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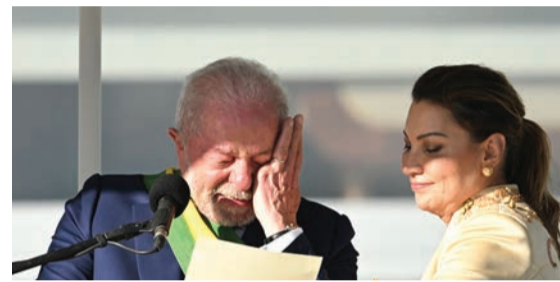
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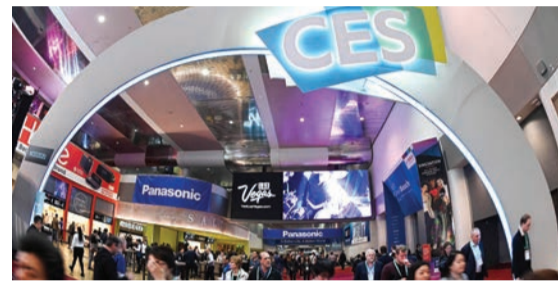
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## 30,000 expats deported in 2022

MoI, MoH to review calls to not renew iqamas of mentally ill residents

### News in brief

#### Dubai scraps alcohol tax

**DUBAI:** Dubai has dropped a 30 percent tax on alcohol sales in an apparent bid to lure tourists. The cut, announced by distributors but not confirmed by authorities, looks set to slash prices that are among the world's highest. The personal liquor license, available to non-Muslims aged over 21 and required to buy alcohol at Dubai's small number of licensed shops, is now free, according to distributors MMI and African and Eastern. — AFP

#### Four tons of drugs seized

**ABU DHABI:** The French navy seized nearly half a ton of heroin and 3.5 tons of cannabis resin when it intercepted an unflagged boat in the Arabian Sea, it said Monday. It seized the drugs with an estimated value of 50 million euros after its frigate Guepratte spotted the dhow on Dec 27, the Indian Ocean Maritime Command said in a statement. Part of the illegal drugs shipment was "probably intended for the European market", said the command based in Abu Dhabi. — AFP

#### Canada curbs home sales

**OTTAWA:** A ban on foreigners buying residential property in Canada took effect on Sunday, aiming to make more homes available to locals facing a housing crunch. Several exceptions in the act allow individuals such as refugees and permanent residents who are not citizens to buy homes. In late December, Ottawa also clarified that the ban would apply only to city dwellings and not to recreational properties such as summer cottages. — AFP (See Page 6)

#### Rescuers battle to save boy

**HANOI:** Hundreds of rescuers in Vietnam battled Monday to free a 10-year-old boy who fell into a 35-m-deep hole at a construction site two days ago. The boy, named Thai Ly Hao Nam, fell into the shaft of a hollow concrete pillar just 25 cm wide, sunk as part of a new bridge in southern Dong Thap province, apparently while looking for scrap metal, a rescuer told AFP. "He has stopped interacting with the outside though oxygen had always been pumped into the" hole, a newspaper reported. — AFP

#### Iran issues hijab warning

**TEHRAN:** Iranian police have resumed warnings that women must wear mandatory headscarves even in cars. Fars news agency quoted a senior police officer who said the "new stage" of the Nazer-1 program - "surveillance" in Persian - was being rolled out "across the country by the police". The Nazer program concerns the "removal of hijab in cars", Fars added. But police have seemingly dropped the threat of legal action, according to messages posted on social media platforms. — AFP

**KUWAIT:** According to sources at the interior ministry, around 30,000 expatriates were deported in 2022, 660 of which were judicial deportations, while the rest were administrative deportations. The expats were deported over a variety of crimes and violations, including drug use, fighting, theft, brewing alcohol, expired residencies and not adhering to the laws of Kuwait.

"Around 17,000 men and 13,000 women were deported. Among the male deportees, 6,400 were Indians, 3,500

Bangladeshis and 3,000 Egyptians. As for women, the deportees included 3,000 Filipinos, 2,000 Sri Lankans, 1,700 Indians and 1,400 Ethiopians," sources revealed.

Meanwhile, sources reported the interior and health ministries will respond to parliamentary requests to coordinate to cancel the permits of expatriates being treated at the psychiatric hospital and deport them. "The health ministry has listed the names of expatriates who are being treated at the

psychiatric hospital and categorized them according to the severity of their illness. Those with chronic mental illnesses are in focus, and not those being treated for minor issues. The names will be reviewed by the ministries, as some of the expat patients are almost residing at the hospital, while others are staying there permanently," sources revealed to Kuwait Times.

"The health ministry said around 9,272 expatriates that have a file at the mental health hospital, and most of them

also have driving licenses that might endanger motorists and pedestrians on the streets. The number of medicines prescribed to expatriates has exceeded 15,000 prescriptions over the past five years," the sources said.

"The deportation of mentally ill patients is the country's right, and the interior ministry can issue the law without the need of legislation from the parliament, especially if it sees the country is harmed by them.

Continued on Page 6



KUWAIT: Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah inspects the seized drugs. — KUNA

## Massive haul of Captagon, shabu, hashish seized

**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry announced Sunday that 1.2 million Captagon pills, 250 kgs of hashish and 104 kg of shabu were seized after some persons attempted to smuggle them into the country. First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah supervised the inspection of the seized narcotic substances, the ministry's security media and public relations department said in a statement.

The statement quoted Sheikh Talal as confirming that attempts to engulf the country with these devastating substances are professionally run, stressing "we must exert more efforts and stand firmly in the face of this danger". — KUNA (See Page 2)

## Ukraine strike kills scores of Russian troops

**KYIV:** Russia on Monday said more than 60 soldiers were killed in a Ukrainian strike on Russian-controlled territory in a bloody New Year's weekend for both sides of the conflict. Kyiv took responsibility for the strike which it said took place in the occupied city of Makiivka in eastern Ukraine on Dec 31. In an extremely rare announcement following criticism by Russian military correspondents, the defense ministry in Moscow said that 63 Russian servicemen were

killed "as a result of a strike by four missiles" in Makiivka.

It was the biggest loss of life reported by Moscow so far in a conflict that has dragged on since President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops to invade on Feb 24 last year. The Russian ministry said US-supplied HIMARS rocket systems had been used and the target was a temporary deployment point. Late on Monday, the General Staff of Ukraine's armed forces said in a statement that its forces were behind the strikes on Makiivka.

"Up to 10 units of enemy military equipment of various types were destroyed and damaged," the general staff said, adding that the human "losses" were still being established.

Continued on Page 6



IZIUUM, Ukraine: A local resident removes debris near his damaged house in this city in eastern Ukraine on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP

## Egypt recovers sarcophagus lid from US

**CAIRO:** Egypt announced Monday the recovery of a sarcophagus lid dating back nearly 2,700 years that it said had been smuggled out and put on display at a museum in the United States. Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry announced the recovery of the artefact, known as the "Green Sarcophagus", during a televised press conference Monday. He said it had been surreptitiously removed from the country and its recovery is part of efforts to "protect Egypt's heritage". The lid, measuring nearly three

meters in length and 90 cm in width, was among 17 artefacts recently recovered from the US, Tourism and Antiquities Minister Ahmed Issa said at the news conference. The sarcophagus lid was looted from the Abusir necropolis south of Cairo then transported to the US in 2008, eventually making its way to the Houston Museum of Natural Science in 2013, according to state media.

Over the past decade, Egypt has recovered about 29,000 antiquities found to have been taken abroad through illegitimate means. Mostafa Waziri, the secretary-general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, said the sarcophagus likely belonged to a nobleman. He said it dates back to the Late Period of Ancient Egypt, and it was named the Green Sarcophagus because of the color of the face etched on it. — AFP



CAIRO: Officials and journalists inspect an ancient Egyptian wooden sarcophagus at the foreign ministry on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP



# Kuwait police seize 1.2 million Captagon pills, 250 kg hashish

Sheikh Talal supervises the inspection of seized narcotics



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah supervises the inspection of the seized narcotic substances. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The confiscated drugs — 1.2 million Captagon pills, 250 kg of hashish and 104 kg of shabu.

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The statement quoted Sheikh Talal as confirming that attempts to engulf the country with these devastating substances are professionally run, stressing "we must exert more efforts and stand firmly in the face of this danger". The minister affirmed that the ministry and its

field and awareness sectors continue, in cooperation with state institutions, to confront this scourge and harness all potentials in the face of all smuggling and dealing attempts that seek to undermine the country's youth.

Sheikh Talal thanked and appreciated the efforts made by the General Administration for Drugs Control and the General Administration of the Coast Guard in directing firmly and decisively successive strikes against smugglers and promoters of narcotic substances. The drugs control department, in cooperation and coordination with the coastguard, seized around 250 kgs of hashish after two people attempted to smuggle them into the country by sea, according to the statement. — KUNA



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## Kuwait's loss of dignitaries in 2022

KUWAIT: In 2022, the state of Kuwait has lost a number of dignitaries and figures, mainly astronomer Dr Saleh Mohammad Al-Ojairi and former speaker of the National Assembly Mohammad Al-Adsani.

**Jan 31:** Member of Kuwait Art Association Yousef Al-Qatami, passed away at the age of 73 after a long and fruitful career.

**Feb 10:** Kuwaiti Astronomer Dr Saleh Mohammad Al-Ojairi, passed away at the age of 101 years.

**March 6:** Influential Kuwaiti political figure Dr Ahmad Al-Khatib passed away at the age of 95.

**March 8:** Former MP Ghannam Al-Jamhoor Al-Mutairi passed away at the age of 91.

**March 13:** Former member of the Municipality board, Marzouq Abdulwahab Al-Marzouq passed away at the age of 100. March 20: Former MP and political figure Abdullah Al-Naibary passed away at the age of 85.

**May 30:** Kuwaiti educator Aziza Mohammad Al-Bassam passed away at age 84. She was a pioneer in the educational scene in Kuwait and the person behind the establishment of the first women library in the country.

**July 20:** Suleiman Al-Mulla, a pioneer in Kuwaiti and Gulf music and songwriting, passed away at age 69.

**Aug 17:** Former Minister of Communication Abdulrahman Al-Ghunaim passed away at age 84.

**Aug 13:** Media figure Amer Al-Salhoul — a prominent figure in the Nabat poetry Diwaniya — passed away.



Influential Kuwaiti political figure Dr Ahmad Al-Khatib.

**Aug 30:** Director Abdullah Al-Awadhi passed away after a long illustrious career in media.

**Oct 12:** Dr Fakhri Shehab passed away after a long illustrious career laying the foundation of Kuwait's economic systems.

**Nov 3:** Kuwaiti media figure Saleh Al-Rujaib passed away after a long illustrious career in Kuwait Radio.

**Nov 15:** Renowned media figure, television presenter and former Information Minister Mohammad Al-Sanousi passed away at age 84.

**Nov 30:** Former Speaker of the National Assembly Mohammad Al-Adsani passed away. —KUNA



Kuwaiti astronomer Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi

## Dubai clears waste from NY celebrations in record time

DUBAI: Dubai Municipality announced the removal of all the waste that it collected from the sites of New Year celebrations in the Emirate of Dubai. It also carried out almost 90 inspection and monitoring visits to ensure that the organizers of the accompanying events adhere to health and safety and food safety standards. The Municipality teams completed field cleaning operations in record time before six in the morning, using more than 114 equipment.

The Municipality's cleaning teams, which conducted the cleaning operations in coordination

with private sector companies, comprised of 2,241 workers, 166 supervisors, and 189 volunteers. The Municipality dealt with the waste originated from the fireworks and New Year shows, in addition to completing the general cleanup operations as part of its efforts to protect the cultural and aesthetic appearance of the Emirate of Dubai.

The teams also monitored the events accompanying the celebrations in 43 locations of the emirate, in order to ensure their compliance with health and safety requirements and food safety standards, through a team comprised of 84 employees and supervisors, in addition to 32 observers at the Burj Khalifa celebration site. The Dubai Frame celebration site of Dubai Municipality attracted nearly 20,000 visitors, who celebrated the beginning of the New Year, and the celebrations included the display of distinctive paintings.

Local



All safety measures are taken to protect KuwaitSat-1 during the launch.



Dr Hala Al-Jassar, along with students, before capture device as part of NASA's SMAP.

# KuwaitSat-1, nucleus of Kuwait's space ambition

## Project director recounts history of KuwaitSat-1

**KUWAIT:** Most people, due to a multitude of reasons, forget to look up into the night sky and wonder what was out there in the vast vacuum of space. This particular curiosity might be at the end of the list for many; however, for those working on the KuwaitSat-1, it was the nucleus of their space ambition, reaching to the stars and seeking answers to the many questions of the cosmos. The heroes behind the KuwaitSat-1 are plentiful. Some were students at Kuwait University's (KU) college of engineering and science, while others were from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR).

Recounting the early history of the KuwaitSat-1, project director Dr Hala Al-Jassar related the story that began around a decade ago. Picture this, a group of students from the KU's department of physics plowing for data on humidity levels in the western deserts of Kuwait, said Dr Al-Jassar. While focusing on the mission at hand, the students-involved in the process carried out in cooperation among KU, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and KFAS-began to ask whether it was possible to conduct experiments on moisture using a Kuwaiti-made satellite instead of NASA's Soil Moisture Active passive (SMAP). Dr Al-Jassar took notice of her students' ambitions and made a mental note that at some point, the dream would be made into a reality. The Kuwaiti academic and the students mapped out the blueprint for the future Kuwaiti-made satellite, visualizing and realizing the device's dimensions, purpose and goal. In 2018, the initial phase for what would be called KuwaitSat-1 began with a multi-party collaboration including KU, NAS, KFAS, and KISR. Arbitrators from outside the Ogroup were brought into to provide insight on this aspiring project and with funding secured, KuwaitSat-1 as a project began development in October of 2019.

It took around three years to finish the satellite with the involvement of 45 students from 330 applicants. Day after day and month after month, the



Dr Hala Al-Jassar at ground station in Kuwait's western desert.

dream was realized finally, achieving what was hopefully, the students' dreams and ambitions, said Al-Jassar. KuwaitSat-1 is only the beginning, affirmed Dr Al-Jassar, noting that there were plans for launching KuwaitSat-2 in cooperation with the Kuwait College of engineering. The project director, as hefty is the title might portray, was not always that academic in charge of one of Kuwait's most daring scientific projects. Al-Jassar was once a child looking up into the night sky wondering what is out there. She went on to choose physics as her major in college in 1981 and now her wonder met her students' and the rest for now ... is history.

Meanwhile, acting director of Kuwait University Dr Suad Al-Fadhli, along with acting secretary general of the university Dr Fayez Al-Dhafari, paid a visit to



Dr Hala Al-Jassar checks captured data included in NASA's SMAP. —KUNA photos

the preparations by the Science College to launch the KuwaitSat-1 satellite on Monday.

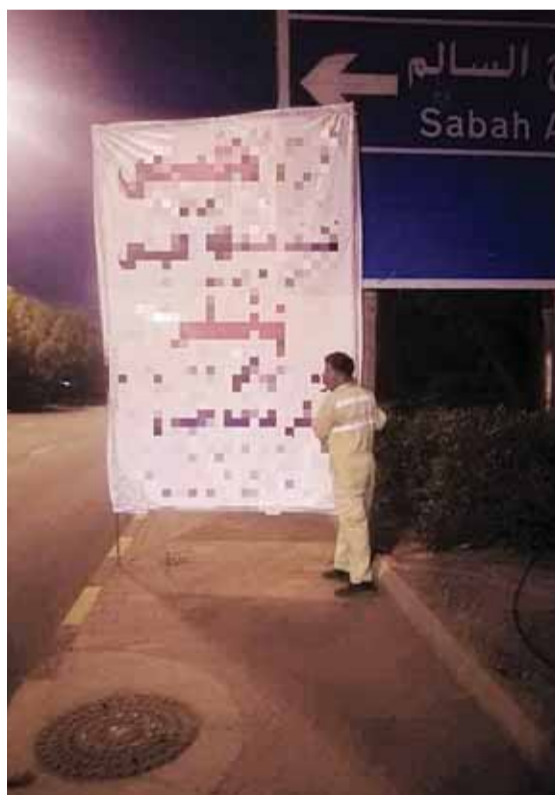
"We are about to prepare for the celebration tomorrow for the launch of the first Kuwaiti satellite into space with the university, as it is the first to take the initiative with the support of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and the presence of many related departments," Dr Dhafari said.

"We hope that this event will return scientific and practical benefits to ease services and achieve hopes of all institutions, as well as push for more scientific achievements with the leadership of academics at the university and the support of KFAS," he added. The satellite will be launched on Tuesday, January 3 at 5:15 pm Kuwait time. —KUNA

## Four citations, six warnings issued to store owners

**KUWAIT:** Field campaigns made by the emergency team of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality in all areas of the governorate concluded with issuing four citations and six warnings. "The supervision team monitors all commercial stores, real estate owners and companies and their adherence to municipal regulations. Violations ranged from non-renewal of advertisement licenses and displaying advertisements without permission from the municipality," head of the governorate's municipality emergency team Nasser Al-Hajri said.

"Moreover, six warnings have been issued for abuse of public property, and violators were asked to submit their licenses and documents related to the municipality, while 15 advertisements were removed," he added. Hajri called on real estate and commercial store owners to adhere to rules and regulations in order to avoid any violation fees, as there will be no leniency from the supervision team in taking all the necessary procedures against violators.



## Ex-director of KFAED addresses employees

**KUWAIT:** Former director of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Marwan Al-Ghanem addressed workers of the fund on the occasion of his retirement, stressing the importance of utmost care for the activities of the fund to preserve the institution and develop its standards.

"I will address you in my last speech as a representative of this elite institution, in which I worked for the past 38 years. I gradually rose up the ranks until reaching the general administration, and then the post of director over a year ago. I have been through experiences that will be forever present in my memory, along with colleagues that have drawn the best features of these years and made the best example for dedication to work, putting the fund and its interests at their forefront in belief of its goals and principles," Ghanem said.

