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PM calls for good governance

Premier urges govts to face challenges, hails Kuwait's satellite launch

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait working hand in hand to integrate economic visions



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Saudi Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih on Feb 13, 2023. Saudi Arabia is working hand in hand with Kuwait to integrate the kingdom's 'Vision 2030' with Kuwait's 'Vision 2035' under the wise leadership of both countries, Falih told the 'Invest in Saudi Arabia Forum' held in Kuwait. — KUNA (See Page 8)

KUWAIT: To address challenges, manage crises and diversify economies, the world needs to support epistemic modes of governance, said HH the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah on Monday. In his speech to the World Government Summit held in Dubai, HH Sheikh Ahmad affirmed that the world is going through a delicate period that requires exceptional management of any given situation, whether it is improving economies or handling natural and manmade crises.

He noted that his country has taken confident steps toward realizing Kuwait's 2035 vision for development to transform it into a financial and commercial regional hub attracting global investments. HH the Prime Minister also affirmed that Kuwait has taken strides in the direction of digitizing government transactions and developing work, economic, environmental and social environments. He affirmed that the Kuwait plan is in line with the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

HH the Prime Minister remarked on the slogan of the current summit - Shaping Future Governments - saying it reflected a clear innovative vision for the world set by host country UAE. He commended the Emirati government on its high-level organization of this prestigious global event. The Kuwaiti premier said the current summit is held during a critical time in the world, extending during his speech condolences to the governments and people of both Turkey and Syria, which were affected by a devastating



DUBAI: UAE President Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan receives HH the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah on Feb 13, 2023 on the sidelines of World Government Summit. — KUNA

earthquake last Monday.

Returning to the issue of shaping future governments, HH the Prime Minister pointed out that knowledge revolution and digital transformation required from governments to step up their game and meet the ongoing challenges, whether financial, educational, etc. Failing to solve problems whether pertaining to the environment or international conflicts will lead to catastrophic consequences for the whole world, he added.

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News in brief

Saudi woman to head to space

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will send its first ever woman astronaut on a space mission later this year, state media has reported. Rayyana Barnawi will join fellow Saudi male astronaut Ali Al-Qarni on a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) "during the second quarter of 2023", the official Saudi Press Agency said on Sunday. The astronauts "will join the crew of the AX-2 space mission" and the space flight will "launch from the US", the agency said. — AFP

Woman's remains found in bag

PARIS: Paris city workers discovered the dismembered lower torso of a woman in a bag in a popular park in the northeast of the French capital on Monday, security sources said. The gruesome discovery was made in a wooded area of the Buttes-Chaumont park, a popular spot for families and joggers in the 19th district of Paris, leading police to open a murder inquiry. A source close to the case said the body part appeared to be the pelvic area of a woman. — AFP

Cafe offers \$140 cup of coffee

MELBOURNE: At US\$140 a pop, one cafe in Melbourne, Australia is serving up no ordinary cup of joe. Melbourne has long been famed for its coffee culture, with Italian and Greek migrants infusing the city with all things bean and cup since the 1940s. And for those looking for a next-level experience, one cafe is selling a cup at 50 times the price of a regular flat white or espresso. The coffee - hailed as one of the world's finest - is grown in Panama's Chiriqui region. — AFP (See Page 11)

Complimentary streaming offers from Zain, Disney+

KUWAIT: Zain, Kuwait's leading digital service provider, has teamed up with Disney+, the streaming service from The Walt Disney Company, to provide its customers with at least six months of streaming. The collaboration sees Zain become the first telecom operator in the MENA region to collaborate with the leading streaming platform.

The official announcement took place at an exclusive event at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) at the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh. It was attended by CCO of Zain Kuwait Meshal

Mohammed and Director of Disney+ MENA Tamim Fares, as well as Zain and Disney+ teams.

Customers on select plans of Zain's all-new home broadband MAX offerings can enjoy a complimentary Disney+ subscription for as long as the plan remains active, whilst existing customers on select home broadband and post-paid voice plans will be offered complimentary six-months access from Zain.

Eligible customers who redeem the offer will have access to thousands of films, series and exclusive Originals from Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and National Geographic, plus the latest movie blockbusters, smash hit TV series, and cult classics from the general entertainment world of Star. Additionally, the first 15,000 customers who redeem the offer will also receive a one-time discount code to receive 20 percent off on their purchases from The Disney Store by Alshaya in Kuwait. (See Page 3)



KUWAIT: CCO of Zain Kuwait Meshal Mohammed with Director of Disney+ MENA Tamim Fares.

Rescue efforts slow as quake toll tops 35,000

KAHRAMANMARAS, Turkey: Rescue teams began to wind down the search for survivors on Monday, a week after an earthquake devastated parts of Turkey and Syria leaving more than 35,000 dead and millions

in dire need of aid. While the focus switched to helping desperate survivors who lack food and shelter, stories continue to emerge of people found alive in the rubble seven days after the 7.8-magnitude tremor.

On Monday, a 12-year-old boy named Kaan was pulled from the debris in southern Hatay, 182 hours after the fifth-deadliest earthquake of the 21st century, Turkish media reported. However, experts warn hopes of finding people alive are dimming. The confirmed death toll stands at 35,224 as officials and medics said 31,643 people had died in Turkey and at least 3,581 in

Syria. The United Nations said it expects the toll to rise far higher.

Survivors face a lack water and poor sanitation. In southern Adiyaman an outbreak of scabies - a skin disease known to spread in crowded areas - is affecting adults, while children are suffering from diarrhea, local media reported. Hatice Goz, a volunteer psychologist in Turkey's Hatay province, said she has been fielding "a barrage of calls" from frantic parents looking for missing children.

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US, China trade blame as UFO mystery deepens

WASHINGTON: Questions about three unidentified flying objects downed by US air force jets over North America in three days intensified Monday, while Beijing and Washington traded accusations over using high-tech balloons to spy on each other. Puzzlement, fear and in some political quarters growing anger reigned as demands mounted for President Joe Biden's administration to explain not just the origin of the objects but their purpose, potential threat, and number.

It's not clear whether the three latest unidentified flying objects - shot down Friday over Alaska, Saturday over Canada, Sunday over Michigan's Lake Huron - have any connection to a much bigger white balloon that was shot down over the Atlantic on Feb 4. The US military, which tracked that balloon as it crossed much of the country, says it was a sophisticated, high-altitude Chinese spying device - one of a fleet of such craft allegedly floating around the globe. Recovery teams are scouring the seabed to pull up the debris for analysis.

China insists that the balloon, which was big enough to be visible to ordinary Americans from the ground, was merely blown off course while collecting weather data. Chinese authorities also admitted that a balloon spotted over Latin

America was one of theirs - in this case a civilian device for flight tests. On Monday, Beijing sought to turn the tables by accusing Washington of deploying more than 10 balloons into Chinese airspace over the last year.

"It's not uncommon as well for the United States to illegally enter the airspace of other countries," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said during a briefing. The alleged flights were made "without any approval from Chinese authorities". At the White House, National Security Council spokeswoman Adrienne Watson quickly called China's allegations "false" and said that China's high-altitude spying program has violated airspace of "40 countries across five continents".

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Mystery sky objects

Shot down over North America in the past 9 days



Sources: AFP/US media AFP



Local



KUWAIT: Attendees pose with beautiful handmade pottery at the Palestinian Heritage Center exhibition on Monday, February 13, 2023. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Officials tour the exhibit and browse a selection of the traditional products displayed.

Palestinian Cultural Week kicks off with exhibition showcasing heritage

Officials hail support of Kuwait's government and people

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar inaugurated on Monday an exhibition of the Palestinian Heritage Center in the presence of Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub at the Women's Cultural and Social Society. The exhibition is part of the Palestinian Cultural Week in Kuwait, which includes various activities and events including art exhibitions, musical nights and seminars to introduce the public to Palestinian culture.

The exhibition was attended by many ambassadors and senior officials. Tahboub told Kuwait Times the exhibition coincides with Kuwait's National and Liberation Day celebrations. "These kinds of events are very important to the Palestinian cause, especially since culture is one of the most important weapons in order to promote the Palestinian cause, as the Zionist entity is trying to steal anything that has to do with culture. We are trying to protect our culture through these exhibitions worldwide," he said.

President of the Jordan Office of the Palestinian Heritage Center Maryam Jabr told Kuwait Times this exhibition has been held twice a year for the last 57 years in Kuwait, and aims to preserve Palestinian heritage, especially since heritage is an essential part of the Palestinian identity. "Every time we hold this exhibition in Kuwait, we receive a large number of visitors of all nationalities and great support from the Kuwaiti community and the government. We are pleased and thankful to them. I would like to congratulate Kuwait on its National and Liberation Day," she said.

"We are a center based in Jordan, but we hold activities in Kuwait, too. We are blessed that the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters kicked off the Palestinian Cultural Week with our exhibition," said Faten Abu-Ghazaleh, Volunteer at the Palestinian Culture Center. "Also, we

are pleased with the visit of Palestinian photographer Tarek Al-Bakri, who tells stories about Palestinian homes, who came from Jerusalem. There are four other events other than this activity," she added. The exhibit will be held from Feb 13-16.

Palestinian embroidery

Palestinian embroidery using needle and silk thread is a manifestation of the Palestinian identity as it has evolved over the ages. An age-old art, all Palestinian women, young and old, spend hours embroidering their trousseaus, dresses, shawls and cushions. Using geometric shapes at first, and then evolving to depicting images from nature surrounding them, the dresses are famous for their flowery designs and bold natural colors of indigo and red. Symbols of the ubiquitous cypress trees surrounding the orange groves, roses, jasmine and the famous olive tree are typical motifs in these dresses.

The exhibition includes a beautiful collection of textile-based traditional handmade cross-stitch pieces, as well as Hebron pottery, posters and books about Palestine in both English and Arabic. It aspires to reaffirm the Palestinian national identity by its handicrafts and support education and families.

Palestinian Culture Center

The Palestinian Culture Center is a non-profit organization established in Jordan in 1993 and which holds many exhibitions in Kuwait. It aims to preserve the rich heritage and culture of Palestine, help empower women and their families in refugee camps become economically independent, and sustain needy Palestinians in their homeland and in the diaspora.

The Palestinian Culture Center has worked to increase the salaries of the 550 or so women who do the embroidery work as well as pay for their transportation from the camps. It motivates the ladies by granting bonuses for excellent quality work. It also provides support to Palestinians in the homeland by providing financial aid to



needy families, healthcare and university scholarships.

Some of the center's accomplishments included support of some of the vital institutions such as Al-Maqased Hospital in Jerusalem, which was established in 1968 with substantial financial support from

Kuwait. The center is also working on providing the necessary financing of the water desalination project in Gaza for producing potable water and assisting Gaza hospitals that were bombed by the Zionist entity, such as Al-Shifa Hospital, in producing and storing oxygen for medical purposes.

Iran envoy mourns quake victims, hails ties with Kuwait

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran mourned the victims of the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria during a National Day reception on Sunday commemorating the 44th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran at Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Hall in Samiya. "Iran greatly mourns the earthquake disasters that took place recently in Turkey, Syria and Iran. In honor of these victims, we will stand for a moment in silence for their kind souls," Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait Mohammed Irani said in his opening remarks.

"Iran has one of the oldest human civilizations in history and a sophisticated system of government. The Iranian people and regime during the past four decades, despite the obstacles created by enemies, have achieved many scientific, technical and economic achievements in the field of self-sufficiency in agriculture, industrial products, medicine, nanotechnology, peaceful nuclear energy and much more," he said.

Irani revealed women had a significant influence on the Islamic Revolution, as their presence was and still is very effective in various political, social, scientific, sports and

artistic fields. "Today, 55 percent of women are in university, 40 percent of them are doctors and 33 percent are faculty members in Iranian universities, as well as working in the parliament, municipal councils and embassies abroad," he added. In the field of sports, the ambassador mentioned Iranian women have won thousands of national and international medals and won many prizes in international art and film festivals, saying Iranian policies are based on the principles and values of its revolution and that it calls for peace, justice and respect.

Irani affirmed that his country believes in cooperating at the international level, noting that signing the nuclear agreement with the group of world powers (P5+1) in 2015 is considered one of the most important examples of Iran's positive interaction with the international community, adding Iran still affirms the implementation of this agreement in full.

The ambassador praised friendly relations with Kuwait, stating the two countries' leaders stressed strengthening these relations collaboratively on consular and legal issues. "There is cooperation with the coastguard and drugs control between both countries, and they have achieved good progress. In addition, more than 80,000 Kuwaitis visited Iran via direct flights in 2022," he pointed out.

"I take this opportunity to congratulate Kuwait on the occasion of its National and Liberation Days, which coincides with the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and congratulate the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, government and people of Kuwait, as well as Iranian citizens residing in Kuwait. At the same time, we



KUWAIT: (From left) Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammed Irani, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Jawhar Hayat and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Zabdullah Zabidov cut the ceremonial cake during celebrations marking Iran's National Day. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

honor the earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria and express our solidarity and sympathy to the victims' families, asking the Almighty to grant them patience and solace," Irani concluded.

using medical means.

Consultant of General Surgery Dr Saud Al-Subaie said 22 cases were discussed and treated, with and without surgical intervention, using advanced modern equipment. Rashid and Subaie said the Amiri Hospital is aiming at developing a medical team and national competencies through such workshops. Both thanked workshop organizers, head of surgery department, allied departments and Amiri Hospital administration as well as health ministry for facilitating the workshop's success.

Cultural exchange and respect of others

In my view

By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

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The "Open Sesame" program is an educational program by the GCC Joint Program Production Institution (GCC JPII). The first series was produced in 1979, and the second in 1982. The show was a great success, and when the late Mohammad Al-Sanousi was in charge of this institution, he presented the program's episodes free of charge to Egyptian television for our brothers in Egypt to benefit from them.

But the program was not shown on Egypt TV and was put away. Later Sanousi met the TV official there and asked her why the program was not shown? Sanousi said he was astonished when he heard her answer: "Do you want the Egyptian public to say that you produce better series than us?"

This story reminds me of an English official during the 1980s, who was still thinking that he is living in Great Britain. So he went to Tokyo to improve the balance of trade. This official returned from Tokyo loaded with several Japanese demands that he was forced to meet, including broadcasting sumo wrestling weekly on British TV!

So, the message of Sanousi is clear to all Gulf countries, as many of our brothers in Egypt do not know about the Gulf's civilization and development; rather maybe their media, and their films in particular, reflect negative images about us. We understand the column by Al-Jumhuriya Newspaper Editor-in-Chief Abdelrazzaq Tawfiq, in which he divulged the grudge that is in his heart against Gulf countries and accused them with the usual framed charges since Nasser's reign.

There is no doubt that this journalist does not represent the good-hearted brotherly people of Egypt, as the first who answered him were Egyptian readers and journalists. Yet the issue Sanousi presented and was revealed to us by Tawfiq remains valid in front of the Gulf media. The leadership of the Gulf media must listen to the message of Sanousi and read the column of Tawfiq to have a firm stand against attempts of some media figures to deprive their people from being open towards others under any pretext.

I remember here what Egypt TV did during an interview by renowned media personality Jassem Al-Shihab with Egyptian composer Riyad Al-Sunbati during the 1960s, when Egyptian TV edited the interview, removing the Kuwaiti interviewer and adding an Egyptian one without regard to all media values.

The Gulf Cooperation Council is facing tendentious attacks from all directions, which makes it imperative for media officials to carry out their duties in order to reflect the real image about the Gulf based on the reciprocity rule. It is time to know where we stand and understand the Japanese lesson.

Hospital workshop helps patients with obesity

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Amiri Hospital held a four-day workshop on advanced constructive obesity sur-

geries. The workshop was in coordination with the specialized obesity clinic and medical and allied departments, such as: anesthesia, internal medicine, endocrinology, obesity, respiratory, psychology, nutrition, physiotherapy, pharmacy and others, who selected and prepared patients for the workshop.

Consultant General and Bariatric Surgeon Dr Asmaa Al-Rashid said the first day started with meeting of the various specialties to discuss the patients' cases and select the suitable treatment plans, then doctors went on rounds to discuss

treatment plans with the patients. The team began performing surgeries on the second day, Rashid said, and continued until the fourth day. The workshop also included lectures by professor Mathew Crowe and Dr Georgio Baretta. The workshop program included live CC for doctors to see and discuss procedures for medical education.

She said the workshop was highly successful in having treatment plans for patients, as well as carrying out the necessary surgeries. She added that obesity is the modern era's disease which must be fought by raising awareness and

Local

Zain teams up with Disney+ to provide complimentary streaming

Zain first telecom operator in MENA to collaborate with platform



KUWAIT: Meshal Mohammed, CCO of Zain Kuwait, and Tamim Fares, Director of Disney+ MENA, pose with Zain and Disney+ teams.

KUWAIT: Zain, Kuwait's leading digital service provider, has teamed up with Disney+, the streaming service from The Walt Disney Company, to provide its customers with at least six months of streaming. The collaboration sees Zain become the first telecom operator in the MENA region to collaborate with the leading streaming platform. The official announcement took place at an exclusive event at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) in the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh. It was attended by Meshal Mohammed, CCO of Zain Kuwait, Tamim Fares, Director of Disney+ MENA, as well as Zain and Disney+ teams.

Customers on select plans of Zain's all-new home broadband MAX offerings can enjoy a complimentary Disney+ subscription for as long as the plan remains active, whilst existing customers on select home broadband and post-paid voice plans will be offered complimentary six months access from Zain. Eligible customers who redeem the offer will have access to thousands of films, series and exclusive Originals from Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and National Geographic, plus the latest movie blockbusters, smash hit TV series, and cult classics from the general entertainment world of Star. Additionally, the first 15,000 customers

who redeem the offer will also receive a one-time discount code to receive 20 percent off of their purchases from The Disney Store by Alshaya in Kuwait (terms and conditions apply). The region's first-ever standalone Disney Store opened in November 2022 at the Avenues Mall.

With Disney+, Zain customers can now enjoy the greatest stories of all time, including blockbuster releases like Disney's "Encanto", 20th Century Studios' "Avatar", and Marvel Studios' "Black Panther"; Originals like "Save our Squad with David Beckham"; and beloved classics from the Disney vault, like "Aladdin" and "The Lion King". Plus, with every episode ever of binge-able series like "The Walking Dead", "Grey's Anatomy", and "The Kardashians", there's something for everyone in the whole family. Disney+ is available on a wide range of devices, including most smartphones, smart TVs, and desktop/web applications. Users will have access to high-quality viewing, up to four concurrent streams, unlimited downloads on up to 10 devices, and the ability to set up seven different profiles.

