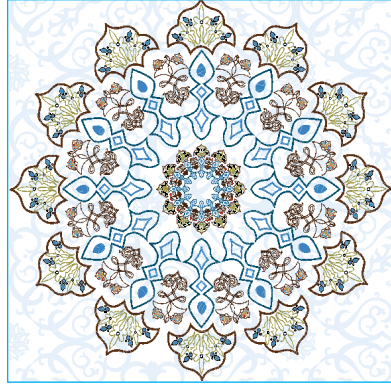


## NOTICE

Kuwait Times will not publish its print edition from 3rd May till 7th May, but readers can stay informed with breaking news and information via [KuwaitTimes.com](http://KuwaitTimes.com) and our digital media channels on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @KuwaitTimes.



عيد مبارك  
EID MUBARAK



# Kuwait welcomes Eid with joy after 2 years of curbs

## Temperatures forecast to rise during Eid in Kuwait



KUWAIT: People shop at a clothing store to prepare for Eid Al-Fitr in Kuwait City. — Xinhua

**KUWAIT:** Citizens and residents in Kuwait were preparing on Sunday to welcome Eid Al-Fitr on Monday with palpable joy and enthusiasm as they appeared relieved of the painful coronavirus restrictions that were in force for the last two years in the country. This year, they can go to mosques for prayers and attend family gatherings and spend outings with relatives unhindered as in the past.

The first day of Eid Al-Fitr begins on Monday in Kuwait marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. The other Gulf states Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain are celebrating Eid Al-Fitr from Monday. Eid

Al-Fitr celebrations follow the end of Ramadan which lasts 29 or 30 days based on when the crescent moon is sighted. Countries which marked the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan on April 2 will thus conclude the 30th day of Ramadan on May 1.

“By Allah’s grace, I am very happy today. The festival mood of Eid is here once again,” said expat Abdul Sattar, without hiding his happiness. In the last two years, Eid festivities remained subdued in most of the world, overshadowed by the coronavirus restrictions and lockdown.

Cutting across religious boundaries, several social groups and organizations have organized Eid gatherings from

Monday lasting for a week. Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Iraq, Australia and Singapore will also mark the Eid Al-Fitr on May 2.

Meanwhile, Kuwait will experience hot weather as of Monday, first day of Eid Al-Fitr and the temperature is forecast throughout the holiday to hover around 38-43 degree Celsius, the national meteorological center said on Sunday. Meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said that the weather remained moderate on Sunday and the temperature ranged between 24 and 28 degree Celsius. It will be sunny in the first days of Eid Al-Fitr holidays and partially cloudy on Thursday and Friday, amid some dust. —Agencies

## Ramadan Kareem

### Eid Al-Fitr in Islam

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

Celebrations in Islam are a blessing from Almighty Allah in that all of them come after accomplishing an act of worship. We have two main celebrations in Islam viz Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) arrived in Madinah, he found its inhabitants celebrating two occasions. Upon asking them, they said, “We used to celebrate these occasions during the Ignorance Era (Jahiliyya). He then informed them that The Loving Allah has substituted those two occasions with two better ones viz Eid Al-Fitr (festival of breaking the fast) and Eid Al-Adha (festival of sacrifice). (This Hadith was classified as authentic by Imam Ibn Hajar.)

Muslims officially celebrate these two occasions, which occur after Ramadan and after the pilgrimage, or hajj. Once during Eid Al-Adha, the festival of sacrifice, Abu Baker (first caliph in Islam) visited Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and found two maidens singing and playing tambourines. He reprimanded them saying, “Do you play Satan’s equipment in the house of the Messenger of Allah?” Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) woke up to Abu Baker’s voice and said, “Leave them alone Abu Baker! Indeed every people have their own festival and this is our festival.” (Reported by Imam Muslim)

Major celebrations in Islam: The religious festival of breaking the fast (Eid Al-Fitr) is one of the two major holidays celebrated by Muslims around the world. This Eid (festival) commemorates the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. It is an occasion for special prayers, family visits, gift-giving and charity. It takes place over one to three days, beginning on the first day of Shawwal, the 10th month in the Islamic lunar calendar. It is highly recommended and meritorious that Muslims give Zakat Al-Fitr (compulsory charity for ending the worship of obligatory fast) to the poor and the needy so that they too enjoy themselves on Eid. Therefore, its purpose is to purify those who fast from any indecent act or speech, and to help the poor and the needy enjoy the Eid without fear and worry. Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) prescribed the Zakat Al-Fitr as a means of purifying the fasting person from shortcomings in his fast, and as a means of providing food for the poor and the needy.

Continued on Page 6

## Iraq again hit by dust storms

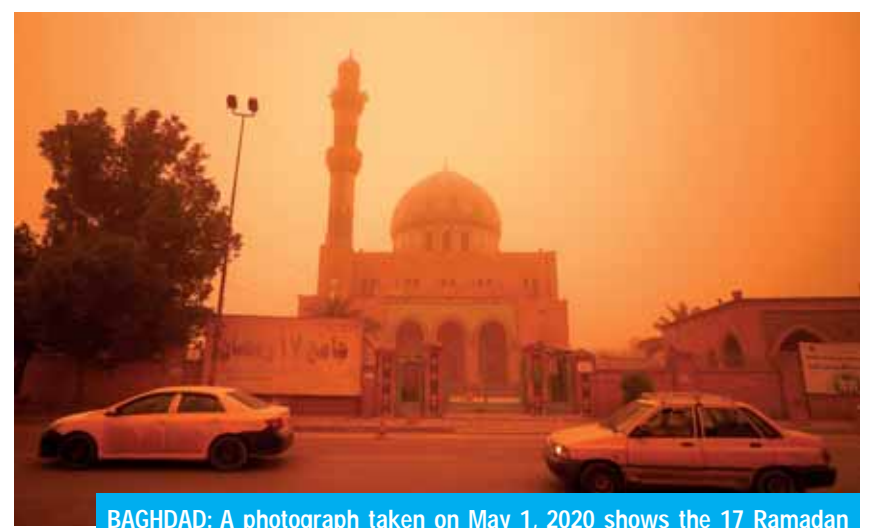
**BAGHDAD:** Iraq on Sunday was yet again covered in a thick sheet of orange as it suffered the latest in a series of dust storms that have become increasingly common. Flights were grounded due to poor visibility at airports serving the capital Baghdad and the Shiite holy city of Najaf, with the phenomenon expected to continue into Monday, according to the weather service.

“Flights have been interrupted at the airports of Baghdad and Najaf due to the dust storm,” the spokesman for the civil aviation authority, Jihad

Al-Diwan, told AFP.

Visibility was cited at less than 500 meters (550 yards), with flights expected to resume once weather improves. Iraq was hammered by a series of such storms in April, grounding flights and leaving dozens hospitalized with respiratory problems. Amer Al-Jabri, of Iraq’s meteorological office, previously told AFP that the weather phenomenon is expected to become increasingly common “due to drought, desertification and declining rainfall”.

Iraq is particularly vulnerable to climate change, having already witnessed record low rainfall and high temperatures in recent years. Experts have said these factors threaten to bring social and economic disaster in the war-scarred country. — AFP



BAGHDAD: A photograph taken on May 1, 2020 shows the 17 Ramadan mosque in the Iraqi capital Baghdad during a severe sand storm. —AFP

## Lebanese students in limbo after fleeing Ukraine

**BEIRUT:** Lebanese university students who fled Ukraine are now struggling to complete their education back home, facing a precarious future as an unprecedented economic crisis crushes their country and their career prospects. “Even war is better than being here,” said 25-year-old Yasser Harb, who left Kyiv just two days before Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24.

The final-year medical student is

now back in a country where electricity is scarce, public services are dysfunctional at best, the local currency has collapsed and living costs have skyrocketed.

He and fellow students are now battling to continue their studies remotely while others face interruptions amid obstacles to transferring their enrolment. Beirut said in late March that around 1,000 students

Continued on Page 6



BEIRUT: Lebanese university students who fled Ukraine are now struggling to complete their education back home.—AFP

## Turkey detains dozens after May Day clashes

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish police on Sunday detained more than 160 protesters who were trying to hold a May Day rally in defiance of a ban imposed by the governor’s office. AFP images showed riot police clashing with protesters near Istanbul’s Taksim Square, pinning some of them forcefully to the ground before rounding them up in a police car.

The Istanbul governor’s office said 164 people were held after staging “an unauthorised rally” and refusing to disperse despite police warnings. An AFP photographer saw around 20

protesters detained near Taksim Square. “Long live May Day,” some of them shouted. “Labour and freedom! Long live May Day.” There are often detentions during the annual May 1 workers’ holiday.

Taksim has been a flashpoint on May Day with frequent clashes since 34 people were killed there on May 1, 1977. A small group led by the Confederation of Turkish Revolutionary Trade Unions attended an officially approved event at Taksim Square.

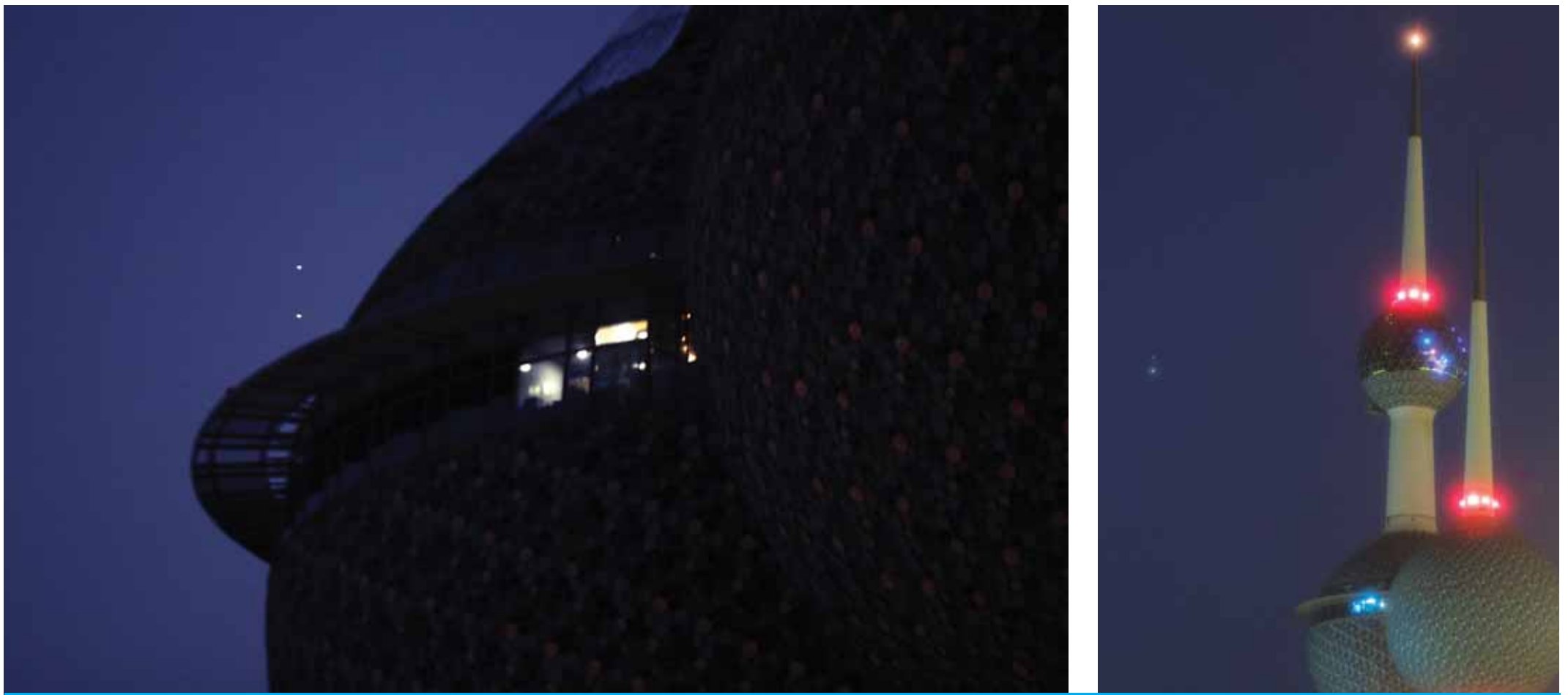
Continued on Page 6



ISTANBUL, Turkey: Turkish riot police officers arrest a protester during the annual May Day (Labor Day) demonstration marking the international day of the workers near Taksim square in Istanbul, on May 1, 2022. —AFP



## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Picture taken on May 1, 2022, in Kuwait City, show the conjunction of Jupiter (top) and Venus near Kuwait Towers. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Mohammad Al-Obaidi

# Eidiya brings special joy to children on Eid

## Eid traditions, eidiya amount evolved with time

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Money gifted to children during Eid is a tradition that kids eagerly await. The eidiya is either placed in an envelope or given directly by parents and relatives. Seif Maraqa, 59, a father of two, said he usually starts his morning by giving his 10-year-old child KD 5 and his 16-year-old son KD 15. "Eidiya nowadays is different from back then. We used to line up and wait our turn to get eidiya. After Eid prayers, my father used to call us. We kissed his hand and head to get his blessings, and then we got the eidiya," he told Kuwait Times.

"Our dreams were small - a quarter dinar was a big amount that bought us snacks and a ball to play with our neighbors' children all day long. If the eidiya was big, my mother would take the money and tells us she will save it for later. But we never received it later," he laughed.

Eidiya is not exclusive to children - brothers also feel obligated to give eidiya to their younger sisters. Mohammad Raziuddin, 28, a brother to two sisters, told Kuwait Times he spends between KD 200 to 300 on eidiya for his sisters and younger cousins. "In my culture, the elders give the young ones. That is why I give eidiya to my two sisters who are 22 and 23 years old. Money aside, eidiya can also be in the form of chocolates, toys, clothes and food," he explained. Raziuddin revealed that as long as his sisters are not working, he will keep giving them eidiya. "I give more money to my sisters because they are at an age where they require more in order to spend on their needs."

Nada Adel, 41, a mother of twin girls and a son, said: "Raising three children is financially exhaust-

ing. Buying clothes and giving eidiya is not only for your own children, but also the children of brothers and sisters, who outnumber mine. My husband spends a total of KD 450 on eidiya." Adel said back in the day, people were not spending that much money, noting that the value of money was better than today, especially as children's minds are more open to reality now. "They want more and more; KD 5 and 10 aren't big amounts of money for them," she said.

Redha Al-Shammeri, 69, a grandfather, said that he loves to spoil his grandchildren with money and



### Eidiya expected for sisters and wives too

chocolates on Eid. "I still give my sons along with my grandchildren eidiya. They are never old to me. I give my children between KD 300 to KD 500, and my grandchildren KD 50 to 150," he told Kuwait Times. Redha said when he was a child, he used to go with his father for Eid prayers and distribute eidiya to the children in the neighborhood.

"My family used to go to the nearest mosque for prayers. After we finished, he used to fill his pocket with chocolates, candies and a small amount of



money to give to children praying at the mosque. After that, we went home and dressed in our finest clothes, usually newly-bought or tailor-made especially for Eid, to get our eidiya of 100 fils," Shammeri recalled. "Usually the whole family meets at the grandfather's house for Eid breakfast. I remember that my brothers and I were shy, always running away when my uncles gave us eidiya. Other than that, eidiya is to be divided equitably among the sons, and each of them is given according to his age," he said.

Eidiya is not only for children anymore - Um Asad told Kuwait Times that husbands are also obliged to give eidiya to their wives. "I expect a golden necklace from my husband as eidiya. I think I deserve it after my huge efforts during the holy month of Ramadan," she said. Um Asad said giving wives eidiya was not a thing in the past, but believes the burden on women is more at the present time "Women are not just raising children - they work and contribute to household responsibilities while teaching children. Men should appreciate that."

## Green Island ready to welcome visitors on Eid

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Green Island is welcoming visitors after Ramadan during its regular working hours - from 9:00 am to 10:30 pm. During Eid Al-Fitr, special activities will take place at Green Island. A company has rented the place for the six days of Eid and entry will be free of charge during this period. After the holiday, the regular entrance fee will be charged.

The Eid event will include an outdoor cinema and many different competitions and prizes for adults and children. Also, during these six days, one day will be for the disabled and one day for children. New facilities were added to Green Island, which will be available during and after the event. Brand-new bicycles of different sizes have been added to those available at the island for rent. Also, there is a train available for the visitors free of charge.

Furthermore, visitors can enjoy playing at the Cable Park, which is suitable for those 14 years and older. This is an exciting adventure game for which special equipment can be rented. Those who play it frequently have their own equipment. The price differs whether the visitor has their own equipment. Those who have bookings don't have to pay the entrance fee.

Children can enjoy various activities, like the new skating rink. There are slides, swings and other games for kids too. Grilling and shisha are not allowed on the island. Visitors can get tables and chairs free of charge.



## Consumers urged to report commodity weight differences

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The consumer protection department of the commerce ministry called on consumers to report any difference between the weight printed on the package and the actual weight of any commodity. Consumers should report the difference in weight to consumer protection offices present in all governorates. They can also send a video of the products being weighed to the emergency number of the consumer protection department - 55135135.

"In case we find a difference in weight, the company will be penalized. They will be fined and may be sent to the prosecution. According to the law, the seller should respect what's printed on the packing or the invoice. All our centers and inspectors are working during the Eid holiday as part of the emergency team," Mishal Al-Manea, President of the Kuwait Association for Consumer Protection, told Kuwait Times. He also noted a video that went viral on social media recently about the difference in the weights of bags of rice of various brands was shot in Saudi Arabia and not Kuwait.



Mishal Al-Manea



Local

# Kuwait's Amir receives Eid Al-Fitr greetings letter from Crown Prince

## Amir shares Eid Al-Fitr greetings with Arab, Muslim leaders

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter of congratulations on Eid Al-Fitr from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday. His Highness Sheikh Mishal wished His Highness the Amir a long healthy life and more development for Kuwait under his wise leadership. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf, in reply, sent a congratulatory letter to His Highness the Crown Prince for Eid Al-Fitr, thanking him for his kind feelings and wishing His Highness a long healthy life.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received congratulatory letters from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Head of National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

They congratulated the Amir on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr, asking God Almighty to bestow peace and prosperity on Kuwait and wishing His Highness the Amir good health. His Highness the Amir sent letters of appreciation in response to their kind sentiments.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah exchanged cables of congratulations and greetings with the kings and presidents of Arab and Muslim countries on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr. In the cables, His Highness the Amir wished happy returns of the occasion for both Arab and Muslim worlds, praying that they would enjoy perpetual security and stability.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday received a phone call from Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani who expressed congratulations on Eid Al-Fitr. The Qatari Amir hoped that the happy occasion would recur with all goodness and blessing for the two countries, Arab and Muslim nation. His Highness the Amir Sheikh



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Nawaf thanked his Qatari counterpart for the gracious gesture that depicted depth of the Kuwaiti-Qatari relations and reciprocated by expressing felicitations to the Qatari Amir on the Eid occasion.

