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GCC forces hold military drills

Crown Prince receives Saudi FM • Top diplomats discuss fraternal ties



KUWAIT: (Left) HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud at Bayan Palace on Feb 5, 2023. (Right) Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal attend a military exercise involving GCC member states. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sponsored and attended on Sunday a military exercise involving Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states. The drill, which brought together a number of Kuwaiti state ministers and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, is an opportunity for the militaries of GCC countries to share their combat knowhow, said Kuwaiti Interior Ministry Undersecretary Abdullah Al-Barjas.

The drill comprised of a vast array of exercises, including counterterrorism operations and how to deal with security alerts, both of which help build a "comprehensive" defense system, HH the Prime Minister told the press. He thanked all state bodies involved in putting together this military drill, hoping the exercise would meet its objective of ensuring that the nation is well prepared to deal with any potential security threats.

Meanwhile, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday received Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace. HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah relayed greetings to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman, wishing them good health and the people of Saudi further prosperity and progress.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-

Sabah also discussed with his Saudi counterpart steadfast fraternal relations tying the two countries. The two discussed boosting collaboration and integration across various fields, as well as the effective implementation of partnership in economic, developmental, human and security fields. This came as per the directives of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf and Saudi King Salman to take both nations to new horizons and achieve further progress and prosperity for the people. — KUNA (See Page 3)

Speaker invites MPs for session on exam cheating

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun on Sunday sent out invitations to lawmakers to attend a special session on Thursday to debate cheating in school exams, after authorities busted a network that leaked higher secondary questions, from which over 20,000 students benefited. The demand to hold the session was submitted by 10 MPs who want to inquire about the government's policy in curbing cheating at schools, asking the government to provide statistical details about cases of cheating caught by the ministry of education in the past five years.

The lawmakers also want to know the truth about claims that some private schools assisted their students in exams in a bid to boost passing rates and performance through cheating. The session is also expected to discuss a draft law calling to punish those who promote cheating at schools with up to seven years in jail. It was not immediately known if the government will attend the session. The presence of at least one minister is essential to convene the session.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly office relieved the National Assembly secretary general of his post and referred him to retirement. His assistant Khaled Busaleeb has been assigned to be acting secretary general until a permanent official is appointed.

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US shoots down China spy balloon

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration lauded the Pentagon for shooting down an alleged Chinese spy balloon off the US Atlantic coast on Saturday, but China angrily voiced its "strong dissatisfaction" at the move and said it may make "necessary responses". The craft spent several days flying over North America before it was targeted off the coast

of the southeastern state of South Carolina with a missile fired from an F-22 plane, Pentagon officials said, falling into relatively shallow water just 14 m deep.

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin called the operation a "deliberate and lawful action" that came in response to China's "unacceptable violation of our sovereignty". But China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs blasted the US action in a statement Sunday morning, saying the downing of the "civilian" aircraft was "clearly overreacting and seriously violating international practice".

Saturday afternoon was the military's first chance to take down the balloon "in a way that would not pose a threat to the safety of Americans," a senior

defense official told reporters, while still allowing authorities to collect the fallen debris from US territorial waters. In eyewitness video posted to social media, the balloon appeared to disintegrate in a white puff before its remnants dropped vertically into the Atlantic Ocean below.

Twitter user Haley Walsh posted that she "heard and felt the explosion" in Myrtle Beach, a popular resort town in South Carolina. President Joe Biden, who earlier Saturday had promised "to take care" of the balloon, congratulated the fighter pilots involved. "They successfully took it down. And I want to compliment our aviators who did it," Biden told reporters in Maryland.

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Pakistani former military ruler Musharraf dies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exiled former military ruler Pervez Musharraf, who became a key US ally during the "war on terror", died in a Dubai hospital on Sunday aged 79 after a long illness. Musharraf seized power in a 1999 bloodless coup and was act-

ing simultaneously as Pakistan's army chief, chief executive, and president when the 9/11 attacks on the United States took place.

The general twice suspended the constitution and was accused of rigging a referendum shoring up his power, as well as rampant rights abuses including rounding up opponents during his nearly nine-year rule. Nonetheless, he became Washington's chief regional ally during their invasion of neighboring Afghanistan. The decision - made after the US issued a "for us or against us" ultimatum - put him in the crosshairs of Islamist

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Pervez Musharraf

US arctic blast breaks wind chill record

NEW YORK: An Arctic blast that brought "frostquakes" to parts of the United States saw the country record its lowest ever wind-chill temperature, meteorologists said Saturday. Atop Mount Washington in the northeastern state of New Hampshire, the wind-chill factor reached minus 78 degrees Celsius overnight, the National Weather Service (NWS) said.

The service's office in the town of Gray, Maine, said in a tweet that it set a new US record for the lowest wind-chill temperature in the United States. CNN reported that it broke the previous record of minus 76 C set in Alaska. The previous low at Mount Washington was minus 74 C, recorded there in 2004, the Weather Channel said.

At almost 6,300 feet (1,920 m), Mount Washington is the highest peak in the northeastern US and is known for having some of the world's worst weather. Temperatures of minus 43 C and wind gusts of over 177 km/h combined for the historic low.

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NORTH WOODSTOCK, New Hampshire: People explore the Ice Castles in -17C weather on Feb 4, 2023 as the northeastern US and Canada are experiencing an arctic blast. — AFP



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Technology leaves families struggling to connect, bond

Social media, devices have negative impact on family cohesion

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: It hasn't been easy for Haider Al-Mosawi, a father of three, to interact with his three children who are preoccupied with their electronic devices. "It's hard to compete for our children's attention when the most entertaining content is only a swipe away on their phones. We used to have a tradition of watching a movie together, but now my children can't tolerate watching 15 minutes of a movie together because they would rather hop on TikTok, YouTube or Roblox," he told Kuwait Times.

These days, owning at least one smart device is essential for every family member in order to keep up with their responsibilities. However, the devices could have a negative effect on family bonding. "Eye contact and body language are essential during communication. Although technologies have benefits, they affect the relationship among family members. This definitely creates a gap between them," Sociologist and Family Consultant Jamil Al-Mari told Kuwait Times.

Family interaction is an important foundation that prepares children for their social life in the future. Therefore, Mari sees their attachment to these devices can leave a bad influence. "Technologies are attractive because they provide numerous kinds of interesting content, which attaches the user to their device. I would like to emphasize on the word 'attachment', because humans should not be strongly attached to something, as this would result in unpleasant outcomes," he pointed out.

Technology supports isolation

Mosawi is not the only parent in Kuwait facing challenges to maintain strong relationships with their children due to technology. Abu Abdullah, also a father of three, told Kuwait Times: "New technologies give independence to each individual. So, every family member is now capable of isolating themselves and using their own devices independently, which not only creates physical distance between parents and children, but also emotional barriers."

Technology reduces face-to-face interaction, said Abu Abdullah, and increases the distance between parents and their children, which results in a lack of communication and causes misunderstandings. It also contributes to the differences we see between family connections in the past and present. New technology, said Abu Abdullah, supports isolation and solitude, whereas digital devices in the past, such as television, used to bring family members together.



Dr. Ali Al-Baghliani



Dr. Jamil Al-Mari



Mohammad Al-Ansari



Haider Al-Mosawi

tion and solitude, whereas digital devices in the past, such as television, used to bring family members together.

"Television used to encourage family unity because it gathers all family members in one place and introduces a single content at a time," he said. Since parents didn't grow up with as much access to the world of technology as their children, it can be quite difficult for them to balance between their traditions and their children's way of thinking, said Mosawi. With continuous exposure to the digital world, the difference in mindsets and attitudes between parents and their children grow wider.

Losing confidence

Although people of all backgrounds and age groups are exposed to content through technology, vulnerable children are more likely to embrace new thoughts promoted on modern platforms. Mosawi said technology has more influence on his children compared to him, which makes parenting harder. "My daughters lost their confidence in their looks because they judge their appearance compared to the influencers they see on social media and no amount of praise for their looks seems to register because they've been sucked into believing social media is more honest than their parents."

Children's attachment to their devices could also have a bad influence on family interaction, which is an important foundation that prepares children for their social life in the future. As a result, children nowadays lack face-to-face social skills because they rely on technology to socialize with their family and friends.

According to Dr. Ali Al-Baghliani, a psychiatry specialist, strong bonds between family members form through spending time together and making



memories away from smart devices. "Using smart devices has a direct impact on the relationship between family members. It minimizes the sense of familiarity that unites parents with their children and pulls apart the family's coherence. Besides reducing quality time, which cannot be enjoyed behind screens," he said.

"Overusing mobile devices has several negative effects, including the paradoxical fact that all of this communication technology is tearing us apart and ruining our interpersonal ties," said Mohammad Al-Ansari, a man in his 20s. Although smart devices made connecting with others easier, Ansari said, using technology for communication remains deprived of spirit and warmth.

However, there are ways to mitigate its negative impact on family bonds. Mari suggested a few solutions to Kuwait Times: "Parents can specify some time for their children and ban using devices during family time. Also, parents should put effort in planning enjoyable and entertaining alternatives for their children to help them put away their smart devices."

How can Kuwait be a magnet for investors?

In my view



By Muhammed Al-Muthafar

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Since Kuwait became independent in the year 1961 and the British protectorate was lifted from it, the country was enveloped in the mantle of democracy through fair and free elected legislative systems, national oversight and executive bodies, and a stable economic climate. The Kuwaitis are dreaming of their country becoming a destination for investors and surpassing its counterparts in its regional environment in attracting investments

The successive governments of the State of Kuwait have taken many measures that help attract investments and advance the economy, relying on that to develop long-term plans through strong and bold legislation and quick executive steps on the ground. The necessity required working on implementing several main axes in the financial and economic affairs as follows:

First

Developing and motivating the human element - Since the human element is the most important element in the reform system, and in order for countries to rise, attention must be paid to the human being and the provision of the necessary support attention must be paid to education, health, talent development and motivation, and the creation of a suitable climate to launch innovations, which is what Kuwait is currently working on, as it has remained it relied on the foreign human element for a period of time that exceeded a quarter of a century, and it is time for Kuwait to depend on its people, by relying on self-reliance, training and developing the Kuwaiti youth and guiding them properly so that they can compete with foreigners and outperform them. This will only happen by developing these young people, educating them, creating more challenge, the ability to work, patience, tolerance for it, good training, and distance from laziness, despair and frustration.

Second

Creating alternative revenues - The state must develop a plan to create alternative sources of oil revenues, as state revenues cannot be dependent on the global demand for oil.

Third

Stopping temporary solutions to economic problems by finding radical solutions to them - This comes through adopting successful procedures and mechanisms in how to deal with the financial and economic file and not resorting to traditional temporary solutions such as imposing more fees

Fourth

The importance of having an economic, financial, legislative reform program - the government must set its reform program in a way that considers the situation of Kuwait and its citizens and their interest, and the investors and their common interests, so that these reforms will be easier. Likewise, legislation and legal amendments must be appropriate to reality, as Kuwait needs to adopt clear and effective rules for governance and transparency in all economic legislation that needs amendments or new legislation issued in the future to keep pace with any economic development in the country.

And since Kuwait, until this moment, has not stopped at a certain level of ambition to develop the country, it provides distinguished services and incentives to both national and foreign investors to encourage them to invest in Kuwait, especially in industrial activity, as it provided plots of land in industrial cities for a symbolic fee for rent and allowed the investor to get more from one piece, unlimited customs exemptions were provided to him, as well as large infrastructure and logistical services, including sound and suitable roads, providing electricity, water, housing, good health services for workers, the internet, and industrial security

Kuwait has also adopted a modern system in the legal form for all types of companies, so that it has become in keeping with the best international systems. It has introduced a one-person company system through which he can establish a holding company under which many companies join, in addition to not allowing prejudice to the rights of shareholders in joint stock companies of all kinds. It also provided huge incentives that do not exist in most modern systems, which is not imposing taxes except on large institutions without companies, at a rate of no more than 15% of the profits, which is one of the best tax systems in the world - as well as labor laws that consider as the rules of right justice.

However, we still hope to obtain more support and incentives for Kuwait to move forward in a better, fast and distinguished way, so that it truly becomes the destination for investors in the region and even the world as a whole.

A record turnout at Gulf Bank's booth at Qout Market event

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank concluded its participation in the first 2023 Qout Market event - the largest market in Kuwait that brings together local farmers, craftsmen, and food enthusiasts in one place. The first day of the event witnessed a large turnout of more than 10,000 visitors, and Gulf Bank's booth received a record turnout from the public, in light of the activities launched at the booth creating a fun, joyous and interactive atmosphere for the visitors. Not to mention the cultural location and the wonderful time of the year where Kuwait enjoys the National Day celebrations throughout the month of February.

This year's Qout Market, with its distinguished location in Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre along the Gulf Road coast, was an opportunity to spend a special day amongst local entrepreneurs, food manufacturers and craftsmen, and to simply enjoy the great food diversity in Kuwait's society. On this occasion, Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Lujain Al-Qenaei said, "We are very pleased with the great interaction from the visitors with the activities provided by Gulf Bank on the first day of the event, which has successfully achieved the main objective of supporting entrepreneurs and SMEs."

Al-Qenaei further stated that Qout Market has returned once again, with full force, holding space for the wide participation of more than 60 SMEs from various sectors. She added: "We are pleased to renew our partnership with Qout Market, to continue its wonderful role in supporting young entrepreneurs and local producers and SMEs who are looking for a creative outlet, to display their products and creations in a distinctive atmosphere that provides them



with the opportunity to engage easily and flexibly with the public."

Al-Qenaei further mentioned that Gulf Bank is keen on being actively present in all activities and occasions that support the youth and SMEs, as promoting sustainability in society and supporting SMEs is one of the main themes in the Bank's 2025 strategy. As part of the Bank's continuous efforts to consolidate the principles of environmental sustainability within the community and aligning with the principles of its recently launched campaign, Gulf Bank distributed reusable bags to visitors throughout the event, with the aim of reducing the use of plastic bags and to raise awareness of plastic waste.

Al-Qenaei concluded her remarks by stating, "We are waiting for you at the Gulf Bank booth on the second Qout Market event, set to happen on the 18th of February. Join us to spend another special day with

fun activities, competitions, and various prizes."

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

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

Kuwaiti overcomes DDH after successful surgery

KUWAIT: Dalal Al-Rashed had suffered from Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH) for almost 20 years, but overcame the odds with a successful surgery carried out by competent medical professionals. Relating her story to KUNA, Al-Rashed said that her journey with DDH began with her birth. She, unknown to everyone around her, suffered from a genetic dislocation of the hip. At a year and six months, her parents noticed something unusual with her, which began a long road of surgery after another until age three.

Though Al-Rashed sought treatment abroad in Germany, from age four onwards, it was decided that physical therapy was mandated for the rest of her life. "I always wondered since childhood why I had to wear shoes different from my peers and why I was not allowed to take part in PE class?" reminisced Al-Rashed. Al-Rashed developed a rebellious spirit at 16, refusing to wear the special shoes for her condition in an effort to avoid the sympathetic gaze of others. Going against the grain, so to speak, Al-Rashed began to feel unbearable physical pains, which led her to seek surgery as a way out despite the risks of the medical procedure.



Dr. Mansour Sadeqi, a Specialist Orthopedic Surgeon

She indicated that the operation, carried out by a skilled medical team, was a success, enabling her to throw her crutches away and enjoy life to the fullest. On Al-Rashed condition, Dr. Mansour Sadeqi-a Specialist Orthopedic Surgeon-indicated that the operation came to fix the severe case of DDH that the patient suffered from, noting that Al-Rashed would now be able to walk normally without the aid of



Dalal Al-Rashed

crutches. He noted that operating was a solution to DDH, saying that it provided the best results and a promise of healing. —KUNA

Local

PM, senior officials attend GCC military exercise



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sponsors and attends a military exercise involving GCC member states. The drill comprised a vast array of exercises, including counterterrorism operations and how to deal with security alerts. — KUNA photos

Zain shares joys of national celebrations with Kuwaitis

Company official sponsor of February Kuwait Festival, featuring GCC and Arab stars



Zain officials honor Nabeel Shuail



Zain officials honor Asala Nasri



Zain officials honor Mohammed Abdu

KUWAIT: Zain, Kuwait's leading digital service provider, announced that it is the official sponsor of the February Kuwait Festival 2023. The event, organized by Rotana throughout February, features many stars from the GCC and Arab world, and is held at the Arena Kuwait, 360 Mall in celebration of Kuwait's National and Liberation days.

Zain is proud to strategically support this national festival since its inception as part of the company's commitment to being actively present in the projects that celebrate Kuwait's national holidays in February and March. Every year, the Kuwaiti community eagerly awaits this grand event as it features some of the top artists from Kuwait, the GCC, and the Arab world. The company is keen on sharing the joys of this cherished time of

the year with the community by supporting such events that reflect the love of Kuwaitis for their nation. This year marks the 62nd anniversary of Kuwait's independence and 32nd anniversary of its liberation.

The concerts of February Kuwait Festival 2023 began with Nabeel Shuail and Asala Nasri on Friday 3 February, and Mohammed Abdu on Saturday 4 February. The festival is set to host the following artists next: Nutrif Al Nutrif and Angham on Thursday 9 February, Majed Al Muhandis and Nancy Ajram on Friday 10 February, Aseel Abubaker and Nawal Alkuwaitiah on Thursday 16 February, and Abdullah Alrwaished and Alissa on Friday 17 February.

Zain has long considered itself a key partner of the Kuwaiti community, especially in such joyous times of

national celebrations. The company's support to this festival comes to show its commitment in sharing the joys of Kuwait with the community in which it

operates. Zain will spare no efforts in being an integral part of the many occasions that are of interest to the local community.

Calls for flexible work timings as school resumes

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait's streets were congested again with the return of half a million students back to school for the second semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The hashtag 'flexible_fingerprint_attendance' trended on Twitter, where citizens complained about traffic jams in various areas. To fix the traffic crisis, many solutions have been suggested, including "flexible fingerprint attendance", which allows employees to have flexible working hours, ensuring their entry and exit from work smoothly, without failing to perform the job tasks assigned to them.