The streaming platform also offers extensive and easy-to-use parental control features to ensure that Disney+ remains a suitable viewing



CCO of Zain Kuwait Meshal Mohammed with Director of Disney+ MENA Tamim Fares.

experience for everyone in the family. This includes the ability to set access limits on mature content and create PIN-protected profiles, in addition to the already existing Kids Profiles, giving parents peace of mind. This collaboration is the latest step in Zain's strategy to provide best-in-class service and content to its customers across Kuwait. Working with regional and global content providers enables Zain to offer its customers access to the largest library of titles to choose

from and the ability to enjoy beloved content anywhere, anytime, on Kuwait's fastest and most powerful 5G network. Zain continues to stay ahead of the digital curve, offering the latest innovative technologies and services to customers. Representing Kuwait's biggest family of subscribers, the company is always committed to meeting customer expectations and serving their aspirations to provide the best and most unique digital lifestyle experiences.

Bugammaz: Joint efforts needed for managing waste

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: A two-day waste management forum opened on Monday with the aim to achieve Kuwait's 2035 vision, which necessitates finding alternatives to waste, recycling and energy transition. Under the auspices of Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Amani Bugammaz, the Gulf Waste Management and Recycling Forum (Gulf -WMFR) on green hydrogen and energy transition is held under the slogan "Sustainable investment for a green Middle East".

The conference also seeks to set Kuwait on track for 2035 by improving and providing new solutions for waste management and recycling, improving the techniques of energy transition for sustainability, keeping up with the latest strategies and highlighting digital transformation in Kuwait and other GCC countries.

During the conference, Bugammaz said in order to achieve good cooperation among the parties in GCC countries, all partners must exchange knowledge and practical experiences and activate strategies and practical plans to



KUWAIT: Dr Amani Bugammaz, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (left), and Samira Al-Kandari, General Manager at the Environment Public Authority speak at the event. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

avoid climate challenges, as this is one of the conference's main goals. This can be achieved through managing sustainability projects and applying advanced techniques and supporting alternatives to waste, recycling and energy transition for a green Middle East.

Bugammaz said environment pollution caused by industrial waste constitutes a global crisis, because it is a main source of spreading noxious gases such as nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide. This necessitates the responsible parties to monitor pollution rates and put forward solutions, such as encouraging recycling and activating strict regulations on industries and other entities to reduce the spread of toxic emissions.

The techniques of managing waste contributed to providing sustainability in many



countries and producing many transformative industries such as paper, plastic, glass, wood, and other materials, which helped in reducing the usage of energy sources such as oil and other nonrenewable sources. Bugammaz also mentioned that this will provide new job opportunities and reduce health issues.

General Manager of the Environment Public Authority Samira Al-Kandari said that it is necessary to find alternatives to manage waste and raise awareness among the public about the environment. The aim of this conference is to confirm the necessity of encouraging recycling. She said Kuwait, besides other GCC countries, is activating its strategies in the first quarter of this year to protect the planet and realize its 2035 vision.

KFH 'keeping it green' at hackathon

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the three-day Climate Change Hackathon organized by Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) to support the efforts towards sustainability and environment preservation. KFH took part in this event under its "Keep it Green" campaign which aims to support social initiatives related to sustainability and environment. In his speech during the hackathon, KFH Executive Manager for Governance and Sustainability Mohammad Al-Arbeed, expressed his appreciation for representing the bank in this event to discuss global challenges of climate change and tackle key topics of environmental implications and sustainability. He added that KFH is making great sustainability efforts and is moving forward with its commitment to preserving the environment through strategic partnerships, initiatives and adopting eco-friendly business solutions.

Arbeed said that sustainability has been, since establishment, an essential element of KFH's core strategy and part of its vision and mission, as well as the core of the Shari'ah-compliant financing principles. He pointed out that Islamic finance industry is key element in sustainability as sustainable finance is prioritizing businesses that support the environment, while considering inclusion, good governance and ethical business standards. He added that environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations have dominated investment decisions in recent years, stressing KFH's keenness to expand its investments in green sukuk and green finance by providing financial advantages to projects and initiatives that take into account environmental aspects and efforts to reduce carbon footprint. Arbeed also touched on KFH's recent sustainability and environmental achievements, saying that the bank issued the sustainability report which included (ESG) pillars as part of the comprehensive sustainability strategy.

KFH had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for establishing stronger alignments with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across KFH. The bank has also launched "Keep it Green" campaign, under which it executes several sustainability initiatives. He also mentioned that KFH is the first bank in Kuwait to receive Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS certificate - Gold level for its environment-friendly auto showroom "KFH Auto". It is worth noting that KFH offers banking cards which are made of recycled plastic materials according to the highest environment sustainability standards. In terms of social considerations, the bank also channels its policies on empowering women, supporting youth, providing unique services to clients with special needs and focusing on talent development. Concluding his speech, Arbeed hoped that these events would achieve their goals by launching several initiatives and adopting fruitful environmental solutions.



Mohammad Al-Arbeed

Kuwait charities on the ground in Syria, Turkey

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti charities continued their relief work a week after the devastating earthquake that killed thousands of people and destroyed buildings and facilities in Syria and Turkey. The Executive Director of Namaa Charity, Saad Al-Otaibi said in a telephone call with KUNA Monday from the Turkish region of Antioch, that Namaa is has been providing aid since day one, with mobile clinics having received more than 4,000 patients so far.

The group was also able to provide 56 cartons of medicines to help medics stationed there. Otaibi added that the bakeries of Namaa Charity distribute on a daily basis more than 7,500 bread bundles, 1,500 meals, 2,500 food baskets, in addition to distributing basic needs, including 37 tents to shelter the displaced, 700 blankets, 700 mattresses and 8,000 water bottles. Otaibi noted that there is a team consisting of 40 people equipped with relief supplies, aiming to participate in search and rescue efforts in Syria and Turkey. He said the situation in the two countries is one of the "tragedies of the current century".

Abdullah Al-Shahab, head of programs and



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti charities distribute food and water and provide shelter for victims of the earthquake. —KUNA

projects at Al-Najat Charity, said more than 2,500 families affected by the earthquake, or about 10,000 people, have benefited from the field aid and relief materials provided by the charity. Shahab said the association's great response is due to the availability of rapid transportation and the presence of Al-Najat Charity relief workers who are ready to deal with crises and humanitarian disasters. The charity has also opened a medical clinic that provides first aid for the sick, the wounded, the injured, the elderly and children. A pharmacy offering medicine and a central kitchen distributing hundreds of hot meals daily have also been set up. Al-Najat has also



given out food baskets and heating supplies to families since the first day of the disaster.

Walid Al-Suwailem, head of the Turkey and Levant office at the Mercy International Association, said that the association has provided urgent relief to those affected by the earthquake since the first moments of its occurrence, specifically in the governorates of northern Syria. Suwailem said the association has been preparing a shelter for the displaced in those areas, which includes 500 tents equipped with food, such as: bread, warm meals, canned food, and water bottles, in addition to heating supplies. —KUNA

News in brief

Social Affairs sole sponsor
of Nuwair Market

KUWAIT: After the success of the farmers and local produce exhibition held by the cooperative sector, the Social Affairs Ministry decided that all upcoming exhibitions would be held under the name "Souq Al-Nuwair" as a symbol of national identity. The Nuwair is a local flower found across Kuwait during the spring season. The ministry emphasized that the market is held under its sponsorship and has no relationship with any other party, whether it is in the private or the public sector. "The market is meant to encourage local farmers and other local producers, highlight the quality of local agricultural products and create a direct relationship between producers and consumers that benefits both parties," said the ministry in a statement.

X-Ray conference
kicks off Thursday

KUWAIT: Chairperson of the Radiology Department at the Health Ministry, Dr Buthayna Al-Kandari, announced the launch of the diagnostic radiology conference to be held from Feb 16-18, under the sponsorship of Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi. "The conference comes in cooperation with a group of professors and consultants in the field of diagnostic radiology, radiotherapy oncology and nuclear medicine from various countries with a long history in these fields, such as the United States of America, Canada, Finland, Austria and Egypt, as well as lecturers from the best doctors in the ministry," Kandari said. "The conference will present a distinguished scientific program that includes many lectures and panel discussions on the latest research developments in the various fields of radiology and radiotherapy, with the aim of improving the level of services as well as increasing the efficiency of the cadres working in the health ministry," Kandari clarified.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: The iconic Kuwait Towers glisten under the sun. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

To be an expat in Kuwait

'This country is a beloved home-away-from-home'

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Ever since Kuwait flourished economically after the discovery of oil and having the world's strongest currency, it started attracting expats from all around the globe. Depending on their circumstances, expats come to Kuwait for different reasons, including higher living standards. Some come with their families and live in Kuwait for a long time and embrace Kuwaiti norms and culture, which blends them with the community, while others come individually for a short period of time. In any case, leaving one's land of origin is never easy, and like any other place, being an expat in Kuwait has its pros and cons.

Born in Kuwait and raised in India, Mufaddal Patwa, a graphic designer and 3D visualizer, shared with Kuwait Times his experience as an expat in Kuwait for the last 13 years. "One of the biggest advantages of living in Kuwait for expats is the tax-free system, which is a major draw, allowing expats

to keep more of their hard-earned income," Patwa said.

This, he said, encourages people to achieve financial stability. He also referred to Kuwaiti cultural heritage and history as an enriching experience for expats. "The depth of Kuwait's culture and kindness of its people will forever hold a special place in their memories," said Patwa, showing his appreciation for Kuwait's heritage sites and Kuwaiti cuisine, in addition to the Mutlaa Ridge, Souq Mubarakia and serene beaches. "This country is a beloved home-away-from-home," he said.

However, being an expat in Kuwait remains challenging under some circumstances, Patwa told Kuwait Times. "While fluency in Arabic often brings growth opportunities for many in the private sector, it also creates challenges for expats who do not speak the language."

According to him, the importance placed on Arabic proficiency and relationship-building with Arab superiors often limits professional advancement for non-Arabic speakers. Another challenge for expats is visa restrictions that complicate the process of changing jobs and uniting with family members who live outside Kuwait. "It is hard for expats to bring their families or change jobs. This can negatively impact their quality of life and sense of security," Patwa said.

Dana Aladem, a Palestinian-Jordanian who was born, raised, educated and is now working in Kuwait, sees herself as part of the community and views Kuwait as her country. She expressed her gratitude for living in Kuwait for several reasons. "There are so many advantages of living in Kuwait that have helped me move forward in my life," she told Kuwait Times. Aladem said Kuwait facilitated her academic journey by offering her a chance to complete her master's degree at Kuwait University at an extremely affordable price in comparison to other places.



Mufaddal Patwa



Dana Aladem



Carlos Nino

"Education is a priority in my life and Kuwait gave me the opportunity to study my master's degree at Kuwait University at a very affordable price." Furthermore, Aladem emphasized her satisfaction at finding the job she likes, as a researcher, which she believes is vital for Kuwait since the state is paying additional attention to support students. Aladem also said Kuwait grants her safety and security. "It is a safe country and this is the most important advantage of living in Kuwait."

After residing in Kuwait for 67 months, Section Lead for the US Department of Defense Carlos Nino, who also manages the US military live fire and training areas, shared with Kuwait Times his experience as an expat in Kuwait. "I have learned to love Kuwait. Here I converted to Islam and for once learned to experience another culture I've fallen in love with to the point I hope to marry into it. I have also met great people," he said. Living in Kuwait had a unique impact on Nino, as he found himself welcomed in Kuwait, and is interested in further expanding and deepening his relationships in the country.

On the other hand, Nino is confused about some restrictions in Kuwait, such as the inability to own property as an expat. "Lots of the restrictions don't really affect me as an American as I have seen it affect other nationalities. The main one is not being able to own property, with prices of accommodations high in Kuwait. I am a pickup-truck type of man, so the inability to own one hurts, as well," Nino said.

and reduce risk of adverse events.

"Cancer is one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020 - a figure that equates to nearly one in every six deaths. Personalized Cancer Care (PCC) along with precision medicine, offers the promise of refining treatment decisions for those diagnosed with certain types of cancers," said Gertraud Eckart, director of Oncology at Merck Sharp & Dohme GmbH.

Hosting the webinar, which saw the participation of over 200 people logging in from around the world, Eckart explained that her organization was working hard to spread awareness of personalized healthcare and the numerous benefits that it confers for patients, health care professionals and systems.

"The position paper 'Personalized Cancer Care in the Eastern Mediterranean Region' is a first of its kind to put Personalized Cancer Care in the spotlight with thought pieces from scientists and key leaders in the field as well as policy recommendations targeting the overall PCC scene in the region. This paper was produced with the help and support of patients' organizations and civil society in the region, making it a seminal reference when it comes to Personalized Cancer Care with "actual" patients' voices being integrated within the paper. It provides a comprehensive road map and a way forward to make sure that Personalized Cancer Care will be accessible to all patients in low- and middle-income countries," she said.

Personalized care
heralds revolution
in cancer treatment

KUWAIT: Under the 2023 World Cancer Day theme "Uniting Voices and Taking Action", the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America Middle East and Africa (PhRMA MEA), the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) and the Personalized Cancer Care Alliance (PCCA) joined forces to debate how individualized cancer care offers a new promise to cancer patients.

The webinar panelists Dr Guy Fones, head of Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs at the World Health Organization (WHO), Hana Char Chouib, board of directors member at Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and general manager at Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon (CCCL), Kawaldip Sehmi, CEO, at IAPO and Abigail Amit, director of Patient Engagement and Innovation at Merck Sharp & Dohme GmbH, shone a spotlight on how precision medicine is empowering cancer patients to take a more active role in their therapy. Established to enable the right treatment to be given to the right patient at the right time, this model of care's ultimate objective is to provide better outcomes, improve patient safety

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Indonesia police official sentenced to death for murder

Cyprus former foreign minister Christodoulides elected president

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BERLIN: Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party's top candidate Kai Wegner (3rdR) reacts as he receives an applause from the leader of Germany's conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party Friedrich Merz (3rdL), German politicians Joe Chialo (1st L), Julia Kloeckner (2nd L), Ines Claus (2nd R) and Karin Prien (1st R) during a leadership meeting in Berlin, one day after the repeat Berlin state elections. —AFP

Social Democrats suffer blow in Berlin loss

Scholz faces criticism for his hesitant military support for Ukraine

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats suffered a heavy setback in a regional poll in Berlin on Sunday, falling behind the opposition conservatives in the capital for the first time in over two decades. While the Berlin vote turned on local issues, the disappointing loss comes as Scholz faces widespread criticism for his hesitant military support for Ukraine in the wake of the Russian invasion last year.

In a court-ordered rerun of the election in 2021, the chancellor's party slipped to their worst postwar result in the capital, where they have held the mayor's office since 2001. The conservative CDU, in opposition in the city and in the federal parliament, surged to around 28 percent, up from 18 percent.

Berlin, one of the country's 16 federal states, was ordered by courts to return to the ballot boxes after the 2021 election was found not to meet basic democratic standards amid widespread voting issues.

Coalition trouble

The outcome of the rerun puts a question mark over the continuation of the coalition between the Social Democrats, Greens and far-left Linke party. "If we have an opportunity for an SPD-led government, then we will try to organise a stable majority for it,"

incumbent Social Democrat Mayor Franziska Giffey told ZDF after the first estimates.

But early figures suggested her junior coalition partner the Greens could finish ahead of the Social Democrats with around 18.5 percent of the vote. The Linke party's share of the vote was meanwhile estimated at around 13 percent.

Giffey and the Social Democrats seem to have been penalised by voters following violent scenes in the capital over the New Year, with revellers targeting the emergency services with fireworks in neighbourhoods with a large immigrant population. The conservative opposition accused Berlin's administration of failing to control the situation and sparked a citywide debate over integration.

The election was also marked by discontent over rising rental prices in the capital and disputes over transport policy. The result of the elections reflect the Social Democrats' struggles nationally, as Scholz's government-in power for just over a year wrestles with rampant inflation and the fallout of the war in Ukraine.

The difficulties for Scholz's coalition with the Greens and the liberal FDP have been to the benefit of opposition parties. Along with the conservative

CDU, the far-right AfD increased its share of the vote slightly to around nine percent in Sunday's rerun, according to the estimates.

Marathon vote

The rerun in Berlin is only the second time in German postwar history that a state election has been declared invalid, after irregularities were reported in a vote in Hamburg in 1991. The organisation of the 2021 election on the same day as a national vote, a local housing referendum and the Berlin marathon had led to widespread logistical problems.

Ballot papers got stuck in traffic as roads were closed for the race, with lines forming outside polling stations struggling to process votes. Sunday's election took place under the watchful gaze of international election observers from the Council of Europe, invited in by the city itself to restore trust after the 2021 fiasco.

Berlin also called up an army of 42,000 election helpers — 8,000 more than last time around — and gave polling stations extra ballots to avoid shortages. The German parliament has also resolved for national elections to be partly repeated in Berlin, with the date of that vote yet to be set. —AFP

Portugal Catholic clergy sexually abused 5,000 minors

LISBON: Catholic clergy in Portugal have abused nearly 5,000 children since 1950, an independent commission said on Monday after hearing hundreds of victims' accounts. Thousands of reports of paedophilia within the Catholic Church have surfaced around the world and Pope Francis is under pressure to tackle the scandal.

The Portuguese inquiry, commissioned by the Church in the staunchly Catholic country, published its findings after hearing from more than 500 victims last year. "This testimony allows us to establish a much larger network of victims, at least 4,815," commission head Pedro Strecht told a press conference in Lisbon that was attended by several senior Church officials.

Strecht, a child psychiatrist, said it would be difficult now for Portugal to ignore the existence of child sex abuse or the trauma it caused. The head of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference (CEP), Bishop Jose Ornelas, will respond to the findings later on Monday.

The country's bishops will convene in March to draw conclusions from the report and "rid the Church of this scourge as much as possible". Father Manuel Barbosa, a senior CEP member, said in January. Faced with a multitude of clergy sex abuse cases that have come to light worldwide and the accusations of cover-ups, Pope Francis promised in 2019 to root out paedophilia within the Catholic Church.

Inquiries have been launched in several countries in addition to Portugal, including Australia, France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands. The pontiff may meet some of the Portuguese victims when he visits Lisbon in August, the capital's auxiliary bishop, Americo Aguiar, said recently.

'The Church needs to cleanse itself'

The time limit for bringing charges has already expired for the vast majority of offences recorded by Strecht's six-member commission but 25 cases have been transferred to the prosecution service. One of them concerns "Alexandra", a 43-year-old woman who has requested anonymity. She alleges she was raped by a priest during confession when she was a 17-year-old novice nun.

"It's very hard to talk about these things in Portugal," a country where 80 percent of people say they are Catholic, said Alexandra, who is now a mother and works as a kitchen helper. "I kept it secret for many years but it became more and more difficult to cope with it alone," she told AFP in a telephone interview last week.

Three years ago, she plucked up the courage to report her attacker to the Church authorities. But she said she was "ignored". The bishop in charge did nothing other than pass on her complaint to the Vatican, which has still not responded.

In April last year, Manuel Clemente, the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon and the highest-ranking prelate in Portugal, said he was ready to "recognise the errors of the past" and ask the victims for "forgiveness". "Bishops asking forgiveness doesn't mean anything to me. We don't know if they mean it," retorted Alexandra, who said she felt "sickened" by the Church and its abuse cover-ups.

