



Established 1961

ISSUE NO: 18906  
16 PAGES, 150 FILS

The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf

JAMADA ALAWWAL 13, 1444 AH  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2022

**3** Mirzaam Expo opens to fanfare as quality blends with elegance



**6** Is Biden running again? He's sure acting like it



**12** Tweet sparks Musk fever in EU's poorest corner



**16** Dr Cool says air-conditioned Olympic marathon possible



## Atlas Lions charge into quarters

Morocco dump Spain out on penalties to make World Cup history



DOHA: Morocco's players celebrate with a Palestinian flag at the end of the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match against Spain at the Education City Stadium in Al-Rayyan on Dec 6, 2022. — AFP

DOHA: Achraf Hakimi struck the decisive penalty to send Spain crashing out and Morocco into the World Cup quarterfinals for the first time, winning 3-0 in a shootout on Tuesday after a 0-0 draw. Spain coach Luis Enrique had claimed his players prepared by taking 1,000 penalties as homework but Pablo Sarabia, Carlos Soler and Sergio Busquets all missed from the spot and Madrid-born Hakimi dinked his home to the delight of Morocco's raucous support.

Walid Regragui's side will face Portugal or Switzerland in what is uncharted territory for them, with their previous best a last-16 exit in 1986. Spain had been hoping they could repeat their 2010 World Cup triumph after reaching the semifinals of Euro 2020, where they were also beaten on penalties by Italy. The teams were closely matched through a nail-biting clash, with Spain having more of the ball but Morocco creating the better openings, few though they were. — AFP (See Page 16)



DOHA: Former National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem (center) and his brothers hold a Kuwaiti flag at the match.

### News in brief

#### KD 50 salary hike limit axed

KUWAIT: Acting general manager of the Public Authority of Manpower Mubarak Al-Azmi has removed a stipulation on work permits limiting an increase of monthly salaries by only KD 50 annually. "Based on public interest, the restriction on increasing wages has been removed," Azmi's decision said. "At the moment there is no maximum limit on salary increases," a source at the PAM told Kuwait Times.

#### No fees can be added to bill

KUWAIT: Official sources said the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Central Bank of Kuwait instructed all e-payments firms and their agents to stop charging commissions or additional fees from customers on top of the product's price if payments are done electronically. Some e-payment companies said they have stopped splitting commissions between sellers and consumers, and the dealer will not be able to add any fee to the bill from Tuesday.

#### Home delivery of KU certificates

KUWAIT: The head of admissions at Kuwait University Dr Abdullah Al-Hajery announced the admissions department launched a home delivery service for certificates. A meeting attended by a number of department officials and delivery company representatives concluded with the approval of the service, which will include certificates, grade lists and 'to whom it may concern' certificates, delivered after a maximum of three days from request. A hotline 90071210 was set up to facilitate the delivery process.

## Citizens, residents of GCC can enter Qatar without Hayya card

KUWAIT: GCC citizens and residents will be allowed to enter Qatar without the need to register for the Hayya card, the Qatari interior ministry said

on Tuesday. The ministry, in a statement carried by the Qatar News Agency (QNA), said Gulf citizens and residents coming to Qatar from all border points will be allowed into the country without registering for digital Hayya cards. However, the card, along with the ticket, is required to attend World Cup matches, affirmed the ministry.

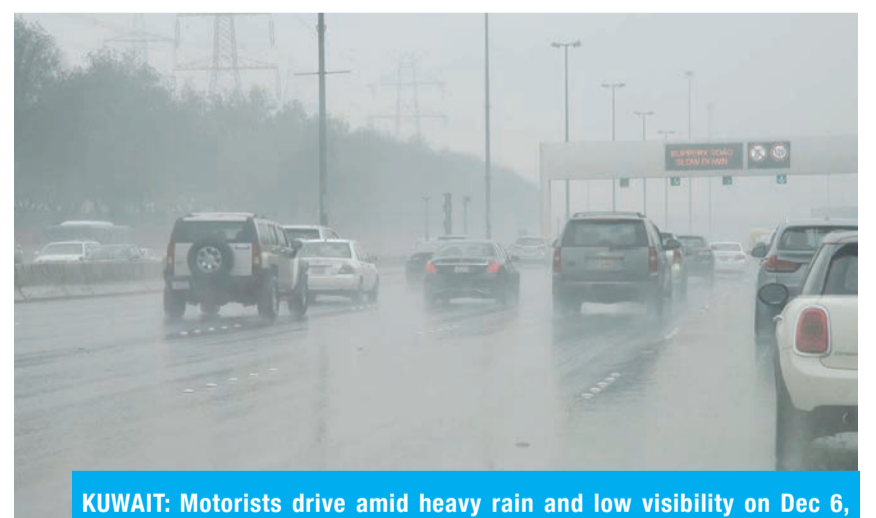
Those arriving in Qatar via land and are eager to use public buses to reach their destinations are welcome to do so, indicated the ministry, noting that parking for vehicles at border points will be provided without fees.

## Kuwait can deal with rainwater deluge: Official

KUWAIT: Kuwait's drainage system can cope with water accumulations resulting from the ongoing rainfall in the country, the public works ministry said on Tuesday. Ahmad Al-Saleh, the official spokesperson of the ministry of public works and the roads authority, told KUNA that rain has been continuously falling since early Tuesday. Emergency teams of the ministry and the authority are

handling some water puddles in inner districts and on the highways, he said, reaffirming that the drainage networks can absorb the water accumulations despite the ongoing downpour.

The teams will remain on alert with forecast of high tides that may disrupt water flow into the sea, Saleh said. The ministry, the civil defense and other relevant authorities are coordinating for prompt response to any situation via social media, the hotline 150 and the ministry's WhatsApp account. Saleh said emergency teams have been stationed in all regions to monitor any hazardous water accumulations and call for assistance if needed. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Motorists drive amid heavy rain and low visibility on Dec 6, 2022. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Al Jazeera takes slain journalist's case to the ICC

THE HAGUE: TV network Al Jazeera submitted the case of slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh to the International Criminal Court on Tuesday, saying she was killed by Zionist forces. The Qatar-based channel said it had "unearthed new evidence" on the death of the Palestinian-American, shot while covering a Zionist army raid in Jenin in the occupied West Bank on May 11.

Any person or group can file a complaint to the ICC prosecutor for investigation, but the Hague-

based court is under no obligation to take on such cases. Al Jazeera said its submission highlighted "new witness evidence and video footage (that) clearly show that Shireen and her colleagues were directly fired at by the (Zionist) Occupation Forces". "The claim by the (Zionist) authorities that Shireen was killed by mistake in an exchange of fire is completely unfounded," the channel said.

An AFP journalist saw a lawyer representing Al Jazeera's case entering the ICC's headquarters to hand over their submission. The ICC last year launched a probe into war crimes in the Palestinian territories, but Israel is not an ICC member and disputes the court's jurisdiction. The Zionist army conceded on September 5 that one of its soldiers had likely shot Abu Akleh after mistaking her for a militant.

The Zionist entity said it would not cooperate with any external probe into Abu Akleh's death. "No one

will investigate IDF (Zionist military) soldiers and no one will preach to us about morals in warfare, certainly not Al Jazeera," Zionist Prime Minister Yair Lapid said in a statement.

ed without fees. It added that GCC citizens and residents eager to enter the country using their private vehicles will be allowed from December 8; however, they must register on the interior ministry's website 12 hours prior to their arrival, without the need to pay fees.

The statement affirmed that these measures were taken to allow people in the region to enjoy the festivities related to the World Cup and fan areas, reiterating that those wanting to attend matches must have the Hayya card. — KUNA



Shireen Abu Akleh

will investigate IDF (Zionist military) soldiers and no one will preach to us about morals in warfare, certainly not Al Jazeera," Zionist Prime Minister Yair Lapid said in a statement.

Continued on Page 6



9 780202 223841

## Local



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud. —KUNA photos



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal receives Ambassador of Jordan to Kuwait Saqr Abu Shatal.



RIYADH: Kuwait Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah with Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khuraiji.

# Crown Prince receives invitation for Amir to attend GCC summit

## Crown Prince sends letter to Saudi King • Jordanian King sends message to Amir

KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday an invitation addressed to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to partake in the 43rd GCC summit due in Riyadh on Dec 9. The invitation letter was handed over by the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan

bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah delivered a letter on Tuesday to King Salman from HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal, dealing with ties between the two Gulf Arab neighbors. The Kuwaiti envoy handed the letter to Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khuraiji, amid talks between

the two diplomats in the Saudi capital, said a Kuwaiti embassy statement.

Also, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Tuesday a written message addressed to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from Jordanian King Abdullah II regarding bilateral ties, issues of common con-

cern and the latest regional and international developments.

The message was delivered to HH the Crown Prince by the Ambassador of Jordan to Kuwait Saqr Abu Shatal.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal also received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA

## Kuwait banking institute trained 50,000 in 10 yrs

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) has trained up to 50,000 people, mostly Kuwaiti citizens, over the past 10 years, the institute's director general Rana Al-Naibari said. Naibari, in an interview with KUNA, said the institute held 130-260 training programs annually in recent years. And, over the past 10 years, it organized nearly 2,500 training programs on professional accreditation, upgrading leaders' skills and updating various works. Some 4,000 people register for these programs every year, Naibari added.

The institute, established according to an Amiri Decree in 1970, currently operates under the aus-

pices of the Central Bank of Kuwait. It partly aims at sharpening professional skills of the banking personnel. Naibari said KIBS had overseen the CBK initiative "Kafaa" designed to secure highly qualified national cadres. "Kafaa" includes programs for developing executives' skills in coordination with Harvard's business faculty, habituating newly graduated Kuwaiti citizens and granting scholarships for studies abroad.

The institute, which has a website headlined "bayanti" including specialized banking studies, regularly coordinates with banks to examine their issues, particularly with respect to human resources, and offers solutions. —KUNA



Rana Al-Naibari

## PAM participates in ILO conference, holds workshop

KUWAIT: Singaporean President Halimah Yacob opened the International Labor Organization's 17th Asia and Pacific Regional Meeting, which is attended by the Kuwaiti government represented by ministries, businessmen and workers. "The scheduled agenda for the meeting includes a number of subjects which will be discussed. Most important is a framework for supporting transitions towards formalization and decent work, which focuses on the legal frameworks and labor market institutions necessary for the transition to formal employment that supports labor mobility and provides for improved labor migration governance and protection of migrant workers," Public Authority of Manpower's Dr Abdullah Al-Rashidi said.

"Moreover, we aim to strengthening multilateral cooperation to achieve productive employment and decent work for all, and discuss multilateral measures to support the eighth goal of sustainable development and strengthen the resilience of the labor market and promote decent work in the Asia-Pacific region and Arab states region," he added. The meeting will continue until Dec 9, 2022.

Meanwhile, PAM organized on Tuesday a workshop in Kuwait titled "Towards exceptional future employment" for those who are looking for jobs in the private sector, hosted by Gulf University for Science and Technology. "The workshops targeted new graduates and those awaiting employment in the private sector with the aim to support and prepare young Kuwaitis to participate in the workforce and encourage working in the private sector, as well as to reduce unemployment," PAM said in a statement.

"The workshop's priorities include making the targeted group more aware about the importance of working in the private sector and showcase its benefits by guiding their professional path to prepare them based on their specializations and requirements," the statement added. "The workshop included a presentation that explains the private sector and its benefit, as well as to guide applicants on how to prepare for job interviews, learn the most important tips to clear them, prepare a CV and how to deal with the work environment to guarantee career success," the statement explained.



SINGAPORE: PAM officials at the ILO meeting.



KUWAIT: Workshop at GUST organized by PAM.

## Values of democracy and values of ethics

In my view



By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

local@kuwaittimes.net

The 33rd US President Harry S Truman (May 8, 1884 - Dec 26, 1972) once said "you want a friend in Washington? Get a dog". This is Western democracy, which did not strike a balance between democracy and ethical values such as tolerance and love, as well as keeping up with the human instinct.

Fair people appreciate Western civilization's adoption of democratic values, which hold people equal in freedoms and opportunities. These fair people hesitate a lot in criticizing the Western world, because they see the amount of misery, injustice and dictatorship many of the world's populations are living under the rule of tyrants.

Despite the correctness of this apprehension, the Western's civilization's ignorance of ethical values such as true love, humanity, children's rights and respect of instinctive human nature made the civilization of the free world lose its balance and the Western individual dream of loyalty and respect for the human being's instinct, friendship, sacrifice and true love. This is what the US president meant more than 60 years ago.

Today, we see Western freedom turn into a pressure tool to impose their culture on others instead of being a tool to promote the culture of understanding and mutual respect. Otherwise, what does it mean for the European Parliament to keep its pressure on the rest of world's people to force them to encourage homosexuality (sexual deviation) among them? This pressure was confronted by many countries, and is a declaration that the world's patience is over towards Western supremacy and that a new world order is being formed.

On the other hand, a French magazine published a while ago insulting pictures of the Prophet (PBUH) of a major religion. The French picked it up, so the magazine reached its goal to increase sales. The issue is not that of instinctive deviations or compromising the rights of young children or insulting a religion - the issue is that of Western civilization failing in instilling values in its people of true friendship, natural instinct and respect for others' rights, and every household there began looking for it in animals.

Democracy is not exclusive to the Western world, as in the East there are successful democracies creating a balance. In Japan, for example, leaders balance between democracy and ethical values, so Japan succeeded in building a population that promotes love wherever they go, as we saw them at the Qatar World Cup.

Time has come for countries that have values to pressure the Western world to adopt the rights of women, children and good men. In the Western world, homosexuality (sexual deviation) is spreading, depriving young children of their basic rights to live in a family of a mother and father, as the mother cares with instinctive motherhood for the child to give them real love, and where the father stands proud to set his children an example to complete the mission of normal people.

Muslims, Christians, Jews and others must build their countries by balancing democracy and ethical values. The people who are angry due to Western interventions must also get angry for losing democracy in their countries, and should work hard to achieve a balance between the values of democracy and ethics.



> Fires in front of his burning car at Kuwait Ind Rally (2018).

Go ahead. Forward it. ➔

Local

## New positions for KT staff members

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times has appointed the following staff members to new positions:

**Islam Al-Sharaa - IT Director**  
Islam Mohammad Al-Sharaa has been working at Kuwait Times since 1983. After completing an MCSE course, he joined the editorial department in 1992, going on to head the information technology department at the paper. Sharaa has covered many events inside and outside Kuwait and met several senior IT specialists during his assignments.

**Shakir Reshamwala - Deputy Managing Editor**  
Shakir Reshamwala has more than 20 years of experience in the field of journalism. After earning a bachelor's degree in commerce, he



Islam Al-Sharaa  
IT Director



Shakir Reshamwala  
Deputy Managing Editor



Faten Omar  
Deputy Managing Editor



Majd Othman  
Head of Business section

worked for a travel magazine before joining Kuwait Times in 2003. He is the front page editor and the paper's senior copyeditor. Reshamwala is a 2013 World Press Institute and 2017 East-West Center Senior Journalists Seminar fellow. He is also a competitive

Scrabble player and has represented Kuwait at many world championships in North America, Europe, Australia, Asia and the Middle East. A budding artist, Reshamwala recently painted a mural on a wall of Kuwait Times' disused printing press.

**Faten Omar - Deputy Managing Editor**  
Faten Omar has been working for Kuwait Times as a local reporter since 2014. She earned her BA in Journalism and Media from Petra University in 2009, and an MA in Media from Middle East University in 2012. Since 2012, Omar has been working as a journalist and freelancer for local, regional and international news agencies. She has reported for Chinese news agency Xinhua, Lebanon's Raseef22, Rai Al-Youm in the UK and Jordanian-based daily newspaper Al-Ghad, as well as a translator for the New York Times. In Kuwait, Omar worked as a reporter at the daily Arabic newspaper Al-Kuwaitiyah and as managing editor of the local section at Al-Mustaqbal newspaper.

**Majd Othman - Head of Business section**  
Majd Othman has a master's degree in the field of journalism and media from Petra University. Before joining Kuwait Times, she worked as a business reporter at Al-Qabas newspaper, business news correspondent for CNBC Arabia - Kuwait office and other local journalism and media institutions, not to mention an internship with Al Jazeera's Amman office.

# Mirzaam Expo opens to fanfare as quality blends with elegance

## Visitors to have an exceptional experience, can win host of valuable prizes

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** Founder and Organizer of Mirzaam Expo Farah Al-Humaidhi confirmed that the third edition of Mirzaam 2022 is the largest and most comprehensive in Kuwait since its launch in 2019, adding the aim of this exhibition is to establish the formal and implicit enrolling of Mirzaam in the list of exhibitions specialized in décor and interior and exterior design in the region, in preparation for placing it on the global map of forums and exhibitions related to this field.



Waleed Al-Khashti



Farah Al-Humaidhi



Ashraf Tamim

She referred to Mirzaam's work strategy, which since its establishment, aims to improve public taste and build a qualitative culture with a Kuwaiti imprint on the skills and arts of decor and interior design for individuals and families. Mirzaam Expo opened on Tuesday at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref and will continue until Dec 10.

Humaidhi added in a press statement that Mirzaam Expo 2022 aims to renew the public's passion for innovation in the field of interior design and decor, pointing out that visitors this year will have an exceptional experience in which quality blends with elegance. The exhibition is spread over an area exceeding 20,000 sq m, which is the largest area of Mirzaam so far, with a selective mix of all areas of design and decoration, from local and regional engineers, suppliers and designers.

The exhibition includes more than 240 distinguished pavilions in more than 20 different categories in the world of interior design and decor, in addition to more than 190 participants in the fields of design and décor. "The great investment in Mirzaam reflects its importance as an exhibition, as its participants are keen to return to it every time with larger and wider areas," Humaidhi said, revealing the return rate of Mirzaam participants and the volume of investment exceeded 85 percent.