Secretary of the Transparency Society Asrar Hayat tweeted: "With every start of the school year, we face the same congested streets and are unable to find solutions to traffic jams. We were also unable to significantly develop the streets and the public transport system, and still have not applied the flexible fingerprint attendance."

Attorney Mohamed Bou Abbas suggested having morning and evening shifts for all ministries. "Every employee should have a work period that must be decided by the department's



KUWAIT: Students in Kuwait go back to school nationwide, kick-starting the 2022-23 semester. — KUNA photos

head. Each employee can choose any time, but can only change this timing after two years. The working hours for the morning shift must be from 9 am to 1 pm, and the evening shift from 3 pm to 8 pm," he said.

Alia Al-Ali tweeted the flexible work system will contribute to raising the level of employee happiness, improving the work environment, increasing employee productivity, reducing the need for overtime and reducing delays and permissions.

Shaikha Al-Musallam said applying flexible fingerprint attendance and raising salaries will change the productivity of employees and everyone will benefit. "Also, parents will be able to spend more time with their children, while the problem of over-employment will be solved because many parents hire drivers for their chil-



News in brief

Criminal court reviews case

KUWAIT: The criminal court started reviewing the first case of vote-buying during the 2022 National Assembly elections in the Third Electoral District, which includes former MP Saadoun Al-Hammad and other persons, which concluded with postponing the trial until April 30. The criminal court approved the defendants' lawyers' request to lift the travel ban against the five accused (one man and four women), as the former MP was not banned from traveling. The accused were present in court and refuted the claims against them. Lawyer Mohammed Al-Otaibi was in attendance on behalf of Hammad and another accused, after which he requested to lift the travel ban because "the defendants are civilians, and we must not be afraid that they will leave the country". In other news, the court of appeal ordered the detention of a tweeter for seven years for insulting the Kuwaiti political leadership and Saudi Arabia.

Education Ministry exams

KUWAIT: Dates for electronic exams have been scheduled for all applicants for supervisory roles in the Education Ministry. Acting undersecretary of Education Ministry Osama Al-Sultan set up schedules for all roles including: school managers, school vice-managers, department heads, technical supervisors and technical directors in all grade levels. Exams will be held between February 12 until March 7 at the Jabriya Training Center. The exams will be 135 minutes long. The morning period will be from 9:00 am till 11:15 am, while the night period will be from 6:00 pm until 08:15 pm. Applicants need to be present an hour before the test and bring their civil ID cards. It's strictly forbidden to bring mobile phones or electronic watches to the exam hall.

Kuwaitization in coops

KUWAIT: The Social Affairs Minister May Al-Baghli has reassured that the policy of Kuwaitization is one of the most important policies within the initiative to develop cooperative work. "The decisions agreed upon after the meeting with the demographics and labor market development committee regarding the Kuwaitization of leadership, supervisory and administrative positions in cooperative societies are in line with the Ministry's current approach. Other provisions will be amended to comply with the decisions of that committee," Al-Baghli said after the committee meeting.

German resident dies

KUWAIT: Security reports indicated that a German resident has died after falling from a high place while working in Mina Abdullah area. "The German resident was rushed to the hospital but unfortunately, he died on arrival," sources revealed to Kuwait Times. Mina Abdullah's police station has been notified of the incident. A case has been registered and investigations are currently underway to find out the reasons behind his death.

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KUWAIT: Horses are paraded during the 10th International Arabian Horse Festival at the Bait Al-Arab Arabian Horse Center. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

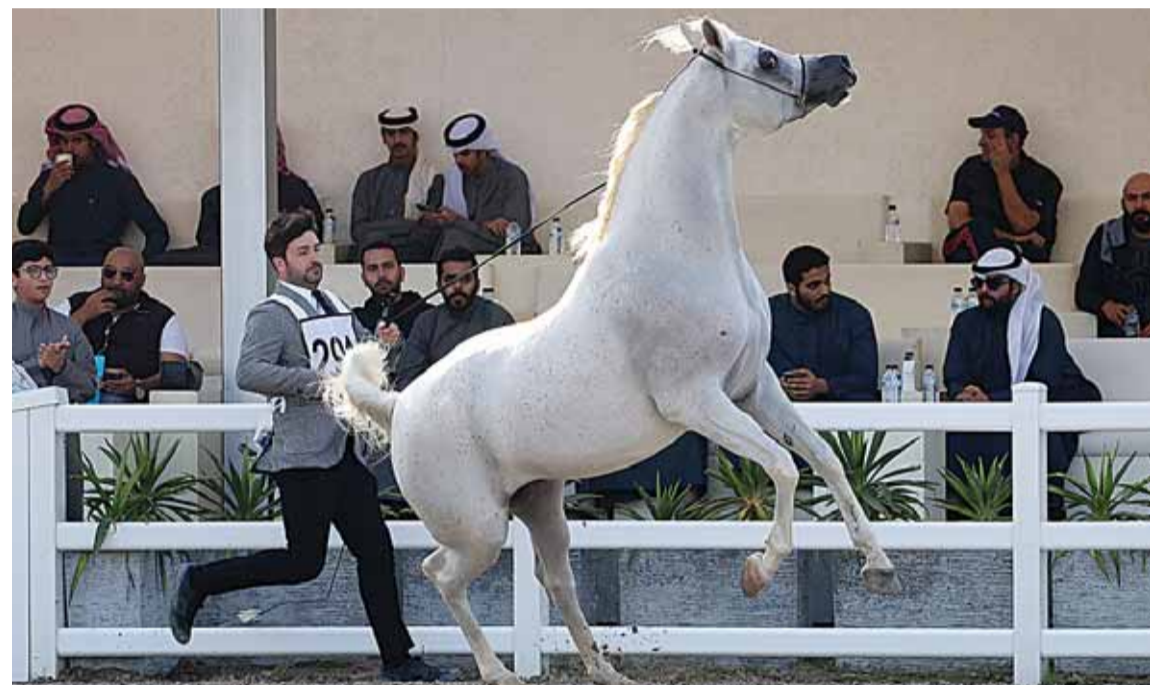
The beauty of Arabian horses



KUWAIT: The first round of the 10th Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival concluded on Saturday with a ceremony to award the winners of the championship's six categories. The four-day event was held to showcase the beauty of Arabian horses, Abdullah Al-Breih, director of the championship, told KUNA. Close to 298 purebred horses from Kuwait and beyond were paraded in the equestrian beauty pageant hosted by Bait Al-Arab State Stud. Here are the winners: Mubarak Al-Khashab's El La Linda for the under-one-year fillies' class.

Mohammad Al-Sahhaf's A J Sifan in the under-one-year colts' class, Youssef Al-Kandari's Thabiat Al-Siba in the 2-3-year fillies' class, Mohammad Al-Enzi's Aja Justafire for the 4+ year stallions' class.

Mubarak Al-Khashab's Ezz Al-Khashab in the 2-3-year colts' class. Al-Khashab's horse also won the title of the most beautiful mare in the 4+ year mares' class. The second round of the 10th Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival will be held in Egypt on Feb 16-19 with 211 Arabian horses participating. —KUNA



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KRCS launches aid projects in Yemen

ADEN: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has opened a health center, an orphanage and a medical camp in the Ma'rib governorate in central Yemen. The buildings are part of the "Kuwait Beside You" campaign, which has been ongoing for eight years. The KRCS had distributed clothes to 400 displaced families as part of the campaign earlier this month.

The Late Fatemah Haddadeh health center, with an area of 230 sq m, 12-beds and 10 wards, will benefit nearly 5,000 patients a year, said KRCS Director-General Abdulrahman AlAoun, who leads a delegation from the Society on a visit to Yemen. The Ya'qub Al-Ghanim Orphanage, covering an area of 700 sq m, has a multi-purpose hall and will serve 600 orphans. The medical camp at Kara General Hospital will help conduct 100 surgeries free of charge, AlAoun said, thanking the Kuwaiti philanthropists who contributed to the humanitarian campaign in Yemen.

He also appreciated the Estijabah Foundation - KRCS's partner - and the local authorities for facilitating the mission of KRCS. Dr Abdul-Rabb Muftah, Secretary of Ma'rib Governorate, expressed gratitude for the Kuwaiti government and people, notably KRCS, for their trailblazing humanitarian initiatives in Yemen. —KUNA



ADEN: KRCS launched a medical camp at the Kara General Hospital among other medical and developmental projects in Yemen's Ma'rib. —KUNA photos



The Late Fatemah Haddadeh Health Center.

Firemen control Jleeb house blaze

KUWAIT: Firemen controlled a fire that broke out in a traditional house in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on Sunday at dawn. "The central command received a report of the fire, so teams from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Ardiya headed to the location of the blaze. They managed to extinguish the fire, which appeared to have started on the ground floor of the two-storey traditional building," the public relations department at Kuwait Fire Force announced.



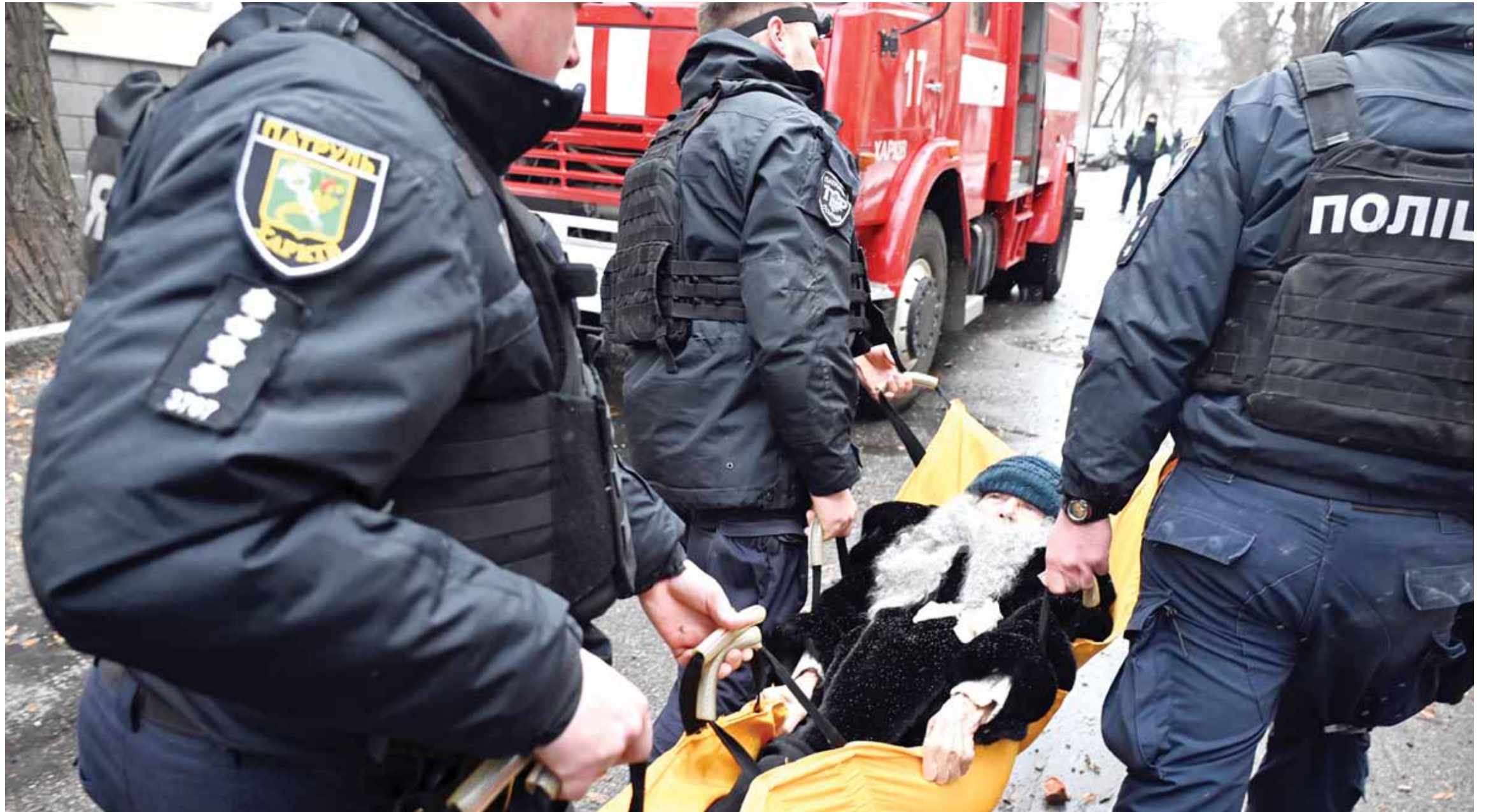


Salvador's new 'mega-prison' in harsh conditions

Iraqi activists protest after father kills YouTuber daughter

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KHARKIV: Ukrainian policemen evacuate a woman wounded following a Russian missile strike in Kharkiv, on February 5, 2023. —AFP

Ukraine fights off Bakhmut assault

'Fierce battles going on for every street, every house, every stairwell'

BAKHMUT: Heavy fighting was underway Sunday in the northern parts of the frontline hotspot Bakhmut, while Russian missile strikes on Ukraine's second-largest city Kharkiv wounded five people. Despite the flow of Western weapons to Ukraine, Russia has in recent days claimed gains around war-ravaged Bakhmut in the eastern region of Donetsk.

However, the head of Russia's mercenary group Wagner said Sunday that the Ukrainian army was not retreating and that fighting raged on in northern parts of Bakhmut. "In the northern quarters of Artemovsk, fierce battles are going on for every street, every house, every stairwell," Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a statement, referring to Bakhmut by its old name.

"The Ukrainian armed forces are fighting to the last," he said. Russian forces have been trying to seize control of Bakhmut in the eastern region of Donetsk for months in what has become the longest and bloodiest battle since Russia invaded Ukraine last February.

'I came to pray for peace'

The fight for Bakhmut has turned the town with a pre-war population of roughly 75,000 into a ghost

town dotted with hedgehog anti-tank defences and burnt-out cars. The town has no water, gas or electricity. About 20 people, including two soldiers, attended a Sunday mass in the basement of the golden-domed All Saints' church in the deserted town. Three women sang hymns, punctuated by sounds of mortar shells in the background.

The room was lit by two dozen candles and a portable light used by the two priests to read from the sacred book.

"Today I prayed that everything will be better for me after I die," said 20-year-old Serafim Chernyshov standing outside the church, with loud sounds of a steady exchange of small arms fire and the pounding of mortar shells to and from Russian positions echoing in the background.

"Last night, a missile flew into my garden and a bullet flew inside my house, it could have hit me," he added. "I might die now or in 30 years. If I'm killed, it will be God's will." "I came to pray for peace," added Lyubov Avramenko, 84. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday that Kyiv's troops would fight for Bakhmut "as long as we can."

He urged the West to supply Kyiv with sophisticated weapons to help his forces retain control of Bakhmut and speed up deliveries of heavy tanks.

In his evening address on Saturday, Zelensky acknowledged that the situation was getting tougher. Russia, he said, was "throwing more and more of its forces at breaking down our defence". "It is very difficult now in Bakhmut, Vugledar, Lyman and other areas," he added, referring to the frontline towns in the east of the country.

The British defence ministry said on Sunday that over the past week, Russia had made "small advances" in its attempt to encircle Bakhmut. The two main roads into the city for Ukrainian troops "are likely now both threatened by direct fire, following the Russian advances," the British defence ministry said. "Bakhmut is increasingly isolated."

Missile strikes in Kharkiv

For months Moscow has systematically targeted Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, including the energy grid, leaving millions in the dark and cold in the middle of winter.

In Ukraine's second city Kharkiv, a missile strike hit a residential building on Sunday, wounding four people, said Oleg Syneubov, head of the regional administration. Another strike left a security guard injured when a missile hit an institute in the north-eastern city, he said.

On Saturday, "the Russians killed four residents of the region of Donetsk," said Pavlo Kyrylenko, head of the regional administration, adding that another 11 people were injured.

Oil and corruption

On Sunday, Russia faced a fresh turn of the sanctions screw, with an embargo on ship deliveries of its refined oil products. The European Union, the Group of Seven industrialised nations and Australia will cap the price of Moscow's refined oil products.

In December, the EU already imposed an embargo on Russian crude oil coming into the bloc by sea and with its G7 partners-imposed a \$60-per-barrel cap on Russian crude exports to other parts of the world.

The new embargo and price caps starting Sunday will target Russian refined oil products such as petrol, diesel and heating fuel arriving on ships. The Kremlin has warned that the measures will destabilise world markets.

In Kyiv, Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov was set to hold a news conference as authorities press ahead with a drive to stamp out corruption under pressure from Western donors, after graft scandals linked to the war effort. —AFP

Pope urges end to ethnic hatred at open-air mass

JUBA: Pope Francis appealed Sunday to the people of South Sudan to lay down their "weapons of hatred" at an open-air mass on the final day of his pilgrimage to a country blighted by violence and poverty. Large crowds of ecstatic worshippers streamed into the John Garang Mausoleum in the capital Juba to see the 86-year-old pontiff, who has made peace and reconciliation the theme of his three-day trip to the world's newest nation.

"Let us lay down the weapons of hatred and revenge... Let us overcome the dislikes and aversions that over time have become chronic and risk pitting tribes and ethnic groups against one another," Francis said in his homily.

He voiced hope that the people of South Sudan, a country that has been at war for about half its young life, would "build a reconciled future".

People waved national flags and sang "Welcome holy father to South Sudan" as the Argentine pontiff moved through the crowds in his popemobile before delivering the mass to an audience local authorities put at around 70,000.

Francis later flew out of Juba for Rome. He is due to hold a press conference on board his plane along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of



JUBA: This handout photo taken and released on February 5, 2023 by the Vatican Media shows the President of South Sudan Salva Kiir (2nd R) walking next to Pope Francis (4th R) as he makes his way to the plane upon his departure from South Sudan. —AFP

Scotland, who joined him on the trip.

It was his first papal visit to the largely Christian country since it achieved independence from mainly Muslim Sudan in 2011 after a long and bloody civil war. Despite the initial revelry in 2011, South Sudan was at war with itself just two years later in a conflict that killed nearly 400,000 people and displaced four million. A peace deal was signed in 2018 between President Salva Kiir and his deputy Riek Machar but many of its conditions remain unmet and violence continues to roil the country.

