



# Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed elected president of UAE

## Kuwait Amir mourns passing of Sheikh Khalifa, congratulates new leader



UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

**ABU DHABI:** The UAE's long-time de facto ruler Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan was elected as president on Saturday, official media said, a day after the death of former leader Sheikh Khalifa. The 61-year-old was unanimously elected by the Federal Supreme Council, WAM news agency said, becoming the ruler of the oil-rich country founded by his father in 1971.

Sheikh Mohamed, often known as "MBZ", met members of the Federal Supreme Council, made up of rulers of the UAE's seven emirates, as the country enters a period of mourning for his half-brother Sheikh Khalifa.

The Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Friday expressed heartfelt condolences on death of Sheikh Khalifa, saying Arab and Islamic nations lost "a great leader" who dedicated his life for service of his people, defending Arab and Islamic causes. The Amir Sheikh Nawaf on Saturday sent a cable of congratulations to Sheikh Mohamed, expressing felicitations after he was unanimously elected as the new UAE president.

Sheikh Mohamed's ascension formalizes his position as leader of the state of 10 million. Under his direction, the United Arab Emirates

has put a man into space, sent a probe to Mars and opened its first nuclear reactor, while using its oil-funded clout to develop a more assertive foreign policy. Official media had already named Sheikh Mohamed as the ruler of Abu Dhabi, the UAE's richest emirate, on Friday, inheriting one of the main titles held by Sheikh Khalifa who died at 73.

Sheikh Mohamed, wearing a light grey kandura or robe, was a pallbearer at the funeral prayers for Sheikh Khalifa who was laid to rest in Abu Dhabi's Al Bateen Cemetery just hours after his death was announced, in accordance with Muslim tradition. Flags are at half-mast around the UAE and businesses and government offices are closed for three days as the country enters a 40-day period of mourning for Sheikh Khalifa, who had ruled since 2004.

Sheikh Mohamed, who was named crown prince of Abu Dhabi in November 2004, is the third son of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan - the revered founder of the UAE. He has been serving as deputy commander of the armed forces and chairman of the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi, which controls the substantial finances of the emirate which sits on 90 percent of the country's oil production. — Agencies



UAE's late President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

SEE PAGES 2 & 3

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ ذَاتِ الْمُرْتَبَةِ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِلِّيِّينَ

**IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE GRACIOUS, THE MERCIFUL**

On the sad occasion of the passing of

His Highness Sheikh

**KHALIFA BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN**

The late President of the United Arab Emirates

**Zain Group Board of Directors, Executive Management,  
and all employees**

wish to offer their sincere and heartfelt condolences to:

**The UAE, its leadership, government, and people, and all Arab and Islamic nations**

He will always be remembered as an esteemed global leader that will forever remain  
in the hearts of all humanity

May God bestow mercy on his soul and may he eternally rest in peace



## Local

# Kuwait's Amir pays tribute to 'great leader' Sheikh Khalifa

## Sheikh Nawaf sends condolences on UAE President's passing

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Friday expressed heartfelt condolences for death of President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, saying Arab and Islamic nations lost "a great leader" who dedicated his life for service of his people, defending Arab and Islamic causes. His Highness the Amir extended deepest condolences on behalf of the government and people of Kuwait in cables of condolences to UAE Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, their families and the people of the UAE. The State of Kuwait, in a grievance over the demise of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, "will always remember his honorable positions towards the (Kuwaiti) just causes during the Iraqi invasion," said His Highness the Amir. He prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow the UAE people with solace, and commended the development that took place during the reign of the deceased which contributed to advancement of the nation. His Highness the Amir announced a 40-day mourning period, flags flown at half-mast and government departments would be off duty for three days starting Friday, May 13.

His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent cables of condolences for Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid and Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed

over the passing away of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince expressed condolences for the Emirati people, describing the deceased as "a great leader" who was a staunch defender of Arab and Islamic causes. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince also praised the "honorable" position of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed towards Kuwait's just causes during the Iraqi invasion and commended his contribution to the development of the UAE. His



### Kuwait remembers Sheikh Khalifa's honorable positions

Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

#### Cementing joint Gulf action

Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem on Friday sent a cable to his Emirati counterpart Saqr Ghabash, offering sincere and heartfelt condolences over the demise of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In the cable, the speaker prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow much mercy over the soul of the deceased and to grant

his family and UAE people more patience. Ghanem paid tribute to the late UAE president as having devoted his life and effort to serving and developing his homeland, and cemented joint Gulf action.

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Friday sent a cable of condolences to his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan over the passing away of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In the cable, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf recalled several achievements and comprehensive renaissance made in all fields in the UAE during the tenure of Sheikh Khalifa, the ministry's media department said in a press statement. The Kuwaiti minister also remembered Sheikh Khalifa's sincere efforts made in serving Arab and Muslim nations' issues, it added. Expressing his heartfelt condolences, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow his mercy on Sheikh Khalifa's soul, and bring solace to his family and UAE's people, according to the statement.

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Sabah Friday expressed heartfelt condolences in cables sent to senior Emirati officials over the death of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Sheikh Talal Khaled sent the cables to UAE Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed forces Sheikh



MANAMA: In this file photo taken on December 20, 2004, United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan attends the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Manama. — AFP

Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan as well as Minister of State for Defense Affairs Mohammad bin Ahmad Al-Bowardi. The Kuwaiti minister recalled Sheikh Khalifa's big role in backing and promoting the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and joint action amongst Gulf states, the Defense Ministry said in a statement. Sheikh Khalifa's achievements and stances greatly contributed to constructing a modern state in all fields, Sheikh Talal said. He prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy on Sheikh Khalifa's soul, and bring solace to his relatives and the people of the UAE, according to the statement.

GCC Secretary General Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf expressed deepest condolences for passing away of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Friday. Hajraf, in a statement, said the deceased spent his life in the service of people, nation, Arab and Islamic nations. He expressed heartfelt condolences for the GCC leaders, Al Nahyan family and the Emirati people over the demise of Sheikh Khalifa who was a "Gulf, Arab and international leader." Hajraf said Sheikh Khalifa contributed to supporting of cooperation march among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. — KUNA

## Kuwait's Amir congratulates new UAE president

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday sent a cable of congratulations to the newly proclaimed UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. His Highness the Amir expressed felicitations to Sheikh Mohamed after he was unanimously elected by members of the Federal Supreme Council as the new UAE president, expressing wishes for Sheikh Mohamed so he may be successful in following steps of the late presidents, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

His Highness the Amir wrote that with the demise of Sheikh Khalifa, he lost a dear brother, while the UAE people, Arab and Muslim nations lost a great leader who dedicated his life for his people, country and the Arab nation, noting his role in maintaining peace and stability in the region and lauding the close and cordial ties bonding the two families (Al-Sabah and Al Nahyan), the two countries and the brotherly peoples of Kuwait and the UAE. Meanwhile, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed cables of identical content to Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday sent a cable of congratulations to UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum on election of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan as the UAE president. His Highness the Amir wished welfare for the new UAE president and the country. Meanwhile, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed cables of identical content to the Dubai Ruler on the same occasion.

Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem on Friday sent a cable to his Emirati counterpart Saqr Ghabash, congratulating him on the election of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In the cable, the speaker said: "Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed is the best successor to the best predecessor. We pray to Allah Almighty to help him do what is good for the UAE and its brotherly people."

GCC Secretary-General Nayef Al-Hajraf on Saturday congratulated Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan as he was named the UAE president. In a press statement, Hajraf voiced confidence that the UAE's march would go on steadily and strongly amid the smooth power transition and consensus on the election of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed as an "inspirational leader for a bright future". He added that while ushering in a fresh landmark stage led by Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, the UAE would certainly complete its pioneering role and bolster its accomplishments and look forward to future so confidently and firmly as a development model that gains the world's respect and admiration. The GCC chief highly commended the great backing of the UAE president, together with other GCC leaders, for the Gulf bloc with a view to attaining its goals and shoring up Gulf integration. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah writes in a book of condolences at the UAE Embassy in Kuwait City on May 14, 2022. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis writes in the book of condolences.



Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani writes in the book of condolences.

## Kuwait's foreign minister pays tribute at UAE embassy

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah has expressed heartfelt condolences to the leadership, government and people of the UAE on

demise of President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The minister, in a condolence note at the UAE embassy in Kuwait on Saturday, expressed deep condolences and consolation on the presi-

dent death, recalling his paramount role in the UAE prosperity and development as well his role in cementing the brotherly Kuwait-UAE relations. Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser also underscored his distinguished role as a Gulf-Arab-international leader, praying to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon his soul and aid the bereaved Al Nahyan family and the UAE people with patience to cope with the great loss. —KUNA



Head of Armenian church in Kuwait Bedros Manuelian writes in the book of condolences.



Patron of the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church in Kuwait Anba Bishop Bigol writes in the book of condolences.

## Kuwait mosques perform absentee funeral prayers



KUWAIT: Absentee funeral prayers were performed in mosques around Kuwait upon the late UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. — KUNA photos

# President Sheikh Khalifa witness to UAE's boom

## Sheikh Khalifa contributed to multi-faceted development

**ABU DHABI:** President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who died on Friday, was a reserved figure who saw the United Arab Emirates skyrocket on the global scene. Sheikh Khalifa, who died at the age of 73, succeeded his father, the late UAE founding president Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, as ruler of Abu Dhabi, the largest and wealthiest of the seven-member UAE.

Khalifa bin Zayed took over as the UAE's second president in November 2004, succeeding his father as the 16th ruler of the emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the country's seven cities and until 1971 an independent emirate. Sheikh Khalifa was at the helm of the UAE as it began its global rise, with service-oriented Dubai emerging as a global tourism and trade hub and Abu Dhabi pumping oil as a key OPEC player. He came to the rescue of Dubai when it was hit by the global financial crisis in 2009, extending a multi-billion-dollar lifeline to the debt-laden emirate.

### First elections

In a show of gratitude, Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum suddenly announced the world's tallest tower, the Burj Khalifa, would be named after the president. The tower was initially dubbed Burj Dubai. The leader ushered in the UAE's first-ever elections in December 2006, when handpicked electoral colleges chose half of the 40 members of an advisory

Federal National Council. Sheikh Khalifa said the polling, in which women took part both as voters and candidates, would culminate in direct elections.

During the first years of his reign, Sheikh Khalifa appeared inclined to perpetuate his father's foreign policy of non-interference. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed was born in the oasis of Al-Ain, his father's hometown, which did not have schools at the time. He studied the Holy Quran. In 1969, Sheikh Khalifa was named crown prince of Abu Dhabi at the age of 21. Two years later, he became Abu Dhabi's prime minister. As president, the sheikh was commander in chief of the UAE's armed forces and headed Abu Dhabi's Supreme Petroleum Council, which exerts wide powers in the energy sector. Like his late father, Sheikh Khalifa maintained close links with various local tribes, often hosting their leaders in his palace.

### Multi-faceted development

Sheikh Khalifa, who succeeded founder of UAE Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan on November 4, 2004, took the country from the phase of foundation to empowerment. During his 18-year reign, Sheikh Khalifa contributed to improvement of competitiveness index of nation which became the second largest economy in the Arab region. The UAE took large strides towards achievements, becoming the first Arab and Islamic country to reach Mars and one among very few to reach space. Sheikh Khalifa



**DUBAI:** A billboard displays the portrait of late UAE's President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan in the Emirate of Dubai on May 14, 2022. —AFP

launched, shortly after assuming office, his first government strategy for a balanced and sustainable development to achieve prosperity for citizens.

Sheikh Khalifa, who continued the legacy of his father Sheikh Zayed for security and stability, supervised development of sectors of oil and gas, and manufacturing industries which diversified economy. The late President also launched housing, road, educational and social projects, as well as

proposing an initiative to develop the legislative authority by allowing elections of half of the Federal National Council. He was re-elected as president in 2009 and continued his contributions to a multi-faceted development. Sheikh Khalifa was named Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi in 1969, became Prime Minister of Abu Dhabi district in July 1971 and named Deputy Commander of UAE Armed forces in 1976. — Agencies



**ABU DHABI:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah offers condolence over the passing of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. — KUNA

## Kuwait Amir's envoy offers condolence over Sheikh Khalifa's passing

**ABU DHABI:** Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation on Saturday offered condolence to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

and Al Nahyan family sheikhs over the passing of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

His Highness the Prime Minister's accompanying delegation comprises Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Advisor at His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Dr Basel Humoud Al-Sabah. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was seen off at the airport by First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Head of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Dakheel Al-Dakheel. — KUNA

## Sheikh Khalifa man of peace: Human Fraternity Committee

**ABU DHABI:** The Higher Committee of Human Fraternity (HCHF) has mourned the death of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who passed away on Friday. In a statement, the HCHF said Sheikh Khalifa departed after a journey full of giving, during which he planted goodness, compassion and peace for all of humanity following in the footsteps of his wise father, the late founding father of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

The HCHF appreciated Sheikh Khalifa's tremen-

dous efforts to promote values of coexistence, compassion and tolerance. "As the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity mourns the late Sheikh Khalifa, it extends its sincere condolences to His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the patron of human fraternity - and to the people of the United Arab Emirates," the statement added.

The General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers has mourned the passing of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In a statement, the General Secretariat extended its members' heartfelt condolences to the UAE leadership, government and people on the loss of a great leader and prayed to Allah Almighty to grant Sheikh Khalifa eternal peace and his family and the UAE people patience and solace. —WAM

## Tributes pour in after passing of UAE president

**DUBAI:** Tributes poured in from around the world on Friday after the United Arab Emirates announced the passing of its president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

### United States

President Joe Biden said Sheikh Khalifa was "a true partner and friend of the United States", adding the US "will honor his memory by continuing to strengthen" relations with the UAE.

### Russia

"Sheikh Khalifa did much to strengthen friendly relations and constructive cooperation," President Vladimir Putin said, adding that the late president would be remembered for the "remarkable progress" the UAE had made during his rule.

### European Union

European Council President Charles Michel said it was "with sadness" that he had learned of Sheikh Khalifa's death. "The EU honors his legacy and leadership under which the UAE became frontrunner of sustainable development and economic diversification."

### Britain

In a condolence message to the crown prince, Queen Elizabeth II said: "Your distinguished brother devoted his life to serving the people of the United Arab Emirates and his relationship with its allies and friends. He will be long remembered by all who work for regional stability, understanding between nations and between faiths, and for the conservation cause."

### France

President Emmanuel Macron said: "My thoughts go out to his brother Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, to his whole family and to the Emirati people."

### India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted he was "deeply saddened" over the news, saying Sheikh Khalifa "was a great statesman and visionary leader under whom India-UAE relations prospered".

### Pakistan

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif tweeted he was "grieved to hear about the passing" of Sheikh Khalifa, adding: "UAE has lost a visionary leader and Pakistan a great friend."

### Palestine

President Mahmud Abbas said he "mourns" for the UAE.

### Jordan

Jordan expressed the "deepest sympathies of King Abdullah and the people of Jordan, as they stand with the people of the UAE in these difficult times".

### Egypt

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said Sheikh Khalifa was a "loyal friend in all circumstances and conditions".

### Iran

In a letter to his UAE counterpart, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian expressed "grief and regret" over Sheikh Khalifa's death.

### Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia said it "shares the UAE people's sorrows" over the death of the president.

### Qatar

Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani offered "the brotherly people of the UAE my deepest condolences and sympathy". —AFP



**ABU DHABI:** The flag of United Arab Emirates flies at half-mast outside the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi on May 13, 2022. —AFP

## Sheikh Khalifa laid to rest



**ABU DHABI:** Late UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan was laid to rest at Al-Bateen Cemetery in Abu Dhabi on May 13, 2022. Senior UAE sheikhs and officials led the funeral prayer and processions. — AFP photos

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# Kuwait expats face problems sending food outside country

## COVID, Ukraine war blamed for ordeal

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Many expats send foodstuff to their families and children in their homelands by land or air due to the reasonable prices of food in Kuwait. But recently, several residents have complained of the difficulty in shipping food products outside Kuwait, saying shipping companies have stopped accepting their shipments due to the coronavirus situation and the war in Ukraine. Kuwait Times spoke with a number of overland shipping offices to find out whether new laws have been imposed on sending foodstuff outside Kuwait.

Ahmad Mostafa, who works at a shipping company in Hawally, told Kuwait Times that many parents send food supplies to their children studying abroad, mostly in Jordan, Egypt and Syria. "Recently, the customs in Sulabiya made it hard to ship these kinds of items, especially to Egypt. Legally, there is no law to stop such shipments, but it depends on the customs employees, if they allow them to pass or not," Mostafa said.