Humaidhi expected a huge turnout for Mirzaam 2022 for several reasons. "Every visitor who concludes a contract, purchase or deal during the exhibition can win many valuable prizes, along with the grand prize, a Volvo car presented by our strategic sponsor BNK Automotive, in addition to

prizes worth KD 10,000 divided into five prizes, a voucher worth KD 2,500 from platinum sponsor Abyat, and a voucher worth KD 500 from Farah Home," she said.

"A special space has been allocated for children in cooperation with B Curious Nursery to encourage women to visit the exhibition without worrying about their children. A presence of a comfortable space was allocated for mothers to breastfeed, in which all their needs are available, as well as restaurants and cafes that provide many options for visitors to enjoy and relax during the visit," she added.

Humaidhi revealed the organization of practical and theoretical workshops throughout the day at nominal prices for visitors, presented by experts in various fields related to finishing and furnishing homes during the five days of Mirzaam Expo, in addition to allocating a number of pavilions at the exhibition for universities that teach interior design and architecture in Kuwait to display their curricula and the works of their students, along with dedicated spaces for workshops and seminars that will benefit visitors. She pointed out all Mirzaam seminars will be free to attend under special and exclusive sponsorship of Dawrat.com.

"I appreciate the efforts and the role of the main and permanent sponsors of Mirzaam since its launch in 2019, especially Zain Company, in addition to Al-Wazzan United Company, which is participating as a platinum sponsor of the exhibition in 2022 after being a golden sponsor of Mirzaam's second edition in 2020, in addition to banking sponsor Boubyan Bank and the platinum sponsors that are participating for the first time in the exhibition in 2022, Abyat and Hassan Abul Group, the leader in the field of finishing. Thanks are extended to the strategic sponsors of the exhibition - BNK Automotive and Volvo Cars, and Mirzaam's golden



KUWAIT: The 3rd edition of Mirzaam Expo opened on Dec 6, 2022. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



sponsors: Waset Basins, Tima Basins, Design Hub, National Industries Ceramics and Farah Home, for their belief in this exhibition, in addition to other sponsors and companies that you can get to know in Mirzaam," Humaidhi concluded.

Executive Director at Zain Group Waleed Al-Khashti told Kuwait Times: "Zain is very keen to be a part of these exhibitions, especially since we are currently providing smart solution services for homes. This exhibition is a gateway to present these services, whether regarding mobile phones, doors

or curtains, in addition to providing electronic games that are built in homes, not to mention the special offers on Internet and Wi-Fi services for homes. All these solutions and offers are presented only during the Mirzaam Expo."

Ashraf Tamim, General Manager of BNK Automotive, said: "This is not our first participation in the Mirzaam exhibition as strategic sponsors - we have always been a part of it, especially since we see that this exhibition is in line with Volvo's policy of focusing on modern and high-end design."

## Kuwaiti surgeon conducts first RARYGB surgery

**KUWAIT:** Dr Mishari Al-Mehanna, a Kuwaiti plastic surgeon, conducted, in collaboration with a Taiwanese bariatric surgeon, a successful Robotic Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass (RARYGB) surgery on Monday. This successful RARYGB, the first of its kind in the Gulf region, is a great achievement that falls in the framework of vision of the Kuwaiti ministry of health to modernize the healthcare system, Dr Mehanna told KUNA.

He noted that the RARYGB procedure was conducted at Jaber Hospital on the sidelines of the 13th Asian conference on type 2 diabetes surgery. The patient, in his 40s, suffers from arteriosclerosis and other chronic diseases, Dr Mehanna noted, adding that the RARYGB is frequently used in developed countries due to its great impact in controlling obesity and diabetes. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Dr Mishari Al-Mehanna with his medical team. —KUNA



Waleed Al-Khashti and Farah Al-Humaidhi with Zain's team.

## Zain showcases its latest smart home solutions

**KUWAIT:** Zain, Kuwait's leading digital service provider, announced its third consecutive platinum sponsorship of Mirzaam Expo, the biggest interior design event in Kuwait. This year's expo, held at Kuwait International Fair in Mishref, is the event's biggest yet, and offers visitors a wide-ranging set of the best products and services in interior design, decoration, and home essentials.

Zain continues to support this unique event to encourage initiatives that contribute to developing creativity, enriching innovation, and progressing the local economic scene. The company is also keen on showcasing its latest and most advanced smart home solutions and products, reflecting its leader-

ship as one of Kuwait and the region's top tech and digital service providers.

Zain is present at Mirzaam Expo via its 'Zain Smart Home' booth at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref - Hall 6. The booth, designed to resemble a small house, features a wide range of advanced products and solutions, and includes three main areas: the Internet of Things (IoT) section presents Zain's latest smart solutions for the home like security cameras, sensors, smoke detectors, thermal sensors, smart lights, and more.

Zain's Smart Home also features a special gaming section for all the needs of gamers and esports enthusiasts, featuring the best gaming consoles, PCs, accessories, headsets, and more. The third section offers many of the company's latest products and digital services. This year's edition of Mirzaam Expo is the biggest yet, covering over 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> with over 200 unique booths with services for interior design, decoration, finishing, furnishing, and more. The event also features special draws with valuable prizes and many activities for visitors.

Mirzaam is the biggest event of its kind in Kuwait, and gathers decoration experts, designers, suppliers, professional contractors, and specialists that offer all services and needs related to designing and decorating homes, offices, commercial projects, and more. The event also features many panel discussions, seminars, and other programs that reveal the secrets of the art of interior design and discuss the latest decoration trends.

Zain's participation comes in line with its strategic vision to continue its transformation into an integrated digital lifestyle provider, which is centered around digital transformation leadership and empowering the community to enjoy a smarter portable lifestyle, as well as using advanced technology solutions to enable an easier and more flexible life. Zain always aspires to new levels of excellence in all the services it offers to its customers. By showcasing its innovative solutions for smart homes, Zain affirms its continuous efforts in meeting customers' needs and aspirations and deliver its promise to offering the best services and latest technologies.



Zain's Smart Home at Hall 6 offers the latest smart home solutions.

## Abdullah Al-Salem University prepares to receive students

KUWAIT: Education Minister Hamad Al-Adwani affirmed the Council of Public Universities will continue to implement its objectives in providing the basic necessities of higher education at a steady and deliberate pace by supporting educational institutions and developing the higher education system to prepare young nationals to become active members who enjoy competitive and productive capabilities of the workforce, in order to achieve the greatest possible developmental impact towards achieving the 2035 vision of Kuwait.

"The council discussed several issues, including forming a committee to select the university's director, the conditions, criteria and procedures attached to selecting candidates for the position, and approving the announcement of the vacancy of the position at Kuwait University," Acting Secretary-General of the Council of Public Universities Dr Subieh Al-Mukhaizeem said.

"The council approved the draft budget of Kuwait University for the 2023/2024 fiscal year and mandated Kuwait University to take the necessary measures in accordance with the law. The council also approved the draft budget of Abdullah Al-Salem University for the 2023/2024 fiscal year proposed by the constituent board of directors and assigned them the Abdullah Al-Salem University to take the necessary measures," he clarified.

Mukhaizeem also stated that the council took necessary measures to ensure the achievement of the state's goal for Abdullah Al-Salem University to receive the first batch of high school students for the 2023/24 academic year. He added the founding board of directors of Abdullah Al-Salem University was assigned to submit a report on the detailed steps to establish the Abdullah Al-Salem University, including the mission, vision, goals, academic study, study programs and specializations that the university will offer in the 2023/2024 academic year.

## Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A restaurant worker prepares grilled meat skewers at a restaurant in Souq Mubarakiya in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Ambassador stresses keenness on showcasing Kuwait products

CAIRO: Kuwait Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem said Monday his country is eager to partake in international and regional exhibitions to share expertise and highlight the country's products. This came in a statement by Ghanem to KUNA on the sidelines of the international exhibition for food and beverages Food Africa 2022, inaugurated by Egypt's Minister of Supply and Internal Trade Ali Al-Mosehli and Minister of Industry and Trade Ahmad Samir.

Ghanem voiced pride for Kuwait's companies and products at the exhibition, commending the efforts made by the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) to facilitate all procedures, remove all obstacles facing these companies and encourage them to market their products in other markets outside Kuwait. He said Kuwait's products are reputable due to their high quality and this is shown by the large number of visitors to Kuwait's pavilion. He affirmed that the relations between Egypt and Kuwait are historical and deep-rooted at the official and popular levels, hoping for further development of ties in the future.

Lina Al-Mousa, head of PAI's exhibitions and promotional activities department, said in a statement to KUNA that the authority organized, prepared and equipped Kuwait's pavilion at the exhibition on an area of 192 sq m to display various Kuwaiti products. She elaborated that the Kuwaiti pavilion includes a variety



CAIRO: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem visits the Kuwait booth at Food Africa. —KUNA

of food industries like dates, honey, dairy and its derivatives, pastries, snacks, frozen fish, healthy packaging materials and others.

PAI is keen on backing Kuwait's companies to show their products at regional and international exhibitions, she said. The Kuwaiti pavilion includes 10

including Kuwaiti Danish Dairy Company, Kuwait Industrial Food Company, Kuwait Flour Mills & Bakeries Company and others. The exhibition features more than 700 companies from 32 countries and more than 500 international buyers from all over the world. —KUNA



Scan & Subscribe  
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

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



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 356-355-353



KUWAIT: Reception held by Thailand Embassy in Kuwait on its National Day. —KUNA

## Assistant FM lauds ties with Thailand

KUWAIT: Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Ambassador Sami Al-Hamad commended ties with Thailand in the economic, commercial, investment, tourism and healthcare fields. In a statement made on the sidelines of a reception held by Thailand Embassy in Kuwait on its National Day, Hamad affirmed Kuwait's eagerness to develop these relations and find a chance

for broader partnership on all levels.

Upon the directives of Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait exerts continued efforts for further cooperation with all sisterly and friendly countries to develop commercial and economic ties to create investment opportunities inside and outside Kuwait, he elaborated.

Meanwhile, the Charge d'Affaires of Thailand's Embassy to Kuwait lauded bilateral relations, referring that the diplomatic ties between the two sides which began in 1963. Thailand and Kuwait have friendly ties in all fields, including trade, investment, tourism, healthcare, education, agriculture and consular affairs amongst others, he said. —KUNA

## PHFS supports Medical Students Association with diabetes workshop

KUWAIT: Based on the principle of community partnership between various bodies in the private and public sectors, and in order to improve the concepts of social, health and community development to achieve Kuwait's 2035 vision in the health field, the development department of the Patients Helping Fund Society supported the Kuwait Medical Students Association in holding a practical workshop on the occasion of World Diabetes Day.

The aim was to teach medical students from various stages the correct scientific methods for measuring the blood sugar level, complications related to the disease and ways to prevent it in order to raise awareness among students and enable them to acquire important clinical skills. The association contributed to an exhibition in which health awareness publications were distributed to spread health awareness among visitors.

The Patients Helping Fund Society also participated with the department of cultural and artistic



activities at the Jabriya College of Medicine on imbalance and hearing loss, and discussed its causes and solutions.



Indonesia parliament approves ban on sex outside marriage

## President Ramaphosa's future fragile despite party backing

Page 6

Page 7

# Climate, nuke crises spark fears of worst

## UN chief warned that the planet was on a 'highway to climate hell'



VAASA, Finland: Smoke comes out of a factory on Dec 6, 2022. — AFP

WASHINGTON: For thousands of years, predictions of apocalypse have borne little fruit. But with dangers rising from nuclear war and climate change, does the planet need to at least begin contemplating the worst? When the world rang in 2022, few would have expected the year to feature the US president speaking of the risk of doomsday, following Russia's threats to go nuclear in its invasion of Ukraine.

"We have not faced the prospect of Armageddon since Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis" in 1962, Joe Biden said in October. And on the year that humanity welcomed its eighth billion member, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the planet was on a "highway to climate hell."

In extremes widely attributed to climate change, floods submerged one-third of Pakistan, China sweat under an unprecedented 70-day heatwave and crops failed in the Horn of Africa, all while the world lagged behind on the UN-blessed goal of checking warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

### Biggest risk yet of nuclear war?

The Global Challenges Foundation, a Swedish group that assesses catastrophic risks, warned in an annual report that the threat of nuclear weapons

use was the greatest since 1945 when the United States destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in history's only atomic attacks.

The report warned that an all-out exchange of nuclear weapons, besides causing an enormous loss of life, would trigger clouds of dust that would obscure the sun, reducing the capacity to grow food and ushering in "a period of chaos and violence, during which most of the surviving world population would die from hunger."

Kennette Benedict, a lecturer at the University of Chicago who led the report's nuclear section, said risks were even greater than during the Cuban Missile Crisis as Russian President Vladimir Putin appeared less restrained by advisors.

While any Russian nuclear strike would likely involve small "tactical" weapons, experts fear a quick escalation if the United States responds. "Then we're in a completely different ballgame," said Benedict, a senior advisor to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, which in January will unveil its latest assessment of the "doomsday clock" set since 2021 at 100 seconds to midnight. Amid the focus on Ukraine, US intelligence believes North Korea is ready for a seventh nuclear test, diplomacy has been at a standstill on Iran's contested nuclear work

and tensions between India and Pakistan have remained at a low boil.

But Benedict also faulted the Biden administration's nuclear posture review which reserved the right for the United States to use nuclear weapons in "extreme circumstances." "I think there's been a kind of steady erosion of the ability to manage nuclear weapons," she said.

### Charting worst-case climate risks

UN experts estimated ahead of November talks in Egypt that the world was on track to warming of 2.1 to 2.9 C-but some outside analysts put the figure well higher, with greenhouse gas emissions in 2021 again hitting a record despite pushes to renewable energy.

Luke Kemp, a Cambridge University expert on existential risks, said the possibility of higher warming was getting insufficient attention, which he blamed on the consensus culture of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and scientists' fears of being branded alarmist.

"There has been a strong incentive to err on the side of least drama," he said. "What we really need are more complex assessments of how risks would cascade around the world." — AFP

## Colombia landslide kills 34

BOGOTA: Heavy rains in northwest Colombia sent a wall of earth crashing onto a winding road, swallowing up a bus and other vehicles and killing 34 people, emergency services said Monday. The landslide Sunday evening prompted a large rescue effort, with dozens of people in hard hats using backhoes and excavators to dig through the earth looking for victims.

The National Unit for Disaster Risk Management said the fatalities included eight minors and that nine other people were injured in the disaster in the remote town of Pueblo Rico. The bus had set out from the city of Cali with 25 passengers, and traveled 270 kilometers (170 miles) before being hit by the landslide as it passed through the Andes mountain region, civil defense officials said.

Colombian media reported that a child had survived and was pulled from the arms of its mother, who did not make it. One survivor said the bus driver had at first managed to dodge the worst of the landslide.

"Part of it was coming down and the bus was a little bit back from that. The bus driver was backing up when it all came crashing down," Andres Ibarquen told radio station Lloro Stereo.

The rainy season that began in August is Colombia's worst in 40 years, according to the government, causing accidents that have left more than 270 people dead. The country has declared a national disaster over the rains linked to the exceptionally long La Nina weather phenomenon, which cools surface temperatures and is currently causing drought and flooding around the globe.

Today, the landslide "puts this town in mourning, tomorrow it could be in another area, because we really have many unstable areas in the country, and the rainy season has not ended," said Javier Pava of the UNGRD.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization said last week the La Nina conditions could last until February or March 2023. In Colombia, the phenomenon has also caused crop damage, compromising food supplies and leading to soaring prices. — AFP

## China's ruling party lauds late leader Jiang Zemin

BEIJING: Sirens wailed across China as the Communist Party eulogised late leader Jiang Zemin Tuesday, hailing him as a patriot who "dedicated his life" to the country. China's rulers orchestrated a day of mourning across the country, with security services ensuring there were no large gatherings on the streets following rare protests in recent weeks.

Jiang died in Shanghai last Wednesday at the age of 96 and left a mixed legacy, taking power in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown and leading China towards its emergence as a powerhouse on the global stage.

A public memorial service attended by China's political elite began at 10:00 am (0200 GMT) in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, bedecked with a giant portrait of the late leader as well as slogans lauding him and a massive flower display.

"He dedicated his whole life and energy



BEIJING: People take part in the public memorial service for China's former leader Jiang Zemin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. — AFP

to the Chinese people, dedicated his life to fighting for national independence, people's liberation, national prosperity, and people's happiness," President Xi Jinping told assembled party faithful at the hall.

"The CCP Central Committee calls on the whole Party, the army and the people of all ethnic groups in China to turn grief into strength," Xi added. Looking frail and distraught, Jiang's wife Wang Yeping sat in a

wheelchair in the front row.

A nationwide "three-minute silence" was held as sirens sounded. In Jiang's hometown of Yangzhou, around 100 people gathered in front of his former residence to observe the silence after which they were swiftly dispersed by police. Flags across the country were at half-mast as were those at Chinese government buildings overseas. — AFP

## Spain's ex-king wins partial victory in UK

LONDON: Three appeal judges in London on Tuesday ruled that the former mistress of Spain's ex-king Juan Carlos I could not sue him for harassment in the English courts for the period while he was on the throne. The judges said in a written judgment that he was "immune from the jurisdiction" in England and Wales until his abdication in 2014. That means that Corinna zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn can still pursue the 84-year-old former monarch in the English courts for his alleged behaviour after that time.

Zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn, who lives

in England, wants an "injunction and damages" due to "a continuous and ongoing campaign of harassment" against her. She claims the campaign began in 2012, following the "break-up of an intimate romantic relationship", and continues to this day.