Hope for change

The wheelchair-bound pontiff, who himself tried to broker peace during the civil war, received a rapturous welcome

throughout his visit. "I came to see the pope bring change to the country. For many years we've been at war, but we need peace. We want the pope to pray for us," said James Agui, 24.

He was among the many who stayed overnight to join the mass at the John Garang mausoleum-built in honour of South Sudan's rebel hero who was killed in a helicopter crash in 2005. On Saturday, Francis met victims of the civil war, who were brought to Juba from various camps, and urged the government to resume the peace process and restore "dignity" to those affected by conflict. With 2.2 million internally displaced people (IDPs), and another two million outside the country, South Sudan is witness to the worst refugee crisis in Africa. —AFP

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International

Iraqi activists protest after father kills YouTuber daughter

Gunmen kidnap Iraqi environmental activist: Family

BAGHDAD: Iraqi activists protested Sunday to demand a law against domestic violence, days after a YouTuber was strangled by her father in a killing that has outraged the conservative country. Tiba al-Ali, 22, was killed by her father on January 31 in the southern province of Diwaniyah, interior ministry spokesman Saad Maan said on Twitter on Friday.

Maan said there had been an attempt to mediate between the young woman and her relatives to resolve a "family dispute". The father later surrendered to the police and confessed to murdering his daughter.

On Sunday, security forces prevented some 20 activists from demonstrating outside the country's Supreme Judicial Council, and they gathered instead at a road leading to the building, an AFP journalist said.

Some held placards saying "Stop killing women" and "Tiba's killer must be held to account". "We demand laws to protect women, especially laws against domestic violence," 22-year-old protester Rose Hamid told AFP. "We came here to protest against Tiba's murder and against all others. Who will be the next victim?"

Another demonstrator, Lina Ali, said: "We will keep mobilising because of rising domestic violence and killings of women." On the sidelines of Sunday's demonstration, human rights activist Hanaa Edwar was received by a magistrate from the Supreme Judicial Council to whom she presented the protesters' grievances.

Tiba al-Ali had lived in Turkey since 2017 and was visiting Iraq when she was killed, a security official in Diwaniyah told AFP. In Turkey she had gained a following on YouTube, posting videos of her daily life in which her fiance often appeared.

Recordings have been shared on social media by

a friend of Ali, and picked up by activists, reportedly of conversations with the father, angry because she was living in Turkey. In the recordings, she also accuses her brother of sexual harassment. AFP could not independently verify the authenticity of the voice recordings.

Meanwhile a prominent Iraqi activist campaigning for the preservation of the famed Mesopotamian marshes has been kidnapped by armed men south of the capital Baghdad, his family said Sunday. Jassim al-Assadi, 65, head of the environmental group Nature Iraq, has appeared regularly in local and foreign media to raise awareness of the threats facing the country's southern wetlands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site imperilled by years of drought.

Assadi was "driving on the highway from Hilla to Baghdad" on Wednesday morning when he was abducted, his brother Nazim told AFP. "Five kilometres (three miles) before the capital, two cars stopped him, and armed men in plain clothes handcuffed him and put him onto one of the vehicles, taking him to an unknown location," he said.

"My cousin was with him," Nazim Assadi added. "They left him on the road." The family has not heard from Assadi since and police are investigating, the brother said, adding that the kidnapers had not contacted any relatives.

"We need time to understand the reason. The motive isn't clear for now," Nazim Assadi said. An Iraqi security official, requesting anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media, confirmed to AFP that the family had reported Assadi missing. While Iraq has regained relative stability after decades of conflict and unrest, assassinations and kidnappings of activists and officials remain common. Iraqi civil society groups have decried the



BAGHDAD: Iraqi women's rights activists lift placards during a rally near the Supreme Judicial Council in Baghdad on February 5, 2023, to protest the killing of Iraqi youtuber Tiba al-Ali by her father in Diwaniyah. — AFP

continued presence of armed factions across the country and the proliferation of weapons, while tribal conflicts often lead to deadly violence.

Since 2006 Assadi, a hydraulic engineer by profession, has been involved in numerous initiatives to restore the marshes, where he was born. The area had faced destruction at the hands of dictator Saddam Hussein, and has been further jeopardised by climate change. After years of drought, winter

rains this year have brought some respite to herders and livestock in the famous wetlands, which were parched and dusty last summer. The United Nations says Iraq is one of five countries most exposed to some impacts of climate change.

The marshes have also been hit by reduced flows from the Tigris and Euphrates due to dams built on some rivers and tributaries in neighbouring Turkey and Iran. — AFP

Thousands rally against Zionist entity reform plan

TEL AVIV: Thousands of Zionists demonstrated in central Tel Aviv Saturday for the fifth consecutive week against controversial legal reforms touted by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government. Crowds carrying blue and white Zionist entity flags braved the rain, swarming the city's central Kaplan Street, with signs labelling the new government a "threat to world peace".

Another sign read "Save Zionist entity's democracy from Netanyahu". The protests have become a weekly fixture on Saturday evenings since Netanyahu's new government — dubbed the most right wing in Zionist entity's history — took office in late December. Local media reported that protests were held in 20 cities across the country, and said tens of thousands gathered in Tel Aviv alone.

Zionist police did not provide official figures for turnout when contacted by AFP. Dania Shwartz, 44, from Ramat Gan told AFP that protesters were "reclaiming" the Zionist flag. "If you look around there's a lot of Zionist entity flags and for many years the Zionist entity flag was a symbol of the right (wing)," she said. "We are patriots and we want this country to keep existing. The Zionist entity flag belongs to all of us, this is not a question of being right or left."

Among the crowd in Haifa was former Zionist prime minister Yair Lapid, who said in a video posted to social media: "We will save our country because we are unwilling to live in an undemocratic country." Netanyahu returned to power following elections in November, at the head of a coalition with extreme-right and ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties.

Last month, he was forced to remove a top minister. Aryeh Deri who leads the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, due to a recent tax evasion conviction. The government has since announced its intention to pursue a policy of settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, as well as social reforms. — AFP

Former UK PM Truss criticises Sunak policies

LONDON: Former UK prime minister Liz Truss on Sunday criticised her successor Rishi Sunak "detrimental" tax policies, as the current leader also faced pressure from another predecessor Boris Johnson over his Ukraine strategy.

Truss came to power in September, immediately implementing a radical tax-slashing agenda. But her plans spooked the markets and threatened to take down the pension sector and she was forced out after only 44 days, making her the country's shortest-serving leader ever.

In her first intervention since losing her job, she argued that the "powerful economic establishment" took her down, and that her replacement Sunak had made a mistake in rejecting all of her tax-cutting measures. Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, she blamed the "strength of economic orthodoxy and its influence on the market" and

said that Sunak's decision to raise corporation tax from 19 to 25 percent was "economically detrimental".

"I am not claiming to be blameless in what happened, but fundamentally I was not given a realistic chance to enact my policies by a very powerful economic establishment, coupled with a lack of political support," she wrote.

The IMF — which criticised Truss' sweeping tax cuts at the time — last week delivered a blow to Sunak when it predicted the UK would be the only G7 country with negative growth in 2023, blaming it partly on the UK's "tighter fiscal and monetary policies".

Sunak has barely been in office 100 days, and despite calming markets, is languishing in the polls as the country's cost-of-living crisis rumbles on. The re-emergence of Truss and the more visible role taken by Boris Johnson in trying to secure more military support for Ukraine has increased pressure from various factions in Sunak's own party.

During a surprise trip to Washington this week Johnson put pressure on Sunak over the conflict, telling Fox News that he should send fighter jets and "give the Ukrainians what they need as fast as possible. Get this thing done. Forget about Putin."

Johnson was also a visible pro-Ukraine



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. — AFP

presence at last month's World Economic Forum meeting, which Sunak did not attend. Johnson and many of his supporters still blame Sunak for triggering his downfall by resigning as his finance minister.

The resulting leadership campaign turned into a bitter fight between Truss and Sunak. The pro-growth faction of MPs that helped her win that contest are reported to be regathering, threatening more headaches for the prime minister. — AFP

Speaker invites MPs for session...

Continued from Page 1

Also, MP Hamad Al-Matar questioned why the cost of production of oil in the country has increased sharply, which was reflected in the draft budget, which projected a huge budget deficit of KD 6.8 billion. MP Adel Al-Damkhi meanwhile sent a series of questions to the acting defense minister about alleged irregularities in directly awarding a

military contract regarding the construction of facilities for Caracal helicopters to the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The lawmaker claimed that a department of Kuwait's defense ministry awarded the contract directly to the US Army Corps of Engineers in violation of the rules of awarding military contracts. He asked why the defense ministry foreign procurement department surpassed the military installations engineering sector and awarded the contract directly to the US agency. He said the foreign procurement department has committed many violations in awarding the contract and asked about procedures that were taken by the ministry in this regard.

spent in the country. Three balloons were spotted during Donald Trump's presidency and another one earlier in the Biden administration.

Biden told reporters he had on Wednesday ordered the craft shot down "as soon as possible". "They decided - without doing damage to anyone on the ground... that the best time to do that was as it got over water," Biden said. According to the senior defense official, the military determined the airship was not a major threat to the United States during its flight, and "the surveillance balloon's overflight of US territory was of intelligence value to us", he added, without providing details.

Teams were already working on recovering the balloon's remains, a senior military official said Saturday. The balloon had flown over parts of the northwestern United States - including the state of Montana - that are home to sensitive airbases and strategic nuclear missiles in underground silos. "We are confident it was seeking to monitor sensitive military sites," the senior defense official said.

Republican lawmakers had quickly pounced on the balloon incident, casting Biden - who has largely preserved, and at times expanded, Trump's hawkish policies on China - as weak. Marco Rubio, vice chair of the Senate intelligence committee, criticized the US president for waiting so long to alert the public as the alleged spy balloon made its "unprecedented" flight over America, saying this amounted to "dereliction of duty". He described the overflight as a brazen effort by Beijing timed to embarrass Biden just before his State of the Union message Tuesday, and to disrupt a since-canceled China visit by Blinken. — AFP

US arctic blast breaks wind...

Continued from Page 1

The NWS office in Caribou, Maine, said a wind chill of minus 51 C was recorded in the small town of Frenchville, just south of the border with Canada.

The office said they had received reports of "frostquakes", also called "cryoseisms", in the region. "Just like earthquakes, (they) generate tremors, thundering sensations. These are caused by sudden cracks in frozen soil or underground water when it's very cold," the NWS office wrote on Twitter. Ahead of the blast, it had warned of an "epic, generational Arctic outbreak".

The NWS said the chills would be "something northern and eastern Maine has not seen since similar outbreaks in 1982 and 1988". "Most stations are forecast to see their lowest wind chills in decades or, in some cases, the lowest ever recorded," the service added. It warned that frostbite to exposed skin can

occur within five minutes in such conditions.

"The dangers of being caught unprepared without shelter from the elements and without proper winter survival gear cannot be stressed enough," the service wrote. The NWS said the blast brought temperatures 10 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit below average over parts of the US Northeast and the coastal Mid-Atlantic.

Extreme weather warnings covering several million people were in effect across much of New England, Quebec and eastern Canada. A wind chill factor of minus 41 C was measured at Montreal International Airport. The Hydro Quebec energy company said the polar blast had sparked record high electricity consumption late Friday and urged customers to turn down their heating by a degree or two.

In New York City, a "code blue" regulation was in effect, meaning no homeless shelter could turn anyone away. In New York's Central Park, the mercury dipped to minus 16 C, the NWS said. Wind-chill temperatures fell below minus 34 C in Boston, where public schools were closed Friday as a precautionary measure. Warmer air was due to move into the region late on Sunday. — AFP

Pakistani former military ruler...

Continued from Page 1

militants, who made several attempts on his life. But it also earned Pakistan a huge influx of foreign aid which bolstered the economy.

In Pakistan, where the military remains supremely powerful and enjoys significant support, Musharraf is a divisive figure. "There was good in him," 69-year-old Naeem Ul Haq Satti told AFP in an Islamabad marketplace. "But his one act, which will be remembered throughout history, was he violated the constitution," the retired civil servant added. "The most important thing a country has is its constitution."

Musharraf had been suffering from a rare disease known as amyloidosis and last summer his family said he had no prospect of recovery. Senior military chiefs "express heartfelt condolences on sad demise of General Pervez Musharraf", a brief statement released by the military's media wing said Saturday. The four-star general died in hospital in Dubai on Sunday

morning, according to media reports and a senior security official who spoke to AFP.

"I can confirm that the late general breathed his last in Dubai this morning ... He is no more," the official, who asked not to be named, told AFP. A Pakistan air force source told AFP that Musharraf's body would be flown back to Pakistan on Monday, aboard a civilian liner or UAE air force jet. Musharraf ruled Pakistan for nearly nine years, starting when then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attempted to remove him as army chief.

Many Pakistanis handed out sweets to celebrate his 1999 coup, which ended a corrupt and economically disastrous administration, and soon turned on the tap of foreign aid. "Pakistan's decision under Musharraf to join the war against terror turned out to be a boon," analyst Hasan Askari told AFP. However, it also brought the conflict to Pakistan's doorstep, with an explosion in militancy in the northwestern regions bordering Afghanistan.

"He was neither a good man nor a bad man," said 45-year-old gem merchant Muhammad Ayaz in the northwestern provincial capital of Peshawar. "Thousands died in terrorist attacks but business boomed during his tenure. He made graveyards and at the same time built housing developments." — AFP

International

Cypriots vote in a close presidential election between three front runners

Winner needs 50 percent plus one vote to succeed two-term President Nicos Anastasiades

NICOSIA: Cypriots voted on Sunday in a close presidential election between three front runners, with the electorate focused on corruption and the economy amid deadlock over the island's long-standing division. A record 14 candidates but only two women are standing, with the winner needing 50 percent plus one vote to succeed two-term President Nicos Anastasiades.

Opinion polls predict a run-off on February 12, with no contender expected to secure an immediate outright majority. "I expect the next president to do something about corruption and to settle the Cyprus question," said civil servant Andreas Georgiadis, 29, after voting in the capital Nicosia.

Many analysts say former foreign minister Nikos Christodoulides is the favourite. Backed by centrist parties, the 49-year-old commands a firm lead in opinion polls but not enough to shake off his rivals. He is likely to face off in the second round against either Andreas Mavroyiannis, a 66-year-old technocrat backed by communist party AKEL, or Averof Neofytou, 61, leader of the governing conservatives, DISY. "Only through unity, through a collective effort, can we really meet the expectations of the Cypriot people," said Christodoulides after voting in Paphos, in the island's southwest. The last opinion poll by state broadcaster CyBC on January 27 had Christodoulides leading at 26.5 percent, Neofytou at 22.5 percent and Mavroyiannis 21 percent.

Corruption, the economy

"All polls indicate that Christodoulides is going to the second round," said Andreas Theophanous of the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs. "And if he goes to the second round, he is predicted

to win," he added.

Chief returning officer Costas Constantinou said turnout at 12:00 pm (1000 GMT) stood at 33.7 percent. Voters appeared concerned about a cash-for-passports scandal and the pressures of irregular migration on public resources, while the issue of the island's decades-old division remains at an impasse.

Cyprus has been split since 1974, when Turkish forces occupied the island's northern third in response to a Greek-sponsored coup. "Some things must change radically in my view, on the Cyprus problem and the economy," teacher Maria Christodoulou, 45, told AFP at a polling station in Nicosia.

The centrist parties that back Christodoulides take a tough line on reunification talks, but his rivals are seen as less hawkish. Neofytou is seen as a pragmatist and "dealmaker", while Mavroyiannis backer AKEL champions reconciliation with the Turkish Cypriots.

'All about personality'

Analysts say campaign pledges to root out corruption and improve the economy are key issues for the electorate. "Corruption is at the core of the discussion, the economy and daily life. The Cyprus problem is a secondary issue," said Giorgos Kentas, associate professor of international politics and governance at the University of Nicosia.

Although Christodoulides had served in both Anastasiades administrations, he seems to have escaped the taint of corruption. "People know there is corruption; the explanation that Christodoulides gave seems plausible to them—that he had no direct responsibility, and they believe that," said Theophanous.



NICOSIA: Head of Cyprus' ruling Democratic Rally (DISY) and presidential candidate Averof Neofytou talks to supporters after casting his vote at a polling station in the capital Nicosia, on February 5, 2023. —AFP

Kentas believes Christodoulides is attracting support because he is seen as independent. "This election is all about personality, and people like Christodoulides," said Kentas. "The other two main candidates are supported by political parties in a top-down process. Christodoulides did not reach out for support—they reached out to him."

Kentas believes whoever is elected will need "to work hard to re-establish the country's cred-

ibility on the world stage." Despite January inflation slowing to 7.1 percent from 7.9 percent in December, high energy and food prices remain a concern.

"Irrespective of who wins, there is the challenge of low salaries and high rents faced by the younger generation," said Theophanous. More than 561,000 people are eligible to vote, including 10,346 Cypriots abroad, chief returning officer Constantinou said on Friday. —AFP

Pervez Musharraf: Pakistan's last military ruler

ISLAMABAD: Pervez Musharraf, the last military ruler of Pakistan, who served as a key ally to the US during its "war on terror" died in exile in Dubai on Sunday at the age of 79. Known as a whisky-tipping moderate, the four-star general seized power in 1999 in a bloodless coup before aligning with Washington during its military intervention in neighbouring Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks.

In nearly nine years of ruling the country, Musharraf presided over a stint

of economic growth while dodging at least three Al-Qaeda assassination attempts. But his liberal credentials failed to mask the brazen blurring of the division between the state and the army.

He famously said "the constitution is just a piece of paper to be thrown in the dustbin" and his legacy divides opinion in a nation which has witnessed at least four military coups since its founding in 1947. In his memoir "In the Line of Fire", he quoted Napoleon and Richard Nixon as models for leadership, men both known for their tenacity — and whose hubris contributed to their downfalls.