According to Hassan Awad, his office has stopped accepting any orders to ship to Egypt. He said this

saves the company time at overland customs clearance, as some customers are not honest about what is in their cartons, which makes it difficult for the company to declare the actual items on the truck. "Shipping food items from subsidized rations distributed to Kuwaitis is on the forbidden list, which some customers try to manipulate and send to their family abroad in various ways," Awad said.

procedures in dealing with shipped foodstuff, as the shipping company must obtain approval from the food authority and register what is being exported from Kuwait to other countries," he pointed out. "Accordingly, information about foodstuffs and their type and validity should be recorded on the customs declaration, even if the shipment is personal."

Regarding the current laws and instructions in this regard, the source said the General Administration of Customs issued instruction no. 31 of 2022 regarding preventing the export of vegetable oils, as the export and reexport of vegetable oils is prohibited from April 1, 2022 until June 31, 2022. On March 12, 2020, the customs issued instructions (no. 30 of 2020) to ban the export of all goods and food products outside the country, except for those that have written approval from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The source affirmed that shipping ration products is a crime punishable by law. "Ration food products are on the main list of goods whose export is restricted. Based on law no. 10 of 2003 and resolution no. 30 of 2003, a fine amounting to the value of the smuggled food items will be imposed and the items will be confiscated," he explained.



### Some shipping companies 'don't follow rules'

A source at the overland customs clearance in Sulabiya told Kuwait Times shipping companies do not follow the restrictions imposed by the customs. "Land shipping companies must follow the correct

disseminate data culture in the digital community - from data analysts to application developers, e-commerce professionals, web authors, and all types of digital content creators."

She pointed out that the Bank aims to educate and enhance participants' knowledge of data visualization and the latest digital analytics techniques, which is why Gulf Bank is encouraging all members of the community to participate, with the only requirement for participation being participants' interest in learning more about data and digital technologies.

#### New Technologies

She added: "At Gulf Bank, we believe that providing a datathon competition will encourage more people to innovate digitally, enabling participants to experiment with modern technologies and techniques to provide the best digital expertise to Kuwaiti society."

She noted also that the public has the opportunity to attend three free training workshops hosted by data experts at Gulf Bank. The workshops will focus on data science, web and app analytics, and the latest data visualization techniques. Participants can attend one or more workshops and apply what they have learned in the competition.



Mai Al-Owaish

#### Digital Transformation

"At Gulf Bank, we have taken the responsibility to contribute to Kuwait's digital transformation and Kuwait Vision 2035, and we are committed to hosting events and using our resources to develop a local tech-savvy community. In fact, the Datathon is one of several steps aimed at providing society with a new set of skills and challenges, helping future generations to use data to achieve our sustainable development goals, strengthen the economy, and contribute to our society's collective benefit through digital data and services," said Owaish. To register for the competition, please visit the Datathon page on Gulf Bank's website.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

### News in brief

#### School closed Sunday, tests can be moved to Monday

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Education announced that public and private schools will be closed on Sunday, May 15, as Kuwait observes a state of mourning on late UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan's passing. Any tests set for Sunday can be moved to Monday, it added.

#### Kuwait condemns Sinai attack

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Friday strongly condemned a "cowardly terrorist" attack on a security checkpoint in northern Sinai, Egypt, which killed and injured a number of servicemen. The State of Kuwait expresses full solidarity with Egypt and supports all measures taken by the government of Cairo to preserve security and stability as well as confronting terrorism and extremism, the foreign ministry said in a statement. It offered condolences for the families of the victims, Egyptian leadership and people, and wished speedy recovery for the wounded.

#### Kuwait oil price at \$115.20 pb

**KUWAIT:** Price of Kuwaiti oil went up by \$3.01 to \$115.20 per barrel on Friday compared with \$112.19 pb on Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said in a statement on Saturday. Globally, price of the Brent crude rose by \$4.10 to 111.55 pb, while West Texas Intermediate crude increased by \$4.36 to \$110.49 pb.

## Gulf Bank launches competition for digital data, analytics enthusiasts

**KUWAIT:** As part of its efforts to support digital transformation and achieve the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035, Gulf Bank will launch its first "Datathon" competition which will be open to all digital data and analytics enthusiasts aged 18 years and above. The Datathon is set to take place over a two-day period, from May 27-28.

The winners of the competition will receive financial rewards worth KD 1000 in the "Data Modeling and Visualization" category, KD 500 in the "Data Visualization" category, and KD 500 in the "Digital Analytics" category.

In this regard, the Head of the Digital Transformation and Innovation Unit at Gulf Bank, Mai Al-Owaish, said: "This event will enhance and

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## Kuwait Airways attends AUM career fair

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Airways Corporation concluded its participation in the career fair organized by American University of the Middle East on May 10-12. The airline received students who wish to work at KAC. Director of Human Resources at KAC Ahmad Al-Bannai said KAC's participation in the job opportunities exhibition aims at attracting young talents of new graduates and encouraging them to join the marketplace, as KAC focuses on supporting youth and training them to become effective elements in the society.



## Twelve injured in Jleeb elevator collapse

**KUWAIT:** Firemen rescued 12 persons who suffered fractures and bruises when an elevator cabinet fell down, while two other persons were not harmed. Investigations are underway to determine the cause of the accident which happened in a Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh building, Kuwait Fire Force said. Meanwhile, firemen battled a blaze in an air conditioning unit on top of a building in Mubarakiya Market. The fire was very limited and did not cause any damage, Kuwait Fire Force said, noting that an investigation was opened to reveal its cause.





G7 nations 'won't recognize' borders redrawn by Russia

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Muslim refugees in Athens seek own cemetery

## South Asia pummeled by heatwave

Temperature hits 50 degrees Celsius in Pakistan

**JACOBABAD:** South Asia was in the grip of an extreme heatwave on Friday, with parts of Pakistan reaching a temperature of 50 degrees Celsius as officials warned of acute water shortages and a health threat. Swathes of Pakistan and neighboring India have been smothered by high temperatures since April in extreme weather that the World Meteorological Organization has warned is consistent with climate change. On Friday, the city of Jacobabad in Sindh province hit 50C (122 degrees Fahrenheit), the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said, with temperatures forecast to remain high until Sunday.

"It's like fire burning all around," said laborer Shafi Mohammad, who is from a village on the outskirts of Jacobabad where residents struggle to find reliable access to drinking water. Nationwide, the PMD alerted temperatures were between 6C and 9C above normal, with the capital Islamabad—as well as provincial hubs Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar—recording temperatures around 40C on Friday. "This year we have jumped from winter right into summer," said PMD chief forecaster Zaheer Ahmad Babar.

Pakistan has endured heightened heatwaves since 2015, he said, especially in upper Sindh province and southern Punjab province. "The intensity is increasing, and the duration is increasing, and the frequency is increasing," he told AFP. Jacobabad nurse Bashir Ahmed says that, for the past six years, heatstroke cases in the city have been diagnosed earlier in the year—starting in May, rather than June or July. "This is just increasing," he said. Far worse may be on the horizon for South Asia as climate change continues apace, top climate scientists have said.



JACOBABAD, Pakistan: Women walk towards their homes carrying drinking water in containers during heatwave in the outskirts of Jacobabad, in southern Sindh province. —AFP

### 'Take cover'

Punjab province irrigation spokesman Adnan Hassan said the Indus river—Pakistan's key waterway—had shrunk by 65 per cent "due to a lack of rains and snow" this year. Sheep have reportedly died from heatstroke and dehydration in the Cholistan Desert of Punjab—Pakistan's most populous province, which also serves as the national breadbasket.

"There is a real danger of a shortfall in food and crop supply this year in the country should the water shortage persist," Hassan said. Pakistan's climate minister Sherry Rehman this week warned residents in the megacity of Lahore "to take cover for the hottest hours of the day". The heatwave has also ravaged

India, with temperatures in parts of Rajasthan hitting 48.1C on Thursday and expected to hit 46C in Delhi anytime from Sunday.

Suman Kumari, 19, a student who lives in northwest Delhi, told AFP: "It was so hot today that I felt exhausted and sick while returning from college in a bus. The bus seemed like an oven. With no air conditioning, it was sizzling hot inside," she said. Most schools have declared summer holidays from Monday for junior classes. Heatwaves were also predicted in parts of northwest India including areas of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh—collectively home to hundreds of millions of people—over the coming days.

But some respite is expected when the southwest

monsoon makes its advance into the Andaman Sea and adjoining Bay of Bengal around May 15, said the India Meteorological Department. As power outages exacerbate heatwaves, India plans to lease abandoned coal pits to private mining companies, a government official said on Friday, in an effort to ramp up production. Pakistan has also faced severe power outages, with some rural areas getting as few as six hours of electricity a day.

### Rapid glacier melt

Home to 220 million—Pakistan says it is responsible for less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. But it ranks as the nation eighth most affected

by extreme weather events, according to a 2021 study by environmental group Germanwatch. Extreme heat can also trigger cascading disasters that could pummel Pakistan's generally impoverished population.

The mountainous portions of the country are home to more than 7,000 glaciers, a number larger than any region outside the poles. Quickly melting glaciers can swell lakes, which then burst their banks and unleash torrents of ice, rock and water in events known as glacial lake outburst floods. Last weekend a key highway bridge in the Gilgit-Baltistan region was swept away in flash flooding caused by glacier melt. In April, officials warned there were 33 lakes in Pakistan in danger of unleashing similar dangerous deluges. —AFP

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ اجْعَلِي إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكِ مَرْصِيَةً فَأَدْخِلِي فِي ذِيكَ وَأَدْخِلِي حَيْثُ

With deep sorrow and sadness  
We offer our sincere condolences to  
The wise leadership in the UAE  
and  
the Emarati people  
on  
the passing of

**Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

"Verily to God we belong and verily to Him we shall return"

**Kutayba Yusuf Alghanim**

Executive Chairman of Alghanim Industries

*May God bestow mercy on his soul and may he eternally rest in peace.*

## International

# Outcry after Zionist police beat mourners at journalist's funeral

## Violence clouds Jerusalem funeral of Al Jazeera journalist

**JERUSALEM:** The US and EU led an international outcry Saturday after Zionist police charged the funeral procession of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and beat pallbearers who almost dropped her coffin. Thousands of mourners packed Jerusalem's Old City on Friday for the burial of the 51-year-old Al Jazeera journalist, two days after she was killed during a raid in the occupied West Bank. Television footage showed pallbearers struggling to stop Abu Akleh's casket from falling to the ground as baton-wielding police charged towards them, grabbing Palestinian flags.

The United States was "deeply troubled to see the images of Zionist police intruding into her funeral procession," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said. The European Union condemned what it said was "unnecessary force" used by the Zionist police. Zionists and the Palestinians traded blame after Abu Akleh was shot in the head on Wednesday near Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank. She had been wearing a helmet and a bulletproof vest marked "Press".



### Pallbearers almost dropped her coffin

Abu Akleh, a Christian and a Palestinian-American, was a highly respected reporter and her funeral drew massive crowds. As her body left St Joseph's hospital in annexed east Jerusalem, Zionist police stormed mourners who had hoisted Palestinian flags. Police said about "300 rioters" had arrived at the hospital for the procession and "prevented the family members from loading the coffin onto the hearse to travel to the cemetery - as had been planned and coordinated with the family in advance".

The police then intervened "to disperse the mob and prevent them from taking the coffin, so that the funeral could proceed as planned", they said, adding glass bottles and other objects were thrown at officers. The Jerusalem Red Crescent said 33 people were injured, of whom six were hospitalized. The Zionist police said they arrested six people. Police then tried briefly to prevent thousands of mourners from following the coffin to the cemetery, but ultimately relented and did not intervene as

Palestinian flags were raised, AFP reporters said.

The United States, European Union and United Nations have backed calls for a full investigation into her killing. Zionist entity has publicly called for a joint probe, which the Palestinian Authority has rejected. A PA official said on Saturday that the authority would welcome the "participation of all international bodies in the investigation". "What happened in her funeral yesterday by the #occupation forces reinforces our position that rejects #Zionist participation in this investigation," Hussein al-Sheikh added on Twitter.

### 'Sister of all Palestinians'

Grief over Abu Akleh's killing spread beyond



**JERUSALEM:** Palestinian mourners carry the casket of slain Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh from a church toward the cemetery, during her funeral procession in Jerusalem, on May 13, 2022. —AFP

the Palestinian territories, with protests staged in Turkey, Sudan and elsewhere. She "was the sister of all Palestinians," her brother Antoun Abu Akleh told AFP. Fresh violence erupted Friday in the West Bank, including a raid and clashes around Jenin refugee camp that claimed the life of a Zionist officer.

Police said the commando, father of six Noam Raz, was wounded "during a shootout with armed terrorists," and later died. The Islamic Jihad group said its fighters were responsible. The Palestinian health ministry said 13 Palestinians were wounded in the clashes, one of them seriously. An AFP pho-

tographer said Zionist forces had surrounded the home of a suspect, besieging two men inside and firing anti-tank grenades at the house in an effort to flush them out.

Tensions were already running high after a wave of anti-Zionist attacks that have killed at least 18 people since March 22, including a police officer and two Ukrainians. A total of 31 Palestinians and three Arabs (of Zionist entity) have died during the same period, according to an AFP tally, among them perpetrators of attacks and those killed by Zionist security forces in West Bank operations. —AFP

## G7 nations 'won't recognize' borders redrawn by Russia

**WANGELS:** The Group of Seven industrialized nations said Saturday they would never recognize the borders Russia is trying to shift by force in its war against Ukraine and pledged enduring support for Kyiv. Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24 but Kyiv's forces managed to push Moscow's troops back from the capital. The conflict is now well into its third month.

"We will never recognise borders Russia has attempted to change by military aggression, and will uphold our engagement in the support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea, and all states," the G7 foreign ministers said in a statement after three days of talks in northern Germany.

The ministers were joined in the resort of Wangels by their counterparts from Ukraine and Moldova, as well as EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. In their joint statement, they vowed to expand sanctions to include sectors on which Russia is dependent and keep supplying Ukraine with weapons to help it repel Russia's invasion. "We reaffirm our determination to further increase economic and political pressure on Russia, continuing to act in unity," they said.

When asked if allies want to see Russia pushed out of Crimea-annexed in 2014 - as well, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said it should be up to Ukraine to "decide by themselves about their country". "It's their territory and we support every measure and every step they are taking to ensure that people in Ukraine... can live as everybody else in Europe again-in peace but also in security and freedom in their own country," said Baerbock, whose country currently holds the presidency of the G7.

### 'Coordinated response'

Western countries have supplied Ukraine with artillery, anti-aircraft missiles and anti-tank weapons, among others. Borrell had also on Friday pledged an extra half a billion euros in EU military aid to help Kyiv repel the Russian invasion, but Kyiv has been pushing allies for more support.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Friday said he has asked the G7 to seize Russian assets and hand them over to Ukraine. Baerbock noted that Canada has already taken the lead in taking such a measure but she said Europe is bound by different legal imperatives that would have to be navigated. "If we were to take this path... it would have to be done in such a way that it stands up to our law," said Baerbock. As the war drags on, the G7 foreign ministers also highlighted the growing impact of the war on poorer countries, especially in the area of food security.

"We are determined to accelerate a coordinated multilateral response to preserve global food security and stand by our most vulnerable partners in this respect," they said. In another nod to the growing global impact of the conflict, the ministers also warned China against undermining punitive action against Moscow for its invasion. They also slammed Belarus over its stance on the war. "We... call on Belarus to stop enabling Russia's aggression and to abide by its international obligations," they said. —AFP

## Macron starts second term with challenges mounting

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron formally begins his second term in office on Saturday, maintaining suspense about his new government ahead of parliamentary elections next month that will shape his next five years in power. The 44-year-old scored a solid victory in April 24 presidential polls against far-right leader Marine Le Pen, but still needs a majority in parliament to be able to push through his domestic reform agenda.

The identity of Macron's new government is expected to set the tone for campaigning, with the president suggesting he intends to name only the second woman prime minister in modern French history. Speculation has been rife in the French media, with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay and current Labor Minister Elisabeth Borne seen as possible candidates, but Macron has taken his

time to name a replacement for outgoing Premier Jean Castex. "It's been decided, but no one knows who it is," a presidential advisor told AFP on condition of anonymity.