He also expressed good wishes to the Qatari Amir and his country. His Highness the Crown

Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also exchanged Eid Al-Fitr greetings by phone Saturday with Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim. Appreciating the call, Sheikh Tamim wished Kuwait progress and prosperity under His Highness the Amir's wise leadership. — KUNA



### Amir receives greetings from top officials

## Saudi King receives Kuwait's parliament speaker in Makkah

**JEDDAH:** Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz received Saturday Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Safa Palace in the holy city of Makkah. The King also welcomed advisor at the royal court and Imam of Masjid Al-Haram (Grand Mosque of Makkah) Dr Saleh Bin Humaid, and president of Masjid Al-Haram and Al-Masjid an Nabawi (the Prophetic Mosque) affairs Dr Abdurrahman As Sudais, as well as a host of imams and scholars, Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. The King shared Iftar meal with all, it pointed out. —KUNA



JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz meets Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Safa Palace in Makkah. — Saudi Press Agency photos



Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz welcomes Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

## Vatican embassy sends greetings on Eid Al-Fitr

**KUWAIT:** The Embassy of the Vatican in Kuwait released the following statement on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr:

"As all of us know, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has taken away the lives of millions of persons around the world, including members of our families. Others fell sick and were healed, yet they experienced much long-lasting pain and suffering from the consequences of the virus. As you celebrate the month of Ramadan that concludes with Eid Al-Fitr, our thoughts turn in gratitude to Almighty God who has protected all of us in His Providence. We also pray for the dead and the sick with sorrow and hope. The pandemic and its tragic effects on every aspect of our way of life have drawn attention anew to one of those important elements: sharing. For this reason we thought it opportune to address this issue in the Message we are pleased to send to each and all of you.

"We all share God's gifts: air, water, life, food, shelter, the fruits of medical and pharmaceutical advances, the results of the progress of science and technology in diverse fields and their application, the ongoing discovery of the universe's mysteries... The awareness of God's bounty and generosity fills our hearts with gratitude towards Him and, at the same time, encourages us to share His gifts with our brothers and sisters who are in any kind of need. The poverty and precarious situations in which many people find themselves because of the loss of employment and the economic and social problems related to the pandemic make our duty of sharing ever more urgent.

"Sharing finds its most profound motivation in the awareness that all we are and all we have are gifts from God and that, in consequence, we have to put our talents at the service of all our brothers and sisters, sharing what we have with them. The best form of sharing springs from genuine

empathy and effective compassion towards others. In this regard, we find a meaningful challenge in the New Testament: "If anyone is well-off in worldly possessions and sees his brother in need but closes his heart to him, how can the love of God abide in him? Children, our love must be not just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine" (1 John 3, 17-18).

"However, sharing is not limited to material goods. Above all, it involves sharing one another's joys and sorrows, which are part of every human life. Saint Paul invited the Christians of Rome to "rejoice with others when they rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow" (Romans 12, 15). Pope Francis, for his part, affirmed that a shared pain is halved and a shared joy is doubled (cf. Meeting with the pupils of Scholas Occurrentes, 11 May 2018). From empathy comes the sharing of attitudes and sentiments on the occasion of important events, both joyful and sad, in the lives of our relatives, friends and neighbors, including those from other religions: their joys become ours, their sorrows become ours as well.

"Among shared joys are the birth of a child, healing from a sickness, success in studies, at work or in business, safe return from a journey, and certainly other occasions. There is also a particular joy for believers: the celebration of major religious feasts. When we visit or congratulate our friends and neighbors of other religions for those occasions, we share their joy for the celebration of their feast without having to adopt the religious dimension of the celebrated occasion as our own.

"Among shared sorrows are, first of all, the death of a person close to us, the sickness of a member of the family, the loss of a job, the failure of a project or of a business, a crisis in the family that sometimes results in its division. It is obvious that we need the proximity and solidarity of our friends more in times of crisis and sorrow than in times of joy and peace. Our hope, dear Muslim brothers and sisters, is that we continue sharing the joys and sorrows of all our neighbors and friends, because God's love embraces every person and the entire universe. As a sign of our shared humanity and the fraternity that flows from it, we wish you a peaceful and fruitful Ramadan and a joyful celebration of Eid Al-Fitr."

## US Embassy sends Eid Al-Fitr greetings

**KUWAIT:** US Embassy in Kuwait Charge d'Affaires James Holtsnider released the following statement on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr: "On behalf of the US Embassy, I extend our best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti people, and Muslims in Kuwait and around the world on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr. This holiday marks the end of Ramadan and is a time for

celebration across Muslim communities worldwide. After two years of social distancing, isolating, and limited family gatherings due to the global pandemic, this Eid Al-Fitr becomes an even more momentous occasion. I am a firm believer that the best way to learn about a country is through its people, and Kuwaitis have been extremely gracious and welcoming since I arrived with my family last July. I'm especially grateful for the country's unique diwaniya culture, itself rooted in a longstanding tradition of Kuwaiti hospitality. The blessings of this joyous time highlight so many of the wonderful characteristics and values that define the Kuwaiti people. From my family to yours, Eid Mubarak!"

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## News in brief

## Interior Ministry says mosque fundraiser was 'uncooperative'

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry commented on the incident involving an imam who was allegedly assaulted by a police officer inside a mosque in Kuwait. The ministry commented that a person involved in collecting donations was uncooperative with officers tasked with overseeing the process of collecting donations and making sure that fundraisers are licensed. The person in question was taken to the relevant authorities for further legal action, the ministry explained, saying that its doors are open for anyone who feels they were subjected to injustice.

## Offices warned of overcharging, declining service

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry warned domestic help recruitment and car rental offices of overcharging clients, declining service or refusing to practice their activity, saying that violation of any of those conditions is punishable by closure of the business.

## Kuwait seeks to invest \$750 million in Pakistan projects

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait-backed units are planning several projects in Pakistan valued at \$750 million, marking one of the largest proposed investments in the South Asian country in recent years. Kuwait Investment Authority's Enertech Holding Company and Pakistan Kuwait Investment Company have applied for a digital bank license and proposed a hydrogen plant and two smart cities, said Mohammad Al Fares, chairman at Pakistan Kuwait Investment Company. The two are already working on a \$200 million water pipeline.

The proposed investments are a boon for Pakistan, which has seen muted foreign investment for more than a decade because of energy outages, terrorism and political instability. Recent turmoil has led to a regime change while the nation's foreign exchange reserves have dropped to less than two months of imports.

Newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is currently visiting Saudi Arabia, which has provided loan support in the past. Pakistan is also negotiating with the International Monetary Fund to release \$3 billion this year. Although loans have been the main stop-gap for financial support, the nation has long sought to increase foreign investment to reduce its reliance on borrowing. Enertech and Pakistan Kuwait Investment Company have formed an alliance to explore opportunities in Pakistan, said Fares. The latter was established in 1979 by the governments of Pakistan and Kuwait and holds multiple investments including a 30 percent stake in Meezan Bank Ltd, Pakistan's fastest growing bank by deposits. - Bloomberg.

## Indian embassy revises timings at outsourcing centers

**KUWAIT:** Indian Embassy, Kuwait has revised the working hours at its BLS International outsourcing centers for passport, visa and consular attestation with effect from Tuesday, May 3, 2022, according to a press release.

1) Third floor on Jawahara Tower, Ali Al-Salem Street, Kuwait City, 2) Mezzanine floor, Olive Supermarket Building Jleeb Al-Shuyouk, 3) Al-Anoud Shopping Complex, mezzanine floor; Mecca Street, Fahaaheel. Timings from Saturday to Thursday — 8 am to 12 noon and 4pm to 8pm.

Documents deposited at the centers for consular attestation from 8 am to 10 am on any given day will be returned to the applicants after attestation on the same day from 6 pm to 8 pm. Documents deposited after 10 am on any given day will be returned to the applicants after attestation on the next working day from 6 pm to 8 pm (requests for same day attestation in such cases will be decided on a case-to-case basis based on the nature of emergency).

The embassy will continue to render other emergency consular services, as required. In case of any further assistance/queries, write to consl.kuwait@mea.gov.in or send a text/voice message to the 24x7 Whatsapp helpline numbers of the embassy, the release added.

## Kuwait Heritage



**KUWAIT:** The American Hospital, one of Kuwait's cultural sites. (Source: Photo album of the KOC in 1970s. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, heritage researcher at the Ministry of Information).

## Local group launches campaign to save 83,000 trees in Kuwait

## Trees to be uprooted to make room for residential area in south Qairawan

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Green Line Environmental Group is organizing a special campaign to save 83,000 trees in the south of Qairawan that are slated to be uprooted by the government to turn it into a residential area. Environmental activist Khaled Al-Hajeri, Chairman of Green Line Environmental Group, affirmed his group warned governmental officials about the danger of removing the 83,000 trees, even though the government has signed many agreements and made many promises in international forums confirming its commitment to protecting the environment and reducing the effects of high temperatures.

Despite the huge efforts and continuous follow-up by Green Line activists to stop the uprooting and parliamentary promises and assurances that the trees will not be harmed, the area's trees are still at risk of removal in spite of their environmental and health importance to the people of Kuwait in light of the spread of air pollution.

According to Green Line, a source at the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources assured them the trees will not be removed. The source stressed PAAAFR is keen on increasing green spaces in the country and protecting green areas, especially as Kuwait has adopted the Saudi Middle East Green Initiative that aims to invest in clean energy projects as part of efforts to reduce regional carbon emissions. Temperatures in Kuwait are projected to rise faster than the global average in the coming decades. Trees help to clean the air, soil and water, making Earth a livable place.

The parliamentary government had allowed the destruction of the woodland containing 83,000 trees in South Qairawan, despite identifying sites suitable as residential areas with the capacity of tens of thousands of residential units. There are



eight areas suitable as residential areas: West Jahra with an area of 5.7 km and capacity for 5,500 housing units, South Sabahiya with an area

Haiman over an area of 5.3 km and capacity for 2,500 housing units, camp land area over 5.2 km that can accommodate 2,000 housing units, Taima over an area of 5.2 km and capacity for 2,000 units, South Doha over an area of 2 km with 1,200 housing units, and Abu Halifa over 1 km with 650 housing units.

Recently, the Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development and Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Urban Development Mubarak Al-Arou announced the PAHW has begun work on planning and designing the South Qairawan project. The project was handed over to PAHW to build housing that accommodates approximately 2,200 housing units for 11,000 citizens. It is worth mentioning that South Qairawan, which has been allocated an area of 3.1 sq km, is a prominent site close to urban areas, located between the Fifth and Sixth Ring Roads.


**Temperatures to rise faster than global average**

of 5.3 km and a capacity for 2,500 units, the radio transmission station area over an area of 25 km and capacity for 15,000 units, South Umm Al-







Sixth survivor pulled from China building collapse, dozens missing

Teenager from war-torn region of Tigray recounts 16-month refugee odyssey

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KRAMATORSK, Ukraine: People wait inside a bulletproof bus to evacuate in Sviatohirsk, eastern Ukraine. — AFP

## 20 civilians evacuated from Mariupol plant

### Hundreds of civilians are still sheltering in brutal conditions

**KYIV, Ukraine:** At least 20 civilians including several children were able to leave a badly battered steel plant in the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol in what could be the start of a long-awaited, larger evacuation of the last holdout in the Russian-held city.

Earlier efforts at evacuations from the Azovstal steel plant—where local fighters say they and hundreds of civilians are still sheltering in brutal conditions—had been futile. Ukrainian fighters of the Azov regiment, which has been defending the site, said 20 civilians had left, possibly for the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, about 225 kilometres (140 miles) to the northwest.

Russia's Tass news agency carried a similar report, though putting the number of evacuees at 25. A United Nations-planned evacuation had been planned, though it was unclear whether Saturday's evacuation was UN-led and whether further evacuations were imminent. There were no immediate details on the condition of the evacuees.

Ukraine's President Zelensky said in a video Saturday evening said Kyiv was "doing everything to ensure that the evacuation mission from Mariupol is carried out". Fresh satellite imagery by private US firm Maxar taken on Friday showed a devastated Mariupol, with almost all of Azovstal destroyed. The apparent ceasefire in Mariupol took place as Russian attacks continued unabated across Ukraine, most heavily in the fiercely disputed eastern regions, but with attacks as far west as Odessa, on the Black Sea coast.

Odessa's regional governor Maxim Marchenko said a Russian missile strike had destroyed the airport runway, as Moscow continues targeting infrastructure and supply lines deep in the west of the country. There were no victims from the airport strike near the historic city of one million people.

Near Bucha, the town near Kyiv that has become synonymous with allegations of Russian war crimes, Ukrainian police on Saturday reported finding three bodies shot in the head with their hands tied. The three bodies found in a pit were "brutally killed" by Russian

soldiers—each shot in the head, the police said in a statement. "The victims' hands were tied, cloths were covering their eyes and some were gagged. There are traces of torture on the corpses," it said.

#### Clearing debris

In Mariupol, the Azov regiment said Saturday that it had been clearing the debris of overnight shelling by Russia to rescue trapped civilians. From the city's badly damaged port zone, AFP on Friday heard heavy shelling coming from Azovstal during a media trip organised by the Russian army, with explosions only seconds apart.



#### Three bodies found in a pit

"Twenty civilians, women and children... have been transferred to a suitable place and we hope that they will be evacuated to Zaporizhzhia, on territory controlled by Ukraine," said Sviatoslav Palamar, deputy commander of the Azov regiment.

But Denis Pushilin, leader of the breakaway eastern region of Donetsk, accused Ukrainian forces of "acting like outright terrorists" and holding civilians hostage in the steel plant. On the front line in the east, Russian troops have advanced slowly but steadily in some areas—helped by massive use of artillery—but Ukrainian forces have also recaptured some territory in recent days, particularly around the city of Kharkiv.

One of the areas taken back from Russian control was the village of Ruska Lozova, which evacuees said had been occupied for two months. "It was two months

of terrible fear. Nothing else, a terrible and relentless fear," Natalia, a 28-year-old evacuee from Ruska Lozova, told AFP after reaching Kharkiv. "We were in the basements without food for two months, we were eating what we had," said Svyatoslav, 40, who did not want to give his full name, his eyes red with fatigue.

#### Putin's 'depravity'

Thousands of people have been killed and more than 13 million have been forced to flee their homes since the Russian invasion of its pro-Western neighbour began on February 24, according to the United Nations. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby on Friday briefly choked with emotion as he described the destruction in Ukraine and accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of "depravity".

Ukrainian prosecutors say they have pinpointed more than 8,000 war crimes carried out by Moscow's troops and are investigating 10 Russian soldiers for suspected atrocities in Bucha. Russia has denied any involvement in civilian deaths in Bucha.

Moscow officials confirmed on Friday that their forces carried out an air strike on Kyiv a day earlier during a visit by UN chief Antonio Guterres, the first such attack on the capital city in nearly two weeks. A journalist died in the attack.

#### 'Russia will not go unpunished'

Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk meanwhile reported that 14 Ukrainians including a pregnant soldier had been freed in the latest prisoner exchange with Russian forces. She did not say how many Russians had been returned. Kyiv has admitted that Russian forces have captured a string of villages in the Donbas region.

"Even if there has been some advance by Russian troops on the ground, it is not very fast," Russian military expert Alexander Khranchikhin told AFP. But Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that the "special military operation... is proceeding strictly

according to plan", China's official Xinhua news agency reported. Russia has warned Western countries against sending more military aid. "If the US and NATO are really interested in resolving the Ukraine crisis, then first of all, they should wake up and stop supplying the Kyiv regime with arms and ammunition," Lavrov said.

But more Western armaments are due to arrive in Ukraine, with US President Joe Biden on Thursday seeking billions of dollars from Congress to boost supplies. And a top Ukrainian military official Saturday said he had held talks with chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff Mark Milley on the "difficult situation in the east of our country, particularly in the Izium and Sieverodonetsk areas, where the enemy has concentrated its maximum efforts and the most combat-ready groups." "Despite the complexity of the situation, we provide defense, keep occupied boundaries and positions," general Valery Zaluzhny said on Facebook. French President Emmanuel Macron said on Saturday that his country would also "intensify" military and humanitarian support.

And Ukraine's President Zelensky said he spoke with Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson "on defense support for Ukraine and other efforts necessary to end the war". "I informed Boris about the current situation on the battlefield in the areas of active clashes and in detail about the situation in our east, in Mariupol, in the south of the country," he said.

"All the leaders of the free world know what Russia has done to Mariupol. And Russia will not go unpunished for this," Zelensky was also reported Saturday to have met with a spokesman for Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is trying to pave the way for an Istanbul summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Zelensky.

And with Sweden pondering a bid for NATO membership, defence officials there said Saturday that a Russian reconnaissance plane had briefly violated the northern country's airspace a day earlier. — AFP

## Risking jail and Church ire, Russian priests condemn Ukraine conflict

**NOVO-BELY KAMEN, Russia:** Father Georgy Edelshtein is keen to debate those who disagree with his opposition to Russia's military campaign in Ukraine. "I'd like to see one or two of my opponents sitting right here," the 89-year-old says, pointing to an empty armchair in his living room full of gilded icons.

The white-bearded priest in a black cassock is one of the few Russian Orthodox priests to have spoken out against Moscow's military operation in Ukraine. In a quavering voice, but without hesitation, he explains: "I'm afraid I am a bad priest. I've never been against all wars but I've always been against any land-grabbing, aggressive war."



NOVO-BELY KAMEN, Russia: Father Georgy Edelshtein, the 89-year-old Russian Orthodox priest, speaks during an interview with AFP in his house in the hamlet of Novo-Bely Kamen on the banks of the River Volga in the Kostroma region. — AFP

Ukraine "is an independent state and let them build their state as they see necessary," he tells AFP in his house in the hamlet of Novo-Bely Kamen on the banks of the River Volga in the Kostroma region, a six-hour drive from Moscow. Since Russia launched its military action on February 24, only a handful of priests from the Russian Orthodox Church led by Moscow Patriarch Kirill—which counts some 150 million believers across the world—have spoken out openly against the Kremlin's military campaign.

Kirill has given a series of increasingly bellicose sermons, calling for Russians to "rally around" the

authorities to help conquer "enemies" he accuses of trying to destroy historic unity between Russia and Ukraine. Since he started heading the Church in 2009, Kirill has sought closer ties with President Vladimir Putin's government, backing conservative values over Western liberalism. The Russian Orthodox Church was severely restricted and under KGB control in the USSR. Even after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union it has never encouraged criticism of the authorities, but some priests are nevertheless speaking out.

#### 'Blood on hands'

On February 25, a day after the military operation began, Edelshtein signed a letter written by a priest friend, Father Ioann Burdin, that was posted on the website of Burdin's parish church in the village of Karabanovo in the Kostroma region.