'Forceful moderate'

Musharraf was born in Old Delhi on August 11, 1943, and his family moved to the newly created Pakistan shortly after

independence. He said he had his first brush with death falling out of a mango tree as a boy. He joined the Pakistan Military Academy at age 18 and became a commando about five years later, rising through the ranks to reach the top when then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appointed him chief of army staff in 1998.

As army chief, Musharraf orchestrated the brief, high-altitude "Kargil conflict" in Kashmir that almost took Pakistan to war with its nuclear rival India. When he ousted Sharif in 1999 in a bloodless coup, many Pakistanis handed out sweets to celebrate the demise of a corrupt and economically disastrous administration.

Musharraf won a five-year term as president in a 2002 referendum, but

reneged on promises to quit as army chief until late 2007. When he presided over Islamabad there was said to be a popular joke: "What's the difference between Musharraf and God? God doesn't think he is Musharraf."

He aligned with the United States after the September 11, 2001 attacks, earning international praise for trying to tackle Taleban and Al-Qaeda militants. Then-US president George W Bush called him "a strong, forceful leader (who) has become a target of those who can't stand the thought of moderation prevailing". Musharraf's most serious challenge emerged when he tried to sack the country's chief justice in March 2007, sparking nationwide protests and months of turmoil that led him to impose a state of emergency. —AFP

Bolsonaro's peculiar exile in US

DORAL: He used to preside over Latin America's largest country and its 214 million people. Now Brazil's former far-right leader lives in a small Florida town and eats alone in a fast-food restaurant. Bolsonaro, 67, has found an unusual refuge in the United States, where he arrived in late December, several days before his supporters stormed government buildings in Brasilia in an attempt to overturn the election victory of his rival, leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

At home, Bolsonaro is being investigated over his alleged involvement in the unrest, which he denies. From the lavish presidential palace, Bolsonaro, a political soulmate of former US president Donald Trump, went on to live in a small community of nearly identical houses near the Disney World resort.

In his first six weeks in the United States, Bolsonaro has kept a low profile, staying at the Orlando home of Brazilian former martial arts champion Jose Aldo, making a trip to a local supermarket and being photographed eating fried chicken alone at a KFC fast-food restaurant.

On Friday, the man who until recently commanded huge crowds in his home country, spoke to some 400 supporters during an event organized by the American conservative organization Turning Point USA at the Trump National hotel in the city of Doral, near Miami. It was unclear if Trump himself played any part in organizing the event.

'More popular than ever'

The meeting had the vibe of an election rally. Bolsonaro spoke passionately about fulfilling his duties to his country—except that the man dubbed the "Trump of the Tropics" was in Florida, several thousand miles (kilometers) away from his homeland.

"There is no greater satisfaction than that of having fulfilled a duty," Bolsonaro said of his presidency. He spoke before an audience dressed in elegant suits and dresses as well as the yellow-and-green



MIAMI: Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro leaves after speaking at a "Power of the People Rally" at Trump National Doral resort in Miami, Florida. —AFP

shirts of the Brazilian soccer team.

Three days earlier, Bolsonaro spoke in the ballroom of a shopping mall restaurant in Orlando at an event put together by the Brazilian expatriate community in

Florida. Bolsonaro, who had repeatedly cast doubt on Lula's narrow victory in an October 30 runoff, again questioned his election loss, calling himself "more popular than ever." —AFP

Salvador's new 'mega-prison' in harsh conditions

TECOLUCA: Conditions inside a huge new mega-prison designed to house 40,000 alleged gang members in El Salvador will be particularly severe, according to accounts from a visiting team of AFP journalists. Miguel Montenegro, director of the nongovernmental Human Rights Commission of El Salvador, has warned of the "risks of violence" in a prison he said would likely end up being badly overcrowded.

"There will most likely be more than the (announced capacity of) 40,000," considering that 63,000 presumed gang members have been arrested since President Nayib Bukele declared a state of emergency last spring allowing arrests without warrants, in the violence-plagued country.

Montenegro has assailed the vast prison—a 166-hectare (410-acre) facility known as the Terrorism Containment Center, or CECOT—as "an embarrassment for the country." An AFP team visited the sprawling complex late Friday into early

Saturday, along with other journalists.

What they saw suggested a very different reality from the images broadcast by national television on Tuesday when Bukele inaugurated the facility. Built on Bukele's orders after he declared a "war" on gangs last March, the prison in Tecoluca, 74 kilometers (46 miles) southeast of the capital San Salvador, consists of eight buildings made of reinforced concrete.

Each one has 32 cells of about 100 square meters (1,075 square feet), designed to hold "more than 100" inmates, according to Public Works Minister Romeo Rodriguez. But each cell will have only two sinks and two toilets.

80 bunks for 100 inmates
Prisoners will leave the cell only for legal hearings (by videoconference), or to be punished in a windowless and unlit isolation cell. There are only 80 metal bunks for every 100 prisoners.

"There will be no mattresses in the cells," the prison warden—who wore a ski mask to protect his identity—told journalists. A network of dozens of cameras will help guards keep constant watch over detainees. While the prison is equipped with dining halls, exercise rooms and Ping-Pong tables, they are exclusively for guards' use.

Ensuring the security of the facility is a two-kilometer-long, 11-meter-high wall with seven guard towers and an electrified fence.



TECOLUCA: A prison security officer uses a body scanner at the newly inaugurated prison, at a secluded rural area in a valley near Tecoluca, 74 km southeast of San Salvador. —AFP

It took 3,000 workers seven months to complete construction of the vast facility, officials said. They have yet to reveal its cost or opening date. Bukele praised the "gigantic job," saying the prison would prove to be an "essential element for total victory in the war against the gangs."

He declared that "war" in late March after a wave of killings left 87 people dead in just three days. Bukele blamed what he said was the laxity of previous governments, which he said had allowed inmates access to "prostitutes, PlayStations, cell phones and computers." —AFP

News in brief

16 dead in China highway pile-up

BEIJING: A highway pile-up in central China has killed 16 people and injured dozens, authorities said Sunday, with footage aired on local media showing burning trucks and smashed cars. Nearly 50 vehicles were involved in multiple collisions along a highway in Hunan province within the span of 10 minutes on Saturday evening, "with some vehicles catching on fire", local traffic police said in a statement. Footage republished online by the state-owned People's Daily showed multiple burning trucks bearing the logos of delivery companies, crushed and overturned cars, and a dark cloud of smoke rising from the crashes. Traffic police said 16 people were killed in the pile-up, including seven in a single collision, while 66 others were injured. "The injured were promptly sent to hospital for thorough treatment, including eight whose injuries were relatively severe, whose vital signs are currently stable," the traffic police said.

Dozens rescued in Greek shipwreck

ATHENS: A woman and child have drowned and 33 people were rescued after a boat carrying migrants from Turkey sank off the Greek island of Leros, Greece's coastguard said Sunday. The survivors, including six children, were transferred to hospital in Leros, with the rescue operation continuing, the coastguard said. Three rescue boats and a helicopter have been deployed but progress is being hampered by strong winds and choppy seas in the Mediterranean. A fisherman raised the alarm after discovering the lifeless body of the woman floating at sea, according to local press reports. Eye witnesses reported seeing an inflatable boat with 40 migrants, including children and people with reduced mobility aboard. Last December, a two-month-old baby died after a shipwreck off the Greek island of Lesbos.

Iran detains journalist

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities have detained a journalist at a reformist publication, local media reported Sunday, as her sister, also a journalist, remains in custody after reporting on Mahsa Amini's death. Iran has been gripped by nationwide protests since the September 16 death in custody of Amini, a 22-year-old ethnic Kurd, who had been arrested for an alleged breach of strict dress rules for women. Elnaz Mohammadi, a reporter for reformist newspaper Hammihan, was detained at the Evin prosecutor's office in Tehran after she had gone there "for an explanation", reported Shargh, another reformist daily. It was not immediately clear why Mohammadi had been summoned there. Her sister, Elahe Mohammadi, was arrested on September 29 after reporting for Hammihan from Amini's funeral. The journalist was subsequently charged with "propaganda against the system and conspiracy to act against national security", offences punishable by death. The procession in Amini's home town of Saqez in Kurdistan province turned into one of the first protest actions, followed by more than four months of unrest. Iran's judiciary has expedited in recent weeks the processes to sentence or free on bail journalists and other people arrested in connection with the protests, generally described by authorities as "riots". —AFP

Business

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2023

Indian regulator reassures investors after Adani rout

Adani's fortune plummets from third to 17th on Forbes rich list

NEW DELHI: India's securities regulator said Saturday that markets were stable and protected from further volatility, following a phenomenal share rout that hit the business empire of tycoon Gautam Adani. The combined market cap of Adani Group's listed companies has collapsed by around \$120 billion-about half of the conglomerate's value-since US short-seller Hindenburg Research released an explosive report in late January.

It accused Adani of accounting fraud and artificially boosting its share prices, calling it a "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme" and "the largest con in corporate history".

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in a statement that India's financial market had "demonstrated ongoing stability and is continuing to function in a transparent, fair and efficient manner". It added that it had "put in place a set of well defined, publicly available surveillance measures" for addressing excessive volatility in specific stocks, without naming the Adani conglomerate.

Adani dismissed the allegations in the Hindenburg report as a "maliciously mischievous" reputational attack and issued a 413-page statement asserting its claims were "nothing but a lie". Hindenburg said in response Adani had failed to answer most of the questions raised in its report.

The group's founder has seen his fortune plummet sharply, dumping him from third to 17th on the real-time Forbes rich list. His operations have expanded at breakneck speed, with Adani Enterprises shares soaring more than 1,000 percent over the past five years.

Hindenburg Research accused Adani of accounting fraud and artificially boosting its share prices, calling it a "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme" and "the largest con in corporate history". Critics say Adani's close relationship with

Modi, who is also from Gujarat state, has helped him win business and avoid proper oversight. "These allegations are baseless," Adani told India Today television on Friday, adding that their shared origins made him an "easy target" for such claims.

"The fact of the matter is that my professional success is not because of any individual leader," he insisted. His comments came as shares in his flagship firm Adani Enterprises went on a rollercoaster ride on the Bombay Stock Exchange, hitting multiple trading stops as they fell by 30 percent before recovering to close up 1.25 percent on the day.

But several other listed units including Adani Total Gas-in which French giant TotalEnergies has a 37.4 percent stake-closed lower again after being suspended for hitting their limits. TotalEnergies said in a statement its exposure to the conglomerate was minimal and welcomed Adani's announcement this week that it would undergo an audit by one of the "big four" accounting firms.

Parliament was adjourned for a second straight day on Friday after opposition lawmakers again demanded the government grant a debate on Adani and Indian financial institutions' exposure to the group. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Indian markets were well regulated and the controversy would not affect investor confidence.

"One instance, however much talked about globally, I would think is not going to be indicative of how well Indian financial markets have been governed," she told broadcaster News18.

Share sale cancelled

Adani has seen his fortune plummet by tens of billions of dollars, dumping him from third to 17th on the real-time Forbes rich list. The 60-year-old publicity-shy school dropout's operations expanded at breakneck speed, with Adani Enterprises shares



AHMEDABAD: Men ride a motorbike past an Adani Group advertisement billboard in Ahmedabad. —AFP

soaring more than 1,000 percent over the past five years. But late Wednesday his main firm cancelled a \$2.5-billion stock sale meant to help reduce debt levels-long a concern-restore confidence and broaden its shareholder base.

The issue failed to attract "mom and dad" retail investors and only sold out thanks to large institutional buyers, fellow Indian moguls and \$400 million from the United Arab Emirates' IHC. Big banks including Credit Suisse and Citigroup have stopped accepting Adani bonds as collateral for loans to private clients,

according to Bloomberg News, fuelling worries about how the conglomerate will raise fresh funds.

Bonds nonetheless rallied slightly on Friday after Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan bankers told clients that parts of Adani's portfolio remained strong, Bloomberg reported, citing unidentified sources. Fitch Ratings said in a statement there was "no immediate impact" on rated Adani credit profiles from the Hindenburg report, but S&P downgraded its outlook to "negative" on two of the group's listed entities. —AFP

UAE, India and France discuss cooperation initiative

ABU DHABI: The UAE, France and India have issued a joint statement announcing the establishment of a cooperation initiative and its implementation. In a statement following a telephone call between Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, India's Foreign Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, and French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna, the countries said that the initiative will promote the design and execution of projects in fields including energy and climate change.

The ministers had first discussed this on September 19, 2022, when they met on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York and on Saturday they talked about this further, news agency WAM said. During their call, the ministers agreed that the initiative will also focus on the protection of biodiversity, particularly in the Indian Ocean.

They will explore the possibility of working with the Indian Ocean Rim Association to pursue projects on clean energy, the environment, and biodiversity. Related video: India-France complete five-day annual aero-naval exercise (WION)

The countries will seek to ensure greater align-



(From left to right), Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Catherine Colonna. —AFP

ment of their respective economic, technological, and social policies with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. To support these endeavors, several trilateral events will be organized in the framework of the Indian Presidency of the G20 and the UAE's hosting of Cop28 in 2023, respectively.

The ministers also agreed to expand their cooperation through initiatives such as the Mangrove Alliance for Climate led by the UAE and the Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership led by India and France.

They also talked about issues such as single-use plastic pollution, desertification, and food security in the context of the International Year of Millets 2023. They discussed defense as an area of cooperation and efforts will be made to improve compatibility, joint development and co-production, and the exploration of training. —Agencies

A 15.4 per cent rise in oil sector activities - which include the production of crude, natural gas and refining operations - drove the sharp increase in gross domestic product, data from the General Authority for Statistics (Gastat) showed. Non-oil activities increased by 5.4 per cent during the 12-month period to the end of December while government services activities were up 2.2 per cent, Gastat said. According to the latest PMI survey new order inflows continued to rise at a marked pace in January, as businesses cited improving demand conditions and stronger client orders. The rate of increase quickened from December and was the second-sharpest in 16 months.

Demand from foreign clients increased and was greater than at the end of 2022, with around a third of all surveyed companies seeing an uplift on the month. The PMI survey also showed that purchasing activity increased sharply and supply chains showed further signs of improvement, whilst inflationary pressures on both costs and charges softened from December. Overall cost pressures were subdued and the softest for three months as staff costs were up only fractionally. As a result, businesses raised their output prices only slightly and at the weakest rate in nearly a year.

The kingdom's inflation rate for 2022 was estimated at 2.6 per cent and, according to preliminary forecasts, has been forecast at 2.1 per cent in 2023, Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan said in December. Inflation is expected to soften in the upcoming months with the reduction in input cost pressures and the continued improvement in supply chains, Al-Ghaith of Riyadh Bank said. —Agencies

Qatar airport aims to beat passenger record

DOHA: Qatar's main international airport aims to pass a record 40 million passengers this year as the Gulf state seeks to build on staging the World Cup to bolster its reputation, its tourism chief said Sunday. Hamad International Airport recorded 39.5 million passengers in 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic struck, and last week announced that with the World Cup in November and December, numbers had recovered to 35.7 million in 2022.

Tourism minister and Qatar Airways chief executive Akbar Al-Baker said capacity restrictions at the airport held back numbers last year. "If we did not

have shortage of capacity we would have exceeded the 2019 figures," Baker told reporters on the sidelines of announcing a jewelry and watch show, the latest in a series of events aiming to draw international visitors.

"I am not satisfied with 39.5 million passengers," he added. "We are hoping that this year we will break a record in the numbers of passengers that will pass through Hamad. "Keep in mind that there is no more FIFA (World Cup) so crossing that record number will really be a big achievement and a lot of pressure on Qatar Tourism to bring people," he said. The wealthy Gulf state is spending billions of dollars expanding capacity at Hamad airport to 70 million people a year and increasing Qatar Airways routes as it seeks to become a dominant player in international travel.

Dubai airport in the United Arab Emirates announced in November that it expected 64.3 million passengers in 2022. —AFP



BAGHDAD: A man shops at a vegetable market in Sadriya, central Baghdad. —AFP

Oil prices helping Iraq, but country still vulnerable: IMF

BAGHDAD: Iraq's economic recovery is being supported by higher oil prices, but it remains vulnerable to shocks from market volatility, according to the International Monetary Fund. Oil production is expected to further rise to 4.6 million bpd this year and 4.7 million bpd in 2024, to reach about 5 million bpd by 2027, the IMF said.

High oil prices are projected to produce fiscal and external current account surpluses for Iraq, OPEC's second-largest producer, the IMF said. Real non-oil GDP growth, on the other hand, is expected to reach 4 per cent in 2023, up from 3.2 per cent last year, supported by stimulus measures from the country's Emergency Law for Food Security and Development. It will then settle at 3.5 per cent in the medium term, the fund said. Inflation, meanwhile, was estimated at 4.5 per cent in 2022, and is forecast to ease to 3.7 per cent this year, further slowing to 2.5 per cent in 2024, the study showed.

"Iraq's economy has been gradually recovering,

supported by strong oil revenues and accommodative policies and the near-term outlook is positive amid a large oil windfall," the IMF said.

However, while the economy's near-term outlook is trending upwards, its dependence on oil and vulnerability to future crude price volatility have increased, the fund said. "In the baseline of gradually declining oil prices, fiscal and external deficits and financing pressures could re-emerge in the medium term, barring significant reforms." Iraq, which also has the world's 12th-largest proven gas reserves, depends on oil revenue to meet 90 per cent of government expenditure. Its economy, however, remains fragile. Insecurity and political instability continue to discourage private investments, putting pressure on Baghdad to maintain a social compact based on government provision of jobs and subsidies which, in turn, are entirely dependent on oil revenue. Iraq exported an average of about 3.6 million bpd in 2022, with an average price of \$96.90 a barrel, the IMF said in its report.

Oil exports are projected to grow to 3.9 million bpd this year and rise to 4 million bpd in 2024, with average prices of \$83.10 and \$77.80 per barrel, respectively, it said. Oil prices peaked in March 2022 nearly hitting \$140 a barrel as Russia pressed ahead with its military offensive in Ukraine, but they have declined about 14 per cent in the past 12 months and around 42 per cent since March. —Agencies

Saudi business confidence hits two-year high

RIYADH: Business confidence in the non-oil economy of Saudi Arabia hit a two-year high in January as output growth in the kingdom strengthened. The reading for the Arab world's largest economy on the Riyadh Bank purchasing managers' index rose to 58.2 in January from 56.9 in December, well above the neutral 50 mark that separates growth from contraction.