"In conclusion of my career, I would like to thank Allah, HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his loyal Crown Prince for



the trust they gave me when they appointed me the general director of the fund in 2021. I would also like to thank the previous directors and other authorities for their limitless support when they headed the administration at the fund as well as the administrative council, whom I had the pleasure to work with," he added.

"The previous period was full of challenges that affected us locally and globally, which made me take daily fateful decisions in both the developmental and humanitarian fields. I have tried to rise above the obstacles and pressures, as all of my colleagues' efforts have been noticed, and they were one of the most important reasons for my success," Ghanem concluded.

In my view

## Smoking a major danger

By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh



local@kuwaittimes.net

**A**larming numbers were revealed during a smoking and addiction workshop, numbers that are highly worrisome for the world and its future. The workshop was organized by the Arab Federation for Drug Prevention last week, where speakers mentioned the dangerous tragedy that is sweeping the world due to smoking.

There is one death every five minutes due to smoking and its resulting illnesses. Death is expected to double from five million in 2020 to 10 million in 2030 due to smoking.

The danger of smoking increased due to male and female youths turning to it, and as experts said, it is the first step to get into the deadly world of drugs. There are Arab countries sponsoring smoking and manufacturing tobacco products due to economic crises, and there are businessmen who are skilled in making people smoke. This is the reason that widened the gap between rich and poor countries as far as the number of tobacco addicts are concerned, while the developed and aware world fights smoking from all corners to protect its youth and save the huge health expense.

Yet we see the opposite taking place in the developing world. Governments own tobacco factories and encourage people to smoke by keeping prices accessible for the youth and increasing points where tobacco is sold, all due to a false belief that this brings income for the state, though numbers clearly show that what the country loses in the form of people and production, in addition to what is spent on illnesses caused by smoking, wipes out all the profits made and goes beyond that to hinder the country's development, to remain at a standstill on the development path.

Speakers in the workshop expressed vivid pain and big heartbreak towards the failure of awareness in our Arab countries about smoking, as the war between awareness against smoking and its promotion is totally unequal. Those promoting smoking in our countries are usually major businessmen who spend large amounts of money to promote tobacco and are very creative in sidetracking the ban law. Meanwhile, on the other hand, there are NGOs and departments in ministries that operate with budgets that do not match the profits of one hour by tobacco companies.

The scourge of smoking is more dangerous than the coronavirus pandemic and results in 20 percent of cancer cases, and maybe more for heart diseases, as the main reason of death in Kuwait - scary numbers that are met with little interest.

The first correct steps in order to spread awareness against smoking is the decision makers' conviction of the importance of this war. Secondly, there must be a sharp rise in tobacco taxes, just like in developed countries, and that money should not go to the finance ministry treasury; rather it should go to the health and social affairs ministries in order to give power to awareness programs against smoking. The money will provide manpower and creativity in studies and strategies that will contribute effectively in the success of campaigns against smoking and will positively reflect on the issues of addiction.

The solution is not difficult, and we in Kuwait are going around it since many decades. We hope the calls that came out of that workshop have a positive effect and are different this time.

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# 'Yom Al-Bahhar' heritage village reopens after renovation



Yom Al-Bahhar heritage village after the renovation. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



## Narcotics Anonymous Kuwait helps addicts stay on recovery road

KUWAIT: Health clinics and hospitals are vital to saving the lives of those addicted to illegal substances; however, to continue to be on the straight and narrow path, support groups are as crucial to providing medical treatments.

In this regard, the Narcotics Anonymous Kuwait, as stated on its website, is "a non-profit fellowship of men and women whose main problem is drugs. We are a group of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs."

Speaking to KUNA on the group's goals and efforts, chairman of Public Relations Saad Abdullah affirmed that Narcotics Anonymous' mission was to help addicts continue on the road of recovery. Those embarking on the road of recovery, no matter the nationality, are welcomed to join the group, added Abdullah, noting that in addition to moral support, the group was guided by individuals who had previous experience in drugs and managed to beat their addiction. He indicated that sessions were offered to men and women in various language including Arabic, English, and Farsi, stressing that Kuwaiti branch was self-funded by members willing to chip in for the cause. Abdullah said that the fellowship had collaborated and cooperated with government entities, charitable organizations, and non-profit organizations in terms of offering venues to the group to meet in exchange with a small fee. The fellowship made its mission to bring addicts and let them reintegrated into society as valuable and important members, affirmed deputy chairman of public relations Mohammad Khaled.

Khaled stressed that addiction was not exclusive to any sector of society, it could affect anyone and plagued their lives with misery. On the group's inner workings, Khaled indicated that Narcotics Anonymous consisted of three committees offering institutional and clinical services, public relations assistance, and literature on how to beat addiction. The Narcotics Anonymous movement first began in the United States in 1953 by a group of addicts. The Kuwaiti iteration of Narcotics Anonymous was established in 1994. According to the group, there are currently 450 recovering addicts including 60 women. —KUNA



People in large numbers visit the renovated Yom Al-Bahhar heritage village.

KUWAIT: The renovated Yom Al-Bahhar heritage village received visitors on Sunday after a period of closure for rebuilding and maintenance. Scores of people including families and children flocked to the village as it opened its doors to visitors. They walked through the new grandiose sections of the

building which have the traditional architectural style narrating the stories of a glorious past to the new generation.

The village includes an area for entertainment for children and about 50 sale points that can be used for Kuwaiti food and heritage objects. It also has

business locations for small and medium projects, in addition to a heritage museum that will be open to public on a weekly basis.

The village will also be a starting station for broadcasting different programs on KTV1. —KUNA

## Kuwait charity digs 2,666 wells in 15 countries

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity Society announced Monday that it has provided 2,666 water wells costing \$5 million in 15 poor countries

during 2022. In a statement to KUNA, Deputy Chairman of Al-Najat Board of Directors Rashid Al-Hamad said that the charity seeks to eliminate the scarcity of fresh water in poor countries by providing water wells, with an estimated number of beneficiaries that exceeds more than 664,000 people.

He stressed the society's keenness to

provide the basic needs of poor countries, indicating that with the help of good people, Al-Najat was able to combat forms of poverty and apply the principle of social solidarity. He expressed his thanks and appreciation to all those who contributed to the achievement of the association's endeavors, be it for individuals or official authorities in the country. —KUNA



Rashid Al-Hamad



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Kuwait Charity provided 2,666 water wells in 15 poor countries in 2022.

## Ejabiya volunteer team calls on Hawally and Capital governor

KUWAIT: As part of its periodic activities, Ejabiya Kuwaiti volunteer team visited the Acting Governor of Hawally and the Capital governorate Ali Salem Al-Asfar where he welcomed the team members, Narges Al-Shatti, the head of the team, Laila Abel and Lamia Al-Hanyan. He praised the team's community initiative to organize a competition for the most beautiful home garden in the capital governorate.

Al-Asfar praised the efforts of the team to serve the community and emphasized its support for this initiative. Some topics of interest to the community and the governorates of Hawally and the capital were also discussed. For example, they expressed interest in spreading environmental awareness in the two governorates and on the cleanliness and beautification of Hawally governorate as it is divided into private hous-

ing areas and investment areas. He praised the role of the Environment Public Authority and the cosmetic sector in the Public Authority for Agriculture, and emphasized sustainable development.

He also touched on the presence of the emergency team and the environmental police affiliated with the governorate to follow up on any obstacles or emergency observations in the governorate, and reiterated his readiness for the success of this initiative.

Narges Al-Shatti thanked the head of the team and the governor for allocating time to meet the team, appreciating the efforts and support for volunteer work. His support for the team's initiative, which will be launched during the celebrations of the National Day and the glorious Liberation Day, started in the capital governorate and then the rest of the governorates to generate awareness about the importance of preserving the environment and establishing healthy cities and smart cities in accordance with international standards.

The governor thanked the team members and wished them continued excellence and urged it to keep constant communication with the governorates in order to highlight the civilized face of the State of Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Ejabiya Kuwaiti volunteer team with Acting Governor of Hawally and the Capital governorate Ali Salem Al-Asfar.



Venezuela leader willing to work at normalizing US ties

## Venezuela, Colombia finalize border reopening after settling dispute

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BRASILIA: Brazil's President-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (L), his wife Rosangela da Silva (2-L), his Vice-President-elect Geraldo Alckmin (R) and his wife Maria Lucia Ribeiro Alckmin, make their way to the National Congress for their inauguration ceremony, in Brasilia. — AFP

# Lula vows to rebuild, reunify Brazil

## Extends an olive branch to many Brazilians who did not vote for him in the election

BRASILIA: Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office Sunday for a third term as Brazil's president, vowing to fight for the poor and the environment and "rebuild the country" after far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro's divisive administration.

The 77-year-old veteran leftist, who previously led Brazil from 2003 to 2010, took the oath of office before Congress, capping a remarkable political comeback for the metal-worker-turned-president less than five years after he was jailed on controversial, since-quashed corruption charges.

A sea of red-clad supporters braved the scorching heat to flood Brasilia, exuberantly cheering Lula as he was driven through the ultra-modern capital in a black convertible Rolls-Royce, accompanied by First Lady Rosangela "Janja" da Silva and Vice President Geraldo Alckmin.

Giving a blistering overview of the past four years under Bolsonaro—who snubbed the ceremony, in a break with tradition—Lula said his government would work to undo a legacy of economic decline, surging poverty and funding cuts in health, education and science.

"Upon these terrible ruins, I pledge to rebuild the country, together with the Brazilian people," he said, vowing to fight for poor Brazilians, racial and gender equality, and zero deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, where destruction surged under Bolsonaro.

The swearing-in began with a minute of silence for Brazilian football legend Pele and former pope Benedict XVI, who both died in recent days. Wearing a blue suit and tie, the charismatic but controversial Lula was then driven from Congress to the Planalto presidential palace, escorted by dozens of bodyguards.

There, he received the presidential sash from eight citizens selected to represent the Brazilian people, including a schoolteacher, a disabled man, a precocious 10-year-old and renowned Indigenous leader Raoni Metuktire.

An emotional Lula broke down in tears, thanking the Brazilian people for their faith in him and vowing to fight for a more just country. He also extended an olive branch to the many Brazilians who did not vote for him in the election, which he won by a razor-thin 50.9 percent to Bolsonaro's 49.1 percent. "I will govern for all 215 million Brazilians," he said. "There aren't two Brazils. We are one country, one people."

### 'Historic day'

It is the first time since the end of Brazil's 1965-1985 military dictatorship that an incoming leader has not received the yellow-and-green presidential sash from his predecessor. Bolsonaro, who has not explicitly acknowledged his loss or congratulated Lula, left Brazil for the US state of Florida on Friday.

The snub hardly dampened the party spirit of the New Year's Day ceremony, which included a massive concert featuring acts from samba legend Martinho da Vila to drag queen Pablo Vittar. Wearing a red hat, attendee Lurdiana Araujo called it a moment of "rebirth"—for both Brazil and Lula, who had become a political pariah until the Supreme Court quashed his corruption convictions in 2021, ruling the lead judge in the case had been biased.

"We've spent the past four years suffering. Now we are witnessing a rebirth of democracy," the 51-year-old said. Foreign dignitaries including 19 heads of state were in attendance. They included the presidents

of a raft of Latin American countries, Germany, Portugal and the king of Spain.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who did not attend, posted on Twitter a photo of himself with Lula, saying "Order and Progress"—the words which adorn the Brazilian flag. He added: "Brazil lives up to its motto. Congratulations dear President, dear friend." US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also tweeted his congratulations, saying: "Here's to a bright future for our countries—and the world."

Security was exceptionally tight for the ceremony, after a Bolsonaro supporter was arrested last week for planting a tanker truck rigged with explosives near the capital's airport. But no major incidents were reported.

### Reversing Bolsonaro policies

Lula got straight to work with a flurry of measures to bolster gun-control regulations slashed by Bolsonaro, revoke the ex-president's rollbacks of environmental protections, and revive the internationally backed Amazon Fund to protect the rainforest.

Lula faces numerous urgent challenges in Latin America's biggest economy, which looks little like the commodities-fueled dynamo he led in the 2000s. They include rebooting economic growth, curbing rampant deforestation and delivering on his ambitious agenda to fight poverty and inequality.

Markets are meanwhile watching nervously how Lula will fund his promised social spending, given Brazil's overstretched government finances. He will face a Congress dominated by Bolsonaro's conservative allies.

Meanwhile, just 51 percent of Brazilians think he will do a better job than Bolsonaro, according to a poll published Saturday by the Datafolha institute. — AFP

"The atmosphere is very intimate," Francesca Gabrielli, a pilgrim from Tuscany in central Italy, told AFP inside the basilica. She said Benedict was "a great pope, profound, unique".

### Lord, I love you

Benedict died at the Mater Ecclesiae monastery where he had lived for the past decade, his last words in the early hours of Saturday said by the Vatican to have been "Lord, I love you!" His body will lie in state for three days, with members of the public allowed in during the day, passing first through the metal detectors used routinely to screen visitors to St Peter's Basilica.

Among the visitors Monday were curious tourists, including Valerie Michalak, on holiday with her family from Benedict's native Germany. "It's a once in a lifetime chance to be part of this big ceremony," she said. Thursday's funeral is unprecedented in modern times in that it will be presided over by a sitting pontiff.

Benedict's shock resignation created the extraordinary situation of having two "men in white"—him and Francis—at the Vatican. Papal deaths usually trigger the calling of a conclave of cardinals to elect a successor, but this time Francis remains in post, and will lead proceedings. The Vatican has yet to release details of the guest list, beyond saying that it will include delegations from Italy and Germany. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who at the weekend joined world leaders from Joe Biden to Vladimir Putin in paying tribute to Benedict, was among the first to visit his body on Monday morning. She was greeted by Archbishop Georg Gaenswein, Benedict's long-time aide. — AFP

## Thousands pay tribute to ex-pope at lying-in-state

VATICAN CITY: Thousands of Catholics paid their respects Monday to former pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican, at the start of three days of lying-in-state at St Peter's Basilica before his funeral. They began queuing before dawn to view the German theologian's body, which was transferred early Monday from the monastery in the Vatican grounds where he died Saturday aged 95.

"I arrived at 6:00 am, it seemed normal to come and pay homage to him after all he did

for the church," said an Italian nun, sister Anna-Maria, near the front of the queue that snaked around the edge of the vast St Peter's Square.

Benedict led the Catholic Church for eight years before becoming the first pope in six centuries to step down in 2013, citing his declining health. His successor Pope Francis will lead the funeral on Thursday in St Peter's Square before his remains are placed in the tombs beneath the basilica.

Benedict's body, dressed in red papal mourning robes and a gold-edged mitre, was laid out on a catafalque draped in gold fabric in front of the altar of the church, flanked by two Swiss Guards. Many of those filing past took pictures on their smartphones, while some prayed or made the sign of the cross.



VATICAN CITY: Handout picture released by the Vatican media shows Italian President Sergio Mattarella (2R) and his daughter Laura Mattarella (R) paying their respect at the body of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI lying in state before going to St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. — AFP



CIUDAD JUAREZ: Relatives of inmates react outside the prison of Ciudad Juarez number 3 after an attack in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua state. — AFP

## Armed attack on Mexican prison leaves 14 dead

CIUDAD JUAREZ: Gunmen attacked a prison in the northern Mexican city of Ciudad Juarez on Sunday, leaving 14 people dead and allowing 24 inmates to escape, the Chihuahua state prosecutors' office said. An unknown number of gunmen aboard armored vehicles took part in the attack, and the dead included 10 prison guards and security agents, the office said in a statement.

About five hours after the dawn incursion began, security forces managed to control the situation, which had also erupted into fighting between inmates within the sprawling state prison, near Mexico's border with the United States. Moments before the attack, armed men fired on municipal police along a nearby boulevard, setting off a car chase that ended with the seizure of

a vehicle and four men, the statement added. Later, assailants in a Hummer fired on another group of security agents outside the prison, it said.

Scenes of chaos ensued as relatives of some prisoners waited for New Year's visits outside the compound. Inside, some rioting inmates set fire to various objects and clashed with prison guards, local media reported. Prosecutors said the outbreak of violence at the prison, where inmates from differing criminal bands and drug cartels are housed in separate cell blocks, also left 13 people injured.

Four people were detained, prosecutors said, without specifying if they were inmates or armed assailants. Details were not immediately available about how the 24 inmates were able to flee or who they were. Prosecutors in the city, which sits across the border from El Paso, Texas, said they were investigating the motive of the attack. Ciudad Juarez has been the scene of years of violent clashes between security forces and the rival Sinaloa and Juarez drug cartels, which have left thousands dead over the past decade.—AFP

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## International

# Venezuela, Colombia finalize border reopening after settling dispute

Today we join the historical, cultural and social brotherhood that has always identified us



URENA: Colombian Trade Minister German Umana (L) and Tachira State Governor Freddy Bernal greet each other at the Atanasio Girardot International Bridge -formerly known as Tienditas bridge- which connects Urena in Venezuela with Cucuta in Colombia, after the two countries officially reopened their shared land border. — AFP

URENA: Venezuela and Colombia reopened the last stretch of their shared border Sunday after settling a diplomatic dispute that had kept it closed for years. Cars honked and passengers waved flags as vehicles with license plates from the two South American countries traversed the Atanasio Girardot bridge-previously blocked by shipping containers amid high tensions.

Also known as Tienditas, the bridge was the final step necessary for a full reopening of the border since the countries restored diplomatic ties last year. A ceremony, which included a blessing by bishops, was held Sunday to inaugurate the border crossing, with officials from both sides in attendance wearing white guayaberas and carrying balloons with their countries' shared national colors-yellow, blue and red.

The neighbors share a 2,200-kilometer (1,350-mile) border through a region riddled with armed groups contending for lucrative drug trafficking and smuggling routes. Transport over the border was partially closed seven years ago and then completely blocked in 2019 when Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro broke off diplomatic ties after Colombia under then-president Ivan Duque questioned his 2018 re-election.

Many other countries, including the United States, did not recognize Maduro's victory in an election widely condemned as rigged. After assuming power last year as Colombia's first-ever left-wing president, Gustavo Petro immediately sought to re-establish ties with Venezuela and pushed to reopen the border. On September 26,

goods trucks were allowed through border crossings that had been open only to pedestrians. Air links have also since resumed.