"The blood of Ukrainian residents will remain on the hands not only of the rulers of Russia and soldiers carrying out this order. Their blood is on the hands of each of us who approve this war or simply remain silent," said the post, which was later deleted. Metropolitan Ferapont of Kostroma, a highly placed monk, condemned the letter, saying that only two priests out of 160 in the region opposed the operation. But their protests did not stop there.

On March 6, Burdin preached about the human cost of the ongoing fighting. The very same day he was summoned for questioning by investigators. On March 10, he was ordered to pay a fine of 35,000 rubles (\$489/450 euros) for "discrediting" the armed forces, punishable by up to three years in prison for a repeat offence. Four people testified against him in court. "During the sermon, Father Burdin... told us that he was going to pray for Ukraine," a female parishioner said according to court documents seen by AFP. Burdin, 50, continues to condemn the military action. "For me, the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' is unconditional," he told AFP at his house close to Kostroma. He says few priests oppose the conflict because many are susceptible to "propaganda", combined with the fear of sanctions and prosecution.—AFP



OTTAWA, Canada: Motorcycle riders of the Rolling Thunder Convoy parade through downtown Ottawa on April 30, 2022. Two months after a trucker-led occupation of Canada's capital, police said bikers planning another anti-establishment protest would be blocked from parading their motorcycles near Parliament. — AFP

## Ottawa police out in force amid bikers' 'freedom' protest

**OTTAWA, Canada:** Ottawa police deployed in force Saturday in the Canadian capital's center amid a motorcyclists-led anti-establishment protest, after making multiple arrests when a crowd became "combative" overnight. At least seven participants in the "Rolling Thunder Ottawa" rally, which comes two months after a three-week-long trucker-led occupation of the city, have been arrested, police said on Friday.

Canadian authorities have vowed to prevent the motorcyclists' rally from becoming as disruptive as the truckers' demonstrations, which choked central Ottawa before the government invoked extraordinary powers to dismantle it. Three city blocks around the Parliament have been barricaded since the end of the truckers' demonstration. On Friday night, "Public Order Units were

deployed... to disperse an aggressive and combative crowd," police said, noting that the seven were held on charges including assaulting police. Twenty-four vehicles have also been towed. The bikers have not made their demands explicit, though several said in social media posts that they sought to "defend their freedom," while others bitterly criticized Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his policies. Early Saturday, protesters on foot converged on a war monument in central Ottawa, said an AFP journalist. Among the protesters were military veterans wearing medal-bedecked vests, their participation reminiscent of the truckers' protests, when former police and retired soldiers helped coordinate protest actions.

Many demonstrators carried Canadian flags—branded as a symbol of protest when the truckers, angered over anti-COVID protocols and broader government policies, rallied in Ottawa. On Saturday, drones could be seen flying overhead and the smell of cannabis wafted through the area, as helmeted police maintained a heavy presence. Motorized vehicles are banned on weekends from the central area where the Parliament and the prime minister's residence are located. Police say they are monitoring social media for "threatening or intimidating behaviors."—AFP



## International

# Teenager from war-torn region of Tigray recounts 16-month refugee odyssey

## 6,400 civilians were murdered in a 'systematic way' between 2002 and 2008

**TIGRAY:** The teenage refugee from the war-torn region of Tigray in Ethiopia had just had a narrow escape from drowning in the Mediterranean Sea-like countless others before him. Even so, as he stood on the cramped deck of a rescue boat, 16-year-old Aber Hageria was already thinking of how to help his family once he gets to Europe. For Hageria made the journey alone. "I want to help my family. To work in Europe to send them money," he told AFP on board the Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) ambulance boat, Geo Barents. "I have a double responsibility: to give them back what they gave me, and to get them out of a region where there is still conflict," he added.



**'I have a double responsibility'**

The 17-month war between government forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has created a humanitarian crisis in northern Ethiopia and sparked fears of famine in Tigray, which has been under a de facto blockade for many months, according to the UN.

Hageria was pulled out of an overloaded dinghy with another 101 people off the Libyan coast on April 23.

Struggling to stand amidst the other migrants lying on deck, he watched an improvised hairdressing session with some consternation. "That's not the way to do it. He's not cutting anything here," he pointed out, with the experience of someone who has handled clippers many times on his journey into exile. Hageria is just one of the 748 unaccompanied minors rescued by the MSF boat since its mission began in May 2021.

Children who make the journey alone are among the most vulnerable of the thousands of exiles trying to reach Europe, said Julie Melicher, MSF humanitarian affairs officer on board the Geo Barents. "Lacking the protection of an adult, they must be able to access their rights and the child protection that is part of that... in a safe place in Europe," she said.

All countries are obliged to apply the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, she added. Several of Hageria's seven brothers, are fighting in the TPLF. Tattoos on his skeletal forearms pay tribute to them, to his parents and his sister. "I love," reads one. Hageria said he barely had time to escape when the fighting broke out.

### 'Completely isolated'

"The war came on suddenly. I fled for my life. But once I left, I couldn't come back," he told AFP. "Tigray is completely isolated by the central government. There is no electricity, no water, no access to food."

With two friends and a phone, he crossed the border from Ethiopia into neighbouring Sudan and, after a 16-month odyssey, eventually reached Libya. He did not talk much about his experiences on the road. But when



**AT SEA:** Aber an unaccompanied minor from Ethiopia (C) stands on the deck of the Geo Barents, an ambulance boat deployed by Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) in the Mediterranean Sea. The 16-year-old was rescued on April 23 off the coast of Libya, pulled from a dinghy with 101 people on board. — AFP

the discussion turned to Libya, he gestured to signal bound wrists and beatings. "Libya is a really dangerous country," he said. He paid \$9,000 (8,500 euros) to smugglers to cross the Mediterranean, he said—a sum his relatives collected for him. "I haven't talked to my family in a long time," he said.

The central Mediterranean is the deadliest sea

route in the world. More than 1,553 people disappeared in 2021 en route to Europe, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As the Geo Barents was headed towards the port of Augusta in Sicily, Hageria kept himself busy helping with English translation and applying bandages to injured fellow migrants. — AFP



**HAYS, Yemen:** Yemeni pro-government forces deploy on the road linking the districts of Hays and Al-Jarrah on the front lines, to secure the movement of citizens and goods in Yemen's war-ravaged western province of Hodeida. —AFP

## Yemen truce could help reverse humanitarian crisis

**SANAA, Yemen:** The United Nations has warned of a "worsening" humanitarian situation in Yemen but said a fragile two-month truce since early April could help reverse the situation. "The worsening humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a reality that we need to urgently address," UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly, said in a statement released late Saturday.

"Over 23 million people—or almost three-quarters of Yemen's population—now need assistance... an increase of almost three million people from 2021," he said. Gressly urged donors to take advantage of a UN-brokered truce that has largely held since April 2. "The UN-led truce is a vital opportunity for aid agencies to scale up life-saving assistance and to reach more people in acute need quickly, including in areas where access was limited due to armed conflict and insecurity," he said.

"For aid agencies to immediately step up efforts, we

count on sufficient donor funding. Otherwise, the aid operation will collapse despite the positive momentum we are seeing in Yemen today," Gressly warned.

He said the UN needs around \$4.3 billion for its 2022 humanitarian response plan for Yemen "to reverse a steady deterioration of the humanitarian situation". The plan aims to target 17.3 million people, he said, adding that nearly 13 million people "are already facing acute levels of need". Yemen's conflict pits the Saudi-backed government against Iran-aligned Huthi rebels who seized the capital Sanaa in 2014. Intense fighting that broke out the following year when a Saudi-led military coalition intervened has killed more than 150,000 people, while more than 200,000 others have died indirectly, including through hunger, unsafe water and disease, UN agencies estimate.

Eighty percent of the 30 million population is dependent on aid. The truce, which can be renewed, has provided the impoverished country with a rare respite from violence. It has also seen oil tankers begin arriving at the port of Hodeida, potentially easing fuel shortages in Sanaa and elsewhere. The truce also involved a deal to resume commercial flights out of Sanaa's airport for the first time in six years, though the inaugural flight planned for late April was postponed indefinitely, with each side blaming the other for holding it up. — AFP

## Eid Al-Fitr in...

Continued from Page 1

Whoever pays it before the Eid prayer will have it accepted from him as Zakat (Al-Fitr). And if anyone pays it after the prayer, then it will be regarded as any optional charity." (Al-Albani rated it as Hasan (authentic) in Saheeh Abi Dawud # 1, 609)

Cause for celebration: The main reason for the Muslims to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr is their conviction that Almighty Allah has forgiven their sins. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Whoever fasts in Ramadan out of pure faith and hoping for reward

from Allah, he will be forgiven his previous sins. And whoever stands in Prayer and devotion during the Night of Power, his previous sins will be forgiven." (Al-Bukhari # 1901)

*Courtesy of the TIES Center: As one of the projects funded and managed by Kuwaiti Society for Cultural Dialogue, TIES aims at empowering Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.*

"They will have to pass the entrance examination at the start of the next school year," he said.

Since returning, Harb has been struggling to complete his degree online from his family home in south Lebanon, as power cuts of up to 23 hours a day wreak havoc with his internet connection and his studies. Even electricity from expensive private generators can be unstable and rarely covers the gaps.

"Slow internet makes it hard to understand what our teachers are saying and affects our grades," he told AFP, adding that he was thinking of returning to Ukraine once flights resume.

The capital Kyiv has managed to maintain electricity supply despite the ongoing conflict, and public transport has remained functional, with life steadily resuming a semblance of normalcy.

"In Kyiv, at least I had all the basic services," Harb said. Samer Dakdouk, a fifth-year medical student at university in Kharkiv, is also struggling to adjust to studying from remote in Lebanon.

"Nothing is easy for us here," said the 23-year-old, who occasionally interns at a hospital in Beirut. — AFP

## Lebanese students in limbo after...

Continued from Page 1

had managed to leave Ukraine, long a destination for Lebanese seeking more affordable universities. At least 340 of them have registered with Lebanon's education ministry to continue their studies.

But Education Minister Abbas Halabi said none of those registered had joined a private university in Lebanon, noting that most had arrived mid-semester. He acknowledged that students "whose universities in Ukraine were bombed could not even recover their transcripts" to proceed with re-enrolment back home. Bassam Badran, president of the country's only public university, the Lebanese University, said returning students would have to wait until the next academic year to enrol.

## Leading Algeria opposition figure freed

**ALGIERS, Algeria:** One of Algeria's leading opposition figures, Karim Tabbou, was released Saturday after 24 hours in detention for unknown reasons, his lawyer said. Toufik Belala, writing on Facebook, said Tabbou was summoned to appear again before police on Wednesday.

The lawyer did not elaborate and was unavailable for further comment. Tabbou was one of the most-recognisable faces during unprecedented mass rallies, led by the Hirak pro-democracy movement, that began in February 2019. The protests demanded a sweeping overhaul of the ruling system in place since the North African country's independence from France in 1962. He was detained Friday evening at his home, rights groups said.

His brother Djaffar wrote on Facebook: "He was arrested arbitrarily and in a terrifying way, without being given the right to contact his family or a lawyer." Algeria's Human Rights League (LADDH) said on its Facebook page there was "no news on the reasons for this new arrest". Tabbou, 47, had been detained but then released on other occasions, including just before last June's parliamentary election, which the Hirak movement boycotted. His last public activity was on Thursday when he attended the funeral of Hirak activist Hakim Debbazi. On Tuesday, Tabbou published on his Facebook page a "homage" to Debbazi, who died after two months in custody. "Physically dead, the martyrs of the just causes are more than alive," Tabbou wrote.

He blamed authorities for the death of "modest and humble" Debbazi and said the activist had been "committed body and soul to the Hirak". Tabbou called on people to honour Debbazi's "sacrifice" and "continue our fight for the advent of a state of law". Tabbou leads a small, unregistered opposition party, the Democratic Social Union (UDS). In March 2020, he was sentenced to one-year in jail for "undermining national security". The conviction stemmed from his criticism of the army's involvement in politics.

The Hirak protests forced longtime president Abdelaziz Bouteflika to step down. Demonstrations continued in a push for deep reforms but the movement waned when the coronavirus pandemic struck. — AFP

## Afghan leader makes rare appearance

**KABUL:** Afghanistan's supreme leader appeared publicly for only the second time in six years on Sunday, telling worshippers celebrating Eid al-Fitr the Taliban had achieved freedom and security since seizing power last year. Speaking just two days after a bomb ripped through a mosque in Kabul, an atmosphere of heightened security surrounded the man introduced as Hibatullah Akhundzada, the chief of the Taliban.

"Congratulations on victory, freedom and success," he told thousands of worshippers at the Eidgah mosque in the southern city of Kandahar, the hardline Islamist group's de facto power centre.

"Congratulations on this security and for the Islamic system." While the number of bombings across the country has dropped since Kabul fell to the Taliban

## Turkey detains dozens after May...

Continued from Page 1

A usually bustling square lined with cafes and hotels, Taksim was also the epicentre of 2013 anti-government protests. Protests initially erupted over an attempt to save adjacent Gezi park from demolition at the hands of the government but grew into a broader movement against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was then prime minister.

## Two rockets target coalition troops in Iraq, no casualties

**FALLUJAH, Iraq:** Two rockets targeting a base in western Iraq hosting US-led coalition troops on Saturday crashed near the complex without causing casualties or damage, security sources said.

"Two rockets fell outside the Iraqi base of Ain al-Asad," a security forces statement said, adding there were no "losses". The base, controlled by Iraq, is located in the desert in the western Anbar province and hosts foreign troops from the coalition fighting the Islamic State group.

A coalition official told AFP there was "no impact on the installation reported" and "no coalition personnel injuries reported". A previously unknown group calling itself "International Resistance" claimed the attack on a pro-Iran channel of messaging app Telegram.

Rockets and drones frequently target the Ain al-Asad base. On April 8, the coalition said it shot down an armed drone targeting the facility, reporting no casualties or damage.

Dozens of rocket and armed drone attacks have targeted US troops and interests in Iraq in recent months. Western officials have blamed headline pro-Iran factions for the attacks, most of which go unclaimed.

The coalition ended its combat mission in Iraq in December, four years after the Baghdad government declared victory over the jihadists.

But roughly 2,500 American soldiers and 1,000 coalition soldiers remain deployed in three Iraqi-controlled bases across the country, including Ain al-Asad, to offer training, advice and assistance to national forces. — AFP

last August, attacks soared over the final two weeks of the fasting month of Ramadan, which ended Saturday for Afghans. Dozens of civilians have been killed in the primarily sectarian attacks—some claimed by the Islamic State group—targeting members of the Shiite and Sufi Muslim communities. Friday's bombing in the capital killed at least 10. Akhundzada delivered his brief address from one of the front rows of worshippers in Kandahar without turning to face the crowd, according to social media posts.

Taliban officials did not allow journalists to approach him, an AFP correspondent reported.

"I'm so happy that I can't even describe it," said Kandahar resident Bismillah, who attended the Eid prayers at the Eidgah mosque. "I had a dream to pray alongside my supreme leader, to hear his voice or to see him." Gul Ahmad, another resident of Kandahar who prayed at the mosque, said Afghans would continue to worship despite the recent attacks.

"Our people love their religion... even if blasts happen every day, our people will still visit such places and worship," he said. Two helicopters hovered over the mosque for the whole of the two-hour event. — AFP

Critics accuse Erdogan of amassing great power, trampling on human rights and quashing dissent.

An Istanbul court on Monday condemned leading rights activist Osman Kavala to life prison, a ruling that stunned Turkish civil society and prompted criticism from Ankara's Western allies.

He was convicted of financing the 2013 protests. The court also handed 18-year jail terms to seven other defendants, including architects, urban planners, a film producer and academics.

In the meantime, thousands gathered on Sunday on the Asian side of Istanbul in an authorized rally to celebrate May Day. "Long live our May Day struggle," they chanted. — AFP



## International

# Sixth survivor pulled from China building collapse, dozens missing

## Changsha police detain building's owner and a team of safety inspectors

BEIJING: Rescuers pulled a sixth survivor from a collapsed building in central China Sunday, state media reported, two days into a search-and-rescue operation that has workers looking for dozens feared missing. The building in Changsha city, Hunan province—which housed a hotel, apartments and a cinema—caved in Friday afternoon, leaving a gaping hole in the dense streetscape.

City officials said Saturday five survivors had been pulled out of the structure, leaving 18 still trapped. A further 39 could not be contacted after the incident. After 50 hours of rescue efforts, a woman—the sixth survivor—was pulled out from the rubble Sunday, state broadcaster CCTV reported, showing footage of firefighters loading a person covered in dust onto a gurney.

Changsha police said nine people—including the building's owner and a team of safety inspectors—were detained Sunday in connection to the accident. They alleged that surveyors had falsified a safety audit of the building. No cause for the disaster has yet been given by authorities.

Changsha's mayor earlier vowed to "spare no effort" in their search for the people still trapped.

"We will seize the golden 72 hours for rescue and try our best to search for the trapped people," mayor Zheng Jianxin said in news briefing Saturday.

He added that over 700 first responders had been dispatched to the scene. State media showed firefighters—backed by a digger—cutting through a morass of metal and sheets of concrete, while rescuers shouted into the tower of debris to communicate with any survivors.

A crowd gathered as chains of rescuers removed pieces of brick by hand, allowing experts a deeper look into the wreckage. Some of the injured were rushed away on stretchers, while sniffer dogs combed the area for further signs of life.

President Xi Jinping on Saturday called for a search "at all cost" and

ordered a thorough investigation into the cause of the collapse, state media reported. A top Communist Party official was dispatched to the scene—an indication of the severity of the disaster.

China's minister of emergency management Huang Ming urged officials to "thoroughly eliminate all kinds of hidden safety risks" in a Saturday meeting. Building collapses are not uncommon in

Xinhua Saturday.

"We propose that China becomes one of the guarantors of Ukraine's security, this is a sign of our respect and trust in the People's Republic of China," China in 2013 pledged to provide Ukraine with "security guarantees" if it is ever invaded or threatened with nuclear attack, but appeared evasive on the same issue in the wake of Russia's attack.

In response to a question about the guarantee last month, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman suggested that such "security assurances have clear limitations on the content and are triggered under specific conditions", in reference to a similar United Nations security resolution on non-nuclear states.

Chinese officials have often blamed US-led NATO for provoking Moscow's invasion and accused Western countries of escalating the conflict by sending weapons to Ukraine. Beijing's state media has also repeatedly amplified Russian propaganda surrounding the war and largely avoided attributing Ukrainian civilian deaths to Moscow's military aggression.

Kuleba has only had two calls with his Chinese



CHANGSHA, China: Photo shows rescuers searching for survivors at a collapsed six-storey building in Changsha, central China's Hunan province. Dozens of people were trapped under a building which collapsed in central China, officials said. —AFP

China, due to weak safety and construction standards as well as corruption among officials tasked with enforcement.