The reading was the second-highest recorded since September 2021, following the recent high in November, driven by an acceleration in growth of output, new orders and stocks of purchases. "Saudi Arabia is continuing its strong performance and outperformed the global economic trends for activity and demand," said Naif Al-Ghaith, chief economist at Riyadh Bank.

"The non-oil sector is starting this year with a strong headline growth ... this growth confirms the Saudi position as the fastest-growing economy among the Group of 20 countries despite economic headwinds." Saudi Arabia's economy grew 8.7 per cent in 2022, boosted by a sharp increase in the kingdom's oil and non-oil sectors, according to initial government estimates.

Business

Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait announces net profit growth of 19% in 2022

BoD recommends distribution of 8 fils per share as cash dividends



Talal Behbehani

Talal Behbehani, Group Chairman of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, said, "The financial performance reflects the Group's long-term plan centered on customer-oriented products, investing in its employees, and boost the bank's share in the market while adhering to prudent risk management practices and enhancing the share of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait in the local and regional markets."



George Richani

George Richani, Group Chief Executive Officer of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait reiterated that: "At Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, we were able to succeed in increasing operating profits by a noteworthy rate in Kuwait. This growth was driven by the full transformation strategy of all our business lines and operations."

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) reported a net profit of KD 32.3 million in the financial year 2022. The increase in the net profit compared to the same period in 2021 was 19 percent. Net operating profit rose by 10 percent to a total KD 90.1 million, and earnings per share were 14 fils, compared to 12 fils the previous year. Total assets grew by 14 percent to KD 6.4 billion, customer deposits by 13 percent to KD 4.4 billion, and the loan portfolio increased by 19 percent to reach KD 4.04 billion.

The Non-Performing Loan (NPL) ratio stood at 1.43 percent and NPL coverage was at 366 percent. The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) reached 15.62 percent while the shareholders' equity stood at KD 504 million.

The Board of Directors has recommend the distribution of 8 fils per share as cash dividends to shareholders, in addition to distributing 5 percent bonus shares. These proposed distributions are subject to the approval of the ABK annual general meeting.

Commenting on the results, Talal Behbehani, Group Chairman of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, said, "The financial performance reflects the Group's long-term plan centered on customer-oriented products, investing in its employees, and boost the bank's share in the market while adhering to prudent risk management practices and enhancing the share of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait in the local and regional markets."

"In addition, the Group also maintained strong credit ratings, "A" Rating by Fitch Credit Rating Agency with a Stable Outlook, and "A2" Rating by

Moody's with a Stable Outlook. Further, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait was also awarded a 'Category 1 Banking License' by the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), a license upgrade, which allows ABK-DIFC to provide customers with a vast portfolio of wholesale banking services from the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Branch, including accepting deposits from corporates, financial institutions and high net worth individuals".

Behbehani also expressed his appreciation for the executive team's foresight and planning and to all staff for their dedication in working diligently to apply the standards of sustainability, good governance and social responsibility contributing wholly to the healthy growth of the balance sheet, profitability and strong credit ratings.

George Richani, Group Chief Executive Officer of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait reiterated that: "At Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, we were able to succeed in increasing operating profits by a noteworthy rate in Kuwait. This growth was driven by the full transformation strategy of all our business lines and operations." George Richani, further stated that: Customer experience is one of the priorities of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait's strategy, in addition to focusing on maximizing the value of operations and diversifying its sectors in addition to expanding in the main markets, enhancing risk management capabilities and innovation to achieve excellence in customer service.

He further highlighted the successful closing of a \$825 million term loan facility, securing one of the largest financing related to a Kuwaiti financial institution. This facility is the largest in ABK's history

and will enable ABK to continue growing, expanding its business, and strengthening its relationships and is evidence of the trust worldwide investors have in ABK, its strategy, and future outlook.

Richani also highlighted the Group's approach based on prudent policies and studied future expectations regarding growth, as the Bank is taking great strides towards digital transformation and following up with market needs, while recording steady growth on the financial level and reinforcing the aspirations of all the Bank's shareholders and customers alike.

Corporate social responsibility

ABK has been striving to fulfill its commitment to society. The year 2022 saw the bank engage itself actively on a variety of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, especially those targeted at the development of the youth in Kuwait. As nationalization of manpower is key to the future of Kuwait and the nation's youth, ABK has always stood out as one of the leading employers of choice for Kuwaiti nationals, and continues to demonstrate its commitment to human capital and national employment by participating in numerous university career fairs.

The bank recently held a recruitment initiative in collaboration with the Public Authority of Manpower, providing job seekers with information about the banking sector and ABK specifically. The initiative was aimed at encouraging Kuwaitis to join the private sector. ABK continues to support the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's joint awareness campaign, 'Let's Be

Aware,' to raise financial literacy awareness and ensure safe banking practices. To fulfill the campaign's objectives, ABK partnered with private and government entities and various industry leaders which placed the Bank among the top performers for the campaign. Meanwhile, ABK Group has made significant progress in terms of sustainability, and recently released its own 2021 Sustainability Report titled 'Banking on a Sustainable Journey'. The report highlights several important initiatives undertaken by the Group, such as increasing nationalization by 5 percent, focusing on empowering women and youth, reducing emissions by 23 percent, and funding two major ESG projects that were successfully completed.

As a further step towards 'Simpler Banking' solutions, ABK launched a new Visa Infinite Privilege credit card for its private banking customers and also introduced new features to its salary transfer offering.

2022 was also exceptional with the celebration of the 20 years of the bank's strategic partnership with Emirates Skywards, the award-winning loyalty program of Emirates Skywards, and Flydubai, and the co-branded ABK Emirates credit cards. ABK has been implementing strategies to create stronger leaders for the future like the recently concluded first phase of the Executive Leadership Program. It included an array of both digital learning modules and various workshops. Through this program, ABK seeks to lift potential leaders to higher levels, offering them an opportunity to improve their leadership skills and realize their full potential.

2022 ANNUAL RESULTS

NET PROFIT



OPERATING PROFIT



TOTAL ASSETS



LOANS



MOODY'S A2 FitchRatings A



Business

NOMO launches Sharia-compliant real estate finance product for ME customers

Al-Tuwaijri: NOMO continues to leave its mark on Islamic digital banking sector

KUWAIT: NOMO Bank, the digital bank of the Bank of London and the Middle East "BLME", a subsidiary of Boubyan Bank Group, announced the launch of its real estate finance product, which allows all customers in the Middle East to own properties in the United Kingdom in a major step towards employing the digital bank's services in providing easier, more convenient, and secure real estate finance solutions.

Abdullah Al-Tuwaijri, BLME's Board Member, stated: "This step comes as a new addition to improve the set of innovative digital banking solutions offered by Nomo Bank to meet its customers' requirements and to provide them with the latest digital services so that they may enjoy a unique banking experience that meets their expectations and needs while offering the highest levels of protection and security."

Al-Tuwaijri went on to elaborate: "The real estate finance product currently offered by NOMO represents a great investment opportunity to our Middle East investors, making it a real possibility for them to realize their dreams and own properties in the United Kingdom, being one of the most attractive and important

real estate markets worldwide."

"The product is fully compliant with the Noble Islamic Sharia and represents a quantum leap that helped us succeed in overcoming the challenges of striking a balance between Islamic banking and digital innovation to make a difference in the Islamic financial services market whose volume exceeded \$1.7 trillion in value," he added.

On his part, Andrew Ball, BLME's CEO, stated: "It is no secret that there is a major segment of Middle East's customers who are looking forward to owning properties in the United Kingdom, and this is where Nomo Bank steps in to help them have access to such services through a quick digital process that grants them access to real estate finance, thus speeding up the purchase process in an easy and swift manner."

Real estate finance via NOMO app

He added: "In Nomo Bank, we always seek to be closer to our customers to make international, investment, and real estate banking easily within their reach, while offering them a world-class



Abdullah Al-Tuwaijri



Andrew Ball



banking experience backed by easily available and innovative technology."

Furthermore, Al-Tuwaijri stated: "It is no longer difficult to have access to real estate finance; with Nomo, those interested in purchasing a property in the United Kingdom can now open a bank account in the United Kingdom and enjoy a group of solutions and services available on NOMO App, and can then apply for a real estate finance within a few minutes."

Speaking about those who will benefit from this product, Al-Tuwaijri explained: "NOMO's customers from the Middle East whether in

Kuwait or the UAE can now benefit from this product, which will also be available soon to customers of other GCC countries. This step will surely have a positive effect on the bank's strategy for offering digital banking services and giving customers the ability to manage their savings easily and conveniently."

He elaborated: "Ever since the launch of Nomo Bank, we have been witnessing a continued growth whether in the number of customers or the innovative digital banking products offered by the bank, which are highly welcomed and used by our customers."

TotalEnergies says Adani exposure 'limited' at \$3.1bn

PARIS: French oil and gas major TotalEnergies said Friday its capital exposure to troubled Indian conglomerate Adani was "limited" at \$3.1 billion. Adani's market capitalization has sunk by more than \$120 billion since US short-seller Hindenburg Research released an explosive report last week accusing the group of accounting fraud and boosting its share prices.

Indian tycoon Gautam Adani's group has called the allegations a "lie". TotalEnergies owns a 50-percent stake in Adani Total Private Limited, 37.4 percent of Adani Total Gas Limited, 19.75 percent of Adani Green Energy Limited and 50 percent of AGEL23.

"TotalEnergies' exposure resulting from these stakes is limited," the French firm said in a statement. TotalEnergies said its stakes represented 2.4 percent, or \$3.1 billion, of its capital employed at the end of December and just \$180 million of net operating income last year.

"TotalEnergies' investments in Adani's entities were undertaken in full compliance with applicable - namely Indian - laws, and with TotalEnergies' own internal governance processes," the statement said. Trading in shares of the Indian group's flagship firm Adani Enterprises, as well as Adani Total Gas and Adani Green Energy, was suspended on the Bombay Stock Exchange on Friday when they hit their limits.

Adani Group, the Indian conglomerate whose accounting practices have come under fire from a short seller, last year shifted the audit of its British subsidiaries from a Big Four firm to one outside the ranks of the 10 biggest in the UK. Gautam Adani's empire has been reeling since US short seller Hindenburg Research last month accused the group of stock price manipulation and fraud.

In its almost 100-page report Hindenburg highlighted Adani's use of a "tiny firm" in India as one of its main auditors. In a lengthy rebuttal denying the allegations, the Adani Group said that its companies "follow a stated policy of having global big 6 or regional leaders as statutory auditors".

Corporate filings show that the 2022 accounts for Adani's UK subsidiaries were audited by Crowe UK. The firm is the 12th largest in the UK, according to Accountancy Age's rankings and its wider global network is outside the top six in the world. Adani's British entities are made up of a portfolio of renewable power plants across India that Adani Green Energy Limited, which is listed in Mumbai, acquired from SoftBank Group and Bharti Enterprises in 2021.

Adani Green Energy Limited is just one of 10 listed companies that the conglomerate controls in India, which span power and energy companies to ports and airports. Following the \$3.5 billion sale, Adani changed the auditor of Adani Energy Holdings Limited, the main UK holding company that houses the subsidiaries, from Big Four firm Deloitte to Crowe. Crowe UK earned £143,000 for its 2022 audit of Adani Energy Holdings Limited, down from the £257,000 that Deloitte charged for its previous audit.

SoftBank had its main holding company in the UK, which is why accounts for these Adani subsidiaries are audited in Britain even though the power plants are in India. — Agencies

Macron gives ground to allies in unpopular pension reform bid

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron's government on Sunday offered a concession on contested French pension reforms, seeking to shore up support from prospective right-wing allies ahead of the parliamentary debate. People who began work between the ages of 20 and 21 will be able to retire at 63, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne told the JDD weekly, rather than the headline age of 64 that has unions and large swathes of the public bristling.

"We hear the request" of MPs from the conservative Republicans party, whose votes are needed to make up a majority for the reform, Borne said. Republicans leader Eric Ciotti had earlier told the Parisien newspaper that the change would "secure a very large majority" of his MPs.

Although re-elected to the presidency last year, Macron also lost his parliamentary majority and has been forced either to cobble together compromises or ram through laws using an unpopular constitutional side door. But he has stuck to the widely disliked pension reform, against which hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated and many workers went on strike in two days of mass action so far, with more planned on February 7 and 11.

Meanwhile, the left-wing opposition in parliament has submitted thousands of amendments to stymie debate on the law. Borne also acknowledged demands from the Republicans and Macron's Democratic Movement allies for a 2027 review of the reform, which aims to bring the pensions system

France demands 'transparency' over US climate subsidies

PARIS: French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire has called for "transparency" between the United States and Europe over the controversial granting of green subsidies and tax breaks. Le Maire and his German counterpart Robert Habeck travel to Washington on Tuesday to meet Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and discuss a landmark US spending bill that has Europe on edge. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funnels \$370 billion into subsidies for America's energy transition-including tax cuts for US-made electric cars and batteries.

While the US wants to reduce dependence on Chinese imports, Europe is worried about unfair competition and the collateral damage if companies relocate outside the EU. "We must be realistic. The IRA is a game changer," Le Maire told AFP in an interview on Friday.

"The IRA offers competitive advantages which, coupled with very low energy prices in the United

Biden's climate plan strains ties with EU allies

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's landmark climate action plan has become a subject of tension between the United States and European Union, which fears it could hurt European industry. With French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire and his German counterpart Robert Habeck headed to Washington in the coming week to discuss the consequences of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), here is what you need to know:

What is the IRA?

The IRA, a massive piece of legislation that largely focuses on climate and social spending, provides more than \$430 billion in US investments. Of that sum, \$370 billion will go toward cutting greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030, making it the largest ever American program to combat climate change. Some investments are in the form of tax cuts for companies that invest in clean energy, but there are also significant subsidies for electric vehicles, batteries and renewable energy projects-if they are manufactured in the United States.

One is a \$7,500 subsidy for households buying US-made electric vehicles, while another gives ben-



MARSEILLE: In this file photo taken on January 31, 2023, protesters take part in a demonstration in Marseille, as part of a nationwide day of strikes and rallies for the second time in a month to protest a planned reform to boost the age of retirement from 62 to 64. —AFP

out of deficit by 2030. And she said the government would pile pressure on companies to end the practice of letting go of older employees, which leaves many struggling to find work in their final years before pension age.

"Too often, companies stop training and recruiting older people," Borne said.

States, poses a risk to our industries." The EU is pushing the United States to make exemptions for European companies. But a special joint task force set up to address Brussels' concerns has yielded little fruit.

"The most important thing is that we cooperate with allies to have transparency about the amount of subsidies and tax credits that will be granted," said Le Maire. "If you know at what price green hydrogen will be released in the United States and at what price it will be released in Europe, this allows you to guarantee fair competition conditions."

Le Maire said that the European Commission had proposed clauses aligning with the American subsidies, "but for these alignment clauses to work, we still need to know how much the subsidies will be." To head off the threat to European industry, the EU on Wednesday unveiled proposals such as the controversial relaxation of state aid rules, to level the playing field.

However, member states do not agree on how to approach the problem. In Washington, Le Maire hopes to secure a "cooperative approach to the most strategic investments in sensitive areas such as semiconductors." "It's not like there is an overproduction of batteries, an overproduction of solar panels, or an overproduction of semiconductors. On the

efits to manufacturers of wind turbines and solar panels who use US steel. The measures have sparked concern in Europe as they impact key industries on the continent.

How are both sides reacting?

The IRA has caused a stir at EU headquarters in Brussels and in other European capitals, which see the various subsidies as discriminatory, in particular against the bloc's auto manufacturers. At the start of the month, the EU unveiled proposals including a controversial expansion of state aid rules partly to counter the threat from US green subsidies.

The new measures give flexibility on providing aid to companies in the green and renewable energy sector, as well as those involved in the decarbonization of industry. There will also be tax breaks for companies in strategic net-zero sectors. But US and EU officials struck a conciliatory tone after recent talks, underlining a commitment to address EU concerns "constructively."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in December after meeting with European officials: "We are committed to moving forward together not at the expense of each other, but to the benefit of each other." Le Maire and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai agreed in November that both sides "should work together to deepen the bilateral understanding of the legislation," according to a statement. Meanwhile US Senator Joe Manchin, who was key in passing the IRA, has expressed surprise at European reactions at a time when the US works to tackle climate change.

"It's shocking for the employees and it's a loss to deprive ourselves of their skills." Government plans will force companies to regularly publish details of how many older workers they employ, with Labour Minister Olivier Dussopt on Saturday trailing financial penalties for those which fail to do so. —AFP



PARIS: French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire gestures as he speaks to the press in the minister's office in Paris. —AFP

contrary, there are not enough of them," he said. "The challenge is not to steal very competitive markets. The challenge is that we manage to develop together, in the United States and Europe, an efficient, competitive green industry that is the most innovative on the planet." After the Washington visit, European Union leaders will hold a summit later in the week that aims to begin crafting a response to the US measures. —AFP

Is there room for maneuver?

Even if Biden wanted to walk back certain measures or broaden the number of beneficiaries, his legislative options are quite limited. Biden's Democratic Party has lost its House of Representatives majority in January. The new Republican majority is keen on slashing federal government spending, threatening to block the usual rubber-stamp approval for raising the nation's debt limit if Democrats do not agree to steep budget cuts. It is also unclear that Biden is considering touching a key plank of his presidential legacy, which he salvaged only after protracted negotiations in the Senate.

The subsidies in question are very popular, especially in states such as Ohio and Michigan, where the automotive industry remains powerful. Their "swing state" status gives them considerable political clout.

What does the EU want?

Before the EU, Canada and Mexico expressed concerns about the IRA, which they saw as incompatible with the free trade agreement between the three North American countries. They obtained an extension of subsidies for electric vehicles made in North America, a key issue for Mexico in particular where many global manufacturers have factories. This is the type of treatment the EU wants to obtain-with the bloc previously urging the US to grant it the same exemptions.

