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# Kuwait playing vital role in global anti-IS coalition

US, Saudi urge repatriation of IS militants, funds for Iraq, Syria



RIYADH: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah heads the Kuwaiti delegation to a ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Islamic State on June 8, 2023. — KUNA

RIYADH: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah headed on Thursday the Kuwaiti delegation at the ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Islamic State, co-hosted by Saudi Arabia and the United States in Riyadh with the aim of raising \$601 million for a stabilization fund. During his speech at the meeting, Sheikh Salem noted that the coalition faces great expectations from the international community that monitors and evaluates the coalition countries' commitment and seriousness in their campaign against terrorism.

Sheikh Salem also touched on the vital role played by Kuwait in transferring the families of foreign terrorist fighters languishing in Syrian camps, adding it reflects sublime humanitarian meanings and international cooperation with friendly countries. Kuwait, along with the US, contributed to the transfer of 667 fighters and their

families from 13 countries in Europe, Asia the Americas and the Caribbean from September 2019 till date, he added.

Moreover, Sheikh Salem appreciated the efforts made by the international coalition secretariat and the work team that prepared for this meeting. Sheikh Salem also thanked Saudi Arabia for hosting this gathering and for its joint invitation with the US to take part in this highly needed meeting.

At the meeting, the US pledged \$148 million for stabilization efforts in Iraq and Syria as it joined Saudi Arabia in urging Western states to repatriate foreign Islamic State group fighters and their relatives. "I'm announcing that the United States is committing \$148.7 million to that fund," said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who kicked-off a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. "This support will meet critical needs that Syrians and Iraqis themselves

have identified."

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said it was "disheartening and absolutely unacceptable" that some wealthy countries had not repatriated citizens who had travelled to Iraq and Syria to join IS. "To those countries, you must step up, you must take your responsibility," said the top diplomat who held separate talks with French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna on the sidelines of the coalition meeting. Colonna is expected in Doha later Thursday for a strategic dialogue session.

The "caliphate", which IS proclaimed across swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014, was declared defeated in 2019 following counter-offensives in both Iraq and Syria. Thousands of jihadists and their family members continue to be held in detention centers and informal camps where US commanders have warned they could

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## NEWS IN BRIEF



### School exam leakers arrested

KUWAIT: Criminal Investigation Department men arrested three people accused of leaking high school final exams for all grades, the interior ministry said on Thursday. The suspects operated WhatsApp groups where they gave the test papers to subscribers in exchange for money, the ministry said, noting they also promoted their activity on social media.

### KU to admit 300 expat students

KUWAIT: Official sources at Kuwait University said the university is expected to admit nearly 300 expat students for the next academic year, who will have to pay fees of KD 100 for each study unit, the same as last year. The move is part of procedures aimed at increasing the number of non-Kuwaiti students in its colleges in compliance with conditions to be included in international university rankings.

### WhatsApp debuts broadcast tool

SAN FRANCISCO: WhatsApp on Thursday began letting select organizations try a new feature called "Channels" that lets them broadcast to followers on the popular, Meta-owned messaging service. Meta described Channels as "a simple, reliable, and private way to receive important updates from people and organizations, right within WhatsApp". — AFP

## Saadoun to contest speaker's post; first poll challenge filed

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Former National Assembly speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun said late Wednesday he will contest the speaker's post for the new Assembly. Saadoun,

89, was speaker of the 2022 Assembly which was nullified by the constitutional court on March 19, leading to Tuesday's polls.

Two MPs, Mohammad Al-Mutair, who was deputy speaker of the 2022 Assembly, and Marzouq Al-Hubaini, announced they will contest the post. It was not immediately known if others will contest. The elections of the speaker, deputy speaker and Assembly committees will be held on the inaugural day on June 20, immediately after formal speeches by HH the Amir, HH the Prime Minister and the lawmaker chairing the session, who is usually the eldest one.

Former Assembly Speaker (2013-2022) Mar-

## World warming at record 0.2C per decade

PARIS: Record-high greenhouse gas emissions and diminishing air pollution have caused an unparalleled acceleration in global warming, 50 top scientists warned Thursday in a sweeping climate science update. From 2013 to 2022, "human-induced warming has been increasing at an unprecedented rate of over 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade," they reported in a peer-reviewed study aimed at policymakers.

Average annual emissions over the same period hit an all-time high of 54 billion tons of CO2 or its equivalent in other gases — about 1,700 tons every second. World leaders will be confronted with the new data at the critical COP28 climate summit later this year in Dubai, where a "Global Stocktake" at the UN talks will assess progress toward the 2015 Paris Agreement's temperature goals.

The findings would appear to close the door on capping global warming under the Paris treaty's more ambitious 1.5C target, long identified as a guard rail for a relatively climate-safe world, albeit one still roiled by severe impacts. "Even though we are not yet

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## Canada wildfires shroud New York in apocalyptic haze

NEW YORK: Smoke from Canadian wildfires shrouded New York in a record-breaking apocalyptic smog as cities along the US East Coast issued air pollution warnings and thousands evacuated their homes in Canada. The devastating fires have displaced more than 20,000 people and scorched about 3.8 million hectares of land in Canada, where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described this wildfire season as the country's worst ever.

More than 100 million people across the north-eastern United States, and extending west to Chicago and south to Atlanta, were under pollution warnings after the smoke drifted hundreds of miles from

Canada, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said. The thick pollution cast an eerie, yellowish glow over the Big Apple's famous skyscrapers, delayed flights and forced the postponement of sporting events.

"It smells like someone is doing a barbecue," said Nicha Suattiyanon, a 30-year-old tourist in New York City from Thailand, who complained of watery and itchy eyes. Mayor Eric Adams told New Yorkers to limit outdoor activity to "the absolute necessities", adding: "This is not the day to train for a marathon." All outdoor activities at New York City's public schools were suspended, as the smog enveloped the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it had slowed traffic to and from the city's airports due to reduced visibility. US President Joe Biden said on Twitter that more than 600 firefighters along with other personnel and equipment had been sent to Canada to help battle the blazes.

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zouq Al-Ghanem said he will remain loyal to all political values he holds, which call for stability, welfare of the people and the progress and development of the country. Ghanem did not contest the Sept 2022 elections.

MP Mohammad Hayef invited new MPs to an informal meeting on Sunday to discuss coordination and the election of Assembly panels. Hayef also announced plans to revive the parliamentary negative phenomena committee. "The committee will discuss all matters related to moralities, Islamic identity and corruption in ministries and public affairs," he said.

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BANGKOK: Workers move blocks of ice into a storage unit at a fresh market during heatwave conditions on April 25, 2023. — AFP



NEW YORK: A person wearing a facemask takes photos of the skyline as smoke from wildfires in Canada cause hazy conditions in New York City on June 7, 2023. — AFP





## Local

# Women not supporting women hinders them from reaching National Assembly

## Belief in male guardianship also among the obstacles facing women

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Empowering Kuwaiti women politically has met with many obstacles in recent years, as Kuwaiti women are still struggling with a lot of things that are hindering them from becoming leaders or decision makers. Male dominance, societal acceptance and women not supporting female candidates are perennial issues affecting women's access to the Assembly, which was clear in the result of the recent National Assembly elections, where only one female candidate — Jenan Boushehri — won a seat among 13 female candidates.

Women not supporting each other is one of the main reasons affecting the results, as number of women told Kuwait Times they believe women shouldn't be in the Assembly due to many reasons, including that women didn't achieve anything previously when they got the opportunity. On the other hand, especially in some electoral districts, many Kuwaiti women believe religious laws prevent women from becoming leaders or "guardians", as they think guardianship is only for men.

Kuwait Times discussed with women voters in several electoral districts their points of view. A female citizen said Kuwait is a conservative country that seeks to implement religious legislations in a way that helps people improve their lives. Although she stressed female representatives in the Assem-

bly is not religiously forbidden, she believes women cannot be main leaders, such as judges or rulers, or be in a position where they have to make critical and fateful decisions. But she reiterated a woman can be a representative in the Assembly beside men to help them come up with better legislation.

The voter also believes traditions hugely influence female voters' decisions. "Many women think men are the best leaders, who have more power and ability to handle things that women can't. We are raised to believe women cannot be in all types of jobs, and that's why men are still the majority in the Assembly and other positions," she added.

Another female voter told Kuwait Times she chose to vote for a male candidate because she believes he accomplished more than what women did in previous years. When asked if women had enough chances to prove themselves, she admitted they didn't have enough time, whether due to repeated dissolutions of the Assembly, male representatives fighting them or being exposed to questioning.

Also, despite many women saying they support women's empowerment and hoping they could have more opportunities in the Assembly, the same women told Kuwait Times they voted for men, either because they think women in their districts are not qualified, or they agree with the idea that guardianship is only for men, according to their beliefs.



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti judge and his aides count the ballots at a polling station for parliamentary elections, in the Abdullah Al-Salem district of Kuwait City, on June 6, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Kuwait's Foreign Minister leads Kuwait's delegation at GCC-US ministerial meeting. — KUNA photos

## GCC-US meeting emphasizes on security ties

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah represented Kuwait at the ministerial meeting of the GCC-US Strategic Partnership, held at the GCC Secretariat in Riyadh on Wednesday. The meeting which was attended by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, reviewed various aspects of cooperation with emphasis on the political and security relations.

Both sides discussed the outcomes of the joint ad hoc committees and the efforts to deepen the exemplary relations. They explored ways to tap into the promising opportunity in different areas of cooperation to realize the joint aspirations and serve the common interest. On regional issues, both sides mulled over ways to stabilize Syria, Yemen and Sudan as well as the latest developments of the situation in Iran.

They stressed the need to double efforts for reaching a durable solution to the Palestinian conflict, which could contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the Middle East. During the meeting, Secretary Blinken reaffirmed the US commitment to maintain the security and stability of the GCC countries and strengthen the strategic partnership with them.

Blinken assured his country's commitment to continue helping facilitate the secu-



rity and stability of the GCC. He said the region is of grave importance to Washington, pointing to his nation's continued efforts to strengthen relations as part of its diplomatic policies agenda. He also mentioned that the GCC is enthralled with deep-rooted relations with the US and are able to overcome all hindrances, while also stressing the need to coordinate and cooperate on issues like food security, renewable energy, and climate change.

The Iranian agenda is being pragmatically examined, added Blinken, as the nuclear program continues to be closely monitored. The crisis in Yemen and Syria needs to be addressed with a political solution to end the conflicts in order to pave way for peace and security in the region, he added. On the Palestinian issue, he also mentioned his nation is working on a consensual solution that could end the ongoing Palestinian conflict. — KUNA



## FM, counterparts discuss relations

RIYADH: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday met Belgium's counterpart Hadja Labbib on margins of the ministerial conference of Global Coalition against Islamic State/ Daesh. The two sides examined the close friendly relations between Kuwait and the European nation, mutual cooperation in various vital sectors, joint challenges at the regional and international levels, namely Ukraine, combat-

ing terrorism and climate change. Also, Sheikh Salem met his Cypriot counterpart Dr Constantinos Kombos and Kosovo's Minister of Foreign Affairs Donika Gervalla-Schwarz. Both meetings were held separately in Riyadh on the sidelines of the ministerial conference of Global Coalition against Islamic State. During the meetings, the friendly sides discussed bilateral ties, ways of enhancing them, and latest regional and international developments. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Environment Public Authority is working on three environmental initiatives on the island, cultivating coral, releasing turtles marked for extinction and tracking them, and cleaning the seabed from waste. — KUNA photos

## EPA rehabilitating marine biodiversity

KUWAIT: Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs at the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Dr Abdullah Al-Zaidan said that the cultivation of corals on environmentally friendly concrete models (Mayafer) on Qaruh Island is part of rehabilitating marine biodiversity in Kuwait. In statement to KUNA, Al-Zaidan said that this national project came in cooperation with various state agencies with aim of implementing goals of the develop-

ment plan and of the UN sustainable development program as well as international agreements ratified by Kuwait.

He added that the authority is working on three environmental initiatives on the island, cultivating coral, releasing turtles marked for extinction and tracking them, and finally cleaning the seabed from waste with a specialized environmental team. The authority placed Mayafer on Qaruh island to study its quality and use in agriculture, explained Al-Zaidan, as they coordinated with the Scientific Center to plant corals and put it on the Mayafer.

He pointed out that wrong human practices in the Kuwaiti islands, such as passing boats harm the cor-

al, which poses a threat to living organisms, stressing that this step came to reduce the resulting negative effects and preserve biodiversity. Al-Zaidan noted that two turtles have been released in a similar previous project that was launched last summer and that the sea turtle tracking project comes in cooperation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), the Scientific Center, Kuwait University and the Coast Guard, where a tracking device is placed on turtles to build a database for migratory and endangered turtles.

Regarding the initiative to collect waste from the bottom of the island, Al-Zaidan said that with the arrival of summer and the increased visiting to islands,



the wrong practices will increase including dumping waste on the beaches and at the sea, which prompted the team to clean the island in hopes of reducing waste dumping and protecting marine environment. Al-Zaidan affirmed the authority's keenness on the environment of Kuwait and following up on various environmental issues, confirming Kuwait's commitment to international agreements on preserving biological and environmental diversity and implementing them on a local level. — KUNA



## Local

# Cabinet holds extraordinary session, commends all election stakeholders

## Ministers applaud voters, praise their patriotism

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet held an extraordinary session on Wednesday at Bayan Palace under chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Following the session, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel said the ministers were briefed by First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as well as by Minister of Justice, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Amer Mohammad Ali Mohammad about the National Assembly elections and their results.

Polls of the Assembly's 17th legislative term were held on Tuesday and final results of the polling were declared on Wednesday. The ministers expressed appreciation for the great efforts exerted by the judiciary, the public prosecution, personnel of the ministries of interior, justice, information, health, education, the municipality, NGOs and volunteers.

They also applauded the voters whose patriotism was translated through their participation in the process and congratulated winners of parliamentary seats, wishing them success in serving the homeland and the citizens. In line with provision 57 of the constitution, the ministers examined the government's resignation motion that would be submitted to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah presides over the Cabinet meeting. — KUNA

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Moreover, His Highness the prime minister, personally and on behalf of the executives, expressed deep gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on their valuable confidence and significant support. He also lauded the ministers for their sincere efforts during the service. — KUNA

## News in Brief



### Anjafa Beach project

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality said it has handed the project to complete the Anjafa Beach development work to a new contractor and the project will be completed in three months. The Municipality said the former contractor could not complete the rest of the project, so it withdrew the work orders.



### Firemen rescue laborers

**KUWAIT:** Firemen from Al-Shaheed and Search and Rescue Centers responded to a call about two laborers who fell into an empty water tank in a project under construction in Daeya area. The two laborers were rescued and handed to paramedics.

### Kuwait condemns attacks

**KUWAIT:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Kuwait's condemnation of storming and vandalizing Saudi Arabia Embassy building, the Embassy building and the residence of the Ambassador of Bahrain, Palestine's Embassy building and the residence of Palestine Ambassador, the Embassy building of China, and the residence of the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in the Sudanese capital Al-Khartoum. In a statement on Thursday, the ministry stressed Kuwait's strong rejection of the continued attacks on accredited diplomats and their affiliated buildings in Sudan. The ministry renewed its call to the official authorities and all concerned parties in Sudan to work on providing full protection for the headquarters of diplomatic missions as soon as possible, as stipulated in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961. — KUNA

## Kuwait takes over the presidency of ESCWA 14th conference

**BEIRUT:** Kuwait on Thursday took over the presidency of the 14th UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) conference in Beirut. Assistant undersecretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Hamad Al-Khalidi obtained the presidency of the commission after Qatar in the last edition. In a statement for KUNA, Al-Khalidi said that this presidency for the next two years gives importance to Kuwait in dealing with the United Nations and ESCWA in the social and economic aspects through supervising committees.