She filed a harassment suit in London in 2020, alleging he pressured her to return gifts worth 65 million euros (\$65 million), including works of art and jewellery. Her legal representatives called Tuesday's ruling "disappointing", but added it only affected a narrow part of their case.

"Corinna's claim can now progress towards trial in the High Court in London," said Michael Kim of law firm Kobre & Kim.

### 'Romantic relationship'

"The judgment applies to a very narrow issue. It concerns only the period when Juan Carlos was the reigning King of Spain," he added. "The overwhelming part

of Corinna's claim, from 2014, remains unaffected and should proceed to trial."

Juan Carlos, listed in court under his full name Juan Carlos Alfonso Victor Maria De Borbon y Borbon, has not appeared at hearings so far and strenuously denies any wrongdoing. In March, the High Court in London fully rejected Juan Carlos's claim that English courts had no jurisdiction to hear the case because he had state immunity as a royal.

Judge Matthew Nicklin said that "whatever special status the defendant retained under the law and constitution of Spain, he was no longer a 'sovereign' or 'head of state' so as to entitle him to personal immunity". He challenged the ruling and took the case to the Court of Appeal. Court submissions claim Juan Carlos, who is married, was in an "intimate romantic relationship" with the divorcee from 2004 to 2009 and showered her with gifts. — AFP

AL-TIJARIA  
نحن نعتنم  
We Care

DONATE A TOY.. SHARE THE JOY  
Al-Tijaria Toys & Stationary Donation Campaign

# TOYS CHARITY 3

Donations will be accepted at  
Boulevard Mall - Ground floor  
Starting from December 8, 2022

Sponsored by:  
Boulevard

## International

# President Ramaphosa's future fragile despite party backing

## 'In the ANC you could be charged for rape and still become president'

JOHANNESBURG: The threat of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's immediate exit from office over a cash-in-sofas scandal has temporarily faded after his party vowed to rally around him at next week's impeachment vote, but his woes are far from over.

The next days are critical for the head of state who has been championed as a graft-busting saviour after the corruption-drenched tenure of predecessor Jacob Zuma. Ruling African National Congress (ANC) party lawmakers vowed to close ranks around him at an impeachment vote in parliament next week, but Ramaphosa remains embroiled in the worst scandal of his career that could yet bring him down. After a tumultuous week following a report by a parliament-sanctioned independent panel which found that he "may have committed" serious violations and misconduct, Ramaphosa appeared to have earned a respite.

The parliament sitting to vote on whether he should face impeachment, initially slated for Tuesday, was at the 11th hour pushed back by a week, prolonging the uncertainty around Ramaphosa's future. That vote will come just three days before the ANC meets for its five-yearly conference to elect a new president. Ramaphosa is the leading candidate of the two nominees named so far for the party leadership.

But that is no guarantee he will be re-elected, or serve out his full state presidential term which should run until April 2024. ANC members facing criminal allegations or charges are expected to step

aside. Ramaphosa is not charged yet over the scandal dubbed "Phala Phala farm-gate", after the name of the estate in northeastern South Africa.

That gives him room to still try his luck and contest the ANC leadership—a ticket to the national presidency. "The step-aside rule doesn't apply here, Cyril Ramaphosa is not charged with anything," lawyer and ANC veteran Mathews Phosa told eNCA news at the weekend. But scandals do not necessarily decide the fate of an ANC president and the party throughout its nearly three decades in power has exhibited a tendency to protect its own people. "In the ANC you could be charged for rape and still become president, you could be charged for an international arms deal and still be a president," said political analyst Sandile Swana.

### Undignified exit?

Formerly a wealthy businessman, the president may follow the footsteps of two of his predecessors, Zuma and Thabo Mbeki, who did not complete their tenures and were forced out by the ANC. "The presidency of Ramaphosa is going to be short," said Swana, but "his chances of leaving in a dignified manner are minimal". The 70-year-old president found himself in hot water in June when South Africa's former spy boss filed a complaint to the police alleging Ramaphosa had concealed a huge cash theft from his game and rare cattle farm in 2020.

He accused the president of having organised for the burglars to be kidnapped and bribed into



JOHANNESBURG: Supporters of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa show their support outside the NAS-REC Centre in Johannesburg. —AFP

silence. Ramaphosa has denied any wrongdoing, saying the cash—more than half a million dollars, stashed beneath sofa cushions—was payment for buffaloes bought by a Sudanese businessman.

But his explanations did not convince the special panel, which raised questions about the source of the cash. On Monday Ramaphosa rushed to the

country's top court asking it to annul the panel's report, but it is uncertain if his request will be granted. The Constitutional Court case, which may take days or weeks to be concluded, "does not in itself stop the parliamentary (impeachment) proceedings from continuing", said public law professor at the University of Cape Town Cathy Powell. —AFP



GDYNIA, Poland: Polish President Andrzej Duda (6L), Minister of South Korea's state arms procurement agency Eom Donghwan (7L) and Polish Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak (4L) pose with officials during the acceptance of the first South Korean K2 battle tanks and South Korean K9 howitzers for Poland. —AFP

## Poland gets first shipment of South Korean weapons

GDYNIA, Poland: Poland on Tuesday received the first shipment of tanks and howitzers that it bought from South Korea as part of a drive to boost its defences following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. An EU and NATO member, Poland borders both Russia and Ukraine and has increased its purchase of weaponry after Kremlin began its war.

In July, it signed contracts to buy South Korean weapons including tanks, artillery and fighter jets. The weapons "are necessary to prevent an aggres-

sion," Polish President Andrzej Duda said during a ceremony at the Gdynia port on Tuesday, where the first purchased tanks and howitzers were delivered.

As part of the deal, Poland is to initially buy 180 K2 "Black Panther" tanks built by Hyundai Rotem before eventually acquiring more than 800 of a special variant to be called K2PL, production of which is start in Poland in 2026.

It also bought 48 K9 howitzers to be delivered this year, with a planned purchase of another approximately 600 to begin in 2024, with domestic production slated to start in 2026. As part of its weapons purchases, Poland in July said it would buy 32 AW149 multi-role military helicopters worth 1.75 billion euros (\$1.77 billion) from Italian arms company Leonardo. And it has also ordered 366 American Abrams tanks and European surface-to-air missile systems. —AFP

The Kremlin said Putin met senior officials to discuss issues related to the country's "domestic security" and that Russia was taking "necessary" measures to fend off more of what it said were Ukrainian attacks. Officials in Russia's Kursk region near the border with Ukraine said earlier Tuesday that a drone attack near an airfield had caused a fire at an oil storage unit. That attack came after the defense ministry said a day earlier that Ukraine had tried to attack another airfield in Ryazan region and also the key Engels airfield in the Saratov region.

Engels is a base for the country's strategic aircraft that Kyiv says have been used to strike Ukraine, and both sites are hundreds of kilometers away from Ukraine's border. The British defense ministry said that if Russia deems Ukraine to have been responsible then Moscow will "probably consider them as some of the most strategically significant failures of force protection since its invasion of Ukraine." The drone attacks come on the back of weeks of systematic Russian attacks that have crippled Ukrainian critical infrastructure like water, electricity and heating ahead of winter.

### 'Crush' Ukraine military

Russia on Monday fired another barrage of dozens of missiles that knocked out power and water in cities across Ukraine, the latest wave of attacks that Moscow has said Kyiv was responsible for because it refused Russian demands. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu on Tuesday said that Russian forces were using long-range, precision weapons to target military-linked facilities and "crush the military potential of Ukraine".

The defense ministry also announced Tuesday it had received back from Ukraine captivity 60 Russian servicemen in their most recent exchange. Russia's invasion and its decision to conscript hundreds of thousands of men has set off an exodus of Russians from the country, including critical politicians and journalists. However, neighboring Latvia announced Tuesday it was revoking the license for exiled independent TV channel Dohzd for multiple violations that included showing the Crimea peninsula annexed from Ukraine as part of Russia. "The laws of Latvia must be respected by everyone," Ivars Abolins, head of the Latvian National Electronic Mass Media Council, said on Twitter. —AFP

## Is Joe Biden running again?

WASHINGTON: Whether Joe Biden will seek a second term is the biggest secret in Washington. Only the man himself increasingly doesn't seem to be hiding the answer. A long distance day trip Tuesday to Arizona is only the latest indication that at 80, Biden is seriously laying the ground to stay in power for another term — until he's 86.

He's never visited the desert state as president and while the White House says he's there to promote a major new semiconductor plant in Phoenix, there's no ignoring that deeply divided Arizona will be one of the key links in any successful campaign. The November midterm elections, in which Republicans failed to score their expected big win in the House while actually losing in the Senate, is being interpreted by Biden as a full-blown validation.

And right as his foe Donald Trump gets his own 2024 election campaign off to a typically scandal-burdened start, Biden is enjoying the best period of his entire first term. The economy is, for now, proving wrong predictions of painful recession. Gigantic spending packages passed by Congress during Biden's first two years in office are starting to come on tap, pouring money into high-tech manufacturing, like semiconductors, green energy, and also old-fashioned infrastructure like roads and bridges.

Abroad, the US-led coalition against Russia in Ukraine continues to hold after nearly 10 months, helping to overcome the bitter taste of failure in Afghanistan. At the White House, Biden just hosted a successful — and lavish — state visit for French President Emmanuel Macron.

When Biden boasts that "things are moving, they're moving in the right direction" — as he did

## Warmer noses are better at fighting colds

WASHINGTON: Chilly weather and common respiratory infections often go hand in hand. Reasons for this include people gather inside more in winter, and viruses survive better in low-humidity indoor air. But there has been less certainty about whether lower temperatures actually impair human immunity and, if so, how. Now, a new study published Tuesday in The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology details a previously unknown way that the immune system attacks viral intruders inside the nose — and finds it works better when it's warm.

These discoveries could pave the way for an eventual treatment against the common cold and other viruses, Mansoor Amiji, a pharmaceutical sciences professor at Northeastern University, who co-led the research, told AFP. The starting point

## Al Jazeera takes slain journalist's...

Continued from Page 1

The veteran reporter, who was a Christian, was wearing a bulletproof vest marked "Press" and a helmet when she was shot in the head in the Jenin refugee camp, a historic flashpoint in the Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

Her niece, Lina Abu Akleh, urged the ICC to investigate the journalist's death. "The evidence is overwhelmingly clear, we expect the ICC to take action," she told a press conference in The Hague, adding that they had asked for a meeting with prosecutor Karim Khan. "My family still doesn't know who fired that deadly bullet and who was in the chain of command that killed my aunt."

last week after good employment figures came out — he doesn't resemble someone about to bow off the stage.

So while Biden has said his decision won't come until "early next year," many of those around him think they already know. "The president will make that decision, I expect, shortly after the holidays, but I expect the decision will be to do it," his chief of staff, Ron Klain, told The Wall Street Journal's CEO Council Summit on Monday.

"I certainly expect him to run," Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic leader in the new House of Representatives next year when Republicans assume their narrow majority, told Fox News on Sunday. "It's clear," said James Roosevelt Jr., another senior Democrat, speaking to The New York Times last week after Biden urged a shakeup of the Democratic candidate nominating process — a plan being interpreted as favorable to Biden. "He intends to run again," longtime Biden friend, Senator Chris Coons, told AFP. Even Newt Gingrich, a pillar of the Republican right wing establishment, can't hide grudging admiration. "Quit underestimating President Biden," he wrote on Axios, warning Republicans that they were blind to "just how effective Biden has been on his terms."

But doctors and family, not political commentators, will decide whether Biden runs. Some of those family "discussions" that Biden has flagged already took place in the Atlantic resort island of Nantucket, where he gathered with close relatives for Thanksgiving. More are expected at Christmas, with highly influential First Lady Jill Biden believed to be in the driving seat. Then there's the annual medical report, also expected to land soon. At 80, Biden shows some typical signs of old age — the shuffling walk, the sometimes distracted facial expressions, and occasionally embarrassing or at least awkward verbal hiccups. —AFP

was previous research by Amiji and colleagues in 2018, which found that nasal cells released "extracellular vesicles" (EVs) — a spray of tiny sacs that swarmed and destroyed bacteria upon inhalation. "The best analogy that we have is a hornet's nest," said Amiji. Like hornets defending a nest from attack, EVs swarm, bind to, and kill invaders.

For the new research, the team set out to answer two questions: are EVs also secreted in the nose in the presence of viral infections? And, if they are, is the strength of their response linked to temperature? To answer the first question, they used a test substance which mimics a viral infection to stimulate nasal mucosa — a thin tissue that lines the nose — that was taken from volunteers who had surgery to remove polyps. They found it did in fact produce EVs that target viruses.

In order to tackle the second question, they divided the nasal cell samples into two groups and cultured them in a lab, subjecting one set of samples to 37 degrees Celsius, and the other to 32C. These temperatures were chosen based on a separate test that found the temperature inside the nose falls by about 5C when outside air drops from 23C to 4C. —AFP

Lawyer Rodney Dixon said there had been a "complete cover-up" by the Zionist entity over Abu Akleh's death. He alleged that her killing was part of a "systematic and widespread campaign" against Al Jazeera by the Zionist entity that also included the bombing of a Gaza building housing Al Jazeera's office last year. "There's a clear attempt to shut Al Jazeera down and silence it," Dixon told the press conference. "We are hopeful that there will now be justice for Shireen."

Dixon said they had not yet had a formal meeting with the prosecutor's office but had handed over evidence including some on memory sticks to the ICC's evidence unit. After receiving complaints from individuals or groups, the ICC prosecutor decides independently what cases to submit to judges at the court. Judges decide whether to allow a preliminary investigation by the prosecutor, which can then be followed by a formal investigation, and if warranted, charges. In the majority of cases such complaints do not lead to investigations, according to the ICC. —AFP

## International

# Indonesia parliament approves ban on sex outside marriage

## Unmarried people living together could face six months in jail

JAKARTA: Indonesia's parliament approved legislation on Tuesday that would outlaw sex outside marriage in a move critics said was a huge setback to rights in the world's most populous Muslim country. After it was endorsed by all nine parties in a sweeping overhaul of the criminal code, deputy house speaker Sufmi Dasco Ahmad banged the gavel to signal the text was approved and shouted "legal". A revision of Indonesia's criminal code, which stretches back to the Dutch colonial era, had been debated for decades. Rights groups protested against the amendments, denouncing them as a crackdown on civil liberties and political freedoms as well as a shift towards fundamentalism in Muslim-majority Indonesia, where the constitution recognises five religions alongside Islam.

"We have tried our best to accommodate the impor-

### 'Morality clauses'

Some of the most controversial articles criminalise extra-marital sex, as well as the cohabitation of unmarried couples. According to the text seen by AFP, sex outside of marriage will be punished with one year in prison while unmarried people living together could face six months in jail.

Albert Aries from the Law and Human Rights Ministry defended the amendments before the vote and said the law would protect marriage institutions. Sex outside marriage could only be reported by a spouse, parents or children, drastically limiting the scope of the amendment, he said.

At a business conference before the vote on Tuesday, US ambassador to Indonesia Sung Yong Kim said he was concerned about "morality clauses" in the criminal code that could have a negative impact on businesses. Several other countries prohibit adultery and enforce harsh punishments on extra-marital sex, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and the Philippines.

### 'A step back'

Analysts say the new code also curtails some political rights. Among the additions are several articles concerning blasphemy—already a crime in Indonesia—and there will be a two to four year jail term for forcing others to renounce their religion.

Spreading ideas "contradictory to Pancasila"—the official ideology of Indonesia which stresses unity and respect for ethnic and religious minorities—will be punishable by a maximum of four years in prison. The death sentence, largely used in Indonesia for drug crimes, will now come with a 10-year probation period, after which the sentence can be reduced to life in jail if the convict shows exemplary behaviour.

Bambang Wuryanto, head of the commission that oversaw deliberations on the text, acknowledged "this



JAKARTA: Photo shows activists holding a protest against the new criminal code outside the parliament building in Jakarta. Indonesia's parliament approved on December 6 legislation that would outlaw pre-marital sex while making other sweeping changes to the criminal code. — AFP

is a product by humans and hence it will never be perfect". But he invited critics to "file a judicial review to the constitutional court" instead of demonstrating.

Rights groups slammed the legislation as morality policing. "The passing of the criminal code bill is clearly a step back in the protection of civil rights... particularly on the rights of freedom of expression and press

freedom," Amnesty International Indonesia director Usman Hamid told AFP.

An attempt to pass a similar draft law in 2019 brought tens of thousands onto the streets in protests which eventually forced the government to back down. On Tuesday around a dozen protesters gathered in downtown Jakarta holding banners. — AFP



### New code also curtails some political rights

tant issues and different opinions which were debated," Minister of Law and Human Rights Yasonna Laoly told parliament. "However, it is time for us to make a historical decision on the penal code amendment and to leave the colonial criminal code we inherited behind."

The article criminalising sex outside marriage has been criticised by Indonesian business organisations as detrimental to tourism, though authorities insist foreigners travelling to Bali would not be affected. The new code, which still needs to be approved by President Joko Widodo, will come into force after three years.

## Roadside bomb kills seven in Afghanistan

MAZAR-I-SHARIF: A roadside bomb killed seven petroleum company employees commuting to work on a packed bus in northern Afghanistan's biggest city, an official and survivors said Tuesday. Although the Taliban claim to have improved national security since storming back to power in August last year, there have been scores of bomb blasts and attacks—many claimed by the local chapter of the Islamic State group.



