintendent Kent Osmond. “Such an investigation will proceed only if our examination of circumstances indicate criminal federal or provincial laws may possibly have been broken.” — AFP

Russian strikes kill 13 in rebel-held Syria

JISR AL-SHUGHUR: Russian air strikes killed at least 13 people in rebel-held northwest Syria on Sunday, the deadliest attack on the war-torn country this year, a war monitor said. At least nine civilians, including two children, were among the dead, with most killed at a fruit and vegetable market in Jisr al-Shughur in the Idlib region.

“These Russian strikes are the deadliest in Syria this year and amount to a massacre,” said Rami Abdel Rahman, who heads the Britain-based group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Russian force-

International

'God's guests': Saudis safeguard hajj hospitality tradition

More than two million pilgrims from more than 160 countries are expected this year

MAKKAH: Braving the scorching Saudi heat, Makkah resident Amer Abdullah distributed free tea and bread to worshippers performing the annual hajj pilgrimage, honoring a long-standing tradition in Islam's holiest city. Joined by his five sons, the 45-year-old Saudi man who spends his evenings serving warm beverages to worn-out Muslim pilgrims, said hajj hospitality runs in his blood.

"For the people of Makkah, there is no higher honor than serving pilgrims," Abdullah told AFP ahead of the start of hajj rituals on Sunday. "My father did it as did his forefathers before him and now I am trying to pass it down to my sons," he added, pearls of sweat forming on his face. Before hotels and high-rises sprang up in Makkah, locals used to host pilgrims in their homes. Now, while the holy city is dotted with luxury accommodation and air-conditioned shopping malls, these have not replaced the deeply ingrained culture of hospitality. Every day at around noon, Abdullah and his sons start filling vacuum flasks with tea and hot milk.

They pack hundreds of loaves of bread into tightly sealed plastic bags before heading out for the night. They set up near the Grand Mosque, which is overflowing with worshippers, some of whom survive solely on handouts for the duration of the four-day pilgrimage. "This is an honor passed down through generations here," Abdullah said, pouring tea into a paper cup.

'Racing to help'

Hospitality, already firmly rooted in Saudi culture, gains even more currency during hajj — one of the

five pillars of Islam that all Muslims with the means must undertake at least once in their lives. More than two million pilgrims from more than 160 countries are expected this year. According to Muslim tradition, they are "guests of God", meaning they must be provided with accommodation, food and drink even if they cannot afford it. Across Makkah, young men distribute free meals consisting of rice, chicken or meat to pilgrims who line up in long queues.

Faisal al-Husseini, a Pakistani businessman living in Makkah, has been distributing hot meals every day for weeks. "It is a great honor to serve God's guests," he said, handing food in a blue plastic bag to a pilgrim. For 47-year-old Egyptian visitor Mahmoud Talaat, the handouts are his sole source of sustenance.

"I depend on these meals because I am unable to afford them," he said. This year's summer timing for the hajj, which follows the lunar calendar, will test the endurance of worshippers during the mostly outdoor ritual. As temperatures exceed 42 degrees Celsius (107 degrees Fahrenheit), young men distribute bottles of frozen water to help pilgrims survive the heat. "We buy water and cool it well, then we start distributing it once or twice a day after prayers," said Makkah resident Hamza Taher, 25.

Standing near a truck loaded with water bottles, his brother Anas, 22, said they were not the only ones helping out. "All of the people of Makkah are racing to help," he said. The tradition of hosting pilgrims in Makkah's homes has died out in recent years, with Saudi authorities embarking on an infrastructural expansion project that has increased accommoda-



MAKKAH: Muslim worshippers and pilgrims gather at the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Makkah on June 25, 2023, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage. — AFP

tion options. But many of the city's residents still remember the centuries-old custom. "When I was growing up, we used to host pilgrims in our homes," said a Makkah resident who asked not to be named over privacy concerns. "It was a beautiful tradition".

And while some practices die out, younger ones are coming into play, including a state-led initiative

by the education ministry that has dispatched hundreds of Makkah's school children to help with hajj. Their tasks include assisting wheelchair-bound pilgrims and guiding non-Arabic speakers to holy sites. "I am completing what my ancestors started hundreds of years ago," said 17-year-old student Sultan al-Ghamdi. — AFP

Guatemalans go to the polls with little hope

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemalans vote Sunday for a president that some hope, but few expect, will finally solve the problems of crushing poverty, violence and corruption in the Central American country. Two popular candidates were disqualified in electoral tribunal decisions widely deemed questionable, leaving a dictator's daughter, a former first lady and a UN diplomat as the frontrunners in a crowded field of 22 candidates. The country of 17.6 million is one of the poorest in Latin America, a reality that has, along with high rates of violent crime, compelled hundreds of thousands to risk the perilous migrant journey north toward the "American dream."

Rights groups have expressed increasing concern over perceived efforts to crack down on prosecutors and journalists, in an apparent bid by the government to protect a corrupt system benefiting those in power. Under outgoing conservative leader Alejandro Giammattei, several former prosecutors from the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), a UN-backed entity closed by the government in 2019, have been arrested or forced into exile.

Earlier this month, the founder of a newspaper critical of the government was sentenced to six years in prison on charges of money laundering, a move decried by press freedom groups. The newspaper founded by Jose Ruben Zamora has been forced to close, and several of its journalists have fled the country. "All the candidates are the same and only come to rob (the people). I still don't know if I'm going to vote," street vendor Nestor Figueroa told AFP in the capital Guatemala City. Guatemalans are asking for "a stop to all the excesses that we now see in terms of corruption," said political analyst Renzo Rosal. But despite the "deep reforms" promised by this year's presidential candidates, Rosal said he remains doubtful much will change after the elections.

Likely runoff

In the latest poll by the Prensa Libre newspaper, center-left candidate Sandra Torres — the ex-wife of deceased former leftist president Alvaro Colom — was leading the race with 21.3 percent, followed by centrist career diplomat Edmond Mulet with 13.4 percent. In third place, with 9.1 percent, is right-winger Zury Rios, daughter of former military strongman Efraim Rios Montt. All three oppose legalizing abortion and same-sex marriage in a staunchly Catholic country, and have vowed to crack down on violence and corruption.

Vote tally underway in S Leone election

FREETOWN: Vote tallying was underway in Sierra Leone on Sunday, the electoral commission said, following fiercely fought elections that were mostly calm despite significant delays in some areas. Tallying, which consists of adding up counted ballots from each polling unit at the regional level, would take place in the capital Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Makeni and Port Loko, the commission said. On Saturday, Sierra Leoneans voted in presidential, parliamentary and local elections, with many polling stations opening late in the capital. But elsewhere in the country, more than 90 percent of polls had opened within an hour of the set opening time, according to National Election Watch, a coalition of civil society groups.

Results are expected within about 48 hours of the vote. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, another observation group, said in a midday update Saturday that voting had been "relatively peaceful" — as did the electoral commission in a late afternoon statement. But after polling stations began to close, the electoral commission said polling staff had been

The current polling suggests a high possibility that the election will go to a runoff on August 20, with no single candidate likely to obtain the 50-percent minimum share of votes required to win in the first round. Two popular candidates — former poll favorite Carlos Pineda and Thelma Cabrera — had their candidacies invalidated by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) in decisions their supporters have claimed amount to political sidelining. According to the Prensa Libre poll, distrust in the TSE is high, with more than one in ten respondents saying they intended to cast a blank vote in protest. Some 9.4 million Guatemalans are eligible to cast a vote.



GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemalan presidential candidate for the coalition Valor Unionista and daughter of the late Guatemalan dictator (1982-1983) Efraim Rios Montt, Zury Rios (left), waves next to her husband Gregory Charles during her closing campaign rally in Guatemala City. — AFP

4,274 murders

Guatemala is one of the most unequal countries in Latin America, according to the World Bank. More than half its inhabitants live in poverty and half of all children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, according to the United Nations.

Insecurity is another major election issue. Guatemala's homicide rate is 17.3 per 100,000 inhabitants — about three times the world average, according to the UN. In 2022 there were 4,274 murders, half of them attributed to drug trafficking gangs.

Torres and Rios have both evoked the tactics of President Nayib Bukele in neighboring El Salvador in his controversial "war" on gangs which has won him adoration at home but opprobrium abroad over rights concerns.

Polling stations open at 7:00 am (1300 GMT) and close 11 hours later, with the first results expected within hours. Also up for election are 160 members of Congress, 340 mayors and 20 delegates to the Central American Parliament. Guatemala does not allow successive presidential terms, and voting is not mandatory. — AFP

attacked by members of the public in certain area as they attempted to move materials. Senior members of the main opposition All People's Congress (APC) party also alleged violence had taken place near several polling centres in Freetown on Saturday evening.

Two members of different international observer missions, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, confirmed one of the incidents.

Key players

Twelve men and one woman were contesting for president, but incumbent Julius Maada Bio's main challenger is Samura Kamara of the APC. Bio, of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), narrowly beat Kamara in a runoff in 2018. Rising food prices are a key issue for many in the import-dependent West African nation of eight million people. Year-on-year inflation hit 43 percent in April, according to the latest official figures. Some 3.4 million people were registered to vote, 52.4 percent of whom are under 35 years old, according to the electoral commission.

Presidential candidates must secure 55 percent of valid votes for a first-round win. Turnout has ranged between 76 and 87 percent over the past three elections. Voters will also elect members of parliament and local councils under proportional representation after a last-minute switch from a first-past-the-post

NATO peacekeepers guard medieval monastery in Kosovo

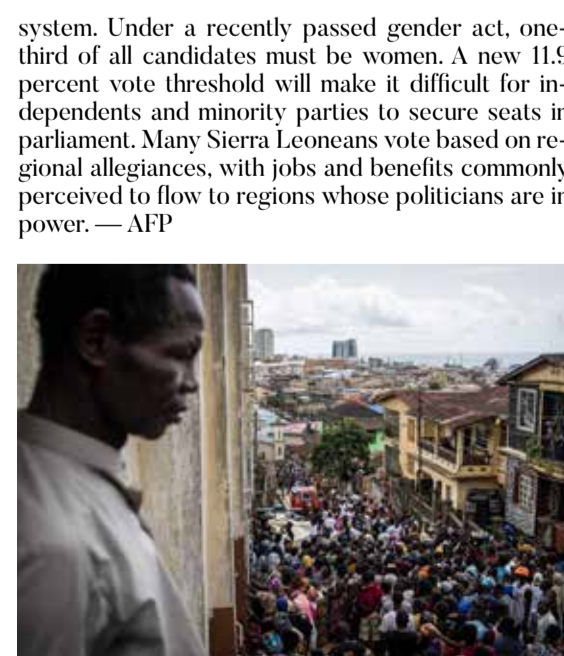
DECANI: Located at the foot of the Balkans' Accursed Mountains, the Decani Monastery is seen as a symbol of Serbia's religious heritage in Kosovo — and a "miracle" of survival through many conflicts. The 14th century domed building, a World Heritage site which still boasts its original frescoes, is under 24-hour guard by NATO-led peacekeepers. They are stationed at the approach to the monastery, their armored vehicle topped with a big gun and sandbagged sentry post anomalous in the bucolic valley. Inside the monastery compound, the soldiers' camouflage uniforms mingle with the black robes of the 20 Eastern Orthodox monks who live there.

Since the ethnic Albanian majority of Kosovo rose up in 1998-1999 against Belgrade, sites linked to Serbian heritage such as the monastery have become targets. Although the situation in Kosovo has largely calmed in the two and a half decades since the 1999 Kosovo war, in which NATO intervened, simmering tensions require continued vigilance by the NATO-led KFOR peacekeeping force. Tensions are currently at their highest since 2004, KFOR commanders say, with ethnic Albanians claiming municipal administrations in Serb-majority flashpoint towns in Kosovo's north, and Serbia holding three Kosovo policemen that were arrested mid-June.

A haven

The peace that reigns in Decani Monastery makes those troubles seem a world away, but its monks are aware that conflict has often lapped at its walls. "Two Balkans wars, two world wars, Communism... the church suffered a lot. So it is kind of a miracle the church survived in such conditions," one of them, Father Petar, told journalists including AFP who visited under KFOR escort in late June.

The monk did not dwell on what threats the site confronts today, emphasizing instead its mix of Gothic, Byzantine and Eastern architecture. "It is a combination of the most beautiful elements of Christian art, from east and west," Father Petar said, observing that the church has "never changed" over its 700-year history. During the Kosovo war and its aftermath, the monastery was a refuge for people of several religious beliefs, a haven from ethnic rivalries. Built between 1327 and 1335, its founder was Serbian King Stefan Decanski, after whom it and the nearby village was named — though Serbs refer to the village as Decani while ethnic Albanians call it Decan. — AFP



FREETOWN: A man looks on at voters gathering at a voting station that opened seven hours late in Freetown during the presidential vote. — AFP



ATHENS: Greek former prime minister and leader of Greece's conservative party New Democracy, Kyriakos Mitsotakis votes at a polling station during the general election in Athens on June 25, 2023. — AFP

Greece votes again with conservatives eyeing majority

ATHENS: Greek voters headed to the polls again Sunday in an election where conservative front-runner Kyriakos Mitsotakis is seeking a second term and an absolute parliamentary majority to form a "stable government". The 55-year-old Harvard graduate, who steered Greece from the coronavirus pandemic back to two consecutive years of strong growth, had already scored a thumping win in an election just a month ago. But having fallen short of five seats in parliament to be able to form a single-party government, Mitsotakis chose to ask 9.8 million Greek voters back to the ballot boxes. Casting his vote, Mitsotakis, who hails from one of Greece's most influential political families said the country is "voting for a second time in a few weeks to get a stable and effective government".

With surveys ahead of the election giving the conservative leader a comfortable margin ahead, his nearest rival, former leftist prime minister Alexis Tsipras, urged voters not to give Mitsotakis such a big majority that would allow his party to act without checks and balances. The vote will decide "whether we will have an uncontrolled government or balance in our democracy and political system," Tsipras said, casting his ballot. Mitsotakis trounced Tsipras by more than 20 percentage points in the May election.