## Restoring 'brotherhood'

"We have taken important steps," Maduro said in an interview broadcast Sunday on Venezuelan state TV. Silvano Serrano, governor of Colombia's Norte de Santander department where the bridge is located, said that "as a single territory, today we join the historical, cultural and social brotherhood that has always identified us." The countries hope to reinvigorate trade, which stood at \$7.2 billion in 2008, but has since collapsed. The Atanasio Girardot bridge connects the Venezuelan city of Urena with Cucuta in Colombia, and had been blocked by shipping containers placed there by the Venezuelan army.

Millions have left Venezuela in recent years, as the country suffers from a deep economic crisis that has seen poverty soar, with many settling in Colombia. Venezuela is also one of the guarantors of ongoing negotiations between the ELN guerrilla group and the Colombian government, which hopes to reach a peace agreement similar to the historic accord signed in 2016 with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. On Saturday, Petro announced that a ceasefire agreement had been struck with the ELN and other armed groups that would last from January 1 to June 30. — AFP

## Exiled Iran oppn figures in united 'victory' message

PARIS: A group of prominent exiled Iranian pro-opposition figures have issued a coordinated message predicting 2023 will be a year of "victory" with the regime shaken by protests. Those sending the message include leaders from the fields of culture, human rights and sports.

The Iranian diaspora has long been seen as lacking unity, split into different political factions and strategies for dealing with the Islamic republic, that ousted the shah in 1979. But with protests still continuing in Iran over 100 days after they were sparked by the death of young Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini, the message appears an attempt to find a long-sought unity.

"The year 2023 was a glorious year of solidarity for Iranians of every belief, language and orientation," it said. "With organisation and solidarity, 2023 will be the year of victory for the Iranian nation. The year of freedom and justice in Iran." The message was sent simultaneously on social media by a variety of figures, ranging from the influential US-based dissident Masih Alinejad to the son of the ousted shah, Reza Pahlavi, who also lives in the United States. Prominent actors Golshifteh Farahani and Nazanin Boniadi also tweeted the message, as did Zar Amir Ebrahimi, who won the best actress award at the Cannes Film Festival in France last year. "We are united to reach freedom," Farahani wrote on her Instagram account. "We will stand together and will not be silent".

Prominent rights activists to post the message included Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, and Hamed Esmacilion, who has led the Canada-based campaign for justice for the victims of the Ukraine Airlines flight shot down by Iran in January 2020. From the field



HAMADAN, Iran : Iranians take part in a pro-government rally in the central city of Hamedan, on December 30, 2022. — AFP

of sports, they were joined by former Iranian international football star Ali Karimi, who has been a vociferous supporter of the protest movement.

The protest movement sparked by the death of Amini, who had been arrested for allegedly breaching the Islamic republic's strict dress code, is presenting the clerical leadership with its biggest challenge since the 1979 revolution. The crackdown has seen 476 people killed, according to Norway-based rights group Iran Human Rights.

Two people have already been executed over the protests, while IHR says at least 100 detainees are at risk of execution. The United Nations says at least 14,000 people have been arrested, with several well known figures such as the actor Taraneh Alidoosti still in detention. Roham Alvandi, a history professor at the London School of Economics, said the message was a "hopeful sign in dark times". With the authorities showing little sign of offering concessions to protesters, the Fars news agency reported that Iranian police were launching a new drive to step up enforcement of the obligatory hijab. — AFP

## Zionist army kills two Palestinians in West Bank

WEST BANK: The Zionist army killed two Palestinians in a West Bank raid on Monday as it demolished the homes of two Palestinians accused of killing a Zionist soldier, Palestinian officials said.

The Palestinian health ministry announced the deaths of "Mohammad Samer Hoshieh, 22, after being shot in the chest, and Fuad Mohammad Abed, 25, after being shot in the abdomen and thigh" during a raid by the Zionist army near Jenin. Zionist soldiers had entered the village of Kafr Dan "in order to demolish the residences of the assailants who were involved in the shooting adjacent to the Gilboa (Jalame) Crossing, in which Major Bar Falah was killed." Zionist's military said.

Clouds of smoke engulfed the small village as two houses were levelled with explosives shortly after sunrise on Monday. The army later said "a violent riot was instigated" when troops entered the village. "Rioters burned tyres, shot live fire and hurled rocks, Molotov cocktails and explosive devices at the forces, who responded with riot dispersal means and live fire," the statement said. "Hits were identified," it added.

Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that 18 others were arrested by the Zionist army in overnight raids across the West Bank. Falah, the Zionist major, was killed in September 2022 during clashes with Palestinian gunmen at the Gilboa checkpoint between Zionist entity and the occupied West Bank.

After he was killed, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades — the armed wing of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas' Fatah party — claimed responsibility. Ahmed Abed, 23, and Abdul Rahman Subhi Abed, 22, whose family homes were demolished Monday, were also



JENIN: Relatives of Fuad Mohammad Abed mourn during his funeral procession in the Palestinian city of Jenin, in the Zionist-occupied West Bank, on January 2, 2023. — AFP

killed in the September clashes in which Falah died.

## New government

Zionist entity regularly destroys the homes of individuals it blames for attacks on Zionists. Human rights activists say Zionist's policy of demolishing the homes of suspected attackers amounts to collective punishment, as it can render non-combatants, including children, homeless.

But Zionist entity says the practice is effective in deterring some Palestinians from carrying out attacks. The two deaths are the first in the West Bank for 2023. According to United Nations data, 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians since the 2002-2005 uprising, known as the Second Intifada, with at least 150 Palestinians and 26 Zionists killed across Zionist entity and the West Bank, including Zionist-annexed east Jerusalem. The new government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, one of the most-right wing in Zionist's history, has sparked fears of a military escalation in the West Bank, occupied by Zionist entity since 1967. — AFP

## Canada bans most foreigners from buying homes

OTTAWA: A ban on foreigners buying residential property in Canada took effect on Sunday, aiming to make more homes available to locals facing a housing crunch. Several exceptions in the act allow individuals such as refugees and permanent residents who are not citizens to buy homes. In late December, Ottawa also clarified that the ban would apply only to city dwellings and not to recreational properties such as summer cottages.

The temporary two-year measure was proposed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during the 2021 election campaign when soaring prices put home ownership beyond the reach of many Canadians. "The desirability of Canadian homes is attracting profiteers, wealthy corporations, and foreign investors," his Liberal Party said in its election plank at the time. "This is leading to a real problem of underused and vacant housing, rampant speculation, and skyrocketing prices. Homes are for people, not investors."

Following their 2021 election victory, the Liberals quietly introduced the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Act. Major markets such as Vancouver and Toronto have also introduced taxes on non-residents and empty homes. Despite a recent heyday, the country's real estate market has cooled for sellers as mortgage rates followed the Bank of Canada's aggressive

## 30,000 expats deported in...

Continued from Page 1

The only thing the interior ministry needs is a decision that adds patients with files at the psychiatric hospital to the list of those who do not



FORT ERIE, Canada: A person walks by homes covered in ice at the waterfront community of Crystal Beach. — AFP

monetary policy in a bid to rein in inflation.

According to the Canadian Real Estate Association, average home prices have fallen from a peak of more than Can\$800,000 (US\$590,000) at the start of 2022 to just over Can\$630,000 (US\$465,000) last month. Many experts have also said the ban on foreign buyers - who accounted for less than five percent of home ownership in Canada, according to the national statistical agency - would not have the desired effect of making homes more affordable.

Rather they point to a need for more housing construction to meet demand. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation - the national housing agency - said in a June report that close to 19 million housing units will be needed by 2030. That means 5.8 million new homes must be built, or 3.5 million more than are currently anticipated to be built to meet that demand, it said. — AFP

meet the requirements of renewal of residency permit," sources explained.

"The file is part of the country's efforts to reduce the number of expatriates and correct the population imbalance to restrict expatriate workers to the needs of the labor market in Kuwait. This will mean that many who are not needed will be deported. This is not a human rights issue, as their stay in Kuwait is temporary and connected to the rules of iqamas and work permits," sources added.

## Ukraine strike kills scores of...

Continued from Page 1

Earlier in the day the strategic communications department of Ukraine's armed forces said that nearly 400 Russian troops were killed in Makiivka. Russian war correspondents, who have gained influence in recent months, said hundreds could have been killed and accused Russia's top commanders of not learning from past mistakes.

Former Russian separatist leader Igor Strelkov said the troops, largely consisting of mobilized Russians, were stationed in an unprotected building that was "almost completely" destroyed because ammunition stored on the premises detonated in the strike. He said "hundreds" have been killed and wounded. "Ten months into the war it is dangerous and criminal to consider the enemy a fool who does not see anything," said Andrei Medvedev, deputy speaker of the Moscow city legislature.

The Samara governor, Dmitry Azarov, said that among the victims were residents of his region, adding that a hotline was set up for their relatives. On social media, some accused the Russian authorities of downplaying the death toll. "Dear God, who will believe in the figure of 63? The building has been completely destroyed," one Russian, Nina Vertykh, wrote on the country's largest social network, VKontakte.

An announcement on the social network urged Russians to collect clothes, medicines and equipment for those who survived the strike. "Everything that the mobilized had on them remains under the rubble," said the announcement. Russian strikes across Ukraine on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day killed at least five people and wounded dozens. The Ukrainian capital again came under fire from Iranian-made drones on Monday, although Ukrainian forces claimed the majority were shot down by air defenses.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko reported an explosion in northeastern Kyiv and said emergency services were dispatched. "An injured 19-year-old man was hospitalized in the Desnyanskyi district of the capital," he said. Following the strikes, the power company Ukrenergo said the situation with the electricity supply in Kyiv was now "more complicated". "That is why emergency shutdowns are now in effect," it said.

General Valery Zaluzhny, commander in chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, said that the army had so far liberated "40 percent of the territories occupied after February 24". Russia's New Year assaults - which targeted downtown areas of large cities - show a change in tactics, said an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. "Russia no longer has any military goals and is trying to kill as many civilians as possible and destroy more civilian facilities," Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted. "A war to kill."

After suffering a series of humiliating battlefield defeats, Moscow started to target electrical and other critical infrastructure in October. The strikes have caused sweeping blackouts and cut off water supplies and heating to civilians as the temperature in some regions dropped below freezing. The UN's human rights chief has warned the campaign has inflicted "extreme hardship" on Ukrainians, and also decried probable war crimes by Russian forces.

Putin declared during his midnight address on New Year's Eve that "moral, historical rightness is on our side". Moscow said its New Year's attacks had targeted the pro-Western country's drone production. Russia has accused Ukraine of targeting its domestic military sites and infrastructure in recent weeks. In December, Moscow said it had shot down drones three separate times over or near Engels airfield, an airbase in southern Russia more than 600 km from Ukraine. Falling debris killed three people in one of those attacks.

On Monday, Russian officials said a Ukrainian drone had struck an energy facility in the southwestern Bryansk region neighboring Ukraine. Bryansk governor Alexander Bogomaz said that the strike had cut off electricity to a village. - AFP

## International

# China's air incursions into Taiwan zone doubled in 2022

## Washington has maintained a policy of 'strategic ambiguity' towards Taiwan

TAIPEI: China's warplane incursions into Taiwan's air defence zone nearly doubled in 2022, with a surge in fighter jet and bomber sorties as Beijing intensified threats towards the island democracy. Self-ruled Taiwan lives under constant threat of invasion. Communist Party rulers claim the island as part of China's territory and have vowed to seize it one day.

Relations have been icy for years under President Xi Jinping, China's most assertive leader in a generation. But 2022 saw a deeper deterioration, as Xi's military ramped up incursions and launched the largest war games in decades to protest against a visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August.

China sent 1,727 planes into Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) in 2022, according to an AFP database based on daily updates released by Taipei's defence ministry. That compares with around 960 incursions in 2021 and 380 in 2020.

Fighter jet sorties more than doubled from 538 in 2021 to 1,241 while incursions by bombers, including the nuclear-capable H6, went from 60 to 101. Last year also witnessed the first incursions by drones, with all 71 reported by Taiwan's military coming after Pelosi's visit. Military analysts say China has used the incursions to probe Taiwan's defences, exhaust its ageing air force and voice displeasure over Western support for Taipei, especially the United States.

"They want to show their determination, their will and to coerce the United States: don't get too close to their red lines, don't cross their red lines," Lee Hsi-min, Taiwan's former chief of general staff, told AFP.

### Strategic ambiguity?

The United States recognises China over Taiwan diplo-

matically, but remains Taipei's most important ally. It opposes any forced change to Taiwan's status and is bound by an act of Congress to supply the island with the means to defend itself.

Support for Taiwan is a rare issue of bipartisan consensus in Washington and there has been growing alarm over whether China might resort to a military solution, a fear heightened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Washington has maintained a policy of "strategic ambiguity" towards Taiwan, deliberately making no firm commitment on whether it would come to its defence. That strategy was aimed at making Beijing think twice about the costs of any invasion, and also to deter Taiwan from formally declaring independence. US President Joe Biden has been mercurial on the issue of strategic ambiguity.

He has repeatedly said US troops would come to Taiwan's aid in the event of a Chinese invasion, only for the White House to walk back his comments. China has used warplane incursions to voice its displeasure against specific events. It sent 71 warplanes to conduct a "strike exercise" on December 25 in response to what it described as "escalating collusion and provocations" by Washington and Taipei.

That came days after Biden signed off on up to \$10 billion in military aid to Taiwan. August saw a record 440 sorties by Chinese warplanes, the same month Pelosi became the highest-ranking US lawmaker to visit Taiwan in 25 years.

### 'Grey-zone' pressure

"The more frequent sorties are worrying and compel the Taiwanese side to be in a perpetual state of alert to ensure that the PLA (People's Liberation Army)



TAIPEI: Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen (C) speaks during a press conference next to Vice President William Lai (2nd L), Premier Su Tseng-chang (2nd R), Secretary General of National Security Council Wellington Koo (L) and Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng (R) at the presidential office in Taipei. —AFP

does not use them as cover for an attack against Taiwan," Taipei-based political and military analyst J Michael Cole told AFP.

However, he also said a rise in incursions "does not signify that (China) is ready to use force at an earlier date against Taiwan—at least not an invasion scenario, which would require months of mobilisation".

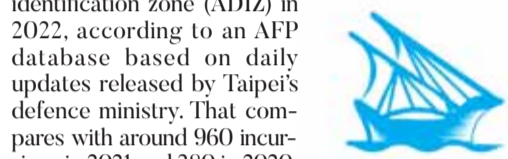
Many nations maintain air defence identification zones, including the United States, Canada, South Korea, Japan and China, which are not the same as a country's airspace. They instead encompass a much wider area in which any foreign aircraft is expected to announce itself to local aviation authorities.

Analysts say China's increased probing of Taiwan's defence zone is part of wider "grey-zone" tactics that

keep the island pressured. "The PRC (People's Republic of China) is launching a war of attrition on the Taiwanese military," said Richard Hu, deputy director of National Chengchi University's Taiwan Centre for Security Studies.

While China intends to collect crucial intelligence and "readiness parameters", such as how quickly and from where Taiwan's interceptions take place, an invasion remains a hugely risky and costly endeavour.

The mountainous island would be a formidable challenge for any military to conquer. "In terms of taking Taiwan by force, PRC is still confronting a number of vital challenges such as sending hundreds of thousands of troops across the Taiwan Strait," said Hu, a retired Army major general. —AFP



'Don't cross their red lines'

## 10 killed in Indian Kashmir violence

SRINAGAR: Ten people have been killed within six days in a sudden uptick in violence in the usually more peaceful Hindu south of disputed Indian-administered Kashmir, officials said Monday. Rebel groups in the Muslim-majority Himalayan region have for decades fought for its independence or merger with Pakistan, which controls a smaller portion of the divided territory.

About half a million Indian soldiers are deployed in Kashmir, and its southern portion, Jammu, is mostly Hindu and comparatively peaceful. But two gunmen suspected to be anti-India rebels opened fire on houses in the remote village of Dangri on Sunday, leaving four residents dead and five injured, police officer Mukesh Singh told reporters.

Police and security forces launched a manhunt in the area close to the Line of Control that divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan. On Monday a seven-year-old child and another person were killed in an explosion near one of the houses, another police officer told AFP on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to media.

An unexploded device was also found nearby and neutralised by a specialist squad, officers said. The deaths followed a firefight between government forces and suspected rebels at a checkpoint in



RAJOURI: Family members mourn next to the bodies of residents who were killed after two gunmen suspected to be anti-India rebels opened fire on houses in the remote village of Dangri in Rajouri district on January 2, 2023. —AFP

Jammu city on Wednesday. Police said four suspected rebels were killed while the driver of their truck escaped and was on the run. Officials said at least 172 suspected rebels and 26 armed forces personnel were killed in fighting last year.

Indian Kashmir has been without an elected gov-

ernment for over five years and has been directly controlled by New Delhi since 2019. India regularly blames Pakistan for supporting the rebels, an allegation denied by Islamabad, which says it only provides diplomatic support to Kashmir's struggle for the right to self-determination. —AFP

## Venezuela leader willing to work at normalizing US ties

CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said in an interview broadcast Sunday that he is willing to work towards normalizing relations with the United States, despite the continued sanctions crippling his country.

Maduro's remarks come days after the South American country's opposition voted to dissolve an "interim government" led by Juan Guaido, who had been recognized by many countries—including the United States—as Venezuela's legitimate leader following disputed 2018 elections.

"Venezuela is ready, totally ready, to take steps towards a process of normalization of diplomatic, consular and political relations with the current administration of the United States and with administrations to come," Maduro said in an interview broadcast on Venezuelan state television.

Maduro broke off relations with Washington in 2019, when the administration of then-president Donald Trump recognized Guaido as Venezuela's "interim president." In an attempt to force Maduro out of office, the United States launched a battery of sanctions against Venezuela, including an oil embargo.

Although the administration of current US President Joe Biden maintains a policy of not formally recognizing the Maduro government, last year it sent delegates to Caracas to meet with him and negotiate prisoner exchanges, among other topics.