In January, an explosion triggered by a suspected gas leak brought down a building in the city of Chongqing, killing at least 16 people. —AFP

### Injured were rushed away on stretchers



## Ukraine FM asks China to be security guarantor

BEIJING: Ukraine's foreign minister has asked China to provide security guarantees for Kyiv, in a lengthy interview containing some of the most direct criticisms of Moscow recently published by Beijing's state media.

Western powers and Ukraine have repeatedly urged China to condemn Russia's invasion as it tries to maintain a supposedly neutral stance, with the United States threatening consequences if Beijing provides military or economic support to Moscow.

"Ukraine is currently studying the possibility of acquiring security guarantees from permanent members of the UN Security Council, including China, and other major powers," Dmytro Kuleba was quoted as saying by official news agency

counterpart Wang Yi since the invasion began on February 24, while Wang met Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in China last month and reiterated that cooperation between the two countries has "no limits".

In the Xinhua interview, Kuleba also accused Russia of having "compromised" Beijing's signature Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, warning that the consequences of the global food security crisis would threaten China's economy.

"We also believe that this war is not in China's interests," he was quoted as saying. His remarks directly referred to Russia's actions as an "invasion"—a term that Chinese officials and state media have sought to avoid. "The situation is not escalating because of Ukraine, we are exercising our right to defend ourselves," he said, in an apparent rebuff of Chinese warnings against other states providing arms to Kyiv.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has not yet spoken publicly with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky. He called Russian President Vladimir Putin the day after the February 24 invasion. —AFP

## Taiwan will not 'cruelly' lock down like China

TAIPEI: Taiwan will not act "as cruelly as China" in imposing lockdowns, its premier said Sunday, despite surging coronavirus infection numbers. The self-governing island recorded more than 10,000 new cases for the first time on Thursday, as the government moves from its zero-COVID strategy and begins living with the virus.

That figure hit 16,936 on Sunday. Taiwan's shift leaves neighbouring China—including its financial hub Hong Kong—as the only major economy still sticking to a zero-tolerance policy even as Omicron breaks through defences and forces painful lockdowns.

"We will not lock down the country and cities as cruelly as China," Premier Su Tseng-chang told reporters before a top government meeting on pandemic prevention. "Countries all over the world have been opening up to live with the virus. Taiwan... will continue to move towards living normal lives and gradually head to a new phase in epidemic prevention," he said at the meeting.

The barbed comment from Su—whose ruling party leans towards Taiwanese independence—comes after years of heightened tension between China and the island, which Beijing views as part of its territory.

Taiwan has largely closed its borders and imple-



TAIPEI, Taiwan: People queue up to receive the Medigen and Moderna vaccines for COVID-19 at Taipei's main train station. —AFP

mented strict quarantine rules throughout the pandemic, keeping infection numbers low. An outbreak last year prompted the temporary reimposition of economically painful social distancing measures until it was brought under control.

Infections are once again rising but the island's leaders have signalled they will follow other former zero-Covid economies such as Singapore, Australia and New Zealand by opening up. Health minister Chen Shih-chung warned last week that Taiwan's daily case count could more than double to 37,000 in a week.

But, according to Taiwan's health ministry, more

than 99.7 percent of 89,990 infections recorded since January 1 this year have been mild or asymptomatic. Around 80 percent of the population are double vaccinated, while nearly 60 percent have taken a third shot.

The government has begun a new plan to shorten home isolation for close contacts of Covid-19 cases to three days, down from 10, if a rapid antigen test proves to be negative at the end of the isolation period. It is also considering relaxing the 10-day quarantine rules for foreign arrivals. Since the pandemic began Taiwan has reported 132,955 cases and 868 related deaths. —AFP

## Guinea junta leader decides on 39-month transition

CONAKRY, Guinea: Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, the head of Guinea's military junta, said Saturday he had opted for a 39-month transitional period before a return to civilian rule. He made the announcement in a speech broadcast on television, saying the National Transition Council (CNT) would put the proposal to parliament.

The announcement came after the creation of what the regime has described as an "inclusive consultation framework" in April. That culminated in a conference boycotted by several prominent political groups.

On Friday, the army-dominated government said that the forum considering the issue had considered a transition period of between 18 and 52 months. Doumbouya, in Saturday's speech, described the period he had opted for as the "median proposal".

Regional bloc ECOWAS had set last Monday as a deadline for putting forward an "acceptable" transition timetable or risk economic and financial sanc-

tions. Guinea's ruling military junta let the deadline pass, however, asking the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for more time for consultations to continue.

ECOWAS has called for an "acceptable" timeline for a return to civilian rule, failing which it has threatened to extend sanctions applied to Guinea following the military coup there.

### Growing discontent

In September 2021, army officers led by Colonel Mamady Doumbouya ousted elected president Alpha Conde in the impoverished former French colony. Conde, 84, had drawn fierce opposition after he pushed through a new constitution in 2020 that allowed him to run for a third presidential term.

Following the coup, ECOWAS called for a return to civilian rule within six months. Although many Guineans initially welcomed the coup, there is growing discontent against the junta in the nation of 13 million people.

Guinea's coup last September came on the heels of a military takeover in Mali. ECOWAS has applied sanctions on members of the Mali junta, shut its borders with the country, frozen its assets at the Central Bank of West African States and imposed a trade embargo.

For Guinea, leading junta members have been



Colonel Mamady Doumbouya

sanctioned and are subject to a travel ban within the bloc. A third ECOWAS member, Burkina Faso, experienced a coup in January. It has so far escaped the sanctions handed out to Guinea and Mali but was also given until last Monday to spell out an "acceptable transition timetable".

The Burkinabe junta has said it stands by a three-year schedule for holding elections, arguing that it first has to deal with a bloody jihadist insurgency. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Boy takes mum's car for spin

THE HAGUE: A four-year-old boy in the Netherlands took his mother's car for a drive before crashing into two parked cars, police said Sunday. Police in the central city of Utrecht were alerted on Saturday when residents spotted a youngster walking in the street dressed only in pyjamas and bare feet. "We immediately responded, as bystanders were worried that the boy was suffering from hypothermia," police wrote on Instagram. As they arrived, officers received a second report of a car accident close-by involving three cars. The driver suspected of causing the accident was missing. That car was registered to the boy's mother, they said. Police phoned the mum "and when she spoke to her son, he made noises resembling a car and used gestures showing turning a steering wheel," police said. —AFP

#### Mexico captures cartel leader

MEXICO CITY, Mexico: Mexican authorities have captured a suspected leader of the powerful Jalisco New Generation Cartel, the navy and the Morelos state prosecutor's office said Saturday. Francisco Javier Rodriguez Hernandez, known as "El Senoron" or "XL", was apprehended on Friday in the tourist city of Mazatlan, in the northwest state of Sinaloa, in an operation carried out by navy agents. Rodriguez Hernandez, who allegedly heads the CJNG in the central state of Morelos, is wanted for aggravated homicide, including the murder of three doctors in April 2020, according to the Morelos Attorney General's Office. "In addition to the above, Francisco Javier Rodriguez Hernandez is wanted for the crime of criminal association, and is one of the main generators of violence in the state of Morelos," it added in a statement, referring to the state neighboring the capital Mexico City. —AFP

#### Swedes accuse Russia of violating airspace

STOCKHOLM, Sweden: A Russian reconnaissance plane briefly violated Sweden's airspace on Friday, Swedish defence officials said on Saturday, as the Scandinavian country ponders a bid for NATO membership after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "A Russian AN-30 propeller plane violated Swedish airspace on Friday evening," the Swedish defence ministry said in a statement, adding that its teams had followed the incident and photographed it. The ministry said the plane was flying east of Bornholm, a Danish island in the Baltic, before it headed towards Swedish territory. "It is totally unacceptable to violate Swedish airspace," public television SVT quoted Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist as saying. —AFP

#### Police clash with protestors

ISTANBUL, Turkey: Turkish police on Sunday detained more than 160 protestors who were trying to hold a May Day rally in defiance of a ban imposed by the governor's office. AFP images showed riot police clashing with protestors near Istanbul's Taksim Square and pinning some of them forcefully to the ground before rounding them up in a police car. The Istanbul governor's office said that 164 people were detained after staging "an unauthorised rally" and refusing to disperse despite police warnings. An AFP photographer saw around 20 protestors detained near Taksim Square. There are often detentions during the annual May 1 workers' holiday. Taksim has been a flashpoint on May Day with frequent clashes since 34 people were killed there on May 1, 1977 during an unstable period in modern Turkey's history. —AFP



# Business

MONDAY, MAY 2, 2022

## Fed gears up to attack inflation as US recession fears grow

### Interest rate hike likely at Tuesday's FOMC meeting

WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve this week is set to redouble its assault against record US inflation while facing an array of shocks both internal and external that analysts fear may one day put the world's largest economy into a recession. The policy setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) will convene its two-day meeting on Tuesday, and top officials have strongly signaled they will hike interest rates by half a percentage point and announce plans to reduce their massive holdings of debt.

Both moves would further tighten lending conditions in the world's largest economy and potentially take the steam out of consumer prices that are rising at rates not seen since the 1980s-driven, in part by the Fed's own policies. The rate hike is expected to be one of several the Fed makes this year, but with the economy also facing shocks from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and COVID lockdowns in China, analysts warn the central bank must strike a delicate balance to stop a downturn.

"They're going to have to be very, very nimble to keep the economy from going into a ditch," Jay Bryson, managing director and chief economist at Wells Fargo's Corporate and Investment Bank, said in an interview.

#### No more easy money

Top Fed officials including Chair Jerome Powell have hinted strongly that a half-percentage point hike will be agreed to at the May 3-4 meeting, twice the amount of the quarter-point hike the FOMC implemented in March. The central bank is also expected to announce plans to begin offloading the trillions of dollars in Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities it bought during the pandemic to support the economy, which would raise borrowing costs.

"They told us everything in advance," said Roberto Perli, head of global policy at Piper Sandler. "I'd be shocked if they do anything different at this point." With consumer prices 8.5 percent higher in March compared to the same month in 2021, raising rates has become an imperative for the Fed, which cut rates to zero as the pandemic began but attracted criticism for keeping them there throughout last year, even as inflation rose.

"Inflation is still very high by all means, so full speed



ROSEMEAD, US: Grocery shopping in Rosemead, California. US inflation reached a four-decade high of 8.5 percent in March and prices are expected to continue to rise for staples like bread, meat, and milk as farmers faces shortages of fuel, fertilizer, and materials as the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues. — AFP

ahead for now with the hawkish rhetoric," Perli said.

#### Beyond their control

The Fed's tools are sharpest at pressuring demand, but the US economy is also being battered by shocks emanating from beyond its borders and the central bank's control, creating fears the Fed will raise rates, inflation will stay high and a downturn will follow. The war in Ukraine has prompted a global spike in prices for oil as well as other commodities, while the pandemic lockdowns in China could worsen global supply snarls that

have bedeviled the US economy in its recovery.

"They're not very well equipped to deal with these shocks," Perli said. A recession is not viewed as imminent, despite last week's release of government data showing GDP shrank in the first quarter of this year, which economists see as a consequence of trade issues that swamped otherwise healthy consumer and business spending. The grim scenario could instead arrive next year, and Bryson said a harbinger would be if prices remain elevated even as the Fed tightens its lending rate.

"The probability of a recession is not insignifi-

cant at this point," he said. "If the inflation numbers continue to come in hot, then I'd say the probability of recession continues to go up." Perli sees signs that Powell himself worries about the Fed's ability to pull off a "soft landing," as the technique of quelling inflation without causing a recession is known.

In March, the Fed chair told a conference, "My colleagues and I will do our very best to succeed in this challenging task"—words Perli said he found troubling. "It's not a way of putting things that denotes a lot of confidence," he said. — AFP

## Experts see harsh realities ahead for Musk at Twitter

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla boss Elon Musk's road to turning Twitter into a money-making platform where anyone can say anything looks to experts like a tough one. Musk's \$44-billion deal to buy the global messaging platform must still get the backing of shareholders and regulators.

And while Musk has not revealed nitty-gritty details of how he would run the business side of Twitter, he has voiced enthusiasm for dialing back content moderation to a legal minimum and making money from subscriptions. "Other than advocating free speech, Musk hasn't articu-

lated a vision of what the platform can be," Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanesi told AFP. "He hasn't said if Twitter has an age issue, a geographic skew, who is the biggest competitor—what else he is thinking." Musk's talk of doing away with Twitter's advertising model for revenue, relying instead on subscriptions, does not appear feasible, Baird Equity Research analyst Colin Sebastian said in a note to investors. "Elon Musk has floated the idea of ditching the ad revenue model," Sebastian said. "We struggle to believe this will happen altogether, unless he plans to fund interest payments on debt out of his own pocket." Analysts doubt that Twitter users would flock to pay for premium content or features such as retweeting posts when social media platforms such as Facebook are free of charge. Musk could try selling posts or asking other websites to pay for anything they use from tweets.

Musk's proclaimed stance as a free speech absolutist also promises to undermine the advertising on which Twitter currently depends for revenue. Brands are averse

to having their ads associated with controversial content, such as misinformation or posts that could cause real-world harm, analysts agreed. Pushing heavily into subscriptions is likely to reduce the audience at Twitter, at the same time that allowing more controversial posts creates a "toxic environment" that puts off advertisers, said Lauren Walden of Tiviti digital marketing specialty firm.

As Twitter struggles with profitability, Musk will be on the hook for hefty interest payments from financing arranged to buy the San Francisco-based company. Meanwhile, US legislators are already threatening to modify a law sparing internet platforms from responsibility for what users post. They could use a Musk-led Twitter as a poster child for the effort.

Musk's talk of getting rid of "bots," software-powered accounts that fire off posts, and verifying user identities runs up against privacy concerns as well as the very free speech right he claims to cherish, academics noted. "Spam is a form of free speech," said Duke University sociology professor Chris Bail. — FP



BOCA CHICA AND MEDFORD COLONIA, US: In this file photo taken on February 10, 2022 Elon Musk gestures as he speaks during a press conference at SpaceX's Starbase facility near Boca Chica Village in South Texas. — AFP

## Suez Canal posts record monthly revenue in April

CAIRO: Egypt's Suez Canal Authority announced Sunday an all-time revenue record for April, earning \$629 million following a series of toll hikes for vessels transiting the vital waterway. Connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, the canal accounts for roughly 10 percent of global maritime trade and is one of Egypt's main sources of foreign currency revenues.

Despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent rise in oil prices, a record number 114.5 million tons of cargo moved through the canal in April, a statement said. This earned state coffers \$629 million in

transit fees, or 13.6 percent more than April 2021 and the highest monthly figure ever recorded, Suez Canal Authority chief Osama Rabie said in a statement.

The SCA has hiked passage tolls for transiting vessels, including fuel tankers, twice this year. The April earnings come as Egypt's economy has been hard hit by the fallout from the war in Ukraine. Foreign reserves fell to \$37 billion in March, from \$40 billion the previous month, according to the central bank. The Egyptian pound lost 18 percent of its value against the dollar in March, while inflation hit 12.1 percent in



March amid soaring food and oil prices due to the Ukraine war.

Under pressure, Egypt is currently in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a

new loan. Since 2016, the IMF has approved three loans totaling \$20 billion for Egypt, where a third of the 103-million population live in poverty. — AFP

## Pakistan, Saudi to discuss extending term of \$3br loan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Sunday said they would discuss extending the term of a \$3 billion loan to help Islamabad's faltering economy. The Gulf nation has long been an intelligence partner of Pakistan as well as a regular source of financial relief for successive governments.

The latest sign of support follows a visit to

Saudi Arabia by new Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, who has inherited a crippling national debt, galloping inflation and a feeble rupee.

A joint statement said the kingdom would continue to support the Pakistani economy and had discussed "augmenting the \$3 billion deposit with the central bank through term extension or otherwise". Saudia Arabia also pledged "to further enhance the financing of petroleum products" at a time when the South Asian country is suffering from frequent power cuts.

The statement comes after recent talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over the release of funds under an existing \$6 billion aid program that had stalled due to concerns about the pace of

reforms. The cash-strapped nation's foreign exchange reserves plunged below \$11 billion last month. "The little financial help we can get from any country would help us given the condition of our economy," Dr Kaiser Bengali, a veteran economist, told AFP.

"But for how long will we run our economy on loans? This policy is not going to work even for the next five years." In recent years, Saudia Arabia has provided Pakistan with \$4.2 billion of support in the form of the \$3 billion loan deposited with the central bank as well as \$1.2 billion in deferred oil payments.

As Sharif concluded his visit, Pakistani Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said he would stay in Riyadh to hold "technical-level talks". — AFP

## Kenya boosts minimum wage as inflation bites

NAIROBI: Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta announced Sunday a 12-percent hike in the minimum wage as the country confronts a surge in the cost of living. Inflation in the East African economic powerhouse jumped to a seven-month high in April, mainly as a result of skyrocketing fuel and food prices, according to official figures.

"As a caring government, we find there is a compelling case to review the minimum wages so as to cushion our workers against further erosions," Kenyatta said at a Labour Day rally. He said the 12 percent increase would come into effect from May 1. It takes the minimum monthly wage from 13,500 Kenyan shillings (about \$116.5, 110.5 euros) to 15,120 shillings (\$130.5, 124 euros).

However the hike falls far short of the 24 percent that had been sought by the Central Organization of Trade Unions-Kenya (COTU). Kenyatta said the high cost of living was due to factors "beyond my control like the coronavirus pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict".

He castigated rival political leaders—including Deputy President William Ruto—for seeking to blame the government for the economic woes, as the country prepares for crucial elections in August. Kenyatta cannot run again after serving two terms but has endorsed his former arch-rival Raila Odinga for the top job.

The August 9 presidential election is expected to be a two-horse race between Odinga and Ruto, who was initially anointed by Kenyatta as his successor, but found himself frozen out after a shock 2018 pact between Kenyatta and Odinga. Kenya's finance minister last month unveiled a \$28 billion budget aimed at helping the economy recover after the COVID-19 pandemic threw hundreds of thousands of people out of work. — AFP



## Business

# Warren Buffett details spending spree, takes jabs at Wall Street

## Berkshire quarterly earnings slump as shareholders gather

OMAHA: The billionaire finance guru Warren Buffett, who complained recently that he did not know where to put his money, said Saturday he has invested billions of dollars so far this year, even as he took jabs at Wall Street. Buffett, 91, took questions for five hours at the much-anticipated annual shareholder meeting of his holding company Berkshire Hathaway in Omaha, Nebraska, its first in-person gathering since before the COVID-19 pandemic. He did so along with his right-hand man Charlie Munger, who is 98.

The event, dubbed a "Woodstock for Capitalists," draws thousands of shareholders from around the world to hear the investment wisdom of Buffett, revered among investors as the "Oracle of Omaha."

As markets vacillated since the start of the year, Berkshire Hathaway spotted bargains and bought shares worth more than \$51 billion from January through March. For example, it raised its investment in oil company Chevron from \$4.5 billion in late 2021 to \$26 billion in late March. Chevron is now among the top four of the holding's investments, along with American Express, Apple and Bank of America. Berkshire Hathaway also acquired a 14 percent stake in Occidental Petroleum.