An announcement is expected early next week. Macron's Republic on the Move party has been renamed Renaissance ahead of the parliamentary polls on June 12 and 19, with several centrist and centre-right parties set to compete under the collective pro-Macron banner of "Together". France's splintered left-wing parties have also agreed a tie-up under the leadership of former Trotskyist Jean-Luc Melenchon who has set his sights on a parliamentary majority to thwart Macron's plans.

"To go from around 60 MPs (in the current parliament) to a majority is highly improbable, but the dynamic created by the new union could mean they make major progress," Frederic

Dabi, head of the Ifop polling group, told AFP this week. Le Pen's National Rally and France's ailing mainstream right-wing party, the Republicans, are also hoping to bounce back from their disappointment in the presidential election by securing significant representation in the 577-seat parliament.

### 'Combination of challenges'

Macron won re-election with promises to continue his broadly pro-business and pro-EU policies of his first term, with more tax cuts, welfare reform and pledged a new emphasis on environmental protection for the next five years. The biggest change is expected to be in his style of governing. The former investment banker repeatedly promised "a new method" that will be less top-down-a move designed to tackle his reputation for elitism and high-handedness. "For it to work, there needs to be results that are concrete and visible to people," Bernard Sananes, the head of polling group Elabe, told AFP. "If it's just about showing you're listening to people, that's great but it won't be enough." —AFP



**PARIS:** France's President Emmanuel Macron waits on the doorsteps of the Elysee presidential palace for the arrival of Argentina's President before a meeting in Paris on May 13, 2022. —AFP

## China struggles with an invisible enemy

**SHANGHAI:** Leaving a fine mist of disinfectant in their wake, China's hazmat-clad health workers are cleaning homes, roads, parcels and even people-but more than two years into the pandemic, experts say it is a futile measure against COVID-19. China is tied to a zero-COVID strategy, wielding snap lockdowns, mass testing and lengthy quarantines as part of unrelenting efforts to quash virus outbreaks no matter the cost to the economy or freedoms of its people.

Among its arsenal of virus controls is disinfectant spraying, which a top Shanghai official earlier this month lauded as a key part of a "grand assault" on the virus. Footage shows legions of "big whites"-as health workers in hazmat suits are referred to in China-spraying apartments with a virus-killing haze after their inhabitants have been taken into state quarantine.

The sight has become one of the most visual expressions of China's zero-COVID policy, which has taken on a political dimension as President Xi Jinping has pegged the legitimacy of his leadership on protect-

ing Chinese lives from COVID. Personal possessions and home furnishings lie amid clouds of cleanser, the images show-while in other cases the targets are city streets, walls and parks.

But such labor-intensive campaigns are relatively pointless against a virus that spreads through droplets expelled in coughs and sneezes into the air, experts told AFP. "Since infection through touching contaminated surfaces is not an important route of transmission, extensive and aggressive use of disinfectant is not necessary," said Yanzhong Huang, senior fellow at the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations. Transmission through contaminated surfaces and objects is possible but comparatively rare.

The odds have not deterred China's disinfectant sprayers. Shanghai alone had sterilized 13,000 areas as of May 2 under a policy targeting infected people's homes, apartment blocks and "preventative" disinfection of entire compounds, vice-mayor Liu Duo said. The city has seethed for weeks under a shifting mosaic of lockdowns that have seen some of its 25 million residents scuffle with police and unleash a flood of fury and frustration on social media.

### Beds, clothes, scooters

In one social media video verified by AFP, a hazmat-

### Why was a new PM appointed?

Wickremesinghe was tapped to replace Mahinda Rajapaksa, the elder brother of the president and the head of a dynasty that has dominated Sri Lanka's politics over the past two decades.

Mahinda resigned on Monday after his supporters attacked demonstrators who had been protesting peacefully against the government for weeks. At least nine people were killed and more than 200 injured in ensuing clashes, with dozens of Rajapaksa loyalist homes set on fire by furious mobs. Mahinda has since been banned by a court from leaving the country and fled the capital Colombo. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa appointed Wickremesinghe in the hopes of forming a unity government and heading off calls for his own resignation.

### Can Wickremesinghe form a govt?

Wickremesinghe is seen as a pro-West, free-



**SHANGHAI:** Local residents queue with umbrellas for nucleic acid tests for the COVID-19 coronavirus in a compound under lockdown in the Pudong district in Shanghai. —AFP

suited health worker brandishing a powerful hose sprays clouds of disinfectant on a resident's bed, desk and clothes. Other clips show workers wandering through streets and housing compounds, casually spritzing walls, scooters-and even the ground while residents line up for tests. One Shanghai resident told AFP his home was sterilized twice after they returned from quarantine, with his family being ordered to wait outside for an hour each time. Experts struggled to see the necessity of the measure for maintaining public health. —AFP



**Ranil Wickremesinghe**

market reformist, and his appointment could help expedite an urgently needed bailout from the International Monetary Fund. But one senior opposition lawmaker has already rebuffed an offer to helm the finance ministry, and four opposition parties have said his premiership is illegitimate. It is also doubtful whether a unity government under Wickremesinghe will be enough to calm public anger if President Rajapaksa continues to resist calls for his resignation. —AFP

## Sri Lanka political deadlock: What happens next?

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's new prime minister has suffered early setbacks as he struggles to form a unity government that can steer the island nation through its crippling economic crisis. Ranil Wickremesinghe, 73, was appointed late Thursday by the country's deeply unpopular president, but several opposition parties have already said they will not support his premiership. AFP reviews Sri Lanka's political deadlock and what could happen next.

## International

# N Korea reports new deaths, battles COVID-19 outbreak

## 21 new 'fever' deaths; more than half a million people sick

SEOUL: North Korea announced 21 new "fever" deaths Saturday and said more than half a million people had been sickened nationwide, two days after confirming its first cases of COVID-19. Despite activating its "maximum emergency quarantine system" to slow the spread of disease through its unvaccinated population, North Korea is now reporting tens of thousands of new cases daily. On Friday alone, "over 174,440 persons had fever, at least 81,430 were fully recovered and 21 died in the country", the official Korean Central News Agency reported.



Actual number of COVID cases could be higher

North Korea confirmed that the highly contagious Omicron variant had been detected in the capital Pyongyang, with leader Kim Jong Un ordering nationwide lockdowns. It was the North's first official admission of COVID cases and marked the failure of a two-year coronavirus blockade maintained at great economic cost since the start of the pandemic. From late April to May 13, more than 524,440 people have fallen sick with fever, KCNA said, with 27 deaths in total.

The report did not specify whether the new cases and deaths had tested positive for COVID-19, but experts say the country will be struggling to test and diagnose on this scale. North Korea has said only that one of the first six deaths it announced Friday had tested positive for COVID-19. "It's not a stretch to consider

these 'fever' cases to all be COVID-19, given the North's lack of testing capacity," said Cheong Seong-chang of the Sejong Institute. "The actual number of COVID cases could be higher than the fever figures due to many asymptomatic cases," he said, adding that the pace of infection was growing "very fast".

### 'Great upheaval'

Kim said the outbreak was causing "great upheaval" in North Korea, as he oversaw a second Politburo meeting in three days to discuss the situation. Kim is putting himself "front and centre" of the country's COVID response, said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "The language he's used suggests the situation in North Korea is going to get worse before it gets better," he told AFP.

"Engagers see this rhetoric preparing the way for international assistance, but Kim may be rallying a population on the verge of further sacrifice," he added. The meeting of the nation's top officials discussed medicine distribution and other ways of "minimizing the losses in human lives", KCNA said. North Korea has a crumbling health system—one of the worst in the world—and no COVID vaccines, antiviral treatment drugs or mass testing capacity, experts say.

But the country will "actively learn" from China's pandemic management strategy, Kim said, according to KCNA. China, the world's only major economy to still maintain a zero-COVID policy, is battling multiple Omicron outbreaks—with some major cities, including financial hub Shanghai, under stay-at-home orders. North Korea has previously turned down offers of COVID vaccines from China and the World Health Organization's Covax scheme, but both Beijing and Seoul issued fresh offers of aid and vaccines this week.

Kim's comments indicate North Korea "will try get-



PYONGYANG: This picture taken on May 14, 2022 shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un taking part in Workers' Party of Korea council to check the operational status of the maximum emergency measurement to prevent the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus infection. — AFP

ting supplies from China", said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. It also looks likely Pyongyang "will adopt a Chinese-style anti-virus response of regional lockdowns", Yang added. So far, Kim said Saturday, North Korea's outbreak was not "an uncontrollable spread among regions" but transmission within areas that had been locked down, KCNA said.

### Nuclear activity

Despite its COVID outbreak, new satellite imagery indicates that North Korea has resumed construction at a long-dormant nuclear reactor. "I can't tell you when the reactor will be ready to go, but it is about

10x larger than the existing reactor at Yongbyon," Jeffrey Lewis of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies wrote in a Twitter thread Saturday.

It would produce 10 times more plutonium for nuclear weapons, he said, adding: "This would make good on Kim's pledge to increase the number of nuclear weapons." The United States and South Korea have warned that Kim is preparing to conduct another nuclear test—which would be the regime's seventh—and that it could come any day now. Analysts have warned Kim could speed up his nuclear test plans in a bid to "distract" North Korea's population from a disastrous COVID-19 outbreak.—AFP

## 27 killed in fire in India capital

NEW DELHI: At least 27 people died and dozens more were injured in a massive fire in a building in the Indian capital New Delhi on Friday, emergency services said. The large fire broke out at a four-storey commercial building in west Delhi in the late afternoon, but its cause was not immediately clear.

"Twenty-seven charred bodies were recovered from the building and almost two dozen injured are undergoing treatment," Satpal Bharadwaj, who was in charge of operations for the Delhi Fire Service at the scene, told AFP. Bharadwaj said there were about 70 people in the building when the blaze erupted. "There was no fire exit and most of the people died due to asphyxiation," he said, adding that more would be known after autopsies could be conducted.

The official said "almost two dozen" were injured and undergoing treatment, but earlier, deputy chief fire officer Sunil Choudhary told AFP that the number of injured stood at "more than 25 people". Choudhary added that some had jumped from the burning building. Broadcaster NDTV, meanwhile, reported that more than 40 people had sustained burns and were hospitalized. While Bharadwaj said the cause was still not known, he did say the building was used for "offices and storage for paper packing material."

NDTV quoted police official Sameer Sharma as saying the building housed the office of a security camera and router manufacturing company. Several officials said they believed the death toll could rise. More than 30 fire trucks were at the scene, along with ambulances. Amit Mahajan, whose cousin and nephew were missing after the fire, told AFP they had been at the building to "train workers". "I have visited all the nearby hospitals but there is no trace of them. We are not sure about their safety or whereabouts," he said.

### 'Tragic'

Fires are common in India due to poor building practices, overcrowding and a lack of adherence to safety regulations. A police officer told AFP on condition of anonymity that one of the office owners has been detained for questioning. The officer was unable to explain the reasons for his detention but said that more arrests could follow. The Indian capital of 20 million people is currently suffering through a heatwave, with temperatures of up to 46 Celsius (115 Fahrenheit) recorded in some places. Last month, the heatwave caused a huge trash dump to catch fire.

It burned for days, adding to the megacity's deadly air pollution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences to loved ones of the fire victims via Twitter. "Extremely saddened by the loss of lives due to a tragic fire in Delhi. My thoughts are with the bereaved families. I wish the injured a speedy recovery," Modi said.—AFP



NEW DELHI: National Disaster Response Force members and firefighters inspect a commercial building a day after a fire broke out in New Delhi on May 14, 2022. — AFP



ATHENS: Esfandiyar Fagkiri, 38, sits next to the grave of his son Hasibollah, who was accidentally killed last year at the age of 5 by a truck in a Greek migrant camp, at the Orthodox cemetery of Schisto, on the western outskirts of Athens. — AFP

## Muslim refugees in Athens seek own cemetery

ATHENS: Standing by the tiny grave of his five-year-old son in the Orthodox Christian cemetery of Schisto on the outskirts of Athens, Esfandiyar Fagkiri says he feels a "dual pain". Not only has he lost one of his five children, but the Afghan family cannot mourn him according to Muslim religious ritual because the cemetery is Christian.

Hasibollah Fagkiri was hit and fatally injured by a truck in January 2021 while playing with other children near the entrance to the Malakassa migrant camp, north of Athens, where he had been living with his family since September 2020. NGOs and local authorities blamed the accident on the camp's poor safety conditions and said it should be shut down. After burying their son, the Fagkiris were shocked to be told that his body must be exhumed after three years—in 2024.

This is standard procedure in Greek cemeteries due to a chronic lack of space—especially in the greater Athens area where more than a third of the country's population of over 10 million live. But for Hasibollah's grieving family, it is unthinkable. Islam does not allow exhumation or cremation and in the Muslim religion, the body remains buried forever, Fagkiri pointed out. But for people without a paid family grave, "exhumation after three years is mandatory," insisted Dimosthenis Stamatatos, head of an association of municipalities near the cemetery of Schisto.

### Growing numbers

The remains of the dead are often kept in a special annex of the cemetery church. Greece is a predominantly Orthodox Christian country, and Muslim cemeteries can only be found in Thrace, a region in the northeast of the country near the Greek-Turkish border, 750 kilometers from Athens. The area is home to a centuries-old Muslim minority, a legacy of the Ottoman Empire's presence in the area.

In Athens, the number of Muslims used to be negligible, but this has changed in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis. There are now about half-a-million Muslims in the Greek capital after successive migration waves and the arrival of thousands of families from the Middle East, North Africa and the Indian subcontinent fleeing war and poverty. Thrace is too far away for most families to bury their dead there, and the cost of transferring the bodies is prohibitive.

"Given the high cost of transferring the dead to Thrace, the number of burials of Muslims in Orthodox cemeteries in Athens has increased in recent years," Rezaei Mohtar, president of the Afghan community, told a press conference last week. The COVID-19 pandemic has made things even harder for grieving families, he said. According to Javed Aslam, a leading member of the Pakistani community in Greece, Muslim migrant communities have long been calling for a cemetery in Athens.—AFP

## Somalia holds long-delayed election

MOGADISHU: Somalia will hold a long-awaited presidential election on Sunday, ending months of delays, with the new leader set to confront huge challenges including a grinding Islamist insurgency and a punishing drought that has sparked famine fears. The troubled

Horn of Africa nation has been grappling with a political crisis since February 2021, when President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed's term ended without a new vote.

The 39 candidates include the incumbent, better known as Farmajo, as well as past presidents Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and former prime minister Hassan Ali Kheyre. Puntland state president Said Abdullahi Dani and former foreign minister Fawzia Yusuf Adan—the lone female contender—are also among the record number of candidates vying for the top job. All have vowed to tackle Somalia's myriad problems and bring relief to citizens weary of violence by Al-Shabaab jihadists, surging inflation and a worsening drought.—AFP

إِنَّمَا الْمَسْئَلَةُ لِنَبِيِّهِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَارْضَوْا بِرُضْوَانِهِ وَارْضَوْا بِرُضْوَانِهِ

## AlMailem Group & ENOC

extend their deepest and heartfelt condolences to the leaders and people of UAE on the sad demise of

His Highness  
**SHEIKH KHALIFA  
BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN**

The late President of UAE

May Allah Almighty  
grant him eternal peace.



ALMAILEM GROUP



# Business

SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2022

## Lebanese activists launch mock 'lollar' banknotes

### Pound collapse, frozen accounts lead to a confusing currency system

BEIRUT: Lebanese activists Friday rolled out mock banknotes featuring paintings of a gutted central bank or the Beirut port explosion to denounce high-level corruption that has helped to wreck the country. The collapse of the Lebanese pound and frozen bank accounts have left Lebanon with a confusing currency system, with a multitude of exchange rates applying to various situations in daily life. The dollars stuck in accounts that citizens can only withdraw in Lebanese pounds at a fraction of their original value are known locally as "lollars".

With parliamentary elections two days away, the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) decided to take the joke to the streets, with a stunt encouraging people to use "lollars" for the day. The "monetary disobedience" campaign, entitled "Currency of Corruption", encourages people to print their own "funny money" at home and try to use it as a means of raising awareness.

"We will not adapt to this mockery anymore, we are #NotPayingThePrice," the LTA said in a statement unveiling the campaign and its hashtag. The mock banknotes feature paintings by acclaimed Lebanon-based artist Tom Young depicting calamities that have hit Lebanon in recent years, from the deadly August 2020 port blast to forest fires, solid waste pollution and shortages.