MAZAR-I-SHARIF: Members of the Taliban visit an Afghan man receiving treatment at a hospital after he was wounded when a roadside bomb hit a bus carrying employees of a petroleum company in Mazar-i-Sharif on December 6, 2022. — AFP

## Croatia sets sights on EU's border-free club

STARA GRADISKA, Croatia: If Croatia gets approval this week to join the world's largest visa-free area, the massive queues of vehicles at the borders with its European neighbours will become history. European Union justice ministers meet on Thursday to decide whether to admit Croatia into the passport-free Schengen zone, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely around its 26 member nations.

One of the main sticking points has been questions over Croatia's ability to police what is the 27-nation EU's longest external land border, at a time when migration remains a key challenge for the country. Zagreb's application in 2016 to join Schengen has also come at a sensitive time for Europe.

Since 2015, millions of migrants, many from conflict zones, have risked their lives to enter the EU illegally and then the COVID 19 pandemic hit in 2020. Both prompted Schengen countries to reintroduce certain border controls. If on Thursday Croatia gets the green light to join Schengen—potentially alongside Bulgaria and Romania—the kilometres-long (miles-long) vehicle queues at the Bregana border crossing with Slovenia will become a thing of the past. Bregana is one of 73 land crossings with EU neighbours Slovenia and Hungary that would cease to exist. "On January 1, we will raise the barriers and border traffic will be free," the head of the national border police service, Zoran Niceno, told AFP. At airports, the change will kick in on March 26, due to technical issues.

### Tourists and trucks

Croatia hopes joining Schengen would boost its lucrative tourism industry. This year, the country of 3.9 million people hosted four times as many visitors, most

of them from other EU states. Removing border controls would enable holidaymakers to reach Croatian destinations faster, the head of the national tourist board, Kristijan Stanicic, said recently.

"International carriers will be delighted," said Vladimir Jurcec of the national road hauliers' association. Removing checks at borders will save them between six and 10 hours every week. "No more crowds and hours of queuing," noted truck driver Filip Svetlicic, whose Italy-bound lorry was stuck in a queue several kilometres long to exit Croatia via Bregana. On January 1, Croatia will also join the EU's single currency club, the eurozone.

### Illegal migration challenge

Ever since the former Yugoslav republic became an EU member nearly a decade ago, it has had the onerous task of policing the bloc's longest external land border. The border—which rubs shoulders for more than 1,350 kilometres (about 840 miles) with Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia—is an area notorious for trafficking in migrants, drugs and weapons. The most challenging is the 1,011-kilometre border with Bosnia, which is not only the longest but also consists of difficult terrain dotted with rivers and craggy mountains. At the Stara Gradiska crossing with Bosnia, police carefully scrutinise documents and waiting vehicles.

For Malik Safeta, a bus driver from Sarajevo, such strict controls are not unusual. "It's normal. This is the last line of defence for the EU and the Schengen zone before the eastern world, which is always a bit more problematic," he said.

The situation at Croatia's borders with its non-EU neighbours is not expected to change much after January 1 because Zagreb has already introduced the Schengen area's rules for dealing with its external limits. "Croatia has applied Schengen procedures for years and uses all the tools required for such border controls," Niceno, the border police head, said. Police say tackling illegal migration was and will remain the most challenging task for its force of around 6,500 border officers.—AFP

## Students protest campus lockdown as China eases COVID curbs

BEIJING: Students protested against a lockdown at a university in eastern China, highlighting continued anger as huge numbers of people across the country still face restrictions despite the government easing its zero-COVID policy.

Some Chinese cities have begun tentatively rolling back mass testing and curbs on movement following nationwide anti-lockdown demonstrations last week. But analysts at Japanese firm Nomura on Monday calculated that 53 cities—home to nearly a third of China's population—still had some restrictions in place. China's vast security apparatus has moved swiftly to smother the rallies, deploying a heavy police presence while boosting online censorship and surveillance.

Videos published on social media Tuesday and geolocated by AFP show a crowd of students at Nanjing Tech University on Monday night shouting demands to leave the campus. "Your power is given to you by students, not by yourselves," one person can be heard shouting in the footage. "Serve the students!"

A third-year student who asked to remain anonymous confirmed the protest took place, a day after the school announced it would seal off the campus for five days because of just one Covid case. Chinese universities have restricted movement for months, with many requiring students to apply for permission to leave the campus and banning visitors.

The Nanjing Tech student told AFP her peers were unhappy about poor communication from the university and worried they would be blocked from travelling home for the winter holidays. In the footage, the crowd can be seen arguing with university representatives and shouting for school leaders to step down.

"If you touch us you will become the second Foxconn!" one protester yells in reference to violent demonstrations last month in central China at a factory run by the Taiwanese tech giant that supplies Apple.

Other clips showed a police car arriving on the scene and university officials promising students they would compile their complaints in a file. The Nanjing protest comes days after people took to the streets in multiple Chinese cities urging an end to the zero-Covid policy, with some even calling for Chinese President Xi Jinping to step down.

Hundreds gathered at Beijing's elite Tsinghua and Peking universities at the end of last month as well as on campuses in the cities of Xi'an, Guangzhou and Wuhan.

Authorities have cracked down on subsequent efforts to protest while appearing to answer some demands by easing a number of restrictions. On Tuesday Beijing said offices and commercial buildings including supermarkets would no longer require visitors to show proof of a negative test.—AFP



BEIJING: A health worker in personal protective equipments (PPE) carries COVID-19 testing swabs and tubes along a street in Beijing. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Thai PM indicates 2023 election run

BANGKOK: Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said Tuesday he wants to rule until 2025, indicating for the first time that he plans to stand in the kingdom's upcoming general election. Thailand is due to go to the polls early next year and on Tuesday the main opposition Pheu Thai party launched some of its campaign themes. Prayut came to power as army chief in a 2014 coup before cementing his position in a controversial 2019 election, but his popularity has been in the doldrums. Pheu Thai is riding high in the polls but the current Thai constitution, drafted under military rule, stacks the system in favour of army-linked parties. In September, the Constitutional Court ruled Prayut's eight-year term limit as PM would end in 2025, and as he left a weekly cabinet meeting on Tuesday he was asked about his plans. "I will do my best in this two years and after that there will be a suitable choice that the public accept to carry on my work," he told reporters.

#### Iran arrests 12 with European links

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards have arrested 12 alleged members of a European-linked group accused of planning acts of sabotage in the country, Tasnim news agency said. The Islamic republic has been rocked by more than two months of what it calls deadly "riots" that it says have been fomented by the United States, its allies and foreign-based opposition groups. The street violence erupted in mid-September after the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman of Kurdish origin, in the custody of the morality police in Tehran. In a statement quoted by Tasnim, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Markazi province, southwest of Tehran, said it had arrested "a network with 12 members with links abroad".

#### Babies found in French freezer

MARSEILLE: Two newborn babies whose corpses were found in a woman's freezer in southern France did not die of natural causes, prosecutors said Monday. "The two children were not stillborn," Florence Galtier, prosecutor in the southern town of Avignon, told AFP, citing an autopsy. Their deaths were "not natural in origin", she added, after the discovery at the home of a 41-year-old woman arrested last Thursday in the southern village of Bedoin. The woman was charged Friday on suspicion of murder of two minors. It is not known if she is the mother of the victims, both girls. The autopsy showed one of the babies had suffered a blow leaving "cranial and intracranial" bruising, believed to be the cause of death. Galtier said it was not clear if the injuries were the result of violence or a fall, a lack of care or something else. She added it had also not been established if the girls were twins—or even unrelated. Police received a telephone tip off from a man whose identity and potential connection to the case are also unclear. France has known similar cases over the years. Last March, a woman in her 30s was placed under investigation after two frozen babies were found at her home. In 2015, five bodies were found in a similar case which saw the mother handed an eight-year jail term.—AFP

# Business

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2022

## Airlines to return to profit in 2023: IATA

### Net profits to reach \$4.7 billion in 2023 as recovery takes shape

GENEVA: Airlines are expected to return to profit next year for the first time since 2019 despite slowing global growth as they recover from a COVID-induced crisis, an industry group said Tuesday. After cutting losses this year, airlines are forecast to make \$4.7 billion in net profits in 2023, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA). This is still far off the \$26.4 billion profit the industry reported in 2019, before COVID prompted countries to enact travel restrictions that have since been eased in most nations. "Resilience has been the hallmark for airlines in the COVID-19 crisis," IATA director general Willie Walsh said in a statement.



Willie Walsh

"As we look to 2023, the financial recovery will take shape with a first industry profit since 2019. That is a great achievement considering the scale of the financial and economic damage caused by government imposed pandemic restrictions," he said. Governments in numerous countries had to bail out airlines as travel was brought to a halt to slow the spread of the virus, and the industry suffered \$137.7 billion in losses in 2020 at the height of the restrictions.

Airlines are expected to post \$779 billion in revenues in 2023, meaning the \$4.7 billion profit constitutes a razor-thin net profit margin of just 0.6 percent. Walsh said many airlines are "sufficiently profitable" to attract capital as the industry seeks to decarbonize its operations. But many others are struggling due to "onerous regulation, high costs, inconsistent government policies, inefficient infrastructure and a value chain where the rewards of connecting the world are not equitably distributed," he said.



WASHINGTON: Airlines are expected to post \$779 billion in revenues in 2023, according to IATA.

Passenger traffic was slightly lower than forecast in 2022 due to slowing economies and China's zero-COVID restrictions.

#### Optimistic about 2023

But the IATA expects passenger traffic to return to 85.5 percent of its pre-crisis level in 2023. And that expected improvement comes as global GDP growth slows, according to IATA's forecast, to 1.3 percent from 2.9 percent in 2022. "Despite the economic uncertainties, there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about 2023," said Walsh.

Airlines should not be as affected by rising jet fuel prices as they were in 2022, while continuing to benefit from pent-up travel demand. A recent IATA

poll found that more than two-thirds of travelers surveyed in 11 global markets are travelling as much or more than before the pandemic. And while 85 percent said they are concerned about the economic situation, 57 percent said have no intention to curb their travel habits.

But Walsh also warned that with such thin margins, "even an insignificant shift in any one of these variables has the potential to shift the balance into negative territory." IATA sees airlines squeaking out a profit thanks to revenues growing faster than costs next year. While rising interest rates may crimp demand for travel, IATA sees that as likely leading to lower oil prices, thus reducing costs for airlines. —AFP

## Libya tells foreign energy firms it's safe to return

TRIPOLI: Libya's state energy firm urged its foreign oil and gas partners to resume exploration and production Tuesday assuring them security had begun to improve dramatically after clashes earlier this year. Rival administrations in east and west have vied for power since March, in a standoff that has hampered Libya's efforts to sharply ramp up output in response to a surge in European demand for non-Russian oil and gas.

"The National Oil Corporation calls (on) the international oil and gas companies with whom it has signed oil and gas exploration and production agreements to lift the force majeure declared by them," the firm said in a statement. Force majeure is a legal measure allowing companies to free themselves from contractual obligations in light of circumstances beyond their control.

NOC said its appeal followed a "realistic and logical analysis of the security situation, which has begun to improve dramatically." The firm expressed "readiness to provide all necessary support... along with providing a safe working environment in cooperation with the civil and military authorities." Libya aims to raise its oil output from around 1.2 million barrels per day currently to 2.0 million bpd by 2027. NOC chairman Farhat Bengdara said last week. On taking up his post in July, Bengdara lifted force majeure at all of the country's oil fields and export terminals as an eastern-based militia abandoned a three-month blockade of six of them that had cut output by 400,000 bpd. —AFP

YOUR LOCAL PARTNER  
FOR GLOBAL REACH



Visit our website

THE INVESTMENT ARM OF AL AHLI BANK OF KUWAIT



## Business

# US green industry subsidies spoil talks with EU on trade, technology

## US-EU talks seek to push trade and investment relationship

COLLEGE PARK, US: US and European Union officials met for trade and technology talks Monday, but hanging in the balance were heightened tensions over American subsidies for its green industry that Europe considers anti-competitive.

Officials touched on issues such as fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and questions over economic coercion, but all eyes were on Washington's landmark Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) during a meeting of the US-EU Trade and Technology Council, held just outside Washington. The act, designed to accelerate the US transition to a low-carbon economy, contains around \$370 billion in subsidies for green energy, as well as tax breaks for US-made electric cars and batteries. EU countries have poured criticism on the IRA, seeing it as a threat to European jobs, especially in the energy and auto sectors.

Monday's talks, the third of their kind, are part of a push "to grow the bilateral trade and investment relationship," according to a National Security Council statement. Both sides took stock of a dedicated task force's work on the IRA, noting "preliminary progress made," said a joint US-EU statement released Monday.

"We acknowledge the EU's concerns and underline our commitment to address them constructively," the statement added.

### 'More solid response'

"Clearly they are trying to set out our concerns in a non-confrontational manner," a European official involved in the talks told reporters Monday. "It was flagged as a dispute, obviously, to which I think we're still waiting for a more solid response," he added. Asked about "tweaks" mentioned last week by US President Joe Biden—so that European companies would not be unfairly treated—the official said the "assessment is that this will be extremely difficult." But officials struck a conciliatory note at a press briefing after their meeting, with the EU's trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis saying, "Today we are leaving this meeting a slightly more optimistic than we were entering (it)."



COLLEGE PARK: European Commission Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis (left), European Commission Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager (second left), US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (center), US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo (second right) and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai (right) speak to the media following the US-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) Ministerial Meeting at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland, on December 5, 2022.— AFP

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, a co-chair of the council, added: "The bottom line is this: We are committed to moving forward together not at the expense of each other, but to the benefit of each other." Both sides found agreement on a host of other issues, including an information-sharing system on public support for the semiconductor sector to increase transparency.

They also entered a deal to implement an early warning mechanism to mitigate semiconductor supply chain disruptions "in a cooperative way."

Both parties launched a "transatlantic initiative on sustainable trade" as well, with an aim to decarbonize energy-intensive industries and help with the transition to more circular economies, the statement said.

### Insufficient space

But EU Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton had decided not to take part in the meetings, his office earlier said, finding that they no longer give enough space to issues of concern to many European industry ministers and businesses. Last month, Breton threatened to appeal to the World Trade Organization and consider retaliatory measures if the United States did not reverse its subsidies.

The plan was also a subject of discussions between President Biden and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron at a state visit last week. Biden said both sides have agreed to discuss practical steps to coordinate and align their approaches, though he added that he would not apologize for the act, which he maintains was never intended to disadvantage US allies.

The Trade and Technology Council is co-chaired by Blinken, Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and Trade Representative Katherine Tai, as well as European Commission Executive Vice Presidents Margrethe Vestager and trade commissioner Dombrovskis. — AFP



## Porsche to join Germany's DAX index

FRANKFURT: Less than three months after a high-profile stock market debut, luxury carmaker Porsche is set to join Germany's blue-chip DAX index, edging out sportswear maker Puma. Porsche will be promoted onto the Frankfurt index of Germany's 40 leading firms on December 19, stock exchange operator Deutsche Boerse said in a statement late Monday.

The firm's "fast entry" into the DAX showed that "our business model is robust and attractive to investors, even in a challenging environment," Porsche's chief finance officer Lutz Meschke said on Tuesday. The maker of the iconic 911 sports car raced onto the Frankfurt stock exchange in late September with one of Europe's biggest listings in years.

Parent company Volkswagen raised around nine billion euros (\$9.4 billion) in the IPO, money that will help finance the group's costly shift to electric vehicles. Porsche has quickly become an investor favorite, its share price climbing by almost 30 percent from 82.50 euros initially to around 106 euros in early afternoon trading on Tuesday. The company's current valuation, at just over 96 billion euros, now surpasses that of its parent VW at 83.5 billion euros, according to Bloomberg. Porsche has also outpaced fellow German carmakers Mercedes-Benz, valued at 68.8 billion euros, and BMW at 56.5 billion.

Porsche's arrival in the top 40 will push Puma out of the DAX. It will instead be listed on the MDAX index for medium-sized companies, Deutsche Boerse said. Like its competitors, Puma is going through turbulent time as high inflation and ongoing COVID-19-related restrictions in key market China weigh on demand. The company recently lost its CEO, Bjorn Gulden, to German rival Adidas. — AFP

## Philippine MPs propose \$4.9bn sovereign fund

MANILA: Philippine lawmakers have proposed a \$4.9 billion sovereign wealth fund to be chaired by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr to boost growth, but critics warn it will be prone to graft and risk Filipino pensions. Congressmen Sandro Marcos and Martin Romualdez—the president's son and cousin respectively—are among the six authors of the bill filed to the



MANILA: Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr delivers his first State of the Nation Address, in Quezon City, Metro Manila in this July 25, 2022 file photo.

House of Representatives and will be examined by several committees before being debated in the house.

The "Maharlika Investments Fund" (MIF) would be seeded with 275 billion pesos from government financial institutions, including two pension funds and two banks, according to the latest version of the bill. It would help the Marcos administration achieve its goals of getting the Philippine economy to "soar to greater heights in spite of external shocks", the authors wrote.

The word "maharlika" is widely associated with Marcos Jr's late dictator father and namesake, who presided over widespread human rights abuses and corruption during his two decades in power. He was ousted in 1986. Marcos Sr claimed to have led an anti-

Japanese guerrilla unit called Ang Mga Maharlika during World War II, but he has been accused of lying about his war record.

The MIF has been met with concern from business groups, economists, activists and opposition figures, who have questioned the need for a sovereign wealth fund in the debt-laden country.

They argue pension funds were already being invested and that diverting them to the MIF would expose them to additional risk. Even the president's own sister, Senator Imee Marcos, said it was "risky to gamble" retirement funds. "We all know about our neighbor Malaysia where their 1MDB was a real disaster where the money was looted," she said, referring to the graft scandal that involved billions of dollars of state funds. A lack of safeguards also meant "the potential for corruption is almost limitless", Vincent Lazatin, former executive director of the Transparency and Accountability Network, told AFP Tuesday.