"In the next stage Kuwait will deal directly with the ESCWA administration in the social and economic aspects, as well as in studies, countries' experiences and statistics," said Al-Khalidi. He noted that there will be intensified meetings held in the coming period to enhance Kuwait's role with the ESCWA committees, and with direct follow-up with all concerned countries that need logistical support, especially in the areas of combating poverty, supporting the disabled, the elderly, and marginalized groups, and working to empower countries according to the available capabilities.

"Kuwait played a pioneering role with ESCWA in previous years it has formed a team in the Ministry of Social Affairs to follow up on the implementation of technical cooperation programs with the organization, and it will have a major role in dealing with special cases," he added. — KUNA



**Assistant Undersecretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Hamad Al-Khalidi**



**Kuwait Red Crescent Society Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer meets UN World Food Program Deputy Director for Gulf States Katrina Gallouzi. — KUNA photos**

## World Food Program hails Kuwait's efforts

**KUWAIT:** The United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) on Thursday heaped praise on Kuwait for the country's contributions towards global humanitarian endeavors, hailing it as among the UN's most indispensable partners. Kuwait never failed to provide "urgent and prompt" aid to some of the impoverished corners of the globe, WFP's deputy director for Gulf Arab states Katrina Gallouzi told KUNA after talks with the country's Red Crescent Society chief Dr Hilal Al-Sayer.

On her visit to Kuwait, the WFP official said it aims to ratchet up cooperation as part of efforts to keep food distribution flowing to countries with se-



vere shortages. Acknowledging the WFP's contributions towards humanitarian aid across the world, the Kuwaiti charities chief agreed that the WFP official's

visit would be instrumental in bolstering ties, underlining the Kuwaiti Red Crescent's unwavering commitment to serve humanity. — KUNA

## KPC maps out clean energy strategy

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (the KPC), the umbrella body of the national oil companies, has mapped out a strategy and roadmap for low-emission energy transformation, the KPC Chief Executive Officer announced on Thursday. Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah said that in line with the 2040 KPC strategy and Kuwait's international obligations to attain hydrocarbon neutrality by 2050, the corporation had worked out the strategy and the roadmap for processing the limited emission energy.

Sheikh Nawaf was addressing a seminar organized by the KPC research and technology division, themed "Kuwait's third for hydrogen". CEO of the participating Japan Cooperation Center for Petroleum and Sustainable Energy Center (JCCP), Tsuyoshi Nakai, said Japanese companies were ready to cooperate with Kuwait in the clean energy realm. The seminar, which involved energy strategy makers from local, regional, and international institutions, shed light on the hydrogen industry.

In line with KPC's Strategy 2040 and complementing Kuwait's international commitments to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, KPC has devel-



oped a roadmap for energy transformation designed to reduce emissions. The seminar is in line with the foundation's strategy on energy transformation through the use of alternative and renewable energy to achieve the zero target.

The seminar helps to develop national competencies and expertise in this field by raising the awareness of oil manufacturers in Kuwait of the increasing development witnessed by the world towards energy transformation strategies and reliance on clean energy technologies and the policies and regulations followed globally. The Chief Executive Officer discussed the challenges faced by the world in securing clean energy, pointing out that the world is moving toward a shift in the field of energy, currently to reduce carbon emissions. — KUNA



## Minister inspects college projects

**KUWAIT:** The Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, Dr Hamad Al-Adwani, announced on Wednesday the establishment of a branch of the College of Basic Education (girls) in the Fahaeel region. The college will open next academic year (2023-2024) to serve about 5,000 female students in the southern regions of the country.

Following an inspection tour of the project, Minister Al-Adwani said that it comes in line with the urban expansion witnessed by the country and in implementation of the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to quickly provide educational services to residents of the southern regions.

He pointed to the directive of the General Authority for Applied Education and Training to expedite the implementation of the project and include it within the plan of the expansion achievements of its buildings in order to achieve an appropriate educational environment and quality, upgrading its facilities, quickly equipping classrooms with laboratories, workshops, and equipment in preparation for the next academic year.

Al-Adwani explained that the project aims to reduce student density and provide classrooms in the main branch for students of the faculty of basic education in the Al-Adwani area. During the inspection tour, the minister visited about 25 classrooms, three laboratories, and others. In a statement, the Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Dr Hassan Al-Fajam, stressed the keenness of the authority to implement the directives of the political leadership to implement projects that promote national development and achieve geographical expansion to solve the problems of parents and students from the southern regions. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** The Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, Dr Hamad Al-Adwani and top officials visit project sites during an inspection tour. — KUNA



## News in Brief

## Kuwait commends IAEA

VIENNA: Kuwait has heaped praise on the UN nuclear watchdog for its commitment towards the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly dealing with Iran's implementation of its obligations under the deal. A recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) left some unanswered questions pertaining to Tehran's commitment to the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the permanent Kuwaiti delegation to the UN's First Secretary Ali Al-Wazan told talks involving the UN nuclear watchdog's board of governors. He called on the Islamic Republic to maintain a steady level of cooperation with the IAEA, subsequently enabling the UN nuclear watchdog to provide "assurances" on the nature of Iran's nuclear program. — KUNA

## GCC lauds Europe efforts

RIYADH: Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Gulf States Jassem Al-Budaiwi has praised the role played by the European Union and international partners in enhancing opportunities for peace and security in the Sahel region of Africa. This came during a meeting between the Al-Budaiwi and the EU representative for the African Sahel region Emanuela Claudia Delery at the headquarters of the General Secretariat in Riyadh, the Secretariat said in a statement. According to the Statement, Al-Budaiwi stressed the importance of the partnership between the GCC Council and the European Union in many fields, including unifying views on international issues, finding, and advancing solutions. — KUNA

## Ministry staff, KUNA praised

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has commended the extensive efforts carried out by the Information Ministry's staff and Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) in covering the 2023 National Assembly elections. In a tweet, Minister Al-Mutairi also expressed gratitude to private, local, and international media for their coverage of Kuwait's elections, which kick-started yesterday. Al-Mutairi visited the editorial department at KUNA on Tuesday to oversee the workflow during the day of election, commending, during his stay, the tremendous efforts played by the agency in providing accurate news and updates. KUNA had tasked competent team of editors, journalists, and photographers to cover the elections and broadcasting news in the Arabic, English, and French languages through its service and social media accounts. — KUNA

## Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis gather around a feast hosted by newly-elected Kuwaiti MP Fahad bin Jamea to celebrate his victory in the National Assembly elections, in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Japan, Kuwait commit to 'carbon neutrality'

## Kuwait Hydrogen Symposium 2023

KUWAIT: On June 8, 2023, Morino Yasunari, Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait attended the Kuwait Hydrogen Symposium, which was co-hosted by Japan Cooperation Center for Petroleum and Sustainable Energy (JCCP) and Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC). CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Company Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah, CEO of Japan Cooperation Center for Petroleum and Sustainable Energy Tsuyoshi Nakai, representatives from the ministry of economy, trade and industry of Japan as well as various Japanese private companies attended the symposium.

The ambassador delivered opening remarks during the symposium that aimed to contribute to carbon neutral goals, as follows: "I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Sheikh Nawaf and his team of KPC for hosting the 3rd symposium on hydrogen in cooperation with JCCP. The fact that the face-to-face event is finally taking place, surviving the pandemic, demonstrates the exceptional, trusted

partnership between the two Japanese and Kuwait organizations, JCCP and KPC. It is my great pleasure to welcome the Japanese delegation who have come over to Kuwait to share their sophisticated knowledge and expertise and I highly appreciate JCCP for its coordinating role. My profound tributes also go to the Kuwaiti speakers from different organizations, such as KPC, KISR and Kuwait University.

As Japan and Kuwait are both committed to carbon neutrality, and given the long lasting partnership between the two countries, which have long time contributed to the stability of the oil market, the focus on energy transition and hydrogen as its key element is appropriate as well as timely. Only two days ago did the Government of Japan launch a new strategy of hydrogen aiming to expand the use of hydrogen from both sides of supply and demand. The strategy identifies areas of priority, such as water electrolysis, fuel cell, transportation, etc. and envisions signifi-

cant increase in government and private investments. CCS and CCUS technologies are an important part of the de-carbonization solutions when renewables come to the main seat. I look forward to concrete discussion on CCS and CCUS based on the outcome of the ongoing projects.

The goal of carbon neutrality and the energy transition can only be achieved through global efforts to realize a more sustainable, environment-friendly and inclusive development of the world. At the recent summit in Hiroshima, Japan, the G7 countries declared the willingness to work through dialogue, cooperation and coordination for the global clean energy transition. I am confident that the exceptional partnership between Japan and Kuwait will make significant contributions to the welfare of the world and of the future human society. I would like to reiterate my appreciation to JCCP and KPC for co-organizing this symposium and thank you all for joining."



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## NBK, KRCS distribute cooling devices to families in need

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) and Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) have distributed essential electric cooling devices to unprivileged families in Kuwait. The campaign aims to offer a refreshing summer for low-income families facing hard weather conditions. The campaign is a way of showing appreciation and solidarity to those families. Yaqoub Al Baqer, NBK Public Relations Senior Manager, expressed his sincere appreciation to Kuwait Red Crescent Society for its prompt response and efforts to help those in need.

"We are pleased and proud to be a part of this noble campaign that aims to provide vulnerable people with the needed aid to protect them from extreme heat," he added. "NBK strives to support various private and public humanitarian missions in meeting their needs and achieving their humanitarian and social goals", he noted. "This aid is part of our corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, which seeks to support initiatives that make a profound impact on the lives of communities around Kuwait.

"We thank the Kuwait Red Crescent Society for their noble efforts, and the continued aid they provide to people in need," he stressed. NBK has been dedicated in helping KRCS across different sectors such as healthcare, education and relief. The Summer Campaign helps KRCS achieve its strategy by ensuring all beneficiaries receive the necessary aid. The campaign, supported NBK targets low-income families to keep them cool during hot weather.

## KUNA concludes training program

KUWAIT: KUNA Center for the Development of Media Skills on Thursday concluded a training program entitled "news writing". The program, presented by the veteran journalist Talal Al-Kandari, at KUNA from 4-8 June, focused on introducing the standards

of news writing, different types of news items, sources and editing. Eighteen KUNA employees participated in the five-day program, as well as participants from Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, Public Authority for Anti-Corruption, Kuwaiti Zakat House and State Audit Bureau. This center, established in 1995, is concerned with increasing skills of professional journalistic work, improving media content, and bringing theory and practice closer in the field of writing media materials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Veteran journalist Talal Al-Kandari poses for a group photo with the attendees after the 'news writing' program. — KUNA





Ex-Pakistan PM granted bail as army vows to 'tighten noose'

Prosecutors tell Trump lawyers he is target of classified docs probe

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## France knife attack wounds four children Macron calls it an 'attack of absolute cowardice'



ANNECY: French police personnel maintain a secure cordon in Annecy, south-eastern France on June 8, 2023, following a mass stabbing in the French Alpine town. — AFP

ANNECY: A man armed with a knife attacked a group of pre-school children playing by a lake in the French Alps Thursday, wounding four as well as an adult and sending shockwaves through the country. The suspect is a Syrian in his early 30s who was granted refugee status in Sweden in April, a police source told AFP. Witnesses described the suspected knife man running around in a frenzy, apparently attacking people at random, before he was shot by police near the banks of Lake Annecy.

"He wanted to attack everyone. I moved away and he lunged at an old man and woman and stabbed the old man," former professional footballer Anthony Le Tallec, who was running in the park, told the lo-

cal Dauphine Libere newspaper.

Another witness, named Malo, told the BFM television channel that the culprit attacked the children before the old man and was "shouting, but it wasn't really comprehensible". Two of the children — believed to be aged around three — and an adult victim were in critical condition and fighting for their lives in hospital, a security source told AFP.

A police source said checks on the man, who was arrested at the scene, were ongoing, but he was unknown to French security services. Annecy is a scenic town in the French Alps close to the border with Switzerland popular with tourists and home to one of the world's top ani-

mation festivals, which starts Sunday.

French President Emmanuel Macron called it an "attack of absolute cowardice". "The nation is shocked. Our thoughts are with (the victims) as well as their families and the emergency services," he wrote on Twitter.

### Minute of silence

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne's office announced she was travelling to the scene and MPs in the French parliament held a minute's silence. "We hope that the consequences of this extremely serious attack... will not send the country into mourning," parliament speaker Yael Braun-Pivet told MPs as she interrupted

a raucous debate about pension reform.

The motive and identity of the attacker are being investigated and the local prosecutor is expected to give further details at a press conference. In 2012, a Franco-Algerian extremist called Mohamed Merah killed seven people during a shooting rampage in the southern city of Toulouse, with the murders of three children and a rabbi at a Jewish school sparking widespread outrage.

Most recently, the beheading of a teacher in broad daylight in 2020 near his school in a Paris suburb by a radicalized Chechen refugee led to shock and grief, as well as a national debate about the influence of radical Islam in deprived areas of

the country. Thursday's attack is likely to spur greater scrutiny of immigration and asylum policy, with right-wing politicians immediately seizing on the suspected culprit's identity as a refugee.

"The investigation will determine what happened, but it seems like the culprit has the same profile that you see often in these attacks," the head of the right-wing Republicans party, Eric Ciotti, told reporters at parliament.

"We need to draw conclusions without being naive, with strength and with a clear mind." The leader of the far-right National Rally party, Marine Le Pen, wrote that she had learned the news with "dread and horror". — AFP

## Russia tells UN court Ukraine shelled dam

THE HAGUE: Russia accused Ukraine at the UN's top court Thursday of destroying a key dam with artillery strikes, and alleged that Kyiv was led by neo-Nazis — a claim Moscow has used to try to justify its invasion.

Moscow's comments to judges at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) came as it denied wider allegations by Ukraine that Russia had breached terrorism laws by backing separatists in eastern Ukraine since 2014.

"Ukraine has declared that Russia blew up the large dam at Nova Kakhovka. In fact, it's Ukraine that did it," Russian diplomat Alexander Shulgin told the court in The Hague. "The Kyiv regime not only launched massive artillery attacks against the dam on the night of June 6, but it also deliberately raised the water level of the Kakhovka reservoir to a critical level" by opening sluice gates at a hydroelectric plant beforehand, he said.

Shulgin, the Russian ambassador to the Netherlands, provided no evidence to the court to support his claims. Kyiv has accused Russia of blowing up the dam in Russian-held southern Ukraine, causing huge floods. Ukraine opened its formal arguments at the ICJ on Tuesday in a case that it first filed in 2017. It branded Russia a "terrorist state" and said its support for rebels in eastern Ukraine was the precursor for Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Repeating allegations made by Russian President Vladimir Putin in an effort to justify last year's invasion, Shulgin said Kyiv had "no moral authority" and was itself oppressing people in eastern Ukraine.

"This regime rose to power on the back of a violent coup in 2014 on the shoulders of nationalists who were the direct descendants of the Nazi collaborators in World War II," Shulgin said. The Russian envoy said Ukraine's current government had "neo-Nazis" in key posts including in the armed forces, accusing them of "brutal repression" in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region.

Putin said one of the goals of his "special military operation" was the "de-Nazification" of Ukraine, and supporters of the invasion have frequently compared Ukraine's treatment of Russian

who operated on him, would not be more specific.

He said the operation usually required a stay of between five and seven days, but the pope's age and illness in March — when he was hospitalized with a respiratory infection — may affect his recovery time.

Italian gastrosurgeon Andrea Mazzari told AFP that "in the case of older people, full recovery can take between eight to 10 days". Francis, who has been the leader of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics for a decade, has suffered increasing health issues over the past year and his hospital stays have sparked concern and fuelled speculation over his future as pontiff. Francis' predecessor, Benedict XVI, who died in December, stepped down in 2013 due to failing health.