In December, the EU said it seeks "non-discriminatory treatment" of the bloc's clean vehicle producers under the IRA's clean vehicle credits, although the specifics could prove complicated to iron out. —AFP

Business

UK mega laboratory generates weather to test homes of future

Energy House 2.0 slashes carbon emissions, save energy and tackle climate change



MANCHESTER: Energy House 2.0, containing two houses built to develop future heating solutions, is pictured at Salford University in Salford, north west England on January 24, 2023.



MANCHESTER: Simulated snow covers a car and the walls of one of two houses built to develop future heating solutions, at Energy House 2.0 at Salford University in Salford, north west England on January 24, 2023. —AFP photos

SALFORD, United Kingdom: The thermometer sinks below zero as a blizzard of fine snow descends on two houses freshly built inside a massive laboratory in northern England. Despite the icy conditions, the two energy-efficient homes remain cozy and warm due to their use of cutting-edge heating and insulation technology. Welcome to Energy House 2.0 — a science experiment designed to help the world's house-builders slash carbon emissions, save energy and tackle climate change.

The project, based in a laboratory resembling a giant warehouse on Salford University campus near the centre of Manchester, opened last month. Rain, wind, sunshine and snow can be recreated in temperatures ranging from 40 degrees Celsius to -20C, operated from a control centre.

Replicating weather

“What we’ve tried to achieve here is to be able to replicate the weather conditions that would be

experienced around 95 percent of the populated Earth,” Professor Will Swan, head of energy house laboratories at the university, told AFP. The facility, comprising two chambers that can experience different weather at the same time, will test types of housing from all over the world “to understand how we deliver their net-zero and energy-efficient homes”, he added.

The two houses, which are quintessentially British and constructed by firms with UK operations, will remain in place for a few years. Other builders will then be able to rent space in the lab to put their own properties under the spotlight.

The project’s first house was built by UK property firm Barratt Developments and French materials giant Saint-Gobain. It is clad with decorative bricks over a frame of wood panels and insulation, with solar panels on the roof.

Scientists are examining the efficiency of several different types of heating systems, including air-source heat pumps. In the living room, a hot-

water circuit is located along the bottom of the walls, while further heat is provided via infra-red technology in the molding and from a wall panel.

Mirrors also act as infra-red radiators while numerous sensors monitor which rooms are in use.

Residents will be able to manage the technology via one single control system similar to Amazon’s voice-activated Alexa interface. Builders estimate the cutting-edge tech will mean that the energy bill will be just one quarter of what the average UK home currently pays, a boon to customers reeling from sky-high energy prices.

It will also make an important contribution to Britain’s efforts to reach zero carbon emissions by 2050 to combat climate change. A parliamentary report found that, in 2019, 17 percent of heating emissions from buildings came from homes-making their contribution similar to all the petrol and diesel cars driving on Britain’s roads. Environmental campaigners have long called on

the UK government to increase energy efficiency and insulation support for existing homes across Britain.

‘Alexa of home energy’

“One of the key technologies that we’re trying on this house is almost like a building management system for residential buildings,” said Tom Cox, UK technical director at Saint-Gobain.

“It’s almost like the Alexa of the home energy system—and that can be automated as much as the occupant wants.” And now with their mega-laboratory, scientists and companies no longer have to wait for extreme swings in the weather.

“We can test a year’s worth of weather conditions in a week,” added Cox. The “ultimate goal is to create that environment which is comfortable and cost effective and commercially viable to deliver”, added Cox. “At the same time (we are) addressing the sustainability issues that we have in construction.” —AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 2 FEBRUARY 2023

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| Market | M. Cap (KD ml) | Last Close | WTD % | MTD % | YTD % | Quantity Traded | Value Traded | No. of Trades | P/E | P/B | % of Total M. Cap |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------|-----|-------------------|
| Premier Market | 34,167 | 8,160.04 | 0.6% | 0.9% | 2.7% | 296,794,975 | 153,671,446 | 24,908 | 16.8 | 1.5 | 78.1% |
| Main Market | 9,587 | 5,620.73 | -1.0% | 0.0% | 0.9% | 328,467,116 | 42,283,644 | 16,462 | 12.4 | 0.8 | 21.9% |
| All Share | 43,754 | 7,330.29 | 0.3% | 0.7% | 2.3% | 625,262,091 | 195,955,089 | 41,370 | 13.3 | 0.8 | 100% |

| Sector | M. Cap (KD ml) | Last Close | WTD % | MTD % | YTD % | Quantity Traded | Value Traded | No. of Trades | P/E | P/B | % of Total M. Cap |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------|-----|-------------------|
| Banking | 27,426 | 1,826.28 | 0.4% | 0.7% | 3.6% | 162,066,900 | 104,358,320 | 12,850 | 23.6 | 1.4 | 62.68% |
| Basic Materials | 489 | 866.50 | 0.7% | 0.4% | 1.2% | 776,825 | 620,842 | 261 | 8.4 | 1.3 | 1.12% |
| Consumer Discretionary | 682 | 1,412.86 | 0.1% | 0.7% | -0.7% | 22,285,493 | 5,413,397 | 2,144 | 12.4 | 0.9 | 1.56% |
| Consumer Staples | 122 | 475.46 | -3.9% | -0.9% | 0.9% | 2,619,736 | 1,015,588 | 272 | NM | 0.9 | 0.28% |
| Energy | 230 | 1,101.14 | -4.2% | 0.2% | -6.5% | 6,802,316 | 704,980 | 619 | 11.6 | 0.6 | 0.53% |
| Financial Services | 4,318 | 1,263.70 | -0.2% | 0.8% | 2.2% | 210,936,882 | 22,338,520 | 8,315 | 11.0 | 0.7 | 9.87% |
| Health Care | 65 | 425.54 | -4.1% | -4.1% | -7.9% | 78,001 | 29,709,980 | 16 | 12.7 | 2.5 | 0.15% |
| Industrials | 3,417 | 990.68 | 0.7% | 1.1% | -5.4% | 50,572,600 | 25,788,231 | 6,065 | 12.8 | 0.9 | 7.81% |
| Insurance | 605 | 1,565.78 | 0.1% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 1,946,703 | 262,417 | 156 | 10.5 | 0.8 | 1.38% |
| Real Estate | 2,474 | 1,193.38 | 0.8% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 134,565,220 | 16,115,980 | 5,371 | 17.3 | 0.6 | 5.66% |
| Technology | 10 | 712.95 | 3.2% | 2.5% | -3.0% | 20,550 | 2,004 | 9 | NM | 0.9 | 0.02% |
| Telecommunications | 3,718 | 1,212.11 | -0.7% | 1.2% | 3.7% | 30,963,220 | 19,010,981 | 5,053 | 14.9 | 2.0 | 8.50% |
| Utilities | 198 | 473.68 | -1.1% | -1.1% | -2.2% | 1,627,645 | 294,121 | 239 | 14.8 | 1.7 | 0.45% |

Top Gainers

| Stock | last Close | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|----------|------------|----------|---------|------------|--------|
| ENERGYH | 95 | 403.66% | 945,820 | 98,341,838 | 226 |
| KFIC | 70.4 | 8.64% | 34,770 | 2,225,344 | 3 |
| SALBOOKH | 15 | 7.75% | 64,483 | 911,569 | 20 |
| MUNSHAAT | 57 | 6.95% | 100 | 5,690 | 1 |
| TAAMEER | 23 | 6.91% | 271,059 | 5,646,644 | 16 |

Top Losers

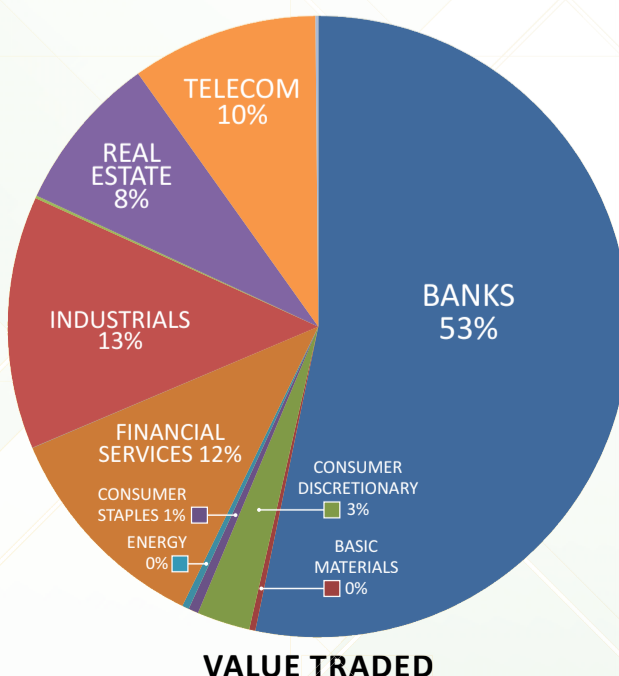
| Stock | last Close | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|----------|------------|----------|------------|-----------|--------|
| ATC | 380 | -13.64% | 78,001 | 29,710 | 16 |
| MARAKEZ | 57 | -9.70% | 98,194 | 5,490 | 43 |
| Emirates | 36 | -8.16% | 11,420 | 420 | 2 |
| ALIMTIAZ | 66.4 | -6.48% | 6,318,010 | 429,117 | 409 |
| STC | 680.0 | -5.95% | 11,043,710 | 7,833,303 | 2,659 |

Top Volume

| Stock | Last | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|--------|------|----------|------------|------------|--------|
| KFH | 837 | 0.48% | 68,499,477 | 56,802,098 | 5,110 |
| IFA | 98.4 | 1.44% | 38,661,167 | 3,801,949 | 756 |
| KRE | 110 | 0.00% | 36,974,989 | 4,059,264 | 911 |
| GFH | 78 | -0.51% | 32,128,164 | 2,513,275 | 1,004 |
| AAAYAN | 146 | 2.82% | 31,634,195 | 4,511,742 | 650 |

Top Value

| Stock | Last | Change % | Volume | Value | Trades |
|-------|-------|----------|------------|------------|--------|
| KFH | 837 | 0.48% | 68,499,477 | 56,802,098 | 5,110 |
| NBK | 1,119 | 1.63% | 24,144,147 | 26,769,473 | 3,052 |
| AGLTY | 602 | 1.35% | 29,091,034 | 17,318,518 | 3,617 |
| ZAIN | 564 | 0.53% | 19,676,249 | 10,964,745 | 2,175 |
| STC | 680 | -5.95% | 11,043,710 | 7,833,303 | 2,659 |



Market Summary:

- Premier and Main Markets' weekly volume and value decreased by 36% and 21%, and 42% and 46%, respectively.
- The Premier Market index showed stability while the Main Market index retreated.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7330, with support levels at 7318, 7286, and 7214, while resistance at 7379. The Premier index closed at 8160, with support levels at 8116, 8064, and 8013, while resistance at 8184. The Main index closed at 5620, with support levels at 5616, 5601, and 5575, while resistance at 5641.



Belgian anthropologist Mathilde Dumas shows bones from skeletons from soldiers who fought in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, in which the French Army under the command of Napoleon was defeated and marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars, at the Institute for Forensic Medicine of Liege, on February. — AFP photos



Belgian anthropologist Mathilde Dumas shows the skull of a soldier who fought in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

The two-century-old mystery of Waterloo's skeletal remains

More than 200 years after Napoleon met defeat at Waterloo, the bones of soldiers killed on that famous battlefield continue to intrigue Belgian researchers and experts, who use them to peer back to that moment in history. "So many bones - it's really unique!" exclaimed one such historian, Bernard Wilkin, as he stood in front of a forensic pathologist's table holding two skulls, three femurs and hip bones.

He was in an autopsy room in the Forensic Medicine Institute in Liege, eastern Belgium, where tests are being carried out on the skeletal remains to determine from which regions the four soldiers they belong to came from. That in itself is a challenge.

Half a dozen European nationalities were represented in the military ranks at the Battle of Waterloo, located 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Brussels. That armed clash of June 18, 1815 ended Napoleon Bonaparte's ambitions of conquering Europe to build a great empire, and resulted in the deaths of around 20,000 soldiers. The battle has since been pored over by historians, and with advances in the genetic, medical and scanning fields—researchers can now piece together pages of the past from the remains buried in the ground. Some of those remains have been recovered through archeological digs, such as one last year that allowed

the reconstitution of a skeleton found not far from a field hospital the British Duke of Wellington had set up. But the remains examined by Wilkin surfaced through another route.

'Prussians in my attic'

The historian, who works for the Belgian government's historical archives, said he gave a conference late last year and "this middle-aged man came to see afterwards and told me, 'Mr Wilkin, I have some Prussians in my attic'". Wilkin, smiling, said the man "showed me photos on his phone and told me someone had given him these bones so he can put them on exhibit... which he refused to do on ethical grounds". The remains stayed hidden away until the man met Wilkin, who he believed could analyze them and give them a decent resting place. A key item of interest in the collection is a right foot with nearly all its toes—that of a "Prussian soldier" according to the middle-aged man.

"To see a foot so well preserved is pretty rare, because usually the small bones on the extremities disappear into the ground," noted Mathilde Dumas, an anthropologist at the Universite Libre de Bruxelles who is part of the research work. As for the attributed "Prussian" provenance, the experts are cautious. The place it was discovered was the village of Plancenoit, where troops on the Prussian and Napoleonic sides bitterly

fought, Wilkin said, holding out the possibility the remains might be those of French soldiers. Scraps of boots and metal buckles found among the remains do point to uniforms worn by soldiers from the Germanic side arrayed against the French. But "we know that soldiers stripped the dead for their own gear," the historian said. Clothes and accessories are not reliable indicators of the nationality of skeletons found on the Waterloo battlefield, he stressed.

DNA testing

More dependable, these days, are DNA tests. Dr Philippe Boxho, a forensic pathologist working on the remains, said there were still parts of the bones that should yield DNA results, and he believed another two months of analyses should yield answers. "As long as the subject matter is dry, we can do something. Our biggest enemy is humidity, which makes everything disintegrate," he explained. The teeth in particular, with traces of strontium, a naturally occurring chemical element that accumulates in human bones, can point to specific regions through their geology, he said. Wilkin said an "ideal scenario" for the research would be to find that the remains of the "three to five" soldiers examined came from both the French and Germanic sides. — AFP



This photograph shows a foot bone that may belong to a Prussian soldier who fought in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.



Belgian anthropologist Mathilde Dumas shows bones from skeletons from soldiers who fought in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.



A Hindu devotee with multiple piercings takes part in a procession to mark the Thaipusam festival in Singapore. — AFP photos



Malaysian Hindu devotees climb 272 steps up towards the Batu Caves temple to make offerings during the Thaipusam festival in Batu Caves on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

Piercings and prayer: Malaysian Hindus celebrate Thaipusam

Ethnic Indian Malaysians massed in Hindu temples across the country Sunday to celebrate the annual Thaipusam festival, months after the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions that had barred large crowds. Tens of thousands of people gathered at the Batu Caves temple just outside Kuala Lumpur over the weekend, many piercing their bodies with hooks and skewers in an act

of devotion to the deity Lord Murugan.

The event commemorates the day when the goddess Parvathi gave her son Lord Murugan a powerful lance to fight evil demons. Bearing offerings such as milk pots and heavy ornate metal structures called kavadis, devotees walked barefoot up 272 steps to reach the temple—an important religious site for local Hindus.



This year's celebration was the liveliest seen in recent years, with devotees glad at being allowed to return to observe their rituals. "(Previously) we couldn't do our vows due to the Covid-19 lockdown," Kupuvanes Tetchanamwoorthy, 45, told AFP.

"This year we could come here and take our vows ... I feel so grateful." Some devotees appeared to be in a state of trance as they carried the kavadis, which can weigh as much as 100 kilograms (220 pounds). Others pierced their bodies with skewers or hung multiple hooks and chains from their bodies in an act of penance. Prior to Thaipusam, devotees will typically hold daily prayer sessions, abstain from sex and stick to a strict vegetarian diet for weeks.

"When we pray for something, we need to give him (Lord Murugan) back something as a blessing," devotee Bahvani Kumaran, 63, told AFP. "Sometimes with your vow, you carry the kavadi, or carry the milk. Whichever way, it is something that you give back to him." While more than half Malaysia's 32 million people are Muslim, the country is home to around two million ethnic Indians. Lord Murugan is particularly revered in southern India and among ethnic Tamil communities in Southeast Asia, with Thaipusam also celebrated in India and Singapore. — AFP

US proposes slashing salt, sugar in school meals

Cut the salt, cut the sugar, but you can keep the chocolate milk. The US Agriculture Department proposed new standards on Friday aimed at tackling obesity and providing millions of American children with more nutritious school meals. "Many children aren't getting the nutrition they need, and diet-related diseases are on the rise," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement.

"Research shows school meals are the healthiest meals in a day for most kids, proving that they are an important tool for giving kids access to the nutrition they need for a bright future," he said. The proposed changes to federally funded school meals would gradually reduce the weekly amount of sodium, which can increase the risk of high blood pressure or heart disease. They would also limit the amount of sugar, which can cause obesity or Type 2 diabetes, targeting high-sugar products like yogurts

and breakfast cereals.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 20 percent—or 14.7 million—of American children and adolescents aged 2-19 are obese. Younger children would be provided with more access to low-fat and non-fat milk while flavored milk would be allowed for older children "with reasonable limits on added sugars."

Greater emphasis would be placed on whole grains, which are known to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and diabetes. According to the Agriculture Department, some 30 million children a year participate in the National School Lunch Program, which provides low-cost or no-cost meals in public schools and non-profit private schools. About 15 million a year are enrolled in the School Breakfast Program. The proposed changes will be open for public comment for 60 days before being adopted for the 2024-2025 school year. — AFP



Lifestyle | Features



Amer Abu Nawas watches a football match before creating content to post on his social media page, at his home in Zarqa, 30km (18 miles) from Jordan's capital, Amman. —AFP photos



Amer Abu Nawas lies on his bed as one of his videos about a football match posted on his social media page plays on a screen.



Amer Abu Nawas holds his mobile telephone which he used for recording his football match analysis to be posted on his social media page.