### 'A lot of questions'

The bill's proponents highlighted Indonesia as an example of a sovereign wealth fund successfully being used to attract direct investments into infrastructure and emerging industries.

But Natixis senior economist Trinh Nguyen said Indonesia's fund has a "very clear" investment objective, while the Philippine proposal "lacks a direction". "There are a lot of questions... How is it going to benefit the longer-term development objective of the Philippines because it's not very clear to me that it would," she said. Under the proposed bill, MIF funds would be "exempt from any regulatory restrictions".

Investment options would include financial derivatives, equities, infrastructure projects and "other investments as may be approved by the Board". Congressman Joey Salceda, who leads the technical working group examining the bill, told AFP the fund's governing board would be chaired by the president. Former president Gloria Arroyo, who has backed the bill, said it was a "powerful statement that the highest official of the land will hold himself as ultimately accountable to the Filipino people for the performance of the Fund".

But Lazatin noted that the country had a dismal record of punishing elected officials for corruption.

"Our laws are good on paper, but in practice... we have not been able to hold public officials accountable," he said. An estimated \$10 billion was stolen from state coffers over the course of Marcos Sr's rule, while the family has been accused of owing more than \$3.6 billion in estate taxes. No one in the clan has been jailed. — AFP

review to posts by high-profile users that initially appear to break rules, the report indicated.

That has resulted in posts that would have been immediately removed being left up during a review process that could take days or months, according to the report.



"This means that, because of cross-check, content identified as breaking Meta's rules is left up on Facebook and Instagram when it is most viral and could cause harm," the board said.

Meta also failed to determine whether the process had resulted in more accurate decisions regarding content removal, the board said. Cross-check is flawed in "key areas," including user equality and transparen-

cy, the board concluded, recommending 32 changes to the system.

Content identified as violating Meta's rules with "high severity" in a first assessment "should be removed or hidden while further review is taking place," the board said. "Such content should not be allowed to remain on the platform accruing views simply because the person who posted it is a business partner or celebrity." The Oversight Board said it learned of cross-check in 2021, while looking into and eventually endorsing Facebook's decision to suspend former US president Donald Trump.

In a statement Tuesday, Facebook Vice President for Global Affairs Nick Clegg said the firm has agreed with the board to review its recommendations and respond within 90 days. He said in the past year, Facebook has made improvements to the process, including widening eligibility for cross-check reviews while also implementing more controls on how users are added to the system.

"We built the cross-check system to prevent potential over-enforcement... and to double-check cases where there could be a higher risk for a mistake or when the potential impact of a mistake is especially severe," such as journalistic reporting from conflict zones, Clegg said. — AFP

## Ukraine slams India for buying Russian oil

KYIV: Ukraine's foreign minister condemned India's ramping up of Russian oil purchases following Moscow's invasion as "morally inappropriate" in an interview broadcast Tuesday. A day earlier India's top diplomat had defended the purchases of discounted Russian crude, saying Europe's imports still dwarfed those of his country despite the continent's efforts to reduce its dependence. But Ukraine's Dmytro Kuleba told Indian broadcaster NDTV it was "completely wrong" to justify buying oil from Russia "by arguing that Europeans were doing the same". It was "morally inappropriate", he said.

"Because you are buying cheap oil not because of Europeans but because of us, of our suffering, of our tragedy, and because of the war that Russia launched against Ukraine." India has increased its purchases of cheap Russian oil six-fold since the invasion in February, to the extent that Moscow is now its top crude supplier, according to local media reports. The government says that with millions of poor Indians hit hard by the global rise in commodity prices in the wake of the war, it has no choice but to buy the cheapest oil possible. On Monday, India's foreign minister S Jaishankar said his country's costs were being driven up by European countries now buying up more oil and gas from the Middle East. "The Middle East was traditionally a supplier for an economy like India, so it puts pressure on prices in the Middle East as well," Jaishankar told reporters. India and Russia are long-standing allies dating back to the Cold War. Moscow remains New Delhi's biggest weapons supplier and India has abstained on UN resolutions condemning the invasion of Ukraine.—AFP

## US trade deficit rose in October on exports dip

WASHINGTON: A drop in exports helped widen the US trade gap in October, government figures showed Tuesday, with decreases seen in shipments of industrial supplies and consumer goods.

The overall trade deficit rose \$4 billion to \$78.2 billion in October, Commerce Department data showed, slightly more than expected. Exports have weakened in recent months as global economies grapple with inflation and higher interest rates, while a stronger US dollar has made American goods more pricey for foreign consumers. Although the US central bank has also embarked on an all-out campaign to raise interest rates and cool the world's biggest economy, imports continued rising, the latest figures showed.

Imports picked up in October to \$334.8 billion on goods including automobiles and parts, but demand for consumer products eased with a drop in items like mobile phones and sporting goods.

Meanwhile, the value of exports eased to \$256.6 billion on a fall in industrial supplies and materials such as natural gas and petroleum products. Consumer goods, in particular pharmaceutical preparations, slipped as well. The US deficit with China decreased to \$26.1 billion in October, data showed. "The pattern may be set for the near-term trade outlook, with waning global demand for US goods weighing more heavily on exports," said Matthew Martin of Oxford Economics. This contrasts against improved imports, which "continue to be supported by a strong dollar and resilient consumer spending." — AFP

## Oversight board slams Meta

WASHINGTON: An oversight panel said Tuesday that Facebook and Instagram put business over human rights when giving special treatment to rule-breaking posts by politicians, celebrities and other high-profile users. A year-long probe by an independent "top court" created by the tech firm ended with it calling for the overhaul of a system known as "cross-check" that shields elite users from Facebook's content rules.

"While Meta told the board that cross-check aims to advance Meta's human rights commitments, we found that the program appears more directly structured to satisfy business concerns," the panel said in a report. "By providing extra protection to certain users selected largely according to business interests, cross-check allows content which would otherwise be removed quickly to remain up for a longer period, potentially causing harm."

Cross-check is implemented in a way that does not meet Meta's human rights responsibilities, according to the board. Meta told the board the program is intended to provide an additional layer of human

## Business

# Biden celebrates giant semiconductor project

## US finally breaking dangerous dependency on foreign manufacturers

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden flew Tuesday to Arizona to celebrate the mammoth expansion of a Taiwanese semiconductor plant, citing the project as proof that the United States is finally breaking dangerous dependency on foreign manufacturers for the vital component.

The White House announced that TSMC is unveiling plans to build a second facility in Phoenix by 2026, ballooning its investment from \$12 billion to \$40 billion. The "major milestone" adds up to "the largest foreign direct investment in Arizona history and it's one of the largest in US history," White House National Economic Council Director Brian Deese told reporters.

Biden will speak at the TSMC site, accompanied by senior political figures and titans of the corporate world, including Apple CEO Tim Cook, TSMC's founder Morris Chang and Micron CEO Sanjay Mehrotra. The Democrat will seek to take credit for the investment influx, pointing to the effect of his signature CHIPS Act, which sets aside almost \$53 billion for subsidies and research in the semiconductor sector. It's a message he'll be especially keen to spread in Arizona, which was long a Republican dominated state but has turned into a battleground where Democrats do increasingly well.

The plant expansion—which comes on top of other significant microchip manufacturing projects dotted around the country—is part of an overall strategy by the Biden administration to try to end reliance on for-

foreign suppliers. Although much of that supply comes from reliable US allies, particularly Taiwan, the COVID pandemic shutdown demonstrated how fragile those supply lines were in case of emergency. With China threatening to take control of Taiwan—and eyeing how to ensure its own semiconductor supplies—Washington wants to bring the vital gadgets home.

"Virtually every large tech firm, including automotive firms and any company that uses technology is sweating bullets that something's going to happen between Taiwan and China. And so there's a massive rush to shift manufacturing out of both countries," technology analyst Rob Enderle said.

### Smaller the better

In the high-stakes world of microchips, sheer quantity is important. The minuscule, hard-to-make gadgets are at the heart of almost every modern appliance, vehicle and advanced weapon.

But quality—and small size—is also increasingly important for sophisticated everyday devices like smartphones and there the White House says it has good news. The new TSMC plant will produce tiny 3 nanometer chips, while the existing facility will start reducing the size of its current 5 nanometer chips to 4 nanometers. Building a plant, or a "fab," takes several years. But once "at scale, these two fabs could meet the entire US demand for advanced chips when they're completed. That's the definition of supply chain resilience," Ronnie Chatterji, National



The White House announced that TSMC is unveiling plans to build a second facility in Phoenix by 2026, ballooning its investment from \$12 billion to \$40 billion.

Economic Council deputy director for industrial policy, told reporters.

Deese, one of Biden's most senior advisors, said the broader message from the White House is that US industrial strategy is undergoing a rebirth.

For almost four decades, the idea was "trickle down," where government would "get out the way"

and cut taxes for big companies to attract investment, he said. Instead, Biden's policy—both through the CHIPS Act and the giant Inflation Reduction Act—uses public money to attract, or "crowd in" private investment. The goal is not to exclude "private companies, but in fact, encouraging private investment at historic scale," Deese said. —AFP

## German factory orders see small uptick in October

FRANKFURT: German industrial orders rebounded slightly in October, official data showed Tuesday, adding to hopes that an economic slowdown caused by Russia's war in Ukraine and soaring energy prices might not be as bad as feared. New orders, which provide a foretaste of industrial output in Europe's largest economy, inched up by 0.8 percent on the previous month, federal statistics agency Destatis said.

The small uptick follows two months of steep falls, and was mainly down to a strong recovery in orders from abroad. Domestic orders meanwhile were down month-on-month.

Germany's export-oriented economy has been hammered this year by the fallout from Russia's war in Ukraine, which has exacerbated supply chain woes and pushed up energy prices across the continent. But the October bounce in factory orders, alongside recent surveys showing improved business confidence, is "a further indication that the recession may be weaker than feared," the economy ministry said in a statement.

ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski however was less optimistic, noting that German order books have shrunk by almost 15 percent since the start of the year. "The jury is obviously still out but the collapse in German industrial orders is one important signal that shows that the long slide into industrial recession continues," he said. The German government expects the country's economy to shrink by 0.4 percent next year. —AFP

## Markets drop as Fed worries offset China COVID easing

LONDON: Stock markets mostly fell on Tuesday as fears that the US Federal Reserve will maintain its aggressive anti-inflation measures trumped growing optimism over China's economic reopening.

London, Paris and Frankfurt were all in the red at around midday. Asian markets were mostly down after all three main indexes on Wall Street lost more than one percent the day before. Data showing a forecast-busting jump in activity in the US services sector last month raised the prospect that the Fed will not back down from sharp rate increases when it meets next week.

Monday's data followed robust jobs figures last week that could give the central bank more room to maneuver, fuelling investor concerns that the Fed's actions could tip the economy into recession. "Worries that the Fed could unwrap an unwelcome present of another super-sized rate hike when policymakers meet next week are sprinkling Christmas fear on indices," said Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

"Speculation is swirling that central banks will have to be more Scrooge-like and make borrowing even more expensive to rein in inflation," she said. Markets had been running higher ahead of the jobs figures after a surprise drop in inflation and comments from Fed boss Jerome Powell that the bank was likely to raise rates at a slower pace.

"Outstanding news from the vast services-based US economy is devastating for market participants keen to see evidence of the US economic disintegration," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes. —AFP

## Australia hikes rates, sounds warning on mortgage crunch

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank on Tuesday hiked interest rates to their highest level in a decade, heaping more pressure on mortgage holders as it tries to dampen soaring inflation. The Reserve Bank of Australia lifted borrowing costs 25 basis points to 3.1 percent, mirroring global efforts to tame runaway food and energy prices by encouraging saving over spending.

Bank governor Philip Lowe said inflation was expected to soon peak at eight percent, a level not seen since the early 1990s. More rate rises were likely in coming months, before inflation is predicted to recede towards the end of next year, he added.

## US services growth logs surprise jump ahead of holidays

WASHINGTON: Growth in the dominant US services sector picked up unexpectedly in November, survey data showed Monday, as business activity strengthened with a boost from the year-end holiday season. The Institute for Supply Management's services index rose to 56.5 percent last month, well above the 50-percent threshold indicating growth and defying expectations that activity would ease as consumers draw down on their savings.

The key sector accounts for two-thirds of the world's largest economy and has held up since the height of the pandemic, despite a recent aggressive campaign by the central bank to cool demand and bring down surging inflation. "A new fiscal period and the holiday season have contributed to stronger business activity and increased employment," said ISM survey chair Anthony Nieves in a statement.

"Increased capacity and shorter lead times have resulted in a continued improvement in supply chain and logistics performance," he added. The latest uptick comes after a pullback in the previous two months. The business activity index surged nine percentage points from October, according to ISM data released Monday, while new orders edged down slightly.

There was some improvement in supplier deliveries, while businesses in the services industry continued struggling to replenish their stocks, ISM

## German car sales climb again in November

FRANKFURT: The German car market showed some signs of recovery in November, as sales rose for the second month in a row, according to official figures published Monday. Just over 260,000 new cars were registered in November, the KBA federal transport authority said in a statement — a 31.4-percent increase from a year earlier. Auto manufacturers have struggled throughout the year with supply issues and shortages of key components, which have slowed sales despite full order books.

November's positive reading however follows another 16.8-percent bump in sales in October. "At the end of an altogether disappointing year for cars there's some hope for a late burst," the VDIK car importers' federation president Reinhard Zirpel said. Total registrations since January however remained 2.4 percent below their 2021 level — already an historically bad year for sales. The improvement in sales showed "that the availability of semiconductors and other components has improved", easing production constraints, EY analyst Peter Fuss said.

"The board expects to increase interest rates further over the period ahead, but it is not on a pre-set course," he said. "It is closely monitoring the global economy, household spending and wage and price-setting behavior." Some analysts have raised concerns about the ability of mortgage holders to cope with the higher interest rates.

Australia faces a debt crunch next year when more than Aus\$2.5 billion (US\$1.7 billion) in temporarily fixed-rate home loans move to a variable rate—exposing borrowers to drastically higher repayments that they may then struggle to meet. "The board recognizes that monetary policy operates with a lag, and that the full effect of the increase in interest rates is yet to be felt in mortgage payments," Lowe said. The federal government has also been considering capping the domestic cost of wholesale coal in a bid to bring down electricity prices, which are forecast to rise as much as 50 percent in the next two years. —AFP



SYDNEY: Australia's central bank on Tuesday hiked interest rates to their highest level in a decade, heaping more pressure on mortgage holders as it tries to dampen soaring inflation.



WASHINGTON: US services sector picked up unexpectedly in November, survey data showed Monday, as business activity strengthened with a boost from the year-end holiday season.

said. The US services sector has expanded for all but two of the last 154 months—contracting in April and May 2020 when the US grappled with the start of the pandemic. "Business is doing well, almost back to pre-coronavirus pandemic volumes," said a survey respondent in the agriculture industry.

Other respondents noted that demand and new business requests remain robust.

But analysts expect activity to slow eventually. "We believe that it's only a matter of time before Fed interest rate hikes and tighter financial conditions push the economy into a recession," said

Oren Klachkin of Oxford Economics. "Services aren't under pressure yet, but that doesn't mean the sector is immune from challenging economic conditions," he added.

Activity in the sector has held up despite monetary tightening as people chose to finance rising spending by tapping their savings accumulated during the pandemic, said Ian Shepherdson and Kieran Clancy of Pantheon Macroeconomics in a recent analysis.

"Our best guess is that people will become less willing to run down savings... as the labor market weakens," they added. —AFP



FRANKFURT: The German car market showed some signs of recovery in November, as sales rose for the second month in a row, according to official figures published Monday.

The industry was however still facing a "mixed" outlook in 2023 as the European economy threatens to pitch into recession, EY said. Sales of battery-powered cars in November improved more than the market as a whole, increasing by 44 percent, with

almost 58,000 units sold. Together with hybrid vehicles, more than 100,000 fully- or partially-electric cars were registered in a single month "for the first time ever", according to the VDA auto industry association. —AFP

Business



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood receives an award from Global Finance.



Ahmad Al-Sumait receives award.



Fahad Al-Othman receives award.



Talal Al-Uraybid and Farahat

# KFH scoops 23 prestigious awards in 2022

## Awards in recognition of its various contributions to the banking sector

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has crowned its outstanding performance in 2022 with 23 prestigious awards from well-known international and regional providers in appreciation of its leading role and significant achievements in various fields of the Islamic banking sector.

The awards are in recognition of KFH excellence, its pioneering role in business and product development, its ability to meet diverse customer needs in all sectors, as well as its technological innovation in service delivery and product quality, reputation, digital transformation, sustainability, corporate banking, social responsibility as well as the Bank's role in nationalization and developing its human capital.

Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at KFH Abdulwahab Al-Rushood said that the global awards KFH won in 2022 add to the series of awards, honors, and recognitions it had received, and confirm the leading position it enjoys among world's well-established financial institutions. He noted that these wins

satisfaction, as well as strengthen its leading position in the market.

Al-Rushood revealed that the awards are not just an achievement and appreciation, but rather a motivation to achieve more successes and accomplishments in the future. They are also evidence of KFH's ability to provide innovative products and services to meet customer's needs, advance the banking industry and strengthen the Kuwaiti economy.