The independent commission, at least, had afforded her an understanding ear and psychological support. It was, she said, "a good first step" for victims who wanted to "break the wall of silence" that had surrounded them. —AFP

Quake stalls election campaign of Turkey's splintered opposition

ISTANBUL: Turkey's splintered political opposition was supposed to agree Monday on a joint candidate to challenge Recep Tayyip Erdogan's 20-year grip on power at the ballot box. But a catastrophic earthquake, which has killed more than 35,000 people in Turkey and Syria, has postponed the meeting and thrown the timing of May elections into doubt.

Ruling and opposition party sources now feverishly speculate that Erdogan will delay the May 14 presidential and parliamentary polls in the wake of Turkey's worst disaster of modern times. "This is going to change things—not just for the government, but also for the opposition," said Berk Esen, an assistant professor of political science at Istanbul's Sabanci University.

The earthquake, and indeed any delay to the vote, could transform the political landscape, presenting both Erdogan—who was first elected president in 2003 — and his rivals with new opportunities and risks, experts say.

Unable to agree on a candidate for more than a year, Erdogan's opponents now have more time to come to a consensus with Monday's meeting postponed indefinitely. They must use that time wisely, analysts say, trying to tap into public anger over the monumental scale of the destruction without appearing to seek political gain from the tragedy.

"The horrific events have handed the political opposition new ammunition against the government—ammunition propelled by public anger and grievance," said Anthony Skinner, a political risk consultant. Erdogan has not uttered a word about elections since the earthquake, but appears on television multiple times a day, hugging survivors and consoling the nation.

'Duty to hold vote'

Kemal Kilicdaroglu, a bookish former civil servant with tepid national support who heads Turkey's main secular party, has long been seen as the frontrunner in the bid to end Erdogan's rule. But Meral Aksener of the nationalist Iyi Party has resisted Kilicdaroglu, appearing to back instead Istanbul's



DIYARBAKIR: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan talks to the press as he visits the hard-hit southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir. The disaster and resulting fury at how the Turkish government has handled it, comes just months before a presidential election in June. —AFP

popular opposition mayor Ekrem Imamoglu. "The opposition was already in a very delicate position" as divisions were rife, Esen said. Esen said Kilicdaroglu is now more likely to become the opposition candidate because "it's going to be very difficult" for someone else to campaign openly at the time of national grief.

Experts believe a May vote is out of the question but that it could take place in June, the latest date by which elections must happen according to the constitution. Erdogan cannot postpone the election beyond June without changing the constitution, and for that, he would need a two-thirds majority in parliament.

That requires 400 votes. Erdogan and his far-right parliamentary allies only have 333, meaning that he would need the opposition to back a longer delay. Sinem Adar, an associate at the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies in Berlin, said one pillar of the opposition's strategy should be to ensure the elections happen by June. Aksener, for one, is pushing for a June vote.

Confronting Erdogan

"It is our duty as politicians to hold this vote," she told journalists last week. But the opposition has

also been divided in its response to the earthquake. Aksener opted to stay quiet and avoid quake-hit regions in the first few days, while Kilicdaroglu swiftly visited affected areas, seeking to console victims.

He has lambasted Erdogan, accusing him of failing to prepare Turkey for earthquakes. On Saturday, he appeared with the pro-Kurdish leader in quake-affected Diyarbakir, the only province that did not vote for Erdogan's alliance in the 2018 polls.

The mayors of Istanbul and Ankara, who is one of the opposition's most popular politicians, have shared images of municipality employees helping rescue efforts, cleaning the rubble and providing hot food to survivors.

Aksener gave a more muted response and said she waited for 72 hours to avoid being an obstacle to rescue efforts. Adar said the quake might bring into sharp relief cracks among the opposition—manifest in disagreements over the candidate and what roles each party will play.

Esen cautioned against reading too much into the different responses since only a week had passed, but said it showed a lack of coordination among the opposition. —AFP

International

Cyprus former foreign minister Christodoulides elected president

Ex-diplomat to take hard line on moribund UN-backed talks on ending island's division

NICOSIA: Cyprus voters on Sunday elected the former foreign minister Nicos Christodoulides as the next president of the small EU member state, vowing after his win to form a government with "broad social acceptance". Christodoulides, 49, won 51.92 percent to defeat fellow diplomat Andreas Mavroyiannis, 66, who took 48.08 percent, the government election service in the south of the divided Mediterranean island announced.

The vote on Sunday, a runoff after an inconclusive first round last week, means Christodoulides will succeed two-term conservative President Nicos Anastasiades. Widely tapped as the election favourite during the campaign, the former top diplomat is seen as likely to take a hard line on moribund UN-backed talks on ending the island's decades-old division.

"The current state of affairs is only worsening," Christodoulides said after results were announced. "That is why... we have a specific plan for how we will seek to break the impasse." Christodoulides, who takes up the post on March 1, said he would begin work to select his cabinet, vowing to form a gender-balanced government.

Christodoulides, who defected from the conservative ruling DISY party to run as an independent, scored 32.0 percent a week ago, against 29.6 percent for Mavroyiannis, who also ran as an independent, backed by the communist AKEL party. Mavroyiannis conceded defeat and congratulated his rival. He told reporters: "Tonight a journey has ended... I regret we couldn't achieve the change that Cyprus needed."

Turkey's once mighty developers under fire after quake

ANKARA: Their mugshots are everywhere: A Turkish developer arrested while trying to flee the country and two colleagues connected to a luxurious apartment tower that crumbled in Monday's disastrous quake. The traumatized country's social media users are calling for their heads. Turkish officials are turning them into the focus of public outrage at the shoddy business dealings that appear to have contributed to the disaster's almost unfathomable scale. And architects view the Ronensas tower's collapse as a symbol of Turkey's inability to maintain building standards that could have dramatically reduced the catastrophic toll.

The number of confirmed fatalities surpassed 29,000 in Turkey and 3,500 in Syria on Sunday. The quake has become the region's deadliest natural disaster in more than 80 years. But officials at the United Nations warn that the final fatalities number may be closer to 50,000.

Turkish officials have responded to the outrage by announcing a rapid series of investigations and arrests linked to the construction and development business. Three people were put behind bars by Sunday and seven more have been detained—including two developers who were trying to relocate to the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Turkey's justice ministry has issued warrants for 114 more people and launched 134 investigations.

PM calls for good governance...

Continued from Page 1

HH the Prime Minister highlighted a recent achievement by Kuwait, which came with the launch of the Kuwait Sat-1 satellite from Florida. He revealed the project was a success due to the three-year cooperation between Kuwait University and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), adding that the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) and University of Colorado Boulder also played a part in the project, making it a successful international cooperation venture.

UAE President Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

US, China trade blame as UFO...

Continued from Page 1

The State Department said China was "scrambling to do damage control" and that the communist government "has failed to offer any credible explanations for its intrusion into our airspace". Over the weekend, Chinese state-affiliated media reported that an unidentified flying object had been spotted off the country's east coast and that the military was preparing to shoot it down. Beijing on Monday declined to comment on that report, referring journalists to the defense ministry, which did not respond to requests for comment from AFP.

In Washington, the extraordinary events are fueling already intense suspicion about China across both the Democratic and Republican parties - a trend likely to grow as the 2024 presidential election approaches. The diplomatic fallout has already been substantial, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken abruptly canceling a rare visit to Beijing.

Republican lawmakers Monday piled pressure on the White House to give answers about the scope and nature of the threat. "How many more unidentified objects in US airspace before the Biden

Rising prices
Voter turnout was 72.4 percent with over 405,000 citizens casting a ballot, a fraction higher than in the first round. Top concerns for many voters are the cost of living crisis, irregular immigration and the island's almost half-century of division between the Greek-speaking south and a Turkish-occupied breakaway statelet in the north recognised only by Ankara.

But many disaffected voters simply looked for "the least worst candidate—a characteristic in most elections, but more so in this one," said Andreas Theophanous of the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs.

UN-backed talks on the future of the divided island, frozen for nearly six years, will be key on the new leader's agenda. Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when Turkish forces occupied its northern third in response to a Greek-sponsored coup, but voters appeared split over whether the division was a priority in the election.

While Mavroyiannis had promised during the campaign to reopen negotiations from day one, Christodoulides has demanded changes before talks are revived. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Twitter he was looking forward to working with Christodoulides "on important files for the EU and for the people of Cyprus, paving the way towards a solution of the Cyprus issue." Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou called the president-elect to congratulate him, her office said, stressing "the Cyprus problem is a top national priority."

'Irregularities'

The problem for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government-in power for the past 20 years-is that the Ronensas case is far from unique. Turkey has erected towers across fault lines and swaths of earthquake-prone regions that have been bracing for a major jolt for years. One of the biggest single disasters struck a hotel housing two dozen Cypriot students and 15 accompanying adults who were in Turkey for a volleyball tournament. All of the children died and only four adults survived.

NTV television said the hotel was briefly closed



HATAY: People walk next to damaged buildings in the Antakia historical city in Hatay after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck the country's south-east. — AFP

received HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad on Monday on the sidelines of the World Government Summit. HH Sheikh Ahmad conveyed the greetings of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the UAE leadership, government and people. He also expressed his appreciation to the leadership of the UAE for hosting this global summit, especially in light of the regional and international challenges that require concerted efforts.

UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum also received HH Sheikh Ahmad. HH the Prime Minister congratulated Sheikh Mohammad on the great success achieved by the World Government Summit, praising the warm reception and distinguished organization that enhances the prestigious position of the UAE at the regional and international levels. — KUNA

Administration gives us some - ANY - answers?" tweeted Republican Representative Mark Green. Officials have issued little information about the three latest objects, other than to say they were much smaller than the confirmed Chinese balloon destroyed Feb 4. That was about the size of three buses, while the new targets were more car-sized. "We're going to do everything we can to recover them," White House spokesman John Kirby told MSNBC on Monday. "As soon as we do that, we'll learn more."

The unidentified flying object shot down Sunday over Michigan was described by officials as an octagonal structure with strings hanging off it. However there was no information about how it was guided or propelled. Canada's defense minister, Anita Anand, told CNN the object shot down over Canada by a US plane appeared to be "cylindrical" but said no more information would be given until "we gather the debris".

Amid often wild speculation, the US Northern Command's General Glen VanHerck was asked if the government could be sure these were not extraterrestrial craft and he replied: "I haven't ruled out anything at this point." Why such a sudden spate of sightings is another unanswered question. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs Melissa Dalton said Sunday that this may be because the Pentagon has been "enhancing" its radars - meaning smaller objects are now visible. — AFP



NICOSIA: Cyprus' new president-elect Nicos Christodoulides speaks before supporters during a proclamation ceremony, with his wife (R) and daughter (L) standing next to him, at Eleftheria stadium in the capital Nicosia. — AFP

lem is a top national priority."

'Too many internal problems'
Retiree Dora Petsa, 75, said she expects the new president "to settle the Cypriot question". But Louis Loizides, 51, said the country has "too many internal problems" from the economy to immigration, having taken in large numbers of asylum seekers, including many who cross the UN-patrolled Green Line.

The ruling DISY had been knocked out of the presidential race for the first time in its history, and the conservative party's decision to back neither candi-

due to construction "irregularities". But then it reopened its doors. "I want these people to face justice. They are murderers," an unnamed witness of the hotel's collapse told NTV.

The quake tore off the building's walls "like sheets of paper", the survivor said. Erdogan has responded to the anger by arguing that no one could have been prepared to deal with Turkey's "worst disaster in history".

But the waves of arrests and investigations represent a marked change in attitude towards an industry that has helped transform Turkey's underdeveloped regions while enjoying a profitable boom.

date threw the run-off wide open. Pre-poll favourite Christodoulides last week squeezed out DISY leader Averof Neofytou, 61, who came third with 26.11 percent in the first round, despite the incumbent's endorsement.

The new government will be under pressure to root out corruption and address higher energy bills, labour disputes and the struggling economy. Vasso Pelekanou, a 47-year-old woman, believes that the new president should help the middle class, which she believes was abandoned by the last government. "The rich have become even richer," she said. — AFP

Denials

Six months passed before Turkey arrested the first suspect in the wake of another disastrous quake in 1999. More than 17,000 people died in the country's northwestern regions near Istanbul at the time. Officials eventually opened 2,100 investigations against developers of collapsed buildings. They did not lead to much. A general amnesty in December 2000 saw 1,800 of those cases dropped. The courts found fault in only 110 cases. Most of those found guilty ended up benefiting from a statute of limitation that entered into force in 2007. The Ronensas project's developer has also pleaded innocence. "I do not know why the building collapsed," Mehmet Yasar Coskun said. "All the permits were issued after studies by the municipality and the oversight company." A local mayor who issued the building permit in 2021 denied responsibility as well. "A private company conducted the control procedure," Seyfettin Yeral told the T24 news site. "We do not have employees who can do such work."

California standards?

Turkey has adopted a series of buildings standards and regulations modelled on those of California. But these have been regularly revised—the last time in 2018. Engineers and architects interviewed by AFP said most of Turkey's builders manage to work their way around existing codes. "On paper, the standards are respected, with contracts awarded to private companies responsible for controlling them," Istanbul architect Aykut Koksall said. But Koksall stressed that developers often strike private deals with companies in charge of conducting the inspections. He said this dilutes enforcement and gives developer much leeway to cut costs. — AFP

Rescue efforts slow as quake...

Continued from Page 1

In Antakya, clean-up teams have been shifting rubble and putting up basic toilets as the telephone network started to come back in parts of the town, an AFP reporter said. The city was patrolled by police and soldiers deployed to prevent looting following several incidents over the weekend. "Send any stuff you can because there are millions of people here and they all need to be fed," Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu appealed late on Sunday.

Aid packages, mainly clothes, were opened and spread across the streets in Hatay province, according to NTV. One video showed aid workers throwing clothes randomly into a crowd as people tried to grab whatever they could. Soylu said rescue efforts had ended in seven parts of Kahramanmaraş, where

authorities report that 30,000 tents have been set up, with tens of thousands of people sheltering in schools and sports halls.

Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay late on Sunday said 108,000 buildings were damaged across the quake-hit zone with 1.2 million people being housed in student accommodation and 400,000 people evacuated from the affected region. The economic cost of the disaster could be as much as \$84.1 billion, Turkish employers' association Turkonfed said in a report Monday.

In Syria, the toll has not changed for several days and is expected to rise. The United Nations has decried the slow arrival of aid in war-torn regions of the country, where basic infrastructure and healthcare have been ravaged by 12 years of civil war. Nurse anesthetist Abdelbaset Khalil described tending to hundreds of patients, despite his own trauma. "I was tending to people in the hospital while my wife and daughter were under the rubble," Khalil told AFP in the city of Harim in the rebel-held Idlib province on the border with Turkey. The first day was "extremely trying and very hard", he said. "It passed like 50 years." — AFP



KAHRAMANMARAS, Turkey: This aerial view shows collapsed buildings during an ongoing rescue operation on Feb 13, 2023. — AFP

International

Protesters, rights groups condemn closure of Cambodian news outlet

'Shutting down VOD is like shutting down the voice of the people'

PHNOM PENH: A handful of protesters gathered in Phnom Penh on Monday to condemn the shutdown of one of Cambodia's last independent media outlets, with rights groups also slamming the portal's closure just months before national elections. Prime Minister Hun Sen among the world's longest-serving leaders ordered the shuttering of online Khmer- and English-language outlet Voice of Democracy (VOD) on Sunday over what he said was an erroneous report about his eldest son.

Sitting in the meeting room at VOD, journalist Khan Leakhena burst into tears as management halted broadcasting at 10 am following the revocation of the outlet's licence. "I have been here since I was an intern," she said. "I do not want to cry, but I am so shocked." "Shutting down VOD is like shutting down the voice of the people," she added.

Outside the outlet's offices, protester Prum Chantha said: "It's only VOD that speaks about the truth... The government must not shut them down." "They are cracking down (on VOD) so that other media outlets don't dare to rise up, to speak the truth," she added. "Other media outlets will be scared-this is a

threat." A dozen police officers blocked the road as information ministry officials delivered the closure notice.

In the now-empty VOD studio, Ith Sothoeth, media director of the Cambodian Centre for Independent Media which oversees VOD, told reporters: "For now we will stay silent." "We hope that this is not the end of everything yet," he said, adding they were working with stakeholders to find a solution.

In the run-up to the election later this year, Hun Sen has increasingly cracked down on dissent and freedom of speech. Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Monday condemned the "outrageous and ridiculous order" to shut VOD, which "barely masks the government's real intent to further suppress media freedom".

"Going after VOD is a good indication that (the) scheduled July 23 poll will be neither free nor fair," HRW deputy Asia director Phil Robertson said in a statement. "The real losers in all of this are the people of Cambodia."

'A clear warning'

VOD, which has broadcast since 2003, published a story on February 9 alleging

that Hun Sen's son, Lieutenant General Hun Manet, had signed off on funds to help earthquake-hit Turkey. Hun Manet has denied the claim, with Hun Sen stating that he himself authorised the \$100,000 relief package.

The Cambodian leader demanded an apology from VOD, but has refused to reconsider his decision to revoke its licence even after the outlet complied. As of Monday afternoon, some Cambodian internet service providers had blocked access to the site, requiring readers to use a VPN.

"This is a blatant attempt to slam the door on what's left of independent media in the country," said Amnesty International. They added it was "a clear warning to other critical voices months before Cambodia's national elections".

Damar Juniarto, executive director and co-founder of digital rights group SAFENet, called the shuttering "bad for democracy". The United States embassy said it was "deeply troubled" by VOD's closure, urging authorities to reconsider.

The German and French embassies also expressed concerns about the move in the run-up to the national polls. In 2017, the Cambodian Daily was forced to close after



PHNOM PENH: An employee cries at the office of online media outlet Voice of Democracy (VOD) in Phnom Penh on February 13, 2023, after Cambodian Prime Minister said VOD would have its operating licence revoked. — AFP

it was hit with a disputed multi-million dollar tax bill, though it later restarted operations online. And ahead of 2018's

elections, many independent outlets were forced to close after being stripped of their operating licences. — AFP



JAKARTA: Former head of the internal affairs for Indonesia's national police Ferdy Sambo, who is accused of murdering bodyguard Nofriansyah Yosua Hutabarat, arrives for a verdict hearing at the South Jakarta court in Jakarta. — AFP

Indonesia police official sentenced to death for murder

JAKARTA: One of Indonesia's most senior police officers was sentenced to death on Monday over the murder of his bodyguard. Ferdy Sambo, a two-star general and former head of internal affairs for the national police, was named as a suspect after his bodyguard was found dead at Sambo's home in July, in a killing police were initially alleged to have covered up.

Sambo was accused of ordering a subordinate to shoot 27-year-old Brigadier Nofriansyah Yosua Hutabarat, and then firing a bullet into the wounded victim himself. He was arrested in August and discharged from the force in September, before a months-long trial that grabbed national headlines and shone a light on a pervading sense of police impunity in the archipelago nation.