### Papal suite

The Argentine was admitted Wednesday after holding his weekly general audience in St Peter's Square and doing a round in his popemobile, cheerfully waving to the crowds. He is staying in the papal suite at the Gemelli hospital, which is the favored choice of pontiffs to the point of being dubbed "Vatican III" by John Paul II.

The suite is painted white and furnished simply. In addition to the pope's room, there is a meeting room for medical staff, a kitchen, bathroom and rest areas, as well as a small chapel. Francis stayed there in July 2021, when he underwent surgery for a type of diverticulitis, an inflammation of small bulges or pockets that can develop in the lining of the intestine.



THE HAGUE: Lawyer for Ukraine Harold Hongju Koh (L), Director General for International Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Oksana Zolotaryova (C) and Ukrainian lawyer Anton Korynevych (R) take their seats at The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. — AFP

speakers in the country to the actions of Nazi Germany. The claims have been contested by the Ukrainian government and the country's Jewish community. A verdict by the ICJ, which was created after World War II to deal with disputes between UN member states, is not expected for months or even years. — AFP



ROME: Director of the department of Abdominal and Endocrine Metabolic Medical and Surgical Sciences at the Gemelli hospital, professor Sergio Alfieri © and Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni © speak to the media at the Gemelli hospital in Rome. — AFP

He was discharged after 10 days, but in an interview in January, he said the diverticulitis had returned. Francis was also hospitalized for three nights at the end of March with a respiratory infection, which was cured with antibiotics. For about a year, Pope Francis has had to rely on a wheelchair because of recurring knee pain. He has said he does not want to have an operation on his knee because of the side-effects he suffered from the general anaesthesia for his colon surgery. — AFP

## Pope in good condition after hernia operation

ROME: Pope Francis, 86, spent a restful night and was in good condition after a hernia operation, the Vatican said Thursday, as doctors cautioned his age and health issues could affect his recovery time.

"Pope Francis passed a quiet night and managed to have a lengthy rest," the Vatican said. "He is in a generally good condition, is alert and is breathing without assistance," it said in a statement. The Argentine pontiff was "grateful" for those sending him well wishes and asked people to pray for him, it added.

Francis underwent a three-hour operation at the Gemelli hospital in Rome Wednesday, and was reportedly cheerful when he woke up. The pope, who had colon surgery in 2021, had been suffering from a hernia on the site of a scar from a previous surgery, doctor Sergio Alfieri told reporters Wednesday.

He was placed under general anesthesia and the abdominal wall was repaired with a surgical mesh, Alfieri said. All papal audiences have been cancelled until June 18 to give the pontiff time to recover. The Vatican said the pope would stay in hospital "several days", and Alfieri,

## 11 killed in blast at Afghan governor's funeral

KABUL: At least 11 people were killed by a blast Thursday at a funeral service for an Afghan acting provincial governor whose assassination this week was claimed by Islamic State, the interior ministry said. Security has improved dramatically since the Taliban stormed back to power in August 2021, ousting the US-backed government and ending their two-decade insurgency, but the Islamic State group remains a threat.

An interior ministry statement said the blast at the funeral for the acting governor of northeastern Badkhashan province also injured more than 30 people as "a great number of compatriots" gathered for a mosque service honoring Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi. "The Ministry of Interior of the IEA condemns this brutality of the disgraced enemies," a statement said of the explosion in the provincial capital of Faizabad. "I was standing outside the mosque to receive the guests coming, suddenly a terrible sound shook the mosque," said witness Naseer Ahmad.

"When I entered the mosque, I saw bloodied dead bodies laying on the ground," the 37-year-old told AFP. An AFP journalist near the scene of the blast said Taliban government security forces had set up checkpoints around the funeral site in the morning. When the explosion rang out people fled into nearby streets, and shops closed in panic as security forces cordoned off the area. The AFP reporter saw 10 bodies on stretchers at a local hospital.

IS claimed responsibility for Ahmadi's killing on Tuesday, when a suicide bomber drove a car filled with explosives into his vehicle. The driver was also killed and six others were wounded in that attack, which also took place in Faizabad.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said on Twitter it "unequivocally condemns this and a recent spate of appalling and indiscriminate attacks that have shown a total disregard for civilian lives".

The Taliban and IS share an austere Islamist ideology but the latter have a more ambitious goal of establishing a global "caliphate". IS has emerged as the biggest security threat to the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan, who have pledged to prevent the nation from serving as a staging ground for international attacks. — AFP



## International

# Prosecutors tell Trump lawyers he is target of classified docs probe

'No one told me I'm being indicted, and I shouldn't be as I've done NOTHING wrong'

WASHINGTON: US prosecutors have told Donald Trump's lawyers that he is the target of a probe into his handling of classified documents after leaving the presidency, in a sign he might be indicted, US media reported Wednesday night. The notice came from the office of special counsel Jack Smith, The New York Times, CNN and other news outlets said, and gives the clearest sign yet that prosecutors are moving closer to charging the former president, who is seeking a return to the White House in 2024.

The Times, citing "two people familiar with the matter", said it was not clear when Trump's team had been told he was the subject of the investigation. Special counsel Smith, named by Attorney General Merrick Garland, has been looking into a cache of classified documents that Trump had stored at his Mar-a-Lago residence after leaving the White House.

The FBI carted away some 11,000 papers after serving a search warrant on Mar-a-Lago in August, and Trump could face obstruction-of-justice charges after spending months resisting efforts to recover the trove. Trump has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. "No one has told me I'm being indicted, and I shouldn't be because I've done NOTHING wrong," Trump posted on his Truth Social network Wednesday. "I have assumed for years that I am a Target of the WEAPONIZED DOJ & FBI," said Trump, who has already been indicted in a separate case. Investigators have been scrutinizing several suspected attempts to obstruct them from getting access to documents and footage from a security camera near the storeroom at Mar-a-Lago where documents were kept.

Trump has openly acknowledged taking and storing the documents, undermining his lawyers' suggestion that he took the stash inadvertently in the confusion of a chaotic departure. Meanwhile, investigators have obtained an audio recording of Trump in which he acknowledged he held onto a classified Pentagon document after he left the White House, according to US media. On Monday, US media also reported that Trump's lawyers met with Justice Department attorneys, John Rowley, James Trusty, and Lindsey Halligan



GRIMES: Former US President and 2024 Presidential hopeful Donald Trump arrives to a Team Trump Volunteer Leadership Training at the Grimes Community Center in Grimes, Iowa. — AFP

were seen by reporters arriving at the DOJ building in Washington but did not make any comment.

The Washington Post reported at the time that Trump's lawyers had come to make their case that their client should not face any charges. One expert told MSNBC that Wednesday's news would suggest an indictment is in the offing. "If a prosecutor tells you that you are the target of their investigation, it means they expect to indict you," former federal prosecutor Renato Mariotti said. "When I was on the other side of the aisle, when I was a federal prosecutor, when I told someone they were a target, that's what I meant."

### 'Dramatic and divisive'

Trump has also been charged with dozens of financial crimes as part of an alleged hush-money scheme to silence a porn star claiming she had sex with him, and is due to go on trial next March, in the middle of primary election season. The former president is facing a growing list of Republican primary opponents, including his former vice president Mike Pence, who avoided taking an absolute position when asked about the probe during a CNN town hall inter-

view Wednesday night. "Let me be clear that no one's above the law," Pence said. "I would just hope there would be a way for them to move forward without the dramatic and drastic and divisive step of indicting a former president of the United States," he added. Fellow 2024 candidate and former Arkansas governor Asa Hutchinson took a stronger tack, urging Trump to drop out of the presidential race. "Donald Trump is the target of an ongoing criminal investigation and he should step aside & put the good of the country above his candidacy," he tweeted Wednesday night.

In addition to the hush-money and documents probes, Trump is being investigated over his efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss in the southern state of Georgia and his involvement in the January 2021 storming of the US Capitol by his supporters.

Other politicians have been found to have kept government documents at their private homes in recent months. In January, Garland named a separate special counsel to examine whether President Joe Biden violated any law after the discovery of some classified documents at his former office and in the garage of his home in Wilmington, Delaware. — AFP

## Critics wary of 'toothless' EU ethics monitor plan

BRUSSELS: The EU on Thursday proposed a new ethics monitor as it grapples with the fallout of a European Parliament graft scandal, but the plan was called insufficient by critics. The long-awaited push to improve standards among politicians and bureaucrats in Brussels has been in the pipelines since it was pitched by European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen in 2019.

But it won fresh urgency after a high-profile probe into European Parliament bribery allegations against Qatar and Morocco, which have denied any wrongdoing. "Democracy in Europe can thrive only if people trust the institutions and such trust is not a given. We have to earn it," said EU values and transparency commissioner Vera Jourova. She called for the plan to be implemented "as soon as possible" ahead of European parliamentary elections next June. The new ethics body — which is expected to have just three employees — would be the first-ever covering the EU's main institutions, the European Council, commission and parliament.

The commission said binding "common standards for ethical conduct" will be set relating to the taking of gifts and hospitality from third parties, declaring assets and side jobs. But the proposal was savaged by EU lawmakers and activists for failing to give the body any investigative powers and the ability to punish wrongdoing.

The centrist Renew group in the parliament insisted it would not back the proposal for a "toothless ethics body". The Greens called the plan "underwhelming, underpowered and uninspired". "This proposal the Commission has put forward today is for a body that is not independent, will not have investigatory powers and will not be able to sanction breaches of ethics rules," said German MEP Daniel Freund. Gaby Bischoff, from the Socialists and Democrats group, called it a "complete missed opportunity". The clamor for tougher policing of EU officials and politicians comes in the wake of the so-called Qatargate scandal that has rattled faith in the bloc.

The probe into alleged influence peddling at the European Parliament exploded into the public domain when Belgian police arrested suspects and netted over 1.5 million (\$1.6 million) euros in cash in December. It centres on accusations that Qatar and Morocco sought to buy off MEPs to tilt the parliament's discussions in their favor. The two countries deny any involvement in wrongdoing, as do three socialist MEPs implicated by the Belgian authorities.

Transparency International said the "watered-down" proposal "would not be able to clean up the mess left by Qatargate". "This proposed ethics body reinforces the EU's business-as-usual, self-policing approach to misconduct," the NGO's deputy director for Europe Nicholas Aiossa said. "If the EU is to be serious about combating corruption within its own ranks, it must ensure that any independent oversight body has the power and resources to investigate and sanction members engaged in wrongdoing." — AFP

## Zionist entity demolishes home of Palestinian bomber

RAMALLAH: Zionist troops on Thursday demolished the West Bank home of a Palestinian accused of carrying out twin bombings in Jerusalem last November that killed two Zionists, including a teenager.

The army used explosives to make the first floor apartment in Ramallah where Aslam Faroukh lived uninhabitable, an AFP journalist reported. Faroukh was arrested in December and accused of carrying out the November 23 bombings at Jerusalem bus stops that killed a 15-year-old Zionist-Canadian and a Jew in his 50s. They were the first bombings to have targeted Zionist civilians since 2016.

"The home was demolished after an appeal to the Supreme Court against the demolition was rejected," the army said in a statement. Clashes erupted when troops entered Ramallah late Wednesday to carry out the demolition, an AFP correspondent reported, with Palestinians hurling rocks at Zionist military vehicles. The Palestinian health ministry said that 35 people were wounded during the incursion. The Zionist army said it had responded to "violent unrest" with "riot dispersal means". "It was a long night, from 11 pm, (2000 GMT) until morning," said Um Mohammed

Faroukh, a relative who lives in the area. "There was tear gas and young men were injured." Moamen Sumreen, 22, a Palestinian journalist who was converging the Zionist raid, was seriously wounded after being hit in the head by a rubber bullet, his family told AFP. His uncle Mohammed Sumreen, also a journalist, said they had been among a group of reporters watching events unfold from the roof of a nearby building. "Throughout the coverage, the soldiers were shining laser lights on us, targeting us with gas bombs and firing live bullets in our direction," he said.

"Moamen wanted to change his position, he stood up and was directly hit by a bullet in the area under the ear," he said, noting that Sumreen was wearing a jacket marked "press" when he came under fire. The Zionist army said that the incident was "under review". Originally from Zionist-annexed east Jerusalem, where he held a Zionist residency permit, Faroukh had lived in Ramallah for some years. According to the army, he is alleged to have acted alone, "identifying with the Daesh (Islamic State group) organization".

Zionist entity, which has occupied the West Bank since 1967, routinely demolishes the homes of individuals it blames for deadly attacks on Zionists. Human rights activists say the policy 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. Faroukh's mother, Um Aslam, told AFP that the demolition would only "increase their hatred and (desire for) revenge." — AFP



RAMALLAH: Palestinian municipality workers inspect the damage to the house of Islam Faroukh, a Palestinian charged for the Jerusalem twin bombings in November 2022 that killed two people, after it was demolished by Zionist forces in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank on June 8, 2023. — AFP

## Saadoun to contest speaker's post...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the constitutional court received on Thursday the first challenge to the 2023 parliamentary elections. More petitions are expected, especially related to claims about the counting of votes. Former MP Obaid Al-Wasmi said on Thursday he will not challenge the results of elections even if he gets a document proving he

has won a seat. Wasmi lost the election on Wednesday.

Lawyer Hani Hussein filed the challenge, claiming that an Amiri decree allowing voters to vote on the basis of their residential addresses specified in their civil IDs is not in line with the constitution. The constitutional court on March 19 annulled the entire 2022 parliamentary elections and the parliament on the basis of a petition challenging the legality of the Amiri decree that dissolved the 2020 National Assembly. The court in 2012 nullified two elections and scrapped both parliaments on the basis of "illegal" decrees. Many MPs have demanded to amend a law governing the constitutional court to limit its powers in nullifying parliamentary elections.

bon emissions. But it has also reduced the air pollution that shields Earth from the full force of the Sun's rays.

Particle pollution from all sources dampens warming by about half-a-degree Celsius, which means — at least in the short term — more of that heat will reach the planet's surface as the air becomes cleaner. Published in the peer-reviewed journal Earth System Science Data, the new study is the first in a series of periodic assessments that will help fill the gaps between IPCC reports, released on average every six years since 1988.

"An annual update of key indicators of global change is critical in helping the international community and countries to keep the urgency of addressing the climate change crisis at the top of the agenda," said co-author and scientist Maisa Rojas Corradi, who is also the environment minister of Chile. Co-author Valerie Masson-Delmotte, a co-chair of the 2021 IPCC report, said the new data should be a "wake-up call" ahead of the COP28 summit, even if there is evidence that the increase in greenhouse gases has slowed. "The pace and scale of climate action is not sufficient to limit the escalation of climate related risks," she said.

Researchers also reported a startling rise in temperature increases over land areas — excluding oceans — since 2000. "Land average annual maximum temperatures have warmed by more than half a degree Celsius in the last ten years (1.72C above preindustrial conditions) compared to the first decade of the millennium (1.22C)," the study reported. Longer and more intense heat waves will pose a life-and-death threat in the coming decades across large swathes of South and Southeast Asia, along with areas straddling the equator in Africa and Latin America, recent research has shown. — AFP

## Kuwait playing vital role...

Continued from Page 1

fuel an IS revival. Despite repeated calls for their repatriation, foreign governments have allowed only a trickle to return home, fearing security threats and domestic political backlash.

Blinken applauded countries that have brought home their nationals from Syria, urging other nations to follow suit. "Repatriation is critical" to reduce populations of large informal camps such as Syria's Al-Hol, which houses 10,000 foreigners, including IS relatives, he said. "Failure to repatriate foreign terrorist fighters risks the possibility that they could again take up arms and attempt to restore" the IS proto-state, he added.