"We are prepared for dialogue at the highest level, for relations of respect, and I wish a beam of light would come to the United States of America, they would turn the page and leave their extremist policy aside and come to more pragmatic policies with respect to Venezuela," Maduro said.

Three of the four major parties in Venezuela's opposition-controlled National Assembly voted on Friday to end the interim government led by Guaido. The body, elected in 2015, is



CARACAS: Handout picture released by the press office of opposition leader Juan Guaido showing Guaido taking part in a virtual meeting with members of the old Parliament, elected in 2015, in Caracas. —AFP

now largely symbolic as it was replaced by a legislature loyal to Maduro, though it still retains control over some of Venezuela's assets abroad.

After negotiations restarted in

Mexico between the opposition and the Maduro government in late November, Washington responded by granting a six-month license to US energy giant Chevron to operate in Venezuela. —AFP

## Two helicopters collide in Australia, killing four

SYDNEY: Two helicopters collided in mid-air, killing four people Monday at Australia's Gold Coast tourism hotspot, officials said, with images showing one of the aircraft's rotors lying on a sandbar. Three other people were in critical condition, police said, describing how bystanders had rushed to haul passengers from an upside-down helicopter.

One helicopter had flipped over on the exposed sandbank a few feet from the shore, images on public broadcaster ABC showed. The aircraft was shorn of its rotors, which lay a short distance away. The other helicopter appeared to be largely intact at the accident scene, which is near the Gold Coast's popular Sea World marine theme park.

A bright yellow rescue helicopter had landed on the sand nearby, its rotors spinning, images of the aftermath showed, with scores of rescuers deployed around the area. Several small police and rescue boats were moored on the exposed sandbank, which was strewn with bits of the destroyed helicopter.

"Those two aircraft, when collided, have crash landed, and landed, on the sandbank just out from Sea World resort," Queensland police service acting inspector Gary Worrell told a news conference at the scene. "As a result of that, four people have lost their lives today," he said. "Three others are critical in hospital."

### Investigation launched

One of the helicopters appeared to have been taking off as the other was landing, Worrell said, adding that the facts were yet to be determined by air accident investigators. The helicopter that landed safely had lost its windscreen, the police office said. "The other airframe has crashed and it was upside down."

"Members of the public and police tried to remove the people and they commenced first aid to try and get those people to safety (from) the airframe that was upside down." Access to the scene was complicated by the sandbank's location, Worrell said. "I would like to thank all those that attended and made (it) possible to get those people to emergency care like they did."

Australia's transport safety bureau said it had already launched a probe into the mid-air collision. Investigators would examine the wreckage and map the site, as well as recover components for examination, it said in a statement. The bureau appealed to anyone who saw the helicopters in flight or had any footage to make contact. A preliminary report was expected in between six to eight weeks. —AFP

## Senegal MPs get 6-month jail terms

DAKAR: Two Senegalese opposition MPs were handed six-month jail terms on Monday for physically attacking a female colleague in parliament. In a case that sparked anguished debate about democracy in Senegal, pro-government legislator Amy Ndiaye was slapped and

then kicked in the belly during a chaotic session in the National Assembly.

MPs Mamadou Niang and Massata Samb were each given six-month prison terms after a trial that began on December 19. They were also each fined 100,000 CFA francs CFA (\$150) and ordered to pay five million francs in damages. Prosecutors had sought two-year terms.

The bust up happened on December 1, during a routine vote on the justice ministry's budget. It was sparked by remarks Ndiaye had made about Serigne Moustapha Sy, an influential Muslim leader who supports the opposition but is not a lawmaker.

After order was restored, Ndiaye fainted and was given hospital treatment—her lawyer Baboucar Cisse said she was pregnant and there were fears she could lose her baby. She has since left hospital but "remains in an extremely difficult situation," Cisse said.

The incident triggered a fierce debate about parliamentary discourse and attacks on women. It notably coincided with an awareness campaign against domestic violence. Senegal is widely viewed as a beacon of stability and democracy in West Africa—a region notorious for coups and dictatorships.

Legislative elections in July led to a virtual tie,

requiring Sall's party to forge a coalition to stay in power. Sall was elected to a seven-year term in 2012 and re-elected for a five-year tenure in 2019. He has not divulged his plans for the next presidential vote, due in 2024. Niang and Samb, who were arrested on December 15, were not present in court. "They are going to remain in prison pending an appeal," one of their lawyers, Abdy Nar Ndiaye, told AFP.

They denied hitting the legislator, despite video evidence to the contrary. Their lawyers argued the pair were immune from prosecution, given their status as lawmakers, but this was rejected by the court. —AFP

# Business

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023

## CBK: Six Kuwaiti banks join GCC cross-border payment system

### AFAQ optimized to process remittances in local, GCC currencies

KUWAIT: Six local banks have joined the GCC Cross-border Payment System (AFAQ) in the State of Kuwait, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced on Monday. This came following its efforts to develop the cross-border payment systems and deploy advanced technologies with the aim to enhance efficiency, minimize reliance on the financial systems and external payment platforms and reduce cost, the CBK's Governor Basel Al-Haroon said in a press statement.

The second phase included the joining of six Kuwaiti banks, namely National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwaiti Finance House, Ahli United Bank, Commercial Bank of

Kuwait, Burgan Bank and Kuwait Industrial Bank, having completed all the required tests and procedures, he added.

CBK announced in March 2022 that the first phase included the Central Bank of Kuwait and Boubyan Bank, and it would continue its efforts to facilitate the phased joining of the other local banks to AFAQ subject to completion of the security and technical tests required for the planned linkage within the preset timeframe, Al-Haroon remarked. The governor added that AFAQ is optimized to process remittances in local GCC and other currencies in a short time and at reduced costs to

customers in a safe and stable environment, and is part of a regional infrastructure operated and developed by Gulf Payments Company for the GCC joint regional payment systems. The CBK's governor went on saying that this would help strengthen the GCC joint payment systems and develop appropriate strategies to avoid financial risks and achieve economic and financial integration in GCC states. The governor concluded by emphasizing that CBK is keen to adopt the latest technologies that help enhance efficiency and security of payment systems, and maintain monetary stability and financial stability in the country. — KUNA



Basel Al-Haroon

## Energy security remains top agenda for 2023

PARIS: In 2022, we saw the first crisis of the new energy era. The most surprising thing about that crisis is arguably how limited its disruption has been. As the world turns the page on 2022, what is certain about this year is that the global push to decarbonize will not slow - it will accelerate, but with a new attention to security.

Previous energy crises centered on oil: the 1973 October War and embargo, the 1979-80 Iranian Revolution and Iran-Iraq War, and the First Gulf War in 1991. Each one of these involved a Middle East war, political upheaval and disruption of petroleum supplies. Today's maelstrom centers on eastern Europe - gas and electricity are at its core, oil and coal whirling around the periphery.



The world oil market completely reconfigured from the early 1970s to the late 1980s.

From a closed oligopoly dominated by the western majors, who moved Middle East oil through their own refining and retail systems at administered pricing, it became a system where national oil corporations took over much of the production but sold into a complex, financialized ecosystem, whose prices were determined by the market. Natural gas, coal, nuclear power and biofuels featured as potential replacements for oil. Modern renewable energy - wind and solar - were negligible. None were the centers of crises themselves, other than nuclear reactor accidents and domestic coal miners' strikes. Algeria tried unsuccessfully in the early 1980s to leverage its position as a gas exporter to Europe to extract better terms. That attempt was not successful and arguably damaged its own reputation. The Soviet Union and its successor Russia, by contrast, found ready gas buyers in Europeans seeking to get off OPEC oil - Vienna, not Moscow, had them over a barrel.

The 1986 oil price crash hastened the Soviet Union's fall; the price spike of the First Gulf War encouraged India's then finance minister Manmohan Singh's famous reforming budget of July 1991; and China's economic transformation brought a long surge in commodity demand. The rise of shale in the US during the 2010s created a major non-state-controlled exporter of both oil and gas.

Globalization created as close to a free market in oil as has ever existed: the gas business liberalized later, and less completely. Modern politicians and energy executives grew up within this paradigm. Prices might rise at times, even to record levels as in 2008, individual actions of terrorist groups, rogue states, sanctions-happy US officials or hurricanes might cut supply in limited areas, and China might appear to be buying up oil assets globally. Countries in Africa and emerging Asia struggled to bring reliable energy to all their people.

But there was little real concern about the political availability of supply in aggregate. Instead, campaigners, voters and policymakers in Europe and, spasmodically, the US came to see energy as a subset of the problem of climate change.

This comfortable situation began to erode in the twenty-teens: China's ban on supplying rare earth minerals to Japan, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, an attempted US interdiction of Iranian oil exports followed by sanctions on Venezuela, and the general turn to "slowbalization" with American suspicion of China. Food price crises became more common and coincided with energy shocks: worries grew over the availability of critical minerals such as lithium and cobalt. — Agencies



Kristalina Georgieva

## IMF chief cautions of 'tough year' for world economy

WASHINGTON: Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva said that 2023 is going to be "a tough year" for the world economy, "tougher than the year we leave behind." "The three big economies, US, EU, China, are all slowing down simultaneously," Georgieva told CBS network on the New Year's Day.

"The US is most resilient. The US may avoid recession. We see the labor market remaining quite strong." "This is, however, a mixed blessing, because, if the labor market is very strong, the Fed (Federal Reserve) may have to keep interest rates tighter for longer to bring inflation down," she explained. Since the European Union is "very severely hit by the war in Ukraine," half of the EU economies "will be in recession next year," IMF chief cautioned.

On China, she said, "For the first time in 40 years, China's growth in 2022 is likely to be at or below global growth." "And looking in to next year, for three, four, five, six months, the relaxation of COVID restrictions would mean bushfire, COVID cases throughout China," she noted. "For the next couple of months, it would be tough for China. And the impact on Chinese growth would be negative." — AFP



TUNIS: Tunisians are pictured next to a tram station in the capital Tunis, on January 2, 2023, after a strike by the public transport employees was announced the night before. — AFP

## Tunisia transport workers strike amid economic woes

TUNIS: Tram and bus workers in the Tunisian capital staged a strike over delays in salaries and the lack of an end-of-year bonus Monday, creating traffic jams across Tunis.

The strike is the latest in a string of similar actions as Tunisia grapples with a grinding economic crisis, with frequent shortages of basic goods from petrol to cooking oil. The North African nation is struggling with debts of more than 100 percent of gross domestic product and is in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund for a nearly two billion-dollar bailout.

## Saudi giant Dar Al-Arkan's Dubai unit to list in UK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's biggest property developer Dar Al-Arkan plans to list its Dubai unit in the UK in the first quarter of this year. The initial public offering plans follow a corporate reorganization of the subsidiary, as it seeks further international expansion. The proposed listing of Dar Al-Arkan Real Estate Development, which was renamed Dar Global Group, is subject to approvals by the UK Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the London Stock Exchange (LSE) and the disclosure of an FCA-approved prospectus, Dar Al-Arkan said in a filing to the Tadawul stock exchange. Prior to the listing, Dar Al-Arkan Real Estate Development will divest a minority stake of about 12 per cent of its equity interest in Dar Global through a primary issuance of new ordinary shares by the new British company to qualified investors in a private placement, it said.

Dar Al-Arkan will retain the remaining 88 per cent controlling interest. Following the listing, Dar Global will be the UK holding company of the group's international property development interests and marketing offices in the UK, Spain, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bosnia and China, according to the bourse filing.

"Subject to the completion of the private placement and obtaining the required UK regulatory approvals, the listing is expected to occur in Q1 2023," the parent company said. The move comes after Dar Al-Arkan said in a separate filing on November 6 that it is exploring "several strategic and capital markets options" for its Dubai unit that may include a listing of the business on an international stock exchange.

Later that month, the Riyadh-based company said it teamed up with The Trump Organization for the development of a resort that will include residential villas, a hotel and a golf course in Muscat. The Trump Resort will be located at Aida, a 100-

metre-high hilltop development situated directly by the sea. Dar Al-Arkan and the Oman Tourism Development Company, better known as Omran, are developing the \$4 billion mixed-use Aida real estate project in the Omani capital.

Dar Al-Arkan, the largest developer in Saudi Arabia, focuses on developing luxury residences and commercial centers in key locations across the kingdom. The company has delivered 15,000 residential units, more than 500,000 square meters of commercial space and is expanding in its home market, the



wider Middle East and Europe. The company has more than \$8.53 billion worth of assets and is currently building three residential projects in Dubai - Dar Al-Arkan Pagani Tower near the Dubai Canal, Urban Oasis by Missoni and W Residences in Downtown Dubai. It is also planning to start a new residential project in Abu Dhabi next year, as the UAE's property market bounces back from the Covid-19-induced slowdown. In December 2021, the company outlined plans to expand globally with new projects in Europe, China and GCC countries to boost growth. Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's largest economy, is focused on diversifying its economy away from oil as part of its Vision 2030 program, and part of this strategy includes the development of megaprojects across the kingdom. — Agencies

## Sri Lanka freezes recruitment in austerity drive

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka began a fresh austerity drive Monday, freezing government recruitment as new taxes and higher electricity prices kicked in with authorities trying to secure an IMF bailout. The Indian Ocean island nation needs to achieve debt sustainability as a precondition to a \$2.9 billion bailout from the Washington-based lender after it defaulted in April as its economy went into crisis.

The IMF has also asked Colombo to trim its 1.5 million strong public service, sharply raise taxes and sell off loss-making state enterprises. A record 20,000 civil servants retired at the end of December-eight times as many as usual according to the public administration ministry-after President Ranil Wickremesinghe reduced their retirement age from 65 to 60. They will not be replaced, the ministry said.

Doubled personal income and corporate taxes kicked in on New Year's Day to shore up state revenue, while electricity prices went up 65 percent after a 75 percent tariff increase in August.

Wickremesinghe, who came to power after Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country and resigned in July following months of protests, said the crisis was not yet over despite the restoration of fuel, food and fertilizer supplies. "Our problems have not been resolved yet," he told his staff on the first working day of the year.

"We need to reduce our debt burden if we are to move forward." Key creditors such as China and India are yet to announce agreement to a "haircut" on their loans to the South Asian nation. As part of the new measures, the finance ministry has also banned non-essential capital expenditure. Any officials who authorize investments over 500 million rupees (\$1.38 million) without clearing them with the treasury first will be held personally accountable, a ministry official said. — AFP



Business



LAS VEGAS: In this file photo taken on January 10, 2020 attendees walk through the Las Vegas Convention Center on the final day of the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: In this file photo taken on January 10, 2020 attendees experience the LG OLED Wave made up of 200 55-inch LG OLED digital screens on the final day of the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

# AI infused everything on show at CES gadget extravaganza

## Consumer Electronics Show opens in Las Vegas on Thursday

LAS VEGAS: The latest leaps in artificial intelligence in everything from cars, robots to appliances will be on full display at the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) opening Thursday in Las Vegas.

Forced by the pandemic to go virtual in 2021 and hybrid last year, tens of thousands of show-goers are hoping for a return to packed halls and rapid-fire deal-making that were long the hallmark of the annual gadget extravaganza. "In 2022, it was a shadow of itself — empty halls, no meetings in hotel rooms," Avi Greengart, an analyst at Techspotential told AFP. "Now, (we expect) crowds, trouble getting around and meetings behind closed doors - which is what a trade show is all about." The CES show officially opens on January 5, but companies will begin to vie for the spotlight with the latest tech wizardry as early as Tuesday. CES will be spread over more than 18 acres (seven hectares), from the sprawling Las Vegas Convention Center to pavilions set up in parking lots. Ballrooms and banquet rooms across Sin City will be used to hustle up business.

With transportation now computing's new frontier,

next generation autos, trucks, boats, farm equipment, and even flying machines are expected to grab attention, according to analysts. "It's going to feel almost like you're at an auto show," said Kevan Yalowitz, head of platform strategy at Accenture.

More than ever, cars now come with operating systems so much like a smartphone or laptop computer. Accenture expects that by 2040 about 40 percent of vehicles on the road will need software updated remotely. And with connected cars come apps and online entertainment as developers battle to grab passenger attention with streaming or shopping services on board. Electric vehicles enhanced with artificial intelligence will also be on display "in a big way," Greengart said. "What has really been the buzz is personalized flying machines," said independent tech analyst Rob Enderle. "Basically, they are human-carrying drones."

### Metaverse momentum?

Led by Zuckerberg's Meta, immersive virtual worlds referred to as the metaverse are seen by some as the future of the ever-evolving internet, despite wide-

spread criticism that the billionaire CEO is over-investing in an unproven sector. After being a major theme at CES last year, virtual reality headgear aimed at transporting people to the metaverse are expected to again to figure prominently.

Formerly known as Facebook, Meta will be allowing selected guests to try its latest Oculus Quest virtual reality headset, trying to persuade doubters that the company's pivot to the metaverse was the right one. Gadgets or services pitched as being part of the next-generation of the internet - or "Web 3" - are also expected to include mixed reality gear as well as blockchain technology and NFTs.

Web 3 promises a more decentralized internet where tech giants, big business or governments no longer hold all the keys to life online. "The idea of how we are going to connect is going to be part of the big trend at CES," said Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanese. Analysts had expected cryptocurrencies to be touted among Web 3 innovations at the show, but there "could be pullback" because of the implosion of cryptocurrency platform FTX and arrest

of its boss Sam Bankman-Fried, according to Milanese.

### COVID and climate

CES offerings will likely show effects of the pandemic, since products designed during a time of lockdowns and remote work will be now heading for market even if lifestyles are returning to pre-COVID habits, noted Greengart. Tech designed to better assess health and connect remotely with care providers will also be strong at CES.

And though the show is unabashedly devoted to consumerism, the environment will also be a theme from gadgets designed to scoop trash from waterways to apps that help people cut down on energy use. A lot of companies are eliminating plastic from packaging and shifting to biodegradable materials, while also trying to reduce carbon emissions, according to analysts.