On one of Beirut's main squares Friday, organizers installed a fake ATM from which passers-by could withdraw "lollars". LTA communications officer Hazar Assi said the campaign was aimed at reminding voters that their current plight was to



BEIRUT: Youth withdraw fake banknotes called "Lollars" from a mock ATM during a stunt to denounce the high-level of corruption that has wrecked the country, in the capital Beirut, on May 13, 2022. —AFP

blame on the country's corrupt hereditary leaders.

"When people vote, they should make a choice based on accountability and rejecting the corruption that is affecting all of our lives," she said. Lebanon's

traditional sectarian parties will seek extend their stranglehold on power in parliamentary elections on Sunday but a new generation of independent candidates are hoping for a breakthrough. —AFP

## Dubai food delivery riders go on strike

DUBAI: Food delivery drivers have staged rare strikes in Dubai, a renowned temple of luxury where fuel prices have spiraled on the back of global inflation sparked by the Ukraine war. The riders, all of whom are foreigners mostly from south Asia, are demanding better pay and have held two strikes this month in the energy-rich Gulf state where industrial action is rare.

"It is impossible to survive in Dubai on what we make," said a 28-year-old Pakistani driver, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal. "After spending on petrol, food and accommodation, I am left with nothing at the end of a day," said the father of two.

The driver, who said he earns around 100 dirhams (\$27) to 150 dirhams a day, said "the hike in petrol prices has hit us hard". "We take up to 15 or 20 orders a day... But I have to shell out anything between 40 and 50 dirhams on petrol. That's in addition to other daily expenses," he said. Like other drivers, he was hired to work for Talabat, part of Germany's Delivery Hero, via a third party sponsor. A Talabat spokesman told AFP earlier this week that drivers earn an average of 3,500 dirhams (\$935) per month, depending on the number of deliveries.

"Yet, we understand economic and political realities are changing constantly, and we will always continue to listen to what riders have to say," he added. Dubai, one of seven emirates that make up

the United Arab Emirates (UAE), ranks among the most expensive cities in the world for expatriates, with a cup of coffee costing \$5. The International Monetary Fund's forecast in April that the war in Ukraine would spark a 3.7 percent cost of living increase in 2022 in the UAE, compared to 0.2 percent last year.

### 'No choice'

The UAE is reliant on the cheap labor of millions of foreigners, mostly from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and African countries. Foreigners account for 90 percent of the 10-million population of the Emirates, the Arab world's second-largest economy after neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Riders on motorcycles are constantly navigating streets between skyscrapers and speeding down highways to deliver food to homes and offices in the wealthy city known for its ultra-consumerist lifestyle. UAE officials did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment on the strikes.

In a global market barely recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, the Pakistani driver said he "had no choice but to join Talabat". "My family (in Pakistan) depends on me," he said, explaining that after spending money on petrol and his daily needs, like internet fees, he has little money left at the end of each month to send home. Talabat said it gives drivers 7.5 dirhams per delivery (around \$2), but riders are demanding a two-dirham increase. The latest protest which began on Monday was the second this month, after drivers for Deliveroo, another popular food delivery app, went on strike at the



DUBAI: In this file photo taken on April 16, 2020 an employee of a delivery company prepares to leave on an errand in Dubai. —AFP

start of May after company plans to increase their working hours and cut their pay.

Deliveroo was quick to react, saying it had "paused all changes", stressing that its initial intention had been "to propose a more well-rounded earnings structure". Advocacy group Migrant Rights said the gig economy is globally exploitative but "even worse" in Arab Gulf countries where many recruiters under the "kafala" sponsorship system do not meet "their obligations by law." "The protests in the UAE, which were staged at a great risk, reveal the growing frustration amongst those working in this sector," it added. —AFP

## Iranians protest as govt spikes prices of staples

TEHRAN: Hundreds of people have taken to the streets in cities across Iran to protest the government's decision to raise the prices of essential goods, state media reported Friday. Earlier this week, President Ebrahim Raisi announced a series of measures to tackle the country's economic woes, including changing a subsidy system and increasing the prices of several staples including cooking oil, chicken and eggs.

Iran's economy has suffered under stringent sanctions reimposed by the United States after it unilaterally pulled out of a deal with world powers on Iran's nuclear program in 2018.

Official figures put inflation at around 40 percent. Iranians reacted to the move—which took effect on Friday—with protests in several cities over the past two days, state news agency IRNA reported.

More than 20 people were arrested in the southwestern cities of Dezful and Yasuj, where protesters called on authorities to reverse their decisions. Demonstrators in the southern city of Izeh attacked shops and tried to set fire to a mosque, the news agency said. Protests broke out soon after Raisi's announcement late Monday of changes to the subsidy system introduced by his predecessor Hasan Rouhani in 2018, which covered several basic goods.

But he pledged that the prices of bread, petrol and medicines would remain unchanged. To mitigate the impact of the price increases, Raisi said monthly



TEHRAN, Iran: Iranians work at a food store in the capital Tehran on May 13, 2021, as prices on basic goods soar. —AFP

payments of between \$10 and \$13 would be disbursed for each family member of low-income households.

### 'Horrible'

But for some residents of Tehran, the allowance won't do much. Azadeh, a 43 year old housewife, said the changes were "horrible". "The new prices have limited my family's purchasing power for everything (...) prices of food items, fruits and other consumables have risen.", she told AFP in the north of the capital.

The price of cooking oil has almost quadrupled since Raisi's announcement, while the price of eggs and chicken nearly doubled. Mohammad, a 40 year

old private sector employee, said prices were rising "by the hour". "How can people live like this?" he asked. Following Raisi's announcement, people rushed to supermarkets to stock up on goods, videos shared on social media and footage broadcast on state television showed.

The president visited one of the main meat and poultry distribution centers in south Tehran and a supermarket in the city centre, his website said. First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber stressed that rising prices were a global problem not limited to Iran. "Prices in the world have changed... the situation in the region has created problems in the prices of products and the prices of basic goods were set accordingly," IRNA quoted him as saying. —AFP

## Ukraine finance minister eyes reconstruction

KYIV: The war is not over, but Ukraine's finance minister says the first signs of economic recovery are emerging after Russian troops retreated away from the capital and northern areas. "The war continues but we are not seeing the same level of escalation as we saw in the first two months," Finance Minister Sergiy Marchenko told AFP in an interview in his Kyiv office, decorated with Ukraine's blue and yellow flag.

"In the first two months we saw attacks and bombings of large cities," Marchenko said. "Now the military front has been localized to specific territories." Already one of Europe's poorest countries before the Russian invasion began on February 24, Ukraine's economy is now in shambles.

Cities have been leveled by fighting, infrastructure is shattered and over six million people have left Ukraine. A Russian blockade has prevented Ukraine to use its ports to ship its key agricultural exports such as wheat and sunflower oil. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank have forecast that the Ukrainian economy will shrink by between 35 and 45 percent this year.

Marchenko said gross domestic product could contract by as much as 50 percent, with the overall damage from the conflict totaling \$600 billion. Customs duty revenues fell 70 percent compared to pre-war levels and tax collection dropped 25-30 percent. Exports and imports fell by almost half and inflation topped 16 percent in April from a year ago, Marchenko said.

### 'A way to survive'

After fierce Ukrainian resistance forced Russian troops to pull away from areas outside of Kyiv and from northern Ukraine, many residents have returned to the capital and businesses have reopened. Ukraine's central bank has seen "first signs of revival" in April and May, Marchenko said.

"Consumer demand is rising," said Marchenko, who sported jeans and a mustard-colored hoodie for the interview as-like other Ukrainian officials—the 41-year-old minister has traded his formal suit for more casual wear during the war. "As of today, 37 embassies have returned to Kyiv and it gives a signal to citizens to return gradually to Kyiv and renew economic activity," he added.

With heavy fighting continuing in the country's east and south, many companies have relocated to western Ukraine to keep their businesses running. If no default on the payment of the foreign debt or even its rescheduling is envisaged by Kyiv, "we need \$5 billion a month to cover the budget deficit," the minister said. His priority is now to ensure the flow of permanent international financial aid.

"We are asking for a high level of financial support but the price is also high. This for us is a way to survive," Marchenko said. Facing the Kremlin's advancing forces, the economist said Kyiv is "now an outpost for democracy" and defeat is not an option. "We cannot lose this war and we need the arms, finances and sanctions."

Vast amounts of funds are needed not only for the war effort, but also to rebuild Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelensky has already called for a new Marshall Plan—the US economic aid program for the reconstruction of Europe after World War II—for his country. Marchenko said he backed using Russian assets seized abroad to rebuild Ukraine—an idea floated by several Western countries, including the United States.

He also accused Russian forces of mass "robbery" in Ukraine, saying Russian soldiers have stolen from ordinary people's homes as well as grain and "other mineral, raw, intellectual resources." —AFP



KYIV: Ukraine's Finance Minister Sergiy Marchenko speaks during an interview in Kyiv. —AFP



Business

# Musk sends mixed messages on Twitter deal, pressuring shares

## Skepticism grows on whether the deal will close

SAN FRANCISCO: Elon Musk sent mixed messages Friday about his proposed Twitter acquisition, pressuring shares of the microblogging platform amid skepticism on whether the deal will close.

In an early morning tweet, Musk said the \$44 billion takeover was "temporarily on hold," pending questions over the social media company's estimates of the number of fake accounts or "bots."

That sent Twitter's stock plunging 25 percent. Two hours later, the unpredictable Tesla chief executive added a tweet, saying "Still committed to acquisition."

Shares recovered a bit, but traded in the red throughout Friday's session, finishing down nearly 10 percent at \$40.72. While the reliability of user figures is an important benchmark for assessing revenues of Twitter and other social media companies, analysts generally interpreted Musk's messages as an attempt to pull out of the deal or to try to force a lower price.

"Although we never questioned Musk's ability to complete such a transaction from a financial perspective, we thought the biggest risk was Elon himself having a change of heart," CFRA Research's Angelo Zino said in an analyst's note. He said the move gives Musk "leverage" and increases the chance "that he either adjusts his offer price downward or just completely walks away." Meanwhile, Chief Executive Parag Agrawal took to the platform to explain moves earlier this week to shake up company leadership and freeze most hiring. "While I expect the deal to close, we need to be prepared for all scenarios and always do what's right for Twitter," Agrawal said. "I'm accountable for leading and operating Twitter, and our job is to build a stronger Twitter every day."

### Skepticism in market

The chief of SpaceX as well as Tesla, Musk is currently listed by Forbes as the world's wealthiest person, with a fortune of some \$232 billion, much of it in Tesla stock. Seen by his champions as an iconoclastic genius and by his critics as an erratic megalomaniac, Musk surprised many investors with his pursuit of Twitter. Musk has described his motivation as stemming from a desire to ensure freedom of speech on the platform and to boost monetization of an Internet site that is influential in media and political circles but has struggled to attain profitable growth.

On Tuesday, Musk said he favored lifting the ban on Donald Trump, who was kicked off the platform in January 2021 shortly after the former US president's efforts to overturn his election defeat led to the January 6 assault on the US Capitol. Analysts also have said the site can boost Musk's other ventures, including Tesla, which so far has grown without following the auto-industry custom of spending heavily on marketing. But

markets have shown skepticism since the April 28 announcement that the Twitter board agreed to sell at \$54.20 a share. The share price has lagged that level, suggesting investors viewed deal closure as not assured, and has fallen further as the broader tech market retreated this week.



LOS ANGELES: This illustration photo taken May 13, 2022, displays Elon Musk's Twitter account with a Twitter logo in the background in Los Angeles. — AFP

### 'Horror show'

In his first tweet about the deal Friday, Musk linked to an article from May 2 referencing Twitter's latest filing to US regulators. The document said an internal review showed Twitter had 229 million "monetizable daily active users" in the first quarter of this year, and just five percent were regarded as false or spam accounts. Analyst Dan Ives from Wedbush said the "circus show" was likely to translate into a "Friday 13th horror show." "The nature of Musk creating so much uncertainty in a tweet (and not a filing) is very troubling," he said. Musk has gotten into hot water with regulators over his tweets in the past, but the Twitter purchase agreement includes a clause specifying that he is free to tweet about the deal provided his posts "do not disparage the company or any of its representatives."

Market analyst Susannah Streeter of Hargreaves Lansdown said the takeover bid "risks hitting the skids." There will be questions "over whether fake accounts are the real reason behind this delaying tactic," Streeter said, adding that "it may be a strategy to row back on the amount he is prepared to pay to acquire the platform." Musk's potential stewardship of the social media site has hit several bumps since the takeover attempt was made public, and sparked worry from activists, over lifting of the Trump ban as well as the possibility the new owner would open the gates to abusive and misinformative posts.—AFP

## Bonfire of bitcoin: Why crypto assets are tumbling

LONDON: The lightning uptake of crypto assets like bitcoin had swelled a volatile sector to a valuation of roughly two trillion dollars recently. A week-long rout has wiped away tens of billions of dollars from that value and spread panic throughout the market.

### Bitcoin blues

Bitcoin is the premier cryptocurrency and its value accounts for the lion's share of the whole sector. This week, its price at one stage plummeted to \$25,500 — less than half of its record price in November last year and the lowest valuation since it exploded at the end of 2020.

"Fears about rampant inflation and the abrupt ending of the era of cheap money have sent cryptocurrencies careering down a cliff edge," said Susannah Streeter of Hargreaves Lansdown, referring to the new monetary tightening policies of the US Federal Reserve and other central banks.

She said the new environment had prompted investors to "scuttle away from risky assets". Bitcoin began to slide at the same time as stocks in technology companies, but the collapse has been more marked in the volatile crypto sector. Many other coins also lost value, including the second most important, ether, which plummeted by a third in the course of the week.

### Not so stablecoins

As the biggest cryptocurrencies are famously volatile, entrepreneurs invented a theoretically more reliable alternative known as stablecoins. These coins, making up a market worth around \$180 billion according to a March estimate from the US Fed, are pegged to the US dollar or other fiat currencies.

But this week one of the biggest, terra, spectacularly lost its dollar peg and plunged to just 10 cents at one stage on Friday. Terra is one of several such coins to rely on a complex mechanism of trades in other cryptocurrencies to support its

peg, rather than being backed by funds in fiat currencies.

Analysts including JP Morgan warned that terra's death spiral raised wider questions about the viability of stablecoins based on algorithms. The "potential collapse" had also "soured sentiment among crypto investors" more broadly, the US bank said in a note to clients.

### Companies creaking

PayPal's decision to accept bitcoin in late 2020 helped kick off a precipitous rise in the value of crypto assets, driven partly by a sense that the digital tokens could potentially function like currencies one day. But closing payments in crypto remains notoriously expensive, time consuming, energy hungry and unreliable.



Nevertheless, crypto firms found their values exploding—none more than Coinbase, an exchange licensed in the United States and floated on the New York Stock Exchange in April last year. Its shares were worth more than \$400 each at one stage but this week they were barely breaking \$50.

"Volatility is inevitable. We can't control it, but we do plan for it," Coinbase boss Brian Armstrong wrote in a blog on Thursday. "I just know that we will make it through to the other side, and we come out stronger than ever if we focus on what matters: building." — AFP



## مَشْرِكَةُ عَزَائِكُمْ

The Chairman, Board Members, the Executive Management and the staff of  
**Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"**

Would like to extend their heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences to  
**The United Arab Emirates**

on the demise of

**Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

We pray to the Almighty to rest his soul in peace and grant patience  
and solace to his family and the people of United Arab Emirates



## Business

# Lack of competition fueled US baby formula shortage

## FDA bans most foreign infant formula due to poor packaging standards

WASHINGTON: There's no end in sight to America's shortage of baby formula—and the crisis has highlighted the lack of competition that has spread to all parts of the US economy, even essential ones such as food for infants. The problem "is not going to solve itself in a day or week," Brian Deese, a top White House economic advisor, told CNN Friday.

He was unable to say how long the crisis would last. Initially caused by supply chain blockages and a lack of production workers due to the pandemic, the shortage was exacerbated in February when, after the death of two infants, manufacturer Abbott announced a "voluntary recall" for formula made at its factory in Michigan and shut down that location.

The shortage has left many parents frantic and fearful their infants may starve. Formula is a necessity for many families, particularly in low-income households where mothers have to return to work almost immediately after giving birth and cannot breastfeed. A further issue is that prices for the formula that remains have skyrocketed. An investigation by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cleared Abbott's formula but made 483 "observations" about the factory, Abbott said in a statement Friday.

