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# Kuwait hosts int'l meeting on foreign terrorist fighters

## Kuwait has made joint efforts to combat terrorism financing

### News in brief

#### Mol bans unlicensed rally

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry on Tuesday rejected a request by opposition groups and activists to stage a rally outside the National Assembly on Wednesday to protest against the state of political paralysis in the country because a new Cabinet has not been formed and the Assembly has stopped holding sessions. The interior ministry said the groups cannot stage the rally without a license from the ministry and warned them against violating the law and the constitution. — B Izzak

#### UAE announces monkeypox case

**DUBAI:** The United Arab Emirates became the first Gulf country to announce a case of monkeypox on Tuesday, insisting it was "fully prepared" to handle any outbreak. The appearance of the virus in a number of countries has caused alarm after the coronavirus pandemic. The case was found in a 29-year-old woman arriving from West Africa, who is receiving medical treatment, the Ministry of Health and Prevention said. — AFP

#### Turkish FM visits West Bank

**RAMALLAH:** Turkey's top diplomat announced Tuesday a raft of new agreements to bolster the struggling Palestinian economy, during the first high-level Turkish visit to the Zionist-occupied West Bank in 15 years. During Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu's trip to Ramallah, Turkey signed nine new pacts with the embattled Palestinian Authority, ranging from agriculture to education and trade. — AFP

#### Two killed in Abu Dhabi blast

**ABU DHABI:** Two people were killed and 120 injured in a gas cylinder explosion in a restaurant in Abu Dhabi, police said. Initial reports "showed that 64 people sustained minor injuries, 56 others were moderately wounded, and two people died", police tweeted. The blast on Monday set off a fire that damaged the facades of six buildings and a number of stores before being brought under control. — AFP

#### Malaysia curbs chicken exports

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's move to cut exports of chickens to control soaring prices and combat domestic shortages ruffled feathers Tuesday, with neighboring Singapore warning of supply disruptions. Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced late Monday that the export of up to 3.6 million chickens a month would be halted from June 1 "until prices and supply stabilize". — AFP

#### Two pilots killed in Iran jet crash

**TEHRAN:** Two Iranian air force pilots were killed Tuesday when their F-7 training aircraft crashed in Isfahan province south of Tehran, the state broadcaster reported. "The aircraft's two pilots were killed in the accident which took place this morning in Anarak district," the broadcaster's website said. The fighter jet was on a training mission when it crashed. — AFP



**KUWAIT:** Delegations attend a meeting of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group, which is part of the Global Coalition against Daesh, on May 24, 2022. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) Working Group held a meeting on Tuesday in Kuwait to discuss and share insights on FTFs and the legal and administrative challenges, with a focus on issues around their prosecution and accountability. Hamad Al-Mashaan, Kuwaiti assistant foreign minister for international cooperation and development, stressed the country's support for international efforts in reaching peace and combating terrorist groups during the opening ceremony.

The meeting is important to achieve peace in conflict areas by blocking all sources of terrorist threats, he said, adding that it aims to follow up on the joint and strategic efforts in confronting the damage resulting from FTFs, in addition to finding a clear mechanism for their return and integration into society.

Kuwait has made joint efforts with the international community in combating terrorism financing, in compliance with its effective role against the extremist Islamic State (IS) group, Mashaan noted, along with its pioneering role in facilitating the transfer of 186 members of fighters' families in conflict areas and ensuring their access to their countries. The one-day meeting will also discuss all main challenges for the

Continued on Page 6

## Quad nations warn against 'change by force'

**TOKYO:** Leaders of Japan, India, Australia and the United States warned Tuesday against attempts to "change the status quo by force" as concerns grow about whether China could invade self-ruled Taiwan. A joint statement by the so-called Quad bloc avoided any direct mention of China's growing military power in the region, but left little doubt about where its concerns lie.

The carefully worded document

also made reference to the conflict in Ukraine, but without offering any joint position on the Russian invasion, which India has pointedly declined to condemn. The Quad's other members have been less coy about their view that a strong response to Russia's war is needed, one that would deter other countries, including China.

"As Russia's invasion of Ukraine is shaking the fundamental principles of the international order... (we) confirmed that unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force will never be tolerated anywhere, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region," Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said, using another term for the Asia-Pacific.

Continued on Page 6



**TOKYO:** (From left) Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi wave to the media prior to the Quad meeting at Kishida's office on May 24, 2022. — AFP

## Xinjiang leak sheds new light on China's 'reeducation' camps

**BEIJING:** A leak of thousands of photos and official documents from China's Xinjiang has shed new light on the violent methods used to enforce mass intern-

ment in the region, researchers said Tuesday. The files, obtained by academic Adrian Zenz, were published as UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet begins a long-awaited and controversial trip to Xinjiang.

Activists say Chinese authorities have detained more than one million Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in a network of detention centers and prisons in the region, which Beijing has defended as training centers. But the trove of police photographs and internal documents - sent

to Zenz by an anonymous source who hacked into official databases in Xinjiang - add to evidence that the mass internments were far from voluntary, with leaked documents showing top leaders in Beijing calling for a forceful crackdown.

The files include a 2017 internal speech by Chen Quanguo, a former Communist Party secretary in Xinjiang, in which he allegedly orders guards to shoot to kill anyone who tries to escape, and calls for officials in the region to "exercise firm control over religious believers". — AFP (See Page 5)

## Young voters shake grip of Lebanon parties

**BEIRUT:** Lebanese law student Charbel Chaaya spent the election campaign distributing flyers in Beirut and trying to convince his parents to vote for independents to shake the grip of established parties. The 21-year-old activist is one of many young voters who went against their parents' political views, and helped propel at least 13 independents to parliament last week for the first time in decades.

"My parents think I'm too idealistic, that this country will never change," he said, adding that his father voted for a traditional Christian party, the Lebanese Forces. "There is a generational gap," Chaaya said. "Our generation knows that sectarian and traditional politics simply don't work anymore." Chaaya is part of a new generation seeking a progressive approach to politics, blaming established parties dating from Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war for an economic meltdown that has pushed thousands to flee the country.

This has widened a generational gap between young people voting for change and an older generation often

Continued on Page 6



**BEIRUT:** In this file photo taken on Oct 20, 2019, young Lebanese demonstrators wave national flags as they take part in a rally in the capital's downtown district. — AFP

Local

# Kuwait's political leadership keen to support security system in the country: First Deputy PM

## Sheikh Ahmad participates in Qatar Security and Safety Exhibition



DOHA: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the opening of the Security and Safety Exhibition (Milipol Qatar 2022). — KUNA photos



Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah tours the exhibition.



Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Khaled bin Khalifa Al-Thani.



Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives in Doha, Qatar to attend the exhibition.

DOHA: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah stressed Tuesday the supreme political leadership's keenness on supporting the security system in the State of Kuwait with the latest devices and technologies to enhance security, safety and stability in the country. In a statement to the press following his participation at the opening of the Security and Safety Exhibition (Milipol Qatar 2022), Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf said that the event provides an opportunity to view the latest high-

tech equipment, devices and systems for detection and prevention.

The exhibition gained great importance by attracting major international companies specialized in security technologies and equipment, in addition to events, workshops and seminars that contribute to the exchange of information and experiences and enrich security work, he said. He explained, the exhibition is being held amid the growing demand for innovative solutions and advanced defense systems to meet the complex

challenges facing the internal security sector and the high rates of cyber threats. The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior arrived in the Qatari capital, Doha, to participate in the exhibition at the invitation of the Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani. 30 countries from around the world and more than 240 delegations will participate in the event. Milipol Qatar 2022 succeeded in establishing its distinguished position as a leading international and regional actor in the field of

internal security and civil defense.

In the meantime, Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad met with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Khaled bin Khalifa to discuss security coordination. The meeting took place in Doha, on the sidelines of the opening of the Milipol Qatar 2022 exhibition. During the meeting, both sides affirmed the deep bilateral ties, and tackled subjects of common interest, information exchange and cooperative exercises between Kuwait and Qatar. — KUNA



DAVOS: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah holds talks with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh. —KUNA photos

## Foreign Minister meets Palestinian PM on WEF sidelines

DAVOS: Representative of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah held talks on Tuesday with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in the Swiss mountain resort of Davos. The talks focused on current happenings around the world, in addition to recent Palestinian developments, with the Kuwaiti top diplomat assuring the Palestinian prime minister of his country's continued support.

Sheikh Dr Ahmad also held a meeting with Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Nicu Popescu. The meeting touched on ways to bolster ties in all possible domains as well as discussing recent regional and international developments. Furthermore, the Kuwaiti foreign minister met with



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah meets Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Nicu Popescu.

President of Google Cloud International Adaire Fox-Martin on the sidelines of forum. The two officials discussed ways to bolster cooperation as well as economic development opportunities between the two sides. Sheikh Dr Ahmad held similar talks with Limak Holding's Chairperson of the Board Ebru Ozdemir on the sidelines of the event. —KUNA



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah meets Limak Holding's Chairperson of the Board Ebru Ozdemir.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah meets President of Google Cloud International Adaire Fox-Martin.



KUWAIT: Mourners pay respects to the family of late Kuwaiti religious scholar and preacher Ahmad Al-Qattan at the Sulaibkhat cemetery on Tuesday. Qattan, one of Kuwait's most renowned religious figures with various religious publications, passed away on Monday at the age of 76. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

# Quota law only way to achieve women's goals in Kuwait: Aseeri

## Fake accounts stereotyped negative image of women's participation

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** Women's participation in political life in Kuwait in the last few years has been experiencing a severe weakness at all levels, starting from their poor participation in elections in the country, such as those of the National Assembly, Municipal Council or cooperative societies, to not holding any political gatherings and seminars that discuss women's issues.

This month for example, only one woman ran and lost in the Municipal Council election, which is considered one of the most essential political platforms for all sectors in the country, such as monitoring the implementation of laws and regulations for general health and education, and for the approval and organizing of construction and urban projects.

Declining political performance, frustration among women and stereotyping are the reasons for women's absence from participating in political life in Kuwait, according to former minister of social affairs Ghadeer Aseeri. "Politicians who consider themselves opponents of women's rights are far from knowing anything about the Kuwaiti constitution," Aseeri told Kuwait Times.

She added that the education system in Kuwait, directly or indirectly, calls to isolate women politically, referring to electoral lists and events at local universities that are exclusively for men. "Fake accounts on social media have succeeded to type-

approval from their male guardians to carry out medical procedures, she added. As a result, Aseeri said women are not participating in political life in Kuwait, because of the "general feeling of frustration among them".

### Quota law

Regarding solutions to empower women in political life, Aseeri emphasized "passing a women's quota law is the only way to achieve our goal, and we expect it to be approved soon". "A quota is an international system that was approved to give members of a society equal rights. It's a globally successful system and used in more than 100 countries around the world," she said.

On the other hand, Aseeri pointed out that the absence of women from political life affects the level of education and increases violence against women. Aseeri added the world notices women's absence in diplomatic representation or in leadership positions at embassies, which shows inequality in giving women their rights in Kuwait.

Women in Kuwait have been demanding in the past years several basic rights, especially for Kuwaiti women who have married men of a different



Former minister of social affairs Ghadeer Aseeri

nationality, such as granting citizenship and permanent residence for their children, housing rights for divorced women, the right to obtain official documents and certificates for their children and scrapping a law that approves marrying or divorcing a woman without her knowledge.



There is general feeling of frustration among women

cast in society's mind a negative image about women who participate in elections and wear specific types of clothes," she said.

Meanwhile, "the parliament has neglected women's issues for a very long time, such as the personal status law, divorce law, housing rights," or scrapping the law that requires women to obtain

## Kuwait calls for greater role to boost competition

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of Kuwait's Competition Protection Agency (CPA) welcomed the third Arab Competition Forum as an important platform for promotion of cooperation among the relevant authorities in the Arab region. The Forum, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWAS) in Oman, is a step towards improvement of economic growth and good governance, Dr Rashid Al-Ajmi said in a speech to the opening session of the event on Tuesday. "Competition plays a great role in catalyzing economic growth amid the current challenging conditions and the negative

impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic," he pointed out.

Dr Ajmi stressed the need of regional economic integration to realize the goals of sustainable development, noting that the State of Kuwait gives high priority to "the national policy of protection." "This policy is a national development project which aims to upgrade the rules and procedures related to protection of competition, facilitate orderly investment and prevent fraudulent behavior," he explained. On behalf of Kuwait, Dr Ajmi expressed gratitude to Oman and ESCWAS for holding the Forum and providing an opportunity for competition project agencies in the region to exchange expertise in this regard.

Dr Abdullah Al-Arisi, CEO of CPA, said Kuwait believes in the need of realizing regional economic integration and is keen on collaboration in all areas, particularly commerce, industry and investment. "Kuwait's national plan aims to create the conditions conducive to free trade, sustainable development and activated com-

petition which could lead to revived economic activities," he affirmed. Meanwhile, Oman's Minister of Commerce and Industry Qais Al-Yousef said the two-day event will build on the momentum of the first and second forums. Competition authorities, government officials, experts and academics, both from within and beyond the Arab region, are gathering to discuss the future of competition policy, he noted.

The Forum is being held in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Trade Center, the League of Arab States and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Oman. The Forum, guided by international best practices, aims to collect concrete recommendations on future activities related to advancing and enforcing competition policy and thereby inform competition policymaking in the Arab region. —KUNA

## Iraq urges nationals to report information about missing Kuwaiti POWs

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq's ministries of foreign and defense affairs renewed a call upon citizens on Tuesday to report any information regarding remains of missing Kuwaitis or Kuwaiti properties. The two ministries affirmed in a statement the keenness of the Iraqi government and people on cooperating in that regard, as it goes in accordance with Iraq's international commitments. The ministries also provided several phone numbers, including of Kuwaiti missions in the country, Iraqis, in and out of the country, could call. The

numbers are as follows: Foreign affairs ministry 009647901935623 - 009647901935622; Human rights department within the Iraqi ministry of defense 009647901945476; Red Cross international committee in Iraq 009647730157444 - 009647901930784 - 009647502120245. The file of the missing Kuwaitis and the Kuwaiti archive had been restricted to the Iraqi human rights ministry before it was shifted to the defense ministry. Later on, the foreign affairs department was added. —KUNA

## KU college hosts seminar on Dr Suad Al-Sabah's poetry

**KUWAIT:** The French Language Department of Kuwait University's College of Arts held a seminar about the poetry of Dr Suad Al-Sabah and its translation to the French language. The event was held in the presence of Dr Suad Al-Sabah, under the patronage of the Acting Dean of the College of Arts Dr Abdallah Al-Hajiri, and head of the English Language and its Cultures Department Dr Monsif Al-Khumairi. Dr Suad Al-Sabah gave a speech during the seminar in which she said, "I am pleased as this is my first visit to this new and beautiful campus." She added, "this university



KUWAIT: Dr Suad Al-Sabah is honored during the event.

is one of Sheikh Abdallah Mubarak Al-Sabah's ideas." Meanwhile, Dr Hajiri welcomed the attendees of the seminar, which came as part of the department's celebration of the Francophone Day.

## Kuwait empowers youth, seeks their development: Official

**AMMAN:** Director General of Kuwait's Youth Public Authority (YPA) Dr Mishaal Al-Rubaie said Tuesday that Kuwait achieved tangible performance of empowering and rehabilitating youth in the society in the framework of specific programs in cooperation with local sectors. This came on the sidelines of a high-level UN regional meeting held in Jordan with the participation of officials from governments, private sectors, and non-profit organizations.

In a statement to the press, Rubaie said that the authority reviewed, during the meeting, Kuwait's commitments to empower young people in Government work program and development plan. The State of Kuwait has succeeded in identifying job opportunities in the labor market and providing Kuwaiti youth with the necessary skills and vocational training, he noted. The Authority managed to provide more than 1,500 job opportunities for young Kuwaitis in cooperation with the private sector in the fields of banking, sport training, engineering, facilities management and others, Rubaie explained.



AMMAN: Director General of Kuwait's Youth Public Authority Dr Mishaal Al-Rubaie attends the event. —KUNA

He stressed the importance of strengthening the Arab-Arab partnerships with the international and regional organizations, and the need for mass cooperation and comprehension between all sectors to achieve the goals of sustainable developments and comply with developed countries. The meeting will adopt, in its concluding session, the necessary recommendations and submit them to the World Summit on Transitional Education, launched by the UN Secretary-General and will be held next September. The meeting was organized by the International Labor Organization, the UN Development Program, the UN Population Fund, and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). —KUNA

to build an economic bloc strong enough to distance us from global polarization and minimize the negative external impacts," he noted. "The Arab Parliament, as representative of the Arab nation, is lobbying for creating such an effective regional bloc and addressing the global problems, including food shortage and COVID-19 pandemic, which is a noble mission," he went on. "The Russian-Ukrainian war, to add insult to injury, complicated the efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19," he noted.

Kuwait's National Assembly and Arab Parliament member Khaled Al-Otaibi affirmed meanwhile the importance of a flexible legislative environment to achieve a better Arab economic integration. Otaibi stated that the work of the Arab economic integration forum was to enhance the economic integration between Arab countries, adding that the forum is titled, "Intra-trade and the Role of the Public and Private Sectors in achieving this," which is hosted by the Arab Parliament and the Arab Administrative Development Organization. —KUNA

## AP president lauds Kuwait's role in joint Arab action

**CAIRO:** President of the Arab Parliament Adel Al-Asoumi said on Tuesday the State of Kuwait took part in all regional events which helps activate joint Arab action. He welcomed Kuwait's participation in the Arab economic forum, themed bilateral trade and private-public role in economic integration. The forum, organized by the Arab Parliament in collaboration with Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO) and the Egyptian government, aims to coordinate regional response to the global economic challenges, Asoumi said in a press statement on the fringes of the gathering. "Those challenges, coupled with accelerated developments, made it inevitable for the Arab countries

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## NBK's 2022 Summer Internship Program starts its registration

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is launching its 2022 Summer Internship Program on June 26, 2022. The online registration for the Summer Internship Program started through nbk.com and it will end on June 18. The two-week courses are specially designed for high school students, between the age of 14 and 18 years. Each session will include 30 students.

"NBK views the Summer Internship Program as an extension to its educational initiatives and as part of its corporate social responsibility," said Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Senior Manager. "This annual program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the suitable opportunities to experience how the actual professional banking concerns and transactions are handled and processed."

"It has been 19 years since the establishment of the program," added Baqer. "At the core of NBK's corporate social responsibility is our commitment to developing the youth in Kuwait. NBK invests at every level in the training, professional development and the growth of the youth cadres, to contribute to trainees' basic and professional competencies and abilities in fields of practical life."

The Summer Internship Program is made up of four different sessions, five-hour daily over two weeks each. The first session starts on the 26th of June, while the following sessions start on 17th and 31st of July and 14th of August respectively.

All trainees will receive a condensed training program about NBK products and services and workshops with Creative Confidence. The trainees will have professional exams from HR department about the knowledge of NBK.