"[The court is] declaring the defendant Ferdy Sambo to be convincingly and legally guilty of committing the crime of premeditated murder... and sen-

tencing the defendant to death," presiding judge Wahyu Iman Santoso told the court.

Sambo has a week to appeal the verdict. Hutabarat's mother sat in the Jakarta court holding his picture as the judge addressed Sambo, who attended in person. There were yelps as the verdict was read, from a stunned public who did not expect the maximum sentence. As Sambo was ushered out of the courtroom, still in custody, he was swamped by media.

When Hutabarat's death came to light, police initially said another member of the security detail had killed him, having caught him sexually assaulting Sambo's wife. But Sambo and his wife were arrested weeks later. She will be sentenced later on Monday.

Police did not reveal the killing for days and said surveillance cameras were not working when Hutabarat was killed. The judge said CCTV footage was deleted by a Sambo subordinate. Activists said Sambo's role as a law enforcer was likely the motivation behind the court handing down the maximum sentence. "This verdict means the law enforcers believed Ferdy Sambo was the mastermind behind this murder," Ardi Manto Saputra, deputy director of human rights group Imparsial told AFP. "He has tainted the reputation of law enforcement and the government's dignity." —AFP

resources, and the drug trade.

Typically, Filipino recruits would pretend to be women and develop online relationships with their targets, usually a Westerner, de Vega said. They receive a wage and get a share of the profits, but are subjected to "corporal punishment" if they do not scam enough people, he said.

Four Filipino women in their 20s, who were detained in Myanmar for illegally entering the country from Thailand a few weeks ago, also returned to Manila on Monday. They had claimed to be tourists, de Vega said.

Around 50 to 70 Filipinos are believed to be still working for Chinese scammers operating in Myanmar, he added. There were another 50 Filipinos working for cryptocurrency scams in Cambodia and 50 in Laos, de Vega estimated.

He said "at least 119" Filipinos had been brought home since last year. "We are slowly repatriating them, but some are not asking to be repatriated," de Vega said. "But if there's a relative who contacts us with an SOS, we'll do it."

An AFP report last year found people from around Asia—including from Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Bangladesh and India—have been pulled into similar operations in Cambodia, some trafficked and beaten by scam operators.

De Vega said the Philippine government had repeatedly warned Filipinos against bypassing official employment channels when looking for work abroad. "We have to stop these Filipinos that get tricked," de Vega said. "It's not true that you can arrive as a tourist and then get work... if they ask for computer experts or customer service, you'll probably be asked to be a scammer." —AFP

Philippine coastguard accuses Chinese ship of using 'laser light'

MANILA: A Chinese security vessel shone a "military-grade laser light" at a Philippine patrol boat in the disputed South China Sea, temporarily blinding crew members, the Philippine coastguard said Monday.

The incident happened on February 6 nearly 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, where Philippine marines are stationed, the Philippine Coast Guard said in a statement. There has been a series of maritime incidents between the Philippines and China, which claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea and has ignored an international court ruling that its claims have no legal basis.

Days before this latest incident, the United States and the Philippines agreed to resume joint patrols in the sea, and struck a deal to give US troops access to another four military bases in the Southeast Asian country.

The Philippine coastguard patrol boat was supporting a "rotation and resupply mission" last week for the marines, who live in a derelict navy ship grounded on the shoal to assert Manila's territorial claims. The Chinese coastguard vessel shone a "military-grade" green laser light twice at the Philippine ship, "causing temporary blindness to her crew at the bridge", the statement said.

The Chinese vessel also made "dangerous maneuvers" by coming within about 140 metres of



AT SEA: Handout photo shows a sailor (C, in orange vest) on board a Chinese Coast Guard vessel removing a cover of its "70 mm naval armament", near waters by the Second Thomas Shoal, in the Spratly Islands in the disputed South China Sea. —AFP

the Philippine boat. "The deliberate blocking of the Philippine government ships to deliver food and supplies to our military personnel... is a blatant disregard for, and a clear violation of, Philippine sovereign rights in this part of the West Philippine Sea," the Philippine Coast Guard said.

Manila refers to waters immediately to its west as the West Philippine Sea. Despite the interference, the resupply and rotation of troops at Second Thomas Shoal were successful, Philippine Coast Guard spokesman Armando Balilo said. Privately owned vessels are normally used to carry supplies, with the coastguard accompanying them. — AFP



AUCKLAND: A general view of a damaged road after a storm battered Titirangi, a suburb of New Zealand's West Auckland area, on February 13, 2023. —AFP

Flights grounded, power cut as storm lashes N Zealand

WELLINGTON: Tens of thousands of homes in New Zealand were without power and hundreds of flights were cancelled Monday as a tropical storm lashed the north of the country. A state of emergency was declared in five regions on the North Island, covering almost one-third of New Zealand's entire population of 5.1 million.

Although the storm was downgraded from a cyclone before it made landfall, high winds and torrential rains have already toppled trees, damaged roads and downed power lines. Wellington-based Prime Minister Chris Hipkins was among thousands stuck in the northern city of Auckland after the wild weather grounded flights.

"Things will get worse before they get better," Hipkins told New Zealanders in a press conference Monday, calling for them to "be prepared, stay inside if you can". He said the government had considered declaring a national state of emergency for only the

third time in the country's history—but it was not yet necessary.

The government announced an aid package of 11.5 million New Zealand dollars (\$7.25 million) to help recovery efforts. Police said one person was missing aboard a boat, which issued a distress call early Monday near Great Barrier Island, north of Auckland. Winds of up to 140 kilometres (87 miles) per hour battered the Northland region, while Auckland's harbour bridge was rocked by gusts of 110 kph.

About 58,000 people were without power on Monday afternoon, according to Roger Ball, head of the national emergency management agency. Emergency management minister Kieran McAnulty said Monday would be a difficult day due to the "highly dangerous" combination of high winds and heavy rain. McAnulty added that it was "unsafe" to try and repair the network while the dangerous weather continued. Auckland, New Zealand's largest city and home to 1.6 million people, is still recovering after flash floods in late January forced thousands from their homes and resulted in four deaths.

"Many people haven't been able to catch a break," Hipkins said. "The need in the community is significant. The effects of the weather events have compounded that." Auckland mayor Wayne Brown said the next 24 hours would be "challenging". — AFP

China crypto scams targeting Filipinos to work for them

MANILA: Chinese criminals running cryptocurrency scams in Southeast Asia are targeting Filipinos to work for them because of their English language and computer skills, a Philippine foreign ministry official said Monday. Filipinos were "prized" targets for scam networks operating in Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, said Eduardo de Vega, acting undersecretary for migrant workers affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

De Vega said efforts to repatriate Filipinos sucked into the scam activities were ongoing, with more than 100 brought home since last year. The latest group arrived in Manila on Monday. Four men, all in their 30s, had been trafficked into Myanmar for "less than two months" where they were held in compounds, de Vega told AFP.

The men were in Dubai when they were recruited online to work as "customer support representatives" in Thailand, the ministry said. When they arrived in Bangkok, they were taken to the western Thai city of Mae Sot and ferried across the border into Myanmar "rebel territory", de Vega said.

There they were "forced to trick individuals into investing in cryptocurrency", the foreign ministry said in a statement. Myanmar's rugged borderlands are home to a patchwork of ethnic rebel groups and military-aligned militia that have fought each other for decades over territory, lucrative timber and jade

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023

Business

Saudi, Kuwait work hand in hand to integrate economic visions: Al-Falih

Kuwait-Saudi bilateral trade jumps 22% • KCCI chief eyes future partnerships in many sectors



KUWAIT: (From left to right) Mazen Al-Nahedh, Khalid Al-Falih and Mohammad Al-Sager during the 'Invest in Saudi Arabia Forum' in Kuwait on Monday. (Right) A view of the forum.



By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Saudi Arabia is working hand in hand with Kuwait to integrate the kingdom's 'Vision 2030' with Kuwait's 'Vision 2035' under the wise leadership of both countries, said Saudi Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih on Monday.

Addressing the 'Invest in Saudi Arabia Forum' in Kuwait, the Saudi minister said the unity of these common visions and goals was pronounced in June 2021 when the first meeting of the Saudi-Kuwaiti Coordination Council was convened. This was followed by the signing of five memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between the two countries, including a memorandum of cooperation to promote direct investment between the two countries, unify efforts to remove hurdles and provide opportunities for investors in both countries.

The economic reforms initiated by the kingdom within the framework of the kingdom's 'Vision 2030', helped the country push its economic growth and diversify its sources, he said. According to the estimates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Saudi Arabia became the fastest growing economy in the world in 2022 and its GDP touched nearly 4 trillion riyals (more than \$1 trillion) to become the 16th largest economy in the world, Falih pointed out.

Applauding Kuwait's accomplishments, Falih said: "We are proud of Kuwait's achievements as a beacon of culture, development and social development over the past decades. We are also proud of Kuwait's long-standing record in trade, as Kuwaiti merchants reached India and Europe in the 19th century for trade, particularly in pearls."

He said the Kuwait Stock Exchange (now Bursa Kuwait) was established in 1962 to be the first stock market in the Arab Gulf region. Kuwait's sovereign funds, and the investments they manage, have become an example to follow. They rank second in the Arab world and fourth globally among their counterparts with assets amounting to \$750 billion, Falih added.

The launch of Kuwait's economic advisory unit,

headed by HH the Prime Minister, set an advanced approach to support Kuwait's national economy, work to attract foreign direct investments with added value and strengthen the role of the private sector within the framework of the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Bilateral trade

Speaking about bilateral trade, Falih said economic exchanges between the two countries have multiplied over the years. "Today, Kuwait is one of the most prominent trading partners of the kingdom as the volume of trade between the two countries amounted to nearly 11 billion riyals, an increase of 22 percent over the levels of the pre-COVID-19 period. Similarly, Kuwaiti investments in the kingdom have grown to about 35 billion riyals in sectors such as hospitality, retail, food, communication, construction and others. We are also proud of choosing a number of major Kuwaiti companies such as Zain, Agility, Alghanim Group, and many others for operating in the kingdom as a market in which huge investments are being pumped in, contributing to the growth and diversification of the Saudi economy as much as they contribute to the strengthening and development of the Kuwaiti economy," he concluded.

"What enhances the feasibility of investing in Saudi Arabia is not only the exceptional opportunities offered, but also the facilities that are provided to investors while investing in major projects proposed by the kingdom," said Mazen Al-Nahedh, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology. Delivering a speech at the Invest in Saudi Arabia Forum, he said: "This provides investors with tremendous opportunities to develop their businesses and realize successes, benefiting from the exceptional growth taking place in all business sectors."

Future partnership

Chairman of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Mohammad Al-Sager praised the

prices, but cautioned that they "remain elevated with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war". Singapore's economy expanded 3.6 percent in 2022, slowing from the 8.9 percent growth in 2021, the MTI said.

Its government lifted the bulk of its COVID restrictions last year. On Monday, it also ended the requirement to wear face masks on public transport. "The economy still remains resilient despite the slightly softer GDP side as the job market is doing strong," said Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with CIMB Private Banking. Despite the reopening of China—the world's second-biggest economy—and other positive global trends, the MTI warned that uncertainties remain.

It pointed to the rate hike campaigns by central banks to rein in inflation, as well as the impact of property sector woes and weakening global demand on China's recovery.

"Further escalations in the war in Ukraine and geopolitical tensions among major global powers could worsen supply disruptions, dampen consumer and business confidence, as well as weigh on global trade," it added. Chief Economist at OCBC Bank Selena Ling said: "China's re-opening bodes well for

ment, the Abu Dhabi-listed company said its annual revenues climbed 18 per cent to \$2.67 billion due to exceptional performance by the onshore and oilfield services (OFS) segments.

The energy giant achieved record revenue, earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) and net profit during the fourth quarter of 2022 as the company's bold fleet expansion program delivered the highest-ever number of operational rigs - bolstering growth and charting a clear course for further expansion in 2023 and beyond. The company's accelerated rig acquisition program added 16 new drilling units in 2022, establishing one of the world's largest drilling and well completion fleets consisting of 115 rigs.

In 2022, EBITDA stood firm at \$1.23 billion, with a margin of over 46 per cent, as Adnoc Drilling made excellent progress on the delivery

encouraging measures taken by Saudi Arabia in the last few years. In a speech at the forum, Sager said the similarity in the premises and objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and New Kuwait 2035 vision must lead to a future partnership between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, not only in the field of investment, but also in the commercial, industrial and service sectors as well.

"It is a partnership that will expand to other Gulf Cooperation Council countries as well through its clear development visions, which are open to contributions of the citizens of these countries and to foreign investments," Sager said.

"If 'Saudi Vision 2030' enjoys the supervision and directives of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman leads and carries its torch, then His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sponsors and directs 'Kuwait Vision 2035', whose steps and projects were entrusted to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," he pointed out.

The two visions basically agree on building an educated workforce, reducing dependence on oil, expanding the production base and enabling the private sector to play its developmental role. This will lead to a sustainable economy that meets the requirements of the times and future trends, he said adding, which will be open to scientific progress and contributes to the dissemination of creativity and innovation.

Sager thanked the Saudi ministry of investment for choosing Kuwait as the first stop in its international roadshow to introduce the climate and investment opportunities of Saudi Arabia. The kingdom approved



Khalid Al-Falih



Mohammad Al-Sager



Mazen Al-Nahedh

in March 2021 a privatization system aimed at making 16 government sectors available to the private sector whose vision aims to raise its contribution to the GDP from 40 to 65 percent. The kingdom has also adopted the national strategy for industry and the national initiative for global supply chains. The country has come a long way in building a sustainable infrastructure in the tourism and cultural sectors and stimulating creativity and innovation.

President of the Federation of Saudi Chambers Hassan bin Mujib Al-Huwaizi said that the programs of the kingdom's Vision 2030 contributed to strengthening the capabilities of the Saudi economy to maintain a continuous pace of growth in 2022, as the programs present enormous opportunities.

"The Invest in Saudi Arabia Forum aims to expand the horizons of economic cooperation and explore the investment and trade opportunities available to the business sectors in both countries," Huwaizi said. The Saudi delegates attending the forum gave an overview of the various development projects taking place in the kingdom during presentations and an exhibition that followed. They included presentations on megaprojects such as NEOM, Qiddiya, the Red Sea, Diriyah, Al-Ula and others.

Singapore maintains growth forecast

SINGAPORE: Singapore said Monday it will stick to its economic growth forecast for 2023 despite the slowdown last year, encouraged by China's rapid reopening after years of crushing zero-Covid policies.

The city-state's economic performance is often seen as a useful barometer of the global environment because of its reliance on trade with the rest of the world.

Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry said in a statement that it would maintain its growth forecast of 0.5 to 2.5 percent. "Growth in China is projected to pick up in tandem with the faster-than-expected easing of its COVID-19 restrictions," the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) said in a statement. "This has led to improvements in the growth outlook of regional economies."

It also pointed to the easing of global commodity

prices, but cautioned that they "remain elevated with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war". Singapore's economy expanded 3.6 percent in 2022, slowing from the 8.9 percent growth in 2021, the MTI said.

Its government lifted the bulk of its COVID restrictions last year. On Monday, it also ended the requirement to wear face masks on public transport. "The economy still remains resilient despite the slightly softer GDP side as the job market is doing strong," said Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with CIMB Private Banking. Despite the reopening of China—the world's second-biggest economy—and other positive global trends, the MTI warned that uncertainties remain.

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In 2022, EBITDA stood firm at \$1.23 billion, with a margin of over 46 per cent, as Adnoc Drilling made excellent progress on the delivery



SINGAPORE: Singapore said on Monday it will stick to its economic growth forecast for 2023 despite the slowdown last year.

regional growth momentum if Chinese consumer demand for goods and services picks up in coming months, however, this may not suffice to offset the slowing demand story in other major economies like the US, Eurozone and the UK." —AFP

of further cost efficiencies while record net profit climbed to \$802 million with 33 per cent year-on-year growth. The company further noted that its highest-ever quarterly revenue generated in October-December 2022 quarter as it recorded 27 per cent year-on-year increase in revenue at \$733 million. Similarly, EBITDA surged 35 per cent at \$353 million and net profit soared 61 per cent to \$234 million primarily due to new rigs entering the operational fleet.

"I am proud of the outstanding results that Adnoc Drilling has delivered over the past 12 months. In addition to record net profit of \$802 million for the year, I am particularly pleased with the over \$10 billion of contract backlog we were awarded in the year by our long-term, highly supportive customers," Abdulrahman Abdulla Al-Seiari, chief executive officer of Adnoc Drilling, said. —Agencies

Russia says gas exports sank in 2022 but oil up

MOSCOW: Russia said Monday its gas exports plummeted by 25 percent in 2022 after the Ukraine conflict brought turmoil to Moscow's ties with key buyers in Europe. The Kremlin's decision to deploy troops to Ukraine in February last year was met with a flurry of sanctions imposed by the United States and Europe, which relied heavily on Russia to meet its energy needs.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak announced the figures and attributed the fall in gas exports to "the refusal of European countries to buy Russian gas". The European Union, once the largest buyer of Russian gas, has drastically reduced its imports during 2022.

In response to Russian intervention Germany scrapped the approval for the recently completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which would have deepened European reliance on Russian gas supplies. And in September explosions on sections of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines under the Baltic Sea saw Washington and Moscow trade blame over the incident. Novak, writing in the specialized journal "Energy Policy," also attributed the fall in exports to "sabotage" of the pipelines. "Gas production in 2022 totaled 673.8 bcm. Exports decreased by 25.1 percent to 184.4 bcm," Novak said. He said that while gas deliveries to Europe had dropped off sharply, those to new buyers, in particular China, were rising rapidly. "The record amount of gas supplied per day by Russia through the Power of Siberia pipeline was beaten more than once," Novak said.

"As a result, gas supplies to China via the Power of Siberia increased by 48 percent and reached a historical maximum of 15.4 bcm." He also said that Russian oil exports had increased 7.6 percent over 2022 compared to a year earlier. Novak said that going forward Russia was working to pivot its energy exports to countries that had not imposed sanctions on Moscow or criticized the Kremlin's offensive in Ukraine. —AFP

Adnoc Drilling net profit up 33% in 2022

ABU DHABI: Adnoc Drilling Company on Monday announced that its annual net profit surged 33 per cent to \$802 million last year as all segments achieved positive year-on-year performance that enabled the company to accelerate its production capacity target of five million barrels per day by 2027.

The company's accelerated rig acquisition program added 16 new drilling units in 2022, establishing one of the world's largest drilling and well completion fleets consisting of 115 rigs. In a state-

Business

Eurozone raises 2023 economic forecast as bloc skirts recession

20-nation area's economy now expected to expand by 0.9%

BRUSSELS: The eurozone economy will grow more than previously forecast in 2023 as the energy crisis eases and the single currency area "narrowly" avoids recession this winter, the European Commission said Monday. The 20-nation area's economy is now expected to expand by 0.9 percent instead of 0.3 percent, as "favorable developments" helped it weather the fallout of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Union's executive arm said.