As election rules this time round would accord up to 50 bonus seats to the winner of the vote, Mitsotakis's New Democracy party is widely projected to emerge victorious. The main danger facing him would be a larger no-show rate at the polls because of the perceived foregone outcome.

Another factor that could affect Mitsotakis' chances at an outright majority would be the number of small parties that make it past the three percent threshold. Urging a strong turnout, he has warned of the possibility of a third election if he fails again to get a majority. "I hope we don't have to meet again in early August," he told Skai TV on Friday.

Achievements

Mitsotakis became prime minister in 2019, beating then premier Tsipras, on a vow to end a decade of economic crisis. That election was the first in the EU nation's post-bailout era, at a time when businesses and workers were ailing under the burden of heavy taxes imposed by Tsipras's Syriza party to build a budget surplus demanded by international creditors.

Over the next four years, tax burdens were eased, and while the Covid-19 pandemic wiped out Greece's vital tourism revenues, the country has since bounced back strongly with growth of 8.3 percent in 2021 and 5.9 percent in 2022.

That was helped in part by over 57 billion euros (\$62 billion) dished out by the government to cushion the impact of the health crisis and inflation. Mitsotakis also had licence to spend under the EU's more relaxed pandemic-era rules. — AFP

International

US aircraft carrier in Vietnam

US, Vietnam celebrate 10th anniversary of 'comprehensive partnership'

DANANG: A US aircraft carrier arrived in the central Vietnamese city of Danang on Sunday, weeks after Hanoi protested against Chinese vessels sailing in its waters. The USS Ronald Reagan's port call in Danang comes as the United States and Vietnam celebrate the 10th anniversary of their "comprehensive partnership". The aircraft carrier—part of the US 7th Fleet "supporting a free and open Indo-Pacific region"—arrived with two escort ships, the guided-missile cruisers USS Antietam and USS Robert Smalls, the American Embassy in Hanoi said.

US Navy officials disembarked and shook hands with their Vietnamese military counterparts in a brief ceremony on Sunday afternoon. "More than 5,000 sailors aboard USS Ronald Reagan are eager to visit Danang and experience Vietnamese culture," USS Ronald Reagan's commanding officer Captain Daryle Cardone said in a statement.

Vietnam and the US share increasingly close trade links, as well as concerns over China's growing strength in the region. A Chinese survey vessel, multiple coast guard ships and fishing boats operated for several weeks in Vietnam's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, prompting a demand that they leave from Vietnam's foreign ministry.

The boats eventually departed in early June. China claims most of the resource-rich waterway despite competing claims from other Southeast Asian nations including Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia. "The visit gives that message that Vietnam is continuing to balance against China by improving its security relationship with the US, and with other outside powers," Nguyen The Phuong, a PhD candidate in maritime security at the University of New South Wales Canberra, told AFP.

Bilateral ties

The US aircraft carrier's visit follows the arrival of



DANANG: The USS Antietam guided missile cruiser, which is part of the carrier group accompanying the US Navy's USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, pulls into port in Danang on June 25, 2023. —AFP

Indian naval ships in Danang last month, as well as a port call by Japan's largest warship in Cam Ranh, a city on the southeastern coast, earlier this week. Pham Thu Hang, spokesperson for Vietnam's foreign ministry, said earlier in the week that port calls were an "ordinary friendship exchange for peace, stability, and cooperation and development in the region and the world".

Strong bilateral ties between the US and Vietnam are key for Washington if it wants to remain the dominant power in the region, Phuong said. "The US hopes that by sending one of their most formidable

naval assets, they will have a trusted and reliable partner in Vietnam," he said.

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a quick visit to Hanoi in April and made it clear he wanted to upgrade diplomatic ties. This is the third visit by a US aircraft carrier to Vietnam after a historic port call by the USS Carl Vinson in 2018, the first time such a ship had arrived in the country since the end of the war. The visit includes several cultural and community events, such as a US Navy band concert, a visit to an orphanage and sports matches. The USS Ronald Reagan has been based in Japan since 2015. —AFP

Investigative outlet sets key test for media freedom in SA

JOHANNESBURG: The amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism draws its name from the Zulu word for dung beetle—a diligent species that fulfils a crucial role. The tiny South African non-profit specialises in delving into political corruption—"digging dung and fertilizing democracy," its editor-in-chief, Sam Sole, said with a chuckle in a recent interview with AFP.

Sole, a lean and bearded 61-year-old, has had little opportunity for laughter of late. His organisation has been running a lengthy investigation into a powerful businessman accused of unscrupulous business dealings, including with President Emmerson Mnangagwa of neighbouring Zimbabwe.

The probe has unleashed a legal and financial headache for the centre as it faces a full-throated challenge from Zinaid Moti, the tycoon in question. The case reaches a key stage on Tuesday when the High Court will hear Moti's objections that the investigation is based on stolen documents which should be handed over. The outcome has huge importance for whistleblowers who until now have been largely shielded from identification by the law.

Graft scandals

South Africa emerged from the tentacles of apartheid nearly three decades ago, astonishing the world with a brand-new liberal constitution and commitment to free space and a multi-racial society. But the past decade or so has seen the nation fall into a dark spiral of crime, cronyism and graft, which in some areas has burrowed deep into its institutions.

Legal fees

Sole said he later learned that his phone calls were being monitored for about six months at the height of the Zuma saga. Today, though, in the Moti affair, "the level of pushback in terms of the PR campaign and legal campaign is unprecedented," he said.

The Black Business Council, a pressure group of black entrepreneurs, this week declared its support for Moti, who has built an empire in property, min-

ing, aviation and supplies. The Moti group, it said, had suffered an "invasion of privacy" by certain journalists "who have increasingly distinguished themselves by their almost singular focus on targeting black people for denigration, vilification, and badmouthing."

Sole pointed to the financial strain of having to mount a defence against someone with deep pockets. "This case has already cost us one-twentieth of our annual budget in legal fees," he said. "When does it become a slap suit to shut people up? That's what is at the core of this suit. It is the biggest challenge we have faced in our 13-year history."

Mathatha Tsedu, 71, a journalist for 40 years before he retired in 2018, said South Africa's tradition of courageous journalism dated back to the apartheid era. "It comes from the history of defiance of the general approach of the South African media, fighting the system back then and not wanting to become part of the system that was in place at the time," he said.

Branko Brkic, editor-in-chief of the Daily Maverick, said, "We have a talented generation of investigative journalists doing the right thing... We are an incredibly stubborn bunch." But, he said, the media in South Africa were in dire straits and amaBhungane itself was "fighting for its life." "AmaBhungane is absolutely vital to the survival of South Africa's democracy," he said. "If shady businessmen shut us up and bring us to bankruptcy, then we have a serious systemic problem." —AFP

the constitutional court to issuing verdicts on constitutional matters including laws, disputes and others. MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said he has submitted a draft law to immunize the Assembly against getting nullified by the constitutional court. He said the amendment requires that decrees related to dissolving the Assembly or calling for parliamentary elections must be verified by the constitutional court before they become effective.

Five lawmakers meanwhile submitted a draft law that calls for comprehensive changes to the formation of the constitutional court. The amendments call for making the court completely independent, even from the rest of the judiciary. The bill calls for establishing the constitutional court with seven members, five from the judiciary, to be appointed by the supreme judicial council, one member to be appointed by the government and the seventh member to be elected by the National Assembly from outside its members.

The chair of the constitutional court must be elected from the five judges and his term should be for four years, which can be renewed only once. According to the draft law, Amiri decrees dissolving the Assembly and calling for parliamentary polls must be sent to the court immediately after they are issued.

the COVID pandemic, when about 2.5 million people took part. Only 10,000 were allowed in 2020, at the height of the global outbreak, rising to nearly 59,000 in 2021. Last year's cap of one million has been removed. Saudi businessman Samir Al-Zafni said all his hotels in Makkah and Madinah are at full capacity until the first week of July. "This year there is not a single vacant bed in our group of 67 hotels," he told AFP.

The hajj also demonstrates social reforms in the deeply conservative kingdom. This year's pilgrimage will be the biggest since Saudi Arabia scrapped rules in 2021 that banned women who weren't accompanied by a male relative. Waiting for a car to take him out of the vicinity of Makkah's Grand Mosque, Moroccan merchant Abdullah Al-Haqouni, 65, said he was struggling with the temperature. "I am very tired. The heat is unbearable," he said, carrying a green umbrella. "God help us." —AFP

Ghanem submits draft reform bills...

Continued from Page 1

before the election date so as to avoid nullifying the elections. The lawmaker said he also resubmitted a draft law calling to adjust the government pay-scale, adding the bill is expected to raise salaries of 90 percent of Kuwaiti government employees.

Meanwhile, the Assembly's legal and legislative committee began on Sunday studying the issue of the constitutional court. A number of lawmakers have submitted draft laws aimed at regulating the work of the country's top court, which has annulled the National Assembly three times since Feb 2012. MP Bader Al-Mulla said he and a number of MPs have submitted a draft law to amend the law governing the constitutional court with the aim to prevent the court from looking into Amiri decrees dissolving the Assembly and inviting voters to cast their ballots. Mulla said this will prevent the court from annulling elections and scrapping the Assembly.

The proposed amendment will restrict the role of

Massive crowds of pilgrims...

Continued from Page 1

Others splashed water on pilgrims as temperatures climbed towards 45 degrees Celsius. Thousands of paramedics were on standby inside the Grand Mosque. Saudi authorities said more than 32,000 health workers will be on hand to treat cases of heatstroke, dehydration and exhaustion. The hajj, which costs at least \$5,000 a person, makes billions of dollars a year for Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, which is trying to diversify its economy beyond fossil fuels.

This year's will be the biggest since 2019, before

Wagner halts revolt but Putin...

Continued from Page 1

claimed that "in 24 hours we got 200 kilometers from Moscow". His long-standing feud with military top brass over the conduct of the Russian operation in Ukraine boiled over on Saturday, when Wagner forces seized the Rostov base and advanced towards the capital. Putin denounced the action as treason and vowed to punish the perpetrators, accusing them of pushing Russia to the brink of civil war — only to then accept a rapidly cobbled-together agreement to avert Moscow's most serious security crisis in decades.

Within hours of Prigozhin's surprise announcement that his forces would return to base to avoid "spilling Russian blood", the Kremlin said Putin's former ally would leave for Belarus. Russia would drop the "armed rebellion" charges against Prigozhin and not prosecute Wagner troops, it said. Ukraine reveled in the chaos, stepping up its own counter-offensive against Russian forces in the country and mocking Putin's apparent humiliation.

Analysts also said the deal had exposed weakness in the Russian president's grip on power. Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko said he had negotiated the truce with Prigozhin. Moscow thanked him, but observers noted that an intervention by Lukashenko, usually seen as Putin's junior partner, was itself an embarrassment. Little is known

Modi on first visit to Egypt...

Continued from Page 1

Egypt has suffered a drawn-out economic crisis in which the currency has lost half its value in a year. The government has in recent months moved to diversify foreign investors, which also include Gulf powers and China. Sisi bestowed Cairo's highest honor, the Order of the Nile, on Modi and the two leaders affirmed their "mutual commitment" to strengthen relations. This would include "increasing high-level visits", facilitating direct flights between the capitals, and "developing Indian invest-

Afghan leader says women 'saved from oppression' by Taliban

KABUL: Afghanistan's supreme leader said Sunday the country's women were being saved from "traditional oppressions" by the adoption of Islamic governance and their status as "free and dignified human beings" restored.

In a statement marking this week's Eid al-Adha holiday, Hibatullah Akhundzada—who rarely appears in public and rules by decree from the Taliban's birthplace in Kandahar—said steps had been taken to provide women with a "comfortable and prosperous life according to Islamic Sharia".

The United Nations expressed "deep concern" last week that women were being deprived of their rights under Afghanistan's Taliban government and warned of systematic gender apartheid. Since returning to power in August 2021, Taliban authorities have stopped girls and women from attending high school or university, banned them from parks, gyms and public baths, and ordered them to cover up when leaving home.

They have also barred them from working for the UN or NGOs, while most female government employees have been dismissed from their jobs or are being paid to stay at home.

However, Akhundzada said "necessary steps have been taken for the betterment of women as half of the society". "All institutions have been obliged to help women in securing marriage, inheritance and other rights," his statement read.

Guaranteed rights

Akhundzada said a six-point decree issued in December 2021 guaranteed women their rights. Among other things, the decree outlawed forced marriages and enshrined the right to inheritance and divorce.

"The negative aspects of the past 20-year occupation related to women's hijab and misguidance will end soon," Akhundzada said.

A report to the UN's Human Rights Council last week by Richard Bennett, the special rapporteur for Afghanistan, said the plight of women and girls in the country "was among the worst in the world".

"Grave, systematic and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid," Bennett said.

UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada Al-Nashif added: "Over the past 22 months, every aspect of women's and girls' lives has been restricted." "They are discriminated against in every way." Despite his rare public appearances, Akhundzada has regularly issued lengthy "state-of-the-nation"-style statements ahead of important Muslim festivals and holidays.

"At the national level, the independence of Afghanistan has been restored once again," he said. He praised Afghanistan's economic resilience, efforts to eradicate poppy cultivation, and the improvement in national security. "It is our shared responsibility to protect and serve our Islamic system," he said. "The current system is the result of the sacrifices of thousands of mujahideen. Let's stand by each other, eliminate conspiracies, value security and prosperity and work together for its further enhancement." — AFP

about the deal, with Minsk saying simply that "negotiations continued throughout the day".

Asked if Prigozhin had been given a guarantee that he would be able to leave to Belarus, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told domestic media: "It is the word of the president of Russia." In Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky's senior aide Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted: "Prigozhin humiliated Putin/the state and showed that there is no longer a monopoly on violence."