Housebound Jordanian football fan a social media star

Having spent most of his life housebound due to a medical condition, Jordanian Amer Abu Nawas's love of football has propelled him to social media stardom. Offering analysis of matches from the leading European football leagues to almost a quarter of a million followers, his Facebook page—"HouseAnalyzer" in Arabic—has grown into what he describes as a "big family".

The 27-year-old was born with osteogenesis, or brittle bone disease, a genetic condition hindering normal bone growth that has meant he rarely leaves his home in Zarqa, 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Jordan's capital Amman. "It is true that I have never played football in my life, and have never attended any match, but for me football is everything," Abu Nawas told AFP.

With no schools in the country catering to his needs, Abu Nawas grew up spending much of his time watching football matches, analyzing the teams and playing football video games. "This always made me feel like it is taking me from this world to a different one," he said. His relatives noticed his passion and encouraged him to publish his match analyses online. In 2017, he launched his Facebook account, which now counts more than 243,000 followers.

'Reach people'

Filmed on a phone in his bedroom, Abu Nawas's videos usually feature him wearing a football jersey, excitedly commenting on matches and news from the world of foot-



Amer Abu Nawas drinks water as he takes a break from preparing a video about a football match to be posted on his social media page.



Amer Abu Nawas watches a football match before creating content to post on his social media page.

ball. Discussing leagues from England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, he sometimes uses a football pitch-shaped board to explain tactical nuances. One of Abu Nawas's latest videos reached more than 1.4 million viewers and he has started posting on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Twitter.

He said he was grateful for modern technology allowing him to connect with so many people. "From this room, from this small place isolated from the world, I was able to cross these walls, reach people, communicate with them, create content, and become what I am today," he said. He expressed sadness at sometimes seeing people attack each other in comments to his posts, and said his relationship with his followers was "like a family". "This family is growing day by day, and I hope it will reach as many followers as possible," he added. Abu Nawas's own family do their best to provide him with a comfortable life.

He is the youngest of three brothers and his father is a doctor and his mother a pharmacist. Inside his room are shelves with a PlayStation, a computer and plastic baskets keeping items he might need. On his bed are phones, remote controls, headphones and a long stick used to reach distant items.

'Not an obstacle'

"He has his own world, in a room with a temperature of 27 degrees to avoid cold and pneumonia. He can operate anything

using the remote control," his father Yusef told AFP. He said his son has friends who occasionally visit. "When he feels bad, they take him out for a tour in a minibus," he said. Abu Nawas lamented that in Jordan "nobody cares" about people with diseases like his, and said he wished he had had the opportunity to attend school.

"The conditions for people with special needs are catastrophic," he said. "I could not learn because there are no special schools for people like me." Last year, the



Amer Abu Nawas holds a board in the shape of a football field, used for explaining to his followers on the social media the plans of the coaches and the roles of the players on the field during a football match.

organizers of the football World Cup invited him to attend the tournament in Qatar. But due to travel difficulties linked to his condition, he arrived late and missed the matches he was scheduled to attend. Even so, Abu Nawas said it was "the best 10 days of my life". "I know my condition, I learned to be content, and I will remain so," he said. "Disability need not be an obstacle to success."—AFP



Amer Abu Nawas lies on his bed as one of his videos about a football match posted on his social media page plays on a screen.

Weeknight paprika-cumin chicken evokes Moroccan grilling

In Morocco, djej mechoui simply means grilled chicken, but the aroma coming off it makes clear that it is so much more.

Slathered in smen, or fermented butter, the bird is richly seasoned with a mixture of cilantro, parsley, paprika, cayenne and cumin before being cooked over glowing coals. The sizzling mixture of spice and smoke is intoxicating, and it inspired this recipe from our book "Tuesday Nights Mediterranean," which features weeknight-friendly meals from the region.

For our adaptation, we slash bone-in chicken leg quarters deeply to the bone, which speeds cooking and creates more surface area for seasoning. And cooking the chicken on a wire rack in a rimmed baking sheet, rather than a deeper roasting pan, increases air flow around the meat to boost the flavor that comes with extra browning.

We start by making a simple spice-and-herb-infused butter with garlic, cumin, cayenne and smoked paprika, which is a Spanish spice, but it lends rich color along with a flavor evocative of outdoor grilling. The butter is brushed onto the chicken, which roasts in a hot oven.



The best way to lightly crush the cumin seeds is with a mortar and pestle, or you can pulse them in a spice grinder. Either way, be careful not to process them to a powder; they should retain some texture.

Don't be shy about cutting through the skin and meat when slashing the chicken. Be sure to cut all the way to the bone so the seasonings can go deep.

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Servings: 4

- 5 tablespoons salted butter
- 4 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons cumin seeds, lightly crushed
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro, plus whole leaves to serve
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus whole leaves to serve
- 2 teaspoons packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice, plus lemon wedges, to serve
- 3 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken leg quarters, patted dry

Heat the oven to 450°F with a rack in the middle position. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and set a wire rack on top. In a small saucepan over medium, melt the butter. Add the garlic and cumin, then cook, swirling the pan, until the seeds sizzle, 60 to 90 seconds. Stir in the paprika, cayenne and 1 teaspoon black pepper. Cook until the spices are fragrant, 30 to 60 seconds. Remove from heat and whisk in the cilantro, parsley, sugar and lemon juice; set aside.

Using a sharp knife, cut parallel slashes on each chicken leg about 1 inch apart all the way to the bone on both sides of each leg. Season all over with salt, then brush both sides with about half of the butter mixture. Place the chicken skin up on the prepared rack and roast for 10 minutes. Brush the remaining butter mixture onto the surface of the chicken. Continue to roast until well browned and the thickest part of the thigh reaches 175°F, about another 15 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a serving platter and let rest for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with cilantro and parsley leaves, then serve with lemon wedges on the side. —AP

Sex Pistol John Lydon loses out in Ireland Eurovision bid

Former Sex Pistols frontman John Lydon has failed in his bid to represent Ireland at this year's Eurovision, losing out to rock band Wild Youth in a nationally televised competition on Friday. The Dublin four-piece, performing the song "We Are One", was selected ahead of Lydon's band Public Image Ltd. and four other acts, by a combination of Irish and international experts as well as a public vote during a special program broadcast by RTE.



John Lydon

The win propels Wild Youth to the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool in May. The band, which has had a string of hits in Ireland, has toured with Scottish singer Lewis Capaldi and Irish pop star Niall Horan. "We just hope we can do the best job for Ireland and make it amazing, we want to give it everything and we hope that everyone gets behind the song," Wild Youth frontman Conor O'Donoghue said. Ahead of the national competition Lydon—whose sneering brand of iconoclasm defined punk rock in the 1970s—gained media attention as the highest-profile performer in the running for Ireland's spot at Eurovision.

Public Image Ltd. first formed in the aftermath of his split from the Sex Pistols in 1978. Public Image Ltd. performed an emotional tribute penned by Lydon to his wife of nearly 50 years, Nora, who has Alzheimer's disease. Speaking to the Irish broadcaster before the show, Lydon said the song was "extremely relevant" to him. "I'm having to endure the slow demise of my wife and to be able to write a song about that, and for it to end up to be, I think, quite beautiful, it's quite an achievement," the punk rocker said. Lydon, 66, was born in London but his parents both hailed from Ireland. —AFP

Sports

Pelicans snap a 10-game losing streak; Curry hurt

James 36 points from NBA record

News in brief

Rangers cuts gap on Celtic

GLASGOW: Rangers were forced to dig deep to cut the gap on Scottish Premiership leaders to six points as Borna Barisic's late winner earned a 2-1 victory over Ross County at Ibrox. Jordan White's equaliser midway through the second period had cancelled out Malik Tillman's first half opener. However, Barisic's deflected free-kick 15 minutes from time ensured Michael Beale's men maintain their pursuit of the Scottish champions. Celtic can extend their lead back to nine points when they visit St. Johnstone on Sunday. Hearts came from behind to stay seven points clear in third with a 3-1 win over 10-man Dundee United. Steven Fletcher put the visitors in front, but Liam Fox's men remain bottom of the table after Ryan Edwards saw red before half-time.

Bol begins with a bang

NEW YORK: Olympic and world 400m hurdles medalist Femke Bol opened her season with a bang Saturday, clocking the fastest women's indoor 500m ever with a time of 1min 05.63sec at the Boston Indoor Grand Prix. The Dutch runner became the first woman to break 1:06 at the distance, breaking the previous world best of 1:06.31 set by Russian Olesya Krasnomovets-Forsheva on January 7, 2006. In other results at the World Athletics Indoor Tour Gold event, world record-holder Grant Holloway won the 60m hurdles in a world-leading 7.38sec - stretching his win streak to 52 straight races. There were world-leading performances for American Heather MacLean (4:23.42) and Britain's Neil Gourley (3:52.84) in the women's and men's miles. And Noah Lyles, the 200m outdoor world champion, clocked a personal best of 6.51sec to win the 60m, edging compatriot Trayvon Bromell who was credited with the same time. Ghana's Benjamin Azamati was third in 6.62sec.

Ancer grabs 2-shot lead

KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY: Abraham Ancer heads into the final day at the Saudi International with a two-shot lead over American Cameron Young after the Mexican maintained his dazzling form in the desert on Saturday. A bogey-free third round six-under par 64, inspired by some fine iron play with 16 greens reached in regulation, doubled Ancer's overnight lead over Young. It looks like a two-horse race with American Matthew Wolff (63), Australia's Lucas Herbert (67) and Thailand's Sadom Kaewkanjana (68) in a tie for third, seven shots behind Ancer's 17-under par total of 197. "It was another very solid round with no dropped shots, that's always my goal," said Ancer, on target for his first win since the 2021 WGC-FedEx St Jude Invitational. "On a golf course like this where it's blowing pretty good, I'm really, really happy. My ball striking has definitely been on, and I've been rolling it really nice all week."

Senegal win CHAN shootout

ALGIERS: Senegal completed a double when they beat hosts Algeria 5-4 on penalties after a 0-0 draw to win the African Nations Championship (CHAN) final on Saturday. Golden Boot winner Aymen Mahious had a chance to win a competition reserved for footballers playing in their country of birth when he stepped forward to take the 10th spot-kick. But his attempt was weak and straight at goalkeeper Pape Sy, who saved comfortably, leaving the teams deadlocked at 4-4, and necessitating a sudden-death extension to the shootout. Ousmane Diouf calmly converted to edge Senegal ahead amid whistling from many in a sell-out 39,120 crowd at the Stade Nelson Mandela in Algiers. Ahmed Kendouci had to score to keep Algerian hopes of victory alive, but his shot rebounded off the crossbar and Senegal were champions.

Scorchers overcome Heat

PERTH: Teenager Cooper Connolly's big hitting at the death and skipper Ashton Turner's heroic 53 saw Perth Scorchers beat Brisbane Heat to win an unprecedented fifth Twenty20 Big Bash League title on Saturday. Their fireworks propelled them to 178-5 and a nail-biting five-wicket win with four balls left in front of a record 53,886 parochial fans at Perth Stadium after Brisbane put on 175-7. It was a successful title defence by a side who beat the Sydney Sixers in last season's decider, with Saturday's win securing a fifth trophy in only the competition's 12th year. "It's a surreal feeling. I've played a lot of games of cricket but you never know how it will pan out," said man-of-the-match Turner after his 32-ball knock. "We are in a rarefied air at the moment, we have a lot of guys in form and that's not always the case. A lot of guys have contributed to wins throughout the season." A victory looked highly unlikely when Turner was run out after a horror mix-up with Nick Hobson, leaving them needing 39 needed off 19 balls. —From AFP

LOS ANGELES: The New Orleans Pelicans snapped a 10-game losing streak with a 131-121 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday, even as Lakers superstar LeBron James crept closer to the NBA all-time scoring record. Brandon Ingram shook off a scoreless first quarter to lead the Pelicans with 35 points. CJ McCollum added 23 and Trey Murphy added 21 as New Orleans turned the tide against a Lakers team that scored 72 points in the first half and led by 12 midway through the third quarter.

James scored 27 points and now needs 36 to overtake Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's record of 38,387. He's averaging more than 30 points per game this season, and could well achieve the summit next week when the Lakers host Oklahoma City on Tuesday and the Milwaukee Bucks on Thursday. But the Lakers remain in dire need of victories, and missed a chance to gain on the Pelicans as they both chase a spot in the play-in tournament.

"I just want to win, play the game the right way and see what happens," James said as coach Darvin Ham stressed the urgency of the Lakers' situation. "We've got to win these games," Ham said. "We had full control of the game." Lakers star Anthony Davis scored 34 points against his former team and the Pelicans trailed by eight late in the third quarter when McCollum drove for a basket. New Orleans stole an inbounds pass and Jose Alvarado made a three-pointer to pull the Pels within three heading into the fourth.

"The third is what killed us," James said. "We gave them 42 in the third. Last possession we were up six with a chance to go up either eight or nine and then we turn the ball over." Midway through the fourth, Murphy connected on back-to-back three-pointers as New Orleans took a six-point lead on the way to their first win since January 13.

Curry limps out

The Golden State Warriors held on for a 119-113 home victory over the Dallas Mavericks after superstar Stephen Curry limped out with a lower left leg injury in the third quarter. The Warriors led all the way against a Mavs team without injured star Luka Doncic, but things tightened up after Curry banged



NEW ORLEANS: Russell Westbrook #0 of the Los Angeles Lakers shoots against Jonas Valanciunas #17 of the New Orleans Pelicans during the second half on February 04, 2023. —AFP

knees with Dallas' McKinley Wright and departed for the locker room.

Curry's 21 points led the Warriors, whose 23-point lead was cut to five with 1:28 to play. In Brooklyn, the Nets shook off uncertainty sparked by Kyrie Irving's bombshell trade request to rally from a 23-point deficit and beat the Washington Wizards 125-123.

The Nets, still without injured star Kevin Durant, Ben Simmons and T.J. Warren also made do without Irving, who was sidelined by "right calf soreness" after saying he wanted out by next week's trade deadline. Kristaps Porzingis led the Wizards with 38 points before fouling out. Washington had wasted no time in taking control, building a 23-point lead in the

first half. But with a career-high 44 points from reserve Cam Thomas, and 29 from Edmond Sumner, the Nets managed to pull off their biggest comeback win of the season.

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo delivered a triple double of 35 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists to lead the Milwaukee Bucks to their seventh straight win, 123-115 over the Miami Heat. Antetokounmpo's third triple double of the season followed his 54-point outburst in a nail-biting 106-105 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Thursday. Jimmy Butler scored 32 points for Miami, who were without injured Kyle Lowry and Victor Oladipo and had just nine available players. — AFP



5th Arab clubs Karate Championship ends

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The fifth Arab clubs Karate Championship concluded on Friday at Yarmouk Club.

Six gold medals were distributed to the winners of the Kata event singles and Kata groups for men and women. The tournament started with the registration of players that went smoothly due to the cooperation of all. The preliminaries were very competitive. Arab players displayed high technical talents.

Yarmouk Club secretary general Fouad Fahad Al-Failakawi lauded the support by the Public Authority for Sport (PAS) and the Kuwait Karate

Federation Board headed by Mohammad. Director of the Arab Karate Federation Mohammad Al-Beloushi commended the organization of the fifth Arab championship, adding that the teams were divided into two groups. Member of the competitions committee in the Arab Karate Federation Adnan Hamza (from Saudi Arabia) said the Arab championship is considered the strongest due to the participation of the best players across the globe.



Awadhi wins Kuwait International Show Jumping event

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Masayel Club and National Team rider Abdallah Mushari Al-Awadhi won Kuwait International Show Jumping (3 Star) tournament which concluded on Saturday at Kuwait Riding Center in Sabhan. Teams from Kuwait, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jordan and Britain participated during the event. Al-Awadhi had to go to a differentiation round at 150 cm height and beat German rider Bejorn in a Fault Free round in

57.17 seconds, while the German was second with 60.92.

Abdallah Al-Roudhan secured third place; followed by Enaz Al-Enaz, Abdelrahman Al-Ferzaie, Ahmad Al-Madhakka, Latifa Al-Hajiri, Ali Al-Kharafi, Italian Antonio, Fawaz Al-Subaie, Ghazi Al-Juraiwi and Shaker Al-Kazmi.

Chairman of the Arab Horse Board of Trustees Alaa Al-Roumi, Technical Director of Kuwait Equestrian Federation, Head of the Fourth Regional Group, Member of the Asian Equestrian Federation Waleed Al-Jassim, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Prince Abdallah bin Fahad bin Abdallah, Chairman of the Board of Saudi Arabian Equestrian Federation graced the event. Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser lauded the attendance - and praised the efforts of Kuwait Equestrian Federation. Sheikh Fahad congratulated KEF.

KTF organizes Tennis coaches course

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Tennis Federation (KTF) is currently holding the International Tennis coaches course at its premise at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex under the supervision of the International Tennis Federation (ITS). The course is for the first level and will continue until February 12. There are 20 participants from Kuwait and some West Asia countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Iraq.

Director of Development at ITF for West and Middle Asia Amir Burghi will be lecturing with Dr Abdallah Abdelaziz Al-Mahmeed. KTF held a press conference during which President of the Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah expressed pleasure for the resumption of KTF. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber thanked the lecturers and participants.

Amir Burghi said he was happy to be in Kuwait and hoped the courses will benefit Kuwait and other participants. He thanked the secretary general of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Faleh Al-Otaibi for his efforts. Dr Abdallah Abdelaziz thanked KTF for supporting the game of tennis in Kuwait.

Sports

Union Berlin knock Bayern off top of the Bundesliga

Haller on scoresheet after cancer battle

BERLIN: Sebastien Haller crowned his recent return from testicular cancer with an emotional first goal for Borussia Dortmund on Saturday, as Union Berlin knocked Bayern Munich off the top of the Bundesliga with a dramatic late win over Mainz. Six months after a shock diagnosis which saw him miss the entire first half of the season, Haller finally opened his account for the club he joined last summer. The Ivory Coast international's second-half header prompted wild celebrations among his teammates and helped Dortmund to a 5-1 win over Freiburg which kept them within two points of leaders Union.