Inflation is also expected to slow more than previously forecast after the war sent oil and gas prices soaring last year. "Continued diversification of supply sources and a sharp drop in consumption have left gas storage levels above the seasonal average of past years, and wholesale gas prices have fallen well below prewar levels," the commission said.

"In addition, the EU labor market has continued to perform strongly, with the unemployment rate remaining at its all-time low." Inflation is forecast to hit 5.6 percent this year, with the commission saying it appeared the "peak is now behind us" after a record high of 10.6 percent in October.

The European Central Bank and peers around the world launched a series of interest rate hikes last year in efforts to tame soaring inflation. The EU executive warned that economic "headwinds, however, remain strong". "Consumers and businesses continue to face high energy costs and core inflation (headline inflation excluding energy and

unprocessed food) was still rising in January," it said.

"As inflationary pressures persist, monetary tightening is set to continue, weighing on business activity and exerting a drag on investment." The European Commission left the eurozone growth forecast for 2024 unchanged at 1.5 percent. It predicted that inflation next year would be at 2.5 percent, still above the ECB's target of two percent.

The commission said that while uncertainty surrounding its forecast "remains high, risks to growth are broadly balanced". "Domestic demand could turn out higher than projected if the recent declines in wholesale gas prices pass through to consumer prices more strongly and consumption proves more resilient," it said. "Nonetheless, a potential reversal of that fall cannot be ruled out in the context of continued geopolitical tensions."

Rate rises ahead

ECB chief Christine Lagarde said this month that "overall, the economy has proved more resilient than expected". But she signaled the ECB would "stay the course" with interest rate increases in March.

Signs have grown the eurozone may have passed the worst of an economic shock, with inflation slowing from a peak in October and the single currency area eking out growth at the end of 2022.

The less gloomy data have given cause for hope that Russia's efforts to strangle crucial gas supplies to Europe may not trigger the deep downturn once



BRUSSELS: European Commissioner for the Economy Paolo Gentiloni (right) gives a press conference on Winter 2023 Economic Forecast at the EU headquarters in Brussels on February 13, 2023. — AFP

feared. As Moscow slashed deliveries following its invasion of Ukraine, European governments rolled out relief measures to cushion consumers and businesses from surging prices, and rushed to fill up

storage facilities. Wholesale gas prices have been easing while relatively mild winter weather has meant reserves have not been used up as quickly as expected. —AFP

On climate, most corporations more talk than action

PARIS: The world's biggest and richest companies are failing to deliver on their climate pledges, according to an in-depth analysis released Monday that calls on governments to crack down on corporate greenwashing. Under growing pressure from shareholders, governments and consumers, companies are racing to roll out strategies to reduce the carbon emissions of their operations, along with their products and services.

Twenty-four multinationals examined have all endorsed the Paris treaty target of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius, and aligned themselves with UN-backed campaigns to ensure that business plays its part in decarbonizing the global economy.

Staying under that critical temperature threshold will require slashing global greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent by 2030, and reaching "net zero" — with any residual emissions balanced by removals — by mid-century, the UN's IPCC science advisory panel has said. But the 2030 pledges of the 22 companies that made them would only slice 15 percent off their collective emissions, the report found.

And net zero targets adopted by all 24 multinationals — if met — would barely remove a third of their current emissions. "The overwhelming majority of these corporations are simply not delivering the goods they promised," the 2023 Corporate Climate Responsibility Monitor concluded.

Climate think tanks Carbon Market Watch and NewClimate Institute did a deep-dive into sectors ranging from the auto, shipping and aviation industries, to retail fashion, high tech and food, to steel and cement. No oil or gas companies were included.

Vague 'net zero' pledges

With combined earnings of more than \$3 trillion, the two dozen companies under the microscope account for some four percent of all global emissions — two billion tons of CO2 or its equivalent each year. Analysts assessed the integrity of each corporation's climate plan, looking at the accuracy of self-reported emissions, targets set for reducing them,

Corp greenwashing 'bad, getting worse'

PARIS: An in-depth analysis published Monday of the climate action claims made by 24 multinationals with a combined income of \$3 trillion shows that almost all are falling far short on their green promises.

"Corporate greenwashing is a serious problem, and a growing one," Gilles Dufresne, co-author of the 2023 Corporate Climate Responsibility Monitor report and policy lead for Carbon Market Watch, told AFP in an interview. "Spurious claims give the illusion that corporations are taking serious action to tackle the climate crisis when in fact they are sweeping it under the carpet." The interview has been lightly edited for concision and clarity.

What sort of claims are companies making?

"Carbon neutral", "good for nature", "net zero" — the average consumer just doesn't understand what these claims mean. Most people think "carbon neutrality" means that emissions have been reduced when actually they have only been compensated. This is misleading, because often it's going to cover only a portion of the emissions from a certain product, or it's going to rely on the purchase of emission reductions schemes that just don't deliver the climate impacts that they're supposed to. A project, for example, to protect a forest may have a massively exaggerating impact, and is vulnerable to forest destruction.

What's a better practice for firms?

For a company to say, "I've contributed to supporting this project" is much less risky in terms of

Companies: how they calculate their carbon footprint

The result, in tonnes of CO₂ emissions, varies considerably depending on which method is used



progress to date, and how heavily pledges depend on questionable compensation schemes known as carbon offsets.

"At a time when corporations need to come clear about their climate impact and shrink their carbon footprint, many are exploiting vague and misleading 'net zero' pledges to greenwash their brands while continuing with business as usual," said Carbon Market Watch executive director Sabine Frank.

Earning the best overall marks was shipping giant Maersk, whose plan for erasing its carbon footprint by 2040 was deemed to have "reasonable integrity".

The climate plans of eight corporate giants — including Apple, Google, Microsoft and steel-con-

glomerate ArcelorMittal — were judged to have "moderate integrity".

Swedish fast-fashion retail giant H&M, also in this tranche, has very ambitious emissions reduction targets, but parts of its green strategy could undermine them, the report found.

"The company's plans to switch to biomass and renewable electricity credits (RECs) in the supply chain could severely undermine those targets," NewClimate Institutes's Silke Mooldijk told AFP.

Biomass is associated with deforestation and CO₂ emissions, and the purchase of RECs "allows companies to report emission reductions that are not real," according to a recent study in Nature Climate Change. —AFP

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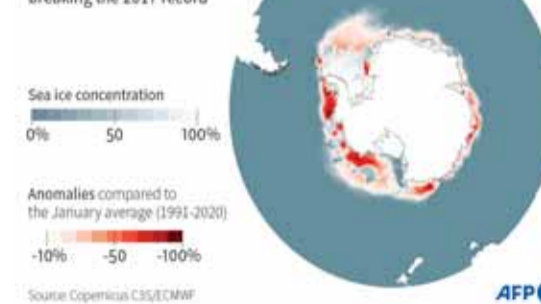
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Melting of the Antarctic ice sheet

The ice extent in January 2023 is the lowest ever recorded for the month of January, breaking the 2017 record



It is especially present in Europe and increasingly in the US, which is mostly where consumers care more about climate action. We've seen companies actually adopting targets for products sold in Europe that are not applicable to products sold elsewhere. The European Union is currently reviewing its consumer protection legislation, in particular in the context of green claims and greenwashing. As part of that there is an ongoing discussion on implementing a ban on 'carbon neutrality' claims.

Do misleading claims really matter?

It's preventing consumers and regulators from understanding why we need to transition and why we need to adopt behavioural changes, why we need to make costly investments, why we need to adopt regulation of emissions. Because if you can do everything in a carbon neutral way already — you can fly in a carbon neutral way, you can eat carbon neutral hamburgers and whatnot — then why change? —AFP

Ex-CEO Braun denies 'all charges' in Wirecard trial

MUNICH: Wirecard's ex-CEO Markus Braun denied all charges against him and insisted he had no knowledge of the massive accounting fraud that brought down the German payments firm, as he took the stand for the first time on Monday. Prosecutors have accused the 53-year-old of commercial gang fraud, market manipulation, false accounting and breach of trust for his role in the Wirecard scandal.

"I reject all the charges," Braun told judges at his trial in Munich. The once celebrated company imploded in June 2020 after it was forced to admit that 1.9 billion euros (\$2 billion) in cash, meant to be sitting in trustee accounts in Asia, didn't actually exist.

Austrian-born Braun is in the dock alongside Wirecard's ex-accounting boss Stephan von Erffa and Oliver Bellenhaus, the former head of Wirecard's Dubai subsidiary. Their high-profile trial opened in December, with prosecutors alleging that the trio invented revenue streams with third-party companies to inflate Wirecard's accounts and make the loss-making company appear profitable.

Braun, who has been in custody for over two years, has always denied wrongdoing.

His defense team has instead painted fugitive ex-chief operating officer Jan Marsalek as the mastermind behind the fraud. In his first lengthy address to the court, Braun on Monday said he "had no knowledge" of fraudulent activities at Wirecard.

"Nor did I join together with others to form a gang," he added. Wirecard's downfall came as "a shock," Braun said, wearing his trademark turtle-neck under a dark suit jacket. He also expressed his "deepest regret" for Wirecard employees and shareholders.

The allegations against Wirecard centered on operations that were overseen by Marsalek, Braun told the court, adding that he himself believed the third-party business dealings were genuine. Marsalek, a shadowy figure with ties to foreign intelligence services, has been on the run ever since Wirecard collapsed. He was last year reported to be hiding out in Moscow. Despite blaming him for the fraud, Braun also spoke of his admiration for his former right-hand man. Having fellow Austrian Marsalek at the firm had at the time seemed like a "stroke of luck", Braun told judges. "I know that sounds unbelievable now, but he had an incredible energy."

Braun's co-accused Bellenhaus, who has admitted to fraud and turned chief witness for the prosecution, offered a different version of events when he took the stand in December. Bellenhaus told judges that Wirecard was "a scam" from the start with Braun "at the core of everything". Braun's defense lawyers have sought to undermine Bellenhaus's testimony, saying Bellenhaus was not a witness but "a main perpetrator in a gang whose sole aim was to embezzle money". Wirecard's collapse sent shockwaves through Germany, drawing parallels with the accounting scandal at US energy giant Enron in the early 2000s. The trial is set to run well into 2024. —AFP



Markus Braun

Business

Rising panic over blocked imports in crisis-hit Pakistan

Government awaits a lifeline bailout from IMF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan business chiefs are clamoring for the cash-strapped government to allow manufacturing materials stuck at the key port of Karachi into the country, warning that a failure to lift a ban on imports will leave millions jobless. Faced with critically low US-dollar reserves, the government has banned all but essential food and medicine imports until a lifeline bailout is agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Industries such as steel, textiles and pharmaceuticals are barely functioning, forcing thousands of factories to close and deepening unemployment. The steel industry has warned of severe supply-chain issues caused by a shortage of scrap metal, which is melted down and turned into steel bars. In the past few weeks, the bars have reached record prices.

"We directly feed materials to the construction industry which is linked to some 45 downstream industries," said Wajid Bukhari, head of Pakistan's Large Scale Steel Producers Association. "This whole cycle is going to be jammed."

Smaller factories have already shut after exhausting stocks, while some larger plants are just days from closing, he said. With an import bill of around \$150 million a month, the steel industry says its operations directly and indirectly affect several million jobs.

Latest data from the central bank said foreign exchange reserves had plunged to just \$2.9 billion-enough for less than three weeks of imports. "This situation triggers fears the construction industry will close down very soon, plunging thousands of laborers into unemployment," the Constructors Association of Pakistan said, echoing calls for steel and machinery to be exempted from the import ban.

'Grinding halt'

Years of financial mismanagement and political instability have damaged Pakistan's economy-exacerbated by a global energy crisis and devastating floods that submerged a third of the country. Alongside a shortage of raw materials, soaring inflation, rising fuel costs and a plummeting rupee have battered manufacturing industries.

An IMF delegation left Pakistan on Friday after urgent talks to revive a stalled loan program ended with no deal, leaving lingering uncertainty for business leaders. The textile and garment industry is responsible for around 60 percent of Pakistan's exports and employs about 35 million people, processing items such as towels, underwear and linen for major brands across the world.

"The textile industry should be prioritized," said Shahid Sattar, secretary general of the All Pakistan Textile Association. "We are the mainstay of the country's exports," he told AFP.

"If you don't have exports, how will you shore up your foreign exchange reserves? Then consequently, how will the economy recover?"

After floods devastated domestic cotton crops last summer the sector is importing a significant amount of raw fabric. Factory owners appealed to the finance minister last month for "direct intervention" to unjam the backlog, which also affects dyes, buttons and zippers.

"The textile industry has more or less come to a grinding halt in Pakistan. We don't have raw materials to operate our mills," Sattar said. Around 30 percent of the textile mills have shut down operations completely, while the rest are working at less than 40 per cent capacity.

Tauqeer ul Haq, the head of the Pakistan



KARACHI: People buy vegetables at a market in Karachi. An IMF team left Pakistan on February 10 having failed to reach a deal on financial aid that would help the country avoid economic collapse. — AFP

Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, said 40 medicine factories were on the brink of closure because of a lack of key ingredients.

Pakistani economist Kaiser Bengali said the supply-chain crisis was "feeding inflation and also hitting the government's revenues". It is also escalating unemployment and fuelling poverty, with a large proportion of construction and factory workers in Pakistan paid daily.

"On average during regular production, workers are paid for around 25 days (per month) but now they are getting wages for 10 to 15 days. While some companies have even suspended their production and workers will only get paid once manufacturing resumes," Bengali told AFP. Nasir Iqbal, an economist at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, said export bans like the one currently in place "can never be a sustainable solution". — AFP

Botswana mulls to cut ties with De Beers

GABORONE, Botswana: Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi on Sunday warned that his country may sever ties with diamond giant De Beers if talks to renegotiate a sales deal prove unfavorable to his government. The country is Africa's leading diamond producer, and Masisi called on the nation to rally behind his government as it tries to hammer out a better deal.

A 2011 sales agreement governing terms for the marketing of diamonds produced by Debswana—a 50-50 joint venture between the government and De Beers, which auctions most of the gemstones—was set to end in 2021. It was extended by the parties citing the outbreak of coronavirus as the reason for the delay to conclude negotiations and it will run through June 30, 2023.

"If we don't achieve a win-win situation each party will have to pack its bags and go," Masisi said at a rally of his ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in his home village, Moshupa, about 65 kilometers (40 miles) from the capital Gaborone. Masisi said he was kickstarting the campaign for the 2024 legislative election, adding that Botswana was facing a "Goliath" as far as the negotiations were concerned.

Under the 2011 agreement De Beers sold 90 percent of diamonds while Botswana auctioned 10 percent through its Okavango Diamond Company. In 2020, Botswana's share was raised to 25 percent.

Now "we got insight into how the diamond market works and we discovered that we had been receiving less than what we should get," said Masisi, who spoke both in English and the local Tswana language.

"We also discovered that our diamonds are making a lot of profit and that the (2011) agreement had not been beneficial to us". "We are upping the stakes because we want a larger share from our diamonds. It can't be business as usual," he warned. —AFP

London Heathrow enjoys best start since before COVID

LONDON: London's Heathrow airport has enjoyed its best start to the year since before the coronavirus pandemic, it revealed on Monday. More than 5.4 million passengers passed through the hub in January, touching a level not seen since the start of 2020.

Demand also rebounded after severe disruption in the run-up to Christmas, when Border Force staff went on strike over pay. "Heathrow is back to its best," said chief executive John Holland-Kaye in a group statement. The hub added Monday that it welcomed recent news that British Airways and Virgin Atlantic will restart flights to China in the spring after the Asian giant fully lifted its "zero COVID" restrictions. COVID ravaged global aviation, grounding planes worldwide and forcing airlines to slash thousands of jobs in 2020.

Demand has since recovered sharply after lockdowns were lifted, but airlines and airports alike have struggled to recruit sufficient staff. —AFP

Gulf Bank provides unique services to management clients

KUWAIT: As part of its continuous efforts to provide tailored services and distinctive products to its various consumer segments, Gulf Bank is providing an array of unique products to its Wealth Management clients. The new products are tailored to the clients' needs and lifestyles and are designed with the requirements of high net-worth individuals in mind.

On this occasion, the newly appointed Assistant General Manager of Consumer Banking - Wealth Management, Sattam Al-Marzouq, said, "In keeping with Gulf Bank's strategy for the year 2025, Gulf Bank's Wealth Management division is continuing to provide private and distinguished banking services to its customers. In return, these services contribute towards consolidating the relationship between the Bank and its customers, and the ongoing surveying and studying of the clients' banking needs and requirements."

Al-Marzouq indicated that Gulf Bank has dedicated one of its latest branches at Crystal Tower in service of its Wealth Management clientele; as part of its commitment to fulfilling the segment's unique banking requirements. The branch exclusively caters to Gulf Bank's Wealth Management clients and boasts a distinctive modern design - equipped with state-of-the-art technology that is designed to provide a seamless banking experience. Al-Marzouq added, "We look forward to further meeting our Wealth Management clients' needs and to offer them with more opportunities to conduct their banking requirements in an easy and swift manner."

He noted that Private Wealth Management clients



Sattam Al-Marzouq

have personal account managers who are in charge of managing their clients' banking needs, who provide them with financial and investment solutions designed to achieve their clients' goals and preserve their wealth. Account managers are in regular communication with their clients and are always ready to meet with them to discuss the status

of their financial goals. Clients can also obtain credit cards (Visa Infinite or MasterCard World) that grant them comprehensive travel and accident insurance, access to airport lounges, Dine & Fly services, restaurant discounts and local concierge services, in addition to being enrolled into the Gulf Points program, and many more.

It is worth noting that Gulf Bank's Wealth Management division was established in 2010 to meet the unique needs and requirements of Gulf Bank's Wealth Management clients. Over the last decade, the division has witnessed exceptional development and has offered its client segment an array of tailored services.

Al-Marzouq mentioned that Gulf Bank has become one of the pioneers in Kuwait in providing investment alternatives in Kuwaiti dinars, that exceed the returns of deposits, pointing to the Bank's success in being part of marketing the largest bond issuance in Kuwait of KD 165 million to its customers to KIPCO Holding.

He also noted that Gulf Bank's WISE Investments is an advisory and portfolio management service that follows a Nobel Prize-winning investment strategy, providing Gulf Bank clients with the opportunity to invest in international markets in an easy, transparent, and cost-efficient way. The prin-

stc launches Mobile podcasting workshop

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, launched a Mobile Podcasting workshop in collaboration with the Youth Public Authority in Kuwait. The initiative falls in line with stc's corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework, while especially focusing on two of the program's key pillars: education and entrepreneurship. The workshop also serves as an innovative concept launched under the Company's February celebrations in commemoration of Kuwait's National and Liberation days.