### Sukuk issuance

In a new achievement that ranks KFH as a leader in shaping the Islamic finance sector, KFH won three prestigious awards in the 14th edition of the EMEA Finance Middle East Awards for 2021, which were awarded to the honorees mid-2022. KFH was named "Best Financial Institution Sukuk" for Kuwait Finance House's debut \$750 million Perpetual NC6 Sukuk, "Best Financial Institution Sukuk" for KFH-Turkey's \$350 million sustainability Tier 2 Sukuk and "Best Green Sukuk" for KFH-Turkey's \$350 million sus-

- The achievements and global awards are a result of KFH's shareholders and customers' confidence
- A pioneering role in nationalization and developing human capital
- The awards are motivation to achieve more successes and accomplishments in the future
- KFH is well-heelled in strong and various sharia-compliant activities
- KFH's high efficiency enabled it to be a player in developing sukuk market
- Ranking KFH as a market Leader is one of the highest rankings at Kuwait level
- KFH is the first local bank to receive GSAS Certificate for KFH Auto building

are the result of the confidence of KFH shareholders and customers, the hard work and competency of its employees, in addition to optimizing their talents and skills by providing them with advanced training programs that enhance innovation and increase productivity. The winning of the awards was also the result of KFH's significant progress in adopting technology and digitization in its operations and financial transactions, the absolute adherence to sharia provisions, as well as applying the highest professional standards to maintain the leading standing of the bank at the global level.

Al-Rushood added that KFH is well-heelled in strong and various sharia-compliant activities and has high levels of liquidity and diversified banking services that adopt the latest technologies and international financial standards.

He pointed out that the success of the digital transformation strategy, which KFH was among the first banks to implement, was reflected in the series of innovative services and products that the bank has launched in recent years. This pioneering step has enabled KFH to attract new segments of customers and meet their changing requirements and

sustainability Tier 2 Sukuk.

Al-Rushood stated that KFH has an impressive record of achievements in Islamic finance, in addition to the bank's high efficiency which enabled it to be a player in developing Sukuk market.

### World's best Islamic bank

In appreciation of KFH's contributions to the growth of Islamic finance, fulfilling customers' needs of sharia-compliant innovative products through highly effective and advanced service channels, leading digital transformation, and distinction in achieving sustainability and continued growth, KFH won the "World's Best Islamic Financial Institution 2022" award from Global Finance Group, in addition to the "Best Islamic Financial Institution in the Middle East" award, and the "World's Best Islamic Takaful" award for KFH Takaful. In its 31st annual ranking of the world's safest banks, Global Finance Magazine also named KFH as the Safest Islamic Bank at the world level.

Al-Rushood said that these awards represent global recognition of KFH leading position in the Islamic finance industry and highlight the efficient operational and financial



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood: The awards confirm KFH leadership among world's well-established financial institutions

performance of KFH in providing highly advanced innovative services while moving forward in the digital transformation strategy and continuing its proactive approach in adopting technology and innovation and focusing on the enhancement of customer experience.

### Advanced digital services

In addition, KFH won the "Islamic Bank of the Year 2022 - Kuwait" award from The Banker, the world's most prestigious banking magazine, owned by the Financial Times Group.

The Banker's jury also praised KFH's strong profitability in 2021, indicating that it was evidence that the bank had successfully weathered the challenges of the pandemic lockdowns and was another factor differentiating KFH from its competitors.

Al-Rushood added that the award is evidence of KFH's efficient performance and its excellence in providing high-quality innovative products through an advanced digital infrastructure.

### Prestigious awards

KFH received five reputable prizes from EMEA Finance in its 14th banking sector awards distribution ceremony in the Middle East. It's a new accomplishment that affirms KFH distinction and pioneering position in adopting the best and latest digital technologies. KFH won the prizes "Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East", "Best Bank in Kuwait", "Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait", "Corporate Social Responsibility in the Middle East" and "Best Islamic Bank in Bahrain".

### Four categories

Euromoney Magazine has classified KFH as a market leader at Kuwait level in four categories: digital solutions, corporate banking, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and Islamic finance. The prestigious rankings by such a renowned magazine emphasize the successful business model of KFH and its quality services, efficient digital transformation strategy and its leadership in different areas in a way that it strengthens its standing and strong brand as well as its solid financial position. Al-Rushood stated that the Market Leader ranking obtained by KFH is one of the highest rankings at the level of Kuwait and a global recognition of KFH's leading standing as well as a new milestone added to the success that it has been striving to achieve in various fields.

### Developing human capital

Recognizing its long record in developing its human capital, KFH won two global awards in the Human Resources field for the year 2022 from Brandon Hall Group, a company specialized in the evaluation and performance assessment of banks, companies, and institutions around the world. KFH was awarded "Best Advance in Employee Engagement" and "Best Advance in Business Automation". Both awards affirm the quality of KFH's Human Resources and the advancement and uniqueness of its processes and applications as well as the consolidation of its efforts in adopting the best global standards, which have been commended by experts in the field.

In a special honoring ceremony held in the

Saudi capital Riyadh under the patronage of the Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs in GCC, the Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs in GCC states honored KFH for its distinction and excellence in the execution of the Manpower Nationalization and qualification programs at the private sector level in Kuwait. KFH is ranked first among banks and private sector as top Kuwaitization destination as it has the largest number of Kuwaiti employees.

The bank also received the AUM Corporate Award 2022 during a ceremony organized by The American University of the

### Sustainability

KFH received the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS - Gold Level Certificate for KFH Auto building. The certificate is granted to projects compliant with strict environment sustainability standards determined by the Gulf Development and Research Organization. KFH is the first bank in Kuwait to receive this prestigious certificate. The showroom enjoys several technical specifications rendering it an environment friendly building having all sustainability standards including natural lighting and using latest glass technologies for the main facades, as well as LED system light and solar system glass boards to provide revolving energy through sun light as well as electric cars charging outlets.

### Stringent international criteria

All the awards KFH won in 2022 from prestigious global bodies specialized in business and finance were based on stringent and professional international criteria that measure factors such as quality, the



Zyad Al-Omar receives an award.



Ahmad Al-Sumait, Yousef Al-Ruwaih and Abdulwahab Al-Rushood with awards.

Middle East (AUM) in the presence of several local, regional, and global institutions.

### KFH rewards program (Baitak)

In another success that confirms its leadership and distinguished customer service, KFH has won "Best Use of Payments in a Programme" award for Baitak Rewards program from 2022 Incentive Awards (IA22) during a special ceremony held in London and attended by banks and companies from around the world. Baitak Rewards Program was nominated for the "Best Use of Payments in a Program" category in which the judging panel's assessment included many fundamental criteria such as quality and efficiency of service provided to customers.

KFH launched Baitak Rewards last December with the aim of encouraging the use of KFH's credit and prepaid cards inside and outside Kuwait.

bank's position, its contributions and financial indicators. Among the criteria were excellence, initiative and innovation in products and services, performance efficiency, geographical reach, shareholder rights indicators, strength of capital adequacy and total assets, customer satisfaction, strategic relationships, and adherence to ethical standards.

The recommendations were made by juries composed of experts and analysts specialized in the Islamic banking sector from all over the world. These criteria indicate that KFH is based on a solid foundation, and is characterized by high-level professional performance, systematic work, diversity, ability to compete, leadership in the Islamic finance industry globally, and excellence in providing an integrated system of banking and financing services which helped established its leading position globally.



Dr Yousef Al-Hurr honors Abdulwahab Al-Rushood



## EXCELLENCE & LEADERSHIP





kfh.com 180 3333



## Lifestyle | Features



In this file photo US actress Kirstie Alley stands with her children True and Lilly, as well as their friend Timothy, as they attend the premiere of *Monsters Inc* in Los Angeles, California.



In this file photo taken US actress Kirstie Alley wears fashions by Zang Toi during the Mercedes-Benz NY/Spring 2012 fashion week in New York. — AFP photos



In this file photo US actress Kirstie Alley attends the season finale of *American Idol* at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, California.

## Emmy-winning 'Cheers' star Kirstie Alley dies at 71

**K**irstie Alley, the two-time Emmy-winning actor who starred in the hit television sitcom "Cheers", died Monday after a battle with cancer, her family said. She was 71. "We are sad to inform you that our incredible, fierce and loving mother has passed away after a battle with cancer, only recently discovered," her children Lillie Price Stevenson and William True Stevenson said in a statement on Twitter. "Our mother's zest

and passion for life, her children, grandchildren and her many animals, not to mention her eternal joy of creating, were unparalleled and leave us inspired to live life to the fullest just as she did."

Alley rose to prominence for her role as Rebecca Howe in the NBC sitcom "Cheers" about a Boston bar, for which she received an Emmy for best lead actress in a comedy series in 1991. She received a second Emmy for her role in

the television film "David's Mother." Alley also starred in the 1989 romantic comedy film "Look Who's Talking"-as well as its two sequels-alongside John Travolta. Travolta paid tribute to the actor Monday night, posting a photograph of a young Alley on Instagram. "Kirstie was one of the most special relationships I've ever had," Travolta said. "I love you Kirstie. I know we will see each other again." — AFP

## 'Goblin mode' conquers Oxford's word of year contest

**"G**oblin mode" - a slang term to describe "unapologetically self-indulgent, lazy, slovenly, or greedy" behaviour-has won an inaugural public vote for word of the year, Oxford University Press said on Monday. Typically used in the expressions "in goblin mode" or "to go goblin mode", it crushed two other contenders-"metaverse" and "#StandWith"-short-listed by Oxford lexicographers for the annual accolade. The phrase went viral on social media in February and then spread into newspapers and magazines, according to Oxford University Press, which publishes the Oxford English Dictionary and announces its yearly winner. The victorious word or expression should reflect the "ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the past twelve months, one that has potential as a term of lasting cultural significance," it noted.

Previous words of the year include "vax" (2021), "climate emergency" (2019) and "selfie" (2013). For the first time, Oxford University Press let the public choose the winning word from the three-strong shortlist decided by its lexicographers. Over two weeks of online voting by more than 300,000 people, they opted overwhelmingly for "goblin mode". As well as being unapologetically self-indulgent, the phrase also denotes behavior that is also typically "rejecting of social norms or expectations", it said. Its use grew in popularity during 2022 as COVID lockdown restrictions eased in many countries and people ventured out of their homes more regularly, according to a statement announcing the result. — AFP

## Tweet sparks Musk fever in EU's poorest corner

**A**n off the cuff tweet by Elon Musk has left Bulgarians over the moon, hoping the world's richest man may be planning to visit the EU's poorest region. The Tesla, SpaceX and now Twitter boss-who is not immune to bouts of online whimsy-recently commented on an image of the towering Belogradchik Rocks in northwestern Bulgaria under menacing clouds. "Pretty sure that was in *Elден Ring*," Musk tweeted, referring to



This photograph shows Ventseslav Nikolov, 72, retired educator, with his goat in the village of Stakevtsi.

one of his favorite video games. Bulgarians were quick to educate him. "Dear Elon, this is from Bulgaria! I invite you to see this place," Tourism Minister Ilin Dimitrov responded.

Hundreds of other Twitter users did likewise, delighted by the attention for a country rarely in the spotlight of the rich and famous. An official invite was promptly dispatched, accompanied by a silver rhyton drinking horn, a symbol of the ancient Thracian civilization that Bulgaria prides itself on.

### Mystery deepens

The plot thickened when the chef of a high-end restaurant about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Belogradchik published an email purportedly from SpaceX hinting at a visit by Musk in April 2023. The whole episode ignited a social media buzz, with memes aplenty showing the billionaire drinking the local rakia alcohol or dressed in traditional Bulgarian attire. Not everyone was star-struck. "He will come and buy our land," one woman worried.

But the online frenzy has delighted Vladislav Terziiski, who took the picture of the spectacular Belogradchik rocks and its fortress some five years ago. "It is so rare that good news from Bulgaria sparks such interest," he told AFP, welcoming "the wave of reactions, jokes, anecdotes and expressions of national pride." As for a possible visit by the man himself? "I am quite skeptical," Terziiski said. "But I keep some hope in my heart."

### 'Three-day wonder'

The Belogradchik fortress awaits its "messiah", political scientist Dimitar Ganev joked on Bulgarian television. Almost obscured by the mist on a cold November day when AFP visited, the impressive rocks were indeed waiting... for tourists. While visitors frequent the site in the warmer spring and summer months, the biggest group on that November day was a three-men camera crew filming for their own project. Also, few of the 5,500 inhabitants of the little town at the foot of the fortress were getting that excited. Like the rest of Bulgaria, whose population has been dropping since the end of communism, Belogradchik has lost half of its people since 1991.

Musk "does what he wants, why not come and visit a nice site and a poor region", said Svetoslav Zahariev, a construction worker in his 50s, who was "disappointed to find the same misery" on his return here after 16 years working abroad. More than 40 percent of the region's people live below the poverty line, making it the EU's poorest, according to Eurostat. Local officials are pushing concrete government policies to help develop tourism, instead of empty declarations.

"You see how one picture has reached Musk. We can't do all this alone, we need a government policy (for tourist development of the region)," longtime



This photograph shows the Belogradchik fortress in the northwestern region of Bulgaria.



A visitor climbing the rocks, inside the Belogradchik fortress.

mayor Boris Nikolov told AFP. Tourism numbers increased sharply after the Belogradchik Rocks were named as one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature poll by a Swiss foundation in 2007. But people left "disappointed by the lack of infrastructure and accommodation", deputy mayor Rosen Mladenov lamented.

"What is this country that relies on a tweet from Musk to develop its tourism!" he fumed. And even if the tech billionaire comes, he "would only be a three-day

wonder, unless he invests here", Nikolov said. So far Musk has remained uncharacteristically silent, ignoring numerous questions on Twitter from the Bulgarian media asking him to confirm or deny a visit. Should Musk venture into this neglected corner of Bulgaria, he should not risk one of his Tesla cars on its rutted roads, a Sofia newspaper warned. Instead, it said, it was best he come in a rocket. — AFP

## Tunisia film portrays 'modern and connected' rural youth

**T**he Tunisian director of "Under the Fig Trees", which portrays young harvest workers, said she hoped the award-winning drama film would "smash the cliché" that rural women are "miserable and closed". Erige Sehiri told AFP her first feature-length work relates the secrets, love stories and resentments of the mostly female orchard workers who live in the countryside but are "modern and connected". The young women pick fruit in rural Tunisia but are hyper-connected and use social media to eke out their freedom, in contrast to their older colleagues who live in a more conservative world. "Our young people are so modern, just like everywhere else in the world," said Sehiri, 40.

The fig orchard, near the town of Kesra, "represents a space of liberty for workers, especially the young ones, where they can talk and discuss everything freely," she said. Shot in the blistering summer heat of Tunisia's marginalized north, the characters are played by actors from similar backgrounds — all amateurs who normally have harvest jobs or work at wholesale markets. "It's a film inspired by real events, things I've heard from women farm workers who work hard all year, and high school students who come in the summer," the director said.

The young women, sometimes helped by a young man, pick soft ripe figs which are then packaged by older workers, under the orders of a bossy young man representing the traditional patriarchal structure. The symbolism extends to the trees themselves, representing the hardships of life, while the mature figs reflect the girls' discovery of sensuality. The film, a co-production involving France, Tunisia, Qatar, Switzerland and Germany, will hit screens in France on Wednesday and premiere later in Britain, Italy and Belgium. It has been shortlisted to represent Tunisia at the Oscars next year, having won awards at film festivals in Tunisia, Belgium and Germany as well as the Ecoprod prize at Directors' Fortnight in Cannes.

Produced on a budget of just 300,000 euros (\$315,000), the work is "a film on the individual and the collective, because one doesn't exist without the other, they go together", Sehiri said. It looks at the links of solidarity between the women, who share their food and dreams of freedom. At the end of a hard day's work, the young workers make themselves pretty and take selfies for their social media. One of the main characters, Fide, is played by Ameni Fdhili, a student who picks cherries for extra cash in the summer. — AFP



The town of Belogradchik, seen from the Belogradchik fortress. — AFP photos



Lifestyle | Features



A Russian tourist takes panoramic pictures of the city in the San Agustin neighborhood during a guided tour in Caracas. — AFP photos



A group of Russian tourists takes part in the cannon shot ceremony during a visit to the mausoleum of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in La Montana barracks during a guided tour in Caracas.



A group of Russian tourists uses their cell phones to take pictures of a snake in the mangrove swamp while walking through Laguna de La Restinga National Park in Isla Margarita.



A group of Russian tourists listens to directions from a tour guide as they visit the Cerro El Copey National Park during a guided tour in Isla Margarita.



A group of Russian tourists takes part in the cannon shot ceremony during a visit to the mausoleum of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

# Shunned over war, Russians holiday on Venezuelan resort island

Shuttled between tourist spots, posing for pictures on beautiful beaches, and dancing awkwardly to merengue: Russian tourists have found a friendly holiday destination on a Venezuelan island far from the motherland and its war with Ukraine. Isla de Margarita is a tropical gem with white-sand shores and turquoise waters. However, years of political and economic turmoil in Venezuela have frightened off most tourists, with Western nations sternly warning citizens not to travel there. For thousands of Russians seeking sun-soaked holidays, but faced with visa and flight restrictions over the Ukraine war, it is a match made in Caribbean heaven. "There aren't many destinations available to Russia right now. It's hard to find places to go on holiday," says Ekaterina Dolgova, 39, who sells medical supplies. Out of a group of Russian tourists on a recent guided tour of the island, she is the only one willing to say anything about the

brutal conflict in which Ukrainians are under constant Russian attack and enduring freezing temperatures, many without water or electricity, thousands of miles away. "A war is by far the worst thing," she said briefly. Some fear repercussions if they speak out, while others support President Vladimir Putin's war efforts.

**Russian translation**  
In the past two months, some 3,000 Russian tourists have taken advantage of a new direct flight between Moscow and Isla de Margarita with Russia's Norwind Airlines. The route re-opened on October 2 after a seven-month interruption due to the war, and was modified to avoid flying over air spaces restricted by sanctions. A 14-hour flight from Moscow, Isla de Margarita is also seen as an affordable option. Tourist Sergei Katch said he paid \$3,500 for a 12-day package to the island. A sign reading "welcome" in Russian greets the tourists at the island's interna-



A couple of Russian tourists take pictures as they visit different sites during a guided tour in Isla Margarita.

tional airport. Everything is organized, from island tours to Russian translation services. The travelers don't leave their hotel without a guide. Dolgova said she decided to travel to Venezuela after ruling out Egypt, which she had already visited twice, and where she says the treatment of Russians has changed since the start of the war.