It bought an 11 percent stake in computer maker HP, as well, and increased its share of video game maker Activision—which is being acquired by Microsoft—to 9.5 percent. Berkshire sold shares worth \$10 billion over the same January to March period. Bottom line, Berkshire's war chest of cash on hand dropped from \$147 billion to \$106 billion. But Buffett said investors need not worry because Berkshire "will always have a lot of cash" to weather hard times. Joining him and Munger on the podium were vice president Greg Abel-at 59, he is Buffett's designated successor-and company executive Ajit Jain.

### Profits down

Buffett took some pot shots at Wall Street, saying, "They make a lot more money when people are gambling than when they are investing." He said the fact

that his company acquired 14 percent of Occidental Petroleum in just two weeks shows that "overwhelmingly large companies in America, they became poker chips." Of cryptocurrencies, he said: "Whether it goes up or down in the next year or five or 10 years, I don't know. But the one thing I'm pretty sure of is it doesn't produce anything." The question of succession at Berkshire Hathaway is a big one because of the age of Buffett and Munger, but neither said anything about retiring. Before the meeting, Berkshire said its net profit plunged by 53 percent in the first quarter due to a drop in the paper value of its investments. Berkshire listed net profits of \$5.5 billion, down sharply from the \$11.7 billion of the year-earlier period.

Operating profits of companies owned by the conglomerate—ranging from insurance companies to energy providers and even frozen desserts—remained essentially unchanged, at \$7.04 billion. A drop in profits from insurance companies was compensated by profits from rail lines, energy firms, manufacturing, services and retail sales, said a statement from Berkshire Hathaway. But the value of its investments, which can be volatile from one quarter to the next, plunged amid the year's market weakness, leading to a paper loss of \$1.58 billion. Buffett regularly advises his shareholders to ignore quarterly fluctuations, whether positive or negative. The value of Berkshire shares themselves has held up well—rising seven percent since the beginning of the year, while the S&P 500 index, representing the 500 biggest Wall Street-traded firms, lost more than 13 percent.

### Earnings slump

Berkshire Hathaway, the holding company of billionaire businessman Warren Buffett, saw its net profit plunge by 53 percent in the first quarter due to a drop in the paper value of its investments, it said.

The announcement came as the corporation prepared for a much-anticipated annual shareholder meeting Saturday in Omaha, Nebraska, its first in person since before the COVID-19 pandemic. The event, dubbed a "Woodstock for Capitalists," draws thousands



OMAHA: A woman looks at the screen with a live view of Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett (left) and Vice Chairman Charlie Munger at the Berkshire Hathaway Shareholders Meeting at CHI Health Center in Omaha, Nebraska on April 30, 2022. — AFP

of shareholders from around the world to hear the investment wisdom of the 91-year-old Buffett, revered among investors as the "Oracle of Omaha." Berkshire listed net profits of \$5.5 billion, down sharply from the \$11.7 billion of the year-earlier period.

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Among Berkshire's most important holdings are shares in American Express, Apple, Bank of America and Chevron. The value of Berkshire shares themselves has held up well—rising seven percent since the beginning of the year, while the S&P 500 index, representing the 500 biggest Wall Street-traded firms, lost more than 13 percent. Berkshire appears, moreover, to have taken advantage of falling share prices to scoop up some bargains, spending more than \$51 billion to expand its portfolio. It sold shares worth \$10 billion over the same period. During the meeting Saturday, shareholders will have a chance to put their questions to Buffett, the company's CEO, as well as his even older right-hand man, 98-year-old Charlie Munger. Joining them will be vice president Greg Abel-at 59, he is Buffett's designated successor-and company executive Ajit Jain. — AFP



NEW YORK: In this file photo taken on April 01, 2022, Union organizer Christian Smalls speaks following vote for the unionization of the Amazon Staten Island warehouse in New York. — AFP

## Christian Smalls, the unlikely union leader who took on Amazon

NEW YORK: In his colorful jacket emblazoned with the slogan "Eat the rich," Christian Smalls is accosted from all sides as he walks by the bus stop where he spent countless hours trying to convince Amazon employees to form a union. The president of the Amazon Labor Union (ALU), which caused a stir in early April by becoming the e-commerce giant's first union in the United States, walks the sidewalk he knows so well in a New York industrial area. He will soon learn if, after the win at the JFK8 warehouse, he has convinced employees of the sorting center located across the street, I.DJ5, to unionize. The vote took place from April 25 to 29, and the counting will begin on Monday. "There are good vibes," he says.

A week before the result, seasoned trade unionists want to take their picture with him, journalists assail him with questions, and members of his team ask him about the organization. He has just shared the podium with two stars of the American left, Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and is preparing to lead a new rally. Smalls, 33, unemployed, worked in the JFK8 warehouse until March 2020. With the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, and faced with a still little-understood and devastating virus, he protested against the lack of protection and called for a walkout. The protest did not draw crowds but it did gain attention, at least at Amazon. Smalls was fired two days later, officially for quarantine violations.

### Meals, cannabis and bonfires

According to an internal memo that leaked to the press shortly afterwards, a senior Amazon official said that Smalls was "not smart, or articulate," and that he should be made "the face of the entire union/organizing movement" "I demonstrated that," Smalls told AFP two years later. In the meantime, he protested outside several residences of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos to defend the rights of essential workers during the pandemic.

He also went in the spring of 2021 to support activists trying to form a union at an Amazon warehouse in Alabama. It was after that trip that he and his small team decided to try their luck in New York, on their own terms and without support from a traditional labor organization. Smalls became a mainstay at the bus stop, where he waited for shifts to change so he could chat with employees. Others—his friend Derrick Palmer and a few employees persuaded of the need to fight, as well as a handful of activists who deliberately got hired at Amazon to join the struggle—worked the break rooms. They listened, tirelessly explaining what a union is, bringing in food, distributing a little cannabis. To reach the night shifts, they sometimes lit bonfires. — AFP

## As tobacco burns out, Malawi looks to cannabis

NAMBUMA, Malawi: Under a scorching sun at a trading post in Malawi, Chikumbuto Chekeni and his wife head to their tobacco sheds to dry their newly harvested leaf. Nambuma, 35 kilometers (20 miles) northwest of the capital Lilongwe, used to be a thriving farming town, buoyed by vast tobacco farming businesses. Today, even during harvest season the town is sleepy, leading some farmers to think about switching from tobacco to the newly legalized marijuana. Malawi is one of the world's poorest countries but a major tobacco producer, ranking first in the world for burley and seventh for overall production.

No other economy is more dependent on the leaf. Government statistics say over 70 percent of the nation's export income comes from tobacco. "The main challenge we face as farmers is the issue of low pricing, which is really killing us," said Chekeni, who has been farming tobacco for 22 years. Returns from tobacco, dubbed the 'Malawi's Green Gold', have dwindled over the past decade due to declining global demands driven by anti-smoking campaigns. Despite the low prices, he sees no other option but to continue farming. This is the only business he knows.

This year has particularly been bad. Low volumes and low prices at the auction floors in Lilongwe forced the Tobacco Commission to cut trade to three days a week. Even on those three days, sales last only an hour. "The future of tobacco farming is bleak," said grower Yona Mkandawire. "By now we should have a lot of tobacco in the warehouses and more trucks at the receiving bay, but there is a lot of empty space here." Despite a sharp decline of tobacco earnings over the years, Malawi's government still calls it a "strategic crop" and defends the country's continuing investment in its production. Last year tobacco earned Malawi \$173.5 million, down 27 percent from the year before, the Tobacco Commission said.

### 'Malawi Gold'

Tobacco Commission chief executive officer Joseph Chidanti Malunga told AFP that this year's harvest will be 50 million kilograms short of what the buyers are looking for. But he insisted Malawi needs tobacco because it's the only crop earning foreign currency. "We cannot abandon this no matter how," he said. "All we do now is to make sure that we produce tobacco that is compliant with what the customers want."

During the first week of sales, prices were down more than 20 percent from last year, according to local media. The price drop has seen some farmers try out new crops, including the recently legalized cannabis.

Malawi legalized cannabis farming for medicinal and industrial use in February 2020. Falice Nkhoma, who is part of the Tilitonse Cooperative for Cannabis Growers, has dumped tobacco because of falling prices. "I have been growing burley tobacco from 2014... but with very little benefit because the prices were always low," said Nkhoma. She has little to show for producing the so-called green gold. "So this year, when I heard that some people would be growing cannabis, I was really excited. I have bought the seeds, and hopefully cannabis farming will bring me good returns," she said.

It's about time Malawi diversified its economy, said Betchani Tchereni, economics professor at the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences.

"We just have to restart the economy. If it's soya, then let's do soya. If it's cannabis, then let's concentrate on cannabis," he said. But cultivation licenses could be prohibitive for some aspiring farmers. Growers, who operate in groups of around 30, have on average to cough out \$10,000 per collective in farming license fees alone. Easing the process of obtaining cannabis licences would give farmers an immediate boost.

"It takes just about three months to mature, and then boom, we have the forex," said Tchereni.

"Licenses can't be this expensive." Cannabis growing is not new in Malawi, but has yet to develop to industrial scale. According to a 2011 World Bank report, Malawi's hemp, known locally as 'chamba' or 'Malawi Gold' is among "the best and finest" sativas in the world. — AFP

## Russia says could seize assets of 'hostile' countries

MOSCOW: Russia suggested Sunday that it could seize the Russian-based assets of countries it deems hostile in retaliation for a US proposal to sell off Russian oligarchs' assets and pay the proceeds to Ukraine. "As far as companies based in Russian territory are concerned whose owners are citizens of hostile countries and where the decision has been taken" to seize Russian assets, "it is fair to take reciprocal measures and confiscate assets," said the speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, Vyacheslav Volodin. "And the proceeds from the sale of these assets will be used for our country's development," he said on his Telegram channel. Volodin accused "a certain number of hostile countries—Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and even the United States"—of flouting international law and "resorting to pure theft."

Volodin said that "today, Russian businessmen are buying foreign companies operating in Russia, and purchasing the shares of partners who want to quit our market." He urged "hostile" countries to "act in a civilized manner and respect international law."

Volodin's remarks came after US President Joe Biden announced a proposal to ratchet up economic pressure on Russia, with enhanced seizure and forfeiture procedures allowing oligarchs' seized assets to be "sold off" to "remedy the harm Russia caused and to help build Ukraine." "A dangerous precedent has been set, which could boomerang back on the US itself," Volodin said. "This decision won't affect our country's economy. The yachts, villas and other assets of rich (Russian) citizens contribute nothing to the development" of Russia, he said. — AFP

## Germany slashes energy reliance on Russia

BERLIN: Germany said Sunday it has made progress in sharply reducing its reliance on Russian energy, a strategic shift Europe's biggest economy has embarked on since Russia invaded Ukraine. Russian supplies now make up 12 percent of Germany's oil imports compared to 35 percent previously, the economy ministry said in a statement. Coal from Russia has also been slashed to eight percent compared to 45 percent of Germany's purchases previously. Dependence on gas remains substantial, but Europe's biggest economy had also reduced its Russian sources to 35 percent of the total compared to 55 percent before Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

The government had in March laid out plans to halve oil imports from Russia by June and to end coal deliveries by the autumn. Germany is also expected to be able to largely wean itself off Russian gas in mid-2024. "All these steps that we have taken require an enormous effort from all players and they also mean costs that are being felt by the economy and consumers," said Economy Minister Robert Habeck.

"But they are necessary if we no longer want to be blackmailed by Russia," he stressed. The reliance of Europe's biggest economy on Russian energy has been exposed as an Achilles' heel as Western allies scramble to penalize Vladimir Putin for his attack on Ukraine. The export giant has since been racing to find alternative energy suppliers to replace Russian contracts. — AFP



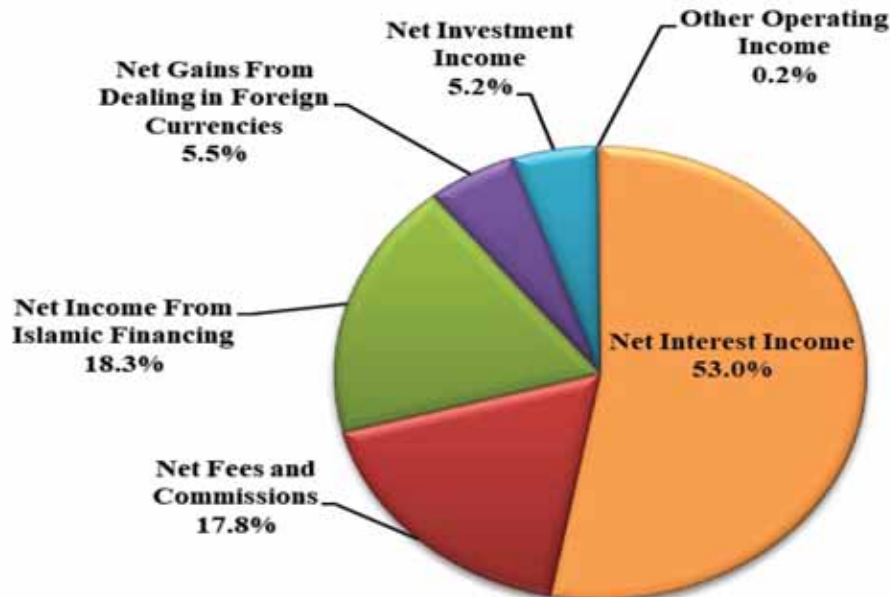
LILONGWE, Malawi: Staff of a tobacco buyer and processing company record details of purchased tobacco at the Lilongwe Auction Floors in Lilongwe. — AFP



# World Bank expects Kuwait to achieve 5.7% growth in 2022

## Mixed performance for Boursa Kuwait in April

Total Operating Incomes in The First Quarter of 2022



KUWAIT: The World Bank issued its April 2022 MENA Economic Update report titled "forecasting growth in the Middle East and north Africa in 'Times of Uncertainty'". The World Bank expects sustained positive growth for the GCC countries between 2021 and 2023. For an understandable reason, these economies' highest expected growth rates occur in 2022 at a 5.4 percent rate. From a negative growth of -3.6 percent in 2020, the six countries recovered to a positive growth of 3.1 percent buoyed by the increase in oil prices in 2021.

Oil prices have increased significantly in 2022, with the Brent average price reaching \$100.3 per barrel during the first quarter (\$60.8 per barrel for the first quarter of 2021).

However, as these forecasts are for an environment of uncertainty, they are negatively reflected in the estimates of the global economic performance. This fact was indicated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) report two weeks ago. Therefore, we have to be careful in adopting these forecasts because of the high margin of error. The World Bank is undoubtedly aware of this and thus lowers its estimates for the growth rate of these countries to 3.3 percent in 2023.

The soundness of these forecasts depends on critical assumptions, such as the oil market in the short term. Kuwait is the most dependent on oil in the Gulf region; its losses were the highest in the pandemic year, and its economy lost about -8.9 percent of its volume.

Nevertheless, the World Bank expects Kuwait to achieve the second-highest growth rate in 2022, about 5.7 percent, which is the year of the record rise in oil prices. The World Bank also expects Kuwait to achieve the highest trade surplus in 2022, ie, its net exports, at 42.4 percent of its GDP volume. It will, however, record the highest deficit in its public budget at 11.4 percent of its GDP.

Comparative figures and indicators confirm that the other five GCC countries have succeeded in reducing their dependence on oil, albeit their gradual and varying degrees. On the contrary, Kuwait remains highly dependent on oil revenues despite the declared goals of decreasing the reliance on oil and diversifying its sources of income. Even in liquidity shortage, Kuwait deepened its crisis with joint parliamentary-government decisions such as postponing the payments of bank loan installments, bonuses for more than 200,000 workers (performance rewards at a

time when most public services are becoming increasingly worse), legalizing the principle of cash-purchase of leave-days, the nine-day-vacations for each of the two Eid vacations, and an intentional negligence in confronting corruption and waste of resources. These and similar decisions mean further and more deep dependence on oil, that is gradually losing its importance in the energy market.

### GCC economies

In a paragraph of our current report, we mentioned the World Bank's forecasts the performance of the GCC economies. Last week's report also noted that using the growth estimates of either the global economy or the regional and individual countries' economies requires caution for any decision. The assumptions of the forecasts reports are not solid due to unprecedented high uncertainty. We present the growth forecasts of the GCC economies as per the IMF, comparing their recent forecasts with their forecasts in October 2021. Then we compare the forecasts of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The purpose of the comparison is to show the estimation differences between two close dates and two twin institutions that have the same information base.

Surprisingly, these differences in expectations are material differences, whether between those estimated in a short period for the same institution or between the estimates of two international institutions at the same time. Nonetheless, the differences are, in fact, understandable as a result of the high uncertainty in predicting the course of economic events. The above leaves a large margin for researchers' diligence and a large margin of error. Our purpose in noting is to warn that the global economy is passing through an unprecedented period of high uncertainty. Under such circumstances, policy and decision-makers must adopt the worst-case scenario at the local level. Let's be hopeful!

### Boursa Kuwait

The performance of the Boursa Kuwait during the month of April remained mixed compared to that of March, with a decrease in the average daily traded value coupled with a positive performance for all the indices. The Premier Market index rose by 2.7 percent, the Main Market Index by 2.2 percent, the All-Share Market index (reflective of

makeover prize by Mersad El Aji, the store manager of IKEA The Avenues, during a special ceremony in IKEA 360. The prize consists of IKEA products and services, including planning service and delivery and assembly.

Everyone still has a chance to win the next grand prize of KD 10,000. You only need to spend KD 10 at any of IKEA store in Kuwait. Every KD10 you spend will give you one entry to the raffle draw to win KD 10,000. The more you shop the more chances to win!

What are you waiting for to be the next winner!! Shop at any IKEA at The Avenues, 360, The Assima Mall, IKEA.com.kw or the IKEA App in Kuwait. Good luck!

The central bank cut its lending rate to zero amid the crisis, where it remained until December 2015. October 2017: The Fed began reducing the holdings on its balance sheet, which had ballooned from less than \$900 billion before the crisis to \$4.5 trillion.

### Trade war slows growth

December 2018 to August 2019: Interest rates peaked in the range of 2.25 percent to 2.5 percent.

Fall 2019: The Fed cut rates several times to the 1.5-1.75 percent range as the trade war launched by then-president Donald Trump slowed growth. The Republican leader had criticized the bank for its high rates.

### Support during the pandemic

March 3, 2020: The Fed cut its lending rate by 50 basis points to between one and 1.25 percent.