The anti-IS coalition was formed in 2014 following the jihadists' lightning advance that saw reports of atrocities multiply as they overran non-Muslim as well as Muslim areas. Despite its territorial defeat, IS

militants continue to conduct attacks against civilians and security forces in both Iraq and Syria. The United Nations estimates that IS still has 5,000 to 7,000 loyalists across the two countries, roughly half of whom are fighters.

Fellow coalition member Britain will pledge more than \$109 million over the next five years to support stabilization efforts in Iraq and Kurdish-controlled northeastern Syria, its foreign ministry said. This comes on top of \$19.9 million in aid over the next two years to specifically address acute humanitarian needs in northeastern Syria, it added.

Thursday's coalition meeting came a day after Blinken told diplomats from Gulf Cooperation Council countries that the US remains "deeply invested" in Gulf partnerships. The US secretary of state flew into Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, kickstarting a visit aimed at boosting ties with its longtime ally, which has begun forging closer relations with Washington's rivals. Relations with Riyadh have been strained in recent times, mainly over human rights and oil, after US pleas for help in bringing down skyrocketing prices last year were dismissed. — Agencies

## World warming at record 0.2C...

Continued from Page 1

at 1.5C warming, the carbon budget" — the amount of greenhouse gases humanity can emit without exceeding that limit — "will likely be exhausted in only a few years," said lead author Piers Forster, a physics professor at the University of Leeds.

That budget has shrunk by half since the UN's climate science advisory body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), gathered data for its most recent benchmark report in 2021, according to the Forster and colleagues, many of whom were core IPCC contributors. To have even a coin-toss chance of staying under the 1.5C threshold, emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other drivers of warming generated mostly by burning fossil fuels must not exceed 250 billion tons (Gt), they reported.

Bettering the odds to two-thirds or four-fifths would reduce that carbon allowance to only 150 Gt and 100 Gt, respectively — a two- or three-year lifeline at the current rate of emissions. Keeping the Paris temperature targets in play would require slashing CO2 pollution at least 40 percent by 2030, and eliminating it entirely by mid-century, the IPCC has calculated.

Ironically, one of the big climate success stories of the last decade has inadvertently hastened the pace of global warming, the new data reveal. A gradual drop in the use of coal — significantly more carbon intensive than oil or gas — to produce power has slowed the increase in car-

## Canada wildfires shroud New York...

Continued from Page 1

More than 11,000 people have already been evacuated in Quebec, and another 4,000 were expected to flee by the end of Wednesday, said the province's Premier Francois Legault.

Biden spoke with Trudeau on Wednesday and offered "additional support to respond to the devastating and historic wildfires," according to the White House. Trudeau said he had thanked Biden, tweeting: "These fires are affecting everyday routines, lives and livelihoods, and our air quality. 'We'll keep working... to tackle climate change and address its impacts.'"

Scientists have warned that rising temperatures are increasing the risk of extreme weather, including the hot, dry spells that often fan wildfires. White

House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said the situation was an "alarming example of the ways in which the climate crisis is disturbing our lives". IQAir.com, which tracks air quality around the world, said New York — normally known for blue skies — was enduring the worst air quality index (AQI) of any major city in the world, New York is normally outside the 3,000 worst cities for pollution, according to the website.

Hugh Hill, a 43-year-old lawyer, said his throat had been stinging from the harmful haze, which he likened to the smell of a wood-burning fire. Like many New Yorkers, he chose to cover his face while out walking his dog in Central Park, normally Manhattan's green lung. AirNow, another monitor, said the Big Apple's AQI reached a hazardous level of 413 at 5 pm (2100 GMT), just short of the scale's maximum of 500. NASA scientist Ryan Stauffer told AFP that New York had broken its previous AQI high, set 21 years ago. New York state Governor Kathy Hochul called it an "emergency crisis" that could last several days. — AFP



## International

# Ex-Pakistan PM Khan granted new bail as army vows to 'tighten noose'

## Army holds undue influence over Pakistan politics

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan had his bail renewed in over a dozen cases Thursday, a month after his three-day detention sparked violence, thousands of arrests, and the resignations of much of his party's leadership. The 70-year-old former international cricket star, facing more than 150 cases registered against him since his ousting in April last year, appeared at two courts in the capital, Islamabad.

"Imran Khan is granted bail till June 19 in eight cases registered against him under the anti-terrorism legislation," one of his lawyers, Sher Afzal Marwat, told AFP. Gohar Khan, another lawyer, said a different court had extended bail in nine other cases. His arrest and detention following a court appearance last month sparked nationwide protests — including a mob torching the residence of a senior army commander.

Pakistan has been mired in economic and political crisis for over a year, with little respite expected ahead of an election that must be held by mid-October. Khan appeared to be riding a wave of popularity towards those polls, holding huge rallies across the country, sweeping a string of by-elections, and vilifying authorities in addresses to the nation broadcast nightly on social media.

But the violence following his arrest — particularly targeting military installations — led to a sweeping crackdown that threatens his political survival and that of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

The army holds undue influence over Pakistan politics, having staged at least three successful coups

leading to decades of martial law. Late Wednesday, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) — the military's publicity wing — vowed to tighten "the noose of law" around those involved in violence.

Following a meeting of the army's top commanders, a statement said the "ill design of inimical forces will be dealt with iron hands". Thousands have already been arrested, with some facing trial by military courts — a process condemned by local and international rights groups.

Khan denies inciting the violence and says attacks against military targets were "black ops" to give authorities an excuse to arrest him and outlaw his party. "I want to tell my nation that I am ready to face jail... I will never bow down to this unfair and autocratic regime," he said Wednesday in his latest address broadcast on YouTube.

"I also request you not to bow down, as the moment you succumb to this unjust and autocratic rule, the existence of our nation will be jeopardized."

Mass resignations have left Khan increasingly isolated at his home in the eastern city of Lahore, from where he ventures out only for court appearances. Late Wednesday several senior politicians who quit PTI in recent weeks announced the formation of a new party, Istehkam-e-Pakistan — the Pakistan Stability party.

Khan's latest court appearance comes a day before the government is due to present its 2023-24 budget before the national assembly. The cash-strapped government is also set to present its economic survey for 2022-23 later Thursday, but details leaked to local media show it missed



ISLAMABAD: Security personnel with ballistic shields escort Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan at the High Court on June 8, 2023. — AFP

every key growth target for the year.

GDP growth was just 0.3 percent against a target of five percent, while industrial output, agriculture and exports all fell well short of targets. Pakistan's

year-on-year inflation hit a record 37.97 percent in May, official data revealed last week, with the nation on the brink of economic collapse and crucial IMF bailout talks stalled. — AFP

## Afghan valley proud of its young suicide bombers

TANGI VALLEY: Taliban-trained suicide bomber Ismail Ashuqullah regrets missing the chance to blow himself up at the height of the Afghan war — like many other young men from the lush green Tangi Valley.

He had fought for eight years with the Taliban against US-led foreign forces and Afghan government troops before joining a special brigade trained for suicide missions. But the withdrawal of foreign troops in 2021 and the collapse of the Western-backed government meant he missed his chance.

"When I was informed by my superiors that I had to join the battalion, I was delighted that God had chosen me. I felt a lot of joy," says 25-year-old newlywed Ashuqullah, his eyes lined with kohl. "I was doing jihad, but it didn't satisfy me. So I thought I had to carry out an operation that could satisfy the hearts of Muslims around the world, and mine too."

Ashuqullah, spoke with AFP in the presence of his father and Taliban intelligence agents in Tangi Valley, a mountainous region of east Afghanistan where locals are proud of the young men sent to their deaths in the name of jihad.

In Islam, the Arabic term "jihad" is used to describe a wide range of religious struggles, ranging from the private spiritual realm to waging actual combat. Under their austere interpretation of Islam, Taliban leaders told their fighters that suicide attacks were the ultimate form of jihad.

"Obviously the role of the Isteshhadi Mujahideen (suicide fighters) was prominent," said Bilal Karimi, spokesman for the

current Taliban authorities. "All the forces of the Islamic Emirate, especially these Mujahideen, fought with their national and Islamic spirit."

### 'Reduce their bones to ashes'

After ousting the first Taliban regime in 2001, the United States and its NATO allies fought a two-decade war against the insurgents to prop up the Western-backed Afghan government. Tangi valley, home to at least 22,000 people, was mostly under Taliban control through much of that war, and was targeted by foreign forces because of its strategic position some 70 kilometres (40 miles) from the capital.

American forces occupied a base overlooking the valley between 2009 and 2011, and troops regularly carried out night raids in their search for Taliban members. They stormed homes where women lived in seclusion — a huge dishonor according to local custom — breeding anger among Afghans. "We had no weapons to compete with, so we saw fit to equip ourselves with explosives and enter the places sheltering the infidels to break their jaws and reduce their bones to ashes," said Abdul Wahab Siraj, another suicide volunteer. "We were so crazy about the love of Allah that life had no importance for us... We were trying to get closer to him as soon as possible through martyrdom."

### Leader's son sacrificed

Suicide attacks became a trademark of the Taliban — effective not only in causing mass casualties but also for garnering publicity and fostering widespread fear. The Taliban claim foreign fighters and Afghan troops were always the target, but civilians made up the largest proportion of victims — including women and children.

According to a report by the United Nations' mission in Afghanistan, in 2019



TANGI VALLEY: Taliban-trained suicide bomber Ismail Ashuqullah (L) speaks with Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) after an interview with AFP in Otari village in Tangi valley of Saydabad district, Maidan Wardak province. — AFP

alone there were 1,499 civilian casualties from suicide attacks claimed by the Taliban. Attacks ranged from lone bombers in suicide vests targeting convoys of foreign forces to complex missions against military installations involving explosive-laden cars and gunmen impersonating police.

The son of Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada blew himself up in one such attack. The bombers were usually young men, and conditioned to believe they were superior to the rest of society, said Michael Semple, a professor at the Peace and Security Institute at Queen's University in Ireland.

### 'Congratulations, your son died'

During the indoctrination phase "they are encouraged to believe that this world in which we live today is fundamentally unimportant" and that "glory is in martyrdom", he said.

In the Tangi Valley, 60-year-old Mir

Aslam Amiri — who fought against the Soviet invasion in the 1980s — speaks with intense pride of his 20-year-old son Najeebullah's "success" as a suicide bomber. "When he graduated from the madrasa, I told him, 'Son! Go and start the jihad... The infidels have occupied our country so you should do jihad now,'" he told AFP. He claims to have never seen his son as happy as the day he left to complete his mission in 2014. As news reached him of the death of his son, he told his wife Amina: "Congratulations, your son died a martyr."

Hiding her face behind a long white veil and sitting under her husband's watchful gaze, she concurs. "He did a very honorable job at such a young age," she said, adding he had decided to become a bomber after being beaten by American troops who raided the family home. "He went with my permission but the memory of him affects me a lot." — AFP

## Fighting rages at Sudan military site facility

KHARTOUM: Sudanese army soldiers and paramilitaries fought for control of a military facility Thursday in Khartoum where a fire raged at an oil and gas facility, witnesses said. The battles came a day after the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) announced in a statement they had wrestled "full control" of the Yarmouk weapons manufacturing and arms depot complex.

Witnesses speaking to AFP from southern Khartoum said they heard the "sound of gunfire and clashes" around the complex, the most important military industrial facility in the country. The RSF claimed that soldiers had fled the site, leaving behind large quantities of military equipment and vehicles.

The paramilitaries also posted videos online purportedly showing their fighters inside the facility, celebrating. Weapons, including machine guns, and large quantities of ammunition could be seen in the background. Sudan has been embroiled in a deadly conflict since mid-April, when fighting erupted between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan against his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo — commonly known as Hemeiti — who commands the RSF.

Violence has spread across the country, most notably in the western region of Darfur, which is home to around a quarter of Sudan's population and has never recovered from a devastating two-decade war that left hundreds of thousands dead and more than two million displaced.

The fire at the Al-Shajara oil and gas facility near Yarmouk broke out overnight Wednesday to Thursday, witnesses said. It was not immediately clear what started the fire but residents said they heard a loud



KHARTOUM: Smoke plumes billow from a fire at a lumber warehouse in southern Khartoum amidst on-going fighting on June 7, 2023. — AFP

explosion at the facility, around which fierce fighting has been underway for the past couple of days.

Plumes of smoke still rose from the site on Thursday morning and could be seen from as far as 10 kilometres (six miles) away. Since fighting broke out in Sudan on April 15, more than 1,800 people have been killed, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

Nearly two million people have been displaced by the conflict, according to the latest UN figures, including 476,000 who have sought refuge in neighboring countries. Talks mediated by Saudi Arabia and the United States broke down, and multiple ceasefires have failed to take hold.

Last week, Washington slapped sanctions on the warring generals accusing both sides for the "appalling bloodshed" after the latest truce collapsed and the army pulled out of ceasefire talks altogether.

In October 2012, Sudan accused Israel of being behind a blast at the Yarmouk facility, leading to speculation that Iranian weapons were stored or manufactured there. Israel at that time refused to comment on Sudan's accusation. — AFP

## Internet blackout in Guinea fuels suspicions of junta

DAKAR: A blackout that hit parts of the internet in the West African state of Guinea has fuelled suspicions that the ruling junta pulled the plug to undermine a protest movement. Over several days last month, online problems wiped out access to WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok — the most popular platforms with Guineans, more than half of whom are under 20 — while many websites were either down or working at glacial speed.

"Communications were impossible," said Nuhou Balde, founder of the online news site Guinee-Matin. "From May 8 our readers started to complain they couldn't read our content. The overwhelming majority are in Guinea — more than 60 percent — so we've lost a lot of readership and partnerships."

Connections have since been largely restored, but accusations are spreading of cyber censorship, something the ruling military denies. An influential bloggers' association, Ablogui, condemned the authorities for using "retrograde methods" that it said were linked to protests against junta leader Colonel Mamady Doumbouya. Several people died in clashes with the security forces.

The chronically unstable state has been run by the army since 2021, when President Alpha Conde, the country's first freely elected leader, was overthrown. The junta has promised, in the face of international pressure, to restore civilian rule by the end of 2024, purportedly to give it enough time to carry out institutional reforms.

But it has arrested a number of opposition leaders and launched prosecutions against others after last year banning all demonstrations. It has also vowed to close any media that contributes to "undermining national unity" or "stirring up (Guineans) against each other." The first major problems with internet connections coincided

with a protest call on May 17. The government spoke of a "breakdown" that "caused capacity restrictions."

### 'Localized disruptions'

Some media linked it to a fault in the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) fibre-optic submarine cable system, the only one serving the country.

But the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI), a global NGO that monitors internet censorship, published data showing "a blockage" in Guinea between May 17-23 that specifically targeted certain platforms, not the entire network.

Another monitor, London-based NetBlocks, said there was no problem with the ACE cable and evidence pointed to "a government decision." During the 2020 elections, the internet was completely cut off, Isik Mater, research director at Netblocks, told AFP.

"But this time, we have localized disruptions, targeting in particular the most popular platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. Twitter, for example, which is not widely used in Guinea, has been virtually unaffected," she continued.

NetBlocks also noted that certain internet operators in Guinea "such as Mouna and VDC Telecom have not been affected, even though they source their supplies from the same upstream location". On May 23, private media and online outlets in the country held a one-day boycott of news over the restrictions and at the closure of two radio stations owned by the Afric Vision group.

Restricting access to the internet is a favorite tool of repressive regimes, say watchdogs. US-based democracy watchdog Freedom House, in its 2022 World Report, found that free access to the internet had declined for the twelfth consecutive year.