Led by social media and digital expert Hind Al-Nahedh, the Mobile Podcasting workshop aimed to provide attendees with a comprehensive introduction to storytelling and audio talk shows. The workshop covered the various stages in launching a podcast which include the planning and preparation, production and recording, and finally the publishing and marketing stage. Aside from the different stages of launching a podcast, Al-Nahedh showcased the attendees how to identify the target audience, effectively use voiceovers, how to upload and manage the podcast page through a mobile device, as well as additional tips and tricks that can assist the aspiring journalists to master their craft.

During the workshop, Ahmad Al-Nowaiabet, PR and Social Media Manager at stc, informed the attendees regarding stc's entertainment platform, stc TV. The platform offers a variety of entertainment features and programs that can inspire the attendees as they learn more about Mobile Podcasting. Furthermore, stc organized several contests for the participants with valuable prizes and free subscrip-

tions to stc TV. stc indicated in a statement that the workshop comes under stc's social responsibility program as well as the February celebrations initiated by the Company. The Company's February celebrations campaign kicked off at the start of the month with the first initiative being a professional photography workshop organized in collaboration with the leading online e-learning platform, dawrat. In continuation of its activities and programs under the campaign, stc plans to continue hosting such initiatives that empower the younger generation throughout the month of February.

As a digital pioneer, stc highlighted that it is committed to empowering the younger generation by evolving their understanding of how to utilize the technology available today to tap into their creative potentials. Embracing the digital tools and platforms available to the public can positively influence the younger generation in pursuing a productive path that can ultimately enhance their lifestyles.

The primary objective behind this workshop was to help equip aspiring podcasters and journalists with the necessary tools they need to develop digital

projects that are relevant and engaging. Through hands-on training workshops like these, stc hopes to further its mission of fostering innovative thinking within society and promoting social engagement through technology-focused initiatives such as podcasts. In this regard, stc thanked Hind Al-Nahedh for delivering the workshop in an engaging and inspiring way that strongly appeals to those who are interested in starting their own podcasts.

principle of WISE Investments is to invest through international, diversified portfolios while achieving the ideal risk-adjusted return in the long term. Al-Marzouq indicated that one of Gulf Bank's most important goals is to preserve customers' wealth, provide safe investment alternatives, and achieve greater geographical diversification in global markets, adding, "Through wealth management, we are keen to provide the best financing services and tools to meet the needs of customers."

Sattam Al-Marzouq has over 22 years of banking experience, and prior to moving to Gulf Bank, he held several banking positions, the previous one being Executive Manager in Wealth Management at NBK.

Al-Marzouq holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Colorado and is certified in Wealth Management from the American Academy of Financial Management. In addition to his academic achievements, Al-Marzouq obtained a number of training courses in management and leadership from Harvard University, Cornell University, and the American University of Beirut.

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 robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit both the internal and external community. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.



Ahmad Al-Nowaiabet speaks during the workshop.



Lifestyle | Features



Leonel Costa, 38 years old, owner of Bobi, a 30 years old Portuguese dog that has been declared the world's oldest dog by Guinness World Records, caresses his pet at their home in the village of Conqueiros near Leiria. — AFP photos



A picture shows Bobi, a 30 year-old Portuguese dog that has been declared the world's oldest dog by Guinness World Records, next to his cat friend at his home in the village of Conqueiros near Leiria.



A picture shows Bobi, a 30 year-old Portuguese dog that has been declared the world's oldest dog by Guinness World Records.

WORLD'S OLDEST DOG BOBI, 30, IS ALSO ONE OF THE LUCKIEST

Bobi, a 30-year-old guard dog who cheated death in his first days, is living out the end of his life as a celebrity in central Portugal after being declared the world's oldest dog ever. When he was recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest dog on February 1, he broke a nearly century-old record previously held by Bluey, an Australian cattle dog who died in 1939 at the age of 29 years and five months.

A purebred Rafeiro, a Portuguese livestock guard dog whose normal life

expectancy is between 12 and 14, Bobi was not supposed to live at all, never mind make it this long. He was born on May 11, 1992, along with three other pups in a wood storage shed owned by the Costa family in the small village of Conqueiros in central Portugal.

Because the family owned so many animals, the father decided they couldn't keep the newborn puppies and the parents took them from the shed the next day, while the mother dog Gira was out, said Leonel Costa, who was eight years

old at the time. But they didn't realise they had left one puppy behind—his colouring made him blend in with the surrounding wood.

Secret existence

Leonel and his sister were heartbroken that the puppies were being killed. But then they noticed that Gira kept returning to the shed, had a look and discovered the surviving puppy. They decided to keep his existence a secret until he could open his eyes. "We knew they wouldn't do any-

thing to him then and that Bobi would remain with us. So we kept the secret," Leonel told AFP. "Afterwards, we were punished, but it was worth it," he said.

Today Bobi is living out his twilight years oblivious that he is a world record holder, except for the media visits following the Guinness classification. "We didn't expect this reaction," Leonel said. Leonel attributes Bobi's longevity to the tranquility of country living and his human diet, which includes lots of meat and fish. "He has always eaten what we eat," he said.

He has never been chained up or put on a leash and used to roam the woods around the village.

Today walking has become difficult, so he spends most of the time hanging out in the yard with cats or napping after meals. Many of the Costa dogs have lived a long life. Bobi's mother Gira lived to 18 years and another dog lived to 22. "We see situations like this as a normal result of the life they have, but Bobi is one of a kind," Leonel told Guinness. — AFP

Aussie cafe offers \$140 cup of coffee

At \$140 a pop, one cafe in Melbourne, Australia is serving up no ordinary cup of joe. Melbourne has long been famed for its coffee culture, with Italian and Greek migrants infusing the city with all things bean and cup since the 1940s. And for those looking for a next-level experience, one cafe is selling a cup at 50 times the price of a regular flat white or espresso. The coffee—hailed as one of the world's finest—is grown in Panama's Chiriqui region.

Dubbed "Black Jaguar", the beans came first at the prestigious 2022 Best of Panama auction in the Natural Geisha category, scoring 96.5 out of 100. They sold for over \$2,000 per pound (450



This photo shows Proud Mary owner Nolan Hirte (left) and project manager Brodie Roberts (right) sampling a brew of coffee at their cafe in Melbourne.

grams). Only 100 pounds were up for grabs and Australian cafe group Proud Mary snapped up a pound.

"I had an out-of-body, enlightened kind of tingle. It was really clearly a special cup of coffee, taste-wise, character-wise," said Proud Mary owner Nolan Hirte, who was on the judging panel. "It was right in your face, so expressive and so clear. "There's something about it that's just 'wow'." The Black Jaguar is the most expensive coffee Proud Mary has ever bought. They made 22 cups available in Melbourne, and a limited amount was stocked at their cafes in Austin and Portland in the United States.

One connoisseur flew two hours from Sydney to buy the deluxe drop, which is served as a pour-over. Melbourne is one of the richest cities in one of the richest countries in the world. Even so, US\$140 is well above what most people would pay for a cup of coffee. But cinematographer Jake Reeder, a self-described "massive

coffee nerd" who won a taste of the Black Jaguar in a competition, said he would have no qualms paying for it.

The 27-year-old described it as a "moving experience". "Anytime you're on the receiving end of a product that's received so much love and care and attention," he said, "it makes you feel something." Hirte believes coffee is a snip compared with more expensive drinks such as wine and tea.

"Coffee is far more complex than wine will ever be, but it often gets roasted dark, has sugar added to it and milk poured on it—it can be so much more," he said. "And does anyone talk about how expensive tea can be, because it out-plays coffee massively." "Why are we trying to hold it back, to think coffee can just have a ceiling?"—AFP



This photo shows coffee being filtered at the Proud Mary cafe in Melbourne. — AFP photos



This photo shows coffee being filtered at the Proud Mary cafe in Melbourne.



This photo shows Black Jaguar beans displayed on the coffee menu at the Proud Mary cafe in Melbourne.

Trugoy of De La Soul dies at 54

David Jolicoeur, member of the De La Soul trio who went by "Trugoy the Dove," has died, US media reported Sunday. He was 54 years old. Trugoy's death was first reported by music outlet AllHipHop and later confirmed by his representative Tony Ferguson to The New York Times and The Washington Post. No cause of death was reported.

Trugoy had spoken publicly in recent years about his struggles with congestive heart failure, and said his health problems had prevented him from performing and touring with his fellow De La Soul members. The pioneering hip-hop group—which also includes Posdnuos and Maseo—formed in 1988 in Amityville in New York's Long Island.

They gained a following for their eclectic sampling, lighthearted wordplay and influence in alternative hip-hop, including jazz rap. The group exuded a positive spirit in contrast to the image of gangsta rap on the West Coast. The New York trio recently began releasing their classic early hits on streaming platforms, following a decades-long battle over their samples.

The New York trio's first six albums, dating from 1989 to 2001, had previously not appeared on streaming platforms



because their label, Tommy Boy, never tackled the huge legal task of clearing all the samples (there are some 60 to 70 on "3 Feet..." alone). News of Trugoy's death prompted quick reaction from industry peers, including the influential MC Big Daddy Kane: "It was a honor to share so many stages with you."

Rapper Busta Rhymes tweeted on Sunday: "Complete Disbelief that I'm typing this right now. This one hurts Bad. Dave aka Trugoy the Dove Fly Beloved Fly.. Rest Easy King." Pharrell Williams joined the outpouring for Trugoy, tweeting that he was "sending love, light and positive vibrations to his family, The Soul and everyone whose lives have been touched by his existence."— AFP



'Magic Mike' tops N America box office but football wins out

Steven Soderbergh's new comedy-drama "Magic Mike's Last Dance" topped the North American box office this weekend with an estimated \$8.2 million in ticket sales, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said Sunday. That rather paltry total for the Warner Bros. film, the third in the "Magic Mike" series starring Channing Tatum as a big-hearted stripper, was doubtless hurt by competition Sunday from football's Super Bowl, the year's most-watched US sporting event. Analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research called it "a soft opening for a comedy drama sequel." It was the first time since September that the top film failed to hit double digits.

But one filmmaker—James Cameron—had nothing to complain about this week-

end. His "Avatar: The Way of Water" took in \$6.9 million to place second for the Friday-through-Sunday period, while a remastered 3D version of his blockbuster "Titanic" placed third at \$6.4 million—the first time a director has simultaneously had two films in the top five.

Fourth place went to Paramount's "80 for Brady," at \$6 million. Veteran actors Lily Tomlin, Jane Fonda, Rita Moreno and Sally Field star as a group of friends traveling to watch famed NFL quarterback Tom Brady play in the 2017 Super Bowl.

And in fifth, off sharply from last weekend's top spot, was Universal's "Knock at the Cabin," at \$4.4 million. The creepy thriller stars Jonathan Groff and Ben Aldridge as a couple whose vacation stay, with two young children, in a remote cabin is disturbed when a mystery man (Dave Bautista) comes to the door to issue a devastating warning.

Rounding out the top 10 were: "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish" (\$3.9 million) "A Man Called Otto" (\$2.6 million) "Missing" (\$2.6 million) "M3GAN" (\$1.7 million) "Plane" (\$1.2 million)—AFP

Lifestyle | Features



CASBAH OF ALGIERS: BEAUTIFUL CITY WITH RICH HISTORY ON MEDITERRANEAN



The Casbah of Algiers is a beautiful icon in the Algerian capital, recognized by the UNESCO in 1992 as world heritage and described as one of the most beautiful locations overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. The city was built on a mountain in the 16th century, between 1516 and 1592 as a headquarters for the Ottoman leader and a military base tasked with protecting Algeria. The city had several gates on all four sides. Casbah had many palaces, 109 mosques, 32 shrines, a total of 166 religious monuments upon the French colonization. — KUNA



Berlin film fest promises starry nights, meaty fare

The Berlin film festival, Europe's first major cinema showcase of the year, opens on Thursday with a focus on the fight for freedom in Ukraine and Iran and the starriest line-up since the pandemic. The 73rd Berlinale, traditionally the most politically minded of the big three European festivals, will coincide with the first anniversary of the start of the Russian invasion.

The event will screen nine new movies, primarily documentaries, about Ukrainian life in wartime, including Sean Penn's "Superpower", shot by the two-time Oscar winner in Kyiv last February. Iran's embattled independent filmmakers will also take centre stage with a series of premieres and panel discussions looking at the country, which has been rocked by rights protests since September.

Artistic director Carlo Chatrian said the 11-day festival was "standing shoulder to shoulder with those who fight to express their ideas". He promised films that "tell the story of the world with all its wounds as well as its heartbreaking beauty".

Spielberg, Mirren, Krieps

French-Iranian actor Golshifteh Farahani ("Paterson") will serve on the jury for the Golden and Silver Bear top prizes headed by Hollywood star Kristen Stewart, at 32 the youngest president in the festival's history. Nineteen films from around the world will vie for the main awards, including "Manodrome" starring Jesse Eisenberg and Adrien Brody, billed as a thriller about masculinity in crisis.

The European bureau chief of The Hollywood Reporter, Scott Roxborough, told AFP that after several editions marred by the coronavirus outbreak, the Berlinale was back with "big star power" and "gala red carpet bonanzas". Three-time Academy Award winner Steven Spielberg is due in the German capital to collect an honorary Golden Bear for his life's work, spotlighted in a retrospective.



This file photo shows US director Steven Spielberg posing with the awards for Best Director - Motion Picture and Best Picture - Drama for "The Fabelmans".

British actor Helen Mirren will premiere the keenly awaited "Golda" in which she stars as Israel's only female prime minister, Golda Meir. And Vicky Krieps, the acclaimed Luxembourg-born actor who made her breakthrough opposite Daniel Day-Lewis in "Phantom Thread", will unveil her turn as renowned Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann in a biopic by veteran German director Margarethe von Trotta. Von Trotta "will be adding to her list of phenomenal feminist figures of the last two centuries", after acclaimed dramas about icons such as philosopher Hannah Arendt and revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, Roxborough said.

'Explosion of manga'

The Berlinale has a stronger track record than Cannes or Venice for includ-

ing female directors, who make up about 40 percent of participants at this year's Berlinale. The opening night film will be Rebecca Miller's "She Came to Me", a romantic comedy about a composer fighting writer's block, starring Peter Dinklage of "Game of Thrones", Anne Hathaway and Marisa Tomei. John Malkovich will present "Seneca-On the Creation of Earthquakes", a surreal take on the mentor of the tyrant Nero in Ancient Rome.

And "Boom! Boom! The World vs. Boris Becker"—a look at the travails of the German tennis champion by award-winning US documentary filmmaker Alex Gibney—will make its debut. Roxborough noted that the Berlinale has a reputation for "finding new voices" and launching up-and-coming talents.

Berlin "is the place for discoveries because the selection committees are quite good at finding stuff overlooked by other festivals", he said. Roxborough said he was looking forward to new movies by Brandon Cronenberg-son of horror king David and Korean-Canadian director Celine Song, who caused a sensation at last month's Sundance film festival with her semi-autobiographical drama "Past Lives". And he predicted that animated fantasy feature "Suzume" by Makoto Shinkai—already a blockbuster in Japan—could be "the biggest film to come out of Berlin this year" amid a global boom in Japanese anime. — AFP

Main line-up at Berlin film festival

The 73rd Berlinale, Europe's first major film festival of the year, starts on Thursday with new movies from around the world screening in the main showcase. Nineteen pictures will vie for the Golden and Silver Bear prizes at the 11-day event, with a jury led by US actor Kristen Stewart. Sixteen of the features in the main showcase are world premieres and one is a feature debut.

Six of the movies in competition are by women and three of the directors identify as non-binary. The Berlinale Special section features other notable films that will have gala screenings. Here are their titles, directors and production countries.

Main competition

"20,000 especies de abejas" (20,000 Species of Bees), Estibaliz Urresola Solaguren (Spain)
 "Art College 1994", Liu Jian (China)
 "Bai Ta Zhi Guang" (The Shadowless Tower), Zhang Lu (China)
 "Bis ans Ende der Nacht" (Till the End of the Night), Christoph Hochhaeusler (Germany)
 "BlackBerry", Matt Johnson with Jay Baruchel, Glenn Howerton, Cary Elwes (Canada)
 "Disco Boy", Giacomo Abbruzzese with Franz Rogowski (France/Italy/Poland/Belgium)
 "Le grand chariot" (The Plough), Philippe Garrel with Louis Garrel, Esther Garrel, Lena Garrel (France/Switzerland)
 "Ingeborg Bachmann-Reise in die Wueste (Ingeborg Bachmann-Journey into the Desert), Margarethe von Trotta with Vicky Krieps (Switzerland/Austria/Germany/Luxembourg)
 "Irgendwann werden wir uns alles

erzaehlen" (Someday We'll Tell Each Other Everything), Emily Atef (Germany)

"Limbo", Ivan Sen with Simon Baker and Rob Collins (Australia)
 "Mal Viver" (Bad Living), Joao Canijo (Portugal/France)

"Manodrome", John Trengove with Jesse Eisenberg, Adrien Brody, Odessa Young (Britain/US)

"Music", Angela Schanelec (Germany/France/Serbia)

"Past Lives", Celine Song (US)

"Roter Himmel" (Afire), Christian Petzold with Thomas Schubert, Paula Beer (Germany)

"Sur l'Adamant" (On the Adamant), Nicolas Philibert (France/Japan)

"The Survival of Kindness", Rolf de Heer (Australia)

"Suzume", Makoto Shinkai (Japan)

"Totem", Lila Aviles (Mexico/Denmark/France)

Berlinale Special

"Boom! Boom! The World vs. Boris Becker", Alex Gibney with Boris Becker (Britain/US)

"Golda", Guy Nattiv with Helen Mirren, Camille Cottin, Liev Schreiber (Britain)

"Kiss the Future", Nenad Cicin-Sain (US/Ireland)

"L'ultima notte di Amore" (Last Night of Amore), Andrea Di Stefano (Italy)

"Seneca" (Seneca-On the Creation of Earthquakes), Robert Schwentke with John Malkovich, Louis Hofmann, Geraldine Chaplin (Germany/Morocco)

"She Came to Me", Rebecca Miller with Peter Dinklage, Marisa Tomei, Joanna Kulig, Tahar Rahim, Anne Hathaway (US)

"Sonne und Beton" (Sun and Concrete), David Wnendt (Germany)

"Superpower" Sean Penn, Aaron Kaufman with Sean Penn, Volodymyr Zelensky (US)

"TAR", Todd Field with Cate Blanchett, Nina Hoss, Noemie Merlant (US) — AFP



Workers hold a banner depicting the Berlinale bear, to be installed on the Berlinale Palast facade, six days ahead of the film festival opening, in Berlin, Germany. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features



Two men look at a Harley-Davidson vintage model during the classic motorcycles parade in Varadero, Matanzas Province, Cuba. — AFP photos



Cuban Harley-Davidson riders gather for a parade of classic motorcycles in Varadero, Matanzas Province, Cuba.



Detail of a Harley-Davidson motorbike at an exhibition of classical motorcycles in Varadero, Matanzas Province, Cuba.