Yaqoub Al-Baqer

## KIB sponsors AUM career fair

KUWAIT: As part of its fully integrated community program, which features a series of initiatives directed towards empowering ambitious Kuwaiti youth and attracting fresh graduates to qualify them to work in the banking sector, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently announced its sponsorship of the career fair hosted by the American University of the Middle East (AUM). As part of its participation, KIB set up a booth to receive university students and other visitors, including those who are about to graduate, to give them the opportunity to present their CVs and conduct job interviews with representatives of KIB's Human Resources Department.

Organized by AUM at its main campus over the course of three days, from May 10th to 12th, 2022, the fair sought to facilitate channels of communication and engagement between business owners and Kuwaiti graduates looking for suitable job opportunities. In this context, KIB was keen to be present at this event, which constitutes a great opportunity to attract young Kuwaiti talents to join the financial and banking sector. The event also provided an opportunity for both students and visitors to learn about the national banking awareness campaign, "Let's Be Aware", which the Bank sought to highlight at its booth and through the efforts of its employees.

## Joyalukkas organizes blood donation drive

KUWAIT: Joyalukkas organized a mega blood donation initiative to build awareness for the importance of donating blood under the slogan 'Donate Blood, be a hero'. Under the initiative, the Joyalukkas CSR team organized their blood donation drive and a media campaign to encourage people to donate blood. The blood donation drive was organized on May 22, 2022. The staff members of Joyalukkas

# Kuwait remains food secure, keeps eye on monkeypox: Cabinet

## Ministerial committee formed to bolster food security

KUWAIT: Kuwait is committed to its food security in light of global concerns over the price and supply of key staples, while it continues to monitor the global spread of monkeypox, the Cabinet said on Monday. In order to enhance food security and ensure the adequate availability of major staples, the government has formed an ad hoc ministerial committee to look into the matter after a surge in food prices triggered by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, it underlined.

The prices of commodities will be under the supervision and monitoring of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to maintain food security



## Ministers hail Municipal Council elections' success

for households in Kuwait, Minister of Commerce and Industry Fahad Al-Shuraian said. Speaking to KUNA and Kuwait Television after the Cabinet meeting, Shuraian affirmed that the ministry was able to maintain prices of local commodities and products despite the hike in global prices due to war and other mishaps.

Kuwait imports 95 percent of food products and any increase in prices was reflective of the alarming global situation, indicated the minister, noting that the Cabinet meeting had focused on establishing a

## Australian University signs MoU with KIPIC

KUWAIT: The Australian University (AU) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC). The agreement aims to enhance cooperation between both parties and provide opportunities for AU students and KIPIC employees to receive training and develop their abilities and skillsets in their careers.

On the other hand, the agreement will provide various benefits for both parties including the creation of internship opportunities for AU students at KIPIC, and in return AU faculty members to provide training programs for KIPIC employees in their Training Centers. In addition, AU students will have the opportunity to relate their graduation projects to KIPIC operations by having real case studies. Furthermore, in order to maintain mutual benefit between both parties; a steering committee with members from AU and KIPIC will be established to meet regularly and oversee the execution of the MoU, and to formulate further methods and processes of cooperation between both parties.

Representing the University Sager Al-Sharhan,



Within this context, Assistant General Manager of the Human Resources Department at KIPIC, Hadi Hadi, said: "Our sponsorship of this event and other career fairs taking place across Kuwait comes in the first place to continue to deliver on our commitment to support the youth segment and aspiring Kuwaiti talents. These events allow these soon-to-be-professionals with the opportunity to explore the labor market before they even graduate, increasing their ability to find the right job opportunities that will furnish them with long and fulfilling careers that are

Jewelry across the Kuwait donated blood.

"Blood is precious because every minute, someone somewhere needs blood every day. This blood can only come from a volunteer and hence we treat 'Blood Donation drives' as one of the most important activities under our CSR activities. Money is not a substitute to a physical donation of blood hence instead of committing money to this cause we encourage our own employees to donate blood on a regular basis. We had a large number of volunteer donors who came forward to be a part of this noble initiative. I also use this platform to request all business establishments and healthy individuals to come forward and donate blood so that precious lives can be saved," added John Paul Alukkas Managing Director Joyalukkas International Operations.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting. —KUNA

ministerial committee tasked with bolstering food security. The committee will be headed by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Fares and includes the membership of several ministers, added Shuraian. He revealed that the Cabinet had instructed several state departments to secure essential commodities and make them readily available to the public.

On the global spread of monkeypox, Health Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Buthaina Al-Mudhaf told the Cabinet that health authorities are taking stringent precautions to keep

the virus at bay. There have been no reported cases of monkeypox in Kuwait, the government's spokesman Tareq Al-Mezrem said after the Cabinet meeting, stressing that the health ministry continues to monitor the situation on a global level.

Two days after Kuwait held municipal elections, the Cabinet thanked all state bodies involved for their efforts to organize the vote, saying the process panned out in an orderly and seamless fashion. The Cabinet went on to congratulate the newly-elected municipal council, wishing the body every success as it seeks to bring the wishes and aspirations of Kuwaitis to fruition. —KUNA



Assistant to the president for Support Services, signed the agreement with Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Acting Deputy CEO Finance and Admin, representing KIPIC. Commenting on the MoU, Dr Suad Al-Radhwan, Assistant Professor of Petroleum Engineering at AU and Steering Committee Member, said: "This MOU is an excellent approach

for bridging the gap between education and industry. We hope the outcome of this MoU will give the opportunity to our students to have better understanding of KIPIC and its operations, and also it will give KIPIC an exposure to evaluate the abilities of our students that can possibly join KIPIC in near future."



best suited to their talents, interests and passions." Hadi also affirmed KIB's dedicated effort to actively participate in all job and career fairs, striving to maintain an ongoing platform that raises awareness and understanding of the banking sector. Through these participations, the Bank is able to introduce people to the nature of work in the banking sector, and to support those interested in pursuing careers within it - helping them identify the right opportunities best suited for their needs and capabilities. Additionally, he noted that being at

these community events helps the Bank find, hire and retain fresh young talents that are able to drive modernity and progress within the sector.

He added: "These job fairs are also a great opportunity for us to explore what talents and skills are available on the market, in order to be able to develop the right training programs and development initiatives to build on those skills. This all allows us to invest in our local talent pool and meet KIB's needs for fresh young Kuwaiti talent that can help drive the Bank forward."





Hong Kong cardinal in court over protest defence fund

## Millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey left in limbo

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# Biden gets presidential whiplash

## Powerful abroad but punished at home

**TOKYO:** Most people would send an email. But Joe Biden had a document flown to him on one continent from a second, so he could order \$40 billion to support an ally's war on a third. The latest giant US aid package for Ukraine was delivered from Washington to a Seoul hotel last week, allowing Biden to affix his signature while on his first trip to Asia since taking office.

It's in moments like this one that US presidents abroad experience near superhero strength. Racking up miles on Air Force One, Biden may even be forgiven for feeling he can change the world. Which is why returning to Washington, as Biden does Tuesday, can be a nasty shock. Globetrotting is one thing.

Pour more money and weaponry than any other country into Ukraine's fight against Russia? Biden did that at the stroke of a pen while in South Korea on Saturday. Poke China with a vow to defend Taiwan against invasion, even if that's not exactly US policy? A simple "yes" to a reporter's question Monday about whether this could happen set the diplomatic world abuzz.

How about bringing 13 countries-accounting for 40 percent of global GDP-into a new trade framework that only hours earlier skeptics said would struggle to attract applicants? He did that in Tokyo on Monday too. But back in the White House, Biden will come back to earth.

Air Force One will touch down at Joint Base Andrews outside Washington and, as if by magic,

Biden the globe-striding giant will shrink into Biden, the deeply unpopular leader, blamed for everything and whose Democratic party looks likely to lose power in a few months. It's whiplash that many US presidents have suffered-and especially acute for Biden.

### Unparalleled American clout

The 79-year-old took office in 2021 with big dreams. At home, he wanted to heal the "soul" of America, unite the country and bring back old-fashioned centrist politics after four wrecking ball years of Donald Trump. Abroad, he wanted to take on what he calls an existential threat from autocratic regimes in places like Russia and China.

Sixteen months later, the first job's not going too well. Domestic policy depends heavily on congressional approval, and Democrats have only the slimmest of possible majorities in Congress, with just two centrist Democratic senators repeatedly blocking Biden's goals.

Come the midterm elections in November, polls show even that fragile advantage will likely be annihilated by vengeful Republicans, ensuring a miserable next two years for the oldest person ever in the presidency. Job number two, though, is going better-and that's not necessarily a surprise.

Presidents get to call the shots on foreign policy, all while benefitting from extraordinary, almost imperial levels of logistical support. In Seoul and Tokyo, Biden roared through the streets in motor-

cade comprising dozens of black, specialized vehicles flown in by advance teams. Or he simply skipped traffic in his Marine One helicopter.

And everywhere he flew in Air Force One, sprawling US military installations awaited. Refueling in Alaska, then landing at Osan Air Force Base outside Seoul and Yokota Air Force Base in Tokyo, the plane's itinerary alone told the story of unparalleled American clout.

### Cold reality

Back home, cold reality awaits. While Biden was traveling, a new poll came out showing 39 percent support, his lowest approval rating yet. The country is up in arms over the highest price increases in 40 years. And Biden is being blamed for everything, including things like the disappearance of baby formula from supermarket shelves after a product recall he has little ability to influence.

The foreign trip wasn't always smooth, either. Biden's comment about defending Taiwan was applauded in some quarters but criticised as muddled in others, while for some analysts, the 13-country trade initiative was just hot air.

Still, Sue Mi Terry, director of the Asia Program at The Wilson Center in Washington, says Biden deserves good marks for his performance on the world stage. He's "succeeding more than he is failing," she said, listing a "solid" performance in building alliances against China and the "good



US President Joe Biden

job" of leading the diplomatic response against Russia in Ukraine.

The real problem is that separating those two spheres-domestic and foreign-might not always be possible. "Foreign leaders definitely pay close attention to US politics and they are well aware of Biden's sagging poll numbers," Terry said, explaining the damage done to a president's credibility.

And this will worsen "on the world stage if Republicans win the midterm elections," she said. So "Biden is making the best of the situation, and to some extent, US allies are all the more eager to work with him now while they still can." —AFP

## Swedish, Finnish to woo Turkey over NATO bids

**DAVOS:** Sweden and Finland will send delegations to Ankara this week hoping to clear up differences with Turkey which opposes their applications to join NATO, Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said Tuesday.

"When we see the problems coming, of course, we

take this diplomatically. We are sending our delegations to visit Ankara from both Sweden and Finland. This will happen tomorrow," Haavisto told attendees at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Sweden and Finland applied to join the transatlantic alliance in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "We think that NATO is a group of 30 democratic countries with common values and very strong transatlantic cooperation, and this is what we are looking for at this moment," Haavisto added.

Turkey's foreign ministry said presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin and deputy foreign minister Sedat Onal will meet the Finnish-Swedish officials on

Wednesday. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was quoted as saying by private broadcaster NTV that Ankara has prepared a "draft agreement" that will be the basis of the discussions.

Turkey wants "guarantees" that can be made in an official, signed agreement, not "wishes", he said. NATO member Turkey has long accused Nordic countries, in particular Sweden which has a strong Turkish immigrant community, of harbouring outlawed Kurdish militants as well as supporters of Fethullah Gulen, the US-based preacher wanted over a failed 2016 coup.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned Saturday that Turkey would oppose membership for the two

applicants unless its concerns were addressed-potentially a major obstacle as a consensus is required in NATO decisions. "We understand that Turkey has some of their own security concerns, such as terrorism," Haavisto said.

"We think that we have good answers for those because we are also part of the fight against the terrorists. So, we think that this issue can be settled," he added. Beyond smoothing ruffles between the Nordic countries and Turkey, analysts say Ankara may be making a show of opposition to secure concessions from other NATO members, such as deliveries of fighter planes from the United States. —AFP

## Xinjiang leak sheds new light on China's 're-education' camps

**BEIJING:** A leak of thousands of photos and official documents from China's Xinjiang has shed new light on the violent methods used to enforce mass internment in the region, researchers said Tuesday. The files, obtained by academic Adrian Zenz, were published as UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet begins a long-awaited and controversial trip to Xinjiang.

Activists say Chinese authorities have detained more than one million Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in a network of detention centres and prisons in the region, which Beijing has defended as training centres. But the trove of police photographs and internal documents-sent to Zenz by an anonymous source who hacked into official databases in Xinjiang-add to evidence that the mass internments were far from voluntary, with leaked documents showing top leaders in Beijing including President Xi Jinping calling for a forceful crackdown.

The files include a 2017 internal speech by Chen Quanguo, a former Communist Party secretary in Xinjiang, in which he allegedly orders guards to shoot to kill anyone who tries to escape, and calls for officials in the region to "exercise firm control over religious believers". A 2018 internal speech by public security minister Zhao Kezhi mentions direct orders from Xi to increase the capacity of detention facilities.

After initially denying their existence, Beijing has claimed the facilities are vocational training schools, attended voluntarily and aimed at stamping out religious extremism. But the leaked documents give an insight into how leaders saw the minority population as a security threat, with Zhao warning that more than two million people in southern Xinjiang alone had been



GUANGZHOU: Handout photo shows UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet (L) speaking with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi (R) during their meeting in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. —AFP

"severely influenced by the infiltration of extremist religious thought".

### Mugshots

More than 2,800 police photos of Xinjiang detainees included minors such as 17-year-old Zeytunigul Ablehet, detained for listening to an illegal speech, and 16-year-old Bilal Qasim, apparently sentenced for being related to other detainees.

The details echo a separate police list leaked earlier to AFP which showed the government crackdown snaring hundreds of people at a time from villages, often many from the same household. "The sort of paranoid threat perception comes out in these files, and the internal justification for why one has to move against an entire population," said Zenz in video comments published alongside the leaked files.

Zenz works for the US-based non-profit organisation the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. The files, parts of which have been verified by multiple news organisations including the BBC and Le Monde, also provide a window into life in detention facilities. —AFP

with several people around a table with bottles of wine and food. Police have investigated the event as part of their probe into "Partygate" and fined one person, but not Johnson.

When he was asked in parliament last December about the gathering, he insisted there was no party on that date and that no rules were broken. Johnson has been fined over a surprise birthday party he attended at Downing Street in June 2020, but was not fined for any other event.

The deputy leader of the main opposition Labour party, Angela Rayner, said it was "astonishing" that Johnson was not fined for the November gathering. She told ITV News that it looked "pretty clear" there was a party that was not a work event, calling it "pretty shocking" he had not been fined for it.

"He knew that he broke the rules, and he's known it all along and yet he's tried to get away with it," she added. "He's tried to lie to the British public, and he's tried to lie to parliament," Rayner said.

But Transport Secretary Grant Shapps sought to defend Johnson on Tuesday, saying the new pictures showed he was "clearly not" partying. "It looks to me he was asked to go and thank a member of staff who was leaving, raises a glass to them and I imagine comes in and out pretty quick, which is presumably why the police have not issued a fixed-penalty notice to the Prime Minister," Shapps told BBC radio. —AFP

## UK PM Johnson under fire over 'Partygate' photos

**LONDON:** UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday faced renewed accusations of lying, after photos emerged of him drinking at a Downing Street party during lockdown in 2020. The revelations came as a senior civil servant was expected to publish her long-awaited full report into the "Partygate" scandal, despite claims that Johnson was trying to have it dropped.

A slew of revelations earlier this year about lockdown-breaking parties caused widespread political and public anger, and put Johnson's position in jeopardy. But the heat was taken out of a potential mutiny from his own MPs by the war in Ukraine, and his hawkish support for President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The photos published late Monday by ITV News were taken during a leaving party for Johnson's communications chief Lee Cain on November 13, 2020, days after the government ordered a second lockdown, and banned household mixing.

Johnson can be seen raising a glass and chatting

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## International

# Millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey left in limbo

## Politicians use us as an election campaign material

**SANLIURFA, Turkey:** Samira hears the same message from Turkish politicians on the television day and night: Syrian refugees like her must return home. But her home near Damascus is still not safe, she says.

The 44-year-old from Ghouta is one of the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Turkey's Sanliurfa province, which shares a long border with Syria.

Civil war in Samira's homeland is estimated to have killed nearly half a million people and displaced millions since it began with a brutal crackdown of anti-government protests in 2011. Turkey has fervently opposed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, backing rebels calling for his removal and opening its doors to refugees.

But a new wave of economic turbulence, which has seen inflation spike and the value of the lira drop, has put Turkey's 3.7 million Syrian population under enormous strain.

Samira said she has never felt so much pressure since she fled to Turkey in 2019. "I don't think about going back, they destroyed our house. The situation is bad over there," she told AFP from her modest ground floor flat in the city of Sanliurfa, which is home to around half a million Syrian refugees — a quarter of the province's population.

Refugees fear they will be used as a scapegoat for Turkey's problems in the 2023 electoral campaign, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces rising public anger over their presence.

### 'Very scared'

The main opposition, the Republican People's Party (CHP), has promised to send them back to Syria, while the leader of the far-right Victory Party has admitted funding a viral social media video aimed at scaring Turks about a "silent invasion" of migrants.

Earlier this month, Erdogan said Ankara was aiming to encourage a million Syrian refugees to return to "safe zones" on the Turkey-Syria border by building them housing and local infrastructure.

"Send Syrians back, send Syrians back!" This is what we hear on television from morning to evening," said Samira, sitting on a cushion on the floor and unwilling to give her full name. "Why don't they like us? We try to build a life here, we try to stand on our own feet. Politicians use us as an election campaign material," she said. Despite pressure from opposition parties, Erdogan has pledged that Turkey will not force Syrian refugees back and "will not throw them into the lap of murderers". But his assurances are not allaying their fears.

A few metres from Samira's house, 43-year-old Umm Mohamed, who runs a grocery store selling Syrian bread, fava and olives, cannot understand the turn of the tide in society. "We are very scared", she said, standing behind the counter, her eyes looking timid beneath a black veil. "We feel the pressure. As a foreigner, we have to be polite all the time."

### Syria not an option

Mohamed's husband defected from Assad's army. "We can't go back," she said. "They would kill us." Fatima Ibrahim, in her early 30s, married a Syrian refugee after fleeing to Turkey nine years ago. The economic fallout is hitting them just as hard as the Turks, she said.

Her husband lost his job as a blacksmith during the COVID pandemic. Two weeks ago he found a job as a farmer in central Konya province — 700 kilometres (435 miles) from Sanliurfa. "Employers pay us less, so locals are annoyed, blaming us for accepting a wage less than theirs," she said, sitting next to her three young sons.

"Sometimes we hear from the locals that we should go back, that we have caused them to lose their jobs," she said.

"Some people tell us, 'Syria is better now, why don't you go back? Everything gets so expensive because of you.' That makes me feel so bad." But returning to Syria is not a possibility for Ibrahim. "I will never go back. I will either stay here or flee to Europe. There's no third option," she said.



**SANLIURFA:** Fatima Ibrahim, who came from Kobane, poses with her children, in Sanliurfa on May 17, 2022. Turkey has fervently opposed Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, backing rebels calling for his removal and opening its doors to refugees. —AFP

### 'Don't mingle'

Ibrahim said she maintains a low profile in public to avoid trouble, keeping contact with locals to a minimum. "I don't visit my neighbours, and they don't visit my home. We don't mingle," she said.