The sharpest declines were recorded in Russia, Myanmar, Sudan and Libya. In addition to infrastructure barriers, Freedom House noted that these restrictions can result from "government decisions to shut down connectivity or block specific applications." Among African countries, Cameroon and Uganda in 2021 and Nigeria and Sierra Leone in 2022 are recent cases of blocking. — AFP



# Business

FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023

## Small yet mighty: Say hello to fully electric Volvo EX30 small SUV!

EX30 will help us capture growing demand for fully electric cars



**KUWAIT:** As a small SUV that does big Volvo things, our new fully electric Volvo EX30 is designed to be as safe as you'd expect from us. It is designed to have the smallest CO2 footprint of any Volvo car to date, and to make people's lives safer, more convenient and more enjoyable through cutting-edge technology and Scandinavian design.

Revealed to the world today in Milan, Italy and available to order now in selected markets, the EX30 is our first small premium SUV and expands our constantly growing, all-electric offering to four models. As the market is rapidly moving towards full electrification, the EX30 will help us capture growing demand for fully electric cars in a fast-growing segment.

What's more, the attractive pricing of the EX30 – which starts at around EUR 36,000 – means our customers get a premium all-electric SUV for a similar price as an internal combustion engine-powered equivalent. The EX30 will also be available with our Care by Volvo subscription package, with its set pricing and transparent ordering process, making ordering one a breeze.

"The fully electric EX30 might be our smallest ever SUV, but it's a big deal for our customers and a big deal for us as a company," said Jim Rowan, our chief executive. "We like to say the EX30 is small yet mighty, because it delivers on everything you'd want from a Volvo but in a smaller package. Like any Volvo, it's an outstanding product which is safe and designed around people and their needs."

The EX30 embodies all of our design values in a smaller format. A long wheelbase, large wheels and equal overhangs bring balance and refinement to the exterior. It's distinctly electric, with a confident face, closed shield and a digital rendition of the Thor's Hammer headlights. Five vibrant exterior colours, from stylish Cloud Blue to bright and expressive Moss Yellow – the latter inspired by lichen growing on rocks along the Swedish west coast – give it character and personality.

### Battery tech that suits your needs

So let's talk about our battery technology. First of all, there's no such thing as simply 'a battery' when we discuss powertrains. Instead, we're giving you the freedom to choose the battery technology that best suits your needs, offering the EX30 with three powertrain options and two different battery types, which also allows us to offer an attractive entry price point for the EX30.

If you spend most of your time in the city or tend to travel shorter distances between charges, we're offering a single-motor option with an LFP battery. The LFP standard-range battery, which uses lithium iron phosphate chemistry, is more cost-effective and less resource-intensive to produce, meaning it is the best option if you don't need maximum range.

If you prefer to maximise range, the Single Motor Extended Range variant with an NMC extended-range battery is your EX30 of choice. The NMC battery features lithium, nickel, manganese and cobalt, and produces its energy more efficiently than the LFP variant. This single-motor, extended range option gives you a range of up to 480km between charges.

Finally, if performance is your priority, pick the Twin Motor Performance variant in which we pair the NMC battery with an additional second e-motor. This all-wheel drive variant of the EX30 provides 315kW (428hp) and takes you from 0-100 km/h in 3.6 seconds – it's officially our fastest-accelerating car ever!

Another thing the EX30 does fast is charging. The extended-range Twin Motor variant has a charging capacity of up to 153kW, while the standard-range car has a capacity of 134kW. That means you can charge your battery from 10 to 80 per cent in a little over 25 minutes. Through the car's centre display and app, you can set the amperage, maximum charging level and when you want to start charging.

To support the best possible driving experience, we've tuned the chassis of the EX30 to make the most of the car's compact dimensions. Its low centre of grav-



ity, as well as its relatively low and evenly distributed weight are complemented by ease of driving and nimbleness in the city and beyond.

### Smaller carbon footprint, yet a big safety impact

As we wrote in earlier blogposts, the EX30 is designed to have the lowest carbon footprint of any Volvo car to date and represents an important step forward for our sustainability ambitions. By tackling emissions across the entire production and lifecycle, as well as a considerate use of materials inside and out, we managed to reduce its total carbon footprint over 200,000 kms of driving to below 30 tonnes.

The EX30 is also designed to be as safe as you'd expect from a Volvo and aims to look after both you and others in hectic urban environments. For example, it includes as standard a special safety feature for bikes that helps to prevent so-called 'dooring' accidents, by alerting you when you are about to open your door in front of a cyclist, scooter or runner.

Our protective safety technology further illustrates how we've applied our high safety standards to our new small SUV. It contains state-of-the-art restraint technology, as well as top-notch structural design that fulfills our ambitious in-house safety requirements – designed to prepare our cars for various real-world scenarios.

The EX30 also aims to make your life more convenient, more relaxing and more enjoyable inside the car through cutting-edge tech and considerate Scandinav-



vian interior design. You can choose from four distinct interior rooms, each with their own expression, while there are smart storage options throughout the cabin. Together with a contextual single-screen UX, with Google built-in and running the latest version of our infotainment system, these features all reflect the hallmarks of true Volvo design. Speaking of cutting-edge tech: the Volvo EX30 is our first car to include a new generation of our popular Park Pilot Assist feature. It can handle all types of parking spaces, including parallel, curved, perpendicular and diagonal fishbone-style, making parking in tight spaces a breeze.

The new Park Pilot Assist will identify any available parking spots around you. Then, once you've tapped the one you want in the new 3D user interface, the feature will operate the throttle and brake as well as the steering. While you supervise the parking process, the screen shows the distance to objects such as cars, walls and bollards in metric or imperial figures.

As with any Volvo car, for the EX30 we've worked closely with tech partners such as Google, Apple and Qualcomm to deliver the best possible user experience. We've also worked closely with ECARX through our jointly owned HalexTek software joint venture to deliver the best possible infotainment platform for our customers.

### A sense of calm

Of course, the EX30 will also come with a digital key functionality which is both convenient for you and

makes it easy to share the car with others. Built on the advanced UWB and CCC industry standards, our technology will be compatible with a wide range of phone brands and models.

The car's dedicated app contains all relevant services related to the car, from charging to finding your car on a busy parking lot, locking it and heating it on a cold winter day. The EX30 is also prepared to receive software updates over the air that will make it better over time.

As if that wasn't enough, the Volvo EX30 also comes with a choice of five different ambient lighting themes. Each is inspired by a different Scandinavian landscape and subtly shifting in colour, adding a sense of calm to the interior.

Whether you prefer the warm sunlight falling through the leaves of a Scandinavian forest, a sunset on the Swedish west coast, the world famous northern lights, the golden summer skies of Swedish midsummer or the bright mood of an urban sunset, your EX30 will be filled with the colours of your choice. For extra immersion, you can pair each lighting theme with an ambient soundscape.

### Zooming across the country in style

Finally, we've got a surprise for you. Starting next year, our EX30 will also become available as a Cross Country variant. Order books for this special version of our small electric SUV will open in 2024, with production expected to start later that year.

The Volvo EX30 Cross Country will build on our long Cross Country heritage, our celebrated line-up of models for customers who want a bit more adventure from their car. It'll come with a range of bespoke features, such as more ground clearance, 19-inch black wheels and the option of 18-inch wheels with bespoke tyres.

When you take your EX30 Cross Country off the beaten path, it will be recognisable by its skidplates on the front, rear and side, special black panels on the front bumper and bootlid, and stylish Cross Country branding – the small, hood-mounted Swedish flag is the cherry on top.

### The small print

- The Volvo EX30 is available for order as of today across Europe and other selected markets. In the United States, customers can place pre-orders, while order-books will open in other markets at a later stage that will be communicated in due course.

- The carbon footprint calculation of below 30 tonnes over 200,000 kms of driving is based on usage of charging electricity from the EU27 electricity mix. The lowest carbon footprint of any Volvo car to date statement relates to globally available products over 200,000 kms of driving.

- Charging times are dependent on factors such as outdoor temperature, current battery temperature, charging equipment, battery condition and car condition.

- Range according to the realistic WLTP driving cycle under controlled conditions for a new car. Real-world range may vary. Figures are based on preliminary target.

- Digital key functionality subject to phone compatibility. UWB-based technology is scheduled to be rolled out next year via an over-the-air software update.

- Features and services may not be available in all markets and will not be standard in all markets or for all models.

### Volvo Cars in 2022

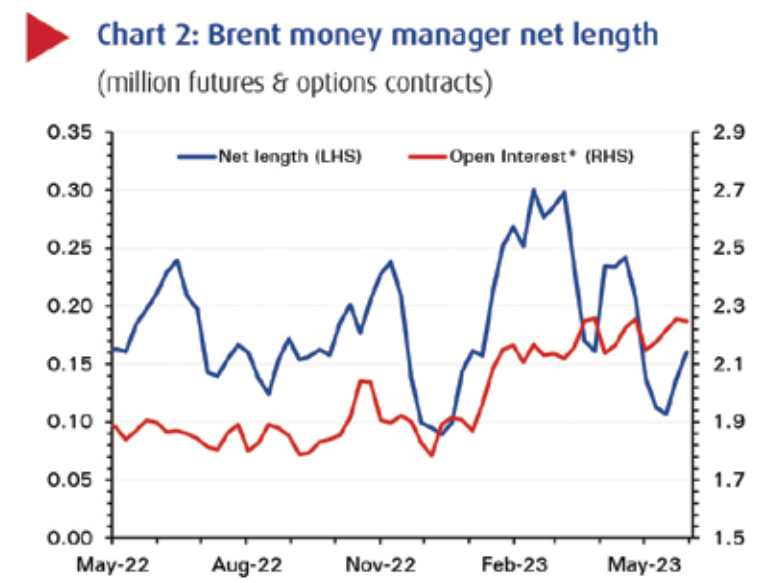
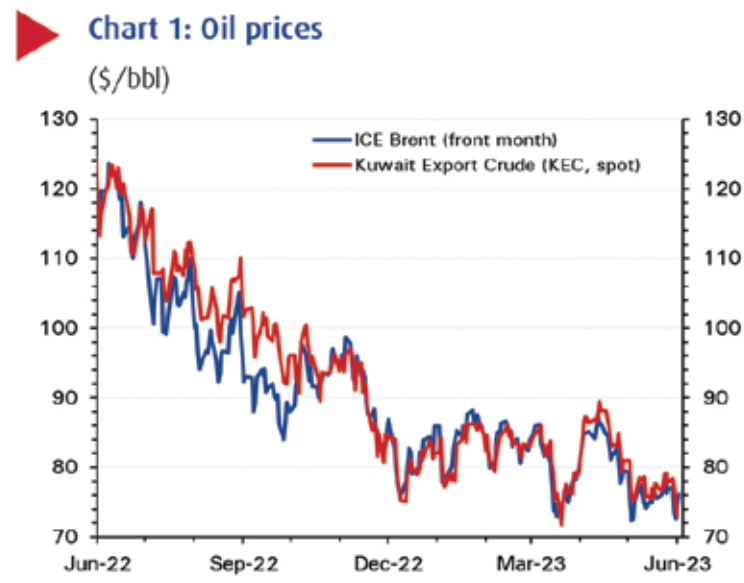
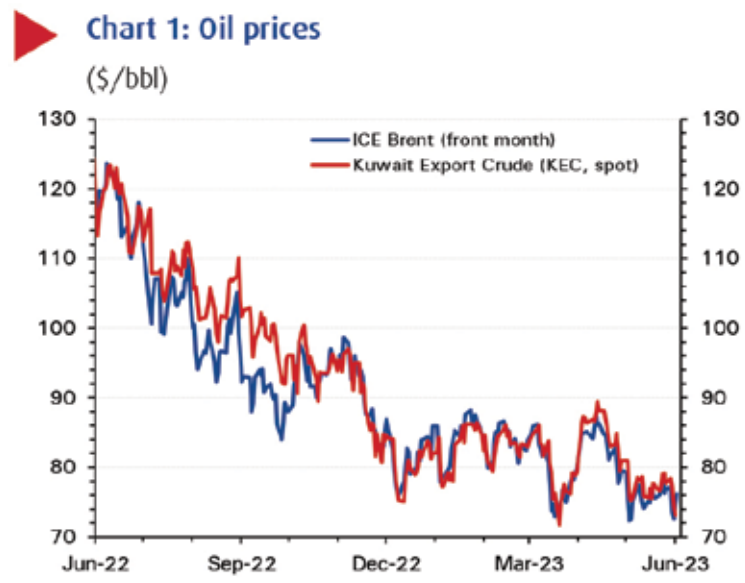
For the full year 2022, Volvo Car Group recorded an operating profit of SEK 22.3 billion. Revenue in 2022 amounted to SEK 330.1 billion, while global sales reached 615,121 cars.





Business

NBK Economic Report



# Saudi cuts output at OPEC+ meet in bid to support prices amid softer demand

KUWAIT: At the recently concluded OPEC+ ministerial meeting, after two days of intense negotiations, Saudi Arabia surprised with its announcement of an additional, unilateral crude production cut of 1 mb/d next month. The move adds to an agreement by OPEC+ to extend existing production cuts of around 3.6 mb/d, including at least 1.2 mb/d of voluntary cuts, beyond 2023 to end-2024. Also notable is the UAE's securing of a 200 kb/d increase to its reference baseline for 2024 to reflect its increased production capacity. This was possible only after several OPEC+ members including Angola and Nigeria, acquiesced to an offsetting reduction in their baselines to reflect a decline in their own production capacities. Assuming no change to OPEC+ policy, therefore, as things stand, the only source of incremental supply in 2024 from OPEC+ will come from the UAE.

In the run up to the OPEC+ meeting, anticipation had been building that production cuts would be back on the table after prices dropped in May and after Saudi Prince Abdulaziz bemoaned the influence of short sellers on the market, warning them to "watch out". Markets took this as a thinly veiled signal about impending production cuts.

May's oil price drop was the fifth monthly fall in succession as fears of an economic slowdown in the US and EU, exacerbated in recent weeks by concerns over the US debt ceiling, combined with tighter global monetary policy and weaker-than expected Chinese economic data to leave the oil bears in the ascendancy. Resilient Russian oil flows and oil stock-builds in the US fed into the narrative of an oil market that was

still fairly well supplied. By May's close, international benchmark Brent crude had fallen 8.6% to \$72.7/bbl (-15.4% ytd), a shade above the year-low of \$72.4/bbl it had set earlier in the month. These are price levels last seen in December 2021. Local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) fell by a similar amount in May to close the month at \$74.4 (-8.1% m/m; -9.3% ytd).

Reflecting expectations in the run-up to the OPEC+ meeting, money manager net length for Brent crude (the difference between the number of contracts betting on prices rising and those betting on falls) increased to its highest in a month (160k contracts), with three times as many 'longs' as 'shorts'. This is something of a minor turnaround after net length sank to a five-month low of 106k contracts in mid-May.

The global macroeconomic and oil demand landscape remains uncertain. Earlier optimistic expectations of a post-pandemic surge in China's economic activity, one that would help compensate for lackluster OECD consumption and lift the global economy, have had to be restrained amid a spate of weaker-than-expected economic indicators. OECD commercial oil inventories have also gained during IQ23 to stand at 4.0 billion barrels by end-March, although the quarterly increase of 35 mb is slight.

Nevertheless, the International Energy Agency (IEA) and others continue to view China's potential this year as positive. Indeed, China's growth outlook remains central to the IEA's repeated, upward revisions to its 2023 oil demand growth estimates: From an annual average of 1.86 mb/d in January to 2.2 mb/d in the most recent, May forecast. The IEA sees the market tighten-

ing markedly in 2H23, with oil demand growth averaging 2.5 mb/d/y and market balances slipping further into deficit (excess of demand over supply) of as much as 2 mb/d in 4Q23.