CUBA'S HARLEY-DAVIDSONS A LABOR OF LOVE FOR ISLAND'S SUPER-FANS

Cuban Carlos Pupo Sablon spared no effort to join up with his fellow Harley-Davidson enthusiasts. He got up at 4:00am to drive his electric blue Harley 660 kilometers (410 miles) over 13 hours-despite fuel shortages-to be there. Cuba's Harley-Davidsons are not as well known as the island nation's collection of vintage American cars, but they also contribute to a palpable feeling of stepping back in time.

There are only around 200 on the island-compared to 60,000 classic cars-but their owners tenderly care for and repair them to keep the hum of their engines audible on the island. For the past 12 years, Harley enthusiasts have met up annually in Varadero-the seaside resort 145-kilometers (90 miles) east of Havana to "share the passion" over a long weekend, explained Raul Brito, 60.

He is one of the event's founders and the proud owner of a 1960s Harley, "the last model to enter the island" after the 1959 communist revolution. Until then, there were several thousands of the iconic motorcycles in Cuba, with even police riding them. But they lost popularity following the communist revolution that created a stigma against anything associated with the capitalist United States.

Antonio Ramirez, 60, is a former taxi driver who has reinvented himself as a bike mechanic. He owns four Harleys, including a custom-made orange tricycle. His first bike previously belonged to his grandfather and then his father "who used it to go to work." Now, restoring Harleys has become a business for Ramirez. "I buy them in parts and then



Cuban Harley-Davidson riders gather for a parade of classic motorcycles in Varadero, Matanzas Province, Cuba.

restore them," he said. But that has only really become possible over the last decade with the loosening of trade restrictions with the US, and helped by the development of Cuba's tourism industry.

Ramirez has been able to source original parts thanks to "family, friends and foreigners" traveling in Cuba. "It was more difficult before, you had to improvise to create everything. Now it's easier to import parts, but we still make a lot by hand," said Sergio Sanchez, a mechanic from Pinar del Rio, 300 kilometers (186 miles) away. Consequently, "there are few original Harleys, almost none, due to the lack of parts." As a teenager,

Sanchez used to borrow his father's Harley, but "it is impossible to find a 1947 piston nowadays."

'More difficult, more expensive'

As is the case with many products in a country that suffers severe shortages due to 60 years of US sanctions, word of mouth and WhatsApp groups are the keys to finding a good deal. This year, Sanchez turned up to the bikers' weekend with a white 1947 Harley that used to belong to the police. Thanks to the 2014 restoration of diplomatic ties between Washington and Havana that sparked an explosion in tourism, it was possible once more to source parts that used to be out



Harley-Davidson enthusiasts participate in a parade of classic motorcycles in Varadero, Matanzas Province.

of reach, said Sandy Leon, 46, who helped restore the white Harley in 2019.

But the good times did not last as Donald Trump succeeded Barack Obama in 2017 and gradually ramped up sanctions that hit tourism. In the first four months of 2019, 250,000 Americans visited Cuba, almost double the corresponding period in 2018. But Trump barred US cruise ships from landing in Cuba and the flow of American tourists dried up.

"Now it's more difficult and more expensive" to source parts, said Leon. Cuba's economic crisis that has seen the peso depreciate has also complicated matters. Pupo Sablon was recognized for his efforts, winning the prize for having

traveled the furthest distance to attend the event. He managed to buy his striking blue Harley after making a deal with a Canadian enthusiast who produced the \$15,000 needed in return for the right to ride the Harley when visiting the island of 11 million people. Before then, the Harley had "remained in the same family since it left the factory in 1951." Pupo Sablon restored it with "parts from that era" in order to maintain its "original aesthetic." Just like its colorful vintage cars, Cuba's motorbikes made before 1960 cannot be exported because they are considered part of its "national heritage." — AFP



Barbadian singer Rihanna performs during the halftime show of Super Bowl LVII between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. — AFP photos



Barbadian singer Rihanna performs during the halftime show of Super Bowl.



Barbadian singer Rihanna performs during the halftime show of Super Bowl.



Rihanna made her long-awaited return to the stage at the Super Bowl with a career-spanning medley of pop bangers, but it was her baby bump that dominated the conversation. The megastar appeared in the stadium midair on a floating stage, donning a clingy, all-red ensemble featuring a molded bustier-and a belt below what many viewers deduced was another mini RiRi in the making.

Representatives for the singer confirmed the speculation to trade magazines Rolling Stone and The Hollywood Reporter: Rihanna is pregnant with her second child. The 34-year-old welcomed her first child, a son, with rapper A\$AP Rocky in May. Musically speaking, fans who hoped for some fresh tracks were disappointed: Rihanna's night on the world's biggest stage offered a nostalgia tour of hits past.

She delivered her club smashes including "Where Have You Been" to "Only Girl (In the World)" and the time-tested "We Found Love." "Rude Boy," "Bitch Better Have My Money," "Work" and "All of the Lights" were also on the setlist, as a sea of dancers performed stunning acrobatics. "Wild Thoughts" "Run This Town" and, of course, "Umbrella" and "Diamonds" rounded out the show.

She did not, as many stars do, bring out any guest artists, commanding the stage all on her own. The evening marked a reversal after Rihanna had previously turned down the gig in protest of the National Football League's handling of race issues. But in accepting the coveted slot this time around, the Barbados-born singer said it was "important for representation." "It's important for my son to see this."

Since releasing "Anti" in early 2016, Robyn Rihanna Fenty has taken a break from recording but has by no means taken it easy: she's become a billionaire, parlaying her music achievements into successful makeup, lingerie and high-fashion brands. Since her last album Rihanna has performed occasional features and more recently recorded music for the "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" soundtrack. But the album she's been teasing for years remains the stuff of myth-and seemed it would stay so awhile longer. — AFP



Barbadian singer Rihanna performs during the halftime show of Super Bowl.

Sports

India stun Pakistan as Lanka win again at T20 World Cup

India beat arch-rivals by seven wickets

News in brief

Swiatek dominates rankings

PARIS: Poland's Iga Swiatek continued to dominate the WTA rankings on Monday, with the only notable change the exit of Estonia's Annett Kontaveit from the Top 20. A distant second behind Swiatek, was the Belarussian Aryna Sabalenka, who won the Australian Open. Tunisian Ons Jabeur remained third. Kontaveit, who won the St Petersburg tournament a year ago but lost in the round of 16 in Abu Dhabi last week, dropped nine spots to 27th. Swiss Belinda Bencic, who saved three match points as she won the final in Abu Dhabi held on to ninth, while the loser Liudmila Samsonova jumped four places to 15th. — AFP

Dardai stunner lifts Hertha

BERLIN: A long-range stunner from Hertha Berlin defender Marton Dardai helped drag his side out of the relegation places with a 4-1 win at home against Borussia Moenchengladbach on Sunday. Dardai, the son of Hertha legend Pal who sat watching in the stands, rocketed a low drive into the underside of the crossbar early in the second half to put his side 2-1 up on his 21st birthday. The win was just Hertha's second victory in their past nine games, taking the side past Stuttgart and out of the bottom two automatic relegation places. The home side, who had conceded 13 goals and scored just one in their past four matches, looked in for another long day when Gladbach took the lead after 17 minutes. Swiss centre back Nico Elvedi rose high to head in a corner from Luca Netz, giving the visitors the lead. — AFP

Chock, Bates win dance title

LOS ANGELES: Americans Madison Chock and Evan Bates won their third Four Continents ice dance title on Sunday with a new personal-best score of 220.81 points. The veteran US duo, who won world championships bronze last year, stamped themselves medal contenders again for the worlds coming up next month in Saitama, Japan. They looked stunned as a career-best free dance score of 133.14 flashed on the scoreboard to confirm a third title in the event for skaters from non-European countries, held this year in Colorado Springs, Colorado. But Bates said they'd been working hard after a runner-up finish to Canadians Piper Gilles and Paul Poirier at the Grand Prix Final in early December, paying close attention to conditioning to allow them to compete well at high altitude in Colorado. — AFP

Morgan retires from cricket

LONDON: Eoin Morgan, who captained England to a thrilling One Day International World Cup success in 2019, said on Monday he was retiring from all forms of cricket. The 36-year-old Ireland-born batsman had already called it a day in terms of international cricket last June when he stepped down as England ODI skipper. Morgan captained England in a record 126 ODIs and 72 T20s. His 118 wins as skipper across the two formats is also a record. He had gone on playing for London Spirit in The Hundred and then most recently South African outfit Paarl Royals in the SA20. "It is with great pride that I am announcing my retirement from all forms of cricket," said Morgan. "After much deliberation I believe that now is the right time to step away from the game that has given me so much over the years. — AFP

Ghana names new coach

ACCRA: Former Brighton and Newcastle manager Chris Hughton was on Sunday named as the new coach of Ghana and tasked with taking the Black Stars to the next Africa Cup of Nations. The 64-year-old had been working as a technical adviser for the team since February last year. Ex-Ireland international defender Hughton steps up to replace Otto Addo who quit after Ghana failed to get beyond the group stage of last year's World Cup in Qatar. "The Ghana Football Association (GFA) has the pleasure to appoint Chris Hughton as Head Coach of the Black Stars following extensive deliberations between the two parties," said a GFA statement. Hughton has also coached Birmingham, Norwich and Nottingham Forest. — AFP

Rangers survive Cup scare

GLASGOW: Rangers survived a Scottish Cup scare to beat Partick Thistle 3-2 after sportingly handing the Championship side a second-half equalizer at Ibrox on Sunday. Thistle led 1-0 at half-time through Kevin Holt's penalty, but Rangers looked to have turned the last-16 tie around when Antonio Colak headed in an equalizer before Malik Tillman scored in controversial circumstances. The American international had gone down requiring treatment with Thistle set to hand possession back to Rangers. However, Tillman robbed the ball deep in the Thistle half and ran through to round the goalkeeper and slot into an empty net. — AFP

CAPE TOWN: India and Sri Lanka came out on top in an all-Asian double-header on the third day of the Women's T20 World Cup at Newlands in Cape Town on Sunday. India made a winning start when they beat arch-rivals Pakistan by seven wickets, while Sri Lanka became the first team to notch two wins when they defeated Bangladesh by the same margin.

Both matches were closer than the final results indicated, with the winning teams needing big unbeaten partnerships to see them home. What had been a tense run chase for India turned into a comfortable win with an over to spare as Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh put on an unbeaten 58 off 33 balls after India were set 150 to win.

Rodrigues batted with calm skill to make 53 not out off 38 balls while Ghosh, 19, hit powerfully to score 31 not out off 20 balls. Favorites India needed almost 10 runs an over when Ghosh joined Rodrigues in the 14th over but the pair were seldom troubled. "We knew we had to bat sensibly and bat until the end. If we did that the loose balls would come," said Rodrigues, who said the presence of her father and childhood coach Ivan had inspired her to perform well.

Pakistan captain Bismah Maroof had made a stylish 68 not out and shared a free-scoring unbeaten partnership of 81 off 47 balls with 18-year-old Ayesha Naseem, who struck an unbeaten 43 off 25 balls. It enabled Pakistan to post a competitive 149 for four after deciding to bat on a dry pitch. "We



CAPE TOWN: Pakistan's Muneeba Ali (left) plays a shot as India's wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh looks on during the Group B T20 women's World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan on February 12, 2023. — AFP

made some mistakes as a bowling unit," said Maroof. Rodrigues said India were a young team with "fight and grit" who had been building steadily since last

year and had belief in each other. "Playing with the same team again and again, everyone's very honest and everyone puts in a lot of hard work." — AFP

International studies courses for coaches

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Tennis Federation concluded the international studies courses for coaches (first level), under the supervision of International Tennis Federation (ITF). The course was held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex. 20 men and women from Kuwait and West Asia countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Iraq participated. The lectures were given by ITF Director of Development for West and Middle Asia Amir Burghi and Kuwait's Dr Abdallah Al-Mahmeed also assisted.

President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis



Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah welcomed the lecturers and participants and congratulated them for passing the course.

Burghi thanked Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber and KTF Secretary General Faleh Al-Otaibi for making the course a success.

Martial Arts Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: World Boxing Council representative in Kuwait Mishal Al-Fajji said the Kuwait second Martial Arts Championship will be on March 11th. He said there will be a fight for the WBC Muay Thai title between the champion Saku from France and Spain's Nozat Trojelio. Al-Fajji met with WBC President Mauricio Sulaiman in Thailand. Sulaiman expressed full support for Kuwait's International Championship.

The meeting was attended by WBC executive secretary for Muay Thai Thanapol Bhakdibhumi and executive committee member, head of the Middle East and Africa for Muay Thai Haji Mohammad Ba



Taher. Al-Fajji said the championship will consist of five matches for boxing professionals and five Muay Thai matches. Kuwait's second international champi-

onship comes on the heels of the success of the first one that was held September 24, 2022 in Kuwait. He said the second match will be more competitive.

Celtics' barrage too much for Grizzlies

LOS ANGELES: The Boston Celtics' long-range barrage was too much for Memphis on Sunday in the Eastern Conference leaders' 119-109 NBA victory over the Grizzlies. The Celtics drilled 21 three-pointers and out-rebounded the Grizzlies 54-34 on the way to a fourth straight victory. Star forward Jayson Tatum had a quiet night with 16 points on 3-of-16 shooting.

But eight Celtics players scored in double figures as Boston again came through despite the absence of Jaylen Brown, who is sidelined with a facial fracture after an in-game collision with Tatum. Brown said before the game he was feeling better and "taking it day by day." "I'm just letting the swelling go down, letting the pain subside, and then I'll kind of go from there."

In the meantime, Marcus Smart also missed a 10th straight game, and Malcolm Brogdon was sidelined with a sore Achilles tendon. Derrick White filled the void, leading the Celtics with 23 points. "Credit to our locker room," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said of the role players stepping up amid the injuries to keep Boston 1 1/2 games ahead of the Milwaukee Bucks atop the East. "Their ability to just be a professional regardless of their circumstances is just exceptional."

Mazzulla was far from concerned about Tatum's scoring output, which came on the heels of a 41-point outburst against Charlotte on Friday. "Tatum is not going to get enough credit for the way he has played," Mazzulla said. "Last game he had 41. He did a great job scoring. Two of the last three games he has done an amazing job managing the game, managing the game by continuing to play defense, managing the game by involving himself, not looking to score making the right play."

"Superstars don't get the credit they deserve when they do that. I think that allows our guys to play with confidence and makes our team even harder to guard." The Grizzlies, led by 25 points



BOSTON: Derrick White #9 of the Boston Celtics attempts a layup against Xavier Tillman #2 of the Memphis Grizzlies during the second quarter at TD Garden on February 12, 2023. — AFP

from Ja Morant, cut a 13-point halftime deficit to one heading into the fourth quarter. But Boston's firepower proved too much as they outscored the Grizzlies 37-28 in the final frame. Veteran Al Horford hit a trio of three-pointers in crunch time to help the Celtics seal the win.

In Toronto, Fred VanVleet scored 35 points to lead the host Raptors to a 119-118 victory over the Detroit Pistons. Pascal Siakam added 22 of his 28 points in the second half for the Raptors, who built an early lead that withstood a late charge from the Pistons. Toronto led by as many as 14 points before Detroit's 13-5 scoring run over the final 1:21 made for the close final margin. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 33 points and Alec Burks added 21 off the bench, but the Pistons couldn't build on their double-overtime victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Friday. — AFP

Scheffler reclaims World No 1 spot

PHOENIX: Scottie Scheffler outduelled Canada's Nick Taylor down the back nine Sunday to repeat as PGA Phoenix Open champion and overtake Rory McIlroy for the world number one ranking. It was the 26-year-old American's first title since capturing last year's Masters and returned him to the rankings summit he surrendered to Northern Ireland's McIlroy last October.

"It feels pretty good," Scheffler said. Scheffler fired a six-under-par 65 in Sunday's final round to complete 72 holes at TPC Scottsdale on 19-under 265 and defeat Taylor by two strokes for the \$3.6 million top prize and his fifth career PGA title. "I'm just proud of how I fought," Scheffler said. "I didn't have my best stuff. I grinded it out today."

"I wasn't hitting it good off the tee. My irons didn't feel as sharp. But I played a great round of golf." Spain's third-ranked Jon Rahm, who also had a chance to become world number one with a victory, settled for third on 270 after a closing 68 with two-time PGA Championship winner Justin Thomas fourth on 271 and Australian Jason Day, the 2015 PGA Championship winner, fifth on 272.

Scheffler became the seventh back-to-back Phoenix Open winner and the first repeat champion since Japan's Hideki Matsuyama in 2017. He joined McIlroy and Max Homa as the only players to successfully defend PGA titles so far this season. Scheffler won his first PGA title last year at Phoenix to launch an incredible two-month run that included triumphs at Bay Hill and the WGC Match-Play before taking his first major crown at Augusta National.

Taylor and Scheffler were deadlocked for the lead with six holes to play. Scheffler reached the green in two at the par-5 13th and rolled in a clutch 22-foot eagle putt to reach 18-under while Taylor answered with a seven-foot birdie putt to stay only one adrift. At the famed par-3 16th hole, with 20,000 rowdy spectators in a stadium atmosphere, Scheffler was booed for missing the green with a 9-iron and Taylor's 8-iron drew boos by rolling off to the left as well. After relief from a grandstand, Scheffler chipped 15 feet past the hole while Taylor pitched to just inside seven feet. — AFP

Sports

Challenged at home, Bayern's season faces true test in Paris

Bayern Munich, PSG face off in Champions League last 16

BERLIN: Bayern Munich travel to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday knowing defeat in the tie will represent a failed season regardless of domestic triumphs. After Saturday's home defeat of Bochum, Bayern manager Julian Nagelsmann cut a frustrated figure and looked anything but a coach who had just masterminded another week atop the Bundesliga table with a comfortable 3-0 home win.

"There was too little movement" the 35-year-old said, promising "if we play like that on Tuesday, we won't go any further (in the Champions League)." Nagelsmann even threw a little warning to his starting XI on Saturday, saying his team "only got better after the 60th minute (when) the substitutions brought fresh momentum." "That's when we earned the result, not before. We have to improve before Tuesday."

Battle of superclubs

The reality of the super-club era is that domestic success will matter little for Nagelsmann - just like his PSG counterpart Christophe Galtier. Other managers have been shown the door at Bayern for less. Niko Kovac was fired the year after winning the league-cup double with the side still in Champions League contention - Bayern eventually lifted the trophy later that season under Hansi Flick. Even big-name European specialist Carlo Ancelotti was sacked by Bayern after the club lost 3-0 away at PSG in 2017 - and that was in the group stages.

Despite romping to their 10th-straight title in 2021-22 Bayern's season was viewed internally as a failure due to the shock Champions League quarter-final elimination at the hands of Villarreal. Nagelsmann, then in his first season at Bayern, may have escaped most of the blame, but the situation will be different should the side be eliminated at the round of 16 stage this time, regardless of the quality of the opposition. Bayern have struggled since the resumption of the league after the winter break as three successive 1-1 draws allowed surprise challengers Union Berlin to cut their lead atop the league table to one point.