Haifa, a 39-year-old English teacher from Aleppo, has fluent Turkish after nine years here, and avoids speaking Arabic in public so as not to attract attention.

"I want to keep myself safe," she told AFP, after she was exposed to verbal assaults on the street.

"Political issues affect us more than the economy," she said.

Since 2016, the Turkish army has launched military operations in Syria, battling outlawed Kurdish militants and Islamic State jihadists. Haifa said: "Some people tell us 'go back to your country, you're having fun while our soldiers are dying there'". "You think it is easy to leave everything behind you? Your memories, your house, everything. You cannot even visit your mother or father's grave." —AFP

## Death toll from Iran tower block collapse rises to 10

**TEHRAN:** The death toll from the collapse of a tower block in southwestern Iran rose to 10 on Tuesday, as the authorities announced the arrest of officials accused of being "responsible" for the tragedy. State television had said Monday that the 10-storey unfinished Metropal building in Abadan, the capital of Khuzestan province, had partially collapsed.

"According to the latest figures, 10 people are dead and 32 injured," rising from Monday's death toll of six. Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi told state television from the accident site. In addition to those confirmed dead or injured, dozens more are feared still trapped under the rubble.

Search efforts continue in a bid to rescue any "survivors", Vahidi said. The building is located on Abadan's busiest street where "commercial, medical and office" buildings predominate, according to state television.

The judiciary's Mizan Online website said that the building's owner, who was reported arrested on Monday, was among the dead. The provincial judiciary said 10 people had been arrested, including the mayor and two former mayors, accused of being "responsible" for the collapse, the website said.



**ABADAN, Iran:** A picture shows a view of a collapsed ten-storey building, as rescue operations continue in the southwestern city of Abadan on May 24, 2022. —AFP

A number of municipal employees and supervisors of the building project were also among those arrested. Several witnesses said in televised interviews that the tower block collapsed "suddenly". An investigation has been opened to determine the cause of the collapse.

Provincial authorities declared Wednesday a day of mourning. Abadan, a city of some 230,000 people, lies 660 kilometres (410 miles) southwest of the capital. In January 2017, 22 people-including 16 firefighters-died after fire engulfed the Plasco building, a 15-storey shopping centre which was Tehran's oldest high-rise. —AFP

be overlooked," Nobuo Kishi told reporters.

Beijing confirmed the flights, saying they were in line with the Chinese and Russian "annual military cooperation plan". The Quad nations are attempting to build their loose grouping into a more substantive counterweight to China's rising military and economic power, despite their differences. They unveiled plans to invest at least \$50 billion into regional infrastructure projects over the next five years, and a maritime monitoring initiative seen as intended to bolster surveillance of Chinese activities.

The moves come with worries over recent efforts by China to build ties with Pacific nations including the Solomon Islands, which signed a security pact with Beijing last month. China's foreign minister will this week kick off a visit to a host of Pacific nations including the Solomons, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Kiribati as well as holding video calls with Micronesia and the Cook Islands, Beijing confirmed Tuesday.

Kishida urged Quad members to "listen carefully" to regional neighbors, including the Pacific islands, while Australia's newly elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the bloc needed to "push our shared values in the region at a time when China was clearly seeking to exert more influence". —AFP

goal of reaching comprehensive peace in conflict areas by stopping terrorism funding and combating the dangers of foreign terrorist fighters. "The aftermath and care for returnees from conflict areas is important. Through experience, psychological aspects must be taken into account, as well as providing financial assistance and finding social solutions to engage them in society," he said.

"I hope there will be positive results in this meeting aimed at completing the work we have done during our previous meetings. I would like to confirm the commitment of Kuwait to Security Council resolutions no. 2178 and 2253 and its support for the countries of the international coalition to defeat IS," Mashaan added. The FTF Working Group Meeting, headed by Kuwait, Turkey and the Netherlands, derives from the 85-member Global Coalition against Daesh, with the participation of several other countries and representatives from international and regional organizations, as well as civil society.

## Navalny loses appeal against 9-year sentence

**MOSCOW:** Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny on Tuesday lost his legal appeal against a nine-year prison sentence that he and his allies condemn as politically motivated. His sentencing came as Moscow pushes on with its military offensive in neighbouring Ukraine and Russian authorities seek to silence remaining government critics.

A Moscow court ruled to "leave the sentence without changes" and for it to enter into force immediately, meaning that the leader of Russia's embattled opposition will be transferred to a strict-regime penal colony with harsh conditions, including few family visits.

President Vladimir Putin's arch-critic appeared before the court via video-link from behind bars at his prison colony outside Moscow. Wearing a black prisoner uniform, the 45-year-old looked grim and listened attentively, leaning against his bars, as the judge read out his sentence.

During the hearing, he dismissed his trial as "meaningless", saying: "I despise your court, your system." "It's you, your system and Putin who are traitors against the Russian people", said Navalny. "I am ready to sit in jail to prove that not everyone in Russia is like this."

### 'Burn in hell'

Navalny used his final words to condemn the Kremlin and its military campaign in Ukraine. "What Putin is doing is pointless," he said. "One crazy thief has seized hold of Ukraine, and no one understands what he wants to do with it." "Your time will pass and you will burn in hell," he concluded his speech.

In late March, Navalny had his jail time extended to nine years after he was found guilty of embezzling donations to his political organisations and contempt of court. He was already serving two-and-a-half years in a prison around 100 kilometres (60 miles) east of Moscow for violating parole on old fraud charges.

The new sentence will replace the one he was handed



**MOSCOW:** Opposition leader Alexei Navalny appears on a screen set up at a courtroom of the Moscow City Court via a video link from his prison colony during a hearing of an appeal against his nine-year prison sentence he was handed in March after being found guilty of embezzlement and contempt of court, in Moscow. —AFP

in February 2021, meaning Navalny will remain behind bars for another eight years. Navalny told the court that the judge who sentenced him last year had later passed him a message expressing her regrets, before dying in September.

The hearings started last week but Navalny was granted a week's postponement so he could have a family visit. His lawyer Olga Mikhailova told the court the sentence should be annulled as it is "unjust" and "contradicts international law".

After the ruling, she said his legal team would appeal to the country's constitutional court, focusing on the risk to Navalny of moving to a strict-regime colony. "Alexei often said there was a threat to his life, so we will be going there," she said.

Navalny's press secretary, Kira Yarmysh, tweeted that "the place where he is to be transferred is notorious for its prisoners being tortured and killed". Navalny wrote on Telegram earlier this month that he heard Penal Colony No. 6 in the town of Melekhovo in the Vladimir region east of Moscow was being prepared for his arrival. The location of his penal colony will be announced after his transfer. —AFP

## Quad nations warn against...

Continued from Page 1

The group's statement made no mention of Russia, or China, but inveighed against a range of activities that Beijing has regularly been accused of in the region. "We strongly oppose any coercive, provocative or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo and increase tensions in the area, such as the militarization of disputed features, the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities," it said.

Hours after the summit, Japan said Chinese and Russian military planes had flown jointly over the Sea of Japan and East China Sea as the leaders met, in a move the country's defense minister called "provocative". "As the international community responds to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the fact that China took such action in collaboration with Russia, which is the aggressor, is cause for concern. It cannot

## Kuwait hosts int'l meeting on...

Continued from Page 1

upcoming period and the importance of coordination and information exchange between members of the Global Coalition against Daesh (IS), he said.

"Despite positive developments, the international community is still going through difficult times due to the deteriorating conditions to which it is exposed at the hands of individual armed terrorist groups. It became important for the international community to implement the plans that were discussed during previous meetings to achieve the goals," he noted.

Mashaan emphasized Kuwait's position in supporting the FTF Working Group Meeting to help the international community achieve the desired

## Young voters shake grip of...

Continued from Page 1

attached to civil war-era parties. The Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah group and its allies fell just short of the 65 seats needed to control the 128-seat parliament, losing their clear-cut majority. This time, the May 15 polls brought in a record number of independents to parliament, totaling a small but significant tenth of the assembly.

Chaaya headed his university's secular club, one of dozens of political groups bringing together young supporters of a mass protest movement that began in Oct 2019. In his Chouf-Aley district, southeast of Beirut, voters ousted Hezbollah ally Talal Arslan in favor of independent newcomer Mark Daou, a university lecturer and advertising professional. A massive number of those campaigning for his list were young people in their twenties, Daou said. "We speak a different language than the traditional parties, that's why people like us," said Daou. "We don't speak in sectarian terms."

Lebanon shares power among its 18 recognized religious communities, and politics are often treated as a family business. This was a clear break from voting patterns in Lebanon, where each community usually supports politicians from their own religious sect. Polling expert Rabih Haber of Statistics Lebanon said that while voter data could not be broken down by age, on social media young people seemed to express far greater support for independent candidates than established parties.

Newly-elected independent MP Elias Jarade, a 54-year-old Harvard-educated ophthalmologist, said most voters who came up to him were young people

from different political backgrounds. "All those who came to our tents and said they voted for us were young men and women, from different regions, religions and political backgrounds," Jarade said.

He was one of two independent MPs who snatched seats from allies of the powerful Hezbollah in its south Lebanon strongholds. The independent MPs are mostly university professors and respected professionals who entered politics after the 2019 mass protests.

Karl, a 30-year-old Beirut resident, went against his parents' wishes and voted for an independent in the country's south, after growing disillusioned with the Christian Free Patriotic Movement of President Michel Aoun, a Hezbollah ally. Karl, asking that only his first name be used, said that there is a trend of younger people voting for independents, despite their limited gains in the south. "At the same time the older generation is also transmitting its own war trauma to their children," he said.

On his way to vote in his hometown, Karl passed by the southern town of Ghazieh, where he saw children chanting slogans and bearing flags for Hezbollah and its ally the Shiite Amal movement. The scene was emblematic of the tight hold the two groups have in south Lebanon, where independents are often threatened and intimidated, according to observers and rights groups.

Sami, 21, who also asked for his first name to be used, said he had failed to dissuade his parents from voting for Hezbollah and Amal. "I thought I had convinced my mother, but in the end there is always something that pulls her back to her beliefs," he said, a common complaint among young voters AFP spoke to. But Sami said he was cautiously optimistic about the independents' modest victory in the south. "Our region was monochrome, there was no space for debate on alternatives to these parties," Sami said. "This opened up, at least, some space to have a conversation." —AFP

## International

# Elderly Hong Kong Catholic cardinal in court over protest defence fund

## Zen's arrest has triggered outrage from Western nations

**HONG KONG:** Ninety-year-old retired Catholic cardinal Joseph Zen appeared in a Hong Kong court Tuesday charged with failing to properly register a protest defence fund, after he was initially arrested under the city's national security law. Zen, one of Asia's highest-ranking Catholic clerics, was among five prominent democracy advocates-including activist and singer Denise Ho and veteran human rights barrister Margaret Ng-who were detained earlier this month. The group acted as trustees of a now-defunct fund that helped pay legal and medical costs for those arrested during huge and sometimes violent democracy protests three years ago.



**They were arrested for 'conspiracy'**

They were arrested for "conspiracy to collude with foreign forces" but have not yet been charged with that offence, which can carry a life sentence under the sweeping security law imposed by Beijing in 2020. Instead, all five of the fund's former trustees and its secretary were charged Tuesday with failing to register it as a "society" with police-a non-national security offence that can incur a fine of up to HK\$10,000 (US\$1,274) for a first conviction.

Each of the defendants, apart from activist Cyd Ho, who is already serving a jail sentence for unauthorised assembly, was in court on Tuesday. All entered a plea of not guilty. The trial will begin September 19, with the prosecution warning it has 10 boxes of exhibits

and eight hours of video footage to support its case.

The investigation into the "612 Humanitarian Relief Fund" was triggered when one of the group, cultural studies scholar Hui Po-keung, was intercepted at Hong Kong's airport on May 10 as he tried to leave to take up an academic post in Europe. The investigation of the fund has also led to the first complaint made by the city's national security police about "professional misconduct" by the lawyers and barristers hired by the fund's beneficiaries.

### 'Classic smearing campaign'

Diplomats from multiple European countries including Germany, France, Sweden and Italy attended Tuesday's hearing. Zen's arrest in particular has triggered outrage from Western nations, who have accused China of eviscerating the freedoms it once promised Hong Kong.

But on Monday, the city's security minister told local media the criticism was a "classic smearing campaign". "To my understanding, the Vatican is a place to pursue justice and peace. If we did not act in accordance with the law because of one's role in the Holy See, then I think it would actually breach the Vatican's principle of justice," said Chris Tang in an interview with the South China Morning Post.

Hong Kong's vicar general, Joseph Chan, was present in court but said he was not there as a representative of the Diocese. "He (Zen) was my teacher, so I came," Chan told AFP. Chan said he is mainly worried about Zen's health but that the nonagenarian has so far appeared in good spirits. The cardinal has arranged a nighttime mass to pray for China on Tuesday night.

### Tai jailed for ads

In a separate case on Tuesday, another high-profile democracy campaigner, Benny Tai, was jailed for 10



**HONG KONG:** Retired Cardinal Joseph Zen (2nd L), one of Asia's highest ranking Catholic clerics, arrives at court with pro-democracy activists Hui Po-keung (L), pop singer Denise Ho (R) and barrister Margaret Ng (C) in Hong Kong on May 24, 2022 after they were recently arrested for "conspiracy to collude with foreign forces". — AFP

months over a 2016 media campaign around the city's legislative elections. Tai, a legal scholar, had earlier pleaded guilty to breaching Hong Kong laws limiting who can place election advertisements.

Despite not being a candidate himself, Tai had promoted a way of coordinating voters to win the most seats for the city's democrats, District Judge Anthony Kwok said. "(Tai's) actions could have damaged the election's fairness and disadvantaged pro-establishment and other candidates," Kwok said.

The judge said a deterrent sentence was needed given the seriousness of Tai's acts, though he conceded the academic did not act for personal gain and had not promoted specific candidates. Tai is already in custody as he is among a group of 47 democrats arrested for subversion under the national security law.

Rights group Amnesty International blasted Tuesday's sentence, calling it "another politically motivated attack based on his pro-democracy activism". — AFP

## Pakistani opposition says 'hundreds arrested' ahead of protest march

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistani police detained hundreds of supporters of ousted prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party ahead of a major sit-in planned by the former leader, senior party members and police sources said Tuesday. Khan, a cricket star turned populist politician, was kicked out of power last month through a vote of no-confidence, but has heaped pressure on the country's fragile new coalition government by staging mass rallies across the country since then.

"More than 200 supporters of PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) have been arrested in Punjab," a police official in Lahore, the capital of Pakistan's largest province, told AFP on condition of anonymity. "We have raided their houses and have arrested many of them."

A second official, asking not to be named, provided the same information, adding that those arrested had been booked on public order offences and remain in detention. Khan has said that he was removed through a "foreign conspiracy", and plans on Wednesday to lead an anti-government march from his power base in the northwestern city of Peshawar to the capital Islamabad, with tens of thousands expected to attend.

The former prime minister said he would stage a sit-in until the government dissolves parliament and sets a date for fresh elections. Fawad Chaudhry, the former information minister in Khan's government, accused

police of carrying out the overnight raids without warrants and put the number of arrested at more than 400.

"More than 1,100 houses were raided overnight. Police entered the houses without any warrants and insulted women and children," he tweeted. Police have not officially commented on the arrests or allegations.

On Tuesday, Khan tweeted that his supporters had a right to peacefully protest. "The brutal crackdown on PTI (leaders) & workers in Punjab & Islamabad has once again shown us what we are familiar with — the fascist nature of PMLN when in power," he said in a tweet, referring to the party of current Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

On Saturday, senior PTI leader and former minister Shireen Mazari was arrested near her house in the capital over a decades-old land dispute. She was briefly detained before a court ordered her release. In 2018, Khan was voted in by an electorate weary of the dynastic politics of the country's two major parties, with the popular former sports star promising to sweep away decades of entrenched corruption and cronyism.

He was brought down in part by his failure to rectify the country's dire economic situation, including its crippling debt, shrinking foreign currency reserves and soaring inflation. Sharif is now grappling with the same crisis, as well as rising militancy and soured relations with the West. — AFP



**LAHORE:** Activists of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of ousted prime minister Imran Khan chant slogans during a protest against the arrest of hundreds of supporters of the PTI ahead of a major sit-in planned by the former leader. — AFP

## Singapore civil servant jailed for leaking COVID-19 measures

**SINGAPORE:** A Singaporean court handed a civil servant a four-week jail sentence on Tuesday for leaking information about the relaxation of coronavirus restrictions. Such leaks rarely happen in the city-state, where the government keeps a tight hold on sensitive information, and the civil service is highly regarded.

But the case is among a few instances during the pandemic where civil servants leaked information related to COVID-19 to their family or acquaintances before it was made public. Chua Wee Lin, a 52-year-old who was a deputy director at the National Library Board at the time, leaked information about the planned relaxation of measures to 18 others in a WhatsApp group four days before the government announced the plans in June 2020.

After attending a meeting where the information was shared, he sent messages detailing the dates that country clubs, cinemas and restaurants would be allowed to reopen after Singapore's partial lockdown, according to court documents.

Some of the members forwarded the information to their friends and family, and one of the messages went viral, eventually reaching staff at a different government ministry, who made a police report. The leak forced the government agencies involved to redirect resources to find the source, court documents said.

"This was extremely time consuming given the viral nature of the information spread, and this had to be done concurrently with their attempts to fight the pandemic," prosecutors said. Chua was handed a four-week jail sentence after pleading guilty to wrongful communication of information under the Official Secrets Act. The maximum punishment for the offence is a fine of \$2,000 Singapore dollars (\$1,455) and two years' imprisonment. Earlier this year, a woman was jailed for 18 weeks for leaking COVID-19 case numbers while she worked for the Ministry of Health, while another civil servant faces similar charges over leaking information on school closures to her husband, according to local media. — AFP

## China congratulates Australia's Albanese

**BEIJING:** Chinese premier Li Keqiang has sent a congratulatory note to newly elected Australian leader Anthony Albanese, easing a years-long freeze in high-level contacts between the two countries. Relations between China and Australia have been shattered by a string of rows over human rights, espionage and the origins of COVID-19.

But Li's letter signalled a willingness to improve relations after Albanese's election, in what is the most significant high-level contact between Beijing and Canberra in at least two years. "The Chinese side is ready to work with the Australian side to review the past, look into the future... to promote the sound and steady growth of their comprehensive strategic partnership," Li said, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency late Monday.

Albanese said the letter was "welcome" and said he would "respond appropriately" when he returns from a summit of Quad leaders in Tokyo. But he has previously warned that the relationship will remain difficult.

"It is China that has changed, not Australia, and Australia should always stand up for our values," the 59-year-old centre-left Labor Party leader said. Tensions between the two sides soared in the past two years after Canberra called for an independent probe into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic and banned telecoms giant Huawei from building Australia's 5G network.

China-Australia's biggest trading partner-responded by imposing tariffs or disrupting more than a dozen key industries, including wine, barley and coal. Li's message came ahead of Albanese's meeting with leaders of Japan, India and the United States for a Quad summit-an infor-

mal grouping for the four countries seen as an effort to counter China.