Russia insisted the rebellion had no impact on its faltering Ukraine campaign and the day after the mutiny said it had repelled new offensive attacks by Ukrainian forces. Kyiv, however, said the unrest offered a "window of opportunity" for its long-awaited counter-offensive. Ukraine also said Sunday that the death toll on this weekend's strike on Kyiv rose to five, with two more bodies recovered from rubble in the capital's Solomyanski district.

Wagner fighters were often thrown into the front of Russia's advance in Ukraine, made up of volunteers, ex-security officers as well as thousands of convicts Prigozhin had recruited. The outfit also conducts several operations in the Middle East and Africa. These missions are seen to have the Kremlin's backing and amount to Russian influence operations to curry favor with African governments and win access to mineral resources.

Independent political analyst Konstantin Kalachev told AFP: "The crisis of institutions and trust was not obvious to many in Russia and the West yesterday. Today, it is clear. 'Yesterday's call for unity made by representatives of the elites only confirmed this. Behind these is a crisis of institutions and fears for themselves," he said. — AFP

ments in Egypt", according to the presidency in Cairo.

India is already Egypt's seventh-largest trading partner, according to data from Cairo's central bank, with trade reaching \$7 billion last year. The two leaders agreed in January to increase Indian investments in Egypt, which currently stand at over \$3.15 billion, including through a potential "dedicated land area for Indian industries in the Suez Canal Economic Zone". Those projects include a \$12 billion green hydrogen plant to be built by Indian firm ACME.

In 2022, as Russia's Ukraine invasion drove up global grain prices, India banned wheat exports to protect its reserves and rein in inflation, but granted an exception to Egypt, the world's biggest wheat importer. Modi invited Sisi to a G20 summit India is hosting in September. — AFP



Sam Sole

Business

MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023

German economy bidding goodbye to years of plenty

Business leaders and experts predict 'hard times to come'



HAGEN, Germany: Locomotives are parked on train tracks of German railway operator Deutsche Bahn at the railway freight station in Hagen, western Germany. Transport across much of Germany will be paralyzed on Monday, March 27, 2023, as workers strike demanding higher wages to cope with surging inflation, the latest industrial action in Europe's top economy. — AFP

BERLIN: On his many visits to semiconductor factories and electric car plants, Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz bangs the drum for an economy at the forefront of an industrial transformation. But the picture painted by business leaders and experts is less rosy, predicting hard times to come for Europe's largest economy. Having dipped into recession at the beginning of the year, Germany looks set to finish the year in the red - and at the back of the pack among its euro-zone competitors.

The government is the only one left still predicting GDP will grow this year, while the main economic institutes and the IMF are looking at a drop of 0.2 to 0.4 percent. Soaring inflation, painful interest rate rises, a sluggish recovery in its key export market China, and high energy costs are all weighing on activity.

The malaise might be more than temporary, some analysts warn. "We currently see the country faced by a growing mountain of challenges," said

Siegfried Russwurm, head of the influential BDI industry lobby. A growing number of businesses, including small and midsize companies, are working on "moving part of their activities out of Germany", Russwurm said at the BDI's annual conference. In the newspapers, the spectre of Germany as the "sick man of Europe" is back, harking back to the period before 2000 when the country struggled to compete on international markets and faced high levels of unemployment.

New era

Scholz, who became chancellor in late 2021, prefers to point to a different economic era. In an interview with German media in March, he said the push to achieve climate neutrality by 2045 would bring back "levels of growth like in the 1950s and 1960s", the age of West Germany's postwar "economic miracle".

For the Social Democrat chancellor, the massive

spending needed to install new wind turbines, build electric vehicles, make steel production less polluting or produce heat pumps will create a virtuous economic circle. But the vision of a new economic golden age thanks to the transition to green energy leaves some experts sceptical. The switchover will first of all see billions of euros sunk into "replacing the existing stock" of fossil-fuel technologies with renewable ones "with significantly elevated costs", Russwurm said. "That will not lead to extra economic growth in the short term."

"We will only reap the reward of this investment in the distant future, when we have effectively managed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," Timo Wollmershaeuser of the economic think-tank the Ifo institute told German media this week. Relatively sluggish growth of less than one percent awaits Germany over the next few years, the country's main economic institutes predict. "Growth could be significantly weaker over

this decade than in the 2010s, years of supposed prosperity," said Marcel Fratzscher, head of the DIW think-tank.

The country is likewise held back by structural weaknesses that are stymying economic performance: slow bureaucracy, low levels of digitalization and an ageing population that could lead to labor shortages. "If the population sinks, GDP will not grow either," Wollmershaeuser said. With the economy heavily reliant on manufacturing, Germany looks to suffer from energy costs that have risen in the wake of the war in Ukraine, even though they have fallen from their early peaks.

Russia was long the main source of gas for Germany, supplying huge volumes at relatively low prices to the country's biggest industrial groups. "Energy costs, labor shortages, bureaucracy - for us, producing in Germany is no longer attractive," Ingeborg Neumann, head of the German textile industry association, said at the BDI event. — AFP

Mexico's 'super peso' creates both winners and losers

MEXICO CITY: Rosario Crisostomo thought she had been cheated when she counted the money sent by her son from the United States. But there was no scam, only a Mexican currency going from strength to strength. Once a laggard of the international foreign exchange market, the peso is among the world's best performing currencies this year. A combination of high interest rates in Latin America's second-largest economy, financial stability as well as inflows of remittances and foreign investment have seen the Mexican currency post double-digit percentage gains against the dollar in 2023.

"I thought they were cheating me, telling me that the dollar was low to give me less, but then I saw that they weren't," Crisostomo told AFP from the town of Piaxtla, in the central state of Puebla, where she lives with her grandson. Some 4.6 million households across the country receive remittances — the country's largest source of foreign currency — largely thanks to the Mexican diaspora in the United States.

The government estimates that in 2023 remittances could exceed last year's record high of more than \$58 billion. This month the Mexican currency reached its strongest levels against the greenback since 2016, earning itself a new nickname — the "super peso." On Friday, it stood at around 17.1 per dollar, compared to 25 in March 2020 when the coronavirus pandemic began. Analysts say the peso's strength is in part due to the high level of the Mexican benchmark interest rate, which is now 11.25 percent.

The lending rate has been raised to fight inflation but has also attracted investors seeking higher returns. The peso has also been boosted by the so-called "nearshoring" trend of US companies like electric carmaker Tesla moving their production closer to home in Mexico instead of Asia, experts say. "When investors look for where to invest and look at emerging markets, there's no other country with a narrative like Mexico with nearshoring," said Carlos Capistran, an economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.



MEXICO CITY: People buy and sell at a local market in Mexico City. The Mexican peso has appreciated by 13.45% against the dollar in 2023, due to factors such as a high reference rate, financial stability, massive remittance flows, and foreign investment. — AFP

In a country that has suffered major currency devaluations in the past, the peso's strength has been mostly hailed as good news. Leftist President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador refers to it as "the Mexican miracle." The touted benefits include a decrease in the size of Mexico's foreign debt, when its value is considered in pesos.

On the other hand, the strong currency reduces the earnings of exporters. "But I would say a strong peso is better than depreciation or devaluation, in general terms," Lopez Obrador said. Rogelio Garciamoreno, a farmer and vice president of the private National Agricultural Council, is both a winner and loser from the "super peso." "The prices of many inputs in dollars are falling. We hope to buy them at a better price," he said. The flip side is that the peso's strength is bad for food exports. "These products are priced in dollars. It hits us very hard because we received fewer pesos than we thought," Garciamoreno said.

The United States accounts for 80 percent of Mexican exports. The peso's appreciation also impacts "maquiladoras" — factories set up mainly by US companies in northern Mexico that use local workers to manufacture products to sell in the United States. "This big devaluation of the dollar is bad for the maquiladoras because they need more dollars to pay the payroll and taxes," said Jesus Manuel Salayandia of the National Chamber of the Transforma-

Siemens Energy shares plunge on wind turbine woes

FRANKFURT: Shares in Siemens Energy plummeted after the company warned that technical problems at its wind turbine unit were worse than previously thought. The group scrapped its full-year profit target and said it was setting aside more than a billion euros (\$1.1 billion) over the coming years to fix the issues at troubled wind turbine subsidiary Siemens Gamesa.

In a call with reporters, Siemens Gamesa CEO Jochen Eickholt said "the quality problems go well beyond what had been known hitherto." "The result of the current review will be much worse than even what I would have thought possible," he added. Shares in Siemens Energy plunged by more than 30 percent shortly after trading opened in Frankfurt, and ended the day about 37 percent lower.

Siemens Energy issued an ad-hoc statement late Thursday saying it had ordered a technical review

following a "substantial increase in failure rates of wind turbine components". The company also withdrew its profit guidance for the fiscal year, without giving an updated estimate. Earlier this year, Siemens Energy said it was expecting a net loss that would exceed the previous fiscal year's loss of 712 million euros. In the call with reporters, Siemens Energy CEO Christian Bruch called the developments "bitter" and "a huge setback".

Siemens Gamesa - created from the merger in 2017 of Spain's Gamesa and the wind energy division of German conglomerate Siemens - has been facing difficulties for years linked to soaring commodity prices and technical woes. At the heart of the latest troubles are faulty components, mainly related to bearings and rotor blades in onshore turbines, Eickholt said.

The company has seen just "a handful of failures" across a fleet of several thousand turbines, he said, but it now had to assess "what to expect over the next 20 years" and which preventative measures to take. "We do not have all the facts" yet, he said, warning that repair and maintenance costs could climb higher still. Siemens Gamesa was also facing other headwinds, Eickholt said, including "difficulties" ramping up production capacities in the offshore area. — AFP



LOWER SAXONY: Photo shows a worker standing next to rotor hubs of wind turbines at the Siemens Gamesa factory in Cuxhaven, northwestern Germany. — AFP

Strange bedfellows: Rivals embrace Tesla EV chargers

Elon Musk's 'superchargers' winning endorsements

NEW YORK: Tesla's electric charging network has long pleased electric car mavens. But Elon Musk's "superchargers" are now winning endorsements from a more unlikely group: other auto companies. Ford was the first to announce a partnership with Musk in late May, followed by General Motors earlier this month. On Tuesday, EV truck company Rivian joined the bandwagon, saying it looks forward "to continuing to find new ways to accelerate EV adoption."

Under the partnerships, Musk has agreed to let consumers with autos from rival brands utilize its national network. Appearing with Musk on Twitter Spaces, GM Chief Executive Mary Barra said she was "really excited" to almost double the volume of chargers available to GM vehicle owners, adding that she hoped the Tesla system, known as the North American Charging Standard (NACS), could become a unified standard for the continent, which would "enable more mass adoption."

The ascendancy of Tesla's network reflects the system's reputation for reliability, as well as the sluggish expansion of rival EV charging options amid supply chain problems and a ponderous rollout of a giant federal program. The embrace by Detroit auto giants has been seen as Musk's latest coup, helping to fuel a roughly 40-percent surge in Tesla shares since the May 25 Ford announcement.

Still, many EV experts say it is premature to declare NACS the winner. "We may be heading that way, but it's still too early to say Tesla and NACS has won," said industry consultant Loren McDonald, who thinks the market's short-run evolution could be akin to the smartphone split between Apple and Android, with two leading standards. EV experts note that other automakers with ambitious US electric vehicle programs, such as Volkswagen and Hyundai, continue to favor the rival standard, known as the combined charging system (CCS).

"Ultimately we'll have one standard, but how long that takes remains to be seen," said John Eichberger, executive director of the Transportation Energy Institute. Eichberger said a Musk-dominated charging system could raise antitrust concerns, adding that it is not yet clear how far the Tesla CEO will go in sharing a technology that had until recently been proprietary. "If we are going to gravitate towards one default source for charging, then it needs to be an open-source technology," Eichberger said.

Delays, supply chain woes

Until recently, many in the industry assumed CCS was in line to become the national standard,

in part because it is explicitly required as the connector to be used in a new federal program. The initiative, the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program, which was established in the 2021 infrastructure bill signed into law by President Joe Biden, provides \$5 billion in funds for states to build EV charging networks.

In February, the White House unveiled an agreement with Musk in which Tesla agreed to make at least 7,500 chargers nationwide open to non-Tesla EVs by the end of 2024, a move that allows Tesla to potentially qualify for NEVI funds. There has been no indication that the White House will shift its policy, but states are reconsidering their implementation in light of recent industry developments. Texas plans to require each charge port to have a CCS connector and a NACS connector, a Texas Department of Transportation spokesman told AFP on Friday.

Tesla's shift comes amid concerns there won't be enough chargers. A January 2023 forecast by S&P Global concluded that the US charging system is "not nearly robust enough to support a maturing electric vehicle market," saying that the number of EV chargers in the country would need to quadruple between 2022 and 2025. The number of EV chargers "has been increasing, but very slowly compared to the number of vehicles coming into the market," said Bertrand Rakoto, global automotive practice leader at Ducker Carlisle, a consultancy.

Industry experts have cited a number of reasons for the sluggish pace of the rollout, including supply chain shortages of key materials; challenges in negotiating affordable electricity contracts with utilities; and delays with NEVI because of uncertainty about federal guidelines or difficulties in states that have no experience in permitting EV chargers. A Department of Energy spokesperson said the agency has been "working hard to stand up" the program and listed seven jurisdictions that have released requests for proposals.