On the supply side, OPEC secondary source data showed total OPEC production trending lower again in April (-188 kb/d m/m) to 28.6 mb/d. Continued disruptions to the Iraqi-Kurdish pipeline to Turkey's Ceyhan terminal and a workers' strike in Nigeria offset somewhat surprising output increases in Saudi Arabia (+95 kb/d) and Angola (+79 kb/d). Meanwhile, according to S&P Global, oil production in the 9-member OPEC+ group (excluding Mexico), led by Russia, declined marginally in April to 13.4 mb/d (-10 kb/d). Taken together, the figures show total OPEC+ output (excluding Libya, Iran, Venezuela, and Mexico) falling in April to 37.5mb/d (-246 kb/d), exacerbating the supply shortfall (relative to OPEC+ targets) to 2.6 mb/d. When May's OPEC+ output data is published later in June, the group's aggregate production is expected to decline by a further 1.1 mb/d as Saudi, Kuwait and others implement their additional voluntary production cuts.


Russian output, meanwhile, was stable at 9.6 mb/d, with only about half of the voluntary production cut of 500 kb/d that the country said it would undertake from March having been implemented. Indeed, despite sanctions and price caps, Russian oil exports (crude and refined products) have increased to a post-invasion high (8.3 mb/d), the IEA noted, with Russia likely diverting supplies intended for domestic consumption to the overseas market instead in order to boost revenues. China and India especially have shown a voracious

appetite for discounted Russian crude, pressuring the market share of traditional West African and even Middle Eastern crude oil suppliers.

Kuwait's crude production in April was steady at 2.68mb/d, according to official sources. Voluntary output cuts of 128 kb/d took effect in May. With crude oil output lowered due to OPEC+ policy and the country's newly-commissioned 615 kb/d Al-Zour oil refinery hungry for additional crude supplies as it ramps up refinery throughputs (the third and final crude distillation unit is due by late summer), state oil operator KPC may opt to re-route domestic crude destined for the export market. Kuwait's refined product exports, which will be increasingly composed of low Sulphur fuel oil and gas-oil/diesel, were up at 957 kb/d in February, a fifth consecutive monthly increase. Kuwait's refining capacity will stand at 1.4 mb/d, the second largest in the region behind Saudi Arabia.

US crude production, meanwhile, has been range-bound this year, seemingly unable to increase beyond 12.3 mb/d (+200 kb/d), in US Energy Information Administration (EIA) data. With shale well productivity gains limited, the persistent decline in US oil rig counts, down 10.6% to 555 so in 2023, would seem to suggest that US output growth may be less than anticipated.

It remains to be seen whether Saudi's unilateral production cut will see oil prices rising above \$80/bbl and holding at a new, higher level. Market fundamentals will almost certainly tighten further in 2H23 as a result, causing an acceleration in stock draw downs. Barring a precipitous decline in oil demand due to recession for example, we expect prices to firm in 2H23.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 8 JUNE 2023

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	919	932	938	919	19	21,563,956	15	1.64%	-9.22%	916	940	14.5	1.85	3.6%	1.04
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	256	260	268	256	12	43,469,825	6	2.36%	-13.06%	256	261	13.6	1.24	3.6%	1.33
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	161	163	166	160	6	19,190,794	3	1.88%	-9.01%	160	167	20.1	0.55	2.2%	1.18
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	188	191	193	188	5	4,670,186	4	2.14%	-8.42%	185	191	17.7	0.71	4.0%	1.29
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	707	726	738	703	35	147,249,135	16	2.25%	-2.96%	715	744	21.5	1.85	1.9%	1.16
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	600	617	619	599	20	20,144,037	17	2.83%	-18.04%	593	618	44.8	2.74	0.9%	1.22
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	125	120	129	119	10	6,766,333	-4	-3.23%	-21.05%	119	125	-	0.57	4.1%	1.79
204	National Investments	Financial Services	200	196	205	196	9	11,080,772	-1	-0.51%	-17.30%	195	206	-	0.81	14.2%	1.94
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	123	122	125	121	4	13,276,488	1	0.83%	8.93%	122	126	21.9	0.74	0.0%	0.95
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	107	107	108	105	3	14,502,674	2	1.90%	-5.10%	106	110	10.2	0.77	3.7%	1.14
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	145	144	148	142	6	31,463,947	0	0.00%	8.27%	140	146	9.9	1.08	5.2%	1.66
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	61.0	61.1	61.5	60.0	1.5	1,580,846	0.5	0.83%	-18.42%	60.1	62	-	0.38	14.7%	1.24
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	108	109	109	107	2	11,935,726	1	0.93%	3.95%	104	109	10.2	0.76	2.7%	1.07
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	750	755	759	730	29	1,994,872	19	2.58%	-5.62%	730	755	15.8	1.72	1.8%	1.04
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	97.5	99.0	102.0	97	5.0	14,132,629	2	1.54%	3.10%	97.1	99	16.1	0.61	2.9%	0.57
501	National Industries	Financial Services	197	200	204	195	9	8,017,005	4	2.04%	-3.23%	195	206	-	0.92	2.4%	1.55
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,116	1,125	1,149	1,116	33	71,814	-22	-1.92%	-7.41%	1,090	1,149	12.4	1.06	5.3%	1.03
506	HEISCO	Industrials	621	640	658	621	37	1,752,272	30	4.92%	4.40%	638	651	22.4	1.62	3.1%	1.02
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	805	795	810	793	17	1,237,543	-10	-1.24%	-0.63%	790	813	11.9	1.53	7.5%	0.98
603	Agility	Industrials	612	612	621	610	11	10,077,946	5	0.82%	-15.00%	598	618	22.1	0.86	0.0%	1.53
605	Zain	Telecommunications	517	511	525	509	16	14,629,653	-4	-0.78%	-9.24%	503	512	11.0	1.73	6.8%	0.69
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,401	3,454	3,470	3,380	90	382,385	48	1.41%	3.03%	3,400	3,461	9.4	3.03	11.1%	0.62
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	192	198	199	191	8	2,388,870	6	3.13%	-2.46%	192	198	-	0.86	0.0%	1.16
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,890	1,892	1,900	1,853	47	735,305	41	2.22%	-0.42%	1,860	1,910	22.5	15.26	4.2%	1.41
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	80.8	80.1	81.4	79.5	1.9	13,463,448	-0.2	-0.25%	5.39%	79.7	81.1	9.5	0.94	6.0%	1.38
821	Warba Bank	Banking	210	209	213	208	5	13,609,575	0	0.00%	-8.40%	207	212	31.4	1.15	1.4%	1.15
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	435	446	453	432	21	3,002,525	13	3.00%	13.49%	432	453	-	1.29	2.7%	0.40
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	372	400	401	372	29	4,519,259	28	7.53%	8.11%	380	400	36.5	1.55	3.8%	0.71
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	181	181	183	180	3	1,148,607	0	0.00%	-3.72%	181	185	14.8	1.82	9.4%	0.43
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	1,810	1,781	1,810	1,780	30	953,844	-9	-0.50%	-13.21%	1,770	1,800	21.0	6.80	4.8%	0.96
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	945	990	1,010	945	65	3,048,250	32	3.34%	22.98%	978	995	12.4	3.80	5.9%	0.32

\* As of end of week closing



## Business

# 'Savings running out': High inflation hits Hungarians

## 'We dip into our savings to get by, but they're running out'

**BUDAPEST:** Antal Palya looks for the cheapest cuts of chicken at a Budapest market. Others in Hungary, home to the European Union's highest inflation rate, now need food aid. For some in the middle-class, even poverty looms.

"We dip into our savings to get by, but they're running out," Palya, a 58-year-old mechanic, said while shopping at the Bosnyak square market. Others shoppers also said they now worry, for the first time, about how to pay monthly household bills and sudden large one-off expenses.

Inflation soared across the world after Russia invaded Ukraine last year, but Hungary stands out among the 27 EU nations. Inflation soared above 25 percent in January. While it has been slowing since then, it was three times higher than the EU's average of 8.1 percent in April.

In May, Hungarian inflation stood at 21.5 percent, official data showed on Thursday, with food prices rising by 33.5 percent and energy prices up 37.2 percent. "I have to be very careful about what I buy now," said Boglarka Toth, a 26-year-old laboratory assistant as she compared prices at the Bosnyak market.

Foods that used to be considered ordinary, such as cottage cheese and sour cream, have become luxuries to some, said a market trader. Low incomes are hit hardest, but sky-high inflation is also dragging the middle class into poverty, according to Zoltan Pogatsa, a political economist and University of Western Hungary lecturer.

"People are selling the valuables they still have, but from a certain point on, they have nowhere to fall back on," Pogatsa said. Aid workers say an increasing number of people are seeking help. "The line separating people who are truly homeless and

those who are not yet but are at the end of their efforts, is starting to blur," said Andras Molnar of the Budapest Bike Maffia, which delivers sandwiches to those in need.

### 'Anti-market' measures

An Ipsos survey published in May, based on answers of 23,000 adults in 29 countries, found that 31 percent of Hungarians were either finding it quite or very difficult to manage financially, compared to 28 percent globally. Hungary's economy rallied for years but now is in recession with three quarters of negative growth in a row.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban has blamed EU sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine for the price increases in the central European country of 9.7 million, calling it "sanctions inflation". "Inflation would fall if we would choose the path of peace instead of war," he said in last week's radio interview, urging a ceasefire. Vowing to bring down inflation to a single digit by the end of 2023, Orban has also accused retailers of overpricing and excess profit-taking.

Last year he slapped windfall special taxes on sectors from retail to banking and introduced price caps on a range of basic foodstuffs. From this month a government decree ordered grocery chains to offer weekly discounts on products like milk, poultry and bread.

But economists are sceptical about the effectiveness of the measures, described by some as "anti-market", and point to Hungary's inflation surge beginning well before Russia's invasion. The volatility of the forint has not helped.

The local currency hit historic lows against the euro and dollar in 2022, contributing to the rising



**HATVAN:** A Hungarian aid worker delivers a food donation to a family whose members suffer from Multiple sclerosis in Hatvan, 60km from Budapest. At 24.5 percent in April, inflation in Hungary was three times the EU average of 8.1 percent, with energy and food price inflation at 42 and 38 percent respectively. — AFP

prices as imports became more expensive, said Peter Akos Bod, an economist at Corvinus University in Budapest and a former central bank head.

### 'We don't rebel'

Rather than helping people, the windfall taxes and other newly introduced taxes are aimed at shoring up budget holes after vast state handouts helped Orban secure a fourth straight election win last year, Bod and other economists say.

But so far neither high inflation nor taxes, eco-

nomical recession and an EU freeze on bloc funding for Hungary over rule of law and corruption concerns have damaged the poll standings of Orban's ruling Fidesz party.

"Hungarians deserve the pain. We don't rebel," said pensioner Maria Kemenesi, 72, at Bosnyak square market. Near a fishmonger's stall, Sandor Bata, 56, said his wife tells him to pick up processed fish fingers in the shop rather than pricey salmon fillets. "It's not the same taste but at least it's fish, kind of," said the laborer. — AFP

## India holds interest rates as inflation eases

**MUMBAI:** India on Thursday kept interest rates on hold for its second-straight meeting, citing easing inflation pressures, but warned about an uncertain global outlook. The benchmark repurchase rate was left at 6.50 percent by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), bank governor Shaktikanta Das announced in a webcast, in line with expectations.

"The Monetary Policy Committee decided to remain focused on withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation progressively aligns with the target while supporting growth," Das said. "Headline inflation still remains above the target, and being within the tolerance band is not enough. Our goal is to achieve the target of 4.0 percent going forward."

Inflation hit a peak of 7.79 percent in April last year, well above the RBI's target range of 2.0-6.0 percent, before slowly easing to 4.7 percent in April. India's economy expanded 6.1 percent in January-March, the final quarter of the fiscal year, to take annual growth to 7.2 percent.

The South Asian nation of 1.4 billion people, which recently overtook China to become the world's most-populous country, is one of the fastest-growing major economies. Central banks around the world, including the RBI, have rapidly hiked borrowing costs to tame consumer prices made worse by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

## Eurozone in recession at start of 2023

**BRUSSELS:** The eurozone entered into a technical recession at the start of the year, shrinking by 0.1 percent for a second consecutive quarter, figures from the EU's statistic agency showed Thursday. Eurostat revised down an earlier forecast that had predicted slight growth, after economic powerhouse Germany said last month it had fallen into recession.

The worse-than-expected figures come as inflation and higher interest rates have curbed demand in Europe's largest economy. Eurostat cut its earlier estimate of 0 percent growth in the final quarter of 2022 and 0.1 percent growth in the first quarter of 2023 to 0.1 percent contractions in both periods.

Two consecutive quarters of shrinking gross domestic product is the threshold for a technical recession. The bad news comes after a painful year for European economies as surging energy prices sparked by Russia's war on Ukraine sent inflation spiralling.

The European Central Bank has responded by hiking its key rates by 3.75 percentage points since embarking on an unprecedented campaign of monetary tightening in July last year. The latest figures cast doubt over more optimistic predictions for the whole 2023. The European Commission forecast in mid-May that growth for the year would reach 1.1 percent across the 20 countries that use the single currency.

### 'Stagnation'

Charlotte de Montpellier, an economist at ING Bank, predicted that the figure for 2023 would only

## Eurozone inflation

Monthly price changes, year-on-year



reach 0.5 percent. "Since the spring, all the data has been bad", she told AFP, pointing in particular to German industrial production and new orders.

"The European economy is in a phase of stagnation and has had difficulty getting through the winter because of the energy shock." Even though gas and oil prices have fallen in recent months, last year's surge in prices had a major impact on household confidence and forced a reduction in consumption.

Capital Economics said in a note it thinks "GDP is likely to contract again in Q2 (the second quarter) as the effects of monetary policy tightening continue to feed through". "Domestic demand has been hit hard

by the combination of inflation and rising interest rates," it said.

Headline inflation for the 20 EU countries using the euro dipped to 6.1 percent in May. But inflation remains well above the 2.0 percent target set by ECB. ECB chief Christine Lagarde said inflation remains "too high" and has suggested that a smaller rate increase could be on its way.

The news of a technical recession could put pressure on the central bank to hold off on further tightening. Adding to Europe's woes, a slowdown in the United States and weaker-than-expected recovery in China are also weighing on exports. — AFP

## Stocks mixed as rate hike worries return

**LONDON:** Major stock markets diverged Thursday as investors bet on whether the Federal Reserve would keep raising US interest rates to combat stubbornly-high inflation. Eurozone indices were higher in early afternoon deals despite data showing the bloc entered recession at the start of the year.

Asian equities closed mixed, while the dollar weakened against main rivals and oil prices gained. Tokyo finished down as the yen bounced on data showing Japan's economy expanded more than initially thought in the first quarter.

Market watchers were taken by surprise this week by rate hikes from the Australian and Canadian central banks. With the pair still concerned by elevated inflation, there is concern that the Federal Reserve could prolong its tightening at its policy meeting next week, heaping more pressure on a struggling global economy.

"Canada and Australia don't often have a central role in moving the markets but the decision by both countries' central banks to resume rate hikes this week has reverberated through the financial system and helped stoke fears about sticky inflation," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

"Much of the narrative sustaining the uneven if material rally in stocks this year has been that the battle with inflation is nearly won by the central banks.

"If the Federal Reserve follows the lead of its Australian and Canadian counterparts then this could be badly undermined and the next Fed decision is now just a week away," Mould added. The Reserve Bank of India held rates Thursday, as expected. — AFP



## LuLu Hypermarket launches 'LuLu Beauty Delights'

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket, the retailer of choice among discerning shoppers in the region, launched the 'LuLu Beauty Delights' promotion that captivated the interest of beauty enthusiasts and shoppers alike.

LuLu Beauty Delights, which runs from June 7-13 across all outlets of the hypermarket, offers an array of value-packed promotions on cosmetics, perfumes, and wellness products. The event was inaugurated on 7th June at the hypermarket's Al Rai outlet by popular beauty vloggers and fashion influencers, along with top management of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait.