"We immediately began implementing corrective actions and subject to FDA approval, we could restart our Sturgis, Mich, site within two weeks," the company said. The FDA promised to announce plans next week that would allow, among other things, the import of formula produced overseas.

### 'Matter of weeks'

The FDA currently bans most foreign infant formula, including products made in Europe, not because of health concerns but due to labeling and packaging standards. "We believe these and

other ongoing efforts will help dramatically improve the supply in the US in a matter of weeks," FDA head Robert Califf said Friday on Twitter. US President Joe Biden also said it "will be a matter of weeks or less" to start fully refilling shelves. He said that stock levels in stores had begun to stabilize this week.

According to the data collection agency Datasembly, as of Tuesday, 43 percent of the usual formula supply was out of stock, up 10 percent from the April average. Deese stressed that safety was key in solving the formula shortage and said that Biden's administration had been running on all cylinders to try and provide enough supply. Accused of a wait-and-see attitude or even indifference, the White House unveiled some measures Thursday to tackle the issue, but the scope seemed limited. Biden said Friday that his administration had intervened as soon as it was aware of the problem, but that they had to "move with caution as well as speed."

### Just three manufacturers

"The White House... is considering all sorts of options for helping parents, which is good," Amanda Starbuck, a research director at the Food & Water Watch group, a food safety NGO, told AFP.

She said the crisis was indicative of the problem with extreme concentration throughout the food production chain. Three US companies control 95 percent of formula sales, according to Starbuck.

"It matters a little less if... we're talking about soda or chips. But it matters a lot more when we're talking about essential things like milk," she said. The current situation is the result of a decades-long movement. The concentration has benefited US companies that, in the absence of competition,



WASHINGTON: A shopper is reflected in a glass case while looking at baby formula at a grocery store in Washington, DC, on May 11, 2022. —AFP

have been able to agree on prices among themselves, Starbuck explained.

"But the blame is not completely on these companies," she said. "Why has our government allowed for... just three companies to control so much?" Not to mention that the companies' giant size does not make them more efficient. "It's not efficient when there's a single recall that affects

every single parent across the country who needs to feed their child," she said. Starbuck said it's time to turn back the clock, even if it means dismantling the huge corporations. "What we need to do now is pass comprehensive antitrust legislation in order to better scrutinize companies, to break up companies that have gotten so big that they're abusing their market power," she said. —AFP

## Thousands of Argentines protest inflation

BUENOS AIRES: Thousands of Argentines brought central Buenos Aires to a standstill on Thursday in another massive protest against the South American country's soaring inflation. The "Federal march for work and salaries, and against hunger and poverty" was bolstered by thousands of people arriving from outside the capital, heeding the call from multiple unions and left-wing groups critical of center-left President Alberto Fernandez's social policies.

Calls to protest have become more frequent since the start of the year, as the Argentine economy shows no signs of stemming its inflationary trend. In the first four months of 2022, prices rose 23 percent, including a 6 percent jump in April, according to figures published Thursday.

Having already recorded inflation of over 50 percent in 2021, the current rate would surpass even the worst estimates of 60 percent by the end of the year. Protesters are also angry at the government's budgetary restraint, a necessity during debt renegotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which will see the country reduce its annual deficit from three percent of GDP in 2021 to zero by 2025. Argentina's left and far left have little clout at the ballot box but a great capacity to organize street protests.

They are vehemently opposed to repaying Argentina's \$44 billion IMF debt, and demand more generous social aid packages. One of their main slogans is: "the debt is to the people."

While the administration has tried to limit expectations of more aid, splits have begun to appear in the government coalition, with Vice President Cristina Kirchner, the former president, openly criticizing Fernandez. "I don't think we will honor all the expectations, all the confidence, all the hope that has been placed in us," she said several days ago, in a veiled barb at the president.

In recent weeks, Fernandez boosted by 50 percent food vouchers for the poor, increased pensions for those working in the informal sector, and also hiked the minimum wage from 38,940 to 45,540 pesos (\$319 to \$373). —AFP

## US stocks finish bruising week on positive note

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks rebounded Friday after a bruising week beset with worries over inflation, the Ukraine war and the economic outlook. Following a strong session in Europe and Asia, Wall Street closed the week robustly, with the tech-rich Nasdaq jumping nearly four percent and the S&P 500 pushing back above 4,000 points. But even with Friday's rally, all three major US indices posted losses for the week. Gregori Volokhine of Meeschaert Financial Services warned "it will take more than one session" to turn around the market, adding that there was no clear news catalyst for Friday's gains.

Analysts at Briefing.com said the turnaround was largely due to "a sentiment-driven trade wrapped up in the notion that stocks are deeply oversold and due for a bounce." Stocks were under pressure for most of the week as fresh data showing elevated US inflation deepened expectations for aggressive action from the Federal Reserve as it tightens monetary policy. —AFP

## Toyota hits global sales milestone of over 20 million electrified vehicles

KUWAIT: Reinforcing its commitment to accelerating its drive to achieve carbon neutrality and create sustainable mobility for all, Toyota Motor Corporation recently celebrated a remarkable milestone with cumulative sales of electrified vehicles surpassing more than 20 million units worldwide at the end of February 2022. Toyota estimates that the use of its electrified vehicles has resulted in around 160 million fewer tons of CO2 emissions and has saved approximately 65 million kiloliters of gasoline to date.

Long-recognized as a pioneer in the development of eco-friendly vehicles, Toyota has adopted a multi-faceted approach that emphasizes 'Sustainable and Practical' solutions as part of its strategy to respond flexibly to the global demand for diverse mobility solutions. In 1997, the company launched the iconic Prius, the world's first mass-production Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV), followed by the introduction of the first Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV), the Prius PHEV. In 2014, the world's first mass-produced hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV), the Toyota Mirai, was launched and is being well-received by customers across the globe.

"We are thrilled to achieve this significant milestone," said Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. "This is a testament from our valued customers around the world to the quality, durability, and reliability of our electrified vehicles.



We are extremely grateful to each and everyone of them for continuously supporting Toyota's drive to achieve carbon neutrality."

Fujita added: "We remain committed to pursuing various technology options that are both sustainable and practical as we continue on our journey towards 'Creating Mobility for All' and 'Producing Happiness for All.'" The company's sales of electrified vehicles in the Middle East are growing year on year, demonstrating increasing public awareness of the benefits electrified vehicles offer in terms of efficiency, performance, and sustainability. Toyota currently offers the biggest line-up of electrified vehicles in the region, with a total of six HEV models including the Corolla, Camry, C-HR, Corolla Cross, RAV4, and Highlander. Meanwhile, Lexus continues to set new standards for sustainability in the luxury segment, where customers can choose from the Lexus ES, LC, LS, NX, and RX, models.

Toyota's electrified vehicle strategy centers on a significant acceleration in the development and launch of diverse electric powertrains, including HEVs, PHEVs, FCEVs, and Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs). In December 2021, the company unveiled its BEV strategy, which includes plans to launch 30 models in the passenger and commercial segments by 2030. The ambitious roadmap also targets



achieving 3.5 million annual electrified vehicle sales worldwide before the end of the decade.

This drive to improve and increase the diversity of electrified powertrain options reflects Toyota's commitment to reducing the environmental impacts of manufacturing and driving vehicles across the globe and achieving carbon neutrality throughout its operations. The company has set a series of targets inspired by key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are designed to embed sustainability throughout its entire operations.

## Hungary holds up EU plan to ban Russian oil

BRUSSELS: The European Union's hopes to quickly impose a ban on Russian oil imports could be dashed after Hungary demanded expensive guarantees for its own fuel supplies, diplomats say. "I am sure we will have an agreement—we need this agreement, and we will have it," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told reporters Friday in Germany as G7 ministers met.

But he added if EU diplomats could not overcome resistance among certain member states, then foreign ministers meeting Monday in Brussels would need to "provide the political impetus".

The European Union has already imposed five rounds of sanctions against the Russian economy and individuals in President Vladimir Putin's inner circle in response to the invasion of Ukraine. A sixth round would add some names to the sanctions list and hit some Russian media outlets, but most importantly include a ban on Russian crude oil imports. EU chief Ursula von der Leyen's European Commission has drawn up a proposed text for such a package, but this needs unanimous approval of all 27 EU member states.

Hungary is holding out, and several of

its neighbors who are also highly dependent on Russian crude for their oil refineries are reluctant to sign up.

### 'We can't accept it'

Brussels is desperate to avoid the appearance of division in the face of Putin's onslaught and Ukraine's plight, and officials are scrambling behind the scenes to patch up a compromise. But, as Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto told the Spanish daily El Pais this week, Budapest has told von der Leyen they have "a problem" with her proposals.

"We can't accept it, unless she offers us a solution," he said. Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, often the odd man out in Brussels' decision making, has informed von der Leyen and French President Emmanuel Macron, who holds the EU presidency, of his concerns.

Hungary is landlocked and, like neighboring Slovakia, all but 100 percent dependent on Russian oil from a single pipeline to supply its refinery, which is calibrated to process only Russian crude. Budapest has demanded to be exempted from the embargo for at least four years and wants 800 million euros (\$830 million) in EU funds to re-tool the refinery and boost the capacity of a pipeline to Croatia. A European diplomat told AFP that Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and even Croatia are queuing up behind Hungary's more vocal opposition with similar demands. The embargo as envisaged by Brussels would see most member states halting Russian crude



A fuel tank at the Duna (Danube) Refinery of Hungarian MOL Company near the town of Szazhalombatta, about 30km south of Budapest. The Duna refinery continues to receive Russian crude through the Druzhba pipeline. —AFP

imports by the end of the year and refined fuels by the end of next.

Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have been offered a two-year derogation to the embargo, but Hungary has dismissed this as insufficient. After the sanctions package was announced with some fanfare on May 4, 10 days of back-room negotiations has failed to find a breakthrough, and tension is mounting. Diplomats in Brussels dismissed reports the oil embargo could be removed from the plan to allow the other much more minor measures to take effect—arguing that

this would be seen as weakness.

"If this package is adopted without an oil embargo, I believe President Putin can celebrate," warned Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. Kuleba, who will join his EU colleagues on Monday, said "it will be the first case when the unity of the European Union will be broken because of the position of one country—Hungary." Hungary has proposed exempting deliveries by pipeline from the export ban. Of the 2.8 million barrels of Russian crude that arrive in the EU every day, only 0.7 million come by pipe. —AFP



Workers of the Ivorian artist Mounou Desire Koffi (not seen) fix the reproduced image on a carpet, one of the stages in the making of artworks with used telephone keyboards in Bingerville, a commune of Abidjan. — AFP photos



Ivorian artist Mounou Desire Koffi cuts out an image on the screen of his artwork reproduced on a carpet of used telephone keyboards in Bingerville.

# IVORY COAST ARTIST RECASTS OLD MOBILE PHONES INTO ART

Stitching together discarded mobile phone keyboards to make art, Ivorian artist Mounou Desire Koffi hopes to raise awareness about pollution. “I wanted to contribute something new,” said the artist, whose work is on display in Abidjan until July. In his studio in Bingerville, near the Ivorian business capital, the 28-year-old describes himself as “young contemporary artist” who wants to stand out from the crowd.

“I’ve been passionate about drawing since childhood. It was always me the

teacher would send to the blackboard to illustrate lessons,” he says. When he decided he wanted to go to art school, his parents, who worked as farmers in southwestern Ivory Coast, had no idea what it was. His art teacher had to visit to persuade them to let him go.

After graduating at the top of his class from the Abidjan Art School, he started looking for old mobile phone keyboards and screens on roadsides, in gutters and in rubbish tips. “Now I have a whole team that is paid according to the quality of

what they turn up with,” he says. “I told them: ‘Stop throwing things away. Bring them to me and we can work with them.’”

**‘Solve a problem’**

In his studio, someone has dropped off bags brimming with mobile phone spare parts. Koffi dives into a pile of keyboards and screens to find those he needs. Placing them side by side on the canvas, he creates colourful human silhouettes in urban settings. Some of his works sell for up to \$1,500. He says the

aim is to try to “solve a problem” in a country where rubbish sorting is almost non-existent, and most household waste ends up in piles in the street.

“Most of my works reflect man’s day-to-day existence in society,” he said. “I think phones are the tools that are most close to us at the moment. We have almost everything stored in our phones.” The artist, who had exhibited his works in Morocco, Belgium and France, says his works seek to spark reflection about waste. “We find all sorts of things in our

dustbins... I’m trying to make people more aware.”

Keen to reflect current debates, Koffi has in his paintings portrayed pollution, but also floods, traffic jams and child soldiers. One of his latest series, titled “Life here”, recounts daily life in Abidjan. After a first exhibition in the coastal town of Bassam, his work is now on show until July at the capital’s Donwahi Foundation. — AFP



Ivorian artist Mounou Desire Koffi selects used telephone keyboards he uses to make his artworks.



Ivorian artist Mounou Desire Koffi makes an artwork with used telephone keyboards.



The Ivorian artist Mounou Desire Koffi traces an image on used telephone keyboards.

## Funny old world: The week’s offbeat news

From demanding parents to Japan’s temples to the tinkle... Your weekly roundup of offbeat stories from around the world.



**Only in India**

Indian parents can be notoriously demanding, none more so than a couple who are suing their son for nearly \$650,000 (626,400 euros) for not giving them a grandchild. Sanjeev and Sadhana Prasad from Haridwar say they exhausted themselves paying for their pilot son’s education and his lavish wedding. They coughed up \$80,000 for the marriage and honeymoon abroad and \$65,000 so he could learn to fly in the United States, only for him to return to India unemployed. “My son has been married for six years but they are still not planning a baby,” the couple said in their court petition. To make matters worse, he won’t move in with them as tradition demands. “At least if we have a grandchild to spend time with, our pain will become bearable,” pleaded the Prasads.

**Off their Potters**

Quidditch players, who run around a field with a stick between their legs, say they want to be taken seriously. The game, which comes from the “Harry Potter” books, is holding its European championships in Ireland in July as it bids to be accepted as a “high intensity sport”. French player Tiphaine Pasquereau insists it is more than just pretending to be flying on a broomstick and demands great skill and verve.

**Stiff drink**

Japanese authorities are investigating how schoolgirls were given hand sanitizer to drink during a 5,000-metre (16,400-foot) walking race. Organizers in Yamanashi mistakenly poured the sanitizer into cups at drinks stations, with one student collapsing after swigging the industrial alcohol. Two others were also taken to hospital. Where’s the money? Embarrassing as that was, it was nothing on the red faces in the Japanese town of Abu where officials mistakenly sent a resident \$360,000 in pandemic aid. Officials immediately visited the person and were promised the money would be returned. But later the recipient said they had “moved the money” and were now “unable to return it”.

**Double fault**

To Rome where the organizers of its big tennis tournament seemed to have pulled off a major coup in getting Peng Shuai, the Chinese star who disappeared after accusing a senior politician of abusing her, back on the court. But as media began asking questions, the organizers had to admit they had confused her with her namesake Zhang Shuai, who is ranked 40th in the world. — AFP



## In new album, Kendrick Lamar delivers introspection and biting social critique

Kendrick Lamar, the rapper whose poignant lyricism has soundtracked the Black Lives Matter movement and compelled many to call him the voice of a generation, dropped his first solo album in five years on Friday. His long-anticipated fifth studio album “Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers” was released to streaming services overnight, and sees Lamar deliver raw self-reflection set against cutting social criticism.

The record is expected to dominate the charts and place the Pulitzer Prize-winning Lamar once again at the center of the American cultural conversation. Born in Compton, California, the 34-year-old artist is renowned as one of contemporary music’s most impactful writers, with his verses offering personal insights while taking on systemic issues such as race relations and structural poverty.

Set to jazz-heavy instrumentals, the Grammy-winner’s music has made him a household name and a rare artist whose work is commercially successful but who is not dependent on constantly churning out content. “Kendrick is a true lyricist,” said Lakeyta Bonnette-Bailey, a professor at Georgia State University who has written extensively on the relationships between rap, politics and social justice.

“The way that he uses metaphors, the way that he hits on certain beats with certain verse... it’s an entire experience,” she told AFP. “He always has something profound to say.” In 2018 Lamar became the first rapper to win the Pulitzer Prize for music, with the award’s board saying his album “DAMN.” was “unified by its vernacular authenticity and rhythmic dynamism that offers affecting vignettes capturing the complexity of modern African American life.”

Stars.” Lamar also featured on a number of songs with fellow artists, including his cousin Baby Keem’s latest album.