March 16, 2020: As COVID-19 spread across the country and the economy shut down, the Fed slashed its lending rate by 100 basis points to zero and resumed its asset purchase policy, which even-

Table No. (1)  
IMF Forecasts of the GCC Countries' Economies Performance  
In October 2021 and April 2022, Reports

Performance of the GCC Economies (IMF)						
Country	Real growth in GDP			Real growth in GDP		
	Apr-22 2022	Oct-21 2022	Change	Apr-22 2023	Oct-21 2023	Change
Kuwait	8.23%	4.33%	3.9%	2.62%	2.66%	0.04%-
KSA	7.60%	4.83%	2.8%	3.64%	2.78%	0.9%
Oman	5.59%	2.93%	2.7%	2.68%	4.18%	1.5%-
UAE	4.24%	3.04%	1.2%	3.80%	3.04%	0.8%
Qatar	3.43%	3.96%	0.5%-	2.49%	2.63%	0.1%-
Bahrain	3.29%	3.10%	0.2%	2.98%	3.09%	0.1%-
<b>Average growth for GCC countries</b>	<b>6.22%</b>	<b>4.13%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>3.40%</b>	<b>2.89%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

both mentioned markets) by 2.6 percent and the BK Main 50 index by 1.9 percent.

Boursa total liquidity during April achieved a lower level than that of March's liquidity. The traded value was at KD 1.345 billion, decreasing from KD 1.559 billion in March. The average daily trading value in April was KD 67.2 million compared to KD 70.9 million in March, reflecting a 5.1 percent decrease from March's average. Traded value in the first 4 months of 2021 (81 trading days) totaled KD 5.492 billion, with an average daily trading value of KD 67.8 million. This represents a 49.6 percent increase compared to the average of the same period in 2021 of KD 45.3 million, and a 22.0 percent increase when compared with the same average of the entire previous year of KD 55.6 million.

Liquidity analysis indicates that, since the beginning of the year, half of the listed companies captured only 2.1 percent of the total liquidity, out of which 50 companies capturing 0.5 percent and 4 companies with no trading. As for the small liquidity companies, 12 companies whose market value equals 5.4 percent of all listed companies' value captured about 17.8 percent of total market liquidity. This means that with almost half of the listed companies deprived of market liquidity, liquidity strongly favors small-cap companies. Liquidity distribution between the two markets during April 2022 was as follows:

**Premier Market (26 companies).** It captured about KD 933.4 million or 69.4 percent of total Boursa liquidity. Half of its companies (13 companies) captured 86.8 percent of its liquidity and 60.3 percent of total Boursa liquidity, while the other half captured the remainder or 13.2 percent of its liquidity. Liquidity concentration rate reached a high level, as 6 companies obtained 69.1 percent of its liquidity. During the first 4 months of 2022, the Premier Market captured 67.8 percent of total Boursa liquidity.

### Main Market (133 companies)

It captured KD 411 million or about 30.6 percent of Boursa liquidity. Twenty percent of its companies captured 86.4 percent of its liquidity while 80 percent of its companies captured only 13.6 percent of its liquidity. With time, listed companies that are now illiquid will have to either find a way to increase their liquidity or face withdrawal from the market. The Main Market obtained 32.2 percent of total Boursa liquidity during the first four months of 2022.



ually reached \$120 billion per month in Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities.

### Economy recovers, inflation arrives

November 3, 2021: The Fed announced it will begin slowing the pace of its asset purchases, with a view towards ending them entirely by the following June, which would set the stage for rate hikes to fight inflation. December 15, 2021: Recognizing that inflation will not be "transitory," as top officials had believed, the central bank accelerated the end of its asset purchases to March. March 16, 2022: The central bank raised interest rates for the first time since 2018 to the 0.25-0.50 percent range.

April 6, 2022: The minutes from the Fed's March policy meeting are released, showing that many participants see one or more 50-basis point rate hikes as necessary if inflation pressure continues.

April 29, 2022: The Fed's preferred inflation gauge, the personal consumption expenditures price index, rises 6.6 percent year-on-year and 0.9 percent month-on-month in March, both faster paces than the month prior. —AFP

When compared to the distribution of liquidity between the Premier and the Main markets, we notice an improvement, since the main market share of liquidity for the whole of 2021 was about 40.6 percent, the distribution of liquidity indicates a return to focus on the premier market, leaving only about 32.2 percent for the main market.

### The weekly performance of Boursa Kuwait

The performance of Boursa Kuwait for last week was mixed where the indices of traded value and number of transactions showed a decrease, while the index of traded volume as well as the general index (Al-Shall Index) showed an increase. Al-Shall Index (value weighted) closed at 745.4 points as of last Thursday, showing a rise by 6.2 points or by 0.8 percent compared with its level last week. While it remained higher by 122.6 points or by 19.7 percent compared with the end of 2021.

## Kalyan Jewellers announces festive special bonanza

KUWAIT: Kalyan Jewellers, one of India's most trusted and leading jewellery brands, has announced a special festive offer in line with the auspicious occasion of Eid and the approaching wedding season. This season also marks the 10th anniversary of Kalyan Jewellers' association with the legendary actor - Amitabh Bachchan. To commemorate the occasion, Kalyan Jewellers has introduced special limited edition gold coins as a tribute to the superstar.

The unique offer will have 50 lucky customers take home the special limited edition Gold Coins throughout the festive season, on basis of a raffle draw. This season, every customer will receive a free raffle draw coupon for every KD 150 worth of jewelry purchases from Kalyan Jewellers.

Adding further delight to the customers' festive purchases, the jewelry brand has announced that it will be giving away 3 coupons for diamond jewelry purchases worth KD 150 and two coupons for uncut and precious stone jewelry purchases worth KD 150. While, customers purchasing gold jewelry worth KD 150 will receive one raffle coupon from Kalyan Jewellers.

Talking about the offers, Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director, Kalyan Jewellers said, "This festive season, we mark the milestone of a decade-long association with superstar Amitabh Bachchan. It has been a delightful experience for us to have Amitabh Bachchan represent brand Kalyan Jewellers and the values, ethics as well as principles that we stand for. Looking back at the past decade, we have grown from strength-to-strength, widening our brand presence, regional footprint and market share across India and the Middle East. Today, Kalyan Jewellers is truly a household name and the contribution of Bachchan in this journey has been enormous. With this unique offer, we aim to spread happiness and cheer with the brand's patrons in the region, who are an integral part of the success achieved by us. We are grateful for the trust and faith bestowed upon us by our customers and continue to strive hard in providing them with best-in-class jewelry with an unmatched retail experience."

These offers are valid until 30th May, 2022, and the names of the 50 lucky winners will be announced on June 6th, 2022 on the brand's social media pages. The jewelry retailed at Kalyan Jewellers goes through multiple purity tests and patrons also receive the Kalyan Jewellers 4-Level Assurance Certificate which guarantees purity, free lifetime maintenance of ornaments, detailed product information and transparent exchange and buy-back policies. The certification is part of the brand's commitment to offering the very best to its loyalists.

## Hayel Al-Enezi wins KD 10,000 prize in first IKEA draw

KUWAIT: IKEA Al-Homaizi is excited to announce the lucky winner of IKEA's first raffle draw, Hayel Al-Enezi. The draw has been conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Al-Enezi was granted the KD 10,000 home

## From recession to inflation, how Fed has dealt with crises

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve has strongly signaled it will raise interest rates by half a percentage point this week to rein in soaring inflation, and likely continue hiking throughout this year. The Fed has long played a decisive role when the world's largest economy faces tough times. Here are some of its major actions since the 2008 global financial crisis:

### The financial crisis and recovery

November 2008: The Fed began injecting liquidity into financial markets following the collapse of Lehman Brothers investment bank. The central bank launched three such programs before ending asset purchases in June 2014. December 2008:





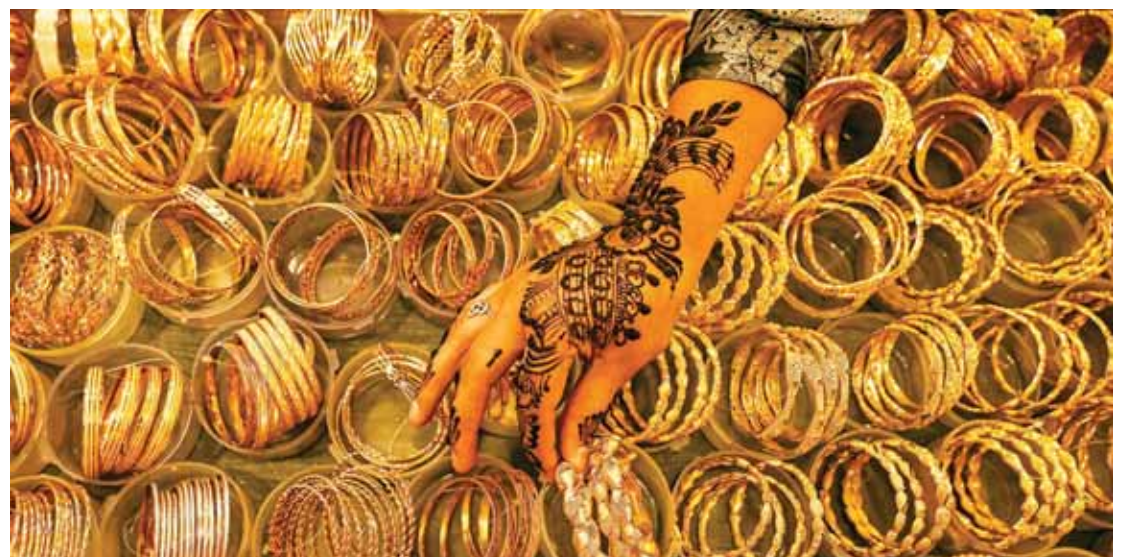
## PALESTINIANS CELEBRATE EID AL-FITR

**P**alestinians have been preparing feasts for Al-Fitr despite difficulties caused by the Zionist occupation and siege of the enclave. Many Palestinians

relish various sweets, candies, fermented fish (fesikh) and buy new clothes for their children on the happy occasion. — KUNA



## Muslims worldwide prepare for Eid



A girl gets her hand decorated with henna at a market area ahead of Eid Al-Fitr, which marks the end of the Muslim's holy month of Ramadan in Srinagar on May 1, 2022. — AFP photos

Shoppers check out ornaments at a market area ahead of Eid Al-Fitr, which marks the end of the Muslim's holy month of Ramadan in Srinagar on May 1, 2022.



A Palestinian man sits for a haircut at a hairdresser in the old city of the West Bank city of Hebron on May 1, 2022, as Muslims prepare to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr, which marks the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.



Displaced Syrian children return to their tents with clothes donated by a local charity organization at a camp for displaced people on the outskirts of the rebel-held town of Dana, east of the Turkish-Syrian border in the northwestern Idlib province.





## Angelina Jolie makes surprise Ukraine trip

Hollywood star Angelina Jolie on Saturday made a surprise appearance in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv where she met displaced people and was spotted in a cafe. Jolie is a UNHCR special envoy but it was not known if she was visiting the country in that capacity. "For all of us, this visit has been a surprise," said Lviv regional governor Maxim Koztytski on Telegram, posting photos and

videos of the actress playing with children and posing with voluntary workers.

At a hospital, she visited children injured in the bombardment of the Kramatorsk station, blamed on a Russian missile, in which more than 50 civilians trying to escape the under-fire east were killed, according to the governor. Jolie also spoke to volunteers giving psychological help to many of the displaced and some of those who had fled. Over 7.7 million people have been internally displaced since the Russian invasion on February 24. A further 5.4 million have left the country. Later the dressed-down star was spotted in a Lviv cafe by Maya Pidhoretska who posted a video on Facebook. "I am having a coffee and I see Angelina Jolie in Lviv," reported the surprised Lviv resident. — AFP

## Australian troupe of actors with disabilities set for European tour

In a quiet room in the southeast Australian town of Geelong, a group of actors with disabilities has gathered to rehearse for their first shows since winning a coveted award for the arts that is likened to a Nobel prize for theatre. Back to Back Theatre is the only Australian company ever to have won the 2.5 million Norwegian kroner (266,000 US dollar) International Ibsen Award, with the selection committee saying they had "created some of the most memorable productions of twenty-first century theatre".

All of Back to Back's actors are neurodiverse—a term that describes the idea that people displaying atypical behavior or thought patterns, such as autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), should not be seen as deficient. Back to Back's work embraces this diversity, and subverts audience expectations of it.

Actor Scott Price, who has autism, told AFP it was "a privilege winning an award after all my hardships I've been through at school", adding that it "probably tops" any other accolades the company has won. In May, Back to Back will perform their play "The Shadow Whose Prey the Hunter Becomes" in Australia and Europe, the company's first overseas tour since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Price had never acted before he auditioned for Back to Back in 2007. At first, he admits, he did not even want the job. Fifteen years on, however, things have changed. "Now I'm a public figure and there's no turning back," he said.

### Critical acclaim

The International Ibsen Award was only the latest praise for Back to Back, which over 35 years has built a name for itself as a theatre company willing to push boundaries. Critics often describe its work as provocative and unafraid to make its audience uncomfortable. Artistic director



This photo shows actors Sarah Mainwaring (left), Simon Laherty (center) and Scott Price (right) during rehearsals in Geelong where a group of actors with disabilities from Back to Back Theatre have gathered to rehearse for their first shows since winning the International Ibsen Award, often called the Nobel Prize for theatre.—AFP photos

Bruce Gladwin said this was by design. "Sometimes [the audience] feel they are passive observers and we're really trying to draw them into the performance," he told AFP.

Back to Back's ensemble includes Price, Simon Laherty, Sarah Mainwaring, Mark Deans—who has been with the company for 30 years—and Breanna Deleo, the newest member, who first joined as a work experience student. Gladwin said Back to Back offered Deleo a permanent spot "because she is a really incredible young performer".

### Three decades of theatre

Back to Back began in Geelong in 1987, at a time when people with disabilities in Australia were being shifted out of institutions and back into their communities. "Back to Back started running workshops with people with disabilities to give

them access to the arts, and also employment within the arts," Gladwin said.

In Australia, less than a third of people with a disability are employed full-time, according to the central statistics bureau. Price, who described himself as an advocate for the neurodiverse, had a clear message for the wider community: "Employ more people with disabilities." "People with disabilities can do absolutely anything if they put their minds to it," he said.

As Back to Back's artistic director for the last 23 years, Gladwin has worked closely with the actors to create some of the theatre's most acclaimed productions. Every new work begins with the actors improvising with one another, exploring ideas that are refined into a script over time. "It actually comes from our hearts and minds," Price said.—AFP



In this file photo French singer, actress and businesswoman Regine waves to the crowds during a parade, along the Champs-Élysées in Paris to celebrate the New Year. — AFP photos



In this file photo French singer, actress and businesswoman Regine performs during a rehearsal before a concert at the Bobino theatre in Paris.



In this file photo President and founder of the association "SOS drogue international", singer, actress and businesswoman Regine receives the Vermeil Medal of the City of Paris from French Mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac during a ceremony at Paris City Hall.

# REGINE, DISCO PIONEER AND NIGHTCLUB QUEEN, DIES AT 92

French singer and actress Regine, who claimed the invention of the modern discotheque and once ran a nightclub empire from Paris to Los Angeles, died on Sunday aged 92, her grand-daughter told AFP. Regine, born Regina Zylberberg in Belgium, opened her first club in Paris's Latin Quarter in the 1950s, replacing the juke-box, ubiquitous in dance venues at the time, with turntables and disc jockeys. The new format, she often said, justified her claim to "the invention of the discotheque".

She famously said: "If you can't dance, you can't make love." The new discos caught on with the jet set and Regine, who became known as the "queen of the night", opened several more venues, including "Regine's" in New York in the 1970s, and others in Miami, Rio de Janeiro and Los Angeles. "Regine left us peacefully at 11 am (0900 GMT) on this May 1," her grand-daughter Daphne Rotcajg said.

In a statement sent on behalf of Regine's family her friend, the comic Pierre Palmade said: "The queen of the

night has left. Closing time following a long and great career." Regine "had the stars of the whole world dancing in her nightclubs", he added. At its height, Regine's disco empire comprised 22 establishments. Her name "became synonymous with the crazy nights that lasted until the small hours", Palmade said, adding that Regine herself would "hit the dance floor until closing time".

While most famous internationally as a nightclub entrepreneur, back home Regine was always considered more for her contri-

but ion to French songwriting. French singer Renaud called her the last historic representative of the French chanson, inspiring an entire generation of singer songwriters, including Serge Gainsbourg and Barbara.

After performing in the legendary Olympia venue in the French capital in the 1960s, Regine sang in New York's Carnegie Hall to a warm reception by an American audience, a feat that among French singers only Edith Piaf could match. "It would make me very happy if

people still listened to my songs 50 years from now," she told AFP in 2020, adding that she was "very proud" that some of them had become part of France's standard repertoire.

"My first profession was discotheques," she said. "For a long time, songs were just a hobby. But now I realize that the stage has been the most important part of my life." She also acted in several films, including by star directors Claude Lelouch and Claude Zidi.—AFP



In this file photo Paris night celebrity, singer, actress and businesswoman Regine poses with a long Ted Lapidus skirt drawn by Erte with the famous "boa" at the Tajan gallery in Paris.



In this file photo French singer, actress and businesswoman Regine attends the opening ceremony of the 39th edition of the Deauville's US film festival on August 30, 2013 in Deauville, north-western France.



In this file photo French businesswoman and singer Regine poses.





## Look! A polar bear meanders way down south in Canada

A polar bear was spotted Saturday in the Quebec region of Canada, prompting wildlife officials to warn residents of a small town stunned by this very rare appearance. The bear-whose species has become a symbol of the dangers of global warming-was seen in the morning hours in Madeleine-Centre in the Gaspesia region, a peninsula along the south bank of the Saint Lawrence River, witnesses said. As of Saturday afternoon, officials were still trying to find the animal.

"The dog was barking and I heard my partner yell, 'There's a bear, there's a bear!'" said Sophie Bonneville, who lives in the town of 2,000 people located 800 kilometers

(500 miles) east of Montreal. Quebec provincial police put out a tweet warning people about the bear sighting and urging them to stay indoors.

Bonneville said nobody in town had ever seen a polar bear so far south, not even wildlife officials. "People thought it was a joke," she told AFP. "How could a bear cross the ice pack, swim and make it here? Even people on the north bank have not seen such a thing," she said. Police patrolled the region, where hiking is popular.

"We went door to door to tell people to stay indoors," Quebec provincial police spokesman Stephane Tremblay told AFP. He said he had never seen a polar bear in

this area, either. "With climate change, anything is possible," said Bonneville, who managed to snap a couple of photos of the bear before it wandered off into a wooded area. "What is worrisome is, why did it come here? Was it global warming? Or was it just a mistake of nature?" she mused.

In Canada, polar bears-the planet's largest land carnivores-are listed as a "vulnerable" species. A 2020 study published in Nature Climate Change said climate change could lead to their extinction as global warming causes the gradual melting of the Arctic ice pack. — AFP



## Rare birth of Asiatic cheetah cubs in Iran

An Asiatic cheetah gave birth to three "healthy" cubs in Iran, the head of the environment department said Sunday, calling it a first in captivity for the endangered species. "Iran", one of only a dozen cheetahs found in the Islamic republic, delivered three "healthy" cubs by C-section, Ali Salajegheh told IRNA news agency. "This is the first birth of an Asiatic cheetah in captivity," he said.