**'Secret weapon'**  
President Nicolas Maduro sees tourism as a secret weapon to revitalize an economy showing timid signs of recovery after years of hyperinflation and a currency in free fall. He has signed a deal with Russia, a strong ally, to receive some 100,000 tourists by December 31. This surge in tourism has had a direct impact

on the island's economy, said Viviana Vethencourt, president of the Chamber of Tourism for the Nueva Esparta state, which covers Isla de Margarita and two other islands. She says there are no statistics, but improvements are slowly showing. For saleswoman Nacarid, who sells jewelry and beachwear, "things sell, but not like before," when the island bustled with visitors from Europe and the United States. "They are hagglers," she complains, as one of the Russian tourists convinces her to halve the price of an item. Dimitri Bobkov, 31, a university professor, tries to dance to the sound of merengue booming from the radio as the tour group stops at a gas station. He has visited the tomb of socialist icon Hugo Chavez and played football with children in a slum. "Here, I like the people, the food, the nature, the climate," said Bobkov. "I will probably remember this for the rest of my life." — AFP

## IWG holds its annual seasonal dinner

To celebrate the spirit of the season and the coming New Year, the International Women's Group-Kuwait (IWG) held its annual seasonal dinner for members and honored guests, including Sheikha Suad Al-Sabah and ambassadors of Sierra Leone, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Indonesia, Guyana and Turkey on Sunday, Dec 4, 2022 at Crowne Plaza Hotel. Ghada Shawky, wife of the Ambassador of Egypt to Kuwait and President of IWG 2022-2023, opened the event by welcoming the attendees to the beautiful atmosphere of the festive celebration, saying that the importance of this time of the year is the message of peace, love and spending time with family and friends. During this special event, Shawky said guests will enjoy celebrating the end of the season through the performances of dances from different parts of the world, featuring the varied traditions and culture of the countries. At the end of her speech, Shawky



wished the attendees a Happy New Year filled with health, peace and prosperity. The celebrations started with the screening of a beautiful video of Christmas in Bethlehem and the song "Ya Mariam" performed by Palestinian singer Lina Sleibi from inside the Church of Nativity, provided by Rima Khalidi, wife of the Ambassador of Palestine. With the participation of the embassies of Armenia, Eswatini, Egypt, Indonesia, the Indian Anjali school of dance and Spanish performer Genoveva, the guests were treated to traditional dance performances under the title "Dances from Around the World". They started with the Armenian dance "Mogats Harsner" translated as "the Brides of Mog" (an ancient Armenian province). Today, this dance is

often performed by females during Armenian weddings. It was followed by "Kudigza", a Swazi traditional dance, where its song means welcoming 'Gogo' the granny (matriarch) of any traditional home, performed by Swazi women. "Kathak" a semi-classic fusion style dance that originated from the northern part of India - Uttar Pradesh - has brisk rhythmic movements and mild facial expressions. The Nubian "Aragid" dance is one of the oldest and most famous Nubian dances in Egypt, which is performed at Nubian weddings. Joy and dance in the life of the Nubians is the language that does not die. The "Cilinyaya" dance is one of the traditional Balinese dances which symbolizes beauty with smooth gestures depicting the cheerfulness of the girls' youth. Finally, with the Spanish touch and the flamenco passion, Genoveva thrilled the members and guests with her goal to bring Kuwait closer to her country, Spain. In closing, Shawky thanked the performers and all sponsors for their invaluable contribution to add joy during the festive season. She also thanked Crowne Plaza Hotel for its permanent cooperation with the International Women's Group, and thanked Santa Claus for bringing joy and happiness to the audience. Lucky draws and raffles were conducted with many wonderful items which also included special prizes.



## Sports

# Celtics earn impressive victory as Pacers overpower Warriors

## Tatum lifts Celtics; Clippers beat Hornets

**LOS ANGELES:** Jayson Tatum scored 17 of his 31 points in the third quarter on Monday as the Boston Celtics earned an impressive 116-110 NBA victory over the Raptors in Toronto. Trailing 62-56 at half-time, the Celtics out-scored the Raptors 35-18 in the third period to take a nine-point lead, pushing their advantage to as many as 13 in the fourth as they handed the Raptors just their third home defeat.

The NBA champion Golden State Warriors also suffered a rare home defeat, falling 112-104 to the Indiana Pacers - the Warriors' second loss this season at the Chase Center in San Francisco. Andrew Nembhard scored 31 points to lead six Pacers players in double figures. Klay Thompson's 28 points led the Warriors as star Stephen Curry endured a tough shooting night, connecting on three of 17 attempts on the way to 12 points. "I just thought they came in, out-played us," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "Out-coached us." In Toronto, the Celtics improved their league-best record to 20-5.

They lead the Eastern Conference by two games over the Milwaukee Bucks, who beat the Orlando Magic 109-102 on the back of 34 points and 13 rebounds from Giannis Antetokounmpo. Tatum scored 17 of his 31 in the third quarter and Jaylen Brown added 22 points as Boston posted their seventh win in eight games - despite the absence of injured Al Horford and ailing Malcolm Brogdon. Defensive Player of the Year Marcus Smart added 18 points and Blake Griffin's 13 included a tip-in off a Tatum miss that pushed Boston's lead to 115-108 with 26.8 seconds remaining.

Tatum said the Celtics told themselves at halftime to "figure it out." "Second night of a back-to-back, against a team that plays really well at home," he

said. "We were just playing too slow. We were worried about the officiating too much, and we just wanted to change that." Tatum said it's the kind of win the Celtics need if they're to return to the NBA Finals and claim the title that eluded them against Golden State last season.

"When we put our minds to it, we can beat anybody," he said. In Orlando, the Bucks shook off a sluggish start on the way to a 54-45 halftime lead and never trailed after the interval, withstanding a late push that saw the Magic cut the deficit to four points with 2:20 remaining. Philadelphia's James Harden returned from injury against his old team in Houston, but the struggling Rockets spoiled his night with a 132-123 double-overtime victory over the 76ers.

The Sixers had hoped Harden's return after missing 14 games with a foot injury would help them reverse their fortunes after two road defeats. But he looked rusty in connecting on just four of 19 shots from the field on the way to 21 points, seven assists and seven turnovers. Joel Embiid led the 76ers with a game-high 39 points. He grabbed seven rebounds with two blocked shots before fouling out in overtime. Jalen Green scored 27 points for Houston and Kevin Porter Jr. added 24.

### Leonard lifts Clippers

Los Angeles Clippers stars Kawhi Leonard and Paul George returned from injury and made an immediate impact in a 119-117 victory over the Hornets in Charlotte. George, who missed seven straight games with a hamstring strain, led the Clippers with 19 points and Leonard added 16 - including a game-tying put-back basket and the game-winning step-back jump shot with 1.4 sec-



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Oshae Brissett #12 and Isaiah Jackson #22 of the Indiana Pacers go for a rebound against Moses Moody #4 and Anthony Lamb #40 of the Golden State Warriors on December 05, 2022. — AFP

onds remaining.

"It felt good," said Leonard, a two-time NBA champion who had missed the previous six games with a sprained right ankle. "My teammates trusted me." In Dallas, the Mavericks seized control with a 33-15 first quarter and never let up in a 130-111 vic-

tory over the Western Conference-leading Phoenix Suns. Luka Doncic scored 33 points and Spencer Dinwiddie added 21 for the Mavs. Deandre Ayton scored 20 points for Phoenix and Devin Booker, who had averaged 39 points over the Suns' previous four games, scored 11. — AFP



**Wales' head coach Warren Gatland**

## Gatland returns to help fix Wales' rugby woes

**WELLINGTON:** Warren Gatland returns for his second stint as Wales head coach just three years after walking away from the job having overseen a golden era of Welsh rugby. Gatland has hastily replaced fellow New Zealander Wayne Pivac, under whom Wales lifted the 2021 Six Nations but won just 13 of 34 tests, suffering sobering defeats this year to Georgia and Italy. Hamilton-born Gatland, 59, coached the Welsh from 2008 until 2019 and is now tasked with getting them back on track for the 2023 Six Nations and next year's Rugby World Cup. He has spent the last three years as head coach and then director of rugby for the Chiefs Super Rugby franchise.

"I want to thank the Chiefs. This was a big decision and leaving a team like this was always going to be hard," Gatland said in a statement. "However, I am looking forward to taking on this new challenge." It's a similar situation to Gatland's first coaching stint with Wales when he took over a demoralized team that crashed out of the 2007 World Cup following a shock defeat to Fiji. Gatland turned the team around quickly, winning the Six Nations in 2008, 2012, 2013 and 2019.

In three of those years - 2008, 2012 and 2019 - Wales completed the rare "Grand Slam" by winning every game in the Six Nations. Under Gatland, who also coached the British and Irish Lions on three tours, Welsh success was forged on a robust defense that opponents often struggled to crack. Alongside hard-nosed defense coach Shaun Edwards, who has since joined France, Gatland gave Wales a tough edge with a conservative, possession-based style of rugby critics dubbed "Warrenball".

### 'One of the very best'

It bore fruit as Wales repeatedly challenged for the Six Nations title and ended a miserable run against southern hemisphere teams Australia and South Africa. Australia's 13-game winning streak against Wales ended in 2018 when the Welsh ground out a 9-6 win over the Wallabies in Cardiff. Gatland coached Wales to five wins over the Springboks, although South Africa pushed them out of consecutive World Cups in 2015 and 2019 at the knock-out stage.

Gatland, a former All Blacks hooker, coached Wales against New Zealand in 12 games but never won. A 40-17 defeat against the All Blacks in the bronze medal match at the 2019 World Cup was his last game in charge. Under Gatland's stewardship, Wales twice reached the World Cup semi-finals, losing 9-8 to France in Auckland in 2011 despite playing for nearly an hour with 14 men, then again losing to the Springboks in 2019. — AFP

## Bollettieri: Tennis stars' coach dies

**PARIS:** Legendary tennis coach Nick Bollettieri, who helped develop superstars such as Andre Agassi and Maria Sharapova, has died aged 91, the IMG Academy announced in a statement on Monday. "Nick Bollettieri, the legendary tennis coach and founder of Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy, which served as the foundation for today's IMG Academy, has passed away," read the statement.

While his methods were sometimes controversial, his academy in Florida churned out top players and he was to coach 10 players who would go on to become number one in the world. Monica Seles, Jim Courier, Anna Kournikova and Mary Pierce were other stars who passed through his Bradenton complex. Bollettieri also advised Venus and Serena Williams and Boris Becker. "Tennis wouldn't be where it is today without Nick's influence," said Jimmy Arias, IMG Academy director of tennis and

## Buccaneers stun Saints

**LOS ANGELES:** Seven-time Super Bowl winner Tom Brady worked his magic again on Monday, firing a touchdown pass to Rachaad White in the waning seconds to lift Tampa Bay to a 17-16 NFL victory over New Orleans. Brady authored the 44th fourth-quarter comeback win of his career, the most in NFL history as he broke a tie with Peyton Manning. Struggling offensively in the first three quarters, Tampa Bay turned it on in the fourth as Brady connected on 15 of 21 passes for 125 yards and two touchdowns in the period.

On a third-and-goal play with three seconds remaining Brady hit White with a six-yard scoring pass, with Ryan Succop's extra point clinching the victory. The Bucs were trailing 16-3 when Brady hit Cade Otton with a one-yard touchdown toss with three minutes remaining. Tampa Bay thought they had another TD with 16 seconds left, but it was disallowed because of a holding penalty. Once again, however, Brady came through as the NFC South division leading Bucs improved to 6-6.

"It's awesome by our team," Brady said. "It's a great effort by the defense to hang in there all day." "I missed some throws early, but (I'm) really proud of our team

for hanging in there against a team we've always struggled with. "Good to get a win at home," added Brady, who completed 36 of 54 passing attempts for 281 yards with two touchdowns and an interception.

one of Bollettieri's original students. "His tennis academy, which I had the privilege of growing up within, not only served as a launching pad for many tennis greats but evolved into an institution that has had a profound impact on the development of athletes across many sports at all levels." Bollettieri founded the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy - now IMG Academy - in 1978 with a focus on intense physical training, total immersion, and ongoing competition among the most talented players in the world.

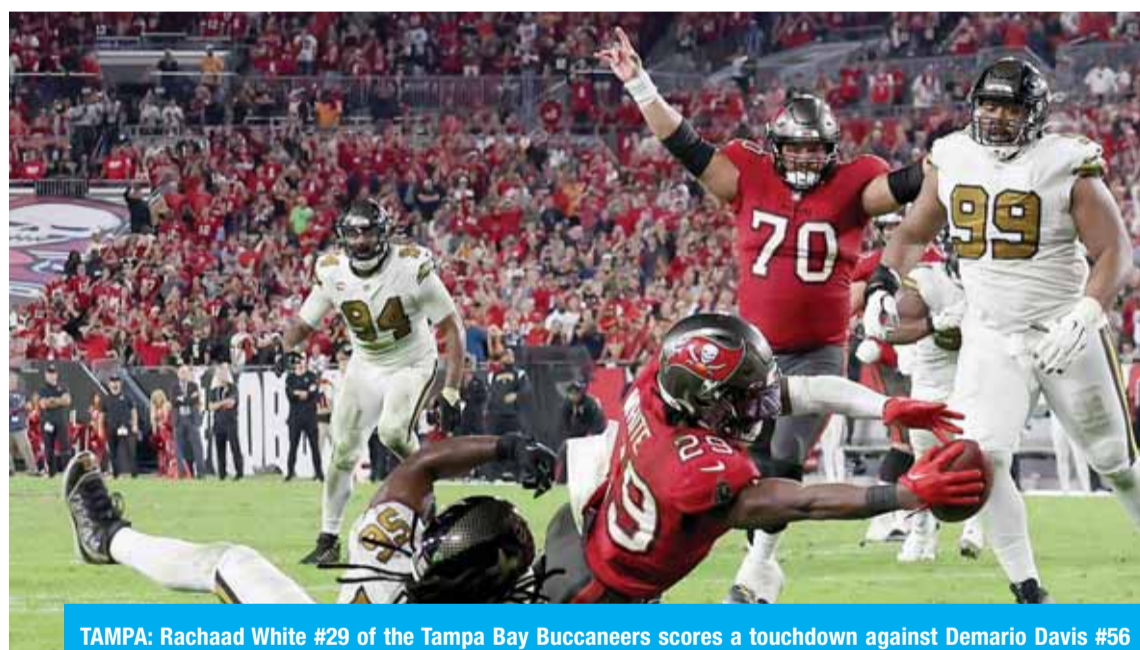
His enthusiasm for coaching continued almost right up to the end. "Even in his last days, you could often find him on campus, coaching and mentoring young student-athletes and staff with the same passion and enthusiasm as he did in his 20s," said Tim Perneti, President of IMG Academy Bradenton, a division of IMG Academy. "Our heart goes out to his wife, Cindi, and his children. He has made a permanent and lasting impact on all of us."

Tommy Haas - a four-time Grand Slam semi-finalist and world number two - posted a moving tribute to the Korean War veteran. "So many memories, I am not sure where to begin," posted the 44-year-old on Instagram. "Nickiiii, that's how i



**KEY BISCAINE:** Legendary tennis coach Nick Bollettieri attends Kids Day at Crandon Park Tennis Center during the Sony Ericsson Open in this file photo. — AFP

have called you for the longest time. "Thank you for your time, knowledge, commitment, expertise, the willingness to share your skill, your personal interest in mentoring me, and giving me the best opportunity to follow my dreams. "You were a dreamer and a doer, and a pioneer in our sport, truly one of a kind." — AFP



**TAMPA:** Rachaad White #29 of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers scores a touchdown against Demario Davis #56 of the New Orleans Saints late in the fourth quarter during the game on December 05, 2022. — AFP

for hanging in there against a team we've always struggled with. "Good to get a win at home," added Brady, who completed 36 of 54 passing attempts for 281 yards with two touchdowns and an interception.

Saints quarterback Andy Dalton completed 20 passes for 229 yards with a 30-yard touchdown pass to Taysom Hill. But the Saints were frustrated in the red zone, settling for three Wil Lutz field goals. — AFP

## 2026 World Cup hosts may look to South America

**DOHA:** North America's trio of 2026 World Cup hosts are being urged to head south to play in the next Copa America in a bid to improve on disappointing results in Qatar. The United States, Mexico and Canada will jointly host the next World Cup in less than four years and as co-hosts they will qualify automatically for the expanded 48-team tournament, leaving plenty of space in their schedule and a shortage of competitive games with no qualifying cycle.

The United States were the only team from CONCACAF to make it out of the group stage and they lost their round of 16 match against the Netherlands 3-1. Canada, playing in their first World Cup since 1986, lost all three of their matches in Qatar while Mexico ended a run of seven straight World Cups where they reached the knockout stage, prompting a major inquest in the country. Central Americans Costa Rica,

CONCACAF's other representative in Qatar, finished bottom of their group.

While the need for improvement is evident, finding games against top international opposition has become more difficult since the drastic reduction in European friendly match opportunities that has accompanied the creation of the UEFA Nations League. CONCACAF will hold the finals of its own Nations League competition in June next year, followed by the biennial 16-team Gold Cup but in those competitions the toughest opponents the 2026 hosts will face is likely to be each other.