However, Nagelsmann has maintained a steadfast focus on their French opponents. When PSG announced Kylian Mbappe could miss the first leg after the star striker went down with injury, an unusually testy Nagelsmann accused the French champions of mind games. "What it says on the (PSG) website is vague. If it's not a structural injury, I can't imagine him missing the game. I'm preparing for the match as if he is going to play," he said.

'It's finally time'

Nagelsmann's players have talked a different game ahead of the crucial clash by expressing their enthusiasm for the tie and doubling down on Bayern's European pedigree. Midfielder Leon Goretzka said he was glad the wait to face PSG was over. "We've been buzzing since the release of the draw... all of Europe is



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian defender Marquinhos (left) and Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar (right) take part in a training session in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, west of Paris on February 13, 2023. — AFP

hot for this game (and) now it's finally time."

Two-time Champions League winner Thomas Muller backed his side "to show up, to be there". "When the tension rises, that's when it matters." Former Man City winger Leroy Sane said his side would not be overawed by the "big names in their

ranks", saying simply "we know what to do". "I am always optimistic. Bayern has always delivered in this competition. "We know our strengths and we have to call on them. Our team consists of great footballers. We are defensively stable and up front it's all about one thing - attack."—AFP



YVELINES: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe controls the ball next to Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti (left) and Paris Saint-Germain's Moroccan defender Achraf Hakimi (right) during a training session in Saint-Germain-en-Laye on February 13, 2023. — AFP

Mbappe's injury, poor form leave PSG in crisis

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain head into the first leg of their crunch Champions League last-16 tie against Bayern Munich this week without the injured Kylian Mbappe, with concerns over the fitness of Lionel Messi, and in crisis after suffering damaging back-to-back defeats. The pressure is firmly on coach Christophe Galtier, given that these big European matches are what define every season for PSG in the Qatar era and their worrying habit of imploding on such occasions.

Galtier's brief is to do what all his predecessors - most recently Mauricio Pochettino - have failed to do and win the Champions League after PSG persuaded Mbappe to sign a new contract and stay in the French capital last year rather than join Real Madrid. They had just gone out in the last 16 for the fourth time in six seasons, the nature of their collapse against Real as spectacular as previous exits at the same stage against Barcelona in 2017 and Manchester United in 2019.

In past years they have been hampered by injuries at inopportune moments, with metatarsal fractures

striking down Neymar ahead of a tie against Real in 2018 and ruling him out of both legs of the United debacle a year later. The Brazilian was also hampered by injury against the Spanish giants last season, but this season it is the other two members of PSG's all-star attack who have been hit by what French media have started to call their Champions League "jinx".

Mbappe is in the middle of a three-week spell out with a thigh injury, meaning he will not play in the first leg but should be fine for the return in Munich on March 8. Messi missed Saturday's 3-1 defeat in Monaco with an apparently minor hamstring complaint, but it remains to be seen if the 35-year-old Argentine will be on top form for Tuesday's showdown.

The post-World Cup hangover that PSG must have dreaded during their outstanding start to the season has not just impacted the fitness of the players who dominated the final in Doha in December. Galtier's team have appeared laboured and have been regularly outfought by domestic opponents while losing four times in 10 games in 2023.

They simply could not cope with Marseille's high-energy pressing game as they went out of the French Cup in the last 16 last midweek. "We lost the midfield battle. We can't afford to come out second best in so many challenges in such a game," admitted Galtier. Yet his side fared no better on Saturday in Monaco, provoking an angry reaction from supporters who had unveiled banners with messages for the team such as "Wake Up". — AFP

Can Haaland, Odegaard lift Norway?

PARIS: As Erling Haaland and Martin Odegaard prepare to face each other when Arsenal take on Manchester City in a huge game in the Premier League title race on Wednesday, back in their native Norway there is optimism that the star duo are about to make the country a footballing force again. Not since Euro 2000 have Norway qualified for a major tournament, when Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Tore Andre Flo were leading their attack. Odegaard was 18 months old and Haaland had not yet been born as Norway defeated Spain but failed to make it beyond their group.

That was the end of the country's footballing heyday, after Norway had reached successive World Cups, defeating Brazil en route to the last 16 at France 98. But things appear to be changing, with the national team reaching the play-offs for Euro 2020 and falling just short in their attempt to make last year's World Cup.

Qualifying for Euro 2024 begins next month and Norway appear slight favourites ahead of Scotland to come through their group alongside Spain. Haaland, 22, has dominated headlines in the Premier League where he is the top scorer by a distance, averaging over a goal a game for City since signing from Borussia Dortmund. Barely 16 when he joined Real Madrid, Odegaard struggled to live up to the hype there but is now leading Arsenal's charge for the Premier League title.

"Martin Odegaard, what a player, what a season. World class. He is a leader on the pitch for Arsenal. Great for them, great for Norwegian football," Roar Stokke, a commentator for broadcaster Viaplay, tells AFP. "Odegaard and Haaland are such an inspiration for other players and an inspiration for Norwegian football. Stokke makes the point that two world-class players is simply "a good start" for Norway and that they need a strong team around them, which may now be emerging. The national team, ranked 43rd in the world, have a pool of players performing in some of Europe's leading leagues.

'Positive vibes'

Among them is Julian Ryerson, the 25-year-old right-back who recently joined Dortmund from



Norwegian striker Erling Haaland

Union Berlin. Alexander Sorloth, 27, has been in excellent goal-scoring form for Real Sociedad, although how the big striker can play in the same team as Haaland remains to be seen. Then there is coach Stale Solbakken, formerly of Wolverhampton Wanderers and who took over in late 2020.

"There are a lot of positive vibes around the team and I think the manager is a factor," Tor-Kristian Karlsen, a former sporting director at local club IK Start who has carried out the same role at Monaco and Israeli outfit Maccabi Haifa, tells AFP. "Solbakken might not have produced results just yet but he is still a very positive, engaging figurehead. He dares to be ambitious and does expect us to qualify."

The national team is undoubtedly on the up, but what about the domestic league? It is 15 years since a Norwegian club made the Champions League group stage, when Rosenborg of Trondheim held Chelsea away, bringing an end to Jose Mourinho's first spell at Stamford Bridge. Bodo/Glimt, the modest club from north of the Arctic Circle, came close to reaching the Champions League proper this year, losing in the play-offs. — AFP

Today's matches on TV

UEFA Champions League

AC Milan v Tottenham	23:00
beIN Sports 2 HD Premium	
beIN Sports HD 2 English	
Paris Saint-Germain v Bayern	23:00
beIN Sports 1 HD Premium	
beIN Sports HD 1 English	

Classifieds

Change of Name

I, Abizer, holder of Indian passport No. M6715946 having permanent Address: Najmpura Po, Sagwara Dist., Dungarpur, Rajasthan, Pin - 314025. Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under Given name: Abizer and Surname: Ghaslet. (C#3158) - 14-02-2023

I, AJAY, holder of Passport No. N2713384 do hereby change my name to AJAY (as Given name) KUMAR ARYA (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name AJAY KUMAR ARYA and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C#3152)

I, Lambani Rajesh (Old Name) Mother (Old Name) Lambani Lakky, holder of Indian Passport No: V7774427, H.No. 3-100/1, Koratpally (Vil), Dichpally (Mdl), Nizamabad (Dist), Telangana, India 503175. Change my given name as Sri Ram, Surname as Gugloth, Mother Given name as Ammi. (C#3153)

I, Jose Francisco Cruz, holder of Passport No. Z4824892, resident of Castelvaddo, Nagoa, South Goa, India, do hereby change my name to JOSE FRANCISCO and Surname to DA CRUZ for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name JOSE FRANCISCO DA CRUZ and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

I, Jayden Simon Cruz, holder of Passport No. U0614482, resident of Castelvaddo, Nagoa, South Goa, India,

do hereby change my name to JAYDEN SIMON and Surname to DA CRUZ for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name JAYDEN SIMON DA CRUZ and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

I, Deodita Cruz, holder of Passport No. T4010092, resident of Castelvaddo, Nagoa, South Goa, India, do hereby change my name to DEODITA and Surname to RODRIGUES for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name DEODITA RODRIGUES and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C#3154)

I, Pooja Sharma, holder of Indian Passport No. U6096088 having permanent address RZF-773/19, Street No. 14, Raj Nagar Part II, Palam Colony Delhi-77, residing in Kuwait at present,

hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: Given Name Pooja Milind and Surname Saraswala. (C#3155)

I, have changed my name from MOHAMMED KHALID NOOR MOHAMED to MOHAMMED KHALID NOOR MOHAMMED SHEIKH as per documents. (C#3156) - 13-02-2023

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Announcement

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Chiefs grab Super Bowl trophy

Kansas City Chiefs overcome Eagles



GLENDALE: Kansas City Chiefs CEO Clark Hunt celebrates with the Vince Lombardi Trophy after the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl LVII at State Farm Stadium on February 12, 2023 in Glendale, Arizona. — AFP

GLENDALE: Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs overcame the inspired Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts to win their second Super Bowl in four years with a 38-35 win in a classic contest on Sunday. Hurts produced four touchdowns, three of them rushing, and threw for 304 yards but ended on the losing side with a late field goal from Harrison Butker settling a ding-dong battle in Arizona.

Mahomes threw for three touchdowns and 182 yards but the Chiefs had game-winning displays across the field as they came back from 10 points down at half-time to hand head coach Andy Reid a victory over his former team. The 27-year-old Mahomes was named Most Valuable Player (MVP) after the game joining an elite club of quarterbacks with multiple Super Bowl MVP awards that includes the likes of Tom Brady, Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw.

Mahomes later revealed that a rousing half-time team-talk amongst his Chiefs team-mates had inspired the second-half fightback. "Everybody said we had to step our game up. Defense played their ass off in that second half. Our offense, we just found a way," he said. Reid meanwhile lavished praise on Mahomes role in the

Chiefs organization, after a performance which echoed his display in the 2019-2020 Super Bowl. "The great quarterbacks make everyone around them better, including the head coach," Reid said.

Philadelphia quarterback Hurts was crestfallen after the game as he searched for perspective. "You either win or you learn," Hurts said. "I am so proud of this team, for everything we have been able to overcome. Obviously we had a big time goal at the end that we wanted to accomplish and we came up short," he said. The game got off to an explosive start with the Eagles scoring a touchdown on the opening drive—Hurts crossing with a quarterback sneak at the end of an impressive 11-play, 75 yard drive. But the Chiefs struck back swiftly with Mahomes connecting with Kelce and Isiah Pacheco as he led the team down the field before crowning the drive with a perfectly floated pass to his trusty target, tight-end Travis Kelce in the end-zone. It was only the second time in Super Bowl history that both teams had scored on their first possession and that set the tone for the game. Butker then missed a chance to put the Chiefs ahead with his 42-yard field goal drifting left and striking the post. Hurts opened the second

quarter in spectacular fashion with a brilliant 45-yard pass deep to AJ Brown, who collected for the touchdown after his clever route left Chiefs cornerback Trent McDuffie flailing. But Hurts gifted away the seven-point advantage on the next possession, dropping the ball without being challenged and Chiefs linebacker Nick Bolton scooped up the fumble and ran 36 yards into the end-zone to level the game at 14-14.

Chiefs fightback

The mistake didn't deter Hurts from running with the ball however and after his 28-yard rush for a first down took the Eagles into the red zone, he restored the Eagles lead with a four-yard run into the end zone. There was though a reminder of Mahomes' recent ankle injury when, running out of the pocket, he was tackled by TJ Edwards and limped off the field.

The Eagles added a field goal before half-time, after more impressive running from Hurts, to go in 24-14 up at the interval. Chiefs fears over Mahomes' ankle allayed when he came out for the second half and promptly led a 75-yard touchdown drive, including a 14-yard rush from the quarterback and ending with a one-yard run

from Pacheco. The Eagles added a field goal to go into the fourth quarter with a six-point lead but then the Chiefs came roaring back. Philadelphia left Kadarius Toney wide open to collect a five-yard pass from Mahomes and put Kansas City 28-27 up and then Toney produced a brilliant 65-yard punt return to set up a near identical play on the other side, with Skyy Moore the gleefully wide-open receiver. But the Eagles responded again with Hurts hurling a 46-yard pass deep left to DeVonta Smith and the quarterback completed the drive with a two-yard run for his third rushing touchdown before adding a two-point conversion for good measure. It was the first time a quarterback had scored three rushing touchdowns in a Super Bowl.

The two-point conversion leveled the score at 35-35 with 5:15 left in the game but the Chiefs managed the clock masterfully. A controversial late holding call against the Eagles James Bradberry gave the Chiefs a fresh set of downs near the Philadelphia line, and when after Butker's 27-yard field goal, there were just eight seconds left on the clock. There was no time for a miracle and Mahomes, the two-time MVP became a two-time Super Bowl winner.—AFP



NAPLES: Cremonese's Ghanaian forward Felix Afena-Gyan (left) and Napoli's Georgian forward Khvicha Kvaratskhelia go for a header during the Italian Serie A football match between Napoli and Cremonese on February 12, 2023.—AFP

Napoli march towards first Serie A title

MILAN: Napoli continued their march towards a first Serie A title in over three decades with Sunday's 3-0 win over rock-bottom Cremonese which provisionally moved the runaway league leaders 16 points clear. A 33-year wait for the league crown looks closer to ending with each passing week and once again Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Victor Osimhen were the key men for Luciano Spalletti's flamboyant team at the Stadio Maradona. Winger wizard Kvaratskhelia set Napoli on their way with a delightful individual effort in the 22nd minute on his 22nd birthday before Osimhen's league-leading 17th goal of the season midway through the second half and an Eljif Elmas strike 11 minutes from the end.

Thanks to a sixth straight league win Napoli will be at least 13 points ahead of Inter Milan come Tuesday morning, their closest rivals travelling to cri-

sis club Sampdoria for the final match of this round of fixtures on Monday night. "The city is making sure that we're always on the case, we all want to win," Spalletti told DAZN. "We need to take it one match at a time... we can't think it's already done and start thinking about other things, or think everything's going to look after itself. "We need to take care of everything ourselves."

Cremonese meanwhile are still yet to win in their first Serie A season since 1996 and look certain to go straight back down despite another committed performance under recently-appointed coach Davide Ballardini. The away side, who knocked Napoli out of the Italian Cup on the same ground last month, started well but as soon as Kvaratskhelia weaved into the box and drilled home his ninth league goal of his debut Serie A campaign the game was up.

Osimhen was not in his usual fiery form but in the 65th minute the Nigeria striker was in the right place to tap in from practically on the goal line when following a corner Kim Min-Jae nodded the ball over to him. And substitute Elmas ensured that Napoli's tally of dropped points stayed at an incredible seven, exchanging passes with Giovanni Di Lorenzo before lashing in his sixth goal of the season past Marco Carnesecchi.—AFP

Barcelona move 11 points clear

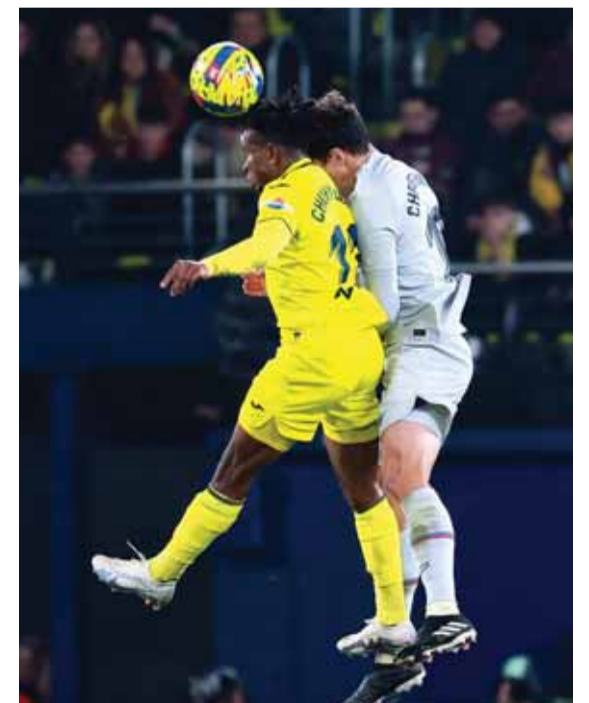
BARCELONA: Pedri's strike earned Barcelona a battling 1-0 win over Villarreal on Sunday to move 11 points clear of second-placed Real Madrid at the top of La Liga. The champions, who won the Club World Cup on Saturday, face Elche in midweek to try and bite back into the growing gap. Earlier Memphis Depay scored his first Atletico Madrid goal as Diego Simeone's side beat Celta Vigo 1-0 to consolidate their position in fourth.

Barcelona rode their luck in a gripping clash at Estadio de la Ceramica but held off a Yellow Submarine onslaught to continue marching towards their goal of winning the title for the first time since 2019. Defender Ronald Araujo in particular made a number of superb blocks and interceptions to help protect Barcelona's slim advantage until the end, locking in another clean sheet.

Barcelona have shut out opponents 16 times in 21 league games this season, conceding just seven goals. "The truth is we are working really hard (defensively)," Araujo told Movistar. "We had to correct this from last season, when teams scored a lot of goals against us, and it was hard for us to keep clean sheets. "We're doing well at the back and the midfielders aren't leaving spaces, the forwards too. It's the fruit of (our) work."

La Liga top scorer Robert Lewandowski missed two big chances for Barcelona. However the Polish international, La Liga's top scorer, made up for it with a cushioned pass for Pedri to open the scoring after 18 minutes. Barcelona fashioned a superb team move, finished off by the 20-year-old midfielder for his fourth goal in seven games across all competitions. Jose Luis Morales should have leveled for Villarreal but did not connect well with a volley and later fired wide when through on goal.

The hosts, who beat Real Madrid in January, were willing to attack the leaders and it led to an entertaining battle which ebbed and flowed from end to end. The Catalans face Manchester United in the Europa League next, on Thursday. "There's a lot of points left (to play for), there's so long to go," said Barca coach Xavi. "The run is extraordinary but we can improve things. We are efficient and very solid, to win these games which are really hard." Villarreal, eighth, have now lost three league games in a row.



VILARREAL: Villarreal's Nigerian midfielder Samuel Chukwueze and Barcelona's Danish defender Andreas Christensen (right) jump for the ball during the Spanish League football match between Villarreal CF and FC Barcelona on February 12, 2023.—AFP

Earlier Simeone's Atletico, down to 10 men after Stefan Savic's red card, were outplayed by Celta but Depay reacted quickly to spin and bury a loose ball in the 89th minute. The Dutch forward, signed from Barcelona in January, netted in La Liga for the first time since September. "It was an important goal above all for the team, and for him," said Simeone. "He worked well this week, he needs minutes and will compete in training to get them. "There's competition between the players and it's good that it's hard for us to decide (who plays)." Goalkeeper Jan Oblak made a string of stunning saves, while Celta striker Iago Aspas hit the crossbar on a free kick, as the hosts dominated at Balaidos. Atletico defender Savic was dismissed in the 70th minute for hauling down Swiss striker Haris Seferovic on the edge of the area.—AFP