"I've been waiting for this moment since day one. When I scored the goal, it felt like the whole stadium was on fire," Haller told Sky. "I am happy, but the way is still long, so we will keep walking and hope for more goals," he added. Freiburg were reduced to 10 men early in the first half after French full-back Kiliann Sildillia was booked twice in the space of two minutes. Former Freiburg player Nico Schlotterbeck then heaped more misery onto his old club, his low snapshot beating goalkeeper Mark Flekken at the near post to give Dortmund the lead.

Schlotterbeck and Niklas Sule handed Freiburg a lifeline with some farcical defending on the stroke of half-time, allowing Lucas Hoeler to sweep in an unexpected equaliser. Yet Karim Adeyemi wriggled his way through the Freiburg box to restore the lead with a neat finish early in the second half, before goals from Haller, Julian Brandt and Giovanni Reyna

completed the rout. Meanwhile in the capital, Union Berlin were working on their own fairytale as a late winner from US international Jordan Siebatheu sent the high-flying minnows top of the table.

'Ironic'

Former Union player Marcus Ingvartsen had cancelled out Kevin Behrens' first-half opener with a late penalty, but the Berliners rallied to claim a fourth straight victory in 2023. The win had Union fans singing about winning the title, but captain Christopher Trimmel said his side were keeping their feet on the ground.

"I was singing along, but only ironically," he told Sky. "There's still a long way to go this season and we are not going to start talking about the title." Eintracht Frankfurt also remained within four points of the top as France forward Randal Kolo Muani scored twice in a 3-0 win over hapless Hertha Berlin. Having put Frankfurt ahead from the penalty spot, Kolo Muani ghosted through the Hertha back line to make it 2-0 before the half-hour mark. Aurelio Buta added a third on the stroke of full time.

RB Leipzig's 0-0 draw at Cologne meant that Frankfurt remain a point adrift of the Champions League places in fifth. Hertha have slumped to four straight defeats since the beginning of 2023, and are now five points adrift of safety after fellow strugglers Bochum cruised to a 5-2 win over Hoffenheim. Philipp Hofmann gave Bochum a deserved lead with a tap-in before Philipp Foerster and Takuma Asano



BERLIN: Union Berlin's German forward Kevin Behrens (2nd left) scores the 1-0 goal against Mainz' German goalkeeper Finn Dahmen (right) during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Union Berlin v Mainz 05 on February 4, 2023. — AFP

showed up a lifeless Hoffenheim defence to make it 3-0 by half-time.

Erhan Masovic and Moritz Broschinski added two more for Bochum after the break, with Christoph Baumgartner and Munas Dabbur grabbing consolation goals for the visitors. Bochum's win

plunged neighbors Schalke further into the mire, as they battled to a second successive goalless draw away to Borussia Moenchengladbach in Saturday's late game. Despite a spirited attacking display, Thomas Reis' side failed to take their chances and remain rooted to the bottom of the table. — AFP

Stan lifts Switzerland to Davis Cup Finals group stage

PARIS: Stan Wawrinka took Switzerland to the Davis Cup Finals group stage on Saturday, winning a rollercoaster deciding clash against Germany, just weeks shy of his 38th birthday. Three-time Grand Slam title winner Wawrinka, who helped the Swiss to Trier. Wawrinka, who turns 38 next month, had lost his singles opener on Friday in straight sets to Alexander Zverev.

Former world number three Wawrinka, now down at 135 after a long spell rebuilding his career following two foot surgeries, was playing in the tournament for the first time in eight years having made his debut in 2004. By contrast Altmair, 13 years younger, was making his Davis Cup debut in Trier. Wawrinka, who turns 38 next month, had lost his singles opener on Friday in straight sets to Alexander Zverev.

He was on the losing side again earlier Saturday when he and Dominic Stricker were beaten in the doubles 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-4 by Tim Puetz and Andreas Mies. However, Marc-Andrea Huesler then stunned world number 14 Zverev 6-2, 7-6 (7/3) to bring Switzerland level at 2-2, setting the stage for

Wawrinka's moment in the spotlight. "I'm happy that I won one point and the last one was the most important," said Wawrinka. "We have a great team. They've been building this team for the last few years. I was happy to come back if they needed me."

The United States, who have won the 123-year-old tournament on a record 32 occasions, also booked their place in September's group stage by seeing off Uzbekistan in Tashkent. Experienced doubles pair Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram cantered to a 6-2, 6-4 win over Sanjar Fayziev and Sergey Fomini in just 52 minutes. "I was so excited to see Raj and Austin play today," said US captain David Nankin whose team were 2-0 up overnight.

'Freight trains'

"They came out really sharp and got the early break in the first set. After that it was like two freight trains, there was no stopping them." Serbia shrugged off the absence of Novak Djokovic to comfortably defeat a Norway team missing world number four Casper Ruud. Ahead 2-0 after Friday's opening singles in Oslo, Nikola Cacic and Filip Krajinovic saw off Viktor Durasovic and Herman Hoeyeraal 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 for the key point. France, the 10-time champions, made the next round with a win over Hungary. Ugo Humbert, making his tournament debut this weekend, sealed the tie with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Fabian Marozsan in Tatabanya in the deciding singles.



Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka

France were given a scare when Hungary surprisingly claimed the doubles rubber as Marozsan and Mate Valkusz defeated Nicolas Mahut and Arthur Rinderknech 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) before Adrian Mannarino levelled at 2-2 with a straight sets win over Marton Fucsovics. "I am so proud of this team," said Humbert. Sweden also made it through to the September group stage with a 3-1 win over Bosnia. The Swedes led 2-0 overnight in Stockholm before Bosnia cut the deficit when Mirza Basic and Tomislav Brkic downed Andre Goransson and Elias Ymer in straight sets. —AFP

Lennon draws on mental battles to help others

LONDON: Aaron Lennon featured in two England World Cup finals squads and played alongside Luka Modric and Gareth Bale at Tottenham Hotspur but now retired his goal is to help footballers suffering from mental health issues. The 35-year-old former winger told The Times on Saturday "this is a big passion for me" and a personal one too after he was detained in April 2017 by police over fears for his welfare and was hospitalized.

Lennon was at Everton at the time and staying with his brother but was unnerved when a mental health worker visited the house. "I said, 'I'm just going to the shop.' Even my brother was wary. 'No, I'm fine, don't worry.' I played it cool. I put on a mask for a long period of time," said Lennon, who retired from football in November last year. "I ended up trying to make my way back to my apartment but couldn't grasp which way to go. "There were reports I was on the motorway in bare feet. I wasn't. I was in my trainers. I panicked."

Lennon, who was a member of the England side that lost to Portugal in the 2006 World Cup quarter-final on penalties, said he was at his lowest ebb. "The next day I was in the Priory (a specialist hospital for mental health issues). "I was scared, suicidal. I was hearing voices. "Psychosis, I'd fully gone, fully suicidal, lowest you could be, didn't want to be here. "I remember being in the room, I just really wanted it to end. "Mad times."

'You're hated'

Lennon - who regrets leaving in 2005 his beloved Leeds United for whom he made his professional debut in the Premier League aged just 16 (2003) - said he reached his nadir due to a mixture of footballing and personal problems. "I had other stuff going on, stuff in my family, I was in and out of bad relationships," he said. "I should have left Tottenham earlier. I wasn't in a great place. That depression was creeping in. "I was sleep deprived. Some days (I'd get) no sleep."

"My head would be racing. That was a spiral. My mind was not functioning properly, really badly out of control." Lennon credits then Burnley manager Sean Dyche for being especially sensitive to his travails when he moved there in January 2018, a few months after his being hospitalized. "Sean Dyche was great for me," he said. "Amazing man-manager. There were still times when I was having bad days when I worked at Burnley, many low days, and he gave me that freedom."

"Sean really understood. He'd call me in to the office and actually asked me how I was." Lennon - who spent 10 years at Spurs and credits Modric, Bale and "that great man-manager" Harry Redknapp as being his inspirations - says he has taken the first tentative steps in funneling his experience into helping professional footballers. — AFP

Atletico unable to tighten their grip on fourth place

MADRID: Atletico Madrid were unable to tighten their grip on fourth place in La Liga as they suffered a 1-1 draw with lowly Getafe on Saturday. Angel Correa sent Atletico ahead in the derby clash but Enes Unal clinically converted a penalty to level for the relegation-battling visitors. Saul, who was Atletico's star last weekend off the bench, scoring the winner against Osasuna, became the villain at the Metropolitan.

The Spanish midfielder handled Borja Mayoral's header in the box to concede the penalty a few minutes after coming on. "We went in front making a great effort, we tried in every way, we played the game we wanted to play," Atletico coach Diego Simeone told DAZN. "Circumstances are not predictable, we didn't get the second goal and what appears in football appeared a penalty in a play which was not dangerous. "But we have to keep improving."

Simeone's side dominated the first half but failed to create many clear chances. However they moved ahead on the hour mark when Correa fired home after Thomas Lemar's shot was saved. The goal was initially flagged offside but was awarded after checking on VAR, by which time Correa had been



MADRID: Getafe's Portuguese defender Domingos Duarte kicks the ball during the Spanish league football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Getafe on February 4, 2023. — AFP

substituted, celebrating his strike already wearing a big coat on the sidelines. "The play for the goal was a bit weird," Correa told DAZN. "They thought it was offside, there were doubts about it, then Cholo made the change and in the end it was a goal, it was a bit strange."

Correa also said he thought his team deserved a

penalty when Getafe's Djene Dakonam appeared to drag down Alvaro Morata in the area in the first half. "I think it was a clear penalty on Alvaro and a second yellow card for the defender," added Correa. "But it's always the same for us. We don't want them to gift us anything, just be fair, because it was a clear penalty." —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|----------------|----------|
| Sabah Hospital | 24812000 | | |
| Amiri Hospital | 22450005 | | |
| Maternity Hospital | 24843100 | Kaizen center | 25716707 |
| Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital | 25312700 | Rawda | 22517733 |
| Chest Hospital | 24849400 | Adaliya | 22517144 |
| Farwaniya Hospital | 24892010 | Khalidiya | 24848075 |
| Adan Hospital | 23940620 | Kaifan | 24849807 |
| Ibn Sina Hospital | 24840300 | Shamiya | 24848913 |
| Al-Razi Hospital | 24846000 | Shuwaikh | 24814507 |
| Physiotherapy Hospital | 24874330/9 | Abdullah Salem | 22549134 |
| | | Nuzha | 22526804 |

Clinics

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

Change of Name

I, Abbas S/o Kutubuddin Gabu Holder of Indian Passport No. L1163061, here by declare that I have changed my name from Abbas to ABBAS GABU as per my Government Documents (Aadhar Card). So now I would be known & recognized by my new name only. ABBAS GABU, Address: 158, Chandni Chowk Ratlam (M.P.) (C #2848) 6-02-2023

I, Husain holder of passport No. V9368379 do hereby change my name to Husain (as given name) Company (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Husain Company and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C#2847) - 3-02-2023

Automated enquiry about the Civild card is 1889988

Mallorca dent Real's title hopes

Real Mallorca beat Madrid 1-0; Asensio misses penalty

PALMA: Real Madrid's hopes of retaining the La Liga title were dented Sunday as the champions lost 1-0 at Real Mallorca, to remain five points behind leaders Barcelona. The Catalans host Sevilla later on and can open up an eight point lead after a frustrated Madrid fell short against Javier Aguirre's side, with Marco Asensio missing a penalty against his former club.

Nacho's 13th minute looping header into his own net separated the teams in a hard-fought clash, frequently slowed by various fouls from the hosts. Amid a constant battle between winger Vinicius Junior and Mallorca's players and supporters, the islanders held off Los Blancos to record an impressive victory. "It was difficult because of the kick-off time, the opponent, it all gets complicated when they go in front," Nacho told Movistar. "They were lucky with the goal, and we also missed a penalty."

Vinicius suffered 10 fouls and Mallorca committed 29 in total. "I think there's an atmosphere developing around Vinicius that doesn't favour anybody, not the player, not football, not the fans, who in the end get involved with the kid," added Nacho. "Between us all we have to enjoy football which is a beautiful sport — we have to leave controversies and nonsense to one side." Real Madrid were without goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, hurt during the warm-up, along with the injured Karim Benzema, Eder Militao and Ferland Mendy, among other absentees.

Rodrygo started up front in place of Benzema, while Dani Ceballos and Fede Valverde were given starts in midfield ahead of veterans Toni Kroos and Luka Modric. The match was heated from the start, largely due to historic bad blood between

Vinicius and Mallorca. Mallorca captain Antonio Raimo has criticized the Brazilian winger on multiple occasions for lacking respect towards opponents and said he wouldn't hold him up as an example to his son. Home fans at the Visit Mallorca Stadium whistled Vinicius when he was on the ball and chanted Raimo's name.

Ancelotti was also frustrated his team were playing in the early afternoon after having faced Valencia on Thursday night and Madrid started sluggishly. Mallorca took an early lead when

Nacho's attempted header sent Dani Rodriguez's in-swinging cross from the left looping over Courtois's stand-in Andriy Lunin and dipping just under the crossbar. Nacho was under pressure from Mallorca target man Vedat Muriqi, who initially appeared to have scored the goal. "It's been six games since I scored but I don't care that it's not mine, if we win, I don't care," said Muriqi.

The hosts shackled Vinicius well in the first half and reduced Madrid to pot-shots from distance, Antonio Rudiger and Valverde firing wildly off-target. Vinicius was booked for stepping on Pablo Maffeo's foot, leaving the Brazilian incredulous after various fouls against him had not been punished with a card. Ceballos protested vehemently to the officials as the teams went in at the break and was also booked, as temperatures rose in the Mallorcan sun.

shirt while looking at the home fans to agitate them further. Early in the second half Raimo responded by offering Vinicius the Mallorca badge on his shirt to kiss. Madrid had a golden chance to level when Mallorca goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic brought down Vinicius, but the Serbian denied Asensio from the spot.

The Real Madrid forward tried to find the bottom right corner but Rajkovic flung himself full-length to tip away his penalty. David Alaba returned from injury off the bench and his cross was volleyed narrowly over by Mariano Diaz, on a rare outing for the Dominican Republic striker, as Madrid's desperation grew. Rudiger sent a dipping header wide late in stoppage time as Madrid's last chance slipped away. Madrid will have to put defeat behind them quickly as they travel to Morocco midweek to take part in the Club World Cup. — AFP



Heated
Vinicius pulled at the Madrid badge on his

PALMA: Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior reacts during the Spanish League football match between RCD Mallorca and Real Madrid on February 5, 2023. — AFP



Fatat Club win Futsal League

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Fatat Club won the URC Women Futsal League for the second consecutive time - beating



KUWAIT: Fatat Club players pose with the trophy after winning the URC Women's Futsal League. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Tadhamon 4-3 in the final match on Saturday at Kuwait Club hall. Kuwait secured the third place after beating Fatyat Al-Oyoun 4-3. The final match was attended by Deputy Director General of Public Authority for Sport Bashar Abdallah, Kuwait Olympic Committee Board Member Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Football Association Deputy Chairman Ahmad Uqlah, KFA member Fatima Hayat, Tadhamon Club Chairman Mubarak Al-Nazal, Chairwoman of Fatat Club Fadeela Al-Shuwailan and

other dignitaries.

Fatat Club player Mariam Noor was declared the best local player for the 2022-2023 season while Natalya Carolina was the best professional player. Aynaa Taiseer won the best foreign player while Dana Al-Enezi took the best promising player. Top URC scorer went to Isabel Desouza; Nour Al-Mansour (best administrator); Best coach went to Fatat Club coach Mohammad Al-Kandary and the Fair Play Prize went to Fatayat Al-Olyoun.

PAS Deputy Director Bashar Adballah said the authority is keen on supporting all athletes in various sports, including women. Bashar Abdallah said PAS will promote the successful experience of Women Futsal. Kuwait Football Association member Fatima Hayat was happy with the URC league's technical level, adding that Futsal Cup tournament will start next week. "We are seeking more support from PAS for women competitions in comprehensive clubs such as Tadhamon, Kuwait, Qurain and Sahel," Hayat said.

Al Ahly edge Sounders 1-0

TANGIERS: Afsha scored in the 88th minute as Egyptians Al Ahly edged Seattle Sounders 1-0 on Saturday to book a Club World Cup semi-final with Real Madrid. Second-half replacement Afsha, a 20-time Egypt international, saw his late volley deflected to wrong foot Sounders goalkeeper Stefan Frei, which took Al Ahly to Wednesday's last-four fixture in Rabat.

Earlier, teenager Musab Al Juwayr scored the crucial spot kick as Al Hilal beat CAF Champions League winners Wydad Casablanca 5-3 on penalties (1-1 after extra time) to set-up a semi-final with Brazilians Flamengo. Al Juwayr, 19, converted after Yahya Attiat-Allah's miss for the Moroccans, playing 350km down the coast from their home city.

Defender Ayoub El Amloud had opened the scoring for the outfit on home soil before team-mate Yahya Jabrane was sent off in stoppage time at the end of the match. Midfielder Mohamed Kanno equalised for the Saudis and sent the game into

extra-time after 94 minutes. Kanno, however, was then red-carded four minutes into the additional half an hour. Al Juwayr secured his side's place in Tuesday's semi-final in Tangier with an effort from the spot on just his 21st senior appearance.

Al Hilal book semis

In another development, teenager Musab Al Juwayr scored the crucial spot kick as Al Hilal beat CAF Champions League winners Wydad Casablanca 5-3 on penalties (1-1 after extra time) to set-up a Club World Cup semi-final with Flamengo. Al Juwayr, 19, converted after Yahya Attiat-Allah's miss for the Moroccans, playing 350km down the coast from their home city.

Defender Ayoub El Amloud had opened the scoring for the outfit on home soil before team-mate Yahya Jabrane was shown a second yellow card for unsportsmanlike behavior on the 91st minute. Midfielder Mohamed Kanno equalized for the Saudis, invited to the tournament, and sent the game into extra time after 94 minutes. Kanno then followed El Amloud off the field four minutes into the additional half an hour for the same reason. Al Juwayr secured his side's place in Tuesday's last four tie in Tangier with an effort from the spot on just his 21st senior appearance. — AFP