### 'Challenging pathway'

Deputy party leader Richard Marles—who is acting as premier while Albanese is in Tokyo-said Australia would be clear-eyed in pursuing its interests. "From an Australian point of view, we understand the complexity of the relationship. It is our largest trading partner but China is seeking to shape the world around it in ways we have not seen before," he said.

"We are certainly going to be navigating that pathway from the point of view of making sure Australia's national interest is absolutely clear." Australia has expressed concerns about Beijing's growing influence in the Pacific region including a recent security pact between China and the Solomon Islands.

A leaked draft of the agreement that has not been made public includes a section that would allow Chinese naval deployments to the Solomons-less than 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) from Australia. China bristled when Canberra last year joined a hotly contested programme to equip its navy with nuclear-powered submarines in a new defence alliance with Britain and the United States.

The alliance, AUKUS, is aimed at confronting strategic tensions in the Pacific where the China-US rivalry is growing. Other issues, including Canberra's decision last year to scrap a major infrastructure project in the state of Victoria-under Chinese President Xi Jinping's flagship Belt and Road Initiative-has soured relations.

The two sides are also locked in a row over spying, with Beijing accusing Australia of raiding the homes of Chinese journalists. Meanwhile, China has charged Chinese-born Australian writer Yang Hengjun with espionage, and arrested Cheng Lei, an Australian TV presenter working for state broadcaster CGTN, for "supplying state secrets overseas". — AFP

## UK MPs blast 'failures' of Afghan withdrawal

**LONDON:** The UK's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan last year showed "systemic failures of leadership, planning and preparation", according to a scathing inquiry by MPs published on Tuesday.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee probe revealed a "fundamental lack of planning, grip or leadership at a time of national emergency" before and during the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August 2021.

"The manner of our withdrawal from Afghanistan was a disaster and a betrayal of our allies that will damage the UK's interests for years to come," the report said. Already in August, the government faced a torrent of criticism over its hurried withdrawal following the decision of its ally the United States to end its 20-year presence. Hundreds of Afghans eligible for relocation were left behind, many with their lives potentially at risk after details of staff and job applicants were left at the abandoned British embassy compound in Kabul. At the time, Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed a mission "unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes" with the UK airlifting over 15,000 people in two weeks.

The foreign secretary at the time, Dominic Raab, was heavily criticised for not immediately leaving a beach holiday when the Taliban took control.

### Foreign Office 'evasive'

Committee MPs spoke with UK officials as well as Afghans who were evacuated, and received evidence from a "wide range of stakeholders". During the run-up to the Taliban takeover, the government and civil servants suffered from an "optimism bias" that the US would change its mind about withdrawing, despite it having been announced by president Donald Trump in February 2020, said the report.

"The UK government failed adequately to shape or respond to Washington's decision to withdraw, to pre-



**LONDON:** Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson adjusts his tie at the start of a cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street in London on May 24, 2022. — AFP

dict the speed of the Taliban's takeover, or to plan and prepare for the evacuation of our Afghan partners," it added. "Most damning for the Foreign Office is the total absence of a plan for evacuating Afghans who supported the UK mission, without being directly employed by the UK government, despite knowing 18 months before the collapse of Afghanistan that an evacuation might be necessary."

In responding to questions from the Committee, which started work on the report in September, the Foreign Office "provided answers that were intentionally evasive and often deliberately misleading". Instead, two whistleblowers provided crucial testimony to the committee. "Those who lead the Foreign Office should be ashamed that civil servants of great integrity felt compelled to risk their careers to bring the situation to light," the report said. The report highlighted the lack of a line of command within the government, and "untraceable and unaccountable political interventions". Particularly controversial was the evacuation by a British ex-serviceman of around 150 dogs and cats from his Nowzad animal charity on a privately chartered plane, reportedly following Johnson's intervention. "Senior officials believed that the prime minister played a greater role in some decisions than has been admitted," the report said.—AFP

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022

# Business

## Eaman Al-Roudhan among region's most inspiring female business leaders

### Zain Kuwait CEO profiled in Arabian Business magazine's 2022 list

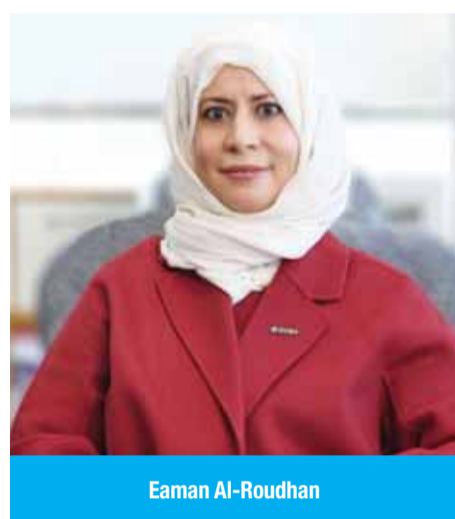
**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced that Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan was featured among the region's 50 most inspiring female business leaders for the year 2022. The list was announced by Arabian Business magazine, the region's premier resource for informed news, features, and commentary on business and regional markets.

This listing from one of the Middle East's leading reputable business magazines came to shed light on the role played by Al-Roudhan in leading Zain towards being one of the Kuwaiti private sector's biggest leaders during the past period, especially her efforts in putting forth and implementing the company's comprehensive digital transformation strategy that aims at empowering a more efficient business sector in the nation under the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Every year, Arabian Business recognizes the Middle East's most inspiring female businesswomen who create an impact, use their influence and experience, and show ambition to make their mark in the region's markets. The magazine selects 50 business leaders from tens of thousands of deserving individuals, including entrepreneurs, NGO directors, and top executives from across industries and sectors.

Eaman Al-Roudhan was appointed CEO of Zain Kuwait in December 2015. A results-focused telecommunications executive, Al-Roudhan has over 25 years of experience spent in various executive management and leadership roles within Zain Kuwait as well as several Zain Group affiliates. Prior to her new appointment, Al-Roudhan was the Chief Regulatory Officer of Zain Group.

Al-Roudhan's successful career at Zain



Eaman Al-Roudhan

started in the Kuwait operation, where she launched the first mobile prepaid service in the country and the region, which went on to dominate the country's mobile services customer base. As Zain expanded across the region, Al-Roudhan's responsibilities also grew from 2003 onwards as she was an active participant in the start-up teams in several Zain operations across the Middle East, namely Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia.

Al-Roudhan continued to play a key role in the transformation of Zain, building operational teams and establishing solid foundations for business units across all major telecommunications sectors including Intelligent Networks, product & service development, strategy and business planning, roaming, wholesale and carrier business, as well as regulatory affairs.

After assuming the role of CEO in December 2015, Al-Roudhan led a number

of vital projects that shaped a new period in Zain's history, most notably the commercial launch of fifth generation wireless technology (5G) in June 2019, where Zain became the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage. In addition, Al-Roudhan led the signing of the smart meters project with the Ministry of Electricity and Water, which is considered one of the largest projects in Kuwait's ICT sector and proved to be a testament to the country's efforts to catalyze the uptake of e-government services and digital transformation.

Throughout her years at Zain, she has also orchestrated numerous strategic alliances with international and regional operators, lead teams and developed resources across technology, commercial, strategy, wholesale, and regulatory affairs.

Eaman Al-Roudhan is a member in a number of international standards and regulatory affairs bodies such as the GSMA Arab World regional interest group and the GSMA Chief Regulatory Officer Group (CROG). She holds a BSc in Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering from Kuwait University and has attended programs at Tokyo Institute of Technology (TIT) and executive programs at Harvard Business School. Al-Roudhan is also currently a member of the Advisory Board at the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

Al-Roudhan was recently ranked as one of the most powerful businesswomen in the Middle East in 2021 by Forbes Middle East, as well as one of the most powerful women in Kuwait in the magazine's special issue to celebrate Kuwait's Success entitled "A New Vision" for 2017.



From entrepreneurs to corporate leaders, meet the women making their mark on the region

## Saudi plans weekly international flights to NEOM megacity

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia's main airline will next month start operating weekly international flights from the kingdom's planned futuristic megacity known as NEOM, with Dubai as the first destination, state media reported Monday. The weekly NEOM-Dubai flights operated by flag carrier Saudia will begin "by the end of June 2022, with plans to expand to London soon thereafter", the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

The \$500 billion Red Sea project is part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 plan to diversify Saudi Arabia's oil-dependent economy. It has been billed as a futuristic cityscape evocative of a sci-fi blockbuster—with everything from flying taxis to robot maids—and will operate under its own founding law that is still being formulated.

Officials say its population will eventually exceed one million people. The national airliner operated the first flight to NEOM's airport in 2019. The airport "is a key enabler of NEOM's development, facilitating efficient access to NEOM for residents and business partners," the project's CEO, Nadhmi Al-Nasr, said Monday, according to the SPA report.

A senior official told AFP last October that NEOM was on track to welcome its first businesses and residents by 2025. As they try to bring NEOM online, Saudi officials are also aiming for a dramatic expansion of the aviation sector that would turn the kingdom into a global travel hub.

Goals include more than tripling annual traffic to 330 million passengers by the end of the decade and drawing \$100 billion in investments to the sector by 2030. The Saudis also aim to establish a new national carrier, construct a new "mega airport" in Riyadh and move up to five million tons of cargo each year. NEOM's strategic location, situated on the Red Sea



Saudi Arabia announced weekly international flights to NEOM megacity.

and the Gulf of Aqaba, will enable it to strengthen economic ties with countries in both the Middle East and Africa. Current timetables suggest that NEOM could even be on its way to completion by 2030. Key areas of city infrastructure will include food processing, entertainment, transport, power generation, water & sewage reprocessing, manufacturing and biotechnology sectors. The Crown Prince also has a vision of the new city hosting top-of-the-line artificial intelligence (AI) such as drones, nanobiology labs and renewable energy resources, such as solar panels. Construction of the mega city runs parallel with MBS' National Transformation Programme (NTP), also known as Vision 2030, which he announced in 2016.

ing relationship between flydubai and Standard Chartered.

Flydubai CEO Ghaith Al-Ghaith said: "We are pleased to have received Standard Chartered's support on this transaction which builds on previous aircraft financing and leasing agreements. We continue to diversify our sources of funding and attract reliable partners in support of our future growth plans. We look forward to working with Standard Chartered again in the future."

Rola Abu Manneh, CEO, Standard Chartered UAE, added: "Standard Chartered has had a long-standing relationship with flydubai and the Investment Corporation of Dubai across multiple businesses. This transaction demonstrates the Bank's continued commitment to the airline and the Government of Dubai's vision for the wide spectrum of sectors that support Dubai's dynamic economy." In recent news, flydubai announced it is resuming



flights to Hail and Tabuk in Saudi Arabia. The airline currently has a network of more than 95 destinations in 50 countries. —Agencies

## Net zero is 'biggest challenge' for aviation: Etihad CEO

**ABU DHABI:** Etihad Airways chief Tony Douglas said Tuesday achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 poses the "biggest challenge" for commercial aviation, in a reality check for the industry. Last year, the International Air Transport Association pledged carbon neutrality by 2050, which is also a target of the United Arab Emirates and several other countries. "The biggest challenge to commercial aviation is the commitment that's been made to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050," the Abu Dhabi-based airline's CEO told the Global Aerospace Summit in the UAE capital.



Tony Douglas

"As a gentleman of more mature years, it's very easy for me and others to sign up to something like that, almost with the anticipation that it will be the next generation who has the responsibility to deliver upon that commitment." The aviation industry is among the fastest-growing sources of greenhouse gases, with airlines looking at hydrogen-fueled aircraft to reduce CO2 emissions.

IATA, which represents 290 airlines accounting for 83 percent of global air traffic, made its net-zero pledge in October. The UAE, one of the world's biggest oil exporters, last year also launched a "strategic initiative" targeting carbon neutrality by 2050.

It has in recent years verbally backed the battle against climate change, but—along with fellow Gulf hydrocarbon producers—remains one of the biggest emitters of carbon dioxide per capita.

"I imagine everybody in this room understands that the physics of powered flight render the achievement of that objective (net zero) extremely difficult anytime soon," Douglas said at the three-day conference. "Our responsibility as leaders within the aerospace sector is to enable the foundations for the next generation to deliver upon what will ultimately determine who are the winners and who are the losers in commercial aviation." —AFP

## UAE's flydubai, StanChart ink deal for 5 Boeing planes

**DUBAI:** Dubai-based budget carrier flydubai and Standard Chartered have signed the sale and leaseback (SLB) agreement for five new Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. Four aircraft were delivered between March and May, with the fifth aircraft scheduled to arrive from Boeing before the end of the first half of the year. The deal was structured, financed and arranged exclusively by Standard Chartered.

The transaction will support the future growth of the airline's fleet, and highlights the long-stand-



## Business

# GCC economies to expand by 5.9% in 2022: World Bank

## Kuwait's economic growth in 2022 expected to accelerate to 5.7%

RIYADH: The economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are projected to expand by 5.9 percent overall in 2022, with this recovery likely to continue in the medium-term, driven by the hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon sectors. The GCC comprises six countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The latest issue of the World Bank's Gulf Economic

Update (GEU) contains a special chapter focusing on critical steps that need to be taken towards energy subsidies, fiscal consolidation, and the importance of getting prices right to bring about an environment that places the private sector at the forefront of green growth.

As major hydrocarbon exporters, GCC countries may also benefit from changes in the energy markets brought about by the war in Ukraine. These countries may see strong fiscal and external surpluses, which could help spur consumer confidence and investments. However, the war has also placed energy security at the top of the agenda of many major oil importers, thereby accelerating their plans for a transition to



sustainable growth model less hydrocarbon dependent and managing the transition to a global low-carbon economic environment that risk to see their oil revenues reduced in the next few decades," said Issam Abousleiman, World Bank Regional Director for the GCC. The special chapter of the GEU discusses opportunities to restructure energy subsidies in the region, as well as opportunities that exist for the GCC countries to become renewable energy powerhouses by diversifying into green technologies. This transition to an environment-friendly model will be a recurrent theme in future issues of the Gulf Economic Update, making this the first in a series that will focus on green growth in the region.

### GCC countries' outlook

**Bahrain:** Bahrain's economy is expected to accelerate in 2022 to 3.5 percent, boosted by surging energy prices. Recovery in the non-oil economy will be driven by expansion in the transportation and communication sectors, as well as increased agriculture and fishing.

**Kuwait:** Economic growth in 2022 is expected to accelerate to 5.7 percent, due to higher oil output as OPEC+ cuts are phased out and domestic demand strengthens.

**Oman:** Growth in 2022 is projected to reach 5.6 percent, underpinned by more than 8 percent growth in the hydrocarbon sector, while the non-oil economy continues to grow by more than 2 percent as faster vaccine rollout strengthens domestic activity.

**Qatar:** Real GDP is estimated to rise in 2022 to 4.9 percent on the heels of boosted hydrocarbon exports, while growth in private consumption may be slightly lower, at 4.8 percent, driven by a potential dilution of World Cup proceeds and higher prices.

**Saudi Arabia:** Growth is expected to accelerate to 7 percent in 2022, driven by stronger oil output following OPEC+ production cuts and continued growth in non-oil sectors, and supported by stronger consumption, increased tourism, and higher domestic capital spending.

**United Arab Emirates:** Economic recovery is projected to continue in 2022, with growth anticipated to reach 4.7 percent driven by oil and non-oil sectors.



### Achieving climate change pledges could support diversification, economic growth, and job creation

Update (GEU), "Achieving Climate Change Pledges," describes them as rebounding robustly from the COVID-19 pandemic in the course of 2021 and at the beginning of 2022. It attributes the rebound to a broadly successful vaccination rollout across the GCC, the easing of pandemic restrictions, and developments in the hydrocarbon market. As a result, fiscal deficits have markedly improved, with the GCC external balance reaching pre-pandemic levels in 2021 as energy prices and export earnings strengthened.

green growth. The GEU contains a special chapter focusing on critical steps that need to be taken towards energy subsidies, fiscal consolidation, and the importance of getting prices right to bring about an environment that places the private sector at the forefront of green growth.

"As GCC countries commit to the net-zero objectives laid out in their pledges and strategies, it is important to restructure energy and water subsidies and address the GCC's challenge of moving to a more



## Aleid Foods signs partnership contract with 'Brunch' for ready-made meals

KUWAIT: Aleid Foods Company signed a 50 percent acquisition contract with "Brunch" company specialized in ready-made meals, to strengthen its position in the local market, and set plans to expand its product sales, distribution, and marketing traditionally and digitally.



Abdulaziz Al-Fahd

The Brunch Company has innovative food brands managed with special operation standards that reflect the globalization of flavors, and are classified into five main production lines including firstly XO Street Food, offering a wide variety of high-quality street food dishes from around the world, secondly Como, which specializes in the Italian cuisine for parties and special occasions, thirdly, Vereen, a production line dedicated to all kinds of 100 percent gluten-free baked goods, fourthly, Zereshk for traditional Persian food with special international flavors, and finally The Brunch, which

offers a variety of healthy meals and beverages targeting the niche consumer segment looking for balanced, healthy and ready-made food with a great taste, suitable for their busy schedule and lifestyle.

The founder and head of "Brunch" company for ready-made meals, Abdulaziz Al-Fahd, expressed his delight in cooperation with Aleid Foods Company, which will support the spread of the new concept adopted in the company's dishes, that results from years of work, study and evaluation of raw materials and preparation procedures applied in the company's kitchen and consumer needs, while taking into consideration costumers' recommendations in recipes development in each of the company's brands. He stressed that the cooperation between Brunch and Aleid Foods will give the company the development opportunity needed to attain the position it deserves in the market.

In turn, Abdullah Al-Ghanim, Business Development Manager at "Aleid Foods", valued the partnership and partial acquisition with Brunch, considering it a reasonable step that will reflect positively on the company's ambition to launch new product lines and diversify its services to reach the largest consumer segments, and is in line with the company's aim for providing new and innovative products keeping pace with the modern and changing food trends and tendencies, and support the company's efforts to push forward with promising projects by harnessing its superior business expertise to expand locally and regionally.

This unique partnership is part of Aleid Foods' commitment to achieving continuous growth and one of its strategy's main axes to invest in national talents and build effective partnerships with young entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium enterprises.

"Aleid Foods Company was established in 1994, with a paid-up capital of more than KD 12 million. It was listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange in 2008 under the consumer services sector. Today, it is a leading company in importing, marketing and distributing food products in Kuwait. "Aleid Foods" has diverse operation lines, a group of partner brands, branches, and subsidiaries specialized in food, with a distribution channel network of advanced logistical capabilities, serving more than 1,000 commercial customers and massive direct-to-store operations. "Aleid Foods" believes in digitalization, and is keen to adopt the latest digital technologies in the marketing and distribution of food products.

## London's delayed commuter rail link opens

LONDON: Long delayed and over budget, the Elizabeth line rail link finally opened in London on Tuesday, with hopes that the speeded up journey times will provide a much-needed economic boost.