The main sponsor of the event, Nivea, ensured that LuLu Beauty Delights provided an extraordinary experience for shoppers who had the oppor-

tunity to explore a vast range of high-quality Nivea beauty products. Moreover, co-sponsors such as PNG, Unilever, L'Oreal, Yardley, and Colgate added their own touch of excellence to the event, enhancing the overall beauty extravaganza.

One of the major highlights of the event was the live demonstrations conducted by famous beauty brands. Experts from these brands showcased their expertise, unveiling the latest trends and techniques in the world of beauty. In addition to the live demos, various sponsors and co-sponsors set up exhibition stalls, showcasing their finest beauty products and providing shoppers with the opportunity to examine an extensive range of beauty options and interact with knowledgeable representatives.

Adding to the excitement, free sampling beauty kits were distributed by the generous sponsors. Customers eagerly embraced the chance to try out new products and experience the quality and effectiveness of these items firsthand.

To further enhance the customers' experience, the promotional event offered free live styling and make-up services. Professional stylists and make-up artists were on hand to provide personalized con-

sultations and create stunning looks for customers.

The success of LuLu Beauty Delights event can be attributed to the perfect combination of impeccable planning, the support of top beauty brands, and the enthusiasm of the attendees. LuLu Hypermarket once again proved its commitment to delivering an exceptional shopping experience that goes beyond expectations, while providing shoppers with an extensive range of products, superb quality and exceptional customer service.





Lifestyle



The newly unveiled star of US rapper Tupac Shakur.



US radio personality Big Boy (left) and Sekyiwa Shakur, sister of US rapper Tupac Shakur, pose for a photo during Tupac's Hollywood Walk of Fame star ceremony in Hollywood, California.



Fans of US rapper Tupac Shakur gather for his Hollywood Walk of Fame star ceremony in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos

# California Love: Tupac honored with star in Hollywood

S

"It fills my heart with honor to stand here today representing the Shakur family," said Shakur's sister Sekyiwa "Set" Shakur at the unveiling in Los Angeles. "Tupac knew deep down that he was always meant for something great. And as his little sister, I had the privilege to watch that greatness unfold."

including "California Love" and "Changes." Shakur also became a key figure in a vaunted rivalry, egged on by promoters, between East Coast and West Coast hip-hop. Though born in New York, Shakur moved as a teenager with his family to California. He became one of the most identifiable figures in the West Coast scene, before he was shot dead in September 1996 in Las Vegas. The circumstances of Shakur's

death remain murky. Wednesday's ceremony came nine days before what would have been his 52nd birthday. Shakur's identification as a gangsta rapper came toward the end of his brief life, when he had repeated brushes with violence and went to prison on sexual assault charges. But Shakur — whose mother Afeni was active in the Black Panther movement and named him after Tupac Amaru, a revolution-

ary Inca chief — also used his lyrics to raise issues facing Black Americans, from police brutality to mass incarceration. Shakur and his mother are the subjects of the television documentary series "Dear Mama: The Saga of Afeni and Tupac Shakur." Director Allen Hughes and producer Jamal Joseph were among those attending Wednesday's ceremony. — AFP



Children wait in the courtyard of the cultural centre Mokili na Poche in Kinshasa.

## In DR Congo's capital, homeless teens pin future on rap

L

**'Trapped'**  
A newly built recording studio caters to the musically inclined among the youngsters who visit Mokili Na Poche. "Business" and his friends are regulars. "I'm trapped, I'm trapped," the youngster rapped into the mic in the Lingala language, rhyming about how he'd left conflict-torn eastern Congo only to end up on the mean streets of Kinshasa.

A barefoot 16-year old known as "Bloodbank" accompanied the song with a rhythm tapped out on a discarded plastic bottle, and beat-boxing through pouted lips. Later, "Business" explained that his dream was to follow in the footsteps of Congolese music greats such as Fally Ipupa, drive a fine car and visit the United States.

Life on the streets is hard, he said, explaining how some homeless youths were supportive but others tried to undermine him. "There really are witches among us," "Business" said.

But he wasn't discouraged: "Music is something I've had since I was in my mother's womb." Congo has a rich musical tradition and some groups, such as Staff Benda Bilili, comprising handicapped people, have risen from the streets of Kinshasa to international prominence. Several of the youngsters at Mokili Na Poche have already recorded an album, with an adult musician, although they were not paid.

**'They want to rebel'**  
Cedrick Tshimbalanga, the director of Mokili Na Poche, described how violence and desperation dominated the lives of youngsters living on the street in Kinshasa. "All of them have a blade or a pocket knife to protect themselves," he said. "There are children that go days and days without eating."

In the courtyard outside the cultural centre's tiny recording studio, several youngsters with bodies covered in scars rested quietly in the shade. Few knew their real age, but they appeared to range from about seven or eight years old to adolescents in their late teens. Tshimbalanga said the music they produce is often uptempo and aggressive, but not violent. — AFP

"They want to rebel against the way society treats them," he said. The centre has started putting together an album of



Junior 'Des Affaires' (right) and Obed 'Banque de Sang' (left) rap in the recording studio of the cultural centre Mokili na Poche in Kinshasa. - AFP photos

rare lifeline to Kinshasa's street children and teenagers — an abandoned population estimated by aid groups to number more than 20,000. Known locally as 'shegues', many are pushed onto the streets because of dire poverty, or because their families have accused them of witchcraft.

Their lives are often marked by violence, drugs and prostitution as well as by deep suspicion from wider Congolese society. But Mokili Na Poche, which opened last November, aims to encourage the neglected and unschooled homeless youths towards creative pursuits such as making bags out of scavenged plastic, or making music.

"Business," whose real name is Junior Mayamba Ngatshwe, is keen like the others to seize any opportunity on offer. Chadrack Mado, another street-dwelling youngster, said he comes to the centre so that "tomorrow I don't become a kuluna" — using a local term for the Kinshasa's notorious machete-wielding gangsters. The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the poorest countries in the world despite its vast mineral wealth. About two thirds of the population of 100 million people live on under \$2.15 a day, according to the World Bank.

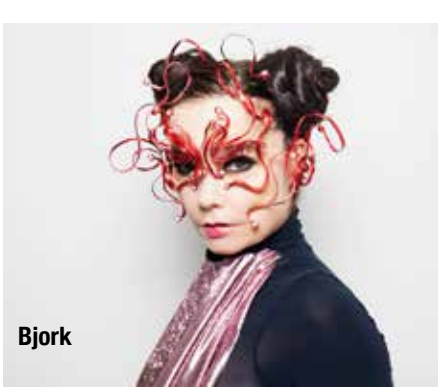


Junior 'Des Affaires' (right) raps with other teenagers in the recording studio of the cultural centre Mokili na Poche in Kinshasa.

## Bjork: 'Musk should build solar-powered festival ships'

B

"I was hoping Elon Musk and his tech friends would make electric tour buses or solar- and wind-powered cruise ships... could you pass that message to him please?" the Icelandic artist told AFP. "Maybe there could be a Coachella-like festival boat that travels the oceans with no flying included," she added. Coachella is a major arts and music festival held in the US desert.



Bjork

Asked if she hoped the Covid-19 pandemic had boosted environmental politics, she said: "Unfortunately not. I think the turnaround is happening very slowly. It would be great if it was a lot faster, but I'm keeping my hopes (up)." "At least during Covid, we saw louder bird singing, cleaner air, less planes... and we know it is possible that if we want to act that fast, we can," she added.

While she waits for innovations from Musk et al, Bjork has been touring some elaborate shows around the world, including a performance at Coachella in California that featured a light show by 864 drones. "I felt because of the nakedness of the voice and orchestra-only music, I didn't want to interrupt that by adding musicians or instruments, but rather sync something epic in the skies to the music," she said. "It seemed to work well in the desert."

**'Self-care and discipline'**  
Bjork, 57, is preparing for a European tour, kicking off in September and featuring a huge choir. But she had to cancel three dates in Iceland because no stage was big enough. "It is the first time of all my tours that I have not brought it to Iceland and it made me very sad," she said. "But I did try my best." The show was initially built around her 2017 album "Utopia" but she said she was "slowly adding more and more of (2022's) 'Fossora' into it".

Thirty years after her first international solo album, "Debut", her voice remains a powerful thing to experience, and she welcomes the effort required to maintain it. "Being a singer is a lot of work — self-care and discipline involved — but fortunately the side effect is that you are overall in good health, so not too bad..." As for future projects, she prefers not to be pinned down. "I like surprises," she said. "It has to feel spontaneous for me." — AFP



US painter Nathaniel Mary Quinn poses at the Gagosian Gallery during a photo session in Paris. — AFP photos

## Nathaniel Mary Quinn's fractured portraits set off Paris show

A

Born in Chicago in 1977, Quinn's first solo show "The Forging Years" opens on Thursday in Paris at the Gagosian gallery. The paintings in the exhibition are new and draw on Quinn's tough upbringing on the South Side of Chicago — a "forging experience (that) recreated my identity", he said. It was a difficult set of experiences for Quinn — a time he remembers as putting him "through the fire of life."

He was particularly affected by his mother Mary's death. "My mother died because my oldest brother was a drug addict. He got drugs on credit... the drug addicts wanted their money and came to the house," said Quinn. But the circumstances of Mary's death — his middle name is a tribute to her — remain to this day a mystery for Quinn. In 2013, the artist stumbled across a style that would become his trademark: using collages of different facial features to create strange and colorful portraits.

**'Magical brilliance'**  
At the time, Quinn worked as a social worker and private tutor when the mother of a student he tutored in Maths and English offered to exhibit his work. He had only four paintings ready to show, and at the last minute decided he wanted a fifth. "I didn't have time to do everything so I focused on what was

important," he said. "I thought to only focus on eyes, nose, mouth and one ear. No cheekbones, no nose bone, no chin — that had to go — because I only had five hours."

He decided to draw each feature



US painter Nathaniel Mary Quinn poses at the Gagosian Gallery during a photo session in Paris on June 7, 2023.

separately and hide them under construction paper while he did the next element. "When I took the construction paper off it was like opening a present," he said. He welcomes the fact that black artists are getting more recognition — in Paris, shows by artists Faith Ringgold and Zanele Muholi have been big hits. Black artists have always produced "magnificent" work, said Quinn. "What has evolved is the society in which we live — the institutions have decided to wake up to the magical brilliance that they have chosen to neglect." "Art is art," he added. "Caravaggio is good not because of the color of his skin but because he's good." — AFP



US painter Nathaniel Mary Quinn poses at the Gagosian Gallery during a photo session in Paris on June 7, 2023. — AFP photos



## Lifestyle



## Algeria discovers 1,140 archeological coins dating back to first centuries

The Ministry of Culture and the Arts announced Tuesday the discovery of a coin collection of 1,140 pieces dating back to the first centuries AD, at an archeological

site in East of Algeria. This came in a statement by the ministry saying that these coins date back to the fourth century AD and the Byzantine period (sixth century AD). "This collection

was discovered in Mador Archeological site located in East of Algeria during a supervised digging by the ministry and several specialized archeologists," it added. — KUNA



## Francoise Gilot, the woman who dumped Picasso, dies aged 101

France's Francoise Gilot, who died Tuesday aged 101, survived what she called the "hell" of being Spanish artist Pablo Picasso's mistress and muse to become a renowned artist in her own right. The Picasso Museum in Paris confirmed her death to AFP, after the New York Times reported Gilot had passed away following recent heart and lung ailments.

While two of the other women in Picasso's life died by suicide, and two others had mental breakdowns, Gilot stood up to the giant of modern art, and was the only woman to leave him of her own accord. "Pablo was the greatest love of my life, but you had to take steps to protect yourself. I did, I left before I was destroyed," she confided in Janet Hawley's 2021 book "Artists and Conversation".

"The others didn't, they clung on to the mighty Minotaur and paid a heavy price," she said, referring to Picasso's first wife, dancer Olga Khokhlova, who lapsed into depression after he left her; his former teen lover, Marie-Therese Walter, who hanged herself; his second wife Jacqueline Roque, who shot herself; and his best-known muse, artist Dora Maar, who had a nervous breakdown. The painter of "Guernica" was, she said, "astonishingly creative, a magician, so intelligent and seductive... But he was also very cruel, sadistic and merciless to others, as well as to himself."

### Bowl of cherries

Gilot was 21 and a budding painter when she first met Picasso, who was 40 years her senior and married to Russian dancer Khokhlova, in occupied France during World War II. At the time of the meeting he was also the lover of French photographer, painter and poet Maar. The meeting took place in a Paris restaurant in the spring of 1943 when he brought a bowl of cherries to her table and an invitation to visit his studio.



French painter Francoise Gilot poses in a painter's studio in 1953. - AFP photos

Lovers for 10 years, they never married but had two children, a son, Claude, born in 1947, and a daughter, Paloma, in 1949. He often painted her, portraying her as the radiant and haughty "Woman-Flower" in 1946. In "Femme assise" (1949), which sold for £8.5 million (\$9.6 million) at auction in London in 2012, he depicted her while heavily pregnant with Paloma.

In 1948, photographer Robert Capa captured the couple on a beach, with Picasso playing in the sand with his son, dutifully carrying a shade over Gilot's head. When she decided to walk out on him in 1953 and resume painting he took it badly.



French painter Francoise Gilot poses at her atelier, in Paris, on April 6, 2004.

He told her she was headed "straight for the desert". From then on his entourage snubbed her and her work. "In France things had got rather difficult for me... leaving Picasso was seen as a big crime and I was no longer welcome," she was quoted as saying by Sotheby's in 2021. The diminutive and slender brunette became a US citizen and did not go to his funeral in 1973.

### Tyrannical

Born on November 26, 1921, at Neuilly-sur-Seine to the west of Paris to a well-to-do family, she followed in her mother's footsteps starting out as a watercolour artist, before moving on to drawing and painting. Her parents wanted her to become a lawyer, but she abandoned her studies at the age of 19. By 21 she was already one of the most respected artists of the emerging School of Paris, which grouped French and emigre artists in the capital during the first half of the 20th century.

As she developed, she increasingly produced minimalist, colorful works and over her career signed at least 1,600 canvasses and 3,600 works on paper. In her 1964 book "Life with Picasso" she portrayed him as a tyrant. Picasso failed in a legal bid to get the book banned, and retaliated by refusing to see her and their children.

She also wrote a book in 1991 on Picasso's complicated love-hate relationship with the other giant of modern art, Matisse, with whom she was friends. The two other men in her life were painter Luc Simon, with whom she had a daughter Aurelia, and American virologist Jonas Salk, inventor of the first polio vaccine, whom she married in 1970 and lived within California until his death in 1995.

Gilot spent the last years of her life in New York, where she continued painting into her nineties. In 2021 her painting "Paloma a la Guitare", a 1965 portrait of her daughter, sold for \$1.3 million at Sotheby's in London. Her work graced the walls of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as well as the Centre Pompidou in Paris. — AFP

## First restaurants in Vietnam awarded Michelin star

Vietnam's booming food scene was awarded its first ever Michelin stars Tuesday, with four restaurants selected by the prestigious dining guide. Three eateries in Hanoi — Gia, Tam Vi and Hibana by Koki — and one in Ho Chi Minh City — Anan Saigon — were each awarded one Michelin star.

Although there were no stars handed out to traditional street food eateries serving classics such as pho (a noodle soup) or bun cha (a vermicelli noodle dish with grilled pork), Vietnamese flavors feature heavily among the winners. Tam Vi largely focusses on northern Vietnamese dishes including ham with periwinkle snails — served with fresh herbs, rice vermicelli noodles and fish sauce — and crab soup with spinach, a popular summer meal.

Nguyen Bao Anh, whose mother, Tam, owns the restaurant and named it after herself, said her mum "had a dream of opening a restaurant where customers could come and feel like they were eating a home-cooked meal". "The restaurant serves traditional food and I think now not many restaurants serve that kind of food that remind people of familiar flavors," Bao Anh told AFP after the awards ceremony in Hanoi.