"By preserving these cubs, we can increase the cheetah population in captivity and then in semi-captivity," Salajegheh added. The cubs were born in the Touran Wildlife Refuge in the Semnan province east of Tehran, where the mother and her

babies are being monitored in intensive care.

The world's fastest land animal, capable of reaching speeds of 120 kilometers (74 miles) per hour, cheetahs once stalked habitats from the eastern reaches of India to the Atlantic coast of Senegal and beyond. They are still found in parts of southern Africa, but have practically disappeared from North Africa and Asia.

Iran is one of the last countries in the world where the Asiatic cheetahs live in the wild and began a United Nations-supported protection program in 2001. The subspecies "Acinonyx jubatus venaticus", commonly known as the Asiatic cheetah, is critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

In January deputy environment minister Hassan Akbari said Iran is home to only a dozen Asiatic cheetahs-down from an estimated 100 in 2010. Their situation "is extremely critical", Akbari said at the time, adding that the animals have been victims of drought, hunters and car accidents. — AFP

## Hundreds have a blast at Thailand amateur rocket festival

Homemade missiles fizzed, roared and sputtered across a field in central Thailand on Sunday as amateur rocketeers put their skills to the test in front of hundreds of revelers. The "Look Noo" festival originated among Thailand's Mon ethnic group as a way to honor deceased monks in the Buddhist kingdom-using a rocket as a spectacular way to ignite a cremation fire from afar. It gradually developed into a competition, with hundreds gathering every year trying to hit a target around a hundred meters away-or at least send their projectiles flying further than their rivals.

Sunday saw the resumption of the annual festival-paused since 2019 because of the pandemic-spurred social distancing restrictions in Thailand-with around 1,000 spectators amassing in Pathum Thani to cheer on over two dozen teams. The rockets deployed are around a meter long,

made from metal and wood and filled with homemade explosives, usually potassium-based. Their horizontal flight is guided first by a cable hanging slightly above head-height, along which they stutter and fizz, gradually picking up speed and belching yellow-white smoke.

At the end of the cable, the rocket continues zipping through the air-and hopefully towards the target-for a few brief seconds before careening nose over tail across the swampy ground. Helpers rush out with red flags to mark where each rocket landed and judges keep records along the sidelines. After every launch, teams have to recalculate the angle of the cable, said Atthapong Kongkarn, 36.

"We adjust the height each round so the rocket could hit the target," he said, as his teammates rejiggered their rocket's equipment for its next round. Going for brute pow-

er and distance over accuracy can tempt teams into danger, Phra Ajarn Samran Thamavaro Thongbai, the assistant abbot at Bang Pho Nai temple, told AFP "Some teams want their rocket to be the fastest and reach the farthest distance, so they use a highly explosive material... But if they are not careful, the rocket might explode," he said. "Our rocket also exploded in the past," he admitted.

A parade of dancing and music accompanies the rockets to the field, and some teams write spells and incantations on the projectiles in the hope of guiding them to their target-as well as a top prize of \$440. From the safety of the sidelines, spectator Jongkol Tuusamran, 65, praised the "teamwork" of the amateur gunners. "As Pathum Thani residents, we're proud of this competition," she told AFP. — AFP



## Parisians up in arms over plan to fell trees near Eiffel Tower

Paris is aiming to redevelop the area around the Eiffel Tower in time for the 2024 Olympic Games, but the city's residents are beginning to rebel over a plan that would see 22 trees ripped up. The Paris mayor's office wants to build tourist facilities and offices at the foot of the world-famous landmark. Architect's projections show semi-submerged buildings covered in greenery.

But campaigners have launched a petition urging the mayor's office to ditch the plan, expressing particular concern over the fate of some very old trees. "We reject the felling and endangerment of dozens of healthy trees, in particular the 200-year-old and 100-year-old trees, which really are the city's green lungs," says the petition, launched by four environmental groups. Around 35,000 signatures have been gathered so far.

Deputy Mayor Emmanuel Gregoire sought to mollify opponents of the scheme. "No 100-year-old tree will be cut down," he said. His aides told AFP they were working to reduce the num-

ber of trees to be felled for the project, having already cut back from 42 to 22. They also stressed the redevelopment was part of a plan that involved planting dozens of trees and creating a green space across the clogged centre of the French capital.

But campaigners remain unconvinced. "They are creating some vegetation, but they are destroying a lot of it at the same time," said Philippe Khayat of the SOS Paris association, one of the backers of the petition. The tower is one of the world's most famous buildings and welcomes some seven million visitors a year. — AFP

« In this file photo people sit below the Eiffel Tower on the Champ-de-Mars on a sunny day in Paris. — AFP



## Sports

# Taylor edges Serrano as history made at Madison Square Garden

**NEW YORK:** Ireland's Katie Taylor retained her undisputed lightweight world championship with a split decision win over Puerto Rican Amanda Serrano Saturday in a history-making, epic fight at Madison Square Garden. The first women's bout to headline a fight card at the iconic New York venue in its 140-year history did not disappoint.

Brooklyn-based Serrano pummeled Taylor in the fifth round, but the bloodied champion held on and reasserted herself as the pair went toe-to-toe over the final rounds of a breathless contest to edge the decision and remain unbeaten after 21 professional bouts. "I had to dig deep," Taylor said. "I knew I'd be in the trenches at some stage. She is a phenomenal fighter, a great, great person."

Serrano, the unified featherweight world champion, has 42 prior victories including 30 knockouts. Despite stepping up two weight divisions to face Taylor, Serrano was more effective in the middle rounds and staggered the Irishwoman in the fifth. Blood was flowing freely from Taylor's nose by the end of the sixth, but Serrano failed to press home the advantage and the Irishwoman regrouped to land the more telling shots in the seventh, eighth and ninth.

The 10th and final round saw them battling blow-for-blow until the final bell, when Canadian referee Michael Griffin gathered them in and the fighters

exchanged a hug. Judge Benoit Rousel scored it 96-94 for Serrano, but judge Guido Cavalleri saw it 96-93 for Taylor and Glenn Feldman scored it 97-93 for the champion. "We put on a hell of a show," Serrano said in the ring. "Women can sell! Women can fight! We put on a show."

With a sellout crowd of 19,187 offering fierce support for both fighters, southpaw Serrano boxed on the front foot with a series of punishing blows snapping Taylor's head back in the fifth. Serrano targeted Taylor's body in the sixth, but the champion fought back fiercely and the cheers were so loud at the end of the round that they drowned out the closing bell.

The 10th was a dogfight, the fighters trading punches in the center of the ring before Taylor emerged with her sixth defense of the undisputed title she has held since beating Delfine Persoon in 2019 to capture all four belts. Her dominant professional career followed a stellar amateur career that included Olympic gold in London in 2012.

Serrano suffered only her second loss and her first for a decade having won 28 straight bouts since defeat to Frida Wallberg in April, 2012. The prospects are that she could get another shot at Taylor with a lucrative rematch tempting both fighters. "Let's do it again, Amanda," Taylor said, as they were interviewed in the ring. "Whatever she wants," Serrano replied. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** Irish boxer Katie Taylor celebrates, alongside manager Brian Peters and coach Ross Enamait after defeating Puerto Rican boxer Amanda Serrano for the World Lightweight Title fight at Madison Square Garden on April 30, 2022. — AFP



## Kuwaiti karatekas participate in Cyprus

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait national karate team members Joud Tawfiq and Tulay Ahmad are participating in the kata competitions of the Karate Youth League in Limassol, Cyprus from April 25 until May 2. Tawfiq and Ahmad's participation is their first in the international youth league, which has the best players in the juniors and youth groups participating in the tournament from more than 25 countries.

Members of the board of Kuwait Olympic Committee and Chairwoman of the Women's Sport Committee Fatima Hayat said she is proud of Kuwaiti athletes participating in one of the most important and largest international karate championships.

"We are proud of having our players in international competitions organized by international federations, and today we are proud of having Joud and Tulay in the karate youth league, which is the result of continued work and keenness to reach the best levels. We wish them all success," she said.

Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Karate Federation Mohammad Al-Jassem said the participation of Joud and Tulay confirms the improvement of women's karate in all age groups, adding this participation is the fruit of major efforts and continued support by the board of directors and all committees at the federation. He also

lauded the support of the Public Authority for Sport and its Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh, and Dr Saqer Al-Mulla, for the participation of the players in international competitions.



## Women's futsal team readies for Gulf tourney

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's national women's futsal team will depart on Tuesday to Kyrgyzstan in preparation for the upcoming third Gulf games to start on May 13 in

Kuwait. The team will play two friendly matches with the Kyrgyz national team. The team, headed by Ibtisam Abdelhameed, has 17 players. They will return home on May 8 and will go into an internal training camp, as they will play their first match against the UAE on May 15.

Abdelhameed said the two friendly matches were arranged at the request of the technical department to check on the team's physical and technical readiness. "There is a highly important tournament ahead of us that comes on the heels of the coronavirus pandemic, so we must be ready from all aspects as we aim for top place," she said.

## Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five crowns 2022 Kuwait champions

**KUWAIT:** Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five came to a close, with team Jayenkom taking the tournament crown. This year, and for the first time, country champions from 2021 and 2022 will land in Qatar for the World Final that will see Neymar Jr in attendance, and on the pitch. Professional footballer and tournament namesake Neymar Jr has even referred to it as the Super Finals. It is certain to be the biggest Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five World Final yet.

The Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five World Final has also set its date and will be held in Doha, Qatar on the 24th of May 2022. The tournament qualifiers round spanned three days, from April 11 to 13, and featured 115 teams from around the country vying for a spot in the Kuwait National Finals. In the end, 12 teams qualified for the National Final, held at Marina Beach on April 20, 2022.

The Kuwait Country Finals began with Kuwaiti star footballer Aziz Mashaan taking up hosting duties and pre-game festivities. He walked the teams through his warmup routine, and kept everyone limber before the start of the first match. He reminded attendees of the importance of keeping muscles healthy and strong before beginning matches. Mashaan is the first Kuwaiti footballer to play for a European team.

Only two teams remained, and they were Jayenkom, and Ajaj. Last year, Jayenkom were defeat-



ed in the Semi-finals when they lost 2-0 to Al-Najjar. This was their time to make all the way to the last match of the tournament. And they were determined to do so.

The National Final turned into a magnificent display of raw and expertly executed defense. Both Jayenkom and Ajaj gave everything to putting a goal through the back of the net, and each time, came up short. No matter what they tried, neither team could break through the defensive wall to score the first goal. The match ended in a draw, and they had to go into overtime.

As per the official rulebook, Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five matches that conclude with a draw go into a head-to-head mode, where one player from each

team is chosen to represent. The first to score wins the match. It was here where team Jayenkom was able to score on Ajaj and win by the slimmest margin of 1-0. Team Jayenkom has proven to be a dominant force in the long running five-a-side series. This championship win marks the second time that Team Jayenkom has been crowned the best amateur 5-on-5 team in the country.

The 2022 World Finals will be completely different from any year before it. Neymar Jr has chosen to bring back the 2021 country winners from around the world to join in the competition this year. This means that The Juniors will be going to Qatar for the Super Finals as well. They won the 2021 tournament by defeating rival Al-Najjar 5-0 to finish strong.

## Mumbai's first win of season 'good' for mood: Suryakumar

**MUMBAI:** Batting hero Suryakumar Yadav on said Mumbai Indians' first win of this IPL season will lift the team spirit after they beat Rajasthan Royals by five wickets on Saturday. Chasing 159 to win, Mumbai relied on an 81-run third-wicket stand between Suryakumar (51) and Tilak Varma (35) to achieve their target with four balls to spare at Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium.

Suryakumar and Varma fell in the space of three balls and Kieron Pollard was out for 10 in the final over as Royals threatened to snatch victory. But Singapore batter Tim David smashed 20 off nine balls and Daniel Sams hit the winning six. Rohit Sharma's Mumbai, the richest and most successful side in Indian Premier League history with five titles, bounced back from a record eight losses but stay bottom of the 10-team table.

"Very happy with the way things went," said man of the match Suryakumar. "It was an important win to have a good atmosphere. Really looking forward to the few games ahead." He later told reporters, the win will "spread positivity" and help everyone "learn" going forward in this season. In-form Jos Buttler smashed 67 to guide Royals to 158-6 but the total was not enough for the team who paid tribute to their first captain, the late Australian hero Shane Warne in the game.

Royals, who won the inaugural IPL in 2008 under Warne, had "SW23" printed on their players' collars and both teams stood in line for a minute's applause at the start of the match. Buttler, who leads the tournament batting chart with 566 runs including three centuries, held up his collar after reaching his sixth 50-plus score. Buttler hit off-spinner Hrithik Shokeen for four straight sixes but fell to the bowler on the final ball of the over.

Australia fast bowler Riley Meredith returned impressive figures of 2-24 from his four overs. In reply, Suryakumar put the chase on track after birthday boy Rohit, who turned 35, fell for two and partner Ishan Kishan for 26. Suryakumar reached his third half-century of the season off 36 balls with a six off Ravichandran Ashwin before falling to Chahal's leg-spin in the next over, but by point that he had done enough to help Mumbai snap their losing run.—AFP





## Sports

# City keep Liverpool at arm's length, Norwich relegated

LONDON: Manchester City maintained a one-point Premier League lead over Liverpool with four games to go after seeing off Leeds 4-0 on Saturday as Norwich were relegated after a 2-0 loss at Aston Villa. Earlier, Liverpool had moved to the top of the table with a 1-0 win at Newcastle thanks to Naby Keita's first-half goal. Both the title contenders each made five changes with tricky away trips sandwiched between both legs of their Champions League semi-finals.

City boss Pep Guardiola could afford the luxury of not even calling on Kevin De Bruyne as the champions kept the fate of the title race in their own hands. Rodri headed home Phil Foden's free-kick on 13 minutes to settle any City nerves. Nathan Ake then turned home Ruben Dias' knockdown as the visitors struck again from a set piece early in the second-half.

Gabriel Jesus kept his fine scoring form going with a thumping finish 12 minutes from time before Fernandinho rounded off the scoring in stoppage time. "It's not about the pressure - it's simple," said Guardiola. "We have to win all our games to be champions. If we don't, Liverpool will be champions."

Liverpool's top scorer Mohamed Salah, Thiago Alcantara, Fabinho and Trent Alexander-Arnold were among those rested by Jurgen Klopp from the start. But they still had far too much for one of the form sides in the league. The decisive moment came in the 19th minute when, with the home side appealing in vain for a free-kick, Jordan Henderson and

Diogo Jota combined to feed Keita, who stepped inside before dispatching the ball past the helpless Martin Dubravka.

The Reds could have made life easier for themselves but Sadio Mane and Jota squandered chances and they survived a late scare when Alisson Becker saved from Bruno Guimaraes. Klopp said he was delighted with his players' ability to produce a winning performance after so many changes as they chase sporting immortality in an unprecedented quadruple.

"I thought it was a top-class game in extremely difficult circumstances," said Klopp, who had voiced his anger at being handed a lunchtime kick-off just three days after facing Villarreal. "That's why I'm really happy. You want to win football games and in the best case you deserve to win. We did today 100 percent against a team in great form in a great atmosphere."

## Burnley bounce continues

Norwich are heading back to the Championship after just one season in the top flight after goals from Ollie Watkins and Danny Ings sealed their fate on manager Dean Smith's return to Villa Park. "I'm disappointed with our result," said Canaries captain Grant Hanley. "It is probably fair, we haven't been good enough this season."

Burnley's turnaround to beat Watford 2-1 at Vicarage Road sealed the Canaries fate. The Claretts looked to be heading towards the trap door when they sacked long-serving boss Sean Dyche two

weeks ago but have taken 10 points from a possible 12 since. James Tarkowski's early own goal gave the visitors an uphill task but late goals from Jack Cork and Josh Brownhill turned the match on his head.

"Credit to the boys, the staff, everybody - we have rallied each other and we want to be in this division," said Brownhill. "We are hardworking and we deserve to be in this division." The result means Watford are all but doomed while 18th-placed Everton are in desperate trouble - five points from safety and facing playing outside the English top-flight next season for the first time since 1954. Brighton hammered Wolves 3-0 and Crystal Palace beat Southampton 2-1. —AFP

## Lyon, Barca set up Women's Champions League final clash

PARIS: Record seven-time winners Lyon saw off French rivals Paris Saint-Germain on Saturday to join holders Barcelona in the final of this season's Women's Champions League. The showpiece in the Italian city of Turin on May 21 will bring together the leading side in European women's football over the last decade and the team who ended their hegemony last year and are now seeking to retain their title.

Ada Hegerberg and captain Wendie Renard scored Lyon's goals either side of a Marie-Antoinette Katoto strike as they beat PSG 2-1 to win their semi-final tie 5-3 on aggregate. The match at the Parc des Princes was watched by a new record crowd for a women's club game in France of 43,254, a week after a world record 91,648 saw Barcelona win the first leg of their tie at home to Wolfsburg.

Earlier Barcelona's run of 45 consecutive wins was ended as they went down 2-0 to Wolfsburg in Germany, but the Spanish champions advanced 5-3 on aggregate to their third final in four seasons. Barcelona won their first title last year when they crushed Chelsea 4-0 in the final in Gothenburg. That ended Lyon's run of five consecutive Champions League crowns and the French club also saw their grip on their domestic title ended last season by PSG.

## Bayern crash at Mainz, Haaland hits hat-trick

BERLIN: Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich suffered a title-party hangover Saturday with a shock 3-1 defeat at Mainz, while Erling Haaland claimed a hat-trick even though Borussia Dortmund crashed 4-3 at home to Bochum. A week after Bayern beat second-placed Dortmund 3-1 in Munich to be crowned league champions for the tenth straight season, Germany's top two clubs both lost.

Bayern boss Julian Nagelsmann was furious after his team's lacklustre display at Mainz, who also hit the woodwork four times in a deserved victory. "There are too many defeats, too many in the same manner," Nagelsmann fumed. "I think we always need a certain basic passion in our game, which we didn't have today. "To not go to the limit in every situation is human after the tenth title in a row, but we still wear the badge on our chest."

Germany Under-21 striker Jonathan Burkardt and French defender Moussa Niakhate gave Mainz an

early 2-0 lead after exploiting huge holes in Bayern's defense. The Bavarians pulled one back when Robert Lewandowski rolled in his 34th Bundesliga goal this season, claiming a league record after scoring 18 times away this campaign.

Midfielder Leandro Barreiro grabbed Mainz's third goal just after the break when his shot took a wicked deflection and looped into the Bayern goal. In Dortmund, Bochum raced into a 2-0 lead after just eight minutes thanks to goals by Sebastian Polter and Gerrit Holtmann. Haaland led the fight back by converting two penalties, then tapped in his third goal with an hour played.