Hundreds of people queued outside Paddington station in west London to be on the first train, which departed to cheers at 6:33 am (0533 GMT). By 10 am, there had been some 130,000 journeys, operator Transport for London (TfL) said.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan was one of those on board, and told AFP that the line was a "game-changer for our country and our city". Khan's predecessor as mayor, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, said the project is forecast to boost the UK economy by £42 billion (\$52 billion, 49 billion euros). Only one of the line's three branches has opened so far, from Paddington to Abbey Wood in southeast London. There, commuters wanted to reap the benefits of the new line from a sprawling hinterland ill-served with fast transport links.

"I'm excited just to see how quick it actually is," said Niyana Sarattat, 45, who works in central London. "At the moment I need to take a train, a bus and a Tube. This will cut my journey in half. Everyone's happy," she added, predicting a rise in local house prices.

### 'Great moment'

David, in his 60s, was on one of the first trains arriving at Abbey Wood having returned from his night shift as a security guard in Farringdon, central London. "It's a big change, it saves me 50 percent of my time. I was very eager to get it," he said. "It's going to increase activities, socializing, friends coming to visit you." The usual bleary-eyed rush hour was replaced for one day at least by wide-eyed excitement, as com-

muters and hordes of train enthusiasts packed the early services.

"I've been interested in the Tube for a long time," said software developer Kirk Northrop, 37. "Something like this, that's been 35 years in the planning and 15 years in the making, it's nice to finally see it come to realization. "It's not often you can celebrate a massive engineering feat."

Commuters snapped on their camera phones inside the vast new stations, marked by curving walls and spacious ticket halls. "It's a great moment for the city, very exciting," said Italian student Salvatore Ingenito, 20, who got up at 5:00 am to see the first train depart.

"Paddington is absolutely ravishing." Disability rights campaigner Brendan Taylor, 18, said the stations' step-free access would also be a "game changer" for those, like himself, in wheelchairs. "Say I wanted to go from Paddington to Westminster, because the Tube is so inaccessible... it would take me about an hour and a half," he explained. "When Bond Street opens it will take me about 15 minutes."

### Costs balloon

Sections from Shenfield, east of London to Liverpool Street and Heathrow Airport and Reading, west of the capital, to Paddington will open by May next year. Trains are currently scheduled to run from 6:30 am to 11:00 pm Monday to Saturday, with a Sunday service expected to start later this year.

The line, named after Queen Elizabeth II, is projected to carry up to 200 million passengers a year, adding 10 percent more capacity to London's transport network. "It's not just fit for Her Majesty the Queen, it's fit for Londoners, fit for Brits, fit for tourists," mayor Khan told reporters. Work started on the project back in 2009 and was initially called Crossrail. It was originally due to open in 2018. But it was hit by problems with construction and complex signaling systems. Costs ballooned to £18.9 billion—some £3 billion over budget. "Bringing the railway together, integrating all the complicated systems was always going to be a challenge. It was a challenge," said Elizabeth Line director Howard Smith. — AFP



LONDON: The new London line, named after Queen Elizabeth II, is projected to carry up to 200 million passengers a year. — AFP

## BoE: UK banks face financial hit over climate inaction

LONDON: UK banks and insurers face big hits to profits unless they take immediate action over their exposure to climate change risks, the Bank of England warned Tuesday. The BoE conclusion came in an initial stress test on how major British financial companies' balance sheets are likely to hold up faced with obstacles on the path to a net zero economy.

"Across scenarios, participants' projections show

that if banks and insurers do not respond effectively, climate risks could cause a persistent and material drag on their profitability," the BoE concluded after a study of 19 financial institutions in the UK including HSBC, Barclays and Aviva. "Loss projections vary across participants and scenarios, but are equivalent to an annual drag on profits of around 10-15 percent on average," the central bank predicted. It added that such a level of fallout could make the financial system more vulnerable to other future economic shocks.

The BoE in June 2021 assessed "climate scenarios, testing different combinations of physical and transition risks over a 30-year period" for UK lenders. The UK government wants a net zero carbon emissions nation by 2050. "Achieving net zero will not be possible unless our societies make considerable investments in developing and disseminating new technologies, and will

require major changes across the economy," Sam Wood, chief executive of the BoE's regulatory arm, said in comments accompanying the results of the stress test.

"A stable financial system can support households and businesses through these changes, and channel investment where it needs to go to support the transition," he added. The BoE said projected bank credit losses were greatest in the "late action scenario". The central bank said this would result in additional sector losses totalling about £110 billion (\$138 billion, 128 billion euros). Total losses for the financial sector could meanwhile reach almost £350 billion where no additional action is taken. "The (UK) government and Bank of England must act fast to align the financial system with net zero," David Barmes, senior economist at lobby group Positive Money, said in reaction to the report.—AFP



## Business

# China offers bonds, tax breaks as new medicine for ailing economy

## Movement curbs hit manufacturing hubs

**BEIJING:** Tax breaks and a bond drive for Chinese aviation and railway firms are among a blizzard of fresh measures agreed by China's economic planners to gee up an economy stunted by a coronavirus surge. China is the last major economy bolted to a zero-COVID strategy of mass testing and tough lockdowns to stamp out infections.

Movement curbs have hit dozens of cities in recent months—from the manufacturing hubs of Shenzhen and Shanghai to the breadbasket of Jilin—seizing up supply chains and crushing retail sales and industrial output to their lowest levels in around two years.

The State Council on Monday announced measures to “stabilize the country's economy and bring it back onto a normal track”, according to the official Xinhua news agency. Beijing will expand the quota of value-added tax refunds by 140 billion yuan (\$21 billion), the agency said.

This takes the overall target of tax refunds, cuts and fee reductions to 2.64 trillion yuan this year, according to a readout of the State

Council meeting on Xinhua. Authorities will also double the lending quota for banks to help smaller enterprises, while allowing some borrowers to postpone their repayments, the report added.

The government will also issue 200 billion yuan in bonds to support the aviation industry, cut the purchase tax on some cars, and support the issuance of 300 billion yuan in railway construction bonds, Xinhua said. “We believe these measures will provide some help and alleviate the severity of the growth slowdown... (but) remain cautious about growth prospects for this year,” Nomura analysts said in a note on Tuesday. The moves come as Chinese cities roll out more regular COVID testing, crowding out other fiscal spending, Nomura said. Meanwhile, the zero-COVID strategy is likely to bog down private demand, analysts added. Markets remained gloomy despite the pledges, with the Shanghai Composite Index down 1.2 percent on Tuesday, while the Shenzhen Composite Index slid two percent in afternoon trade. —AFP



BEIJING: A delivery worker passes items to people inside a fenced residential area under lockdown due to COVID-19 coronavirus restrictions in Beijing. —AFP

## African Development Bank approves \$1.5bn for food crisis

**ACCRA, Ghana:** The African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a \$1.5 billion emergency program to alleviate the impact of worsening food insecurity due to the Ukraine war, its director said on Monday. About 20 million farmers on the continent will benefit from the fund as Africa faces a shortage of at least 30 million metric tons of food, especially wheat, maize, and soybeans imported from Russia and Ukraine.

“The US\$1.5 billion... will be used to support African countries to produce food and do so rapidly,” AfDB's Group President Akinwumi Adesina told the media ahead of annual general meetings in Ghana's capital Accra. The program aims to help produce 38 million tons of food. This will consist of 11 million tons of wheat, 18 million tons of maize, six million tons of rice and 2.5 million tons of soya beans.

“Food aid cannot feed Africa. Africa does not need bowls in hand. Africa needs seeds in the ground, and mechanical harvesters to harvest bountiful food produced locally,” Adesina said.

“Africa will feed itself with pride for there is no dignity in begging for food.” The program aims to deliver seeds, fertilizer and services to farmers and support post-harvest management, the AfDB said in a statement. It will also provide financing and credit guarantees for large-scale supply of fertilizer.

According to an AfDB statement, the food production program “is an unprecedented comprehensive initiative to support smallholder farmers in filling the food shortfall.”

The price of wheat has soared in Africa by over 45 percent since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Fertilizer prices have gone up by 300 percent and the continent faces a fertilizer shortage of two million tons.

Many African countries have already seen price hikes in bread and other food items, worsened by the rise in fuel for transport. “If this deficit is not made up, food production in Africa will decline by at least 20 percent and the continent could lose over \$11 billion in food production value,” the AfDB said. —AFP

## Everlasting masterpiece Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro

**KUWAIT:** The new Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro Series has already hit the shelves and is creating a frenzy amongst smartwatch lovers. This watch seems to have hit all the right notes both in terms of design and features. It has a stunning design, up to 14-days battery life, professional health management, 100+ workout modes including a cool and professional Free Diving Mode, and more! The fact that it can connect with Huawei devices as well as other Android and iOS devices makes it an enticing choice for many. However, we know you must have a handful of questions that need answers before you can make up your mind. Here, you can find answers to all the important questions regarding the new smartwatch from Huawei.

True, a lot of people are going crazy about this smartwatch's design and for good reasons. For starters, the watch brings the elegance of high-end luxury watch-

## KFH wins Visa award for Sharia-compliant foreign currency card

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has received the “First Sharia-compliant Foreign Currency Prepaid Card in Kuwait” award from Visa. The award was presented to KFH in recognition of its efforts in launching the first sharia-compliant Visa prepaid card of its kind in the local market. This card helps customers manage their payments efficiently and pay directly in foreign currency without charging foreign currency exchange fees.

“We are honored and delighted to have received this award from Visa which recognizes the standards of excellence and pioneering steps taken by KFH to always differentiate itself by launching unique banking products and services. This foreign currency card is a clear-cut example of the outstanding position of KFH in the cards market and the entire Retail Banking market”, said Group Chief Retail and private Banking officer at KFH, Khaled Yousif Al-Shamlan, on the sidelines of receiving the award from Visa in an award ceremony held at KFH Headquarters.

Commenting on this, Dr Saeeda Jaffar, Visa's Group Country Manager for the GCC region, said: “Visa is delighted to present this award to KFH for launching the first sharia-compliant foreign currency prepaid card in Kuwait. As the global leader in digital payments, Visa strives to provide innovative solutions that address the evolving payment needs of consumers in Kuwait. KFH's efforts in providing the innovative, secure digital payments that contribute to the growth of digital commerce in Kuwait make them a well-deserving recipient of this award.”

Al-Shamlan added that the launch of the prepaid card depicts KFH's keenness to give customers a unique



banking experience to fulfill their ambitions and aspirations, not to mention it represents the bank's strategy of rolling out high-end products and services while expanding its customer base, and increasing market share for maintaining strong financial position in Kuwait and worldwide.

He indicated that the Foreign Currency Prepaid Card enables customers to easily charge and pay in different currencies during travel and online shopping, indicating the card, that is available in five main currencies: US Dollar, Pound Sterling, Euro, UAE Dirham and Saudi Riyal, is safer than cash and gives travelers a smart and suitable method to carry their travel money.

Al-Shamlan added that the cards provide unique advantages including avoiding fluctuations in exchange rate of the chosen currency, easy spending without exchanging the currency, protection of purchases and benefiting from continuous VISA offers. He explained that issuing the card to the customer does not require the customer to have an account in KFH or make a salary transfer. The card does not require an annual commitment. He added that customers need to be 18



Khaled Al-Shamlan with Dr Saeeda Jaffar

years old and above.

He emphasized that KFH is continuing its success in the banking cards market, using the highest standards of quality and innovation, underlining the great success of various campaigns for cards and Baitak rewards program.

Al-Shamlan highlighted KFH's leadership in digital transformation using the most modern payment methods. He referred to the “smart wallet” service through smart mobiles and watches, that provide the latest smart and highly secured payment methods in cooperation with “Garmin”, “Fitbit” and “Samsung”. The holders of all KFH cards are now able to enjoy the smart and easy payment methods by passing the device or the smart watch on the POS which are compatible with “NFC” locally and globally.

## Lulu Group International Chairman at WEF meeting



KUWAIT: Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu Group International, an Indian multinational conglomerate company, met with Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs



Sheikh Dr Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investments Abd Al-

Wahab Muhammad Al-Rashid and other dignitaries on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland during the annual meeting on May 23, 2022.

es, with the Moon Phase complication that gives it the feel of classic watches. This complication allows you to observe the different phases of the moon as it changes. To complement the stunning design of the watch, the materials used in its construction are also remarkably high end.

The watch comes in two variants - Titanium Edition and Ceramic Edition - both of which are a pleasure to look at. The Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro Titanium Edition brings a fresh look and feel with a minimalist design and uses luxury-grade polishing to create a premium finish. It uses a titanium metal case, sapphire glass lens and ceramic back case; all of which are premium and extremely durable materials.

Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro Ceramic Edition has a design that is starkly different, though. It is soft and elegant with a soft natural gloss that highlights its elegant, feminine features. The lasting ceramic luster on the watch is achieved only because of the state-of-the-art craftsmanship and effort that went into it. It also features an exclusive flower dial with dynamic effects; the five different dial effects show various shapes of the flower with time. The vivid blossoming of flowers not only symbolizes the passage of time in a fascinating

way but also adds a fun twist to its presentation.

### Battery life

The battery life of the Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro Series is quite impressive for a smartwatch. Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro Titanium Edition comes with a 14 days battery life and seven days of battery life in intense usage scenarios, while the Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro Ceramic Edition comes with 7 days of battery life in typical scenarios and 4 days of battery life in heavy usage scenarios. The ultra-long battery life of the watch makes it an effective health management and workout tracking tool. Even when you have to top up the battery, having wireless fast charging support means that you can charge up the watch for a full day of use in just 10 minutes.

### ECG feature

Huawei Watch GT 3 Pro series supports Electrocardiogram (ECG) data collection, which can accurately provide single-lead ECG measurements, real-time analysis, sinus rhythm and atrial fibrillation detection, and premature atrial and ventricular beat reminders for users and supports arterial stiffness detection, allowing users to actively prevent the risk of



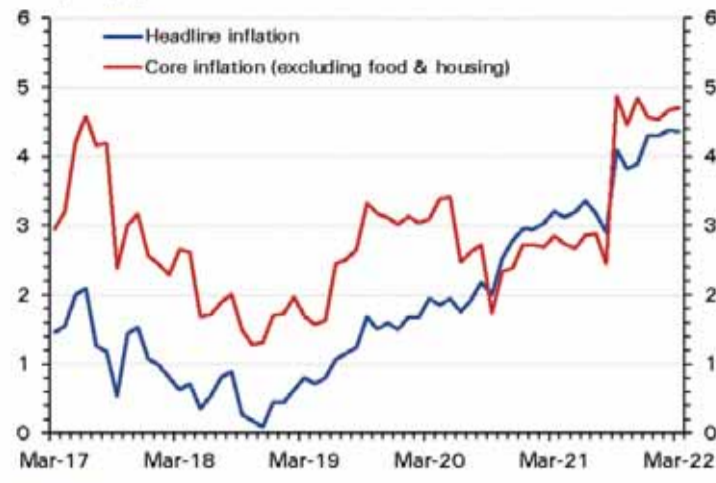
vascular diseases. It also offers all-round health management in heart rate monitoring, blood oxygen, sleep, respiratory health, and pressure, which helps keep tracking the changes in your body. With the Huawei Health App on the phone, you can synchronize real-time exercise and health monitoring data to pay close attention to the health of you and your family.

Huawei TruSeen 5.0+ not only further improves the accuracy of heart rate monitoring but also improves the accuracy of SpO2 monitoring. Especially in workout scenarios, the accuracy of dynamic heart rate monitoring is greatly improved.

Business

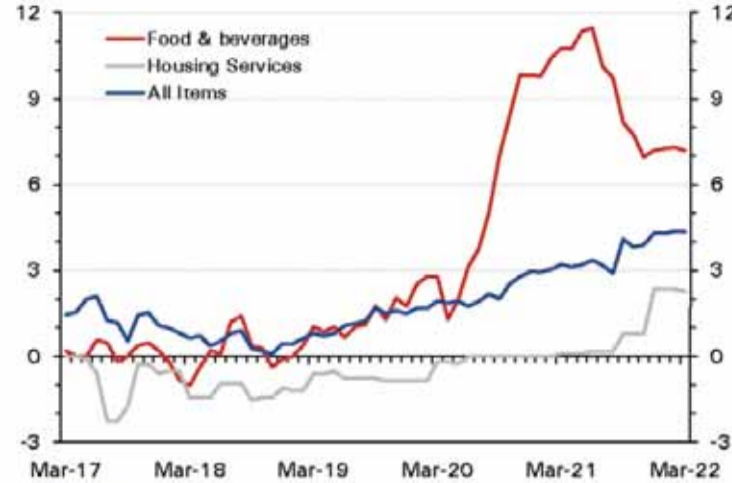
NBK Economic Report

Chart 1: Consumer price inflation (% y/y)



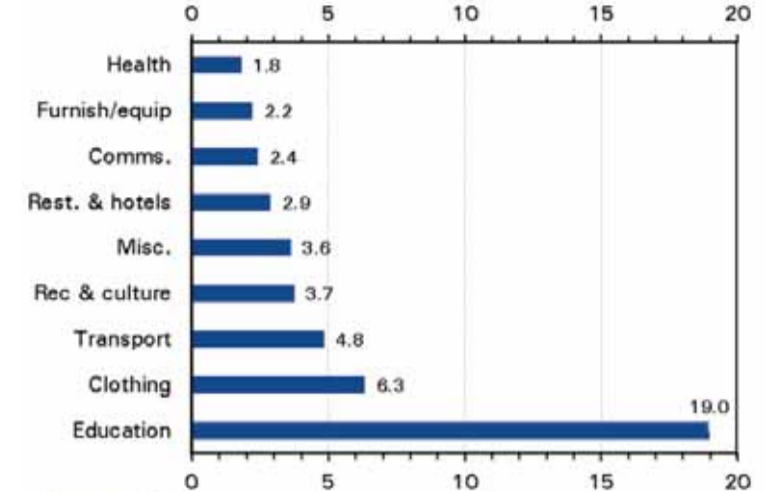
Source: Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), NBK

Chart 2: Inflation in food and housing services (% y/y)



Source: CSB

Chart 3: Inflation in 'core' components (% y/y, March)



Source: CSB

# Kuwait's consumer prices rise in 1Q22 amid global pressures

## Inflation expected to persist in 2022 despite policy tightening

KUWAIT: Kuwait's consumer price inflation continued to rise through 1Q22, finishing the quarter up 4.4 percent y/y, versus 4.3 percent in December 2021. Core inflation, which excludes food and housing, was higher at 4.7 percent (4.6 percent in December). Robust local consumer demand and global supply chain disruptions - recently worsened by the war in Ukraine and COVID-19 lockdowns in China - have driven price gains. Inflation is expected to persist in 2022, though monetary policy tightening by central banks could begin to dampen price rises by softening demand and economic growth more broadly.

Price pressures stemming from a mixture of buoyant consumer demand and supply chain disruptions have persisted. The latter, which materialized during the COVID-19 pandemic, have been exacerbated in recent

months by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and China's zero-COVID lockdown policies. Global food and commodity prices have been especially affected. Pass-through into domestic prices has been quite pronounced in economies heavily dependent on imports and where state price controls are absent or minimal, therefore.