"If you are the kind of person who is off the grid growing vegetables, then CES is not for you," Greengart said. "But, I do commend companies that find ways to make their products and the supply chain more sustainable." —AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 29 DECEMBER 2022

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,212	8,115.68	1.3%	-4.4%	6.2%	243,108,666	107,168,286	19,524	24.6	2.6	77.2%
Main Market	10,096	5,596.79	0.4%	-1.5%	-4.9%	381,113,508	40,357,358	15,616	43.3	1.4	22.8%
All Share	44,308	7,292.12	1.1%	-3.9%	3.5%	624,222,174	147,525,644	35,140	28.9	2.3	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	26,882	1,793.91	1.2%	-3.8%	10.5%	102,344,932	59,867,665	8,224	26.3	2.6	60.67%
BASIC MATERIALS	488	865.11	-0.4%	-1.9%	-15.6%	589,091	438,560	208	8.2	1.5	1.10%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	996	1,486.83	1.2%	0.5%	11.2%	45,711,117	4,272,965	2,090	28.1	11.3	2.25%
CONSUMER STAPLES	146	479.95	-1.3%	-1.8%	-34.4%	4,612,255	1,669,835	271	0.0	1.2	0.33%
ENERGY	237	1,138.52	1.2%	4.3%	-20.3%	11,599,964	256,472	277	10.1	1.1	0.54%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,425	1,257.24	-0.2%	-5.7%	-11.7%	265,635,329	29,975,238	10,550	69.3	1.7	9.99%
HEALTH CARE	229	461.85	0.0%	1.7%	-42.1%	0	0.000	0	14.3	5.8	0.52%
INDUSTRIALS	3,815	1,078.88	3.7%	-5.0%	-5.5%	53,704,402	28,479,004	5,617	36.4	1.5	8.61%
INSURANCE	638	1,550.82	0.2%	0.5%	1.1%	497,202	73,518	90	9.5	1.0	1.44%
REAL ESTATE	2,610	1,208.71	-0.7%	-5.7%	-8.9%	124,910,776	14,775,870	4,987	18.5	1.3	5.89%
TECHNOLOGY	10	696.22	-1.3%	-9.7%	1.8%	59,453	5,957	33	0.0	0.9	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,624	1,181.46	1.6%	-2.7%	8.5%	13,117,005	7,443,758	2,544	13.2	2.0	8.18%
UTILITIES	207	494.74	2.7%	-4.6%	-17.5%	1,440,648	266,802	249	15.5	1.7	0.47%

### Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ASIYA	57	9.83%	27,265,915	1,500,741,675	1,129
MADAR	114.0	9.62%	2,277,697	237,879,187	29
KHOT	177	9.26%	1,800	312,800	3
JIYAD	23	8.92%	35,714,867	809,673,911	828
KINV	152	8.57%	36,168,068	5,258,315,266	800

### Top Losers

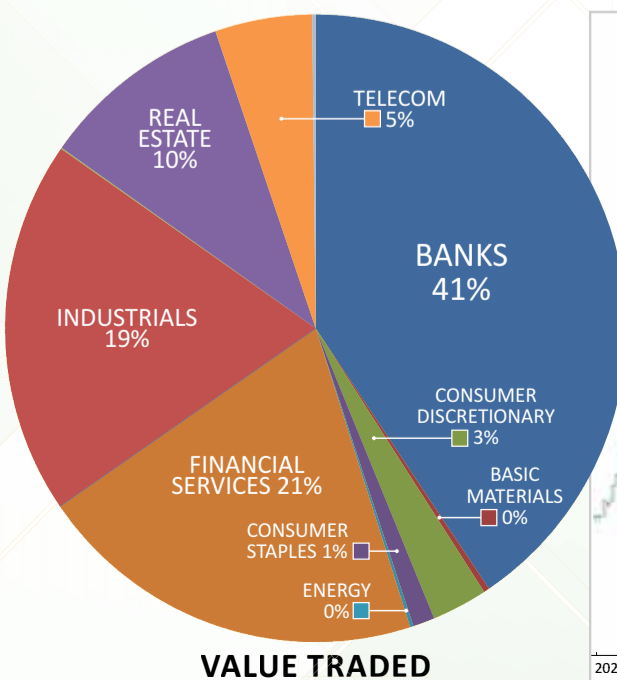
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
CLEANING	33	-9.34%	1,291,014	41,817	72
TAAMEER	21	-9.09%	85,430	1,874	17
URC	63	-8.95%	1,961,636	126,304	345
KBT	56.1	-8.78%	4,542,342	260,329	88
GFC	89.9	-7.32%	1,044	95	5

### Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	76	0.00%	44,976,177	3,423,847	1,440
KFH	823	2.36%	43,775,172	35,718,836	3,971
KRE	108	1.89%	37,331,831	4,041,764	1,125
KINV	152	8.57%	36,168,068	5,258,315	800
JIYAD	23	8.92%	35,714,867	809,674	828

### Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	823	2.36%	43,775,172	35,718,836	3,971
AGLTY	720	5.73%	27,566,294	19,507,474	2,795
NBK	1,078	0.28%	9,891,064	10,670,046	1,288
ZAIN	563	2.36%	11,925,317	6,663,641	1,953
KINV	152	8.57%	36,168,068	5,258,315	800



### Market Summary:

- Premier and Main Market's weekly volume and value increased by 3%, 3%, 18%, and 7%, respectively.
- Both Premier and Main indices recovered during last week. If this continues we will witness a green beginning.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7292, with support levels at 7286, 7214, and 7162, and resistance at 7318. The Premier index closed at 8115, with support levels at 8115, 8064, and 7977, while resistance at 8184. The Main index closed at 5596, with support levels at 5575, 5550, and 5523, while resistance at 5601.

## Business

# Global airlines adopt 'wait and see' approach as China slowly reopens

## Only marginal rise in bookings for China-bound flights

**LONDON:** The world's airlines are taking a cautious approach to China's reopening, reluctant to immediately change up schedules and divert planes from other routes despite the internal pent-up demand for international travel. Scheduled flights into China during January, February and March are up no more than 2.9 per cent this week compared to last week, according to aviation data provider Cirium. That's fewer than 100 more flights each month. Planned inbound services for the remainder of the year are little changed - a sign China's relaxation of quarantine restrictions from January 8 are yet to convince airlines to make significant changes to their timetables, according to Bloomberg.

Carriers' lukewarm reaction to China's border reopening amid a COVID surge doesn't chime with the intense desire for overseas travel from people living in Asia's biggest economy. Curbs on travelers from China are also limiting any immediate ramp-up in flights as major markets, including the US, mandate negative Covid-19 tests from arriving passengers.

"I don't think airlines will shift capacity from what they're doing now in China," Subhash Menon, director general of the Association for Asia Pacific Airlines, said. Most will rather wait to assess the situation, with Hong Kong, which also recently did away with many COVID restrictions, being a useful testbed, he said.

Before the pandemic, China had an enormous outbound travel market. Mainland residents reacted swiftly to Monday's news with bookings for outbound flights surging by 254 per cent on Tuesday morning versus the same period the day prior, Trip.com Group Ltd. data show. The top five destinations were Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand. Flight bookings to Singapore jumped 600 per cent, while bookings to the remaining four destinations soared around 400 per cent.

Airlines in those countries, however, weren't rushing to add capacity. Singapore Airlines said it will "continue to monitor the demand for air travel and adjust capacity accordingly." Cathay Pacific Airways welcomed the announcement and said it will "continue to communicate with relevant authorities and increase our passenger capacity to and from the Chinese mainland as much as possible."

Korean Air Lines said it plans to increase flights

to China after the two nations mutually agreed to boost connectivity. Korean Air currently operates nine flights a week to seven cities in mainland China and will boost that to 15 flights to nine cities starting from next month, with the two additional cities being Shenzhen and Xiamen on top of Shenyang, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Dalian, Qingdao, Tianjin and Nanjing.

"There aren't that many inquiries from Chinese, or from Koreans, for travel packages yet," said Yook Hyun-Woo, a director at Modetour Networks, a major travel agency in Seoul. "We're still worried a resurgence of the virus during winter may cool demand." Japan said this week it will require a negative Covid-19 test result for travelers coming from China after infections there exploded, and asked airlines not to increase the current number of flights. US health authorities followed on Wednesday, while Italy will test all arrivals from China after almost half the passengers on two flights to Milan tested positive for the virus.

A Japan Airlines spokesman said it was unfortunate that the country had strengthened its border measures for China, but noted the carrier would act in accordance with government guidance. ANA Holdings said it's watching the situation closely. Travelers from China made up nearly one-third of the 32 million visitors that flocked to Japan in 2019, before the pandemic. Qantas Airways in Australia, another popular destination for Chinese tourists, said it would "keep customers updated about any plans we have to recommence flights into China."

Other foreign carriers meanwhile remain limited by lingering pandemic curbs in terms of what capacity they can add back to China. US airlines were restricted on the number of flights they could operate to China under an agreement between Chinese authorities and US Department of Transportation that dates to 2020 when the pandemic upended aviation. That accord would have to be modified for them to expand their China capacity. United Airlines Holdings is "currently evaluating the market demand and operating environment to determine when it's right for us to resume additional flight operations to mainland China," spokesman Joshua Freed said in an emailed statement. United currently flies between San Francisco and Shanghai four times a week. Delta Air Lines said it had no changes to announce for its China service. The air-



line has been flying to Shanghai from Detroit and Seattle with a stop at Incheon International Airport in South Korea for crew changes. American Airlines Group didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. American currently operates twice-weekly flights from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to Shanghai with a stop in Seoul.

Deutsche Lufthansa said it looked forward to increasing capacity and remains "committed to this important market." The German group currently operates 17 weekly flights from Europe to Chinese gateways including Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. Starting from January 16, Austrian Airlines will add one more weekly flight from Vienna to Shanghai. Lufthansa says it looks forward to increasing capacity to China and remains committed to the market. International airlines will also be seeking clarification around aircrew and whether they are able to stay overnight in China now quarantine has been dropped. Currently, many international carriers have to fly into China, drop off passengers and then fly to Seoul for the crew to spend

the night there before flying back to China the next day to pick up fresh travelers for an onward overseas flight.

The industry's main trade body, the International Air Transport Association, also said the requirement for pre-departure COVID tests needs to be removed.

While online searches for Lunar New Year outbound flights were up 300 per cent as of December 27, searches for Labor Day flight tickets around the holidays in early May were up 600 per cent, VarioFlight data show.

International ticket prices also aren't showing any meaningful fluctuations and are still elevated. Polls on Chinese social media indicated high fares could be another deterrent. "I got so excited at the news and then the flight prices calmed me down," one person wrote on an account on Weibo, which is similar to Twitter. "Will wait and see instead." VarioFlight analyst Wang Yi said international flight volumes will rebound gradually and probably "hit a real turning point by summer 2023." —Agencies

## CBK bonds, tawarruq worth KD 240m issued

**KUWAIT:** The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced Monday new CBK bonds and related tawarruq valued at KD 240 million (around \$792 million). The securities bear a return rate of 4.250 percent and a maturity of six months, according to a CBK statement received by KUNA. On December 19, CBK issued bonds and tawarruq of the same worth: yet of a three-month term and a return rate of 4.125 percent. —KUNA

## KIPCO completes KD 165m 6-year bond issue

**KUWAIT:** KIPCO - Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - has announced that it has successfully completed its KD 165 million (\$538 million) six-year senior unsecured bond issue. This is the largest KD-denominated bond issue to date, reflecting the confidence of investors in KIPCO's underlying credit strength.



Sunny Bhatia

The bonds, maturing in December 2028, were available in fixed and floating rate tranches, with the floating tranche attracting 67 percent of the allocation. The fixed rate bond pays investors a coupon of 6.75 percent annually, while the floating rate pays investors a coupon rate of 3 percent annually over the declared Central Bank of Kuwait discount rate.

The joint lead managers of the transaction were Kamco Invest and Gulf Bank. Commenting on the transaction, Sunny Bhatia, KIPCO's Group Chief Financial Officer, said:

"This issuance represents a landmark transaction, as it is the largest ever KD-denominated issuance to date. We are pleased to be active contributors to the Kuwaiti debt capital market and its development. The transaction reflects the continued success of our proactive liability management that aims at raising long-term financing, extending the tenor of our existing liabilities for a stronger capital structure, and aligning the liabilities profile with investment holding strategies."

He added: "We would like to thank the Kuwait Capital Markets Authority, our investors and our joint lead managers - Kamco Invest and Gulf Bank - for their support."

## KFH concludes an outstanding year of CSR achievements

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has wrapped up 2022 by successfully launching social initiatives with added value and positive impact on the community, leading KFH to win several prestigious local and global awards. Most prominent of these awards were "CSR Market Leader" award in Kuwait by Euromoney Magazine, and "Corporate Social Responsibility in the Middle East" award from EMEA Finance.

KFH Group Deputy General Manager Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH's initiatives which targeted all society segments in 2022, highlighted KFH's leading social role in serving the community, noting that this role is characterized by diversity and comprehensiveness which contributes to promoting sustainability standards as well as lays new foundations for the developmental role of the private sector.

### Strategic social initiatives

Al-Ruwaieh pointed out that KFH enjoys a track record of strategic social initiatives. Among the most prominent societal contributions of KFH have been supporting the initiative to reconstruct the areas damaged in the Mubarakia fire incident, supporting the capital governorate's initiative to beautify its buildings and roads, launching an initiative in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice for the settlement of the liabilities of debtors against whom court orders were passed. KFH also contributed

## India's largest online grocer aims to win the ecommerce race

**MUMBAI:** India's largest online grocery company BigBasket is striving to capitalise on rising consumer spending and ecommerce trends in Asia's third largest economy, with fresh funds at its disposal and a possible public listing on the horizon. The ecommerce company recently raised \$200 million in funding from Tata Digital and other investors, taking its valuation to \$3.2 billion, as it plans further expansion.

"A combination of trust, convenience, reasonable price, fresh supplies, delivery at your convenience along with first mover advantage worked well for BigBasket," says Anil Joshi, managing partner of Unicorn India Ventures, a Mumbai-based early stage fund house.

BigBasket sells and delivers thousands of products through its app and website, serving households' everyday needs, from basmati rice to toothpaste. The company, which operates in more than 30 cities, handling about 15 million orders a month, generated \$1.2 billion in revenue in 2022 and recorded a loss of \$140 million, according to research firm Tracxn.

As part of its growth plans, BigBasket is consider-

largely to the Covid-19 government relief fund. In addition, KFH supported the efforts of Ministry of Interior by providing vehicles to assist the ministry employees while carrying out their duties towards the state and society. The Bank also supported the efforts to build the Addiction Treatment Center and volunteered to build 15 ambulance centers to enhance the medical system.

### Collaboration with KRCS

Al-Ruwaieh said that during 2022 KFH signed agreements with Kuwait Red Crescent Society to support implementing social and humanitarian initiatives inside and outside the State of Kuwait, mainly, the execution of relief projects to aid the victims of natural disasters in Turkey. An agreement was also signed with the Disaster and Emergency Management in Turkey "EFAD" to support the establishment of a regional center to respond to the disasters and fires in Antalya - Turkey.

Al-Ruwaieh added that KFH has signed two donation agreements with Kuwait Red Crescent Society and King Hussein Cancer Center in Jordan aiming to cover the treatment expenses of cancer patients.

He mentioned that KFH has recently participated in the relief and medical campaign in Jordan and collaborated with Kuwait Red Crescent Society in a field visit to aid Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The visit is part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Kuwait Office.

### Sustainability initiatives

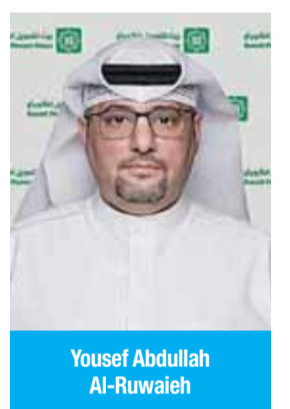
Al-Ruwaieh highlighted KFH's role in promoting sustainability standards and continuing the efforts in (Keep it Green) campaign as part of the Group's integrated sustainability strategy that includes all

sustainability elements such as environment, society and youth.

He revealed that KFH signed a strategic partnership with Sidra initiative and the voluntary Green Dream team, which includes various environmental projects in the field of plantation and mitigation of carbon emissions such as the "Carbon Offset" platform. The "Carbon Offset" is the first platform in Kuwait through which carbon emission may be mitigated by launching greening and other environmental projects. KFH also participated in the plantation of nearly 2,000 in Abdali reserve in collaboration with the Green Dream Team. In addition, KFH's team of volunteers participated in the cleanup campaign of Kubbar island and Ushaireh Beach and renewed its strategic partnerships with SEEDS platform and Sadu House to provide workshops and courses on sustainability and preserving the environment.

"During 2022, KFH has succeeded in organizing several distinguished events to enhance sustainability awareness such as the initiative held at Assima Mall in collaboration with PUFF where it succeeded in collecting more than 25,000 plastic bottles within 5 hours for recycling," said Al-Ruwaieh.

He also said that KFH participated in a conference organized by Eco Business Incubator for environment and renewable energy projects. KFH also organized a conference to launch the sustainability report as part of its integrated sustainability strategy.



Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh



Rising internet access in the world's second most populous country has been spurred by cheap data plans and budget smartphones, helping to bring consumers online. The trend of online shopping was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw the country imposing some of the world's strictest lockdown curbs. India has one of the fastest growing grocery markets in the world, expanding annually by 8 per cent. The industry, which includes online as well as brick and mortar store shopping, is expected to become a \$850 billion market by 2025, according to RedSeer Consulting. It forecasts the country's online grocery market alone to reach \$25 billion by then.—Agencies



Exhibition room at Ramses Wissa Art Center.



# Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Center: Egypt's traditional craft, worldly talents



Senior weaver working at Ramses Wissa Art Center for 60 years. — KUNA photos

**E**gyptian Artist and Architect Ramses Wissa Wassef had not anticipated when he created his art center for textiles, in Harrania district of Giza in the 1950s, that his small town students would turn into world-renowned artists. Wassef cultivated the innate creative prowess of the little children when he began to teach them the art of weaving on the loom, in a pioneering attempt to protect the Egyptian heritage as he saw the detrimental effect of machinery on the traditional craft.

The children's talents were put on display for the first time outside of Egypt in 1958 in Switzerland, and over time became a permanent and notable guest to international exhibitions. The tapestries of Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Center are known for their vibrant colors extracted from rare plants planted within the center itself, woven onto the tapestries is the lush Egyptian countryside, with its plush greenery, water channels and Egypt's traditional fauna. — KUNA



Curated artistic works at the textile center.