But his five-year hiatus from producing solo work had some fans speculating about his possible retirement. Lamar put those rumors to bed last month in announcing his fifth studio record—an 18-track double album that sees the rapper once more turn his socially conscious gaze to our tumultuous era.

Bonnette-Bailey said Lamar had a talent for “letting people inside his mind,” a quality that drew in his listeners. “(He is) telling stories of his own personal struggles through his music, as well as documenting and telling the story of what is occurring in Black America, or in Compton, or in the whole Black diaspora,” she said.

**‘Bare my soul’**

The album’s first track “United In Grief” opens with a choir singing the line “I hope you find some peace of mind in this lifetime,” before Lamar comes in: “I’ve been goin’ through somethin’.” Throughout the album, Lamar meditates on inner demons, repressed emotions, the struggles of family life and the trappings of fame. Spoken-word track “We Cry Together,” which features actress Taylor Paige, portrays a fighting couple whose biting words see personal anger transition into structural rage.

“You the reason why strong women f\*\*\*d up / Why they say it’s a man world / See, you the reason for Trump / You the reason we overlooked, underpaid, underbooked, under shame,” read the lyrics. In “Auntie Diaries,” Lamar critiques society’s treatment of transgender people, while in “Savior” he warns against turning to celebrities for guidance. The album’s cover is a photo of Lamar wearing a crown of thorns and holding a young child, while a woman who appears to be his partner Whitney Alford is in the background, holding an infant.

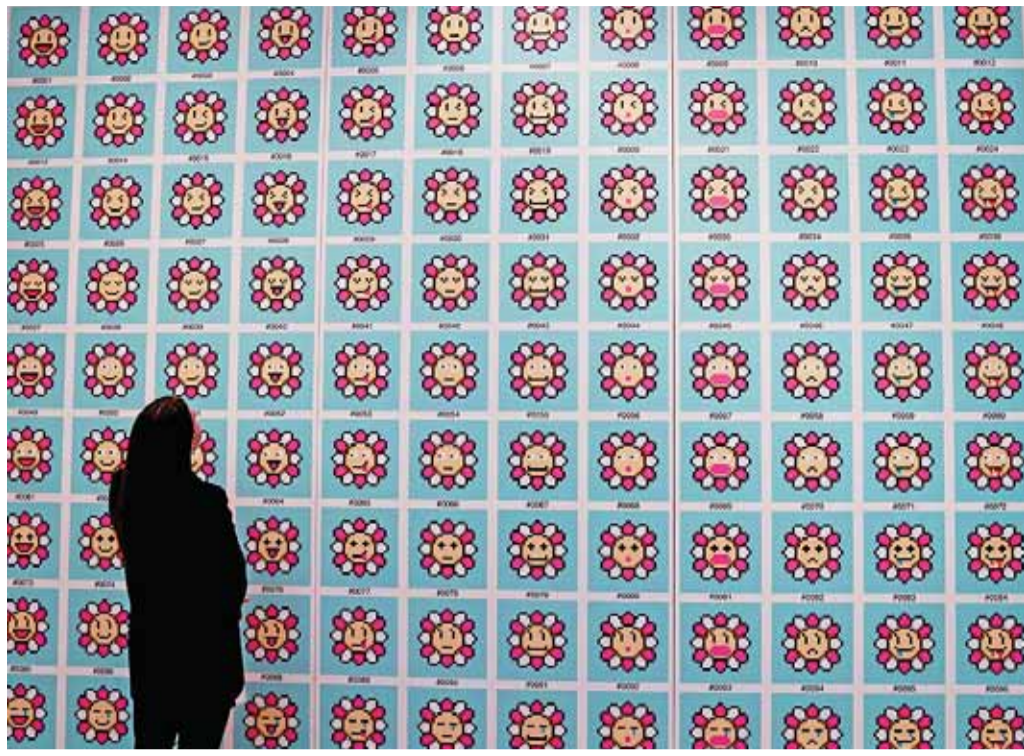
In the raw, soulful track “Mother I Sober,” Lamar lays bare stories of childhood trauma, infidelity and sexual abuse. That track ends with a woman’s voice telling a child: “You did it, I’m proud of you / You broke a generational curse,” before the same choir that began the album closes the track. “Before I go in fast asleep / Love me for me,” they sing. “I bare my soul and now we’re free.” — AFP



In this file photo rapper Kendrick Lamar performs during the 2016 Austin City Limits Music Festival at Zilker Park in Austin, Texas. — AFP

**‘Authenticity’**

Following that historic win, he curated and contributed a number of songs to the soundtrack for the film “Black Panther,” including his Grammy- and Oscar-nominated collaboration with SZA, “All The



A person stands in front of artist Takashi Murakami's '108 Earthly Temptations, 2021-22' during a press preview for 'An Arrow through History' at Gagosian's New York galleries. — AFP photos



A person stands in front of artist Takashi Murakami's 'Flowers'.

# Contemporary art to the metaverse: Takashi Murakami's poppy trip

Takashi Murakami is known for blending pop art and Asian fine arts, but for his latest exhibition in New York, he is moving into the metaverse. At the show "An Arrow Through History" that opened this week at Manhattan's Gagosian Gallery, Murakami builds bridges from traditional fine arts to Japanese pop art to buzzy NFTs—the digital tokens that represent original artwork.

Murakami told AFP he is concerned that younger generations are screen-obsessed and "don't understand the contemporary art history." "They can

enjoy very few things, but with the plus of augmented reality, maybe the young people open their eyes more and then step into the contemporary art scene," the 60-year-old Japanese artist said. Of late, athletes, artists, celebrities and tech stars have been hawking NFTs, which use the same blockchain technology as cryptocurrencies.

"When I work on a creative production, I make no distinction between digital and analog," Murakami said in a statement from Gagosian. "I'm always working in the context of contemporary art, and that context is all about whether

I can be involved in events that manage to trigger a cognitive revolution."

#### 'Into the metaverse'

In one piece, Murakami painted thick canvases and wooden structures the blue and white patterns of fish, inspired by Chinese porcelain vases dating back to the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368). Using Snapchat and an augmented reality filter, visitors can be immersed in the exhibition room via their phones, standing among digital images of fish that swim among the physically real works of art.

"Japanese culture originally came

from the Eurasian continent, and my concept has been to go beyond from there into the metaverse, shooting through the history of art with a single arrow," Murakami said in the statement. The metaverse is an immersive virtual reality which is accessible with augmented or virtual reality glasses, and is a concept that has experienced a boost in recent years.

Stuck at home during the coronavirus pandemic, Murakami told AFP that "I was watching the reality in my house, so that was a very monumental moment." "For us it was getting super stressful

every day, we could not go outside," he said—but his kids could enjoy VR. "That meant I had to change the mind, to fit in with the next generation of my kids," he said. "This is my first answer-the show."

Murakami is also set to open a special exhibition at The Broad contemporary art museum in Los Angeles, titled "Takashi Murakami: Stepping on the Tail of a Rainbow," which will include immersive environments and run from May 21 until September 25. — AFP



A person stands in front of artist Takashi Murakami's 'Murakami.Flower Pink & White'.



A person stands in front of artist Takashi Murakami's NFT project called Murakami Flowers.



A person stands in front of artist Takashi Murakami's 'Avatar HIROPON Style, 2022'.



A person stands in front of artist Takashi Murakami's '#1 Murakami Arhat, 2022'.



Artist Takashi Murakami stands in front of "Grass Carp, 2022" during a press preview for "An Arrow Through History" at Gagosian's New York galleries in New York City.



Gabriella Chu poses in front of artist Takashi Murakami's 'CLONE X ◊ TAKASHI MURAKAMI #2 Lonesome Cowboy, 2022'.



In this file photo taken on October 24, 1996 Spanish Opera singer, Teresa Berganza smiles during a press conference in Madrid.

## Spanish mezzo-soprano Teresa Berganza dies aged 89

Celebrated Spanish mezzo-soprano Teresa Berganza, who performed in the world's greatest concert halls since the 1950s, has died at the age of 89, Spain's culture ministry announced. "We are very sad to learn of the death of Teresa Berganza," the ministry tweeted, saying Berganza had died on Friday. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez hailed her as "one of the greatest female voices in the world." "Her voice, her elegance, her art will be with us forever," Sanchez continued.

The Madrid-born singer specialized in

the works of Rossini and Mozart. She was also famed for her appearances in the leading role of Bizet's famous opera "Carmen". In a message released posthumously by her family to the Spanish media, Berganza said, "I don't want a public announcement or a wake, nothing. "I came into the world without anyone knowing, I want it to be the same when I leave it."

Berganza made her operatic debut in 1957 as Dorabella in Mozart's "Così fan tutte" in at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in southern France. The following year she

made her first appearance in the United States, singing in Dallas alongside Maria Callas in Cherubini's opera "Medea". She went on to sing in the world's most famous concert halls, from Vienna to Milan, via Paris, London, New York and Chicago. Berganza was the first woman to be admitted to the Royal Academy of Arts in Spain and was also awarded an honorary doctorate by Madrid's Complutense University. In 2005 she was awarded the Legion d'Honneur, France's highest honor. — AFP



In this file photo taken in February 1975, Spanish mezzo-soprano Teresa Berganza poses for a picture. Spanish opera singer Teresa Berganza died at the age of 89, announced Spanish media. — AFP photos

## Sports

# Warriors overpower Grizzlies to advance in NBA playoffs

## Boston Celtics stay alive in the East

LOS ANGELES: The Golden State Warriors pulled away late to beat the Memphis Grizzlies 110-96 and reach the NBA Western Conference finals on Friday as the Boston Celtics stayed alive in the East with a 108-95 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks. Klay Thompson drained eight three-pointers on the way to 30 for the Warriors. Stephen Curry added six three-pointers and 29 points as Golden State completed a 4-2 victory in the best-of-seven series. They will face either the Phoenix Suns or Dallas Mavericks, who play a deciding game seven in their series on Sunday.

So will the Celtics and defending NBA champions Milwaukee after Jayson Tatum's 46 points powered Boston to a victory that knotted their series at three games apiece. With his team facing elimination, Tatum came through. He drilled seven of the Celtics' 17 three-pointers to help them withstand a 44-point, 20-rebound performance from Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo and knot the best-of-seven series at three games each. "Our season was on the line," Tatum said. "I knew that and we knew that. We had to give it all we've got."

Antetokounmpo posted the first 40-point, 20-rebound game since Shaquille O'Neal in 2001, but his third 40-point outburst in four games was not enough for the reigning champs to advance. The winner of the series will take on the Miami Heat for a place in the NBA Finals. Tatum reeled off 11 straight Boston points in the fourth quarter to help thwart a rally by the Bucks, who closed a 13-point deficit to four on Antetokounmpo's three-pointer early in the final period. "Huge night by (Tatum)," Celtics coach Ime Udoka said. "Other guys, as well, but (Tatum) definitely needed."

### 'Another level'

It looked briefly as if the Bucks might author another impressive comeback victory, after erasing a 14-point fourth-quarter deficit to win game five on Wednesday. But Tatum and the rest of the Celtics would not let that happen.

"He took it to another level," Boston's Al Horford said of Tatum. "That's what big-time players do in moments like this. He's a special player and he showed it tonight. He's poised, knew when to shoot it and knew when to pass it, knew when to attack. "We put a lot on him and he delivered."

Jaylen Brown scored 22 points, and point guard Marcus Smart added 21 points for the Celtics. Jrue



SAN FRANCISCO: Klay Thompson #11 of the Golden State Warriors takes a shot against Steven Adams #4 of the Memphis Grizzlies in Game Six of the 2022 NBA Playoffs Western Conference Semifinals on May 13, 2022. — AFP

Holiday scored 17 for Milwaukee, and Pat Connaughton with 14 was the only other Bucks player to score in double figures. In San Francisco, it was nip and tuck through three quarters with Curry making two straight baskets to put the Warriors up 78-77 going into the fourth period. Curry scored 11 points in the final quarter and Andrew Wiggins scored 10 of his 18 as the Warriors, down by two with 6:55 remaining, turned the tide.

Draymond Green chipped in 14 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists. Kevon Looney pulled down 22 rebounds for the Warriors, who had a chance to close out the series in the previous game and were blown out by 39 points. They reached the conference finals for the first time since 2019, when the franchise reached a fifth

straight NBA Finals but fell to Toronto in the championship series. "I used to take it for granted," Green said of reaching the conference finals. "I have a much deeper appreciation for it, it's so hard."

The Grizzlies, who eliminated the Warriors in the play-in tournament last year, were without young star Ja Morant, who suffered a bone bruise in his left knee in game four of the series. Dillon Brooks led the Grizzlies on Friday with 30 points and Desmond Bane added 25, but Memphis could not find an answer at the end. "This obviously stings," Grizzlies coach Taylor Jenkins said. "Such a special season with a special group, and I want them to cherish that, remember that, despite this loss." — AFP

## Ukrainians show strength at Deaflympics in Brazil

CAXIAS DO SUL: When Rymma Filmoshkina practiced the hammer throw in the yard near her house in Mariupol at the start of the Ukraine war, her neighbors thought she was throwing a bomb. But her "weapon" isn't one of destruction: it just won the 33-year-old deaf athlete a gold medal at the Deaflympics in Brazil. Thousands of kilometers from the conflict at home, the Ukrainian team is raking in the medals at the Olympics for the deaf, which opened on May 1 and wrap up Sunday in the southern city of Caxias do Sul.

With two days left to go in the Games, Ukraine had a commanding lead in the medal table, with a total of 116 - more than double the second-place United States. "In this event, we show the world we exist: we are Ukraine, a real powerful, independent and democratic country," said Valeriy Sushkevych, president of the Ukraine Paralympic committee. "One soldier called us and said: in between battles, we support you on TV. Your fighting spirit in sports is very important for us," he told AFP.

### 'Really want' peace

Ukraine has a history of punching above its weight in disabled sport. Its Paralympic program owes its success to two and a half decades of specialized schools in every region of the country for children with disabilities, who start participating in sporting programs at an early age, Sushkevych says. Ukraine finished sixth in the medal table at the Summer Paralympics in Tokyo last year, and second at the Winter Paralympics in Beijing in March, just after Russia launched its invasion.

The team's success at the Deaflympics is symbolical - charged: Ukraine had finished second in the medal table at the last three editions of the event - behind Russia, which was banned from all international competitions over the invasion. "I dedicate these medals to Ukraine. I'm very proud to represent my country," said



CAXIAS DO SUL: Ukrainian orienteering athlete Dmytro Levin shows his medals during the 24th Summer Deaflympics, in Caxias do Sul, Brazil, on May 12, 2022. — AFP

a smiling Dmytro Levin, a 24-year-old native of Kharkiv, speaking in sign language after winning two golds and a bronze in orienteering. "I'm happy to have won this medal for Ukraine. But all I really want is peace," said 15-year-old Sofia Chernomorova, who won bronze in badminton.

### 'Didn't hear the sirens'

Filmoshkina said she still remembers the vibrations she felt with every bomb that exploded in Mariupol, the port city devastated by relentless Russian strikes. "A lot of deaf people died because they didn't hear the air raid sirens and went outside at the wrong time," she said. Her teammate Julia Kysylova, who won silver in the hammer throw, said that for a long time, she was sure they would have to cancel their trip for the Games.

"When the war erupted, it was impossible to train. I spent a month sheltering at home," said the 25-year-old athlete from Nova Kakhovka, in the hard-hit southern region of Kherson. She finally managed to flee to Spain, leaving her husband behind. "It was a miracle we managed to cross the border. The trip took more than two days," she said. "After the Games, I hope to go back home and be with my husband," she added. "But I don't know if that will be possible." — AFP

optimism for the season but added that rivals should expect "trouble" if he does not reclaim his world title in Eugene in July. "When I lose I come for blood," he joked.

De Grasse said he was not concerned but admitted that he will have to go home and "work on some things". Britain's sprint heroine Asher-Smith trailed Thomas and Jamaica's Shericka Jackson in the women's 200 metres. "It was my first race and I have to get some more under my belt," she said after Thomas was elated at her victory. "This was a big one to start the season, there was a lot of competition," she said. "I have a will to win, I fight to the end."

### Kibet surprise

Duplantis' appearance had been much-awaited in Doha but the wind forced organizers to delay the contest until Saturday when it will be staged indoors. High jumpers Mutaz Essa Barshim of Qatar and Italian Gianmarco Tamberi also appeared nervous about competing together for the first time since they shared gold in Tokyo. But both were overshadowed by South Korea's Woo Sanghyeok who cleared 2.33 metres.