But McDonald, who closely tracks state NEVI programs, said no states have awarded contracts to build EV chargers so far. He does not expect most of the chargers to be built until 2025 or later. Much industry focus has been on the need to build fast chargers to address range anxiety: the fear of drivers being stranded without access to charging capacity. But McDonald believes this concern is overrated, viewing the real priority as adding chargers at homes, apartment buildings and condos. — AFP

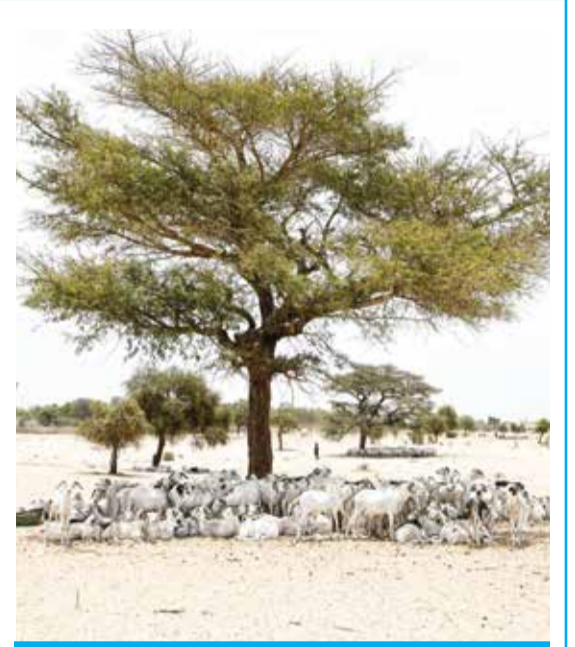
Senegal's unrest stokes instability for sheep farmers

SEWEKHAYE: An outbreak of violence in Senegal is having a ricochet effect on the country's sheep herders ahead of a Muslim festival which is a peak time for business. The deadliest clashes in years broke out in the capital Dakar on June 1 after opposition leader Ousmane Sonko was sentenced to two years' jail, casting a pall over his bid to contest the 2024 presidential elections. For sheep farmers, the crisis has happened at the worst possible moment.

For months, they have been gearing up for Tabaski, a festival also called Eid Al-Kabir or Eid Al-Adha, when Senegalese traditionally sacrifice a sheep for a family feast. This year's festival falls next Thursday. Near Sewekhaye, a livestock town around 100 kilometers from Dakar, Cheikh Ba looked at his flock roaming in a sun-scorched valley dotted with little white-sand dunes. The 52-year-old is among many herders who had halted there, too fearful of entering the capital. "Our original destination was Dakar, but we're afraid of losing our animals there because of the protests," said Ba.

Sixteen people died in the three-day unrest, according to the authorities, while Amnesty International puts the toll at 23. The opposition is planning a new unauthorized demonstration in Dakar on Sunday. "Sheep traders were attacked in Keur Massar," a suburb of Dakar, said Ismaila Sow, an official with the national sheep breeders' association. "We have advised farmers to hole up in waiting areas in the countryside and avoid the cities."

In Sewekhaye, seeking shade under acacia trees, straw tents or tarpaulins, herders watched as their animals greedily devoured food from feeders and took water from plastic troughs. The bush around the town is dotted with the bodies of rotting sheep, many of which have died from stress or dehydration, said El Hadji Diallo Diop, a vet. Mohamed El Moctar, a Mauritanian herder in his 50s, said he had set off from Aioun, in southeastern Mauritania, on June 9. He first crossed jihadist-torn Mali, entered Senegal and then chose



SEWEKHAYE: A herd of goats takes shelter from the sun under a tree at Sewekhaye, one of the country's main slaughter markets. — AFP

to stay in Sewekhaye. "I've lost more than 100 out of 200 sheep since I've arrived," he said.

Shortfall

The secretary general of the livestock ministry, Ousmane Mbaye, told AFP that there was a "deficit" of sheep for Dakar as the festival loomed. Herders are reluctant to bring sheep to Dakar both because of the unrest but also a decline in neighborhood locations where live animals are sold, the authorities say. Many such spaces have been turned to public parks or are construction sites.

The government keeps a very close eye on sheep numbers as Tabaski approaches. Its census says, quite precisely, that Senegal currently has 559,215 animals - more than 18,000 more than this time last year. But the supply problems caused by the clashes have caused a particular bottleneck for Dakar, where there is deficit of some 40,000 sheep compared with 2022. The shortfall has caused prices to surge, leading to a wave of grumbling and official promises to "progressively reduce the gap" before festival day. Amina Diallo, 62, said she paid 165,000 CFA francs (\$280) for a sheep last year. — AFP

AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 22 JUNE 2023

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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	33,666	7,835.38	0.7%	4.5%	-3.5%	516,695,636	156,109,032	29,965	17.1	1.2	79.1%
Main Market	8,903	5,466.60	0.3%	0.5%	-2.3%	456,419,693	41,349,267	19,405	14.4	0.8	20.9%
All Share	42,569	7,049.33	0.7%	3.7%	-3.3%	973,115,329	197,458,299	49,370	15.0	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	25,469	1,711.95	0.9%	3.7%	-4.6%	185,800,767	80,623,393	12,002	19.6	1.2	59.83%
Basic Materials	516	914.55	-5.4%	-0.4%	5.7%	5,196,294	3,744,503	1,670	8.1	1.4	1.21%
Consumer Discretionary	1,047	1,562.37	-0.7%	1.5%	5.1%	75,773,080	6,113,479	3,294	13.9	0.9	2.46%
Consumer Staples	184	606.53	7.9%	20.6%	26.4%	8,910,564	4,490,009	1,042	NM	1.1	0.43%
Energy	214	1,026.40	2.7%	3.7%	-9.8%	6,020,894	602,397	587	9.2	0.8	0.50%
Financial Services	4,326	1,231.70	0.6%	4.0%	-2.0%	422,846,176	46,129,706	13,435	21.9	0.8	10.16%
Health Care	224	451.26	-0.3%	-1.6%	-2.3%	12,011	5,585.24	4	9.9	0.9	0.53%
Industrials	3,509	1,011.06	1.0%	4.5%	-6.3%	66,496,745	29,936,397	7,200	17.4	0.9	8.24%
Insurance	872	2,122.75	-0.7%	-0.6%	36.9%	870,040	191,424	236	10.8	0.8	2.05%
Real Estate	2,587	1,206.24	0.4%	8.2%	-0.2%	178,894,744	16,720,646	7,407	14.2	0.6	6.08%
Technology	9	632.92	-2.1%	-8.3%	-9.1%	22,540	1,969	14	NM	0.8	0.02%
Telecommunications	3,391	1,109.85	0.1%	1.2%	-6.1%	13,611,355	7,213,988	1,936	11.0	1.4	7.97%
Utilities	219	523.68	6.4%	8.2%	5.8%	8,660,119	1,684,803	543	16.3	2.0	0.51%

Top Gainers						Top Losers					
Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
EKTTITAB	16	40.71%	19,479,459	274,770	423	TAMINV	546	-9.60%	5,124	3,092	7
GFC	73	24.41%	91,938	6,086	31	ALOLA	52.3	-8.25%	13,587,946	772,815	636
UPAC	250	18.48%	191,561	42,105	21	ALAQARIA	29	-7.77%	40,061	1,168	5
TAAMEER	18.1	16.03%	3,524,374	62,087	134	CLEANING	27	-6.80%	1,082,675	32,396	94
WETHAQ	28	14.58%	161,675	4,402	27	MASHAER	55	-6.68%	225,567	12,370	44

Top Volume						Top Value					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	88	0.80%	77,049,089	6,856,776	2,200	KFH	749	1.22%	43,807,968	32,616,029	3,906
AAYAN	150	0.67%	56,981,656	8,730,812	1,073	NBK	941	0.43%	16,321,782	15,346,591	1,636
JYAD	20	0.52%	56,547,317	1,152,958	1,269	AGLTY	628	-1.57%	20,911,575	13,251,166	2,680
KPROJ	134	3.08%	44,088,613	5,872,316	899	AAYAN	150	0.67%	56,981,656	8,730,812	1,073
KFH	749	1.22%	43,807,968	32,616,029	3,906	GBK	263	-0.38%	29,140,890	7,706,318	926

VALUE TRADED

MARKET SUMMARY

Premier market volume and value dropped 37% and 31%, respectively. Main Market volume increased 1% while value dropped 8%.

Premier index reached a resistance level of which will try to overcome. Main index failed to overcome the resistance and now is retreating to previous support.

Technically, All Share index closed at 7049, support level at 7041, 7000, and 6981, while resistance at 7085. Premier index closed at 7835, support levels at 7784, 7767, and 7748, while resistance at 7864. Main index closed at 5466, support levels at 5447, 5424, and 5393, while resistance at 5467.

Boubyan Bank awarded the 'Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait'

Award highlights steady steps built on clear strategies

KUWAIT: Global Finance announced its awards for banks in Kuwait and the region, which saw Boubyan Bank's recognition for the eighth consecutive year with the award for the "Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait" for the year 2023. This came in light of the bank's achievement of sustainable growth across its various financial indicators and market shares, as well as its outstanding performance and the materialization of its vision which targets the growth of its customer base and offering solutions and products which meet the needs of various segments in a manner that provides them with a unique banking experience.

Boubyan Bank's CEO - Private, Consumer & Digital Banking, Abdullah Al-Tuwaijri, commented: "Thanks to Almighty Allah, we managed to succeed in a new challenge at the level of Islamic financial institutions in Kuwait by winning this special award, which reiterates our keenness on success and highlights our steady steps built on well-studied strategies that enabled us to make great leaps and growth across all our financial indicators, especially our market shares across various sectors."

"Boubyan Bank's solid performance is the fruit of its unwavering commitment to offering sustainable solutions and products that achieve sustainable growth over the long term. All this was achieved by the special efforts of our human resources, and we remain committed to maintaining our success across all business sectors side by side with fi-

ancial results," he added. Global Finance explained its rationale behind giving this award to the bank, stating that over the past years Boubyan managed to make great leaps in terms of growing its financial indicators, especially its market shares, in one of the most competitive markets in the region.



Abdullah Al-Tuwaijri

Always closer to customers

Al-Tuwaijri elaborated: "This award crowns our efforts and commitment to customer satisfaction. We are keen on being closer to our customers all the time to guarantee that we offer them quality banking services and products that meet their expectations and needs, thus raising the bar for offering outstanding service levels that exceed customers' expectations." He added: "Boubyan Bank always seeks to improve the level of banking services for a more creative and flourishing future, where customer's convenience is our priority. This strategic investment that meets the various demands of all segments of customers will reinforce the position of Boubyan Bank as a leading Islamic bank in banking and digital solutions, locally, regionally, and internationally," he added.

Year full of challenges

During Q1 of this year, the bank recorded KD 27.6 million in profits, thus recording KD 20.6 million in net profits at a growth rate of 22% compared with last year, while the earnings per share amount to 4.4 fils. Additionally, the bank's assets grew to KD 8 billion at a growth rate of 8% compared with last year, while the bank's financing portfolio grew by 5% to reach KD 6 billion, and operating income grew by 6% to KD 52.6 million, whereas the bank's market share of local financing increased to 11.4%.

This year witnessed the launch of the bank's new brand identity titled "Imagine the possibilities". The new brand identity is aligned with the bank's success and achievements over the past years as well as its ambitions for the future. The rebranding process aimed to keep up with our growth, while expressing the bank's ambition and passion to build a strong relationship with customers, and to refresh our messages to various segments of customers and stakeholders and, thus, we updated our logo, our mission, vision, and Boubyan's core values.

Boubyan Bank has continued topping the pyramid of customer service in Kuwait, evidenced by earning two awards from Service Hero, the international consumer-driven customer satisfaction index. The bank was named the Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service for the 13th year in a row since 2010, in addition to receiving the First Place Award in Customer Service as a Country Winner across all economic sec-



tors in Kuwait. Additionally, the bank was ranked on the list of the top 10 most valuable and strongest Kuwaiti brands in terms of valuation for 2023, in addition to being ranked the fastest growing at a growth rate of 33% as per Brand Finance, the international brand-valuation consultancy.

Zambia cheers after landmark debt deal

LUSAKA: Jubilant lawmakers in Lusaka sang Zambia's national anthem on Friday after foreign lenders agreed to restructure part of the country's debt, a move that entrepreneurs said brought hope for the crippled economy. Zambia defaulted on its \$18.6-billion foreign debt in 2020 at the height of the COVID pandemic. The restructuring deal, covering around a third of the tab, came on Thursday at a two-day summit in Paris hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Relief was palpable in the capital Lusaka, where legislators in parliament belted out the national anthem in celebration. The victory is a major success for President Hakainde Hichilema, who swept to power in 2021 on the back of promises to revive the economy, root out graft and woo back scared investors. "Unlike our colleagues that defaulted on repaying the debt we have secured a debt restructuring program," said Garry Nkombo, an MP with Hichilema's party.

In the city's business district, groups of people shared copies of the morning newspapers, whose front pages were dominated by the debt story. "It's finally done," the Zambia Daily Mail headlined, while the Times of Zambia led with "Bail-out". Mooya Chilala, who runs a small business selling fertilizer and seeds, said he believed the deal would ease economic pressure on Zambia and improve living conditions for many people.

"This is something that the previous government attempted for years," the 44-year-old father of four said. "It's a good thing for the country." Zambia is Africa's biggest copper producer, with a population of nearly 20 million people. It ran up huge debts under former president Edgar Lungu, who borrowed heavily for infrastructure projects during his six years in power. Negotiations on restructuring had stumbled over differences between creditors, with the United States accusing China - the biggest single lender - of delaying an agreement.

'Debt sustainability'

A French official said the agreement covered \$6.3 billion of bilateral debt, of which \$4.1 billion is owed to China. Private creditors, who are owed \$6.8 billion, will have to "make a similar effort to what we have done," the official said. The country's total debt at the end of 2022 amounted to \$32.8 billion, including \$18.6 billion owed to foreign lenders, according to finance ministry figures. Part of the debt is held by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and multilateral development banks and is not covered by the restructuring. — AFP

Zimbabwe carbon credit's takeover spooks investors

BINGA: It is shortly after sunrise, and Peter Mudenda looks for elephant tracks on a dirt road surrounded by mopane trees. Once a farmer, the 49-year-old gave up the plough several years ago when a massive forest protection project was launched in Binga, a remote semi-arid district in northern Zimbabwe. He now makes a living digging fireguards, taking care of trees and keeping tabs on wildlife. "I was getting a good yield... but I was quick to appreciate that we could benefit more as a community from a conservancy," Mudenda told AFP.