In Kuwait, food and beverages have a 17 percent weight in the consumer price index (CPI), so this component has had a significant influence on the headline rate. During 2021, inflation in the food and beverages category was responsible for more than 46 percent of the 3.4 percent increase in the overall year-average CPI. As of March, however, while still elevated, food price inflation had slowed to 7.2 percent from a peak of 11.5 percent last summer. The price of seafood, fruit and meat continue to increase at double or near-dou-

ble-digit rates. For context, the FAO Food Price Index, which tracks international food prices, reached an all-time high in March (and up 34 percent y/y), following the onset of the war in Ukraine, though it did slow slightly in April (-0.8 percent m/m).

Meanwhile, prices in the housing services component were 2.3 percent y/y higher in March, following several hikes to rental prices in 2021. The indications are that after several years of stagnation, prices could start firming as landlords look to recoup higher construction costs and as demand in the mid-level expatriate rental market stabilizes after the pandemic.

Price rises in the CPI have been broad-based, however, reflected in the further upward tick in core inflation in 1Q22. Notable price rises were recorded in the education (+19 percent y/y), clothing (+5.7 percent)

and transport (+4.8 percent) categories. The higher cost of education is largely a reflection of last September's increase in school fees when in-school attendance resumed after the pandemic.

The inflation outlook in 2022 is likely to be one of persistent price pressures, especially amid the ongoing Ukraine conflict, which is having an outsized impact on global food and energy prices. Nevertheless, with the US Fed leading other central banks, including the Central Bank of Kuwait, in tightening monetary policy, demand and overall economic growth is expected to soften this year. A stronger US dollar, to which the Kuwaiti dinar is partially pegged, is also probably helping to dampen price rises in Kuwait, by making imports less costly. Inflation could average around 4.3 percent this year.



SEOUL: This file photo shows the Samsung flag and South Korean national flag fluttering outside the company's Seocho building in Seoul. — AFP

## Samsung unveils \$356bn investment blueprint for 5 years

SEOUL: South Korean conglomerate Samsung Group on Tuesday unveiled a massive 450 trillion won (\$356 billion) investment blueprint for the next five years aimed at making it a frontrunner in a wide range of sectors from semiconductors to biologics. The new figure is an increase of more than a third over its investments spent over the past five years. The tech giant is South Korea's largest chaebol-the family-run conglomerates that dominate the economy-and its overall turnover is equivalent to a fifth of the national gross domestic product.

Samsung Electronics, its flagship subsidiary, is the world's biggest smartphone maker. The investment plan would bring "long-term growth in strategic businesses and help strengthen the global industrial ecosystem of crucial technology", Samsung said in a statement. The 80,000 new jobs would be created "primarily in core businesses including semiconductors and biopharmaceuticals" through 2026.

It also noted the investment would "bring forward the mass production of chips based on the 3-nanometer process", the latest technology to further shrink the size of semiconductors and boost computing power. It will also invest heavily in biopharmaceuticals with its affiliates Samsung Biologics and Samsung Bioepis. The new plan represents a 36 percent increase in investment over its total investments over the past five years. Of the 450 trillion won Samsung plans to spend over the next five years, it will commit 360 trillion won to South Korea.

### Biden visit

The announcement comes after US President Joe Biden toured Samsung Electronics' massive Pyeongtaek semiconductor factory on Friday, underscoring the South Korean giant's role in securing global supply chains of microchips. South Korea and the United States need to work to "keep our supply chains resilient, reliable and secure," Biden said, calling semiconductors manufactured there as "a wonder of innovation" and crucial to the global economy.

Lee Jae-yong, the firm's vice-chairman and the de facto leader of the wider Samsung conglomerate, escorted Biden and newly sworn-in South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol inside the assembly line, and introduced the two to an audience in English. It was Lee's highest-profile public appearance since his release on parole in August. He had served more than half of a two-and-a-half-year sentence for bribery, embezzlement and other offences in connection with a corruption scandal that brought down ex-South Korean president Park Geun-hye.

Samsung employs about 20,000 people in the United States and work is under way to build a new semiconductor plant in Texas, scheduled to open in 2024. The vast majority of the world's most advanced microchips are made by just two companies-Samsung and Taiwan's TSMC-both of which are running at full capacity to alleviate a global shortage. —AFP

### News in brief

#### US to tap diesel reserves

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration is ready to tap into the United States' national diesel reserves to tame soaring prices amid a supply crunch, a White House spokeswoman said Monday. The Russian war against Ukraine and ensuing economic sanctions against Moscow have caused fuel prices to soar around the world. The issue, along with rising inflation, is a major challenge for President Joe Biden and his Democratic administration ahead of midterm elections in November. "We're closely monitoring challenges to diesel supply and prices as a result of (President) Putin's invasion" of Ukraine, White House press secretary Emilie Simons wrote on Twitter. —AFP

#### Algeria president sacks CB chief

ALGIERS: Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on Monday sacked central bank chief Rostom Fadli, in office for less than two years, the presidency announced without giving any further explanation. Tebboune "on Monday ended the functions of the Governor of the Bank of Algeria, Mr Rostom Fadli, and appointed Mr Salah Eddine Taleb to replace him," it said in a statement. Fadli had taken office in June 2020 as interim head of the central bank of Africa's fourth-biggest economy, later being confirmed in the role. Algeria is a rentier economy dependent on oil exports for 90 percent of its foreign income, and therefore vulnerable to price movements. — AFP

#### Russia eases forex norms

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday said domestic exporting companies would have to sell 50 percent of their income in foreign currency, a reduction from 80 percent earlier, after Moscow said the ruble stabilized. After the West slapped sanctions on Russia over the start of Moscow's military offensive in Ukraine in February, financial authorities introduced harsh capital controls. They ordered exporting companies to sell 80 percent of their export earnings to buy rubles, among other measures. Since then, the ruble has staged a spectacular rebound and strengthened around 30 percent against the dollar. — AFP



EL PASO, United States: In this file photo taken on November 20, 2020, a resident watches as a drone delivers a COVID-19 self collection test kit to her home, after being ordered from Walmart, in El Paso, Texas. — AFP

## Walmart says expanding its drone deliveries

NEW YORK: US retail giant Walmart said Tuesday it is dramatically ramping up its drone deliveries, expanding the airborne service to six states by year-end with the potential to deliver one million packages annually. The delivery network will broaden to 34 sites by the end of the year, "providing the potential to reach four million US households" in Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Texas, Utah and Virginia, David Guggina, Walmart's senior vice president of innovation and automation, said in a statement.

"This provides us the ability to deliver over one million packages by drone in a year," Walmart customers who order goods between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm and pay a delivery fee of \$3.99 (3.75 euros) per order can have them delivered by air in

as quickly as half an hour, the company said. Each delivery can weigh a maximum of 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms). Tens of thousands of products are compatible with the service, including medicines, diapers and hot dog buns, according to Walmart. The retail behemoth is using devices and technology from DroneUp, a start-up in which Walmart has invested. Each participating store will house a drone delivery hub with a team of pilots cleared by the US Federal Aviation Administration to operate the unmanned aircraft.

By 2020, Walmart had announced a partnership with DroneUp as well as Flytrex and Zipline. Several projects have emerged, but their scale has remained limited until now. By significantly accelerating its efforts, Walmart is seeking to position itself as a leader in the drone delivery market, a sector coveted by several major American operations including Amazon, Google parent company Alphabet and even shipping giant UPS. Arkansas-based Walmart says it can strongly compete in the drone market due to a singular and major advantage: about 90 percent of Americans live within 10 miles (16 kilometers) of one of the nation's 4,700 Walmart stores. — AFP



A Google employee riding a camera-equipped tricycle here in 2010 to collect photos for the Street View service.

## Google marks 15 years of Street View

PARIS: Google celebrated on Tuesday 15 years since it kicked off its mammoth and hugely controversial effort to photograph streets in minute detail across the globe. The panoramic images of Google Street View have slipped into daily life for millions-but during its early years it attracted countless court cases and howls of anguish from privacy campaigners.

The US tech giant is marking the anniversary by releasing a slew of new features, including an improved version of the "time travel" tool that allows users to see previous photos taken by Google's cameras. The firm also published lists of the most popular destinations for users-with Burj Khalifa in Dubai taking the top spot for buildings, followed by the Eiffel Tower and the Taj Mahal.

Google said Indonesia was the most popular country for Street View, ahead of the United States, Japan, Mexico and Brazil. The Indonesian capital Jakarta was the most searched city, beating Tokyo, Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires. —AFP



Workers remove the final New York City payphone near Seventh Avenue and 50th Street in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. — AFP photos



New York City Council Member Julie Won poses for a photo after workers remove the final New York City payphone near Seventh Avenue and 50th Street in Midtown Manhattan.

## 'End of an era' as New York removes last of its iconic payphone booths

Marking the end of an era, New York City on Monday removed the last of its storied payphone booths, which have fallen victim to the ubiquity of free Wi-fi and cell phones in recent years. But Superman fans can take comfort in the fact that Manhattan will keep four of the defunct booths, made famous as the impromptu changing rooms for journalist Clark Kent as he transformed into the Man of Steel.

Over the decades, the phone booths have featured widely in pop culture, from comic books to Hollywood blockbusters and TV shows. That ended Monday morning, when, in front of assembled media, Manhattan borough president-the equivalent of the mayor-Mark Levine had the last booth housing two Bell System payphones at the corner of 7th Avenue and 50th Street dismantled and lifted on to a flatbed truck.

Levine said on Twitter he was "on hand today to say 'Bye Bye' one last time to the famed (infamous?) NYC pay phone." "I won't miss all the dead dial tones but gotta say I felt a twinge of nostalgia seeing it go," he added. Fixed-line payphones began disappearing from the streets of New York in the early 2000s as cell phone use spread, and then vanished even faster in the 2010s with the explosion

of smartphones.

The final blow came when, in 2015, Manhattan went ahead with the installation of thousands of LinkNYC hotspots offering WiFi and free local calls. Those new kiosks are to be gradually connected to the emerging 5G network. "Truly the end of an era but also, hopefully, the start of a new one with more equity in technology access," said Levine, referring to neighborhoods

in northern Manhattan, such as Harlem, that are less well covered by telephone and internet networks. According to local media, Manhattan will keep four of the old-fashioned phone booths on the Upper West Side, on West End Avenue at 66th, 90th, 100th and 101st streets. — AFP

## Kate Moss expected to testify at Depp v Heard trial

The high-profile defamation case between Johnny Depp and his ex-wife Amber Heard is poised to get another dash of celebrity-British model Kate Moss is expected to testify. The 48-year-old Moss, Depp's former girlfriend, is scheduled to make an appearance by video on Wednesday. Moss, who went out with the "Pirates of the Caribbean" star from 1994 to 1997, is being called to the witness stand by Depp's legal team, the New York Post and other US media said.

The 36-year-old Heard, during her testimony earlier this month, mentioned a reported incident in which Depp was alleged to have pushed Moss down a flight of stairs. That reference provided an opening to Depp's lawyers to call Moss as a witness to address the allegation. Depp, 58, filed suit against Heard over an op-ed she wrote for The Washington Post in December 2018 in which she described herself as a "public figure representing domestic abuse."

Heard, who had a starring role in "Aquaman," did not name Depp in the op-ed, but he sued her for implying he was a domestic abuser and is seeking \$50 million in damages. The Texas-born Heard countersued, asking for \$100 million and claiming that she suffered "rampant physical violence and abuse" at his hands. Depp, during his four days on the witness stand, denied ever striking Heard or any other woman and claimed that she was the one who was frequently violent.

### 'Narcissistic traits'

On Monday, the seven-person jury hearing the case listened to testimony

from two doctors called as witnesses by Heard's team and from a Hollywood industry expert. Richard Moore, an orthopedic surgeon, said it was unlikely that a finger injury sustained by Depp during a fight with Heard occurred in the manner in which Depp said it did.

Depp said the tip of the middle finger on his right hand was severed when Heard threw a vodka bottle at him while the couple were in Australia, where he was filming the fifth installment of the "Pirates" franchise. Moore, who reviewed the medical records, said the wound was not consistent with that explanation.

David Spiegel, a psychiatrist, testified that Depp had "narcissistic traits" and behavior that indicated he had a substance use disorder. Spiegel engaged in a testy exchange with one of Depp's lawyers when pressed about the American Psychiatric Association's so-called Goldwater Rule, which says it is "unethical for a psychiatrist to offer a professional opinion unless he or she has conducted an examination." Spiegel acknowledged that he did not personally examine Depp but said his opinions were valid as an expert witness.



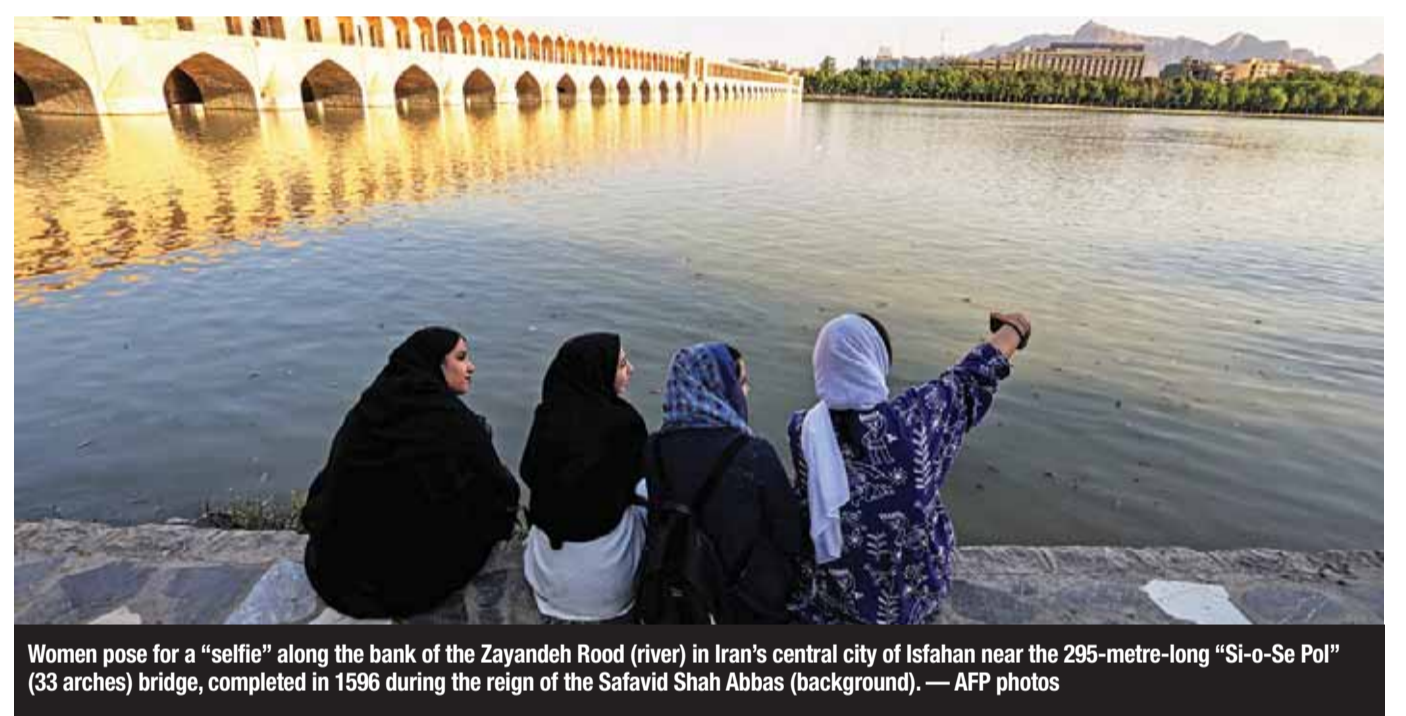
US actor Johnny Depp arrives into the courtroom after a lunch break at the Fairfax County Circuit Courthouse in Fairfax, Virginia. — AFP

### 'Causing his own demise'

Also testifying on behalf of Heard was entertainment expert Kathryn Arnold, who said Depp's habitual "tardiness, drinking and drug abuse" had hurt his career along with pursuing this and other lawsuits. "He's causing his own demise," Arnold said. Arnold said that allegedly defamatory statements made about Heard by Depp's former lawyer, Adam Waldman, had damaged her career. Heard's career was "on the precipice of a meteoric rise" following her starring turn in "Aquaman" but it has been stymied by a "lot of negative publicity," she said.

"Her world has been silenced in terms of opportunities," she added, estimating that Heard has suffered between \$45 and \$50 million in lost film and TV roles and endorsements. Depp's lawyers put experts on the stand earlier in the trial who testified that the actor lost millions because of the abuse accusations, including a \$22.5-million payday for a sixth installment of "Pirates."

Depp filed the defamation complaint in the United States after losing a separate libel case in London in November 2020 that he brought against The Sun for calling him a "wife-beater." Depp, a three-time Oscar nominee, and Heard were married in February 2015. Their divorce was finalized two years later. Judge Penney Azcarate has scheduled closing arguments in the case for Friday, after which it will go to the jury. — AFP



Women pose for a "selfie" along the bank of the Zayandeh Rood (river) in Iran's central city of Isfahan near the 295-metre-long "Si-o-Se Pol" (33 arches) bridge, completed in 1596 during the reign of the Safavid Shah Abbas (background). — AFP photos

## Iconic Iran river threatened by droughts, diversions

The famed river bridges of the Iranian city of Isfahan are a beloved tourist draw-but much of the time their stone arches span just sand and rocks, not water. Drought and upstream water diversions have seen the Zayandeh Rood, "fertile river" in Persian, run dry since 2000, with only rare exceptions. Sitting on a quay with two friends, 60-year-old Jalal Mirahmadi gazed with melancholy at the riverbed, which became the site of a farmers' protest late last year.

"When I was a child, the water flowed under the arches of the bridge and sometimes overflowed to spill into the surrounding streets," he sighed. The river runs nearly 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the Zagros Mountains in the west to Lake Gavkhouni in the east, making it the longest waterway in central Iran.

On its way through Isfahan, it meanders under several beautifully crafted bridges from the 17th century, the city's golden age when it was the Persian capital. "When the water of Zayandeh Rood flows, the bridges have a special appearance and beauty," said Ali Mohammad Fassihi of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. "These historic bridges are meaningless without water."

### Heat and drought

Largely arid Iran, like other nearby countries, has suffered chronic dry spells and heat waves for years, which are expected to worsen with climate change. Iran is sometimes hit by summertime blackouts when the blistering heat drives up air condi-

tioner use while low rainfall reduces the water reservoirs of hydro-electric dams.

The reduced flow of the Zayandeh Rood, however, is also man-made because much of its water has been diverted to supply neighboring Yazd province. Last November, tens of thousands of people, including farmers, gathered in the dry riverbed to complain about the drought and blame officials for diverting water. Security forces fired tear gas when the protest turned violent and said they arrested 67 people. The municipality later launched an awareness campaign on the fate of the river, with several signs erected in Isfahan, the country's third-largest city with two million people. Young people in the city say they are used to only seeing the river's dry bed.

High school student Amir, 18, said he rarely goes there because it "is no longer pleasant without water." "Most of my memories and those of my generation are associated with the dryness of the river," he lamented.