Barshim was second and Tamberi only seventh. Eighteen year-old Kenyan, Noah Kibet, who burst into the spotlight by taking a silver medal at the world indoor championships in Belgrade in March, won the men's 800 metres against Australian Peter Bol and Canadian Marco Arop in 1:49.08. It was Kibet's first Diamond League race.

## Bairstow, Livingstone trounce Royals in IPL

MUMBAI: Punjab Kings thrashed Royal Challengers Bangalore by 54 runs in the Indian Premier League match on Friday following blistering knocks by Liam Livingstone and Jonny Bairstow. Kings were put in to bat and amassed a challenging total of 209 for nine in 20 overs after Bairstow and Livingstone scored brisk fifties against a faltering bowling line-up of Bangalore at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai. Bairstow hit a 21-ball half-century but was caught by Mohammed Siraj off Shabbaz Ahmed at 66 before Livingstone took charge and scored a 42 ball 70 run knock.

Kings opener Shikhar Dhawan scored a 21 run knock but was clean bowled by Australian Glenn Maxwell in the powerplay. But Bairstow continued with the attack hitting seven sixes and four fours. Skipper Mayank Agarwal tried to accelerate the score but fell to Harshal Patel at 19. Kings tail enders could not capitalize on the brilliant innings by Livingstone who kept losing their wickets. Patel was the top wicket taker for Bangalore and returned with figures of 4 for 34.

Wanindu Hasaranga took two while Maxwell and Ahmad bagged once each. In reply Bangalore lost the momentum in the powerplay after they were down by three wickets for 40. Bangalore skipper Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli opened the innings for the team but could not make a mark with their bats. Kohli scored 20 runs before Kagiso Rabadahe picked him up in the third over followed by du Plessis in the next at 10. Rajat Patidar knock of 26 ended after he fell to Rahul Chahar but Maxwell on the other end tried to accelerate the run scoring. Maxwell scored three fours and a six in his 35 before being caught at long-off by Arshdeep Singh off Harpreet Brar. Bangalore tail enders buckled under pressure and kept losing their wickets at regular intervals, losing four wickets for 38 runs. —AFP

Alison dos Santos of Brazil (47.24) beat American rival Rai Benjamin for the first time in the men's 400 metres hurdles. "I feel so proud. We came here to prove this, now I want the next race," said the Brazilian who took bronze in Tokyo when Benjamin won silver. US world record holder Kendra Harrison took the women's 100 metres hurdles (12.43) in a photo finish decision over Nigerian Tobi Amusan and Jamaica's Britany Anderson.

Dominican Republic's Maurileidy Paulino, silver

## Djokovic extends stay as world number one

ROME: Novak Djokovic took his place in the Italian Open semi-finals on Friday with a 7-5, 7-6 (7/1) win over Felix Auger-Aliassime which guaranteed that he would remain world number one for a 370th week. Top seed Djokovic is chasing a sixth title in Rome ahead of Roland Garros later this month, and needed more than two hours to win a match which featured some magnificent tennis from big-hitting Auger-Aliassime. Canada's Auger-Aliassime crashed in serves of over 200km/h, hitting 11 aces, and showed a wide range of bold shots in his first ever match against 20-time Grand Slam winner Djokovic. The 21-year-old, who won his first ATP tournament in Rotterdam in February, even went toe-to-toe in rallies with Djokovic, drawing applause from the Serb early in the match with one particularly deft drop shot. "He's got the lethal serve, honestly, one thing is to practice another thing is to play against someone in an official match... It was not easy at all for me to return," Djokovic said after the match. "He's also returning well, he's moving well, he's a very complete player. He did ask me to raise the level."

Djokovic showed touches of class, exemplified by a lob at the end of a thrilling rally which broke Auger-Aliassime's serve in game six of the second set to move the 35-year-old 4-2 ahead. Auger-Aliassime brought the crowd to their feet by fighting back to take the set to a tie-break, where his brave resistance finally met its end. Djokovic is top of the bill again on Saturday night for his clash with Casper Ruud where he can claim his 1,000th career victory on way to the final.



ROME: Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates winning the first set against Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime during their quarter finals match at the ATP Rome Open tennis tournament on May 13, 2022. — AFP

Stefanos Tsitsipas made the semis by beating local hero Jannick Sinner 7-6 (7/5) 6-2 in a clash which was stopped for over 10 minutes at match point after a spectator fell ill. Next up Tsitsipas will face Alexander Zverev, who comfortably saw off Cristian Garin, the only unseeded player left in the tournament, 7-5, 6-2. It will be the third time in the space of a month that the German will meet the Greek in the last four, with the pair sharing the honours from clashes in Monte Carlo and Madrid.

### Thrilling Jabeur comeback

Ons Jabeur is in the semis of the women's draw after bouncing back from being a game away from defeat to beat Maria Sakkari 1-6, 7-5, 6-1. Tunisian Jabeur made history last weekend by winning in Madrid to become the first Arab or African player to claim a WTA 1000 title and let out a roar of delight after a magnificent win at the Foro Italico. The 27-year-old looked certain to be heading out after being hammered by world number four Sakkari in the first set and going down 5-2 in the second.

Greece's Sakkari was serving for what appeared to be a routine win but from nowhere Jabeur pushed back, breaking serve in game eight before winning the next seven to go three ahead in set three, a lead which she never relinquished. —AFP

## Lyles claims key win amid League desert storm

DOHA: World 200 metre champion Noah Lyles won the first big sprint clash of the season on Friday at a wind-battered Doha Diamond League meeting when Olympic champion Andre de Grasse finished outside the top three. The fierce desert gusts made it too dangerous for Sweden's Armand Duplantis to bid for a new world pole vault record. Britain's world champion Dina Asher-Smith managed only third place in her first 200 metres of the year as Olympic bronze medalist Gabrielle Thomas stormed to victory. The 24-year-old Lyles, aiming to bounce back from a disappointing 2021 when he managed only bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics, led from start to finish.

Fellow-American Fred Kerley crept up late on but could not stop Lyles winning in 19.72 seconds, though none of the meeting times will count because of the wind. Jereme Richards of Trinidad came third squeezing out de Grasse. "I came here to get my energy for the season. I perform under pressure, it helps me to get excited about the season," said Lyles who expressed

medalist in Tokyo, won the women's 400 metres in 51.20sec, as Olympic champion Shaunae Miller-Uibo of the Bahamas struggled to make third (51.84sec), behind Stephanie Ann McPherson of Jamaica. Francine Niyonsaba of Burundi, who can only run longer distances because of high testosterone levels, took the women's 3,000 metres (8:37.70) ahead of Kenya's Olympic 1,500m champion Faith Kipyegon and Australian Jessica Hull. —AFP



DOHA: Canada's Andre de Grasse (left), US' Noah Lyles (center) and US' Fred Kerley compete during the men's 200m event during the IAAF Diamond League athletics Doha meeting at the Khalifa International stadium in the Qatar capital on May 13, 2022. — AFP

## Sports

# Myanmar gaming stars face barriers in eSports journey

## Athletes battle online opponents and creaky infrastructure

**HANOI:** Myanmar's eSports athletes must battle not only online opponents but also a creaky national infrastructure in their bid to make it in the ferociously competitive world of gaming. A relative newcomer to the fast-growing electronic sports scene, Myanmar sees eSports as a way of connecting to the outside world, a top gaming official from the country told AFP at the SEA Games in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi. ESports are a popular choice among many Asian youths seeking the promise of fame and fortune on the digital battleground.

But Myanmar's budding gaming stars face challenges that are unthinkable for many of their rivals. Power outages and internet connection problems are routine obstacles in the developing country where the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi was toppled by the army in February 2021. "Blackouts are a challenging factor," Myanmar Esports Federation vice president Kaung Myat San said, adding that gamers who do not have back-up generators "will find it difficult".

Myanmar is plagued by a frail energy grid that particularly stumbles during the hot summer months when electricity use is high, forcing locals to buy costly generators for their power needs. Another barrier is the country's internet, which although "getting better" is still slower than other countries, said Kaung. Gamers can suffer "high ping"—a lag between the player inputting a command and the server responding to it—which can be fatal in a sport where fractions of seconds are the difference between online life and death.

"High ping is an issue for some games, especially to enter international events that are hosted

online," he said, adding that was however "only a small percent". He declined to comment if his country's political troubles were a factor on local eSports performance. Underlining the fears people have of being seen to criticize the ruling junta, one eSports player at the SEA Games declined to give his name in describing how they sometimes have to hop from one location to another in the middle of the day when the power cuts out. He said that they usually get about 18 hours of electricity a day.

### 'Catch up to the world'

ESports made its debut at the biennial SEA Games in 2019 and was also set to feature at the Asian Games in China later this year, before those Games were postponed because of COVID. Talk has bubbled away for years about eSports one day making the Olympics. International gaming competitions meanwhile can draw vast online and in-person audiences and prize pools in the tens of millions of dollars. The obstacles teams from Myanmar face has not stopped some making their mark in eSports.

The Burmese Ghouls, a professional team, took second place at the Mobile Legends M2 World Championship in January 2021. At the SEA Games in Hanoi, a row of Myanmar eSports players furiously tapped at their phones against Singapore in a Friday group-stage match of League of Legends: Wild Rift. After a 15-minute battle, the Myanmar group bowed out from the brightly lit stage with their second loss of the day after being beaten earlier to Vietnam.

The athletes declined to speak to the media, shying away from queries. Kaung said despite the



**HANOI:** The FIFA Online 4 esports team of Thailand (left) competes against Singapore in a football esports game during the 31st Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) in Hanoi on May 14, 2022. —AFP

defeat, the country's 29-strong eSports squad still stand a chance at winning medals in two other mobile gaming events in Hanoi. He is confident about Myanmar's long-term gaming prospects, but the players need help. "For our players to

overcome these problems, they have to join professional eSports organizations which can support them. Sponsoring them can grow their careers," he said. "Through eSports we can catch up to the world." —AFP

## Tiger continues comeback from severe injuries

**TULSA:** Tiger Woods continues his comeback from severe leg injuries at next week's PGA Championship after making a sensational return at last month's Masters with plenty of curiosity over the state of his game. The 15-time major champion practiced last month at Southern Hills and excited fans hope he can improve on his 47th-place finish at Augusta National, where Woods called finishing 72 holes among his greatest career achievements.

"Some of the players who are close to me have seen it and have seen some of the things I've had to endure," Woods said last month. "It has been a tough road and one that I'm very thankful to have had the opportunity to be able to grind through. I think it was a positive and I've got some work to do and looking forward to it."

Woods, a former world number one now ranked 804th, won the 2007 PGA Championship at Southern Hills and returns to the Tulsa, Oklahoma, layout 15 months after a severe car crash that so badly damaged his right leg that he feared it might have to be amputated. "To go from that to here, we're excited about the prospects of the future, about training, about getting into that gym and doing some other stuff to get my leg stronger," Woods said after his final round at the Masters last month. "We'll get back after it."

Woods, 46, fired a 63 in the second round in 2007 at Southern Hills on his way to the title and came back a few weeks ago to see what changes a course renovation had brought since walking a course for four days has become a major stamina test. "It caused quite a buzz even before he landed," Southern Hills golf director Cary Cozby told The Golf Channel. "He left here looking like Elvis heading off the stage."

Southern Hills underwent a major renovation in 2019 with bunkers reshaped and many trees removed. "He remembered all of the golf course, every club he hit it seemed," Cozby said. "He seemed to enjoy the changes." Augusta National offered one of the toughest walks of any season but Southern Hills has only a couple of major climbs, what should be an easier test as Woods looks to the British Open at St. Andrews in July.

"I have those days where I just don't want to do anything. It just hurts. It's those days that are tough," Woods admitted at Augusta. "I just have to work through it. In order to get better, you just have to go out there and put in the time." Woods had battled through nagging back and knee injuries to win the 2019 Masters for his first major victory in 11 years, only to be faced with his latest setback after a California automobile accident in February 2021.

Players and spectators applauded Woods, a 2022 World Golf Hall of Fame inductee, in his comeback effort at the Masters. "We all have to thank Tiger for where the game is," four-time major winner Rory McIlroy said. "Tiger has left more of a mark on this game, I think, than anyone else basically in history. We should all be very fortunate that we played at a time that he was around because we've all benefited from him." —AFP

## Asian pole vault king Obiena sets SEA Games record

**HANOI:** Asia's top pole vaulter Ernest John Obiena set his sights on the World Athletics Championships in July after retaining his SEA Games title by easily clearing a Games-record 5.46m on Saturday. The 26-year-old Filipino, ranked the sixth-best men's pole vaulter in the world, eclipsed his own previous Southeast Asian Games record 5.45m he set in winning gold in 2019. But in hazy conditions at My Dinh National Stadium in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, Obiena fell short of bettering his Asian-record 5.93m.

"I wanted to beat the Asian record. You never know how many chances I get, I wanted, I really wanted it today," he told reporters afterwards, having failed three times at 5.94m. But he was nevertheless feeling "positive" about the World

## After epic run and Masters win, No.1 Scheffler seeks title

**TULSA:** Top-ranked Masters champion Scottie Scheffler enters next week's PGA Championship on a run major rivals are calling "dangerous" and "borderline Tigeresque" even as the 25-year-old American downplays his feats. The year's second major tournament tees off Thursday at Southern Hills with Scheffler trying to become the first man to get halfway to a calendar-year Grand Slam since fellow Texan Jordan Spieth in 2015.

"It's nice to be on a good run," said Scheffler. "I really just try to stay in the moment. Goals, expectations, nothing like that changes for me. I just like being out here playing golf." Scheffler began an astonishing two-month run by winning his first US PGA title in February at the Phoenix Open, then captured his second in March at Bay Hill in the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

After a disappointing share of 55th at The Players Championship, Scheffler won the WGC Match Play Championship and followed that with his first major title, taking the green jacket and the top ranking with his victory at Augusta National. "He's setting the bar pretty high right now and obviously he's the guy to

## Munoz shares lead with Skinnis, Palmer at US PGA Tour

**LOS ANGELES:** Sebastian Munoz followed up his first-round 60 with a three-under par 69 on Friday to maintain a share of the US PGA Tour Byron Nelson tournament alongside rookie David Skinnis and Ryan Palmer. US veteran Palmer surged up the leaderboard with 10 birdies in a 10-under par 62 while Skinnis, a 40-year-old from England who finally made it to the PGA Tour via the Korn Ferry developmental circuit, had 10 birdies and a bogey in his nine-under 63 at TPC Craig Ranch in McKinney, Texas, north of Dallas. The trio were tied on 15-under par 129, one stroke in front of American Justin Lower who signed for a 66.

Former Masters champion Charl Schwartzel of South Africa was two back on 13-under 131. Munoz, who on Thursday became the first player to post two rounds of 60 in the same PGA Tour season, said things were more difficult from the get-go on Friday. "We had a lot more

chase for all of us," said US PGA Tour veteran Will Zalatoris. "What he's doing is borderline Tigeresque. It's pretty cool to see."

Tiger Woods, the 15-time major winner who returned last month at the Masters from severe leg injuries in a February 2021 car crash, will play at Southern Hills, where he won the 2007 PGA Championship. He tested his stamina for walking the course in a practice round last month. But Phil Mickelson, who last year won the PGA at age 50 to become the oldest major winner in golf history, will not defend his crown, the PGA of America announced Friday.

The US left-hander has not played since his controversial comments in support of the Saudi-backed LIV Golf series were revealed in February. He apologized for the remarks and said he needed a break from golf. He has missed two majors in a year for the first time since 1993. Mickelson was sure to face questions about his future on the US PGA Tour, which refused to grant members releases to compete in the LIV Golf opener next month in London.

Scheffler played a practice round earlier this month at Southern Hills. "It's a really good test," Scheffler said. "It looked pretty similar to what it did before. A lot of sight lines off the tee were still very familiar to me. Definitely cleared out a lot of trees, but other than that most of the green complexes are pretty similar." Spieth was the most recent winner of the first two majors in a season at the 2015 Masters and US Open. Before that it was Woods in 2002 with the same combination.

in-between numbers, we struggled with the speed of the greens on the front. It's tough to back a 60, but I feel like I did a good job of closing the round and going out with a 69." Munoz settled for bogey from a greenside bunker at 11, then after a birdie at 13 he three-putted for bogey at 17. An 18-foot birdie putt at the first was the turning point, said Munoz, who added birdies at five, six and eight. Skinnis, who has missed nine cuts in 14 starts this season, powered up the leaderboard with five birdies in five holes from the seventh through the 11th, a run capped by his 21-foot birdie at 11. At 18 he got up and down from a greenside bunker for a birdie, rolling in a 10-foot putt.