The conservancy is part of a wider project that makes money selling carbon credits, a financial tool aimed at tackling climate change. But in Zimbabwe, the model has been updated by a shock announcement that the government intends to claim half of all revenues. As more

countries look to regulate the sector, the move has created uncertainty in a \$2 billion global market, stoking fears that other governments may follow suit, analysts say.

"The approach they've taken is quite radical and a bit blunt," said Gilles Dufasne of Carbon Market Watch, an advocacy group. The scheme in Binga is part of Kariba REDD+, the largest carbon credit initiative of its kind. Carbon credits aim at providing an important funding source for conservation. Companies or individuals buy credits from entities that remove or reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as investing in renewable energy, planting trees or nurturing old forests.

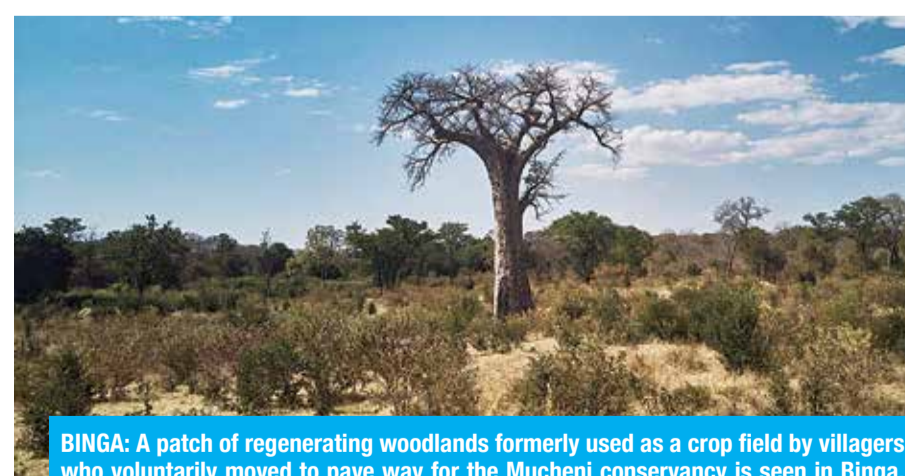
Each credit is worth the equivalent of one ton of carbon dioxide - a useful badge of honor for those keen on proving their green credentials. A partnership between Zimbabwean firm Carbon Green Investments and South Pole, a Swiss-based carbon offsets developer, Kariba REDD+ was launched 2011. It now covers 785,000 hectares (1.9 million acres) of forest, fostering a series of community-led activities from beekeeping

to ecotourism. Since its inception it has generated more than 100 million euros (\$110 million) from the sale of carbon credits, according to South Pole - a figure that is expected to mushroom.

Carbon credit boom

The global market is forecast to grow at least five-fold to \$10 billion by 2030, according to a 2023 estimate by oil giant Shell and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). Much of the trade happens between companies in a so-called voluntary market. But countries are also negotiating an international carbon offset trading system to reach their climate targets under the umbrella of United Nations-led climate talks.

South Pole says most of Kariba's income was produced over the past two years. Gucci and Nestle are among firms that have bought into it. Last month, Zimbabwe, which is cash strapped and in desperate need of foreign currency, said it wants a slice of the pie. Francis Vorhies, a conservation economist at South Africa's Stellenbosch University, said there was a logic behind Zimbabwe's



BINGA: A patch of regenerating woodlands formerly used as a crop field by villagers who voluntarily moved to pave way for the Mucheni conservancy is seen in Binga, Zimbabwe. — AFP

move, given that the national market was based largely on government-controlled resources.

But the new policy has spooked investors and locals alike. "This is business, not charity work. There are investors putting in their money," said Elmon Mudenda, a local councilor in Binga, who shares the same surname

as the former farmer but is not related to him. "Government must be careful to come up with friendly policies, so that we don't have communities going back to a mindset where they don't value the conservation of forests." Under the new policy, 50 percent of all revenue from carbon offset projects should go to the national treasury. — AFP

A hawkish week for central banks

KUWAIT: Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell delivered a testimony before congressional committees outlining his views on inflation and the economy following the decision to hold rates. On the inflation front, Powell said that the "pressures continue to run high, and the process of getting inflation back down to 2% has a long way to go." He was questioned by committee representatives regarding the Fed's employment mandate to which Powell reminded them "We still have historically low unemployment rates and high employment rates now, high participation, a very strong labor market."

Furthermore, some members raised concern that higher capital requirements in the banking sector could restrict lending and disproportionately affect smaller banks. Powell responded, "The capital requirements will be very, very skewed to the eight largest banks." Finally, in terms of monetary policy outlook, Powell stated, "nearly all FOMC participants expect that it will be appropriate to raise interest rates somewhat further by the end of the year." Markets are pricing in a 25bps rate hike for the upcoming meeting to potentially take the terminal rate between 5.25%-5.50% before ultimately pausing, despite some central bank speakers signaling that two further rate hikes could be in the cards.

US jobless claims

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits remained elevated at highs reached in November 2021, with 264,000 jobless claims coming in higher than expected and holding the previous level. The last three prints have deviated from the surprisingly resilient jobless claims reports, which used to come in at the high 100,000 to low 200,000 range in a sign that the Fed tightening could be softening an otherwise robust labor market.

US PMI declines

Business activity in the US private sector softened, with composite PMI falling to 53 from 54.3 previously. The decline was driven by the manufacturing sector, which came in at 46.3 from 48.3 in May. Meanwhile, the services PMI came in greater than expected but also declined from 54.9 in the previous month to 54.1 in June. Chris Williamson, chief economist at S&P Global said "The question remains as to how resilient service sector growth can be in the face of the manufacturing decline and the lagged effect of prior rate hikes." The Fed have been keeping an eye on sticky inflation in the services sector, which is less susceptible to immediate interest rate effects than manufacturing. The dollar gained against a basket of other currencies over the week, with the US dollar index last trading at 102.90.

Rates - 25th June, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0940	1.0841	1.1011	1.0889	1.0695	1.1090	1.0944
GBP	1.2817	1.2683	1.2838	1.2711	1.2610	1.2920	1.2717
JPY	141.80	141.20	143.91	143.68	142.70	145.85	141.68
CHF	0.8944	0.8905	0.9013	0.8973	0.8820	0.9150	0.8890

Euro-zone recession fears

Business activity in the Euro-zone slowed in June amid fears of deep economic worries for the bloc. The Euro-zone flash composite PMI dropped to 50.3 from 52.8 previously, considerably below the forecasted figure of 52.5. Both services and manufacturing PMI prints were below market expectations, at 52.4 and 43.6 respectively with manufacturing in particular entering deep contraction territory amid increased sensitivity to higher interest rates.

The bloc's economic powerhouse, Germany, also had prints come in below market expectations, with the composite PMI for Europe's largest economy falling to 50.8 from 53.9 previously. Furthermore, Germany has entered a technical recession following revised GDP contraction, which could be a sign of things to come as the European Central Bank tries to balance between combating elevated inflation and avoiding a hard landing.

In a release regarding the Euro-zone PMI prints, S&P Global said, "Although energy and supply chain worries have eased since late last year, June has seen a further escalation of concerns over demand growth, and in particular the impact of higher interest rates, and the resulting possibilities of recessions both in domestic markets and further afield." The EUR/USD currency pair is down slightly on the week, last trading at 1.0889.

SNB hikes rates by 25bps

The Swiss National Bank raised interest rates by 25bps to 1.75% and signaled that there is more to come. It is the fifth consecutive hike ever since the central bank pulled rates from negative territory. In a policy statement, the SNB said, "It cannot be ruled out that additional rises in the SNB policy rate will be necessary to ensure price stability over the medium term." The USD/CHF currency pair ended the week higher at 0.8973.

UK CPI higher than expected

Over in the UK, the latest CPI y/y reading has resulted in concern, with the latest print coming in at 8.7%, worse than the forecasted 8.4%. As the British economy was attempting to cope with Brexit and the

labor shortage that resulted in additional inflationary pressures, it was handed with two more blows, the first being COVID-19, and more recently, the increase in energy prices cause by the war in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, the economy managed to escape what was widely expected to be an inevitable recession in 2023. Although the major issue in the UK seems to be the stubborn price growth, the Bank of England remains behind their counterparts in the US and Europe in the tightening cycle, which resulted in a surprise interest rate decision by the central bank in order to catch up and fight elevated and sticky inflation.

BoE hikes by 50bps

The Bank of England delivered a 50bps hike to 5% following a surprise CPI reading as it attempts to fight elevated inflation and catch up to their counterparts in the US and EU. In its policy statement, the central bank stated, "If there were to be evidence of more persistent pressures, then further tightening in monetary policy would be required." The BoE also acknowledged the upside to inflationary pressures that might prove it to be more persistent than anticipated. Governor Andrew Bailey criticized "unsustainable" wage growth and a tight labor market as labor shortages are contributing to inflationary pressures following Brexit. Bailey said, "We cannot continue to have the current level of wage increases." He added that "It's important, then, that price setting and wage setting reflects that because the current levels, I'll be absolutely honest, are unsustainable." Finally, Bailey warned, "We're not expecting, we're not desiring a recession. But we will do what is necessary to bring inflation down to target."

UK PMI Slows

Business activity in the United Kingdom is showing signs of a slowdown with composite PMI coming in at 52.8 versus an expected 53.6. The manufacturing sector continues to remain in contraction territory at 46.2 versus 46.8 expected and 47.1 previously. Meanwhile, the services sector also declined to 53.7 from 55.2 previously, below expectations of 54.8. The GBP/USD currency pair ended the week down at 1.2711.



Thais don ghost masks to summon spirits at annual festival

Decked out in elaborate long-nosed masks and ruffled pants, hundreds of Thais banged cowbells and danced in a grand parade on Saturday at an annual ghost festival in the country's northeast.

But since the festival became a tourism drawcard, hand-painted masks have taken on more colorful and vibrant designs in recent years.

"A simple one would take around one to two weeks to make, but a more complicated design might take months," he told AFP. Locals believe it is bad luck to keep their masks after the festival, Pisit added.

"After the ceremony, we will bring them to Wat Pone Chai. After that, we will float the masks on the river because we believe that it symbolically washes away bad energy and negativity," Pisit said.

Tourists described the festival as a one-of-a-kind experience. "It's fantastic, it's absolutely unique. Never seen anything like this before," 69-year-old Australian retiree Colleen Duplock said.

Bangkok accountant Sonjai Vongpartamajaroen, 54, said it was her second year in a row visiting the festival. "In Bangkok, it's just a lot of tall buildings, (nicely) dressed people, a lot of fancy things, but no connection... Here you can see local people, they like to get together and they like to have fun," she told AFP.

"I think I will keep coming every year." Overnight, revellers dressed in ghost masks and mesmerizing costumes had danced the night away to techno tunes at a street party. — AFP

The streets of Dan Sai district in Loei province were awash with color and traditional music at the Phi Ta Khon carnival as participants summoned the spirits before thousands of spectators. With echoes of Mexico's Day of the Dead, the annual Thai ghost festival's roots lie in Buddhist traditions.

Men covered in mud - a symbol of fertility and the country's rice fields - also took part in the procession along a narrow one-kilometre road packed with revellers.

Artist Pisit Tabtong, 59, said traditionally the ghost masks, made from coconut husks, had simple designs with muted clay colors.



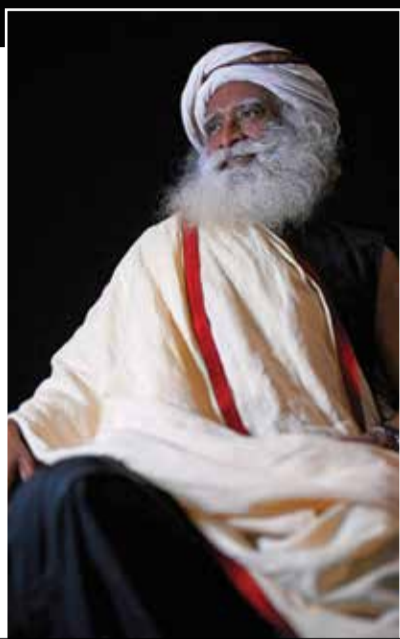
Festival-goers wearing ghost masks and colorful costumes while dancing during the annual Phi Ta Khon carnival or ghost festival in Dan Sai district in northeastern Thailand's Loei Province. — AFP photos



Lifestyle

Superstar yogi Sadhguru: ‘The age of yoga has come!’

Indian mystic and author, founder and head of the Isha Foundation, Sadhguru (Jaggi Vasudev) poses during the International Day of Yoga at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.



Superstar yoga teacher Sadhguru has more than 10 million followers online and he sees no limit to how many people will become adherents in the coming years. “I think in 25 years you will have probably 60 to 70 percent of the world doing some form of yoga,” he told AFP during a visit to Paris this week.

“Yoga is a science that was first transmitted by the first yogi 15,000 years ago but until now no generation was ready to address their well-being - and all aspects of who they are - in a scientific manner using these tools,” he added. Millions discovered 65-year-old Sadhguru, real name Jagadish “Jaggi” Vasudev, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when his daily videos on Instagram became a vital resource to get through lockdowns.

Punctuated by bursts of laughter, they combine lessons on life, yoga practice and humorous reflections. Yoga is increasingly recognized worldwide for its health benefits, particularly in combating stress and maintaining physical flexibility. Dressed as usual in a turban and a huge light-colored shawl, Sadhguru said yoga’s “internal tools” of meditation, postures, breathing and mantras were “with-in everyone’s reach”.

“More people are intellectually active than ever before in the history of humanity... This generation and the coming generations are really ready for yoga,” he said. “It’s only now we are able to understand ... our relationship to the world around us,” he added. “The age of yoga has come!”