An artist finishing up her weaved textile.



Ramses Wissa Art Center for textiles.



## 'Avatar' sequel leads in N America, passes \$1 billion globally

**"A** vatar: The Way of Water" took in an estimated \$82.4 million this holiday weekend in North America, pushing it past a global total of \$1 billion in near record time, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. The four-day domestic take for the sci-fi flick brought its domestic total to \$440.5 million, on top of \$957 million earned overseas; only a half-dozen films have passed the \$1 billion mark in their first two weeks.

But director James Cameron has estimated that the high-budget 20th Century movie needs to make twice that much just to break even. The original "Avatar" took in a record \$2.9 billion. Second place in North American theaters went to Universal's family-oriented "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish," a computer-animated spin-off of the popular "Shrek"

franchise. It took in \$22 million for the Friday-through-Monday period.

Another blockbuster sequel, Disney's "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," earned \$6.5 million to place third; its domestic total rose to \$439.6 million in its eighth week out. In fourth place was Sony biopic "Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance With Somebody," at \$5.4 million. English actress Naomi Ackie portrays the late superstar. And in fifth was Paramount's comedy-drama "Babylon," at \$3.6 million. Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie star in director Damien

Chazelle's over-the-top tribute to an early Hollywood struggling with the transition from silent films to "talkies."

- Rounding out the top 10 were:
- "Violent Night" (\$2.8 million)
  - "The Whale" (\$1.8 million)
  - "The Fabelmans" (\$1.6 million)
  - "The Menu" (\$1.4 million)
  - "Strange World" (\$747,000)—AFP



## Actor Jeremy Renner in critical condition after snow plow accident

**M**ovie star Jeremy Renner, known for his role as Hawkeye in several Marvel blockbusters, was in critical but stable condition following an accident, his representative told US media on Sunday. Renner had been plowing snow when he suffered serious injuries, a representative told The Hollywood Reporter and Deadline. "We can confirm Jeremy is in critical but stable condition with injuries suffered after experiencing a weather-related accident while plowing snow earlier today," Renner's representative told the outlet, without specifying where the accident took place. "His family is with him and he is receiving excellent care," the representative, who was unnamed, added.

Renner, 51, has been nominated for two Oscars for his roles in "The Hurt Locker" and "The Town". He has also appeared as Clint Barton, also known as superhero Hawkeye, in several Marvel films and a recent miniseries. Renner

owns property near Mt Rose-Ski Tahoe, an area near Reno, Nevada that has been hit by winter storms, according to The Hollywood Reporter. He recently posted on social media about severe weather conditions in the area around Lake Tahoe, which borders California and Nevada and is a world-renowned skiing destination. On December 13, Renner tweeted a photo of a car buried by snow with the caption "Lake Tahoe snowfall is no joke." — AFP



Actor Jeremy Renner

## Lifestyle | Features



Oskar Arngarden, a 38-year-old Swedish Lutheran Church priest, is photographed at Uppsala University Hospital in Uppsala, Sweden.



Oskar Arngarden, a 38-year-old Swedish Lutheran Church priest, is photographed at the chapel of Uppsala University Hospital.



Oskar Arngarden, a 38-year-old Swedish Lutheran Church priest, is photographed at the chapel of Uppsala University Hospital.—AFP photos

# SWEDEN'S 'CROSSFIT PRIEST' HEALS BODY AND SOUL ON INSTA

Under the Instagram handle 'crossfit-priest', Swedish hospital chaplain Oskar Arngarden doles out fitness and spiritual advice to more than 30,000 followers, helping to heal body, mind and soul. "God is in every aspect of my life," the 38-year-old says. "When I'm working out it's also in some way a relationship interaction, a prayer with God." Pulling out his cellphone at the gym across from the Uppsala University Hospital—where he is a Swedish Lutheran Church priest—the muscular father-of-two shows videos on his Instagram account of him lifting weights and exercising.

"In the Bible, it says that your body is your temple. And part of that is to think: 'How should I treat my temple?'" While the negative effects of social media are well documented, Arngarden says social media can also be a good place to talk about "faith and health, and... our existential, mental health." His account also features posts with spiritual reflections and

healthy life habits. The young priest launched his first Instagram account in 2019.

He became such a sensation that he quickly found himself overwhelmed. "It got a little bit out of hand... In a couple of months I had 160,000 followers, and I'm a pretty shy guy so for me it was not that comfortable". A lot of the comments were about his toned physique, numerous tattoos and resemblance to Australian actor Chris Hemsworth. At the same time, he was suffering from depression. He ended up closing his account.

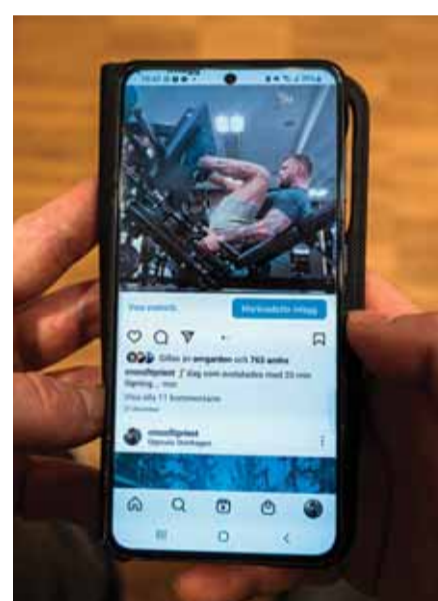
### 'Something spiritual about social media'

In 2020 he returned to Instagram, with a clearer idea of the message he wanted to deliver—especially to his subscribers in Sweden, one of the most secular countries in the world. "We are held back by a history where the church was in the centre, and people came to the church," he

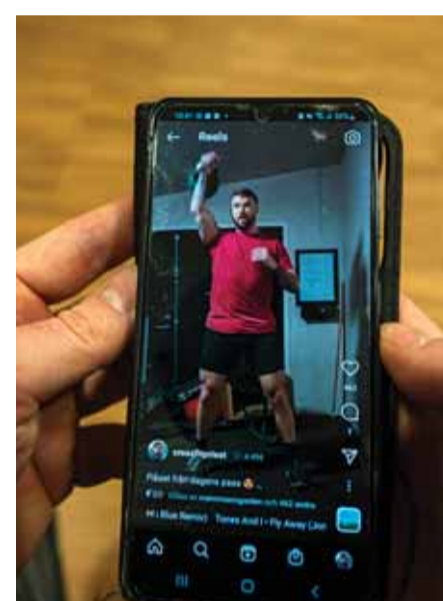
says. "Now we need to find ways for the church to come to meet people. "And where are the people? They are on social media."

To him, there is "something spiritual in social media", and the way it allows users to "interact with the whole world." Modern technology offers a unique way for him to reach out, he says, and to show how his faith and exercise routines are inextricably linked. "My faith is always with me in everything I do," he says.

Some of his followers contact him directly through the social media app, and it is "the more deep conversations" which interest him the most. Some tell him about their own life experiences, or their spirituality. "I want that interaction with other people, to hear their histories and stories," he says. "It's a blessing to me just to listen to that."—AFP



Oskar Arngarden, a 38-year-old Swedish Lutheran Church priest, scrolls through the videos posted on his Instagram account of him lifting weights and doing other exercises.



## US TV news legend Barbara Walters dead at 93

Pioneering television journalist Barbara Walters, who upended a male-dominated industry as the first woman to anchor an evening news show in the United States, died on Friday at the age of 93, her long-time employer ABC said. Walters interviewed a host of US presidents, foreign leaders such as Anwar Sadat and Fidel Castro, and A-list celebrities in a hugely successful career that spanned five decades—becoming a touchstone of American culture in the process. She died at her home in New York, tweeted Bob Iger, CEO of Disney, ABC's parent company. "Barbara was a true legend, a pioneer not just for women in journalism but for journalism itself," Iger said.

Walters won 12 Emmy awards, all but one while at ABC, the network said. She largely retired from television after signing off in 2014 from the daytime program "The View," which she had launched in 1997. Walters created a much-copied template for high-profile political and celebrity interviews—and blazed a trail for women in an industry run by white middle-aged men. "How proud I am today when I see all the young women who are making and reporting the news," Walters said on her last appearance on "The View." "If I did anything to help that happen, that's my legacy."

### Trailblazer

Her news career began in earnest in 1961 when she joined NBC's breakfast

news and entertainment show "Today." Walters became the first woman to anchor a US evening news program when she joined "ABC Evening News" in 1976, earning the then-unprecedented salary of \$1 million a year. Three years later, she was named co-host of the news magazine program "20/20", beginning a run that would last more than two decades.

By the time she left TV, Walters had interviewed every US president and first lady since Richard Nixon. Walters's long list of interviewees included leaders such as Boris Yeltsin, Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, Saddam Hussein and Vladimir Putin, and A-listers Michael Jackson, Angelina Jolie and Harrison Ford. Born in Boston, Walters graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in New York in 1953 with an English degree.

She briefly worked as a secretary, then as a writer at NBC, eventually becoming the network's first woman anchor in 1974, co-hosting the morning "Today" show program. Two years later, she would join ABC. Tributes poured in for Walters following the announcement of her death. "Without Barbara Walters there wouldn't have been me—nor any other woman you see on evening, morning, and daily news," Oprah Winfrey, one of the most powerful figures in US media, wrote on Instagram.

"I did my very first television audition with her in mind the whole time." Veteran news anchor Dan Rather described her as a "trailblazer and a true pro." "The world of journalism has lost a pillar of professionalism, courage, and integrity," he tweeted. "She outworked, out-thought, and out-hustled her competitors. She left the world the better for it. She will be deeply missed."—AFP



In this file photo US television journalist Barbara Walters waves to the long line of fans as she enters the Border's Books in Vienna, Virginia.—AFP

## War-themed video game fuels wave of misinformation

Troops battle through burning streets. Missiles take down fighter jets. Drones pulverize tanks. The dramatic visuals have the trappings of real-life combat, but they are clips from video games fuelling misinformation. Footage from the war-themed Arma 3 video game, often marked "live" or "breaking news" to make it appear genuine, has been used repeatedly in recent months in fake videos about the Russian offensive in Ukraine.

The frequency and ease with which gaming footage is mistaken as real, even by some media broadcasters, and shared as authentic news on social media highlight what researchers call its serious potential to spread misinformation. "The fact that it keeps happening is a reminder of how easy it is to fool people," Claire Wardle, co-director of the Information Futures Lab at Brown University, told AFP. "As video game visuals get more sophisticated, CGI (computer-generated imagery) can, at a quick glance, look real. People need to know how to verify imagery, including looking at metadata so that these mistakes don't get made, especially by newsrooms."

Arma 3, whose Czech-based developers promise "true combat game play in a massive military sandbox," allows players to create various battlefield scenarios using aircraft, tanks and a host of weapons. Players often upload hours of gaming footage on platforms such as YouTube and researchers blame its easy availability for its misuse. In the comments under one Arma 3 video titled "Ukraine's counteroffensive!"—which simulated a missile strike on a column of tanks—a user, who apparently took it as real, wrote: "We must ask Ukraine after this war to train NATO forces how to fight."

### 'First TikTok war'

"While it's flattering that Arma 3 simulates modern war conflicts in such a realistic way, we are certainly not pleased that it can be mistaken for real-life combat footage and used as war propaganda," a representative of Bohemia Interactive, the game's creator, said in a statement. "We've been trying to fight against such content by flagging these videos to platform providers, but it's very ineffective. With every video taken down, ten more are uploaded each day." In recent years, Arma 3 videos have been used in false depictions of other conflicts, including Syria, Afghanistan and

Palestine, with the clips often debunked by global fact checkers.

That includes AFP, which has debunked several videos using Arma 3 content, including one in November that also claimed to show Russian tanks being struck by US-made Javelin missiles. The clip had been viewed tens of thousands of times on social media. Bohemia Interactive said the misleading videos have recently "gained traction" in regard to the conflict in Ukraine. Dubbed by observers as the "first TikTok war," it is a conflict like no other as a steady stream of visuals from the frontlines—some of it misleading or false—pour onto

spreading fake news," were also shared by various mainstream media and government institutions worldwide, Bohemia Interactive said. In a live broadcast in November, Romania TV wrongly presented an old Arma 3 video as battle footage from Ukraine, and a former Romanian defense minister and former intelligence chief offered their analysis of the footage as if it were real. This occurred after another Romanian news channel, Antena 3, made the same error in February—among the experts invited by the broadcaster to analyze its video taken from Arma 3 was the spokesman of the Romanian defense ministry.

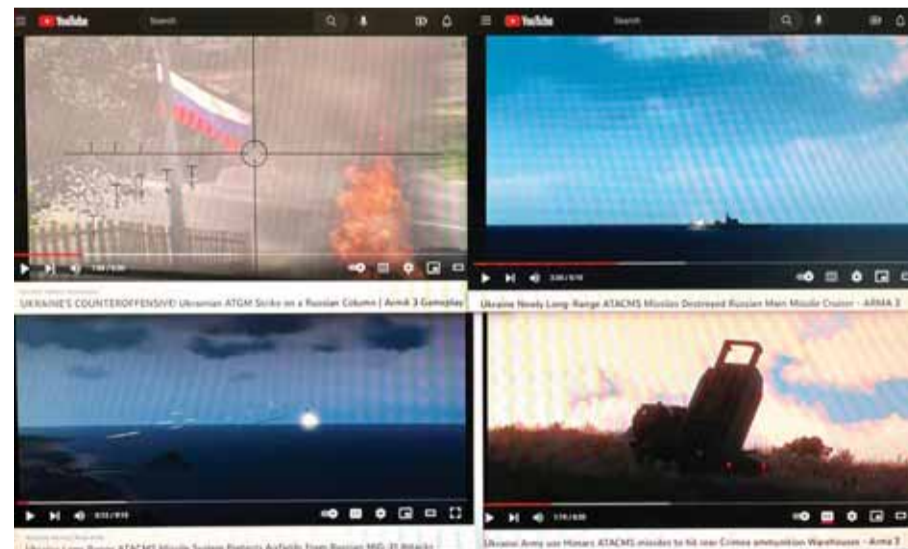


Photo illustration generated in an office in Washington, DC shows a computer screen with four YouTube windows displaying combat clips from Arma 3's war-themed video games.—AFP

social media platforms.

Given the unsophisticated nature of the Arma 3 misinformation, researchers say it is unlikely to be the work of state actors. "I suspect that the people posting this content are just trolls doing it to see how many people they can fool," Nick Waters, from the digital forensics firm Bellingcat, told AFP.

"Secondary disseminators will be gullible people who pick up this content and circulate it in an attempt to garner fake internet points." Bohemia Interactive said the false videos were "massively shared" by social media users, many of whom seek what researchers call engagement bait—eye-catching posts that generate more interaction through likes, shares and comments.

### 'Different from reality'

The Arma 3 videos, which its creator acknowledged are "quite capable of

Bohemia Interactive has urged users to use gaming footage responsibly, refrain from using clickbait video titles and clearly state that it was derived from a video game. Researchers say their videos are relatively easier to debunk compared to "deepfakes"—fabricated images, audio and videos created using technology that experts warn is frighteningly sophisticated and gaining ground in the criminal underworld. "If you know what you're looking for, these (Arma 3) videos aren't actually difficult to identify as fakes," said Waters.

"As good as Arma 3 looks, it's still significantly different from reality." The fact that many are unable to do so points to another stark reality in the age of misinformation. "It shows that some people don't have the skills to navigate the current information environment," Waters said.—AFP



Members of the Playaz Inc play musical instruments as they practice at a school in Mitchells Plain near Cape Town, ahead of the upcoming Cape Town Minstrels Parade. —AFP photos

# TRUMPETS AND COLORS RETURN TO CAPE TOWN CARNIVAL

A tambourine in hand and a pacifier in his mouth, two-year-old Thaakir Buzic is ready to join brightly colored bands parading through the streets of Cape Town, in South Africa. About 20,000 performers divided in dozens of troupes are to march in the city centre on Monday while playing music and dancing for the annual Cape Town Minstrel carnival. Also known as "Tweede Nuwe Jaar" ("Second New Year"), the celebration, which returns after a two-year COVID-induced break, is a family affair for Buzic's relatives.

The boy is going to be the youngest of 13 family members-led by his 68-year-old great aunt to take part in the parade-as dancers for the 1,000-strong Playaz Inc troupe. Dressed in the band's distinctive green and white colors, Buzic bounced from one leg to the other as brass players rehearsed outdoors at a school in Mitchells Plain, near Cape Town, on New Year's Eve.

"It's in the troupes that my parents met. I was born into it, the same goes with my kids and my grand-kids," said his grandmother, Sadia Daniels, 40, who has not missed a parade since she was born. "Only the lockdown could keep us away from it ... this year we're back on track." The festivity has its roots in colonial times,



A member of the Playaz Inc minstrel troupe gets ready to play his tuba as they practice at a school in Mitchells Plain near Cape Town.



A young member of the Playaz Inc minstrel troupe dances as they practice at a school in Mitchells Plain near Cape Town.

when slaves-some of whom were forcibly brought to Africa's southern tip from Southeast Asia-were allowed to relax on the day after New Year's Day. They used the time off to dress up, dance and sing. It's now seen as a celebration of the Cape's diverse culture and marks the start of a weeks-long competition where minstrels battle it out for the title of best troupe.

## Crime and COVID

In impoverished, crime-ridden communities with high unemployment rates, for some joining a band offers a way out. "The biggest thing for us is to keep the youngsters occupied. It takes them away from all the ills from our neighborhoods," said Raeed Gallant, 35, co-director of Playaz Inc. Siraaj Allen, 30, said music kept him from taking a more dangerous path, when as a teenager he started hanging around

with "the wrong guys". "I chose music. And that saved me from being a bad person," he said. Now a professional musician he coaches the Playaz Inc band's 150 trombones, sousaphones, trumpets and saxophones.

