



3 Health minister visits new Farwaniya Hospital project



6 Indian party woos voters with sweet smell of socialism



12 Silkworm cat grub smells like success



16 New Zealand beat England to reach first T20 World Cup final



Kuwait to limit visas for Lebanese over Gulf row

Lebanon's Gulf envoys meet PM amid showdown over Hezbollah

Al-Kharafi: Zain Group's 9M performance a testament to the success of '4Sight' strategy



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third-quarter (Q3) and nine-month periods (9M) ended Sept 30, 2021. The company ended the period with a stable customer base of 48.4 million customers. For 9M 2021, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 1.1 billion (\$3.8 billion), down three percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y), while consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 478 million (\$1.6 billion), down 3 percent Y-o-Y, still reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 42 percent. Efficiency and optimization initiatives resulted in consolidated net income increasing 5 percent Y-o-Y, amounting to KD 135

million (\$450 million). Earnings per share amounted to 31 fils (USD 0.10) for the nine-month period.

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi commented: "The operational performance that saw net profit growth over the 9M period, despite the huge impact of unavoidable currency devaluations, is testament to the successful implementation of the '4Sight' strategy. I am extremely proud of the digital transformation achievements and network rollouts our teams have accomplished across our footprint, enabling us to continue in our mission to foster sustainable systemic change and provide meaningful connectivity in offering high-quality and appealing services to our customers." (See Page 8)

KUWAIT: Kuwait is to limit the number of visas it issues for Lebanese nationals as a diplomatic row festers between Beirut and Gulf states, a security source in the state said yesterday. "A verbal decision has been taken to be stricter in granting tourist and business visas to Lebanese," the source told AFP, asking not to be identified.

The source stressed that no official decision had been made and that visas for visitors from Lebanon have not been suspended. Like neighboring Saudi Arabia, Kuwait recalled its ambassador from Beirut after Lebanon's information minister criticized a Riyadh-led military intervention in the Yemen conflict, sparking a row with Gulf states.

Kuwait, home to some 50,000 Lebanese, has also asked Beirut's charge d'affaires, its highest-ranking diplomat in the state, to leave the country. Lebanon's ambassadors to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain yesterday

met with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati in Beirut to discuss the impact of the crisis on the country's expatriate community. They expressed "fears of worsening repercussions on bilateral ties between Lebanon and Gulf states and the interests of Lebanese living in these countries", according to a statement from the premier's office.

More than 300,000 Lebanese live in Gulf Arab states, providing a key lifeline for Lebanon's faltering economy, according to the Gulf Labor Markets and Migration think tank. The row has turned into a showdown over Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement, which is backed by Iran, the regional rival of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan has said Hezbollah's dominance of Lebanese politics made "dealing with Lebanon pointless for the kingdom".

Continued on Page 2

COP26 draft urges boost to emissions cutting goals by 2022

GLASGOW: A draft UN climate summit text yesterday urged countries to boost their emissions cutting goals by 2022 - three years earlier than planned - as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson dashed back to Glasgow to check the pulse of negotiations. Yesterday's text was the first indication of where nations are 10 days into the COP26 talks in Glasgow, after data showed promises made so far left the world far off track to limit heating to 1.5C.

Negotiators are tasked with accelerating national decarbonization plans, stumping up long-promised finance for vulnerable nations and finalizing rules of the Paris Agreement on carbon markets and transparency. "Some significant issues remain unresolved and I think as we know time is not on our side," COP26 President Alok Sharma told delegates. "We all know what is at stake in these negotiations and the urgency of our task."

The text, which will change as ministers begin the high-level wrangling as COP26 enters its last two days, called for nations to "revisit and strengthen" their decarbonization plans by next year, instead of 2025 as previously agreed. It said that limiting heating to 1.5C - the Paris deal's most ambitious temperature goal - "requires meaningful and effective action by all parties in this critical decade".

Continued on Page 2

News in brief

Emirates on 'recovery path'

DUBAI: Emirates airline said it was on the path to recovery from the COVID pandemic yesterday as six-month losses dropped by more than a half from a year earlier. The Dubai-based carrier posted an April-September loss of \$1.6 billion, compared with \$3.4 billion during the same period in 2020. Revenue was up 86 percent year-on-year and passenger numbers rose 319 percent to 6.1 million, Emirates said. — AFP

Iran releases seized tanker

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards said yesterday they had released a Vietnamese-flagged oil tanker they seized last month in the Sea of Oman in a tense incident also involving the US Navy. Yesterday, the official website of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said "the seized Sothys oil tanker was released by court order after it was emptied of oil belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bandar Abbas". — AFP (See Page 7)

COVID cases spike in Greece

ATHENS: Greece is experiencing a fourth wave of COVID. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis warned Tuesday as daily infections hit their highest since the pandemic began, with hospitals starting to buckle under the pressure of rising infections. The country notched up a record 8,613 new COVID-19 cases in 24 hours after cases more than doubled in less than a fortnight. Forty-six people died of the disease on Tuesday, after 65 a day earlier. — AFP

Nobel-winning activist Malala gets married

LONDON: Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Pakistani Taliban for campaigning for girls' education, got married on Tuesday in a small ceremony in Birmingham, central England, she announced on social media. "Today marks a precious day in my life. Asser (Malik) and I tied the knot to be partners for life," she wrote on Twitter, where she also posted images of herself and her new husband on their wedding day.

"We celebrated a small nikah ceremony at home in Birmingham with our families. Please send us your prayers. We are excited to walk together for

the journey ahead," she added. A nikah ceremony is the first step in an Islamic marriage. When she was 15, Yousafzai was shot in the head by militants from the Tehreek-e-Taleban Pakistan, an offshoot of the Afghan Taliban, in her hometown in the Swat valley while on a school bus in 2012.

She recovered after months of treatment at home and abroad before co-writing a best-selling memoir titled "I am Malala." Yousafzai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as a 17-year-old in 2014, sharing the award with Kailash Satyarthi, a children's rights activist from India. She graduated last year from the University of Oxford with a degree in philosophy, politics and economics.

Now 24 years old, she advocates for girls' education, with her non-profit Malala Fund having invested \$2 million in Afghanistan. She has also signed a deal with Apple TV+ that will see her produce dramas and documentaries that focus on women and children. — AFP



Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai is seen with her husband Asser Malik in this image she posted on Twitter.

Singapore lions infected with coronavirus

SINGAPORE: Four lions at a Singapore wildlife park have tested positive for the coronavirus after coming into contact with infected zookeepers, and have symptoms including coughing and sneezing, officials said yesterday. The endangered Asiatic lions started displaying signs of illness at the weekend, prompting officials to order coronavirus tests.

The infected big cats along with five others at the Night Safari park have been placed in isolation in their den,

the government's animal and veterinary service said. "All the lions remain bright, alert and active," said Sonja Luz, from Mandai Wildlife Group, which operates the park. "We expect that the lions will make a full recovery with minor supportive treatment."

Three zookeepers from the Night Safari are confirmed to have been infected. The park is an open-air zoo home to hundreds of animals, which welcomes visitors at night. An African lion at Singapore Zoo - which is adjacent to the Night Safari - has also fallen sick, and officials have ordered virus tests. Luz added the risk of animals passing the virus to humans is low.

Both Singapore Zoo and the Night Safari remain open, although the lion exhibits have been temporarily closed. — AFP



SINGAPORE: Asiatic lions are seen in the Night Safari exhibit at the Singapore Zoo in this undated handout photo. — AFP