‘Technology for well-being’

Sadhguru has many celebrity fans, from Will Smith and Matthew McConaughey to Paris Hilton and Andrea Bocelli, who welcome the way he gears ancient teachings to their materialist world. He is also close to nationalist Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has made yoga a central part of his image. But Sadhguru says yoga is not a purely Indian phenomenon. “People are identifying it with India, with Hinduism, but no, it has nothing to do with that,” he said.

He says it was kept alive for thousands of years in India because it was a relatively peaceful corner of the world protected by natural barriers. “We managed to preserve it ... but a time has

come when the world will go towards it, because this is not a philosophy, an ideology. “This is not a new religion. This is a technology for well-being.

“It doesn’t matter whether you’re black, white, man or woman. Whatever you are, if you learn to use it, like your camera or your phone, it will work for you.” A keen biker, Sadhguru is also part of several projects around the environmental and biodiversity. He has a renowned yoga centre and non-profit foundation, Isha, based at Coimbatore in southern India that has planted some 25 million trees, among other projects. — AFP



(From left) This combination of pictures shows Billy Crystal in New York, soprano and opera singer Renee Fleming in Paris, singer Barry Gibb in Somerset, South West England, rapper and actress Queen Latifah in Cap d’Antibes, southern France and singer Dionne Warwick in Los Angeles. — AFP

BILLY CRYSTAL, QUEEN LATIFAH AMONG KENNEDY CENTER HONOREES

Beloved comedian Billy Crystal and pioneering rapper Queen Latifah are among the 46th crop of Kennedy Center honorees, one of the United States’ most prestigious arts awards, the center announced on Thursday.

Crystal and Queen Latifah will be honored on December 3 along with acclaimed soprano Renée Fleming, sole surviving Bee Gee Barry Gibb and singer Dionne Warwick at the annual gala held in Washington, according to a statement.

The event at the Kennedy Center

- Washington’s performing arts complex that serves as a living monument to slain president John F. Kennedy - brings a dose of glitz to the capital, where such red carpet events are rare.

The gala regularly sees the cream of the cultural crop mix with Washington’s top political echelons, including sitting presidents, with US President Joe Biden attending the past two years.

The 46th iteration will be hosted for a third time by 2017 Kennedy Center Honoree Gloria Estefan to steer a slate of star-studded tributes.

The new class of honorees ex-

pressed their gratitude for the recognition in a statement, with Queen Latifah, an actress and singer as well as a rapper, saying she was “humbled to be included in this incredible list of artists.”

“When we started on this journey decades ago, we were often told, ‘No’. No, you won’t be able to leave New Jersey. No, if you rap you can’t sing. No, singers can’t become actresses. No, actors can’t also produce,” said the hit “U.N.I.T.Y.” rapper.

“To now be recognized amongst so many multi-hyphenates feels unbelievable, not for just me and my team, but

for our community.”

Crystal, known for an extensive comedic career marked by hits such as “When Harry Met Sally,” echoed the sentiment.

“I am overwhelmed to be part of this fantastic group of artists,” he said.

“I started performing when I was five years old, making my parents and family laugh. Those laughs have carried me my entire life and career. I so wish they could be at the Kennedy Center for this glorious occasion.” — AFP

Rapper Young Thug releases album from jail

Young Thug fans awoke Friday to a new album from the Atlanta rapper, who is embroiled in a sprawling gang conspiracy trial and has been imprisoned since May 2022.

The 15-track record entitled “Business is Business” includes features from Drake, Future, 21 Savage and Travis Scott, and is Young Thug’s first LP since 2021’s chart-topper “Punk.”

The 31-year-old born Jeffery Williams was one of 28 alleged street gang members swept up in a racketeering indictment accusing defendants of myriad predicate offenses that support an overarching conspiracy charge, including murder, assault, carjacking, drug dealing and theft.

The indictment shook the rap world in Atlanta, where Young Thug is considered among the industry’s most impactful figures who has been elemental to forging contemporary rap’s sound.



Surprise arrival: Baby born on Kenya high-speed train

Passengers on a high-speed train in Kenya were all smiles as a fellow traveller gave birth, assisted by a doctor and nurse who were also on board, Kenya Railways said.

The expectant mother went into labor while travelling on the express service from Kenya’s capital Nairobi to the port city of Mombasa.

“We are delighted to share a heartwarming story of a mother who welcomed her bundle of joy on board the Madaraka Express,” Kenya Railways said on Facebook, posting photos showing the woman and the newborn surrounded by beaming staffers and passengers. After giving birth, “she was rushed to Mariakani subcounty hospital for further medical assistance,” the post said, drawing over 2,400 likes. “Both the mother and the baby are okay. We wish her well.”

Hundreds of people congratulated the new mother on Facebook, with some urging her to name the baby Madaraka (“freedom” in Swahili) and others calling on Kenya Railways to give the child free lifelong access to the express service. The service is part of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) - Kenya’s biggest infrastructure project since independence from Britain in 1963.

It was launched as a master plan by East African leaders to connect their nations by rail. Currently snaking from Mombasa via Nairobi to the Rift Valley town of Naivasha, it is planned to eventually link Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Burundi and Ethiopia. — AFP

Swiss museum probes ‘king of clowns’ Nazi links

Grock became known as the “king of clowns” but the Swiss entertainer who made the world laugh is now in the spotlight over his connections with Adolf Hitler. A Swiss museum, which has recently acquired Grock’s archive, is researching links between the performer - considered by peers to be the greatest musical clown of his time - and the dictator of Nazi Germany.

In the first half of the 20th century, Grock’s success rivaled that of Charlie Chaplin. But while Chaplin satirized Hitler, Grock seems to have welcomed him into his dressing room. Last month, the Neues Museum Biel took possession of around a thousand items from Grock’s collection.

Sound recordings from shows, letters, photographs and musical scores were donated by Grock’s 74-year-old great-nephew Raymond Naef. Via Naef, Grock’s stage costumes and musical instruments were donated by Switzerland’s Knie family circus dynasty. But the Neues Museum Biel did not want to put on a Grock exhibition without first exploring the artist’s life off-stage, where he developed a reputation as a shrewd businessman.

“It’s the museum’s responsibility. It’s absolutely necessary,” the art and history museum’s director Bernadette Walter told AFP.

Hitler telegram

Wettach published several autobiographies and his great-nephew Naef wrote a book and curated a 2002 exhibition about Grock’s career - but until now, no historian has investigated the nature of his Nazi connections. “Grock says in his autobiography that Hitler came to his dressing room, and that Hitler saw his shows 13 times,” said Walter, though the museum has not yet verified the claim.

The museum did not consider turning down his archive, which entails conducting lots of research - something Walter compared to the investigations that cul-

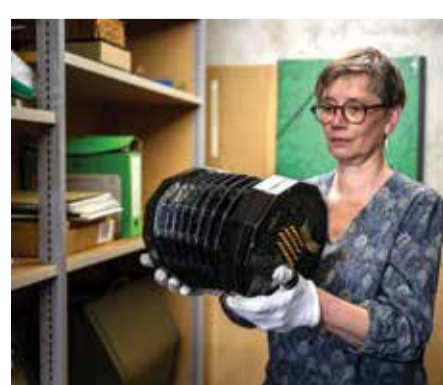
tural institutions carry out into artworks looted by the Nazis. “A museum must also tell stories that are not always spotless,” the director said, arguing that the past should not simply be forgotten.

At a May 12 online auction, the museum tried to buy, for research purposes, a seasonal greetings telegram that Grock sent to Hitler in 1942. “We know that he met Hitler and (Joseph) Goebbels,” the Nazi propaganda chief, and that he performed for wounded German soldiers, said Walter, but whether he had any political allegiances remains a mystery.

Grock performed in Germany before the Nazis came to power in 1933, and the museum wants to see whether he adapted his stage show afterwards. Grock always said he was apolitical and his autobiography mentions his shows in Britain, France and the United States, said Walter. “He played when he was paid. We know that Grock was opportunistic, but that cannot be used as an excuse.”

No joke

Laurent Diercksen, who wrote the 1999 book “Grock: An Extraordinary Destiny”, said the acrobat, juggler and multi-instrumentalist “didn’t give a damn about politics” and focused on “success”.



Neues Museum Biel’s director Bernadette Walter shows clown Grock’s signature instrument the concertina.

“We cannot judge him on a single letter, an isolated act or one revelation taken out of context,” the journalist told AFP, finding it a shame that the great music hall artist might primarily be remembered for his “so-called Nazi sympathies”. Born in 1880, Grock - real name Adrien Wettach - grew up in the Bernese Jura mountains above the city of Biel in northern Switzerland.

He chose his pseudonym in the early 1900s, when he replaced Brock in Brick and Brock, a famous duo of the time. Grock died in 1959 aged 79, with his sketches known to audiences around the world. “He brought laughter to an era when there wasn’t much to laugh about,” said his great-nephew, who nonetheless recalled that Grock’s connections with the Nazis had caused family disputes.

But he wanted Grock’s collection to be publicly accessible for historical research and potentially be exhibited, adding that people needed to distinguish between the art and the artist. “We do not destroy the houses built by the architect Le Corbusier simply because he was also a bit of a fascist,” Naef concluded. — AFP



Neues Museum Biel’s director Bernadette Walter holds a picture of the clown Grock where he appeared twice, in the Museum’s reserve.



Neues Museum Biel’s director Bernadette Walter holds a picture of the clown Grock next to a bust of him in the Museum’s reserve, in Biel. — AFP photos



Neues Museum’s director Bernadette Walter shows a picture of the Swiss entertainer and clown posing in a Mercedes car in Biel.



Neues Museum Biel’s director Bernadette Walter holds a record of the clown Grock next to a bust of him in the Museum’s reserve in Biel.

Sports

Zimbabwe stun Windies

Dutch knock Nepal out of World Cup qualifier

News in Brief

Neymar hit with new fine

RIO DE JANEIRO: Environmental authorities in Brazil fined football star Neymar a second time Saturday after their orders to halt an unlicensed construction project at his mansion outside Rio de Janeiro were ignored, officials said. The Brazil and Paris Saint-Germain star was already facing a fine of at least 5 million reais (\$1 million) after authorities said they had found "various environmental infractions" Thursday at his luxury property in the resort town of Mangaratiba, where workers were building an artificial lake and beach. The authorities cordoned off the site and ordered a halt to all activity, but Brazilian media reports said Neymar had instead thrown a party there and gone swimming in the lake. The city government said environmental inspectors had returned Saturday and found "activity" at the site "violating the restraining order and committing further environmental infractions." — AFP

Cheetahs win Currie Cup

JOHANNESBURG: Cheetahs put a season of financial hardship behind them on Saturday to be crowned South African rugby champions with a 25-17 home win over Pumas in the Currie Cup final. Centre Reinhardt Fortuin, wing Cohen Jasper and scrum-half Rewan Kruger scored a try each and 39-year-old fly-half Ruan Pienaar kicked two conversions and two penalties for the winners. "I was sure we would win only in the final minute. Pumas pushed us all the way and we made it difficult for ourselves sometimes," said former Springbok Pienaar. Centre Ali Mgiijima scored a try for 2022 champions Pumas and fly-half Tinus de Beer slotted four penalties before a 34,000 crowd in the central city of Bloemfontein. Seven-time Currie Cup winners Cheetahs never trailed after taking an early three-point lead, were 18-11 ahead at half-time, and the stronger side in a low-scoring second half. — AFP

Kvitova books 42nd final

BERLIN: Petra Kvitova on Saturday reached her 42nd tour final in Berlin where she will face Donna Vekic for the title. After the quarter-finals of the grass-court tournament were washed out on Friday, two-time Wimbledon champion Kvitova defeated Caroline Garcia 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) and then unseeded 's-Hertogenbosch champion Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-3, 6-4. Vekic knocked out lucky loser Elina Avanesyan 6-2, 7-6 (7/0) and sixth seeded Maria Sakkari 6-4, 7-6 (10/8) to book a place in her 12th career final. Vekic came from 2-0 and 5-3 down in the second set against Sakkari before sealing victory on a fourth match point. Croatian world 23 Vekic had beaten Sakkari on grass on her way to the Nottingham title in 2017, one of four career finals she's reached on grass. Alexandrova was the only one of the four semi-finalists on Saturday to not have to play twice, as Veronika Kudermetova withdrew from their quarter-final due to a left hip injury. — AFP

Ogier holds off Rovanner

NAKURU: Sebastien Ogier held off an onslaught from world championship leader Kalle Rovanner on Saturday to maintain his lead in the Safari Rally going into Sunday's final stage. Ogier, 39, who is not driving a full season, leads Rovanner by 16.7 seconds ahead of Sunday's finale. The race is down to a two-car battle between the Toyotas of Ogier, eight-time world champion, and Rovanner, 22, the defending champion. More than two minutes behind in the seventh round of 13 this season are the two other Toyotas with Welsh driver Elfyn Evans and Japan's Takamoto Katsuta. Since returning to the calendar in 2021, Kenya has the reputation as one of the toughest rallies on the circuit. Ogier triumphed in 2021 and Rovanner last year. Hyundai drivers Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak, who started the race second and third respectively in the standings, suffered in the Safari. — AFP

Bublik, Rublev face off

HALLE WESTFALEN: Alexander Bublik eased past home hope Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-5 to reach the final of the Halle ATP tournament on Saturday. Bublik, 26, will play his first final of the season in the Wimbledon warm-up grass-court event against Russia's Andrey Rublev who knocked out Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3, 6-4. Kazakh Bublik won his only title last year in Montpellier against Zverev and now holds a 3-1 record against the German. On Saturday, Bublik took less than an hour and a half to dispatch the former world number two, firing down 14 aces with a strong service game. In the first set, he quickly took the lead with a break in the fourth game and then counted on his serve to pull him through. The two players duelled until 5-5 in the second set, when Zverev collapsed, allowing Bublik to confidently seal victory 7-5. "The job is not finished, there is one last match," Bublik said. — AFP

HARARE: Zimbabwe stunned West Indies by 35 runs in a crucial World Cup qualifying triumph on Saturday while the Netherlands ended Nepal's hopes of reaching the global showpiece for the first time. The Dutch side's seven-wicket win guaranteed a Super Sixes place and also meant that both Zimbabwe and two-time champions West Indies were assured of their places in the next round.