"It has been a bit of a struggle," Skinnis admitted of his first US PGA Tour season. "I came off a really nice run on the Korn Ferry Tour to finish and I felt good going into the PGA Tour season. Then when you find yourself not getting in every tournament and you start to slip behind a little in the points it's tough to see yourself continue to fall down the list. You've eventually got to figure out a different game to play, you can't keep looking at that otherwise it will demoralize you a little bit."

Palmer, a four-time PGA Tour winner, is a local favorite, but he hasn't received the same attention this week as a couple of other North Texas natives—world number one and Masters champion Scottie Scheffler and



**HANOI:** Vietnam's Nguyen Van Ly (center) kicks a shot in the sepaktakraw match against Thailand during the 31st Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) in Hanoi on May 14, 2022. —AFP

delayed six months because of COVID and are set to officially open later Thursday. The 2023 SEA Games are scheduled to be held in Cambodia and 2025 will be in the Thai capital Bangkok. —AFP



**TEXAS:** Scottie Scheffler plays a shot on the 12th hole during the second round of the AT&T Byron Nelson at TPC Craig Ranch on May 13, 2022 in McKinney, Texas. —AFP

A schedule change has the PGA after the Masters now, a double only three players have managed—Sam Snead in 1949, Jack Burke Jr. in 1956 and Jack Nicklaus in 1963 and 1975. Tokyo Olympic champion Xander Schauffele warns that Scheffler could join his fellow Americans. "He's very playful, practices really hard. You're always going to see Scottie out there chipping or putting pretty late in the day," Schauffele said. "I'm not surprised he has been winning so much and playing great. I imagine him being very comfortable, which is a dangerous place for the world number one." —AFP



**TEXAS:** David Skinnis of England plays a shot from a bunker on the 18th hole during the second round of the AT&T Byron Nelson at TPC Craig Ranch on May 13, 2022. —AFP

former number one Jordan Spieth. But he gave local fans something to look at, teeing off on 10 and stringing together four straight birdies on the 12th through the 15th—a run that featured a 21-footer at 14. He added two more birdies at 17 and 18 — where he stuck his approach from the rough a foot from the pin. —AFP

Sports

# City eyes on Premier League prize as Leeds face the drop

## Tottenham turn the screw on Arsenal

LONDON: Manchester City can put one hand on the Premier League trophy on Sunday should they beat West Ham to extend their three-point lead over Liverpool at the top of the table. The Reds are in FA Cup action as they face Chelsea at Wembley at Saturday, offering City the chance to stretch their advantage to six points and further boost a seven-goal lead on goal difference.

City have been in scintillating form since a 2-2 draw with Liverpool last month left the title race on a knife edge. Pep Guardiola's men have struck 22 goals in five games since to close in on a fourth title in five seasons. Another convincing win at the London Stadium and the title will be realistically won given City's better goal difference. "Everybody knows with winning at West Ham and it will be almost, almost done, with the goal difference," said Guardiola on Friday. "It's absolutely a final."

However, there are concerns for Guardiola in cobbling together a defense. Ruben Dias, John Stones and Kyle Walker have been ruled out for the season, while Aymeric Laporte, Fernandinho and Nathan Ake are fitness doubts. West Ham are also in need of the points in their bid to pip Manchester United to Europa League football next season. David Moyes' men trail sixth-placed United by three points but have a game in hand over the Red Devils.

### Spurs turn the screw

The battle to join City, Liverpool and almost certainly Chelsea in next season's Champions League is alive after Tottenham thrashed north London rivals Arsenal 3-0 on Thursday. Spurs are now just one point behind the Gunners and can leapfrog them with victory over Burnley on Sunday lunchtime. Arsenal are not in action until Monday when they travel to Newcastle. "It was important to win, of course. We play before them on Sunday, they play Monday night, so I feel like if we can win that, we

obviously put a bit more pressure on them," said Spurs striker Harry Kane.

"I think I'd rather be going first than second, of course. But we still need to go out there and win. Otherwise it makes their job a lot easier." Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta was furious with the officiating at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium as his side conceded a penalty and had Rob Holding sent off before half-time. But there is little time for Arteta to lick his wounds if Arsenal are to avoid missing out on Champions League football for a sixth consecutive season.

### Battle at the bottom

The result between Spurs and Burnley also has huge ramifications at the bottom of the table. Leeds sit in the bottom three due to their much-inferior goal difference compared to Burnley with both sides two points behind Everton. Should Leeds fail to halt a losing run at home to in-form Brighton, they could be virtually relegated this weekend. "Our preparation as such is that we feel like we have to win the match," said Leeds boss Jesse Marsch, who has been unable to kickstart a faltering season since the sacking of Marcelo Bielsa in February. Everton's form at Goodison Park has been the key to edging towards survival. The Toffees have taken 10 points from the last 12 available at home, including victories over Manchester United and Chelsea.

Four points from home games against Brentford and Crystal Palace on Thursday would stave off the financial disaster of dropping into the Championship. "We're not done, we're not over the line," said Everton boss Frank Lampard. "The minute you switch off or you stop doing the good things you were doing this game can punish you, so we have to make sure we approach the games with the exact same attitude and try to pick up the results that we need." —AFP



WOLVERHAMPTON: Manchester City's Belgian midfielder Kevin De Bruyne (left) fights for the ball with Wolverhampton Wanderers' English defender Conor Coady during the English Premier League football match at the Molineux stadium in Wolverhampton.—AFP

### EPL Table

English Premier League table before Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Man City	36	28	5	3	94	22	89	Brentford	36	12	7	17	44	52	43
Liverpool	36	26	8	2	89	24	86	Newcastle	36	11	10	15	40	61	43
Chelsea	36	20	10	6	73	31	70	Southampton	36	9	13	14	41	61	40
Arsenal	36	21	3	12	56	45	66	Everton	35	10	6	19	37	56	36
Tottenham	36	20	5	11	63	40	65	Burnley	35	7	13	15	32	49	34
Man Utd	37	16	10	11	57	56	58	Leeds	36	8	10	18	39	77	34
West Ham	36	16	7	13	57	46	55	Watford	36	6	5	25	32	70	23-relegated
Wolves	36	15	5	16	36	39	50	Norwich	36	5	6	25	22	78	21-relegated
Brighton	36	11	14	11	38	42	47	Note: Top four qualify for Champions League; Europa League and Europa Conference League places to be decided; bottom three relegated							
Leicester	35	12	9	14	52	56	45								
Crystal Palace	35	10	14	11	46	42	44								
Aston Villa	35	13	4	18	48	49	43								

## Officials amend third Gulf Games schedule

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Higher organizing committee of the Third Gulf Games has amended the schedule after the postponement of its launch for three days due to the death of United Arab Emirates president Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The games will be launched in four events instead of one as were previously scheduled. The committee decided to join the first days of competitions prior to the opening ceremony on May 22nd to avoid extension of the games dragging beyond 31st May as participating teams are committed to other continental events.



Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi

### Shooting is ready

The games will start on Monday (9:00 am) with men and women athletics, men's basketball, Futsal and shooting tournaments. The technical meeting of the participating shooting teams will be held on Monday. The shooting equipments will also be inspected. President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Engineer Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi said Kuwait team are ready for the event and shooters have been in a training camp for days in preparation for the competitions.

Al-Otaibi said the technical department selected 28 shooters to compete in the events. Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi thanked President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, committee members, Director General of Public Authority for Sport Dr Humoud Fulaiteh and all those who supported the Kuwait National team.

### Futsal team

Meanwhile, the Minister of National Assembly Affairs, State minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Rajhi, Information and Culture Minister Dr Hamad Rouh Al-Deen, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser and Deputy Directo General of PAS Dr Saqer Al-Mulla visited the Futsal team during their training. The visit was highly appreciated by the team officials and players. Manager of the Futsal team Hussein Habeeb



Kuwait Basketball referee Munira Al-Hashash

thanked the officials for their visit adding that it boosted the team's moral.

The officials inspected Sheikh Saad Al-Abdallah complex facilities during their visit to check all preparations ahead of the competitions on Monday. Chairman of Athletics Federation Sayyar Al-Enezi lauded the visit of Ministers Mohammad Al-Rajhi and Hamad Rouh Al-Deen to Ahamad Al-Rashdan Field and Track in Keifan area. He said the technical committee headed by federation member Bader Al-Rushoud approved the amendments on the competitions schedule in

order to have the men and women competitions to be at the same time for three days. He said the men's competitions will be in two sections - mornings from 9:00am and from 7:00 to 9:00 pm; 4:00pm-6:00 pm for women.

### Bu Shallakh happy

Member of UAE Football Association Amal Bu Shallakh said she is happy to see the women's participation for the first time in the Gulf Games. Bu Shallakh commended the efforts of KOC member Fatima Hayat in developing women's football.

## Lyon edge Wasps to reach European Challenge Cup final

LYON: French side Lyon reached their first European final clinging on to edge English Premiership club Wasps 20-18 in a Challenge Cup semi-final on Saturday. Wasps scrum-half Dan Robson put the first points on the board after 23

minutes at the Stade Gerland when he took off down the blind side to touch down. Veteran New Zealander Jimmy Gopperth, who is leaving Wasps to join Leicester next season, missed the conversion but popped over a penalty to give the English side an 8-0 lead.

Lyon fly-half Leo Berdeu pulled back a penalty for the home side before half-time and eight minutes after the break put Lyon into the lead. Berdeu took a quick throw in his own half. New Zealand centre Charlie Ngatai made the break in midfield and from the ensuing ruck, Berdeu darted through the gap to score. He added the conversion but Gopperth

knocked over a penalty to restore the Wasps lead.

It was short-lived, however, as replacement hooker Yanis Charcosset scored Lyon's second try. Berdeu converted and then added a penalty to make the score 20-11. Wasps had a Dan Frost try disallowed for a knock-on but kept pressing the Lyon line and were rewarded with six minutes remaining when Gopperth bundled over from a line-out. The 38-year-old converted his try to reduce the gap to two points but Lyon clung on to book their place in the final where they will await the winner of Saturday's late game between fellow French club Toulon and English side Saracens. —AFP

## Wydad reach CAF Champions League final despite draw

JOHANNESBURG: Moroccan club Wydad Casablanca qualified for a third CAF Champions League final in six seasons despite being held 1-1 by Angolan visitors Petro Luanda on Friday. Two-time African champions Wydad triumphed 4-2 on aggregate having won the first leg of the semi-final 3-1 in Luanda last Saturday. Wydad will confront title-holders Al Ahly from Egypt or Entente Setif from Algeria in the May 30 final with the Cairo club defending a 4-0 first-leg lead in Algiers on Saturday.

The final is scheduled for Morocco, but Ahly has asked the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to overturn the Confederation of African Football (CAF) decision, citing the need for a neutral venue. Playing with confidence and energy lacking in the first leg, Petro went ahead on 21 minutes through Gleison Moreira, one of three Brazilians in the starting line-up. Amine Farhane levelled seven minutes later at the Stade Mohammed V in the Moroccan commercial capital, and while Petro had more possession thereafter, they could not score again.

The closest the Luanda outfit came to securing what would have been a deserved second-leg victory was in added time at the end of the second half when substitute Erico Castro struck the woodwork. With so much at stake, tempers became frayed as the second half progressed with four players from Wydad and three from Petro yellow carded. A member of the Angolan technical team was also cautioned.

### Red card

Petro substitute Adriano Yano was shown a red card by the South African referee after the final whistle for dissent. After displaying clinical efficiency to build a two-goal first-leg advantage, Wydad were favoured to win again in front of a huge, vocal, largely red-clad home crowd.

Petro had to score at least three goals to survive and, understandably, opted for a risky but necessary attacking approach. It was hard to believe Wydad were the hosts in the early exchanges as Petro constantly pushed forward, forcing the Moroccans to back pedal continuously. The boldness of the visiting team paid off when Gleison moved in the right flank and unleashed a shot from just outside the box that took a slight deflection off Farhane as it flew into the corner.

Farhane atoned soon after as he raced across the six-yard box and nodded a Reda Jaadi corner between goalkeeper Wellington Lima and To Carneiro for the equalizer. Yano proved an inspired second-half substitution by Portuguese coach Alexandre Santos, going close twice to putting his team ahead again. Petro have been the surprise side of the 2022 Champions League — reaching the semi-finals for the first time since 2001 after scraping past a Cameroonian club on away goals in the first qualifying round. —AFP

# Liverpool beat Chelsea to win FA Cup

**LONDON:** Liverpool held their nerve to win the FA Cup for the first time since 2006 after a dramatic penalty shoot-out against Chelsea as the quadruple chasers kept their history bid alive on Saturday. Jurgen Klopp's side won 6-5 on penalties at Wembley as Greek defender Kostas Tsimikas was the unlikely hero with the decisive kick after Alisson Becker kept out Mason Mount's effort.

A hard-fought final had finished a 0-0 draw after extra-time, setting the stage for a nerve-jangling shoot-out that featured misses by Chelsea's Cesar Azpilicueta and Sadio Mane, whose shot was saved by Edouard Mendy when he had a chance to clinch the trophy.

For the second time this season, Liverpool emerged victorious against Chelsea on penalties, having already beaten them 11-10 following another 0-0 draw in the League Cup final in February. Liverpool's triumph keeps them in the hunt to become the first English team to win all four major trophies in a single season.

With two prizes already secured, the Reds will hope for a slip from Premier League leaders Manchester City, who are three points clear of them in the title race with two games left for both teams. Even if Liverpool are unable to win a second English title in three seasons, they could still cap an astonishing campaign by winning the Champions League final against Real Madrid in Paris on May 28.

With that ambition in mind, Klopp's only concern as he danced jubilantly in front of the Liverpool supporters amid a swirling mist of red flare smoke was whether his team will be at full strength

against Real. Liverpool lost Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk to injuries that could rule them out of their last two Premier League games next week and will spark fears about their ability to recover in time for the Champions League final.

Liverpool have won both domestic cups in the same season for the first time since 2000-01, with Klopp getting his hands on the famous old trophy for the first time. For Chelsea, it was a painful third successive FA Cup final defeat after previous losses to Leicester and Arsenal.

### Mentality monsters

Liverpool made a blistering start as they swarmed forward in a blur of swift passes and relentless pressing. Diaz should have put Liverpool ahead after accelerating onto a sublime pass from Trent Alexander-Arnold, who caressed the ball through Chelsea's defence with the outside of his boot. Diaz's tame shot was saved by Mendy, but the ball was still rolling towards goal until Trevoh Chalobah scrambled back to hack clear at the last moment.

With Tuchel gesticulating furiously on the touchline, Chelsea dug in and finally turned back the red tide. Mount led their first serious raid, crossing for Christian Pulisic to clip his shot just wide. Pulisic carried the fight to Liverpool again moments later, slipping his pass to Alonso, who should have scored but took a poor first touch and scuffed his shot straight at Alisson Becker.

Diogo Jota wasted a golden chance to give Liverpool the lead soon after his introduction as Salah's replacement, the Portugal forward volleying over from



**LONDON:** Liverpool's English midfielder Jordan Henderson lifts the trophy as Liverpool players celebrate after winning the English FA Cup final against Chelsea at Wembley stadium on May 14, 2022.— AFP

Andrew Robertson's cross. Chelsea were on the offensive after the interval and Pulisic's strike was well saved by Alisson before Alonso's free-kick cannoned off the bar.

But Klopp's self-proclaimed "mentality monsters" haven't come this close to a quadruple without remarkable fortitude. They wrestled back the momen-

tum and Diaz clipped the outside of the post before Robertson volleyed against the woodwork. In the spring heat, and with both teams having played at least 60 games in a marathon season, it was no surprise fatigue became a factor in a tame extra period that never looked like producing a winner.

Tuchel had sent on his penalty-sav-

ing specialist keeper Kepa Arrizabalaga ahead of the League Cup final shootout in a move that backfired. Tuchel stuck with Mendy this time, but the result was still the same. Klopp admitted Liverpool's remarkable season would be a disappointment if they only finished with the League Cup, but he no longer has to worry about that.— AFP

## CONDOLENCES

**Kuwait Times management and staff convey their deepest condolences to the royal families, government and people of the UAE on the passing of**

**His Highness**

**Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan**

the late President of the United Arab Emirates

*May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him*