However, Bochum hit back with goals in the final ten minutes. Juergen Locadia fired one in before Milos Pantovic converted the winning penalty after a handball by Dortmund midfielder Axel Witsel. Bochum claimed their second significant scalp this year following February's shock home win over Bayern.

## Home fans turn on Dortmund

The Dortmund team trudged off to a chorus of whistles from home fans. "I can understand that the fans are annoyed, but the lads didn't deserve to be insulted like that," said Dortmund coach Marco Rose. "We are all mega disappointed. "We reacted well after falling behind quickly, but when I look at

points give us a bit of breathing room." The strike from Morocco-born Sabiri, who has represented Germany at under-21 level, and Audero's save pushed Samp eight points clear of their local rivals, who sit just inside the drop zone level on 25 points with Salernitana. How Salernitana, who have a game in hand, get on at Atalanta on Monday will be key to Samp's hopes of staying up as the southern side are on a run of three straight wins and pushing for what would be a miraculous escape after sitting bottom of the league for most of the season.

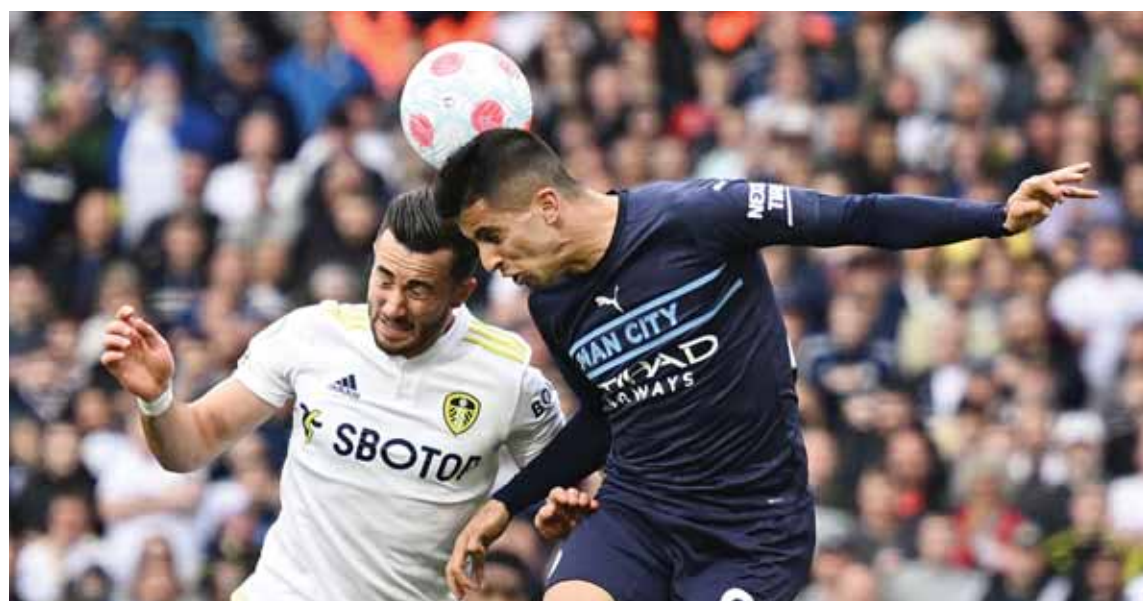
Genoa meanwhile are in deep trouble and face the increasingly real prospect of playing in Serie B for the first time since 2007. Alexander Blessin's side, taken over by American backers 777 Partners in September, have to play Juventus and Napoli before hosting Bologna in their final match of the season.

They are three points behind 17th-place Cagliari, who stayed firmly in the relegation fight after first-half goals from Antonin Barak and Gianluca Caprari consigned them to a 2-1 home loss against Verona earlier on Saturday. The Sardinian team pulled a goal back in the 57th minute through a superb free-kick from Joao Pedro but lost for the seventh time in

## Samp strike survival blow against Genoa, Sassuolo hit for six

MILAN: Sampdoria boosted their chances of staying in Serie A on Saturday after prevailing 1-0 in a relegation derby with local rivals Genoa, who missed a stoppage-time penalty and are now staring the drop in the face. Abdelhamid Sabiri struck a potentially huge blow in the race for top-flight survival when he forced home the only goal of the game 24 minutes into a fraught clash at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris.

Sampdoria were saved in the dying moments by goalkeeper Emil Audero, who pushed away Genoa captain Domenico Criscito's spot-kick to spark chants of "Serie B! Serie B!" from the Samp supporters as both Audero and Criscito broke down in tears for very different reasons. "Those tears at the end just came to me, I tried to hold them back," said Audero. "It's truly a dream because today we were playing for our destiny, let's be honest... These



LEEDS: Leeds United's English midfielder Jack Harrison vies with Manchester City's Portuguese defender Joao Cancelo during their English Premier League match at Elland Road on April 30, 2022. —AFP

already had one place in the final after thumping Wolfsburg 5-1 at home in the first leg. That meant the pressure was largely off them in Germany and they fell behind two minutes into the second half when Tabea Wassmuth scored with a deflected strike from outside the box.

It was Wassmuth's 10th goal in 10 games in this season's Champions League, moving her level with Barcelona captain Alexia Putellas, the reigning Ballon d'Or. Jill Roord made it 2-0 with a terrific strike before the hour mark, but two-time champions Wolfsburg had left themselves with too much to do to save the tie. —AFP



PARIS: Lyon's Norwegian forward Ada Hegerberg heads the ball in front of Paris Saint-Germain's defender Amanda Ilestedt during their UEFA Women's Champions League semifinal second-leg match at the Parc des Princes stadium on April 30, 2022. —AFP

the table and see 50 goals conceded (this season), it's clear what the core issue is."

Later, Freiburg climbed back into the top four and the Champions League places with a thrilling 4-3 win at Hoffenheim. After Hoffenheim went 2-1 up early in the second half, Freiburg roared back with goals by captain Christian Guenter, Lucas Hoeler and South Korea's Jeong Woo-yeong before Sebastian Rudy scored a late third goal for the hosts.

Cologne climbed to sixth and stay on course to play European football next season after a 4-1 romp at Augsburg with Anthony Modeste scoring twice. Stuttgart kept alive hopes of avoiding relegation as midfielder Chris Fuehrich fired a late equalizer in off the crossbar to earn a 1-1 draw at home to Wolfsburg. Stuttgart remain 16th, which carries a relegation play-off at the end of the season.

They have two tough games left - away to Bayern and home to Cologne - to bridge the four-point gap to 15th and guaranteed safety next season. Hertha Berlin, who are four points and one place above Stuttgart, are not yet sure of avoiding relegation after a 1-1 draw at second-from-bottom Arminia Bielefeld. Hertha were cruising to an away win thanks to a header by midfielder Lucas Tousart before Swedish defender Joakim Nilsson nodded in a last-gasp equalizer for Bielefeld. —AFP

eight games and face both Salernitana and bottom team Venezia in a tight run-in.

## Napoli secure Champions League

Napoli effectively secured a place in the Champions League by hammering Sassuolo 6-1, with Dries Mertens hitting a brace in a display which boosted spirits in Naples after falling away in the title race. Luciano Spalletti's side are third, four points behind league leaders AC Milan who host Fiorentina on Sunday.

Napoli crashed in four goals in the first 21 minutes through Kalidou Koulibaly, Victor Osimhen, Hirving Lozano and Mertens to secure the points against a flat Sassuolo. Mertens netted again nine minutes after the break at a sparsely-populated Stadio Diego Armando Maradona before Amir Rrahmani made it six with 10 minutes remaining.

Only 20,000 fans showed up after two awful recent defeats to Fiorentina and Empoli - the latter coming after throwing away a two-goal lead in the final 10 minutes - all but ended their bid for a first league title since 1990. "In my nine years of being here, this was the most disappointing... Next season we can really go for it, but only if we have our heads in the right place," said Mertens to DAZN. —AFP

## Bournemouth stay ahead of Forest in race for promotion

LONDON: Bournemouth stayed ahead of Nottingham Forest in the race for automatic promotion to the Premier League with a 3-0 win at Blackburn Rovers on Saturday. Former Liverpool and Chelsea forward Dominic Solanke struck his 30th goal of the season before Philip Billing was twice on target in the second half at Ewood Park.

Victory left second-placed Bournemouth three points clear of Forest with two games to play - including next week's clash between the two clubs. Only the top two at the end of the regular season are guaranteed a place in English football's lucrative top flight, with Championship leaders Fulham already assured of one of those coveted spots. "It was definitely a high-pressure game," said Bournemouth manager Scott Parker. "That's where you get to at this point at the season when you're competing for what we're competing for."

The teams that finish third to sixth, currently led by Forest, will then compete for the other promotion place in a series of play-off games. Forest, twice the champions of Europe, remained in contention thanks to a 5-1 thrashing of Swansea that delayed Fulham being crowned champions, although the London club will take the second-tier title with victory over Luton on Monday. Sam Surridge's hat-trick, including two goals in four minutes, provided the backbone of Forest's win. Cyrus Christie's own goal sent the Midlands side in their way before Rovers equalized through Michael Obafemi. But then came Surridge's treble and a late goal from Alex Mighton to leave Forest well-placed for Thursday's crunch encounter. "It was obviously a brilliant win," said Forest boss Steve Cooper. "I am very grateful to the players for sticking to the game plan. —AFP



RENNES: Rennes' French midfielder Benjamin Bourigeaud eyes the ball during the French L1 football match against Saint-Etienne at The Roazhon Park Stadium on April 30, 2022. —AFP

## Rennes on course for Champions League

PARIS: Croatia international Lovro Majer grabbed both goals as Rennes defeated lowly Saint-Etienne 2-0 in Ligue 1 on Saturday to strengthen their grip on the third Champions League spot in France. Majer volleyed Rennes ahead on 41 minutes at Roazhon Park and made sure of victory late on to push the hosts three points clear of in-form Monaco, who are at home to Angers on Sunday.

Saint-Etienne remain in the relegation play-off place and two points from outright safety with three games to play. They are four points above Bordeaux in 19th. Kylian Mbappe scored twice at Strasbourg on Friday to move up to 24 Ligue 1 goals this season but champions Paris Saint-Germain conceded a stoppage-time equalizer in a 3-3 draw.

Strasbourg led through Kevin Gameiro's early goal but Mbappe struck either side of an Achraf Hakimi effort to put PSG in control. Marco Verratti's own goal cut the deficit and Anthony Caci levelled at the death. Strasbourg moved up to fifth but trail Rennes by five points, with Nice behind them on goal difference ahead of Sunday's trip to Bordeaux. Lens recovered from two goals down and a red card for goalkeeper Jean-Louis Leica to salvage a 2-2 draw at home to Nantes to stay in the race for European football next season. —AFP





MADRID: Real Madrid's players carry Real Madrid's Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti at the end of the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid and Espanyol at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on April 30, 2022. —AFP

## Real Madrid win 35th Liga title

### Ancelotti in class of his own - first coach to win all five major European leagues

MADRID: Real Madrid secured a 35th La Liga title on Saturday with a 4-0 home win over Espanyol as Carlo Ancelotti became the first coach to win all five major European leagues. Needing just one point from their last five games, Madrid struck twice through Rodrygo in the first half at the Santiago Bernabeu before goals from Marco Asensio and Karim Benzema completed the victory.

Madrid lifted the trophy in front of nearly 80,000 inside the stadium, and the traditional celebrations continued at the Cibeles fountain in the Spanish capital. "It's the first time I've won a title at the Bernabeu, the atmosphere is really something special," Ancelotti told Movistar Plus. "If I was crying (at the final whistle), it's because I'm happy."

Ancelotti returned to Madrid last summer to take over from Zinedine Zidane for a second spell after quitting Everton. The Italian has also won the

Premier League with Chelsea, Serie A with AC Milan, Ligue 1 with Paris Saint-Germain and the Bundesliga with Bayern Munich. Given they have been top since November, it was no surprise that Madrid won a league they have dominated for months, but dips in form from Barcelona and Sevilla offered the chance for an early coronation.

Madrid moved 17 points clear of second-placed Sevilla with four matches to play. Barcelona have a game in hand but are 18 points adrift. With La Liga wrapped up, Madrid can turn their full attention to the second leg of their semi-final at home to Manchester City on Wednesday, when they will need to overturn a 4-3 loss from the opening game to advance to another European final.

**'Incredible season'**

"Winning La Liga is special," midfielder Luka

Modric told Real Madrid TV, as he paid tribute to the fans who were unable to watch the club win the title in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We played a great match, the atmosphere was incredible and we hope to repeat that Wednesday." It is the earliest Madrid have clinched the trophy since they won it with four games to spare in 1989-90.

"It's the first time we've won it with as many games to go, that means a lot. We've had an incredible season and now we want to celebrate that a bit," said Modric. Ancelotti rested Benzema and Vinicius Junior from the start for the visit of Espanyol, and Rodrygo seized his chance with two goals late in the first half. He combined with fellow Brazilian Marcelo to put Madrid ahead on 33 minutes as he steered into the far corner for only his second league goal this campaign.

Mariano Diaz, handed a rare start in attack, then

won the ball deep in Espanyol territory and Rodrygo rolled in a second with a clinical finish past goalkeeper Diego Lopez. Eduardo Camavinga played in Asensio to slam in a third for Madrid on the counter on 55 minutes, with Modric then making way for Toni Kroos and Benzema replacing Casemiro on the hour. Benzema notched his 42nd goal in as many games this season across all competitions to seal a runaway triumph for Madrid on a historic day for Ancelotti.

Villarreal suffered a 2-1 defeat at bottom side Alaves three days ahead of the second leg of their Champions League semi-final tie with Liverpool. Atletico Madrid could risk missing out on a return to Europe's top club competition after losing 2-0 to Athletic Bilbao. Copa del Rey winners Real Betis can reduce the gap to fourth-placed Atletico to a single point if they win away to Getafe on Monday, while Barca host Mallorca on Sunday. —AFP

### Football 'super agent' Raiola dies aged 54

MILAN: Mino Raiola, one of football's most powerful agents whose high-profile clients included Paul Pogba and Erling Haaland, has died at the age of 54, his family announced on Saturday. "In infinite sorrow we share the passing of the most caring and amazing Football Agent that ever was," the Italian's family said in a message on Twitter. "Mino fought to the end with the same strength he put on negotiation tables to defend our players. As usual, Mino made us proud and never realised it."

Raiola's family did not say from what illness he had been suffering but he had been at Milan's San Raffaele hospital where he had previously survived scares. His death comes two days after Italian media reported he had died only for his agency, the head of San Raffaele's intensive care department and eventually the man himself to deny he had passed away.

Raiola built up a glittering portfolio of players, which also included AC Milan forward Zlatan



Mino Raiola

Ibrahimovic, over a long career as both one of the sport's most influential agents and most controversial characters. Public reaction was relatively muted from his stable, although late on Saturday Borussia Dortmund striker Haaland, one of football's hottest talents, posted a picture of himself with Raiola on Twitter with the

short message "The best".

He attracted criticism due to the enormous sums he earned in commissions from his deals and the huge inflation in player salaries - which have risen to previously unimaginable levels since the 1990s - that he helped to fuel. Raiola was born in Nocera Inferiore in southern Italy but in 1968, still only a one-year-old, he was taken with his family to Haarlem in the Netherlands. He began his working life at his family's pizzeria in the medieval city before beginning his long march to becoming one of the most powerful agents in football. —AFP

### American teenager Knighton fourth fastest over 200m

PARIS: American teenage sprint sensation Erriyon Knighton became the fourth fastest man over 200 metres on Saturday when he timed 19.49 seconds at the Baton Rouge meet destroying his own Under-20 world record of 19.84sec in the process. The 18-year-old's time blitzed those of sprint legends Carl Lewis and Tommy Smith and places him behind only Jamaica's world record holder Usain Bolt (19.19sec), another Jamaican Yohan Blake (19.26) and American Michael Johnson (19.32).

Knighton burst onto the scene last year when



Erriyon Knighton

aged just 17 he qualified for the Tokyo Olympics and finished fourth in the 200m final behind Canada's Andre de Grasse. Knighton's time on Saturday is way ahead of Bolt's best prior to his turning 20 of 19.93sec. Knighton will have his sights set on the world outdoor championships in Eugene, Oregon, (July 15-

24) provided he comes through the qualifiers (June 23-26) at the same venue.

Elsewhere on Saturday Botswana's Letsile Tebogo set a new Under-20 world record in the 100m as he ran 9.96sec in Gaborone to take a hundredth of a second off American Trayvon Brommell's previous mark. —AFP

### Unseeded Wang stuns Yamaguchi to win Asia title

MANILA: Unseeded Wang Zhiyi withstood a late fightback from world champion Akane Yamaguchi to record a stunning victory in the women's final of the Badminton Asia Championships on Sunday. Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia took the men's title with a 21-17, 23-21 win over Indonesia's Jonatan Christie - then tore off his sweaty top and hurled it into the Manila crowd in celebration.

China's Wang, ranked 16th in the world, needed treatment on a back injury but hung on to beat the Japanese top seed and defending champion Yamaguchi 15-21, 21-13, 21-19 in 78 minutes of pulsating action that had the raucous crowd rocking. "I think it's something I couldn't have imagined because before the competition everyone including myself didn't think that I could achieve these results," the 22-year-old said after winning the biggest title of her young career.

"This was a very difficult match because my

opponent is a world-class athlete, but I think I was in the right frame of mind to battle her. My goal is to win every competition so I hope I can keep up with these better performances, be resolute and work harder."

As in her semifinal win Saturday over second seed An Se-young of South Korea, Wang had to recover from the loss of the opening game. After levelling the match, the up-and-coming Chinese player looked to be heading for a comfortable victory as she raced into a 16-5 lead in the decider, before nerves and her nagging back kicked in to give Yamaguchi a lifeline.

The Japanese player used all her experience to claw her way back as Wang began to make unforced errors and Yamaguchi levelled at 19-19 after a lung-bursting 30-shot rally. But Wang, who moments earlier had needed attention from the trainer at the side of the court, summoned up reserves of energy and forced Yamaguchi to go long to set up a first championship point. —AFP



Wang Zhiyi

### Trabzonspor win Turkish Super Lig

ISTANBUL: Trabzonspor on Saturday won the Turkish Super Lig title for first time in 38 years as they clinched the trophy with three matches to spare. Fans from the Black Sea team flooded the pitch to celebrate the triumph minutes before the end of a 2-2 home draw against Antalyaspor. It is the club's seventh league title in its history, and first since 1984.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan took to Twitter to congratulate the club and its fans "with my most heartfelt feelings", using a hashtag #SampiyonTrabzonspor (#ChampionTrabzonspor in English). Trabzonspor fans also took to Taksim square in Istanbul to celebrate the title. —AFP



ISTANBUL: Trabzonspor fans celebrate in Taksim Square after winning the Turkish Super Lig championship football title for first time in 38 years on April 30, 2022. —AFP