However, Zimbabwe will have the advantage of taking the two points from Saturday's win with them into the next stage which features the top three sides from the two groups of five. Zimbabwe, put into bat, made 268 with Sikandar Raza top scoring with 68 from 58 balls, hitting six fours and two sixes. Ryan Burl added a crucial 50 with five fours and a six after Zimbabwe had been 112-4 at one stage while skipper Craig Ervine made 47 at the top of the order.

In reply, West Indies were well-placed at 134-3 before they lost seven wickets for just 99 runs. Opener Kyle Mayers top scored with 56 off 72 balls

featuring eight fours and a six. In the middle order, captain Shai Hope (30), Nicolas Pooran (34) and Roston Chase (44) all got starts but Tendai Chatara (3-52) and man of the match Raza (2-36) applied the brakes as the West Indies were dismissed for 233 in the 45th over.

"We did feel that we were maybe 20-30 short of what would probably be a winning score," said Ervine. "It is always going to be tough mentally. We have talked about treating every game and opposition the same. Today has been quite an emotional day for everybody and it is not a long time before we have to come back and play again on Monday." Hope admitted that fielding let them down. "Too much is on my mind right now, not sure if I can explain it. Lot of hurting and very disappointed but the tournament is not over yet," said Hope. "We have to make sure we harden ourselves and understand what we have to do moving forward."

Earlier, Nepal were put in to bat in their crunch

British MotoGP at the start of August. Marquez has now missed five races this season.

He underwent hand surgery following a crash in the season-opener in Portugal, his fifth operation since crashing in Jerez in 2020. Marquez, lying a lowly 19th in the standings, has not won a race since the end of the 2021 season. "It's obviously the most difficult period of my life," he admitted. "Thankfully I'm surrounded by great people both in my private life and in the team," he remarked, as rumors swirl of a possible exit from Honda at the end of the year. "Honestly I don't think it's a good idea to talk about my future during this difficult period."

"The aim first of all is to regain fitness, to feel up to battling from the front. I'm a fighter, I'm still feeling driven." His Honda team boss Alberto Puig stated: "We have a contract with Marc and on this basis I envisage us continuing next season. But Honda isn't the type of team that would keep someone who isn't happy." After Sunday's race in Assen the MotoGP circus resumes at Silverstone for the ninth round of the championship on August 6.

Dutch MotoGP sprint

In another development, Pole-sitter Marco Bezzecchi won the Dutch MotoGP sprint race at Assen on Saturday ahead of world champion Francesco Bagnaia. Fabio Quartararo completed the podium after third-placed Brad Binder was demoted to fifth following a penalty for track limits. Bagnaia took command of the 13-lap dash around the classic motorcycling venue at turn one from Binder as pole man Bezzecchi was caught napping, dropping to third.

Marquez woes continue, Honda star forced out

PARIS: Honda star Marc Marquez was forced to pull out of the Dutch MotoGP hours before Sunday's eighth round of the season due to injury. The six-time former world champion missed last weekend's race in Germany in similar fashion. The Spaniard is enduring a troubled season, hitting the deck twice at Assen following no fewer than five falls at Sachsenring. That left him nursing numerous injuries including a rib fracture which he aggravated this weekend.

"After (Saturday's) sprint the pain became worse and worse," Marquez reported. "This morning I went to the medical centre to let them know that I wasn't in a fit state to ride," he added. "Last Tuesday, after a check-up in Madrid, the results were reassuring despite the discovery of a fractured rib. But a test this morning showed the rib had moved slightly," he said, adding it was better to be "cautious" to avoid the injury worsening.

Marquez is one man for whom the six-week break after Assen can't come soon enough given his torrid start to the season. The Spaniard was due to set off from a lowly 17th on the grid after filling that position in the sprint. Given all his woes with his Honda bike the holiday will hopefully do the 30-year-old a world of good as he targets returning fresh and fit for the

Hughes sets British 100m record to win at NY Grand Prix

NEW YORK: Zharnel Hughes broke Linford Christie's 30-year-old British 100m record on Saturday, closing late from third to win in 9.83 seconds at the New York Grand Prix athletics meet. The 27-year-old Anguilla-born Briton sped past Jamaica's Ackeem Blake and American Christian Coleman over the second half of the race to capture the title in a key warmup meet for qualifying for August's World Championships at Budapest. "Anything is possible," Hughes said of the remainder of the season. "And the great thing is we haven't started speed work yet. So this is just raw speed and endurance."

Hughes, the 2018 European 100m champion, defeated runner-up Blake by 0.1 of a second with 2019 world champion Coleman third in 10.02. Hughes lowered the old British mark of 9.87 set by Christie in 1993 at Stuttgart. It prompted Hughes to recall a prior New York meet where he raced sprint legend Usain Bolt, now among his training partners in Jamaica.

"In 2015 I came here and I ran against Usain Bolt and it was memorable," Hughes said. "I wanted to come back here again and prove myself, and prove to the world, that I'm here." Hughes did that with a closing spurt that came from the discipline of following his race instructions. "Patience. Patience. Patience. That's what I've been told. Go through the phases. Don't get carried away by anyone," Hughes said. "Just relax and trust yourself. You will be good."

American Noah Lyles, the two-time reigning 200 world champion, won the men's 200 in 19.83 with Suriname's Issam Asinga second by .42 of a second. "It was not perfect but it was very fun," Lyles said. "Coming off the turn was a little bit of a jerk. We'll clean that up later." Reigning world and Olympic 800m cham-

Bradley leads Reavie by one at Travelers

NEW YORK: Keegan Bradley fired six birdies in a six-under par 64 on Saturday to take a one-shot lead over former winner Chez Reavie heading into the final round of the US PGA Tour Travelers Championship. On another low-scoring day at TPC River Highlands in Cromwell, Connecticut, Bradley built a 21-under par total of 189 as Reavie posted a seven-under par 63 for 190. It was a further four strokes back to world number four Patrick Cantlay, who had nine birdies in his nine-under 61 for 194.

Rickie Fowler went one better with a 10-under par 60 and headed a trio on 195 that also included Adam Scott, who shot 65, and overnight co-leader Denny McCarthy, who settled for an even par 70. Bradley and Reavie, playing together in the final group, had traded the lead and were tied at 20-under through 15 holes when Bradley landed his tee shot at the par-three 16th six feet from the cup and converted the birdie. Reavie, meanwhile, missed the green and was unable to get up and down, falling two adrift. He clawed back a shot with a 12-foot birdie putt at 18, where Bradley couldn't get his 18-foot birdie attempt to drop.



NEW YORK: Brandon Carnes of the United States, Zharnel Hughes of Great Britain, Christian Coleman of the United States, Ackeem Blake of Jamaica, and Terrance Laird of the United States compete in the Asics Men's 100m during the 2023 USATF NYC Grand Prix at Icahn Stadium on June 24, 2023. — AFP

pion Athing Mu made her 2023 season debut with a victory in 1:58.73, beating fellow American Sage Hurta-Klecker by 2.04 seconds with Aje Wilson, the 2022 world indoor champion, 11th and last in 2:07.97.

"First meet, just coming out, trust the training," Mu said. "This is just an opportunity to see where I'm at and make adjustments." American Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, the reigning world and Olympic 400 hurdles champion, captured the 400 meters in 49.51 with compatriot Gabby Thomas second in 50.29. "We wanted to take it out a little more conservative," the winner said. "Work on the back end, see what the closing speed was like. Much better execution. Still things to work on. So happy overall."

American Aleia Hobbs won the women's 100 in 10.98 with Jamaican Briana Williams second in 11.04

"It was just really solid," Bradley said. "Pretty boring honestly until the very end there. I made some nice shots some nice putts. I'm proud of the way I played." Bradley, born in Vermont and a favorite of New England fans, admitted had to battle a tendency to push too hard in a tournament he has long wanted to win. "I've wanted to win this tournament forever, so the feeling of wanting to push and win is something I need to fight against and just let myself go out and play," he said.

Birdies to win

Bradley, who shared the overnight lead with McCarthy, quickly built on his advantage with three birdies in the first six holes. But he parred the next six as Reavie continued to pile on the pressure that started with his 24-foot birdie at the first. Reavie added birdies at the sixth, seventh and eighth. Another run of three straight from the 11th through 13th saw him pull level then move in front of Bradley - who regained a share of the lead with a 16-foot birdie at the 15th.

Reavie said his birdie at the last was "huge, just to get a little momentum going to dinner and sleeping tonight. I played well - really well in the middle of the round," Reavie said. "Then pulling that nine-iron on 16, I know you can't hit it over there. Just a bad swing." Reavie predicted the final round would be a

tie by the Netherlands but folded for 167 after a middle-overs crisis initiated by Vikramjit Singh (2-20) and Logan van Beek (4-24). Nepal slumped from 46 for 1 to 91 for 5, and were unable to recover with skipper Rohit Paudel top scoring with 33. In reply, opener Max O'Dowd hit 90 of 75 balls with eight fours and four sixes with Bas de Leede making an undefeated 41 as the Dutch reached their target in the 28th over.

"Disappointed not scoring the hundred but for me I just want to contribute to match-winning knocks - 90 in a winning cause is enough," said man of the match O'Dowd. Paudel admitted that Nepal struggled to cope with the short ball tactics of the Dutch. "We had a plan but we couldn't execute. We need to learn and go back home and see how we can improve in that area," he said. In the last round of Group A games on Monday, West Indies face the Netherlands, who are second in the pool, while Zimbabwe tackle already eliminated United States. — AFP



ASSEN: Gresini Racing MotoGP's Spanish rider Alex Marquez during the Dutch MotoGP at the TT circuit of Assen, on June 25, 2023. — AFP

Bezzecchi bided his time and moved back to race second, leaving Bagnaia in his crosshairs.

Ten laps to go and Bezzecchi muscled past his good friend and compatriot to regain the lead, quickly opening up a half second gap. At the midway point it was Bezzecchi's race to lose. And the Italian, who dominated practice and set a record lap time in qualifying, didn't disappoint, even extending his lead at the line to 1.294sec. Riding for Valentino Rossi's VR46 Ducati-satellite team he displayed a touch of the Italian legend Rossi's showmanship, climbing a camera gantry to milk the applause from his growing number of fans. — AFP



CROMWELL: Keegan Bradley of the United States plays his shot from the 12th tee during the third round of the Travelers Championship at TPC River Highlands on June 24, 2023. — AFP

"shoot-out." "You've got to make birdies and eagles to win this golf tournament," he said. Fowler showed there were plenty to be had with eight birdies and an eagle in his 10-under effort. But his bid to break 60 came undone at his final hole, the ninth, where his approach hit the green and rolled into the first cut of rough and he settled for a par. — AFP

Sports

West African football coach dreaming big in Kyrgyzstan

With help of foreign players, Kyrgyzstan moves up in FIFA rankings



LENINSKOYE: Former football player of the national team of Kyrgyzstan, Ghanaian born Daniel Nii Arman Tagoe leads the training session of a children's football team in the village of Leninskoye near Bishkek. — AFP



Ghanaian born Daniel Nii Arman Tagoe

LENINSKOYE: Under the watchful eye of Daniel Tagoe, a coach from Ghana, around 30 children wearing blue and yellow kits learn to play football in a village outside the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek. One of several West African players living in Kyrgyzstan, 37-year-old Tagoe says he dreams of developing a football culture in the poor Central Asian country. "My dream is to have them play in English premiership, in Spain, in Russia," Tagoe told AFP in English, referring to the young players.

It is an ambitious task in a country not known to be a major football nation. Mixed martial arts and wrestling are among favorite sports in Kyrgyzstan, and much of the country still lacks adequate sporting facilities. Tagoe arrived in Kyrgyzstan from Russia when he was in his early 20s and played for the mountainous

country's national side for years. After a successful career which saw him win the Kyrgyzstan Player of the Year award in 2009, the Ghanaian opened a football school in the village of Leninskoye outside Bishkek.

"I have my house here. My wife lives here," he said, adding that a lot of parents asked him to teach their children. "When I finished my career, I decided, why not teach them?" said Tagoe, a fluent Russian speaker. Children say they are happy to learn football skills from him. "I am glad that Tagoe came and opened his club," said eight-year-old Daniil Mukhamedaliev. He said he lived far away from Leninskoye and had to walk through the fields to attend his classes. "He's a good coach."

'My son is pleased'

Around 80 aspiring football play-

ers aged between 6 and 18 have signed up, and regularly come to play at the new pitch. It is located next to a primary school still bearing the name of Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenin and featuring a map of the USSR on a wall. Nearby, horses graze in a field where locals played before Tagoe's arrival and abandoned football goalposts have no net. "We've never had anything like this before," Arzu Jafarova said, smiling. "My son just sat at home," the 38-year-old added. "Now we are pleased and my child is pleased."

Another parent, Zamir Jooshev, is equally enthused. "Not all villages have such an opportunity," said Jooshev, whose son and daughter are learning to play. He said it was also rare to have a former Kyrgyzstan national team player train local children. Along with another Ghanaian, David Tetteh, Tagoe is one of

several Africans to have played for the Kyrgyzstan national side. Their contribution to the country's football successes is indisputable. In the 2010s, Kyrgyzstan was among the worst football teams. With the help of foreign players including the West Africans the country has moved up in the FIFA rankings, reaching its highest-ever place of 75 in 2018. The national team has also qualified twice for the Asian Cup.

'My heart'

Tagoe briefly lived in Russia, but was later convinced to play for the Dordoi Bishkek football club in Kyrgyzstan. His success encouraged others to try their luck in Central Asia. "Everybody wants to play in Dordoi, especially the Ghanaian football players," said Tetteh. "Dordoi is my everything, it's my heart,"

said the 37-year-old, who scored a record 123 goals for Dordoi and was later promoted to coach. Another Ghanaian, striker Joel Kojo, has played in Kyrgyzstan since 2017 and now represents the country internationally.