### Riverside selfies

From time to time, authorities briefly open the upstream dam's floodgates to irrigate wheat fields east of Isfahan-to the delight of thousands who quickly flock to the river. This happened in mid-May when locals and tourists rushed to the waterway to capture the ephemeral views with their eyes and with selfies. Under the shade of trees on the banks, families drank tea and smoked shisha. Some strolled and others

pedaled swan-shaped boats, which were back in use after baking in the dust.

At the majestic Si-o-Se Pol Bridge, portrait painter Mohammad-Reza Abdollahi, 50, drew the yellow-brick bridge while awaiting clients. "I hadn't been to Isfahan for 10 years because there were few tourists due to the drought in Zayandeh Rood," he said. He had only planned to stay for a week or two, but said that when the dams were opened, "I extended my stay." Mahnaz, a 27-year-old art student holding her camera, said she was delighted to capture the river's beauty. "I didn't have good photos of the bridge's reflection in the river because it's been dry since I learnt photography," he said.

### 'Like a mother'

Mirahmadi, the 60-year-old man, looked on at visitors to the river with mixed feelings. "Do you see this crowd today?" he said. "In a few days, when there is no more water in the river, you will only see old men like us. And we will come just to remember." The floodgates had been closed again and already the change was obvious: water flowed only under two arches of the Khajou Bridge, which is known for its decoration and its steps descending into the current. "Zayandeh Rood is the meeting place for all the people of Isfahan," said Borna Moussavi, who campaigns for the preservation of the river and the heritage of Isfahan. — AFP



People sit beneath the "Si-o-Se Pol" bridge.



A boy jumps across one of the arches of the "Si-o-Se Pol" (33 arches) bridge.

Lifestyle | Features



Jerry Huang, maker and fish enthusiast, poses with his fish tank trolley for photographs at a park in Taichung, central Taiwan. — AFP photos



Jerry Huang, maker and fish enthusiast, poses with his fish tank trolley for photographs at a park.

## Bill Cosby sex assault case starts in California

A trial against Bill Cosby began Monday in California, with a civil suit alleging the disgraced comedian sexually assaulted a teenage girl almost five decades ago. Judy Huth says the man once known as "America's Dad" attacked her at the Playboy Mansion in the mid-1970s when she was around 15 years old. Huth says she suffered "psychological damage and mental anguish" as a result of the alleged assault.

The case is the latest in a raft of legal actions against 84-year-old Cosby, who was once one of the most popular performers on US television. Dozens of women have said they suffered sexual assault at his hands. Huth's case was originally filed in 2014, but had been on hold while Cosby faced aggravated indecent assault charges in Pennsylvania. Cosby was convicted of drugging and sexually assaulting a woman 17 years ago, but freed from his prison sentence after the state's supreme court ruled he had been denied a fair trial.



In this file photo US actor Bill Cosby arrives at court in Norristown, Pennsylvania to face sentencing for sexual assault. — AFP

His release from prison—he had served more than two years of his three-to-10 year sentence—infuriated many advocates of the #MeToo movement. His conviction was the first sexual assault guilty verdict against a celebrity since the advent of the worldwide reckoning against sexual violence and abuse of power. But the court did not exonerate him, rather it overturned the conviction on a technicality.

Judges wrote that a non-prosecution agreement between a former district attorney and Cosby over evidence he gave in a different civil case meant the actor shouldn't have been criminally charged in the first place. In the case that local broadcasters reported had started Monday, Huth claims she met Cosby on a film set, and days later was invited to his tennis club. There, she says, he gave her alcohol and took her to the Playboy Mansion, where he forced her to perform a sex act. Cosby has denied her version of events. The defense has leapt on apparent discrepancies in Huth's claim. The assault was initially alleged to have happened in 1974, when she was 15 years old, but more recently has said it took place a year later. — AFP

## Taiwan man invents stroller for fish to 'explore other worlds'

Jerry Huang's aquatic pets rarely feel like two lost souls swimming in a fishbowl because they get to go for regular strolls. In Taiwan's Taichung City, Huang can be seen pushing his latest invention: a goldfish bowl on wheels. "In the past, people walked their dogs and cats, now they take their parrots for walks, also snakes, lizards," Huang, 31, told AFP. "Is there a chance for underwater creatures to explore the land above water?" he asked himself.

Huang, an avid aerial drone photographer who makes a living mak-

ing content for his YouTube channel, soon came up with a solution. After spending weeks in his workshop tinkering with the design, the goldfish stroller actually came together in just a few days, cobbled together from spare parts he had lying around.

The space-age-looking contraption (estimated cost \$300-400) consists of a large, water-filled acrylic cylinder for the fish to reside in, combined with a battery-powered filtration and oxygen system plunked on a specially built trolley. "I have done a lot of research before I

started making this fish tank. It's not a spur of the moment thing. You need to understand fish," he said.

He decided goldfish, which are hardy and not especially frightened of humans, were the best test subjects. Huang is fairly confident his goldfish enjoy the adventures. "We all have this urge to explore other, uninhabitable exotic worlds, that's why we send spaceships to the universe," he beamed. "If I were a goldfish, I would definitely be super thrilled if someone invented a thing for me to go explore other worlds." — AFP



A girl looks at a fish tank trolley at a park in Taichung, central Taiwan.



Children look at a fish tank trolley at a park in Taichung.



This picture showing Jerry Huang walking with his fish tank trolley at a park.

## South African paraglider makes first legal flight off Everest

A South African paraglider has made the first legal flight off Mount Everest, an expedition organizer said Tuesday, opening doors for "climb and fly" adventurers on the world's highest mountain. Pierre Carter, 55, leapt off near the summit at an altitude of nearly 8,000 meters (26,247 feet) last week, cruising above the Himalayas as other mountaineers descended on foot. Carter flew down at a top speed of 80 kilometers (50 miles) per hour, taking only 20 minutes to land near the small settlement of Gorakshpeth at 5,164 meters.



South African paraglider Pierre Carter speaks during an interview with AFP in Kathmandu.

"It was a beautiful flight down. Above the clouds and then through the clouds and down," Carter told AFP. Weather conditions dissuaded Carter from climbing all the way to the top of Everest's 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) summit before his flight from the South Col ridge around noon. "Once you're in the air it is all relative," Carter said. "But the take off's

always difficult the higher you are... your glider doesn't want to fly as easily." Carter began climbing as a teenager and soon became interested in paragliding.

Since 2005, he has flown off five of the seven mountains that make up the tallest summits on their respective continents, beginning with Russia's Mount Elbrus. Carter reached the summit of Alaska's Denali in 2016 but was not permitted to fly. He next aims to repeat the feat off Mount Vinson in Antarctica. There have been only three recorded flights off Everest, all without government permits.

French alpinist and pilot Jean-Marc Boivin was the first person to paraglide down from Everest in 1988. A French couple made a tandem flight from the summit in 2001 in a feat that was repeated a decade later by a pair of Nepali climbers. "This is the first time Nepal has issued a flight permit on its mountains," Dawa Steven Sherpa of Asian Trekking

told AFP. Sherpa said he expected more climbers to follow Carter next season, now that Nepali authorities have shown a willingness to permit flights off the Himalayas. "Many climbers are also paragliders and the idea of climbing and flying down is gaining popularity," Sherpa said. "Authorities now see this can boost Nepal's tourism industry, especially after Covid," Sherpa said.

The country only reopened its peaks to mountaineers last year after the coronavirus pandemic shut down the industry in 2020. A rare window of good weather has already allowed hundreds of climbers and guides to reach the Everest summit since a team of Nepali climbers opened the route on May 7. At least three climbers, including a Russian and two Nepalis, have died on Everest since the season began. — AFP



This handout photograph shows South African paraglider Pierre Carter gliding off from the South Col Mt Everest as he flew back to Gorakshpeth in Solukhumbu Everest region.

## 'Hulk' star Ruffalo joins call for global wealth tax

US actor Mark Ruffalo on Tuesday joined a call by over 150 wealthy people for governments to tax them more, as global elites and policymakers met at the World Economic Forum in Swiss resort Davos. The face of Hulk in a decade of Marvel movies was one of dozens of new millionaires to put their names to an open letter titled "In Tax We Trust", which was first delivered to attendees at a virtual WEF conference in January.

"While the world has gone through an immense amount of suffering in the last two years, we have actually seen our wealth rise during the pandemic-yet few if any of us can honestly say that we pay our fair share in taxes," the letter read. The Patriotic Millionaires group said it had boosted the number of signatories to over 150 by May, from 100 in January.

Its chairman Morris Pearl, a former managing director at mammoth asset manager BlackRock, vowed in a statement to "continue to pressure global leaders to heed our call: tax the rich before it's too late". But Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) secretary-general Mathias Cormann said that wealth taxes could be less effective than other revenue-raising options.

"They don't necessarily raise that much revenue," he told a panel discussion at Davos. "In terms of the politics of it, it's attractive, but in terms of the substance of what it achieves it's not that attractive." Cormann did suggest that "property taxes are probably the most efficient, least distorting" form of wealth tax.



US actor Mark Ruffalo

"There's huge scope in wealth taxation... it's been tried and in some countries it works," Oxfam executive director Gabriela Bucher responded. "These amounts that are being accumulated. You could not spend them in several lifetimes." Cormann and the OECD are betting on a deal struck by over 130 countries last year to tax multinational companies at a minimum of 15 percent to boost revenue for hard-up governments.

Asked if Washington might walk back its commitment should Republicans win control of Congress at November midterm elections, Cormann said that "it's in the rational self-interest of the United States to be part of this deal". For companies, it's "much better for them to be operating in a globally consistent framework" rather than navigate conflicting tax regimes, he added. "I can't imagine that any country or any side of politics in any country would make a judgment that would put themselves at that sort of disadvantage." — AFP

## Sports

# What is happening in the Wimbledon controversy?

## Russian and Belarusian players banned

**PARIS:** The French Open is being overshadowed by the controversy sparked by the decision of Wimbledon to ban Russian and Belarusian players from next month's grass court Grand Slam. AFP Sport looks at the main points in a crisis which could prompt some players to skip the event after the ATP and WTA tours stripped Wimbledon of ranking points.

### What happened?

Wimbledon, which starts on June 27, banned players from Russia and Belarus in response to the invasion of Ukraine even though they are allowed to continue competing at other tournaments, including the ongoing French Open. "In the circumstances of such unjustified and unprecedented military aggression, it would be unacceptable for the Russian regime to derive any benefits from the involvement of Russian or Belarusian players," the All England Club said.

The ATP and WTA, who run the professional tours, responded by stripping the event of ranking points. "Discrimination by individual tournaments is simply not viable," said the ATP. Wimbledon said the sanction was "disproportionate". It is not the

first time that the tournament has instituted a ban—players from Germany and Japan were prevented from competing in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

### What have the stars said?

Former world number one Naomi Osaka said she is considering not playing Wimbledon if there are no ranking points. "I'm leaning more towards not playing given the current circumstances. I'm the type of player that gets motivated by seeing my ranking go up," said the four-time major winner. Defending champion Novak Djokovic "intends to go" although he insisted Monday that the decision to ban players was a "mistake" and that other options were available. He says the impasse is a "lose-lose situation".

Djokovic will attempt to win a seventh title at Wimbledon even though he stands to lose the 2,000 points he claimed in 2021. Ironically, Daniil Medvedev, one of the banned Russians, could inherit his top ranking as a result. John Isner, who won the longest match in tennis history, an 11-hour five-minute marathon, at Wimbledon in 2010, said he was ambivalent.

"Right now, truthfully, I'm not that stoked about Wimbledon. I might just show up on Saturday and maybe I will play Monday and see what happens," said the American. For many players, ranking points are hard currency, opening doors to the bigger tournaments and, by extension, the bigger pay cheques. Many in the sport are multi-millionaires. For example, in 2021, Osaka became the world's highest-earning sportswoman with a fortune of \$57 million, according to Forbes. The likes of Djokovic and Rafael Nadal have long broken through the \$100 million barrier in on-court earnings alone.

### How do Ukraine players feel?

Lesia Tsurenko, a former top 25 player, has blasted her fellow WTA professionals for a lack of understanding, claiming that only "four or five" have asked her about the war in the three months since the invasion. Tsurenko, now outside the top 100, has been unable to return to her home city of Kyiv, instead having to base herself at an academy in Italy alongside fellow player and compatriot Marta Kostyuk. Former Ukraine player Sergiy Stakhovsky, who famously defeated Roger Federer on Centre

Court at Wimbledon in 2013, described the ATP decision on stripping points as "a shameful day for tennis". "To say that I am disappointed in @atptour would be understatement. Never would expect that anyone can stand on the side of invaders and murderers," tweeted Stakhovsky, who has joined the Ukraine military to fight the Russian invasion.

### Will there be a boycott?

Osaka said that without ranking points, Wimbledon would resemble an "exhibition" tournament, but the prospects of a large-scale snubbing of Wimbledon are unlikely. The allure of prize money for the lower-ranked players in particular will be too tempting—in 2021, first round losers pocketed 248,000 (\$60,300) each. However, if there was a boycott of the All England Club, it would not be the first. In 1973, Yugoslavia's Niki Pilic had been suspended by his national federation for refusing to play a Davis Cup tie, a move supported by the international body. The ban ruled Pilic out of Wimbledon so the recently-created ATP ordered players not to compete at Wimbledon unless the suspension was lifted. Over 80 players opted not to appear. — AFP



**HANOI:** Participants take part in the closing ceremony of the 31st Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) in Hanoi on May 23, 2022. —AFP

## Party time as COVID-delayed SEA Games end

**HANOI:** The SEA Games in Vietnam's capital Hanoi came to a noisy and colorful close on Monday after more than two weeks of competition in everything from athletics to football and eSports. The closing ceremony, held in an indoor sports complex and a joyful mix of dancing, music and pageantry, brought the curtain down on a Games which started six months late because of Covid.

Nearly 5,000 athletes from 11 countries fought for Southeast Asian pride, with hosts Vietnam easily topping the medals table with 205 golds, followed by Thailand and Indonesia in distant second and third. The closing gala, at a venue with a capacity of about 3,000, was markedly smaller than the opening ceremony when tens of thousands crammed into the My Dinh stadium.

But it did not disappoint as men in white military garb came out onto a stage holding the flags of the 11 nations. Heavy rain fell outside. Hailing the biennial competition a success, Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh declared the Games closed and the mantle was handed over to Cambodia, which will stage the 32nd edition about a year from now. "The torch of peace and development in Southeast Asia will continue to shine," he said. Athletes from the countries did not parade before the audience during the ceremony.

### Record-breakers

When the Games finally got under way earlier this month, Singapore emerged again as SEA swim kings with 21 golds in the pool. Malaysia swept all eight golds in the diving, in what was a generally disappointing Games for the country, coming a lowly sixth in the medals table with 39 gold. East Timor won three silvers and two bronze to prop up the table. Stars of the future were made and some bolstered their already global reputation. Thailand's 16-year-old Puripol Boonson shattered the 200m Games record and also clinched the 100m gold as he became the region's new sprint king on the track.

Reigning Olympic champions Panipak Wongpatthanakit from Thailand defended her taekwondo crown, as did Filipino Hidilyn Diaz in women's weightlifting. A national hero in the Philippines, Diaz is already eyeing up the Paris 2024 Olympics. But Singapore's former Olympic swimming champion Joseph Schooling hinted in Hanoi that his career is almost at an end age 26, but not before adding two more SEA Games golds to make it 29 for him overall. Controversially, he was denied gold in freestyle relay when Singapore's sprint team was disqualified. There was disappointment too for the Philippines' bodybuilders, who were barred from competing over failing to fulfill anti-doping rules, forcing them to leave Hanoi without even taking to the stage. —AFP

## Djokovic wins on Slam return as Nadal strolls

**PARIS:** Reigning champion Novak Djokovic won in straight sets on his return to Grand Slam action at the French Open on Monday and 13-time Roland Garros winner Rafael Nadal eased to victory, but Naomi Osaka crashed out in the first round. Djokovic defeated Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-3, 6-1, 6-0 in the first night session at full capacity in Paris in his first match at a major since losing last year's US Open final.

His attempt to defend his Australian Open title in January ended in chaos and controversy when he was deported from Melbourne for refusing to get vaccinated. "I'm happy to be back. Roland Garros is one of the biggest tournaments in the world, and the memories from last year still are fresh in my head, in my mind," said Djokovic. The world number one, who turned 35 on Sunday, converted eight of 18 break points against Nishioka under the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier on a rain-interrupted day.

"I have to be pleased overall. I always expect highest from myself, so I can always do better, but was a very good start of the tournament," added Djokovic. He will next meet either Federico Coria of Argentina or Slovakia's Alex Molcan, who is working with Marian Vajda-Djokovic's former long-time coach. Nadal, on a quarter-final collision course with Djokovic, brushed Australia's Jordan Thompson aside 6-2, 6-2, 6-2 to improve his Roland Garros record to 106 wins and just three losses since his 2005 title-winning debut.

"It's a good start, of course, straight sets," said Nadal, seeded fifth. "I played good for a while. Then things that I could do better and I need to do better. But it's a positive start." The Spaniard, who last week downplayed concerns over the recurrence of a foot injury that plagued him in Rome, meets Corentin Moutet in round two after the French wildcard defeated 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka.

### Osaka, Krejcekova dumped out

Four-time Grand Slam winner Osaka was knocked out 7-5, 6-4 by Amanda Anisimova—the

## Mbappe 'consulted president Macron over PSG deal'

**PARIS:** Kylian Mbappe made the startling revelation Monday that he had talked over his potential transfer to Real Madrid with Emmanuel Macron, saying he appreciated the "good advice" of the French president, who wanted the Paris Saint-Germain star to stay in France. World Cup winner Mbappe had for months seemed certain to sign for Real Madrid before being persuaded to sign a new three-year deal at PSG, the club he joined in 2017. "We talked quite a bit," Mbappe said of his exchanges with Macron. "You can say that it was good advice. He wanted me to stay, that's part of the negotiations."

Mbappe said that Macron was one of a number of different people to whom he had talked. "It's then that you see that football has changed and has an important place in society. It's important to also know how to stay in one's place despite the importance that can be given to me in the country." With that in mind, Mbappe also revealed that PSG would not block him from playing in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The Paris-born Mbappe was raised in the north-eastern Parisian suburb of Bondy, part of the Seine-Saint-Denis department that is home to not only the Stade de France, but also several other Olympic sites including the Olympic Village. There is no doubt that the potential participation of a star-quality, home-grown talent in the Summer Games would be a massive boost for organizers. "First of all I have to be picked," Mbappe said of the possibility of taking part in Paris 2024. "We talked about it with the club. The club are not against it, they are for it. There weren't any problems with regard to that in negotiations."



**PARIS:** Spain's Rafael Nadal returns the ball to Australia's Jordan Thompson during their men's singles match at the Court Philippe-Chatrier on day two of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament in Paris. —AFP



**PARIS:** Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka during their men's singles match on day two of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament on May 23, 2022. —AFP

same player who ended the Japanese star's title defence at the Australian Open this year. Osaka served eight double faults and committed 29 unforced errors on her return to Roland Garros, after withdrawing in 2021 when she refused to honor mandatory media commitments before revealing she had been suffering from depression. "I thought I tried really hard, and I just feel like it was a bit unfortunate because I wasn't able to play as many matches leading into this tournament," said Osaka, seeded at a Grand Slam for the first time since the 2018 Australian Open.