"Music taught me discipline and now I give it over to the younger guys, to make sure they don't go the same path that I almost went." With 27 troupes confirmed, organizers are expecting the parade to

come back with a bang on Monday after the two-year hiatus. "COVID-19 had a devastating effect on everyone ... Many people live for this carnival," said Muneeb Gambeno the head of the association organizing the event. "There's definitely a feeling of exuberance in the community and everyone is geared up to have the most exuberant carnival ever." — AFP



In this file photo British designer Vivienne Westwood gestures from inside a ginat bird-cage, suspended off the ground, in front of the Old Bailey in central London, in protest of the extradition trial of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.



In this file photo British Fashion designer Dame Vivienne Westwood poses for photographers after collecting her ensignia from the Prince of Wales during an Investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace in London.



In this file photo British fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, dressed as an angel, poses with other anti-fracking activists, dressed as Joseph, and the three wise men, as they demonstrate outside the Royal Courts of Justice, Britain's High Court, in central London. — AFP photos

# The Westwood brand: Cocky, brazen and resolutely independent

Irreverent British designer Vivienne Westwood, who died on Thursday, succeeded in keeping her fashion house financially independent, even as others sought stock market listings or security within major luxury groups. She weathered the COVID pandemic, inflation and other storms thanks to the support of celebrities such as actor Emma Watson, singer Dua Lipa and British Queen Consort Camilla.

The punk icon's fashion house had just two board members-Westwood herself and long-time director-general Carlo D'Amario-until Jeffrey Banks joined them just two weeks ago on December 16. In 2018, the company went into the red and was restructured. But it stayed afloat. "Vivienne did have ups and downs because of Covid, as well as inflation, especially in Europe," said Andrew Burnstine, associate professor in marketing at Lynn University in Florida.

"One of the reasons she was able to weather the recent storm was because of the incredible celebrity client base she had," Burnstine told AFP. "Having a loyal and solid client base, licences, franchises and yearly collections are the best way to continuing your brand name and identity," he added. "Vivienne was very good at making calls, meeting with clients and, most importantly, marketing her brand and name on social media and the media."

## 'Buy less. Choose well'

The latest financial results for Westwood's fashion house published on the UK government's Company House website-covering the 2020 financial year-showed a pre-tax profit of 3.9 million pounds (\$4.7 million) on sales worth 42 million pounds. The label had around 500 employees. The trade press made much of a past run-in Westwood had with the UK tax authorities. She was accused of underestimating the value of her label by means of payments to a Luxembourg-based subsidiary and was forced, about a decade ago, to pay around 500,000 pounds in extra tax. Westwood was an environmental and anti-capitalist activist, and coined the phrase "Buy less. Choose well. Make it last."

But she was accused of hypocrisy for continuing to produce several collections every year, including men's and women's ready-to-wear, accessories, perfumes

and wedding dresses. The Westwood label nonetheless prides itself on using organic or recycled synthetic materials, has stopped using plastic packaging and regularly publishes its carbon emissions. While the majority of the label's sales are in the UK, where it owns six boutiques, the brand also has one outlet each in France and Italy, and two in the United States. It is also making inroads in Asia, notably in China, Japan, Thailand and

style of the brand since the couple met in 1989. That style cocks a snook at bourgeois and aristocratic conventions by subverting traditional British clothing habits. The cuts are sophisticated but asymmetrical.

Westwood uses traditional florery or tartan prints, along with tweed and romantic tulle fabrics. But the prints and colors clash. Tucked-up skirts and crumpled crinolines make for a mad princess



In this file photo Canadian model Linda Evangelista displays a voluptuous dress at the Grand Hotel in Paris as part of Vivienne Westwood's 1996 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection.

Singapore. It has production sites in the UK, China, Italy and Kenya, with a "Made in Kenya" line that aims to develop a sustainable supply chain in Africa.

## Subverting conventions

Since 2016, the company's artistic direction has been steered by Westwood's husband and long-time business partner Andreas Kronthaler, who has made a significant contribution to the

or wonky ballerina look-always provocative, always tongue in cheek. SM apparel combines with the corsets of romantic heroines. Taffeta dresses are worn as miniskirts with fishnet tights-a look Westwood herself sported when she collected an award at the Florence Biennale in 2021, at the tender age of 80. Once a punk, always a punk. — AFP

## Sports

# Brady sparks Bucs into NFL playoffs; Giants join them

WASHINGTON: Tom Brady threw for three touchdowns and ran for another to lift Tampa Bay into the NFL playoffs on Sunday while the New York Giants also booked a post-season berth. Seven-time Super Bowl champion Brady, 45, completed 34 of 45 passes for 432 yards and scored on a 1-yard touchdown run with 1:58 remaining as the Buccaneers beat Carolina 30-24. Mike Evans made 10 catches for 207 yards-including touchdown grabs of 30, 57 and 63 yards from Brady - and the Bucs (8-8) took the NFC South crown for Brady's 19th career division title.

"It felt great. Happy to win the division," Brady said. "Really proud of our guys. We battled through a lot of tough things this year." Bucs punter Jake Camarda grabbed a bad snap and managed a kick in the dying seconds to avoid giving Carolina the ball with great field position, saving the triumph. "Wish they wouldn't be as exciting as we made them but happy we got the win," Brady said. "Nice to qualify. We'll try to finish strong."

The Giants reached the playoffs for the first time since the 2016 season thanks to a 38-10 home victory over Indianapolis. Daniel Jones threw for 177 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 91 yards and another two scores to seal a wildcard spot for the Giants (9-6-1). The Philadelphia Eagles (13-3) squandered a chance to capture the NFC top seed - and a first-round bye plus home-field edge - for the second week in a row with a 20-10 home loss to New Orleans.

The Saints (7-9) sacked Gardner Minshew, filling in for injured Jalen Hurts, six times and got a 12-yard interception return touchdown from Marshon Lattimore. "Our defense did a phenomenal job," Saints defender Cameron Jordan said. The Eagles would still take the top spot by beating the Giants next Sunday. Buffalo (12-3), which plays at Cincinnati on Monday, was overtaken for the top AFC spot when Kansas City edged visiting Denver 27-24. Patrick Mahomes threw for 328 yards and three touchdowns for the Chiefs (13-3).

The Miami Dolphins, playing without concussion-sidelined quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, suffered a 23-21 defeat at New England. Miami's fifth straight loss came after Tagovailoa's replacement, Teddy Bridgewater, exited with a finger injury. Mac Jones threw for 203 yards and two touchdowns to spark the Patriots, who matched Miami at 8-8 and



EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey: Gary Brightwell #23 of the New York Giants is stopped by the Indianapolis Colts on a kickoff return at MetLife Stadium on Jan 1, 2023. — AFP

could make the playoffs by winning next week at Buffalo. The Pittsburgh Steelers kept their playoff hopes alive by winning 16-13 at Baltimore on Kenny Pickett's 10-yard touchdown pass to Najee Harris in the final seconds.

Washington (7-8-1) dropped a 24-10 home contest against Cleveland as Deshaun Watson threw three touchdown passes for the Browns (7-9). Detroit (8-8) moved ahead of Washington in the playoff fight by routing Chicago 41-10 as Jared Goff threw for 255 yards and three touchdowns and Jamaal Williams ran 22 times for 144 and a touchdown. Green Bay reached 8-8 with a 41-17 home

route of Minnesota and the Packers, who started 4-8, will reach the playoffs if they win at home over Detroit next Sunday.

"A lot of things have gone our way," Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers said. "I knew we'd figure it out at some point." Buffalo, Kansas City, Cincinnati, Baltimore and the Los Angeles Chargers had already clinched AFC playoff berths. Philadelphia, Minnesota, Dallas and San Francisco had already secured NFC post-season spots. Three vacant playoff berths remain and Jacksonville has the inside track for one after a fourth straight victory, stomping host Houston 31-3.

Jacksonville (8-8) can claim the AFC South division title by winning at home next week over Tennessee (7-9), losers of six straight. South Korean Koo Young-hoe kicked a 21-yard last-play field goal to give Atlanta a 20-19 win over Arizona while Geno Smith's two touchdown passes sparked Seattle over the eliminated New York Jets 23-6. Justin Herbert threw two touchdown passes and Austin Ekeler ran for 122 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Los Angeles Chargers over the LA Rams 31-10. Robbie Gould's 23-yard overtime field goal gave San Francisco a 37-34 victory at Las Vegas. — AFP

## Jokic triple double leads Denver over Boston in showdown

WASHINGTON: Nikola Jokic delivered a triple double with 30 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists to spark host Denver over Boston 123-111 in a Sunday showdown of NBA conference leaders. Two-time reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Jokic made 10-of-13 shots from the floor, including both 3-point attempts, and went 8-for-8 from the free throw line to produce his ninth triple double of the season.

The Nuggets improved to 24-12, stretching their Western Conference lead to one game with a 10th win in 12 contests and snapping Boston's four-game win streak. "We're playing a good brand of basketball," said Denver's Andrew Gordon, who con-

tributed 18 points, six rebounds and seven assists. "It's about handling business. We ended up handling business. It's not about the other team. It's about the standard that we hold ourselves to. Tonight we held that standard."

Denver, 14-3 at home, defeated the Celtics for the first time since Nov 2019. Bruce Brown added 21 points for Denver while Michael Porter Jr added 19. Jaylen Brown led Boston with 30 points and eight rebounds while Jayson Tatum contributed 25 points, seven rebounds and six points for the Eastern Conference-leading Celtics, who still have the best record in the NBA at 26-11.

Gordon defended the Boston stars much of the night. "Those are special players," Gordon said. "You try to make it difficult for them. You really aren't going to be able to stop them. You try to make it uncomfortable for them, make their shots difficult, and that's what we did." A broken rim halted the game for 34 minutes with 6:43 remaining in the fourth quarter with the Nuggets leading 110-97.

Japan's Rui Hachimura came off the bench to score a game-high 26 points in leading the Washington Wizards to a 118-95 victory at Milwaukee. Latvian center Kristaps Porzingis added 22 points and Kyle Kuzma contributed his second career triple double with 10 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for the Wizards (17-21). Washington's win streak stretched to five games despite the absence of star guard Bradley Beal.

Falling to 23-13, the Bucks were led by 19 points and 10 rebounds from Bobby Portis, and were without Greek star Giannis Antetokounmpo, who was sidelined by a sore left knee. Ja Morant scored 35 points and New Zealand center Steven Adams added 11 points and 23 rebounds to spark the host Memphis Grizzlies to a 118-108 victory over Sacramento. "We took it upon ourselves to step up and deliver," Morant said. De'Aaron Fox led the Kings (19-16) with 19 points while Domantas Sabonis added 18 points and 14 rebounds. The Grizzlies improved to 23-13, level with New Orleans for second in the West, one game behind Denver. — AFP



DENVER: Nikola Jokic #15 of the Denver Nuggets puts up a shot against Grant Williams #12 of the Boston Celtics at Ball Arena on Jan 1, 2023. — AFP

## Djokovic gets hero's welcome

ADELAIDE: Australian qualifier Alexei Popyrin stunned second seed Felix Auger-Aliassime in the first round of the season-opening Adelaide International on Monday as Novak Djokovic was given a hero's welcome in a rare doubles appearance. On a day of upsets, world number 11 Holger Rune also crashed out, as did women's third seed Daria Kasatkina and fifth seed Danielle Collins.

Canada's Auger-Aliassime was in top form towards the end of 2022, winning three tournaments in October and November before leading Canada to Davis Cup glory when they beat Australia in the final. He rose to number six in the world and said before the tournament he wanted to ride the wave of momentum into the 2023 season. But he came unstuck against Popyrin, who dropped out of the top 100 last year, slumping 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

The 23-year-old Australian attacked at every opportunity, hitting 32 winners, including 12 aces. Popyrin broke Auger-Aliassime once in the first set and although he went down an early break in the second, he was able to claw back then clinch the tiebreak on his first match point. "I had a really, really tough season last year," Popyrin said. "So to come out in my first main draw match of the year and beat a player of his quality, it just shows that the work I did in the off-season is paying off."



ADELAIDE: Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic reacts during his first-round doubles match with Canadian Vasek Pospisil at the ATP Adelaide International tournament on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP

Popyrin now plays American Marcos Giron who beat French veteran Richard Gasquet 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (6/8), 7-5 on Sunday. Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka downed fifth seed Rune - the ATP Newcomer of the Year in 2022 after claiming three titles - in three sets. Rune, 19, won the first set comfortably but his serve went off the ball and Nishioka came back to win the next two and take the match 2-6, 6-4, 6-4. In other singles action, Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic beat Australian Christopher O'Connell 6-4, 6-4 and Frenchman Quentin Halys eased past wildcard Jordan Thompson 6-3, 6-4.

## Nadal beaten again as Swiatek, Tsitsipas cruise at United Cup

SYDNEY: World number two Rafael Nadal slumped to a second-straight defeat at the United Cup Monday in a setback to his Australian Open preparations, but Stefanos Tsitsipas and Iga Swiatek were both on song. There was also more misery for former world number two Alexander Zverev, who, like Nadal, suffered a second loss to start his season, this time at the hands of Taylor Fritz. Spanish 22-time Grand Slam winner Nadal surprisingly crashed in his season-opening match on Saturday to 14th-ranked Cameron Norrie.

And he again succumbed after winning the first set, going down 3-6, 6-1, 7-5 to Australia's 24th-ranked Alex De Minaur in Sydney, including losing six games in a row in the second set. "Honestly, I couldn't be happier that I managed to get my first win over Rafa on this court, it's no secret this is my favorite court in the world," said De Minaur. "Rafa is a hell of a competitor and what he has been able to do for this sport is truly astounding so I'm just honored. It's a dream come true."



SYDNEY: Spain's Rafael Nadal warms up prior to face Australia's Alex De Minaur during their men's singles match of the United Cup on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP

It went with serve to 2-2 in the first set, but Nadal played some loose shots and a double fault handed De Minaur a break point, then he sent a forehand long to go 2-3 behind. But the Australian couldn't sustain the pressure and Nadal broke straight back. After a slow start, the Spaniard found his groove and in a devastating burst won the next three games to take the set. De Minaur appeared deflated and was broken again on his first serve of the second set, but he flicked a switch to reel off six games in a row to leave Nadal stunned. — AFP

## Pak halt NZ on 309-6 after Conway century

KARACHI: Off-spinner Agha Salman and pacer Naseem Shah helped Pakistan derail New Zealand to 309-6 Monday after opener Devon Conway scored a brilliant hundred on the first day in the second Test in Karachi. Salman grabbed 3-55 and Naseem took 2-44 to trigger a New Zealand middle order slump which saw the tourists lose five wickets for 45 runs during the final session, slumping from 234-1 to 279-6.

At close, Tom Blundell and Ish Sodhi were batting on 30 and 11 respectively as they try

to revive New Zealand's innings. Conway, who scored 122, put on 134 for the opening wicket with Tom Latham (71) after New Zealand won the toss on a National Stadium pitch that had traces of grass but did not initially support bowlers.

Conway steadied the innings with another 100-run stand for the second wicket with Kane Williamson who made 36, but Pakistan pulled back after the visitors were 226-1 at tea. Salman had Conway caught behind by Sarfaraz Ahmed soon after tea to make it 2-234 before six runs later Naseem dismissed Williamson in the same manner. Conway struck 16 boundaries and a six in his 257-minute stay at the crease.

Salman then struck twice, beating Daryl Mitchell's defense for three and had Henry Nicholls caught behind with a turning delivery for 26. Abrar Ahmed took his only wicket by trapping Michael Bracewell for nought. The

two-match series is tied at 0-0 after the first Test - also in Karachi - ended in a tame draw.

In the morning, Pakistan's three-pronged pace attack looked helpless until Naseem struck in the sixth over after lunch, trapping Latham leg-before with a sharp incoming delivery. Latham, who scored 113 in the first match, hit nine boundaries in his 100-ball knock, his 24th Test half-century. Conway was lucky to survive a sharp chance when Saud Shakeel failed to hold on to a miscued drive off Hasan Ali on 89.

Pakistan brought on Abrar Ahmed in the ninth over, but there was no sign of turn as Conway smashed a boundary and a six off the spinner's second over. The hosts picked Naseem and Hasan in place of spinner Nauman Ali and fast-bowler Mohammad Wasim after the first Test, while New Zealand picked pacer Matt Henry over Neil Wagner. — AFP



KARACHI: New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell is clean bowled by Pakistan's Agha Salman (not pictured) during the first day of the second cricket Test match at the National Stadium on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP

Sports

# Lowly Forest frustrate Chelsea

## Villa punish Lloris mistake to shock Spurs

NOTTINGHAM: Graham Potter admitted Chelsea's disappointing 1-1 draw at Nottingham Forest underlined the lack of consistency that threatens to shatter their hopes of qualifying for the Champions League. Raheem Sterling put Chelsea ahead in the first half at the City Ground on Sunday. But Ivory Coast defender Serge Aurier levelled after the break and Chelsea were fortunate to escape without an embarrassing defeat after Forest dominated for long spells in the second half.

Chelsea are languishing in eighth place after failing to win for the sixth time in their last seven league games. The Blues are seven points adrift of fourth placed Manchester United in the race to qualify for the Champions League via a top four finish. Just months after replacing the sacked Thomas Tuchel, Chelsea boss Potter is starting to come under fire as the early optimism after his move from Brighton begins to fade.

Chelsea's 2-0 win against Bournemouth on Boxing Day was supposed to offer hope of a brighter period in 2023. But while it is surely too early for Potter to be worried about losing the first high-pressure job of his career, the 47-year-old needs an uptick in results in the new year to avoid putting Chelsea chairman Todd Boehly in an awkward position.

Forest are third bottom having won just three games all season, but boss Steve Cooper will take heart from the way his team rattled Chelsea in the second half. The only dark cloud for Forest was the alleged homophobic chanting from home supporters that earned condemnation from LGBTQ groups.

Brennan Johnson threatened an early goal for Forest when he sprinted clear of Marc Cucurella and Thiago Silva, but Kepa Arrizabalaga spared his team-mates' blushes with a good save.

Meanwhile, Antonio Conte admitted Tottenham face a fight to finish in the Premier League's top four after a costly mistake from Hugo Lloris condemned the north Londoners to a damaging 2-0 defeat against Aston Villa on Sunday. Playing for the first time since France's World Cup final defeat against Argentina, Tottenham goalkeeper Lloris weakly spilled Douglas Luiz's shot early in the second half and Emiliano Buendia pounced to put Villa ahead.