He played for Kyrgyzstan in the CAFA Nations Cup in mid-June. Tagoe and Tetteh have shot to fame in Kyrgyzstan, and their framed jerseys adorn the walls of a building housing Dordoi. "David Tetteh and Daniel Tagoe are among the first foreign players to come to Kyrgyzstan," Ruslan Sydykov, general director for Dordoi, told AFP. "In my opinion, they are the best African footballers to have played here." Back in Leninskoye, Tagoe said he wanted to help raise a new generation of professional footballers in the country. "My dream will come true," he said. — AFP

Qatari fund to buy stake in NBA, NHL and WNBA teams

WASHINGTON: The Qatar Investment Authority is poised to buy a minority stake in the group that owns Washington franchises in the NBA, WNBA and NHL in a groundbreaking move by a sovereign wealth fund into US pro sports, the Washington Post reported. The Post was one of several US media outlets reporting that the state-owned Qatari fund was seeking to acquire a 5% stake in Monumental Sports & Entertainment, the group headed by Ted Leonsis that owns the NBA's Washington Wizards, the WNBA's Mystics and the NHL's Capitals.

If the deal goes through, the QIA would become the first sovereign wealth fund to own part of a major US team sports club. The Post cited a person familiar with the terms, and the NBA confirmed it was reviewing the investment, which has yet

to be finalized. The NBA tweaked its rules last year to allow for such foreign investment, although no fund is allowed to own more than 20% of a team. "The NBA Board is currently reviewing a potential investment by QIA in Monumental Sports & Entertainment, the parent company of the Washington Wizards, among other sports properties," NBA spokesman Mike Bass said in a statement quoted by US media. "In accordance with the policy, if approved, QIA would have a passive, minority investment in the team, with no involvement in its operations or decision-making." The Athletic cited a "high ranking NHL source" in saying the league has never precluded investment by a sovereign wealth fund. Acquisition of a stake in a team does require approval from the league's board of governors, and the Athletic reported that the executive committee of the board has already signed off on the sale. Speaking last week on "The Dan Patrick Show" syndicated talk show, NBA commissioner Adam Silver spoke about state investment in sports and when discussing the financial deal between the PGA Tour and the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund, which backed the breakaway LIV Golf circuit.

"When the Saudis invest in sports, it gets outsized attention," Silver said. "Now, I don't want to complain about that because we want to get outsized attention. On the other hand, somebody

could go down the list there. They are investors in some of our largest American corporations. Some of the most well-known brands have investments from them. And I also think it's a two-edged sword. "I hear the comments about sportswashing. On the other hand, you're talking about it, others are talking about it. "In the same way, the World Cup - the football World Cup, soccer World Cup - brought enormous attention to Qatar. I think people learn about these countries, learn about what's happening in the world in ways they otherwise wouldn't."

Widespread investment

Qatar has made heavy investments in global sport over the past decade. Qatar Sports Investments, owners of French champions Paris Saint-Germain, are in negotiations over acquiring a stake in Italian football club Sampdoria, a source told AFP last month. QSI has owned the French club since 2011, transforming it from a struggling outfit into one of the most powerful in Europe with QSI president Nasser al-Khelaifi also serving as president of PSG. It also owns a 22% stake in top Portuguese club Braga. Qatar hosted the World Cup last year, when the country's treatment of migrant workers and its human rights record dominated pre-tournament headlines. — AFP

US to host expanded 32-team Club World Cup

MIAMI: The United States will host a new-look expanded 32-team Club World Cup in 2025, governing body FIFA announced Friday. The move means the US will host major tournaments for three successive summers, culminating in the 2026 World Cup which will be co-hosted with Mexico and Canada. In 2024, an expanded Copa America, featuring national teams from South America and the CONCACAF region, will be held in the United States.

The existing Club World Cup, which began in 2000, has struggled to capture global attention and FIFA president Gianni Infantino has long targeted an expansion to bring the top clubs from Europe, South America and the rest of the world into a tournament format. The most recent edition was held in Morocco in February and featured just seven teams.

"The Club World Cup 2025 will be the pinnacle of elite professional men's club football, and with the required infrastructure in place together with a massive local interest, the United States is the ideal host to kick off this new, global tournament," said Infantino. While many of the qualification slots remain to be decided, the tournament will feature the likes

of Real Madrid, Manchester City, Chelsea, Brazilian clubs Flamengo and Palmeiras, Mexican team Leon and Seattle Sounders from Major League Soccer. The dates, host cities and match schedule for the tournament will be established at a later date, FIFA said.

FIFA decided in February that the new competition will feature 12 teams from Europe, six from South America and four representatives each from Asia, Africa and CONCACAF, which includes North and Central America and the Caribbean. The Oceania region will also be given one slot and the host nation is guaranteed a place in the tournament. The European participants will include the winners of last five Champions Leagues. The new

tournament will, like the national team World Cup, be held every four years. The last edition in the smaller format is scheduled to be played in Saudi Arabia in December.

Teams from South America will qualify through the Copa Libertadores and CONMEBOL's rankings. FIFA is setting up operations in the United States with offices in Miami and recently signed an agreement to work jointly with CONCACAF on regional tournaments such as the Gold Cup and Nations League. FIFA also announced on Friday it was pushing back the decision on the host of the 2030 World Cup from September or October to the second half of next year "to ensure additional consultation with all key stakeholders." —

Unbeaten Martinez stops Bornea, keeps bantamweight title

WASHINGTON: Argentina's Fernando Martinez retained his IBF world junior bantamweight title on Saturday with an 11th-round stoppage of Filipino challenger Jade Bornea in a battle of unbeaten fighters at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Referee Charlie Fitch stopped the bout 29 seconds into the 11th round after Martinez opened a bloody gash on the right ear of Bornea early in the ninth. "I definitely saw the injury in the ear," Martinez said through a translator. "I hit it with a left and it popped, it exploded. I just kept going at the ear and that's what ended this fight."

Martinez improved to 16-0 with his ninth victory inside the distance while Bornea fell to 18-1 after dropping his first world title bout. "The training camp we had was brutal. It was great," Martinez said. "The stronger fighter won and it was me." It was the South American's second defense of the 115-pound division crown he captured 16 months ago from Philippines fighter Jerwin Ancajas and kept in a rematch last October, both wins by unanimous decision.

Bornea, 28, went to a southpaw stance at the start against Martinez as they traded combinations going toe to toe in the early rounds. Martinez, 31, landed a hard left in the fifth round but a clash of heads denied him a chance to press the advantage. Early in the ninth round, a left hook by Martinez exploded Bornea's right earlobe. Blood splattered and gushed down Bornea's neck but he made it through the round and told Fitch he wanted to continue. Martinez landed a flurry at the end of the 10th round and attacked Bornea's face early in the 11th before Fitch halted the contest. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733

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

Change of Name

I, Antony Paul Cheruvalkaren Francis, holder of Indian Passport No. T6762519 having permanent address in Kerala, India, Pin 680317, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) **Saddikali** and (surname) **Pachlasawala. (#3816) 26-06-2023**

garpur, Rajasthan, Pin - 314025, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) **Saddikali** and (surname) **Pachlasawala. (#3816) 26-06-2023**

I, Saddikali, holder of Indian Passport No. L9757454 having permanent address Mohammadpura Temba, Sagwara, Dun-

I, Husain, holder of Indian Passport No. P2217948, having permanent address MP, India - 452012, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Hussain** and surname: **Dharwala. (#3814) 23-06-2023**

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Kuwait secures 19 medals

Kuwaiti athletes shine in Special Olympics World Games



A four-member Kuwaiti team win silver in athletics competition. — KUNA photos

BERLIN: Kuwaiti athletes have added eight medals to their tally in the Special Olympics World Games currently held in Berlin. Athletes Zainab Al-Durai and Bu Rabaa won gold medals in bowling and badminton competitions respectively. Taif Al-Enezi won four medals, three silver and one bronze, in the weightlifting contest. Rider Basma Al-Busaili won silver medal in the equestrian game and a four-member Kuwaiti team won silver in athletics competition.

With today's medals, the Kuwaiti tally since the start of the event climbed to 19 medals: 6 gold, 10 silver and 3 bronze. Special Olympics guest of honor Sheikhha Suhaila Al-Sabah said the achievement of the disabled is "our pride," adding that despite the strong competition by participating teams, Kuwait's athletes were able to win and remain in top places that received appreciation from all. — KUNA



Athlete Zainab Al-Durai celebrates winning gold medal in the bowling competition.



Kuwaiti athlete Taif Al-Enezi (left) won four medals, three silver and one bronze, in the weightlifting contest.

Kuwaiti discus thrower grabs gold medal



Essa Al-Zenkawi

RABAT: Kuwaiti athlete Essa Al-Zenkawi won the gold medal in the discus-throwing contest in the Arab Athletics Championship, which concluded in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh Saturday. Kuwaiti champion Al-Zenkawi scored 59 meters and 20 centimeters, ahead of the Qatari thrower Moaz Ibrahim, who scored 59 meters, 11 centimeters, and Egyptian Shehab Abdelaziz who scored 57 meters and one centimeter.

This is the second gold for Kuwait in the championship after the one won by runner Yaqoub Al-Youha in the 110-meter hurdles competition. Kuwaiti athletes Abdulrahman Al-Azmi and Madhawi Al-Shammari won one silver medal each in the javelin throw and the 200-meter running race competitions respectively. 16 Arab countries, including Kuwait, participated in the Arab Championship which was held in Marrakesh during the period from 20-24 June. — KUNA

Inter Miami misery continues; DC, Red Bulls win in MLS

MIAMI: Inter Miami's miserable run of form continued ahead of Lionel Messi's impending arrival with a 4-1 loss at Philadelphia, while there were wins for DC United and the New York Red Bulls in Major League Soccer on Saturday. Miami suffered a seventh straight defeat and remained rock bottom of the Eastern Conference while United upset Eastern Conference leaders Cincinnati with a 3-0 home triumph. The Red Bulls also enjoyed a surprise 4-0 victory over Atlanta.

Miami announced on Friday that former Spain and Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets was set to join Messi at the club in July, but the pair will have plenty to do if the club is to have any hope of making the post-season. Philadelphia, last season's runners-up, took the lead through a simple header from Norwegian Jakob Glesnes in the 14th minute off a corner. Argentine Julian Carranza doubled the advantage from close

range in the 39th minute and Leon Flach drilled home the third from the edge of the box on the stroke of half-time.

Finch winger Robert Taylor pulled a goal back for Miami five minutes after the interval with a heavily deflected shot, but the visitors were never truly in the contest. The Union wrapped up the victory in the 68th minute when Miami's David Ruiz turned a Mikael Uhre cross into his own net. Cincinnati's 10-match unbeaten run ended at Wayne Rooney's DC United, who grabbed a 10th-minute lead through Pedro Santos. Derrick Williams doubled the lead with a left-footed blast in the 17th minute and then, three minutes before the break, Cristian Dajome's shot crept under Cincinnati keeper Roman Celentano.

Cincinnati had Ian Murphy dismissed for a second yellow card in the 79th minute. The Red Bulls continued their recovery from a poor start to the season, climbing up to 11th in the East, three points off the playoff places, with their rout of Atlanta. Daniel Edelman fired the New York side in front with a left-foot drive in the 32nd minute and Cristian Casseres made it 2-0 with a well-taken individual effort just before half-time. Two late goals from Frankie Amaya completed an impressive victory for interim head coach Troy Lesesne.

In the Western Conference, St Louis moved above Los Angeles FC at the top of the standings after winning 2-1 at San Jose while the defending champions fell to a surprise 3-2 loss at home to the Vancouver Whitecaps. Samuel Adeniran scored his first goal in MLS to put St Louis ahead in the 41st minute, rising well to head in a corner from Rasmus Alm. Jamiro Monteiro brought San Jose level before Adeniran settled the contest from the penalty spot after Jonathan Mensah fouled Aziel Jackson in the box. The Whitecaps stunned Los Angeles with a second-minute goal, Ranko Veselinovic flashing home a well-angled header.

Things got worse for Steve Cherundolo's side when Vancouver extended their lead in the 23rd minute through Brian White's looping header into the far corner after a fine cross from Ryan Gauld. Denis Bouanga reduced the deficit just before the interval but the Whitecaps were in no mood to roll over and restored their two-goal advantage with Gauld driving home from the edge of the box. Mexican Carlos Vela kept the home side's hopes alive with a 68th-minute goal but LAFC were not able to make the most of a series of chances to equalize in the final minutes. The Columbus Crew beat Nashville 2-0 with goals from Christian Ramirez and a Jack Maher own goal. — AFP

Han clinches first Asian Tour win at Korea Open

CHEONAN: US golfer Seungsu Han clinched his first Asian Tour title at the Kolon Korea Open on Sunday, winning by six shots after leading from the opening round. The 36-year-old finished the final round with an even-par 71 for a tournament total of six-under-par 278 at the Woo Jeong Hills Country Club. "This is such a great honor," said Han, who was born in Incheon, South Korea, but moved to the United States when he was 13. "I first started playing in Korea when I was 13, so the Korea Open means a lot to me," he said. "I think it is the best tournament in Korea."

Han was trailed by South Korea's Kang Kyungnam, who also carded a final-round 71 to finish second. He said the tournament was "tremendously challenging" because he was struggling with foot and throat pains, adding that he tried to avoid looking at the scoreboard. "It was about being mentally strong and my putting was great, I holed some long ones," he said.

Han's dominance was unexpected, even though he has some notable victories under his belt. He won the 2017 Casio World Open, one of Japan's biggest events, and three years later claimed the LG Signature Players Championship on the Korean PGA Tour. Sunday's win also meant Han secured one of the two spots on offer in this year's Open Championship at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, with Kang claiming the other. — AFP



CHEONAN: USA Seungsu Han poses with the trophy after his victory in the Kolon Korea Open golf championship at Woo Jeong Hills Country Club on June 25, 2023. — AFP