Anisimova, the 27th seed, reached the semi-finals in Paris three years ago. "It's tough to see Naomi Osaka in the first round so I knew it wouldn't be easy," said the American. "I knew I had to play my best tennis and the conditions were not easy." Women's defending champion Barbora Krejcekova also crashed out, losing 1-6, 6-2, 6-3 to 19-year-old Diane Parry of France in her first match since February following injury. The Czech world number two had yet to play on clay this season after being

sidelined by an elbow problem.

"I just think I just collapsed physically, and, I mean, it was tough because I didn't play the matches," said Krejcekova. Fifth seeded Anett Kontaveit became the fourth top-10 player to fall before the end of the second day, going down 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 to Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic. Iga Swiatek, the favourite for the women's title, stretched her winning streak to 29 matches by dispatching Ukrainian qualifier Lesia Tsurenko 6-2, 6-0 in 54 minutes.

The 20-year-old Swiatek, who took over as world number one following Ashleigh Barty's shock retirement, has won her last five tournaments and is bidding for a second French Open in three attempts. "Today was a pretty good match," said Swiatek. She is unbeaten since February and has the longest winning streak on the WTA tour since Serena Williams won 34 matches in a row in 2013. "I'm pretty sure that it can end, but I just want to keep going. I'm sure someday my streak will stop." Ten matches were interrupted due to rain and will resume on Tuesday. — AFP



**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe is cheered by supporters outside the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. —AFP

### No say on transfers

There has been speculation that as well as a gigantic, undisclosed financial package, PSG's Qatari owners had persuaded Mbappe to remain with his hometown club by agreeing to give the 23-year-old forward some say in which players to sign for next season. Mbappe however denied any such agreement had been made.

"I remain a footballer, who is part of a team, and I will not go beyond this role. I won't go beyond my role as a player," he said at a press conference seated alongside PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi. "Everyone knows that last year, I wanted to leave and I was convinced that it was the best choice, but the years go by and things change. I am French and there is this sentimental side to leaving my

country which would have been difficult. "The project has changed, my club wants to build a new sporting ambition and I think there are other great stories to write here, that's what matters."

Hours after Mbappe announced on Saturday that he was staying at the club came the news that PSG's powerful sporting director Leonardo heavily criticised by supporters—had been sacked. Al-Khelaifi said Mbappe's decision to stay at the French champions sent "a very strong sign". "We are keeping the best player in the world," the president said. "This is a great day for Paris Saint-Germain, for our supporters in France and in the whole world—Kylian is staying at PSG for the next three seasons and that is important for us and for Ligue 1." — AFP

Sports

# Roma, Feyenoord hope to turn the corner in Conference League final

## Two of Europe's most passionate fan bases descend on Tirana

**MILAN:** Two of Europe's most passionate fan bases will descend on Tirana for Wednesday's Conference League final, a competition belittled by some but which has captured the imagination of Feyenoord and Roma supporters. Starved of success in recent years, both teams travel to the Arena Kombetare knowing they will be backed to the hilt for the climax to a successful inaugural season for UEFA's new tournament.

Such is the desire to be at the final that the 20,000 capacity stadium in the Albanian capital is nowhere near big enough, with Roma coach Jose Mourinho saying that the two teams' fans "would have filled the Santiago Bernabeu". Feyenoord said they were disappointed with the paltry allocation of just 4,000 tickets and asked fans not to buy from touts, but that is unlikely to deter supporters hungry for a rare chance for European glory.

Roma were last in a continental final 31 years ago losing the UEFA Cup to Inter Milan and their fans haven't seen their team win a trophy since 2008. A huge number of supporters are trying to find ways to travel the relatively short distance to Albania from Rome, as fans desperately seek tickets for the match and ways of getting across the Adriatic.

The prospect of a European trophy after reaching the semi-finals of both the Europa League and the Champions League in recent seasons has created a wave of enthusiasm among Roma fans. They have offered unconditional backing to Mourinho, whose reputation in Italy was such that he has been given leeway that other managers have not had from notoriously volatile supporters.

Seen as yesterday's man elsewhere, particularly in England, Mourinho has created a strong team spirit

and got the best out of his key summer signing Tammy Abraham. "You're finished when you no longer have passion for the game," Mourinho told reporters before Roma's win at Torino on Friday, which ensured them Europa League football next season. "It's up to us coaches to decide when enough is enough and you've got to wait a lot longer for that to happen to me."

### Abraham at home in Rome

Abraham has been the star of the show for Roma this season, repaying his 40 million euro transfer fee from Chelsea by scoring 27 goals in all competitions, nine of which have come in the Conference League. The 24-year-old has settled in extremely well in Rome, not always the easiest of environments for players, and he has the knack of scoring goals which either decide matches or tips the balance in favor of his team. His early header in the emotional second leg of Roma's semi-final against Leicester City put them in Wednesday's showdown. "For me it's not a little cup," Abraham told AFP last week. "I believe every final is a final no matter what competition it is. You get to the final, you want to win the final."

Feyenoord have a much fuller trophy cabinet but the vast majority of their successes came in the last millennium. The 1970 European champions also won two of the old UEFA Cups but it has been slim pickings in the two decades since their last European success. They have never made it past the group stages of the Champions League and have not gone further than the last 32 since groups were introduced to the UEFA Cup in 2004 ahead of the remodeled Europa League five years later.



**ROTTERDAM:** Feyenoord players are about to leave Rotterdam-The Hague Airport to Tirana where they will play the UEFA Conference League final against AS Roma. —AFP

Arne Slot has led Feyenoord to third, 11 points behind champions Ajax but an improvement on the previous season's fifth place, and have the fans on side with a continental cup on offer. Standing in their way is an expert of winning one-off games who is gunning to complete the set of UEFA club trophies.

"His CV makes you wary of his team. He is known for winning many finals," Slot said of Mourinho to UEFA. "But we mainly have to focus on his team, the tactics and the different ways they play. We shouldn't pay too much attention to the fact that he has such an impressive track record in finals." — AFP

## Hertha Berlin keep Bundesliga status with play-off win

**BERLIN:** Hertha Berlin secured their place in the Bundesliga for next season with a 2-0 away win at Hamburg on Monday to take the promotion/relegation play-off 2-1 on aggregate. "That is a huge relief. What the boys did was outstanding," said Hertha sports director Fredi Bobic. An early headed goal by Hertha captain Dedryck Boyata and a speculative second-half free-kick from Marvin Plattenhardt saw Hertha turn their fortunes around in Monday's return leg.

Hertha had lost the first leg 1-0 in Berlin last Thursday, but the visitors flew out of the traps in Hamburg when Boyata smashed in a header after just four minutes. Falling behind subdued the hosts, who lacked the composure of the first leg. Only a superb save by Hamburg goalkeeper Daniel Fernandes blocked a fierce shot by Hertha striker Ishak Belfodil with half-time approaching. Hamburg rallied after the break with right-back Moritz Heyer testing Hertha goalkeeper Oliver Christensen with a long-range shot.

At the other end, Fernandes pulled off a brilliant save at the near post to block a shot by Plattenhardt, but the dead-ball specialist who was not to be denied. The Germany defender launched a stunning free-kick from the left flank to the far post which curled over Fernandes and into the net on 63 minutes. The goal put Hertha ahead on aggregate for the first time in the play-off tie as the visitors hung on despite increasing desperation from the Hamburg team. Hertha finished with ten men when Lucas Tousart was



**HAMBURG:** Hamburg's Gambian midfielder Bakery Jatta (right) tackles Hertha Berlin's Montenegrin forward Stevan Jovetic during the German Bundesliga Relegation Play-Off second-leg football match Hamburg SV v Hertha Berlin on May 23, 2022. —AFP

shown a second yellow card just before the final whistle as tempers flared in stoppage time. After nine straight seasons in the Bundesliga, Hertha avoided their first relegation since 2011/12. The aggregate defeat denied Hamburg a return to Germany's top flight after four seasons since their 2018 relegation. Hertha's caretaker coach Felix Magath, 68, who won Bundesliga titles in charge of Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg, has kept the Berlin club up despite winning just

three of his nine games in charge. "We are massively grateful for what Felix has done, striking the right key to get the best out of the team," added Bobic. As a player, Magath scored Hamburg's winning goal in the 1983 European Cup final win over Juventus and won three Bundesliga titles with the north German club. Hamburg qualified for the play-off by finishing third in the second division while Hertha ended up third from bottom of the Bundesliga. —AFP

## 'For Lewandowski, Bayern is history'

**BERLIN:** Robert Lewandowski's agent Pini Zahavi has made it clear the Polish striker wants to leave Bayern Munich, amid reports Barcelona have made an offer. "For Robert, things are very clear: he wants to leave FC Bayern this summer," Zahavi told German daily Bild. Lewandowski has already said he wants to leave Bayern, where he has a year left on his contract, with Barcelona reportedly offering 32 million euros (\$34 million) to sign the 33-year-old.

Zahavi warned Bayern: "Of course they can

keep Robert for another year, to be fair he has a contract until 2023, but I wouldn't recommend that to them. "For Robert Lewandowski, FC Bayern is history." A back-to-back winner of FIFA's best male player award, Lewandowski has won every title available since joining Bayern in 2014, including eight Bundesliga trophies for a total of 10 having won two with ex-club Dortmund.

He also won the Champions League with Bayern in 2020. Lewandowski was top-scorer in the Bundesliga last season for the fifth year running after netting 35 goals in Germany's top flight. Bayern CEO Oliver Khan and director of sports Hasan Salihamidzic have both publically stated the club will not let Lewandowski leave before 2023. On Sunday, Salihamidzic slammed Zahavi on a

Sport1 talk show. "He (Lewandowski) has an adviser who has been messing with his head all year," Salihamidzic fumed.

Zahavi played a role in David Alaba leaving Bayern for Real Madrid on a free transfer, leading to former club president Uli Hoeness once describing the player agent as a "piranha". Zahavi, 78, says the issue for Lewandowski is not about extra money. "He has felt disrespected by those in charge (at Bayern) for months, that's the truth. "FC Bayern has not lost Lewandowski the player, but Robert the person". Zahavi says he hopes Bayern's senior figures "will think about it again" and allow Lewandowski the opportunity "to fulfil a lifelong dream and move to the club (Barcelona) he has always dreamed of." —AFP

## Man City title miracle all part of Pep's plan

**MANCHESTER:** Pep Guardiola joked it had been part of his plan for Manchester City to come from 2-0 down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 to claim the Premier League title as his side paraded the trophy through Manchester on Monday. Needing to win to hold off Liverpool by a point to win the title, City were trailing 2-0 with 15 minutes remaining before three goals in five-and-a-half manic minutes at the Etihad.

Guardiola kept his post-match promise by puffing on a cigar as he took to the stage at the end of the parade. City have now four titles in the last five years under Guardiola and six in the last 11 seasons. "It was the plan, 0-2, calm, calm," Guardiola said with a laugh. "And after we scored it was a great night. "Everybody knows what has happened is an incredible achievement. This is the toughest league, in six years since we arrived we had four. "The happiness on all the faces is the greatest reward we can get."

Despite their domestic dominance, the Champions League has remained beyond City despite the billions spent amassing a stellar squad. Another heartbreaking exit to Real Madrid in the semi-finals earlier this month could have derailed their Premier League title charge, but they bounced back to take the necessary 10 points from the final four games. "There was a lot of tension in the last month after (the defeat to Madrid) and a lot of difficult games. "We never give up and we have to be so proud of the group."

Many of the City squad looked to have spent most of the past 24 hours celebrating their triumph. Ederson sprayed more than one of the fans clinging to lamp posts with champagne, while Jack Grealish offered to buy everyone on the roadside a shot if they wanted to meet him out in the city later on. Kevin De Bruyne was far from alone in sporting dark glasses, admitting to being a "little bit drunk". The Belgian was named the club's player of the year amid the celebrations.

Asked if he thought it was all over at 2-0, De Bruyne said: "For about 10 seconds. Then we just go and we did it. We did it the City way, I would say. Now it feels very sweet." The event also became a farewell party for club captain Fernandinho, who will return to his native Brazil this summer after nine years and 12 trophies with the club. "When I came here for the first time and met someone from City they said, 'Listen, we want you to be one of the leaders, we want you to be a champion,'" the 37-year-old said. "When I look back all of the titles we won are really special." —AFP

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

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

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

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**EMERGENCY**  
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### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Santosh Tucarama Raicar, R/o H.NO. 1131, Tolecanto Velim Salcete Goa. Herby change my name from Santosh Tucaram Raicar to Santosh Tucaram Raicar, as per my birth certificate and also my father's name from Raikar Tucaram to Tucarama Tucaram Raicar and mother's name from Raikar Ratna to Ratna Tucarama Raicar. Therefore in all my future

dealings & documents I shall be known as Santosh Tucarama Raicar. Sd/- SANTOSH TUCARAMA RAICAR (C 1450)

I, Mustufa Pathan S/o Khojema Pathan Holder of Indian Passport No. L0032979, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Mustufa to Mustufa Pathan as per my Government Documents. Mustufa Pathan, Address: 25, Bank Colony, Lokendra Bhawan, Ratlam. (C 2001)



BOSTON: Duncan Robinson #55 of the Miami Heat collides with Grant Williams #12 of the Boston Celtics during the first quarter in Game Four of the 2022 NBA Playoffs Eastern Conference Finals at TD Garden on May 23, 2022. —AFP

## Celtics rout Heat to square series

### Tatum rediscovers his scoring touch with 31 points

**BOSTON:** Jayson Tatum rediscovers his scoring touch with 31 points as the Boston Celtics thrashed the Miami Heat 102-82 to level their NBA Eastern Conference finals series on Monday. Two days after dropping their opening home game of the best-of-seven finals, Boston came roaring back at the TD Garden with a one-sided game four blowout that squares the series at 2-2. Tatum also finished with eight rebounds and five assists, with support coming from Payton Pritchard (14 points) and Derrick White (13). Jaylen Brown and Robert Williams added 12 points apiece.

Al Horford led a hard-nosed Boston defensive effort with 13 rebounds and four blocks. Victor Oladipo led the scoring for Miami with 23 points from the bench. None of Miami's starting line-up made double figures, making a paltry 18 points in total. "We just came and redeemed ourselves," Tatum said. "We knew this was a game that

we really needed, to protect home court. After the last game we were just ready to play, to get back out here and play better."

"It's been a back and forth series so far. It's best of three now, we'll just go away now for game five and get ready," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said his team had never been able to recover from a poor start. "They came out and jumped on us," Spoelstra said. "I think more than anything our offense hurt us at the beginning. We just weren't purposeful. "But we're not making any excuses. They outplayed us tonight for sure. We never could get any kind of a grip on the game."

#### Highs and lows

Spoelstra insisted that his team would mount a response in game five. "This is part of the playoffs. There's a lot of extreme highs and extreme lows, and a lot

of emotion," said Spoelstra. "You just have to stay the course and stay together. "And it's a great series. You have to embrace that." The game was effectively won in the first two quarters as Boston punished a strangely subdued start by Miami to race into a 29-11 lead in the first quarter.

Tatum, who had been restricted to just 10 points in Saturday's game three defeat, was back to his sharp-shooting best with 12 points in the first quarter alone. With Miami's offense unable to penetrate a Boston defense bolstered by the return of Williams, the Celtics kept the pressure on in the second quarter, extending the lead to 27 points at one stage. There was no better illustration of Miami's offensive impotence than the first-half points haul of their starting line-up.

With Jimmy Butler contributing just six points, the Heat's starters totaled 10 points in the first half, with only

Oladipo's 18 points off the bench preventing a total humiliation. Miami made just 11-of-40 attempts from the field in the first half, a shooting percentage of just 27.5 percent. Any hopes Miami had of mounting a second-half fightback were quickly snuffed out in the third quarter. Boston outscored the Heat 12-4 immediately after the interval to pull clear by a whopping 32 points with the lead at 69-37.

The departure of Williams with what appeared to be left knee soreness midway through the third quarter helped Miami reduce the deficit to 23 points at 73-50, but it was only a temporary reprieve. Boston continued to score steadily at the start of the fourth quarter and were sitting on a 31-point lead at 88-57 with just under nine minutes remaining before closing out a wire-to-wire win. The series now swings back to Florida, with top seeds Miami hosting game five on Wednesday. —AFP



## Kuwait shines at 3rd Gulf Games

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait continued their dominance at the Third Gulf Games - topping the medal table as they added one more gold medal in the eSport. The sandstorm that hit Kuwait caused the postponement of some games including the Ice Hockey match between Kuwait and Bahrain. Some of the Volleyball, Basketball, Table Tennis and the women Futsal matches were also postponed.

#### Excellent women presence

A member of Kuwait Olympic Committee, Chairwoman of Women Sport Committee Fatima Hayat said women's participation in this Gulf Games is a start for the development of women sport in GCC, adding that "there will be one vision for more support in the field of women's sport." The opening ceremony of the Games was attended by Chairwoman of the Gulf Organizing Committee of Women's Sport, Member of Bahrain Olympic Committee Sheikha Hayat Bint Abdelaziz Al Khalifa, Member of Oman Olympic Committee Lujainabint Mohsen, Assistant Secretary General for Administrative and Financial Affairs of UAE Olympic Committee Azzabint Suleiman, Undersecretary of KSA's Sports ministry for



Strategic Planning and Investment, Member of Saudi Arabia's Olympic Committee Adhwaabint Abdelrahman Al-Areefi and Chairwoman of Qatar Sports Committee Lulua Al-Merri.

#### Sports facilities

President of Bahrain's Tennis Federation Sheikh Abdelaziz Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa lauded the sports facilities and thanked Kuwait government for hosting the games. He also appreciated the excellent organization.

#### Volleyball competitions

The fourth round of Volleyball competitions will resume on Wednesday with a match between Kuwait

and Saudi Arabia (7:00 pm), this will be followed by UAE and Oman (3pm) and then Bahrain vs Qatar (5pm).

#### Kuwait wins eSport gold

Kuwait eSport's players Abdallah Al-Reesh and Mushari Al-Kayed won the gold medal of Fifa22. Al-Reesh defeated UAE's Ahmad Al-Suwaidi in the final match and took the silver medal, while the bronze medal went to Oman's Fahad Al-Hasani. Wednesday will be the finals of the League of Legends - with the participation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and UAE.

#### Qabazard, Antar advance

Kuwait tennis player Essa Qabazard defeated



Qatar's Mousa Shanani 6-3/6-1, while Abdel Hameed Mubarak defeated Qatar's Mubarak Shanani 6-1/6-1 while Bader Antar beat Bahrain's Hassan Abdelreda 6-3/6-0 in round 16. Meanwhile, Ali Al-Shatti lost to Qatar's Rashid Nawaf 4-6/4-6 as Hussein Al-Shatti lost to Saudi Arabia's Abdallah Al-Faraj 5-7/3-6.

#### Cycling results

At the Women Cycling 49:700 kilometers race competition, UAE won the individuals gold, silver and bronze medals. Shikha Rashid won gold, Safiya Al-Sayegh won silver and Huda Hussein won the bronze. UAE also won gold; Saudi Arabia took silver while Kuwait won bronze at team event.