Lloris was left on the bench for Tottenham's draw against Brentford on Dec 26 as he rested after France's agonising final loss in Qatar. The 36-year-old, who conceded three times against Argentina before France lost on penalties, might have wished he had been given longer to recover after his blunder against Villa. Brazilian midfielder Luiz added Villa's second goal in the closing stages, leaving Conte's side to endure jeers from frustrated fans at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Tottenham had hoped the first Premier League match of 2023 would serve to kick-start their bid to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top four finish. Instead, they suffered a New Year's Day hangover as mid-table Villa punished a lethargic display. Fifth placed Tottenham have failed to win both of their matches since the World Cup break, a dip in form which has allowed fourth placed Manchester United to climb two points above them.

Adding insult to injury for Tottenham, it was



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's South Korean striker Son Heung-Min vies with Aston Villa's English defender Ezri Konsa during their English Premier League football match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Jan 1, 2023. — AFP

former Arsenal boss Unai Emery who masterminded Villa's success on his return to north London. Villa manager Emery, dismissed by Arsenal in 2019, has now won three of his four Premier

League matches since replacing the sacked Steven Gerrard in November. No player has scored more Premier League goals on New Year's Day than Harry Kane's five. — AFP

## No Messi, no Neymar as PSG suffer first loss

LENS: Paris Saint-Germain, without World Cup winner Lionel Messi and Neymar, lost for the first time in any competition since March 20 last year when they were defeated 3-1 at Lens on Sunday. "Lens deserved their win," said PSG coach Christophe Galtier. Lois Openda scored one and set up another as Lens, who have only lost once in Ligue 1 this season, closed the gap on PSG at the top to four points after 17 rounds. "We are happy to be four points behind," said Lens coach Franck Haise. "This victory proves that we can beat anyone in this championship."

PSG's last loss was more than nine months ago when they fell 3-0 at Monaco in Ligue 1, although that still left them 12 points clear at the top of the table. On Sunday at Lens, PSG were without Messi and suspended Brazilian Neymar, but Kylian Mbappe, the Golden Boot winner

in Qatar, received a rousing welcome from the Lens fans as he warmed up. Galtier said he hoped French fans would give Messi a similar reception.

"He's going to join us on January 3, in 48 hours," said Galtier. "I hope Leo will be well received. He won the most beautiful trophy by being very good. We know he's a great and decisive player so we hope he'll be well received obviously." "Kylian worked hard," said Galtier. "He showed a very good attitude." "Leo and 'Ney' were not there but that is no excuse."

Lens took the lead after five minutes when PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma blocked an effort from Massadio Haidara to Przemyslaw Frankowski who scored. Hugo Ekitike replied three minutes later, swinging hard as Brice Samba dived to gather a cross and driving the ball through the Lens goalkeeper's grasp. Lens took control after 28 minutes. Seko Fofana won possession on the edge of his own box, drove through a couple of challenges then measured a pass between the PSG central defenders to Openda. The Belgium sprinted clear, and squeezed a shot under Donnarumma.

Lens pressed from the start of the second half and in the 48th minute won possession deep in the PSG half. The ball reached Openda in the box, his backheel left the defense flat-footed and allowed Alexis Claude Maurice to take a touch and score from close range. The French league normally takes the holiday season off but with matches to make up following the World Cup, it played one round immediately after Christmas and another on Sunday and Monday.

They have dubbed the games 'Celebration Week', in English, as a nod to the English tradition of Boxing Day games, but many fans are suspicious or hostile. Among protest banners unfurled by fans in an almost empty stand at Nantes, where the home team beat Auxerre 1-0, was one that complained that the league and broadcasters were "killing" them.

In Monaco, Aleksandr Golovin smashed in the only goal from outside the penalty area as the home team did just enough to beat Brest 1-0 and tighten their grip on fourth place. Angers remain anchored to the bottom after suffering a ninth straight loss, falling 2-1 to visiting Lorient who broke their own run of six



LENS: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe runs with the ball during the French L1 football match between RC Lens and PSG at the Bollaert-Delelis Stadium on Jan 1, 2023. — AFP

games without a victory.

The home team's Moroccan World Cup stars Sofiane Boufal and Azzedine Ounahi, who have just returned from vacation and reportedly been promised lucrative transfers, were honored before

the match but did not appear. "I was happy to see Sofiane and Azzedine," said Angers coach Abdel Bouhazama. "For the moment they are here. For the rest, I leave that to the club directors. I take care of what happens on the pitch." — AFP



KUWAIT: Bader and Mohammad Al-Mailam with other riders.

## Murruzzu wins showjumping championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Italian rider Antonio Murruzzu won Alsaqb Equestrian Club showjumping championship following tough competition with other riders in the fifth and main round at a height of 135 cm in 58.50 seconds without faults. Rider Abdallah Al-Awadhi won second, third and fifth places while rider Shaker Al-Kazemi won fourth and Rakan Al-Hasawi won sixth place.

Chairman of Alsaqb Club Mohammad Al-Mailam and Chairman of Messilah

Equestrian club Bader Al-Mailam handed riders their prizes. Golden Era rider Nadia Al-Mutawa won first place in the fourth round at a height of 125 cm, followed by Shaker Al-Kazmi, Ahmad Al-Ansari, Khalid Buresli, Aws Al-Tannak, Abdullah Al-Awadhi and Misk Al-Marshoud.

In the third round at 115 cm height, rider Abdullah Al-Hamad won first place followed by Abdullah Al-Ammar, Tala Barakat, Fawaz Al-Ghunaiman, Dalal Al-Sharhan and Fawaz Al-Saeed. Rider Mohammad Ghloum won first place of the second round at 105 cm, followed by Italian Kora Busilli, MUSAED Al-Shuaibi and Dawood Al-Obaidan. Chairman of Alsaqb Club Mohammad Al-Mailam said competition was very strong between all riders, who were looking for first places. He said riders are ready for upcoming international championships.

## Toulouse end 20-yr wait for Clermont win

PARIS: Toulouse celebrated their first win at Clermont since 2002 on Sunday with a 32-13 victory that consolidated their seven-point lead at the top of the French Top 14. For slumping Clermont, it was an eighth defeat in the Top 14 this season and they are down at 11th in the table. "I am very satisfied with the performance of my players, the guys attacked from the start and we created a lot of chances," said Toulouse assistant coach Jean Bouilhou. "We are ending this long series of defeats here. Clermont remains a stronghold of French rugby."

Toulouse ran in four tries, two of them in the first half through winger Juan Cruz Mallia and centre Sofiane Guitoune. Melvyn Jaminet kicked eight points as the 21-time champions led 18-6 at the interval with Jules Plisson booting two penalties for Clermont. Jaminet and Paul Graou then turned the screw by adding converted tries early in the second period before lock forward Tomas Lavanini salvaged some pride for Clermont with their only try.

Toulouse ended the game with 13



CLERMONT-FERRAND, France: Toulouse's French center Sofiane Guitoune hands off Clermont's French wing Damian Penaud at The Marcel-Michelin Stadium on Jan 1, 2023. — AFP

men after yellow cards for lock Rynhardt Estadt and winger Arthur Retiere. The dismissals came too late for the home side missing a host of first-choice players. "This is the first time this season that we have had this feeling of helplessness," admitted Clermont scrum-half and skipper Sebastien Bezy. "We have taken a huge step back without finding the solutions to erase these mistakes." — AFP

## KFA hopeful for Kuwait football

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Football Association (KFA) Abdullah Al-Shaheen hoped the new marks the true return of Kuwait football, and that the participation of Kuwait is successful in the Khaleeji Zain 25 Gulf Cup and achieve ambitions and hopes. "We welcomed the new year as our national team is participating in the Gulf Cup with a new look. We hope to receive full support during the championship, so that the participation achieves its goals, and be ready for future events," Shaheen said in a press statement.

"We launched KFA's 2030 vision for football with regards to improving football, and we declared the KFA strategy and presented its goals. The board of directors faced difficulties and challenges, and we are continuing towards achieving our dreams and ambitions to activate and implement this vision," he added.

"We were able to overcome many accumulated obstacles. We are still in the beginning and there still remains a lot in the march of developing football, but with our continuing work and cooperation, everything will become easy and we can achieve all that is better for improving Kuwait football and please our fans," Shaheen said.



Abdullah Al-Shaheen

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

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

### Clinics

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

### Industrial Shuwaikh

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

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, DAWOOD MYDEEN JAKIR HUSSAIN holder of Passport No. L 1169867 do hereby change my name to DAWOOD MYDEEN JAHIR HUSSAIN for all purposes. I will hence-

forth be known in the name DAWOOD MYDEEN JAHIR HUSSAIN and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C#0878) 3-1-2023

I, Hussain, Holder of

Passport No. Z2690374, do hereby change my name to Hussain (as Given name) Captain (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Hussain Captain and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C# 2825) 30-12-2022

Automated enquiry about the Civild card is 1889988

## Brazil pays final respects to Pele

FIFA to ask all countries to name a stadium for Pele: Infantino



SANTOS, Brazil: FIFA President Gianni Infantino (third right) attends the wake of Brazilian football legend Pele at the Urbano Caldeira stadium on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP

**SANTOS, Brazil:** An emotional Brazil began paying its final respects Monday to football legend Pele with a wake at the stadium where he first took the world's breath away with his dazzling skill. Hundreds of fans lined up Monday morning to file through the Vila Belmiro, home to Pele's longtime club, Santos, where the coffin bearing the remains of "O Rei" (The King) was displayed in the center of the field.

Pele, a three-time World Cup winner widely considered the greatest footballer of all time, died Thursday at the age of 82 after a long battle with cancer. Carlos Mota and his 12-year-old son Bernardo traveled more than 500 km from Rio de Janeiro to Santos, a southeastern port city in Sao Paulo state, to pay tribute to their late hero. "My whole childhood was influenced by what Pele did for Brazil, by his World Cup wins. He was a national idol," Mota, 59, told AFP. "I never saw Pele play, but I've seen the videos. He's the greatest player who ever walked the Earth," said Bernardo.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino and Alejandro Dominguez, head of the South American football confederation CONMEBOL, were among the first to pay their respects at the open coffin, which was displayed under an awning and surrounded by bou-

quets of white flowers. FIFA will ask all the world's countries to name a stadium for Brazilian football legend Pele, Infantino said at the wake. "We're going to ask every country in the world to name one of their football stadiums with the name of Pele," Infantino told journalists.

"We're here with great sadness," Infantino said. "Pele is eternal. He's a global icon of football." FIFA had already flown the flags of the world at half-mast Friday outside its headquarters in Zurich in honor of Pele, whom the organization has named as the greatest player of the 20th century.

The oceanside stadium of the team nicknamed "Peixe" - "fish" in Portuguese - opened its doors at 10:00 am (1300 GMT) for a 24-hour wake, to be followed by a funeral procession through the streets of Santos on Tuesday, then a private interment. Known as Vila Belmiro after the neighborhood where it is located, the black-and-white stadium has a capacity of 16,000 people. In the stands, three giant flags were displayed, one with an image of Pele sporting his famous number 10 on his jersey. Another bore the message "Long live the king"; the third said simply, "Pele 82 years."

Tuesday's funeral procession will pass by the

house of Pele's mother, 100-year-old Celeste Arantes, who is still alive but unconscious and unaware that her son has died, according to family. The procession will end at a cemetery in Santos, where Pele will be interred in a special mausoleum.

### Tributes to 'eternal' star

Born Edson Arantes do Nascimento, Pele is the only player in history to win three World Cups and defined the "beautiful game" with his talent. His death sparked a global outpouring of tributes. Pele scored 1,283 goals in a career of 21 years, most of them played at Santos. Wreaths of flowers left by his fans have brought a splash of color to Vila Belmiro, which houses a bust and a statue of the football great.

Elsewhere in the city, banners with Pele's face decorate another monument erected in his likeness. At the headquarters of the Brazilian Football Confederation in Rio de Janeiro, a giant poster with Pele's image bears the word "eternal". And at the inauguration on Sunday of Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the ceremony began with a minute's silence in Pele's memory. There was a heavy security deployment in Santos, with

throng of athletes, politicians, dignitaries and fans expected to descend on the port city 75 km outside Sao Paulo.

### 'The King'

Pele had been hospitalized at the Albert Einstein Hospital for a month until his death on Dec 29. Born on October 23, 1940, he grew up selling peanuts on the street to help his impoverished family. He got his famous nickname after mispronouncing Bile, the name of a goalkeeper at Vasco de Sao Lourenco, where his footballer father once played.

Pele exploded onto the scene at age 15, when he made his professional debut with Santos. At just 17, he helped Brazil to its first World Cup championship, in 1958. That was followed by World Cup titles in 1962 and 1970. The latter marked the pinnacle of his career, as he starred on what many consider the greatest team of all time. Pele had been in increasingly fragile health in recent years. He remained active on social media, cheering on Brazil during the World Cup in Qatar and consoling the pre-tournament favorites when they were eliminated in the quarterfinals just three weeks before his death. — AFP

## Attiyah survives rocky route to win Dakar stage

**AL-ULA, Saudi Arabia:** Defending champion Nasser Al-Attiyah (Toyota) used all his experience of the rocky conditions to win a tough 430km second stage from Sea Camp to Al-Ula in the 45th Dakar Rally on Monday. As many of his rivals were held up by a series of punctures, including Sebastien Loeb (Prodrive) who lost almost an hour and a half, the Qatari Al-Attiyah ploughed to a provisional 14-second win over Erik Van Loon (Overdrive).

Carlos Sainz (Audi) was third man home, 5 minutes 5 seconds back, which was enough to give the Spaniard the lead in the provisional general classification, 2min 12sec ahead of Attiyah. Mathieu Serradori (Century) is running third, 24min 55sec behind Sainz. "It was absolutely the time to attack and drive a good stage," said Attiyah.

"It was not an easy day. There were a lot of rocks and the navigation wasn't easy. We had one flat tyre, one puncture at the beginning, but after that we tried to be really careful in the stony places. In the sand we pushed and I'm quite happy."

Loeb's hopes of competing for a first ever Dakar title hang in the balance after a stage he described as a "car wreck". "The whole special was hell," said a stony-faced Loeb as he stepped out of his car which was missing its bonnet, torn off during an impact.

"At the driving level, (it was) completely uninteresting, driving in rocks in slow motion, trying to cross without puncturing and, well, we had three punctures. We did everything to drive slowly but there was nothing we could do, it was not at all suitable for a car like ours." The nine-time world rally champion, who finished second last year, is now down in 31st in the overall standings 1hr 21min off the lead.

Meanwhile, American rider Mason Klein took the



AL-ULA, Saudi Arabia: Toyota's driver Nasser Al-Attiyah of Qatar and French co-driver Mathieu Baumel compete during the second stage of the Dakar 2023 rally between Sea Camp and Al-Ula on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP

overall lead in the motorcycling category after winning Monday's stage. "Most of the day I was just following the other guys and then at the last part they were making jokes about me leading out or not leading out and letting them all do the work," said Klein. "So, I said, fine, I'll take my turn and I just left them and it was good."

His compatriot Ricky Brabec had led overnight but could post only the 15th fastest time and was 8min 19sec slower than KTM rider Klein. In spite of picking up a penalty, Klein timed 1min 9sec faster than Germany's Sebastian Buhler on the stage with another American Skyler Howes finishing third 1min 13sec adrift.

The 21-year-old Californian benefitted from some tactical slowing down from Australian rider Daniel Sanders who was comfortably leading the stage before opting to ease off in the last kilometers to avoid having to open the way on Tuesday. "I was pushing a lot at the start to make up a lot of time and that was working, but then I knew we still had 200km to go, so I backed off a little bit and sat back for tomorrow and sit back in the pack," said the GasGas rider. — AFP

## Ronaldo set for grand unveiling after Saudi move

**RIYADH:** Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo will be unveiled before thousands of fans at Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr club on Tuesday, a spokesman said, after sealing a shock move estimated at more than 200 million euros. The 37-year-old great, a five-time winner of the Ballon d'Or, will arrive late on Monday with his family together with media and technical staff, club spokesman Al-Walid Al-Muhaidib told AFP.

Ronaldo, who left Manchester United under a cloud after slamming the club in a TV interview, will appear at Al Nassr's 25,000-capacity Mrsool Park stadium in Riyadh at 7:00 pm (1600 GMT) on Tuesday, officials said. The latest, and possibly final, chapter in an illustrious career comes weeks after Portugal's quarterfinal exit from the World Cup in neighboring Qatar, where his great rival Lionel Messi lifted the trophy with Argentina.

Ronaldo's signing until June 2025 is just the latest foray into top-level sports by oil-rich Saudi, which has moved into Formula One, boxing and golf and snapped up English club Newcastle United. Al Nassr is expecting a full stadium for the unveiling, according to one official who did not want to be named because he was not authorized to speak to media. Ronaldo is by far the biggest star to play in Saudi Arabia, although other heavyweights including George Weah, Pep Guardiola and Xavi also had stints in the wealthy Gulf in the twilight of their careers.

Al Nassr, the nine-time Saudi league champions, have called Ronaldo's signing "more than history in the making", claiming he will inspire the rest of the league and even the country. In a tweet, Saudi



RIYADH: A fan holds the jersey of Saudi football club Al-Nassr's new Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo at a sports shop on Jan 2, 2023. — AFP

Sports Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal pledged to "support the rest of our clubs for quality deals with international stars soon".

United terminated Ronaldo's contract during the World Cup after an explosive interview where he said he felt "betrayed" by the club and had no respect for coach Erik ten Hag. The Portuguese forward has long been one of the top-paid players in football, earning a reported salary of 31 million euros at Juventus before taking a pay-cut to rejoin United.

Ronaldo has won five Champions League titles (2008, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018), league titles in Italy (2019, 2020) with Juventus, in Spain (2012, 2017) with Real Madrid and in England (2007, 2008, 2009) with United. He is also the top scorer in the Champions League and with the Portuguese national team, with whom he won Euro 2016. In Qatar, he became the first man to score at five World Cups with his penalty in the group-stage win over Ghana. — AFP