Former United States international striker Taylor Twellman, now a leading television analyst with ESPN, told AFP that the trio needed to spread their wings and take on South America's top teams. "In order for CONCACAF to compete at the highest of levels at the World Cup they have to find better competition. The UEFA Nations League killed the friendly circuit for the United States, Canada and Mexico. I'd love to see them compete in Copa America and having done so myself it's such a tougher spot to play than the Gold Cup," he said.

### 'Can't just play friendlies'

Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa, who has

featured in the last five World Cups, has made a similar call and also suggested his country might also want to feature in the Asian Cup. "We can't just play friendlies in the US," he said. Such moves would require the agreement of CONCACAF, which governs North and Central America and the Caribbean and would also need to be signed off by FIFA. CONCACAF declined to comment.

The next Copa America is scheduled for 2024 although no venue has yet been set after Ecuador declined their turn to host. Unlike the European Championships which is strictly for UEFA member nations, the Copa America has in the past involved nine different 'invited' countries from outside of CONMEBOL.

Mexico has taken part on nine occasions and the United States three times but Canada has yet to feature. A more ambitious plan could be for a repeat of the special centenary edition of the tournament, held in the United States in 2016, which featured six CONCACAF teams alongside all ten CONMEBOL nations. Such a scenario would offer the most lucrative commercial revenue possibilities and build momentum among fans and television audiences ahead of the World Cup. — AFP

# Brazil thrash South Korea 4-1, face off with Croatia

## South Korea coach resigns after World Cup exit



DOHA: South Korea's midfielder #07 Son Heung-min shoots but fails to score during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Brazil and South Korea on December 5, 2022. — AFP photos



DOHA: Brazil's forward #10 Neymar celebrates with Brazil's forward #20 Vinicius Junior, Brazil's forward #11 Raphinha and Brazil's midfielder #07 Lucas Paqueta after scoring his team's second goal from the penalty spot on December 5, 2022.

DOHA: Neymar returned from injury to help inspire Brazil to a 4-1 victory over South Korea on Monday as the favorites cruised through to the quarter-finals of the World Cup. The world's most expensive player had sat out his team's last two matches with a sprained ankle suffered in their opening 2-0 win over Serbia. But he came back for this last-16 tie as Tite's team clicked into gear and delivered an ominous message to their rivals, at least before easing off in the second half.

Vinicius Junior opened the scoring inside seven minutes before Neymar added another from the penalty spot to move to 76 goals for his country, leaving him just one away from equalling Pele's all-time record tally. Richarlison's brilliant goal made it 3-0 and Lucas Paqueta added another before half-time to leave South Korea shellshocked. Paik Seung-ho pulled one back but by then Brazil were thinking about Friday's quarter-final clash with 2018 runners-up Croatia.

"The time has come to go further," Neymar told Brazilian broadcaster Globo, referring to their defeats in the semi-finals in 2014 and quarter-finals four years ago. "We are dreaming of winning the title, that's obvious, but we have to go step by step. "This was the fourth game. There are three to go but we are prepared. Our minds are focused on winning the title." The five-time world champions had not scored four goals in a knockout game at the tournament since 1998.

Here they played at times with the joy associated with the Brazilian national team, the players coming

together to celebrate each goal by showing off their dance moves and their coach even joining in. If they finished playing within themselves, their first-half display was superb and a fitting tribute to the great Pele. The Brazilian legend had said he would watch the game from the Sao Paulo hospital to where he was admitted last week for cancer treatment, and supporters in Doha's Stadium 974 unfurled a banner with a get well soon message to him.

It was a chastening experience for Son Heung-min and South Korea, who have still never won a World Cup knockout match outside their own country. Their coach Paulo Bento later announced he would not be continuing in the role. "I believe we can be very proud of what we have done at this World Cup, and what we have done over the last four years to get here," said Bento. Tite made 10 changes to the Brazil team after rotating his squad for last Friday's inconsequential 1-0 loss to Cameroon, with Danilo also returning from injury at left-back.

### Richarlison stars again

With Alisson Becker back in goal and Thiago Silva and Marquinhos playing too, this was Brazil's first-choice defense but their forwards quickly put the tie to bed. The opener came from their first shot on target as Raphinha burst away from Kim Jin-su on the right and his ball across goal came to the feet of Vinicius who coolly picked his spot.

They then won a penalty as Richarlison was caught by Jung Woo-young and Neymar duly beat Kim Seung-gyu - his last six goals for Brazil have now all

come from the spot. Alisson was then called into action to tip over a vicious long-range effort from Hwang Hee-chan, but Brazil scored their third in style just before the half-hour mark. Richarlison juggled the ball on his head three times just outside the area before laying it off to Marquinhos and then continuing into the box to get on the end of Silva's pass which he slotted home for his third goal at this World Cup.

Paqueta got their fourth nine minutes before the break with a first-time finish as he connected with a Vinicius ball held up from the byline. They took their foot off the pedal in the second half, although Raphinha was denied on several occasions by the goalkeeper. Korea though deserve credit for keeping going and were rewarded inside the final quarter-hour as substitute Paik brought down a clearance and sent in a ferocious shot from 25 meters that brushed off Silva to beat Alisson.

Meanwhile, Paulo Bento announced he would not be staying on as coach of South Korea after they were eliminated from the World Cup with a 4-1 defeat at the hands of Brazil on Monday. "Now I need to think about the future, but I will not be with the Korea team. I am going to rest and then see," the 53-year-old former Portugal coach said after the loss in the last 16. "I have just told the players and the president of the national federation. "This is a decision which I took in September. It was set in stone and today I confirmed it. I have to thank them and am very proud to have been their manager." Bento took over following the 2018 World Cup, succeeding Shin Tae-yong. — AFP

### Messi defends Lautaro

Both coach Lionel Scaloni and captain Messi have been quick to defend the forward. "Lautaro is a hugely important player for us, he's a forward, he lives for goals," said Messi. He may well have been mindful of that as he seemingly tried desperately to tee up his strike partner against Australia. "Lautaro has saved us many times, I don't want to talk about these details - that would be unfair on Lautaro, who has given us and will keep giving us so much joy," said Scaloni, when asked about the striker's misses against Australia.

Alvarez will likely keep his place against Netherlands for Friday's World Cup quarter-final. "It's perfect that Julian is scoring and Lautaro will also score," said Scaloni. It is a different story for the two players at club level. While Lautaro is a certain starter at Inter, Alvarez has started just three Premier League matches at Manchester City, though he has scored three times. With Messi dazzling and proving once again the inspiration for Argentina, fans will not mind who else gets on the scoresheet, as long as the team keep winning. But it is turning into a bittersweet experience for Lautaro and perhaps the making of Alvarez. — AFP

his first World Cup goal.

After one dazzling run, Messi passed to his fellow forward inside the 18-yard box with only the goalkeeper to beat, but Lautaro skied his effort. It could have been so different for Lautaro, who twice put the ball in the net against Saudi Arabia in Argentina's opening Group C encounter. Both times, though, he was denied by an offside flag. Argentina then toiled to create anything against Mexico in their next match, until Lautaro was taken off. Moments later, Messi opened the scoring.

For the final group game against Poland, Lautaro lost his place to youngster Julian Alvarez, who has rewarded his coach's faith by scoring in each of his two starts. After replacing the 22-year-old with 20 minutes left against Australia, Lautaro fluffed three presentable chances to kill the game. It has led to a succession of memes and jokes flooding social media at his expense.

Some have even compared him to compatriot Gonzalo Higuain, who missed a chance in the 2014 World Cup final against Germany - which Argentina lost 1-0 - when played through one-on-one with the goalkeeper.

## Brazil WCup squad 'scary'

DOHA: Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic called Brazil's squad "scary" but says his team are not big underdogs in Friday's quarter-final against the World Cup favorites. Dalic's side, runners-up at the 2018 World Cup, beat Japan on penalties on Monday to guarantee at least their third best finish at the tournament. The coach said on Tuesday he was proud of his team for showing the character and mentality to get this far in Qatar, but knows that Brazil will be a whole different proposition.

"Brazil has (over) 200 million people, we only have four million, so we're a bit like the suburb of a city in Brazil," Dalic said. "It will be a different game than against anyone we have played so far because Brazil likes to play football. "If we are looking at it realistically, Brazil is the best team at the tournament, they have a great choice of players, a great squad, it's scary, so it's a great test for us." Dalic said "it doesn't get better" than playing Brazil at a World Cup.

"Maybe we'd rather it was in the final than the quarter-final though," he added. "We want to give maximum effort - we won't surrender before the game. We want to counter Brazil's quality with our own and we want to play football against them." Croatia have refreshed their squad in the four years since the last World Cup, with only a handful of veterans remaining, including captain Luka Modric and winger Ivan Perisic. Dalic said this generation should not be compared to the team beaten by France in the final in Russia because they largely included players sprinkled across elite club sides.

"We have already earned a historic result after getting silver in 2018 and bronze in 1998, this is our third best Croatian result at a World Cup," said Dalic. "I wouldn't draw comparisons to the team from 2018, when you look at our players then, they played for clubs like Barcelona, Inter (Milan), Juventus, Liverpool, Real Madrid of course. "When you compare it to today, we have six players from the Croatian first division, it's a different team. "But I take my hat off to this generation, because they are playing great." Brazil thrashed South Korea 4-1 on Monday with one of the best performances of the tournament so far, but Dalic thinks that his team can fight their corner against the five-time World Cup winners. — AFP

## Lautaro struggles as Argentina thrive at World Cup

DOHA: Argentina have gradually found their feet at the World Cup, improving with every game, but striker Lautaro Martinez has been going in the other direction. For most of the past four years, the Inter Milan player has been a starter for the national team, usually alongside Lionel Messi and Angel Di Maria in a daunting three-pronged attack.

The 25-year-old, who has 21 goals in 44 internationals, was on the teamsheet for Argentina's first two group games in Qatar. But things have unraveled quickly for him, to the point that he found himself the subject of jokes online following Argentina's 2-1 last-16 win over Australia. Towards the end of the game, after Lautaro was introduced as a substitute, many fans felt Messi repeatedly tried to set up his teammate to score

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

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

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
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, PARLAPALLI SHIVA KUMAR REDDY holder of Indian Passport No. U0748409 having permanent address pin code 524101, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Given name SIVA KUMAR REDDY and Surname YARAMAPU. (C#2811)

I HAVE CHANGE MY NAME FROM HAKIMUDDIN S/O SHABBIR HUSAIN JAWDDIYA PASSPORT NO. Z5712517 IN FUTURE I AM KNOW FROM THIS NAME HAKIMUDDIN JAWDDIYA S/O SHABBIR HUSAIN JAWDDIYA V/P MOHAM-MDIPURA TEMBA SAG-WARA. (C# 2813) - 05-12-2022

## FOR RENT

### First Floor (Al-Zahra Area)

- (1) • Laundry room + Storage
- (1) • Living room
- (4) • Master bedroom
- (1) • Maid room + toilet
- (2) • Car park shaded
- Guest bathroom
- Shatter
- Lift
- Deposit 500 KD
- Rent (1150 KD)

Contact: 94167027

Automated enquiry about the Civild card is 1889988

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSALHOTLINE 128

## Morocco the last African and Arab nation standing at WCup

### Spain crash out on penalties

DOHA: Achraf Hakimi struck the decisive penalty to send Spain crashing out and Morocco into the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time, winning 3-0 in a shoot-out on Tuesday after a 0-0 draw. Spain coach Luis Enrique had claimed his players prepared by taking 1,000 penalties as homework but Pablo Sarabia, Carlos Soler and Sergio Busquets all missed from the spot and Madrid-born Hakimi dinked his home to the delight of Morocco's raucous support.

Walid Regragui's side will face Portugal or Switzerland in what is uncharted territory for them, with their previous best a last-16 exit in 1986. Spain had been hoping they could repeat their 2010 World Cup triumph after reaching the semi-finals of Euro 2020, where they were also beaten on penalties by Italy.

The teams were closely matched through a nail-biting clash, with Spain having more of the ball but Morocco creating the better openings, few though they were. Luis Enrique trialed his third right-back of the tournament in Marcos Llorente, and benched the team's top scorer Alvaro Morata for Marco Asensio, after the shock defeat by Japan. Spain monopolized the ball, with Morocco's fans furiously whistling with their side out of possession.

Morocco, who are the last African and Arab side left standing at the first World Cup held in an Arab country, were intensely backed and their fans greatly outnumbered Spain's. With La Roja playing in a pale blue second strip, they resembled the away team on

hostile territory. Gavi, who at 18 years and 123 days old became the youngest player to start a World Cup knockout game since Brazil great Pele in 1958, rose to the occasion.

The Barcelona midfielder terrier was at his most intense, smashing into challenges left, right and centre, even diving to make one with his head.

Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou tipped a Gavi strike on to the crossbar, though it would have been ruled offside, while

Asensio drilled into the side-netting, although Spain created little. Regragui's side sat deep defensively and threatened on the counter, with Unai Simon beating away a long range effort from

Noussair Mazraoui.

Sofiane Boufal, who bypassed Llorente like sand slipping through the Spaniard's fingers early on, carved the best chance of the half for Nayef Aguerd, who headed inches over. Bounou pummelled away a Dani Olmo strike from an angle as the tension cranked up after the break. Luis Enrique raged at Rodri for choosing the wrong option on the ball, and withdrew the dogged and muddled Gavi for Carlos Soler. He threw Morata on too, giving Spain a focal point up top, but they struggled to supply him as Morocco sat deeper and deeper.

Another substitute, Nico Williams did find the Atletico Madrid striker on one occasion but the angle was too tight and he scraped a shot across the face of goal. Bounou made a fine save from Olmo's free-kick as it almost snuck all the way through, with Spain finally creating stronger chances as the game frayed in the moments before extra-time. Morocco responded in the additional period by finding stability and testing Simon, who made a fine save with his legs to deny Walid Cheddira after he broke in down Spain's left flank.

Despite heavy pressure by Spain in the final moments before penalties, they could not

trouble the Sevilla goalkeeper again, with Pablo Sarabia clipping the outside of the post, although

he might have been off-side. Having been sent on apparently for the shoot-out, Sarabia struck the post again from Spain's first penalty, after Abdelhamid Sabiri had sent Morocco ahead. Soler and Busquets missed, while Hakim Ziyech scored, before Hakimi netted against his birth country to ignite wild celebrations. — AFP



DOHA: Spain's forward #10 Marco Asensio falls over Morocco's defender #05 Nayef Aguerd during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain on December 6, 2022. — AFP



Spain's midfielder #09 Gavi and Morocco's midfielder #17 Sofiane Boufal fall down during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain on December 6, 2022.



Spain's midfielder #06 Marcos Llorente jumps over Morocco's defender #06 Romain Ghomem Saiss during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match.



Morocco's supporter poses for pictures during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain on December 6, 2022.



Morocco supporters dressed in lion costumes cheer ahead of the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain.



Morocco's supporters cheer during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain on December 6, 2022. — AFP photos

DOHA: Morocco's goalkeeper #01 Yassine Bounou deflects a penalty kick from Spain's midfielder #05 Sergio Busquets during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain on December 6, 2022. — AFP



DOHA: Morocco's coach #00 Walid Regragui is thrown into the air as Morocco players celebrate winning on penalty shoot-out the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain on December 6, 2022. — AFP

### Air-conditioned Olympic marathon possible: Dr Cool

DOHA: The engineer who developed the air conditioning for Qatar's World Cup stadiums says that a cooling system for an Olympic marathon is possible if the Gulf state bids for the Games. Amid reports that Qatar is targeting the 2036 Olympics, Saud Abdulaziz Abdul Ghani, widely known as Dr Cool, said Qatar has already "proven" its technological capability for the World Cup and can repeat the feat for a new mega event. Doha was a contender for the 2016 and 2020 Olympics and sports officials have said it is studying a new campaign using the World Cup as a launchpad.

The infrastructure for the 32-nation football tournament has been widely hailed, even if Qatar has faced criticism over its rights record and its fierce summer temperatures forced FIFA to change

the dates to winter. The wealthy Gulf state also held the world athletics championships in 2019 and will stage the world swimming championships in January 2024 and the next Asian Cup football as it steps up its bid to become a dominant international sports hub.

#### Cool running

The athletics championship was held in the air-conditioned Khalifa stadium. But because of the daytime heat, the women's marathon started at midnight and only 40 of the 68 runners finished as temperatures rose above 30 Celsius (86 Fahrenheit). The World Cup was moved to November-December to avoid the summer heat and Qatar could ask the International Olympic Committee to do the same to allow a first Olympics in an Arab nation, sports sources say.

There are already air-conditioned streets in the Katara cultural district and Qatar has a 1.1 kilometer air-conditioned jogging track in one city park. Media reports have said an Olympic marathon could also be specially cooled. Sports authorities have not commented, but Saud, an engineering pro-

fessor at Qatar University, said an air-conditioned marathon course could be built.

"It is feasible and possible. Engineering-wise anything is possible," he told AFP on the sidelines of a press conference Monday. "You don't need a street. Maybe there could be cooling stations and things like this. Let it happen and then we will see," he added. "We have proven to the world that technologically we have the capability," he said referring to the World Cup. "We have done that and we can do it again." When asked if he was working on plans, Saud replied: "Nobody has contacted me yet".

Saud, who previously developed air conditioning for Ford Mondeo cars, spent 13 years working on the cooling used at seven of the eight World Cup stadiums. While critics have said it is a waste of energy, Saud responds that Qatar's solar power more than makes up for the energy used and the air conditioning keeps the players and turf healthy and even eliminates spectator body odor. Inside the stadiums, players and fans are kept at about 21 Celsius (70 Fahrenheit) by jets blasting air at the pitchside and under spectator seats. "The general feedback is very successful," said Saud. — AFP