"This award is for my mum and I'm proud of her," she added. Sam Tran, the chef and co-founder of high-end



Chef Yamaguchi of Hibana by Koki, holds the one-star Michelin award at the Michelin Guide ceremony in Hanoi.



A waiter serves dishes at the Michelin Guide ceremony in Hanoi.

contemporary restaurant Gia, spent 10 years studying in Australia before returning to Hanoi, her home city, to push the boundaries of Vietnamese cuisine.

"Through each dish at Gia, I want to tell the story of Vietnamese culture," she wrote in a guide to the ceremony. "I want to tell the story of each stage of my life, the regions I have visited, the flavors passed down from generation to generation that I have tasted." In Ho Chi Minh City, Anan Saigon was recognized for its modern take on Vietnamese classics, including a bone marrow wagyu beef pho.

Gwendal Poullennec, international director of the Michelin Guide, said Viet-

nam's two biggest cities, Hanoi and commercial centre Ho Chi Minh City, offered a vibrant and varied dining experience. "Hanoi has a laid back and relaxed vibe, with small shops and restaurants mostly from the Old Quarter", Poullennec said.

"Ho Chi Minh City on the other hand is a bustling and rapidly growing city, which offers a unique energy to all travelers and a very diverse food scene." Hibana by Koki, which serves Japanese cuisines was the only non-Vietnamese restaurant to receive a star. — AFP



Nguyen Bao Anh (left) of the Tam Vi restaurant holds her Michelin Star winner chef's whites at the Michelin Guide ceremony in Hanoi.



Gia Restaurant Chef and Co-founder, Sam Tran (right) holds her Michelin Star winner chef's whites at the Michelin Guide Ceremony in Hanoi.



Waiters prepare to serve dishes at the Michelin Guide ceremony in Hanoi.



(From left to right) Peter Cuong Franklin of Anan Saigon restaurant, Michelin Guide International Director Gwendal Poullennec, Nguyen Bao Anh and Doan Mai Anh of the Tam Vi restaurant, Chef and co-founder Gia restaurant Sam Tran and Chef Yamaguchi of Hibana by Koki restaurant, pose for photographs at the Michelin Guide ceremony in Hanoi. - AFP photos



Lifestyle



The Spanish chef specializing in bluefin tuna Julio Vazquez prepares a tuna dish at his restaurant El Campero, in Barbate, southern Spain. - AFP photos



A tuna dish by Spanish chef specializing in bluefin tuna Julio Vazquez is pictured at his restaurant El Campero, in Barbate, southern Spain.



Parts of bluefin tuna resulting from the traditional quartering 'ronqueo' are seen on a blackboard.

# Spain's 3,000-year-old

# TUNA FISHING TRADITION

As the sun rises in the Gulf of Cadiz on Spain's southern tip, a team of fishermen lifts the tip of a vast system of nets with bluefin tuna trapped inside. "Hoist!" they cry before men in wetsuits jump into the water to deliver a final blow to the fish captured using this 3,000-year-old netting tradition. Dubbed an "almadraba", the system of nets is designed to catch large bluefin tuna during their annual migration from the Atlantic into the warmer Mediterranean to lay their eggs.

annually off the coast of Spain's southern province of Cadiz using the "almadraba" technique. Around 500 fishermen in Cadiz use the system, according to the Almadraba Producers' and Fishermen's Organization (OPP51). Aside from Spain, the technique is only found in Italy, Morocco and Portugal.

The nets form a series of chambers that trap only the biggest of the migrating tuna. The tuna are "practically like bulls" and their blows are like "the kick from a horse," said the captain of the fishing boat, 61-year-old Antonio Ponce. Tuna have been caught in this stretch of water using this method since the Phoenicians ruled the Mediterranean from around 1,200 BC. Use of the technique in Spain almost disappeared in the 1970s due to a lack of profitability but demand for quality tuna from Japan breathed new life into the sector. Over 1,600 tons of bluefin tuna are caught

**'Sustainable technique'**  
Because the nets only catch the biggest tuna, it is a "sustainable technique," said Jose Luis Garcia Varas of the Spanish branch of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). In the early 2000s, the global popularity of sushi put bluefin tuna in danger but the establishment of regional fishing quotas allowed the species to recover. Atlantic bluefin tuna was in 2021 moved from the category of "endangered" to that of "least concern" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

In Spain, the Japanese taught local fishermen to minimize the stress endured by the tuna to improve the taste of the meat. Fishermen now use a sawn-off shotgun called a "lupara" to kill the tuna instantly. While the structure of the nets



A bluefin tuna is hauled out of the sea using the ancient fishing technique of almadraba in the waters of the Strait of Gibraltar off the coast of Conil de la Frontera, southern Spain.

"has remained more or less the same for many years," what has changed is "the way of treating the fish to achieve quality, to take away their suffering," said Ponce.

The Japanese also taught locals how to consume parts of the tuna which were previously thrown away — and got them to eat raw fish. Bluefin tuna "has 25 parts, 25 textures, 25 tastes. They were not known before," said Julio Vazquez, the 43-year-

old head chef at the El Campero restaurant in the coast town of Barbate. His menu includes 32 different dishes using bluefin tuna. "When my mother or my grandmother cooked, there was not so much diversity," he added.

**'Delicacy'**  
Vazquez recalled that the bestselling Spanish cookbook "1080 Recipes" by the late culinary author Simone Ortega had only one tuna recipe — for a



A man quarters bluefin tuna, caught in the waters of the Strait of Gibraltar using the ancient fishing technique of almadraba.

gratin using tinned tuna. While 80 percent of the tuna caught in Cadiz used to go to Japan, now 70 percent is sold in Spain and just 30 percent heads to Asia, according to OPP51.

Thousands of people head to Cadiz — a region of whitewashed houses and sandy beaches — to eat bluefin tuna caught using the "almadraba" technique. The tiny resort town of Zahara de los Atunes — named after the tuna — holds an annual festi-

val dedicated to the fish. Last year its bars and restaurants served 105,000 tapas during the four days of the event, according to the town hall. "Here is all about freshness," said Noah G. White, a 23-year-old chef visiting from Sweden, who asked for Vazquez's autograph after eating at his restaurant. "You can eat it raw and that is for me a delicacy in itself," he added. — AFP



Two divers swim next to a bluefin tuna, killed by themselves by shooting an underwater gun straight to its head, prior to being lifted out of the water to the boat.

## Anger as pre-historic stones destroyed for French DIY store

Around 40 standing stones thought to have been erected by prehistoric humans 7,000 years ago have been destroyed near a famed archaeological site in northwest France to make way for a DIY store, an angry local historian has revealed. The stones in Carnac were between 50-100 centimeters (20-40 inches) high and stood close to the main highly protected areas of one

of Europe's largest and most mysterious pre-historic tourist attractions.

"The site has been destroyed," local archaeologist Christian Obeltz told AFP on Wednesday, having revealed the clearance of the land in the Ouest-France newspaper. He believes 39 standing stones — known as menhirs — have been lost, estimating their age to be around 7,000 years based on carbon dating conducted on stones nearby in 2010.

The land was granted a building permit from the local mayor's office in August last year and DIY chain Mr Bricolage is currently building a new store there. Mayor Olivier Lepick told AFP that he had "followed the law" and pointed to the "low ar-

chaeological value" of objects found during checks before the construction process began.

The land was not situated in a protected area and had been earmarked for commercial use, he added. Carnac is famed for its vast fields of stone megaliths which stand in long lines close to the Atlantic coast in the windswept Brittany region.

There are around 3,000 of them on the two main protected areas which extend over more than six kilometers (four miles). The stones are thought to have had a sacred and funereal function, although various theories exist. The Regional Office of Cultural Affairs (Drac) for Brittany, which is responsible for ensuring the law protecting cultural monuments is respected, played down the importance of the losses.

"Given the uncertain and in any case non-major character of the remains, as revealed by checks, damage to a site of archaeological value has not been established," it said in a statement on Wednesday. But local archaeologist Obeltz believes local authorities failed to properly investigate.

"There weren't archaeological excavations in order to know if the stones were menhirs or not," he said. When contacted, the Mr Bricolage group said it "sincerely regretted the situation" but pointed to authorizations for its store granted last year. — AFP



This general view shows a line of ancient stones standing on a megalithic site at Carnac, western France. - AFP



The ruins of ancient fish salting factories are pictured at the Roman archaeological site of Baelo Claudia in Bolonia, southern Spain.

## Unknown US WWI soldier buried in France 105 years after death

An unidentified US World War I soldier whose remains were accidentally uncovered in northern France last year was buried with full military honors on Wednesday, in the first such ceremony for 35 years. Hundreds of thousands of troops — many undiscovered or unidentified — are buried across northern France, the epicenter of brutal trench warfare that defined the 1914-1918 conflict's western European front.

The unknown US soldier is believed to have been killed in

July 1918 and was identified as American by equipment found alongside a few bones that were the only remains of his body. He was buried on Wednesday at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, around 70 miles (113 kilometers) northeast of Paris, which holds the graves of more than 6,000 other US soldiers killed in a 1918 offensive against German forces.

French, US and German army units attended the ceremony, during which the soldier was awarded a medal by Amer-

ican army chief of staff James McConville. The cemetery's superintendent Hubert Caloud said it was the first time since 1988 that a US serviceman had been buried at an American World War I battle commission monument in France.

"For 105 years, this guy was all alone. To have people leave work and be here is very meaningful," Caloud said. "We are very content he is buried with his fellow soldiers." Families of other, recently identified soldiers have been able to choose burial sites, usually in the United States. But Caloud's organization had to decide on the ceremony for the unknown soldier, he added.

Bones belonging to troops killed during the war are regularly unearthed. US and Canadian World War I soldiers are being buried at two sites in northern France this week. Hundreds of new remains are expected to be found as excavation work to dredge a new canal in the region continues. A new cemetery to hold the influx of freshly discovered remains is being built in the village of Loos-en-Gohelle with a capacity for 1,200 graves. — AFP



US soldiers from the 54th Brigade Engineer Battalion stand next to the coffin of an unknown WWI soldier.



## Sports

# Djokovic and Alcaraz in era-defining Open duel

## 36-year-old Djokovic seeks to preserve legacy of 'Big Three'

PARIS: Having battled through 59 encounters with Rafael Nadal over 16 years of epic rivalry, Novak Djokovic faces the Spanish legends heir apparent Carlos Alcaraz at the French Open in a match laced with era-defining potential. Djokovic will be playing a 45th Grand Slam semi-final on Friday; for Alcaraz, it will be just his second. With Roger Federer retired and Nadal nursing a hip injury until next year, 36-year-old Djokovic has the responsibility of preserving the legacy of the 'Big Three'.

"It's definitely the biggest challenge for me," said Djokovic, chasing a third French Open title and men's record 23rd Slam which would break the tie he currently shares with Nadal. Friday's showpiece will be the first time Djokovic and Alcaraz have met at a Grand Slam and only the second time in their careers. Alcaraz, then still 19, defeated the Serb from a set down in the semi-finals of the Madrid Open last year, a day after he had knocked out Nadal on the faster, higher altitude courts of the Spanish capital.

He predicted then that the "sky's the limit" and he wasn't far wrong, claiming a maiden Slam title at the US Open and becoming the youngest world number one. "He carries himself very well. Brings a lot of intensity on the court. Reminds me of someone from his country that plays with

a left hand," said Djokovic of a player who is 16 years his junior but already boasts the competitive DNA of Nadal. Djokovic has 90 career wins at Roland Garros and is playing his 11th semi-final.

### 'Guy to beat'

When he made his tournament debut in 2005, Alcaraz was just two but despite the age gap, Djokovic is keen to measure himself against the Spaniard for the first time at a major. "If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best. He's definitely a guy to beat here. I'm looking forward to that," added Djokovic, bidding to reach a seventh final in the last eight majors in which he has played.

Alcaraz fell at the quarter-finals in Paris 12 months ago while Djokovic's run ended in the semi-finals at the hands of Nadal. The Spaniard then lost in the last 16 at Wimbledon where Djokovic was crowned champion for a seventh time. When Alcaraz swept to his maiden Slam in New York in September, the Serb was stranded at home, banned from entering the US because of his refusal to be vaccinated.

Hopes they would meet at the Australian Open, when Djokovic collected a 10th Melbourne title, were dashed when Alcaraz pulled out with a leg injury. "Since

the draw came out, everyone was expecting this semi-final against Novak, myself as well. Since last year I really wanted to play again against Novak," said Alcaraz. "We are both playing a great level. It's his 45th semi-final of a Grand Slam; this is going to be my second. I would say his experience is better, but I'm not going to think about that." Greek world number five Stefanos Tsitsipas has had a close-up view of both men this year.

### 'Speedy Gonzalez'

He lost to Djokovic in the Australian Open final and was swept out of Roland Garros by Alcaraz in straight sets in the quarter-final. "Djokovic has experience; Alcaraz has legs and moves like Speedy Gonzalez," said Tsitsipas. "Alcaraz can hit huge, super-big shots and Djokovic prefers control over anything else, probably control and precision, to apply pressure and just make the opponent move as much as possible." There is also Djokovic's famous iron will - in the five tiebreaks he has played in Paris this year, he hasn't committed a single unforced error.

The clash between Djokovic and Alcaraz has overshadowed Friday's other semi-final between 2022 runner-up Casper Ruud and Olympic champion Al-



PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates his victory over Russia's Karen Khachanov during their men's singles quarter final match on June 6, 2023. — AFP

exander Zverev who is in the last four for a third successive year. Twelve months ago, Zverev suffered season-ending ankle ligament damage in his semi-final against Nadal. "That was the most difficult year of my life," said the 26-year-old German. "I love playing tennis and

the sport and competition were taken away from me." Zverev leads Ruud 2-1 in their head-to-head match-ups but they have never met on clay. That could prove significant as world number four Ruud boasts the best record on the surface since 2020 with 86 wins. — AFP

## Superstars who left soccer elite leagues

PARIS: Argentine football superstar Lionel Messi's move to spend the final years of his stellar career in the United States will come as a crushing blow to Barcelona fans who dreamed of a return to the club that nurtured him. The 35-year-old Messi will be following a well-trodden path of the greats of the 'Beautiful Game' by taking a lucrative pay day in football's less celebrated leagues. Here, AFP Sport picks out four examples:

### Pele - New York Cosmos 1975-77

It took the persuasive powers of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to lure the man, who vies for the mantle of greatest ever with Messi and Diego Maradona, to the North American Soccer League (NASL) in 1975. "They want to make soccer big in the United States," Pele told CNN in 2011. "That was the reason (I went). I started my mission." Aged 34 at the time, he stirred huge public interest and crowd numbers soared. Averaging below 10,000 fans a match before his arrival, Cosmos attendances surged to over 40,000. Pele took to the New York nightlife but did not neglect his duties on the pitch, inspiring the team to a Football Bowl title in 1977. His endorsement of the NASL prompted other legends such as Franz Beckenbauer and George Best to sign up - though it was to crash and burn in 1984.

### Gabriel Batistuta - Al Arabi 2003-05

The Argentine striker took the high road to the previously low-key Q-League on a free transfer and reportedly received \$8million to join Al Arabi. 'Batigol's' eye for the back of the net - which had seen him rattle in the goals for Serie A sides Fiorentina and Roma - did not desert him in Doha. He scored a record 25 goals for the club in his maiden season. Batistuta was joined by Pep Guardiola, Frank de Boer and Marcel Desailly as Qatar raised its football profile in what was arguably a key first step towards successfully winning the rights to hosting the 2022 World Cup.

### Zico - Kashima Antlers 1991-94

His exploits on the pitch earned him a stint as Brazil's sports minister but despite being in his early forties he broke off his nascent political career to play for second-tier Japanese side Sumitomo Metals. The task was to secure them a place in the first ever Japanese professional league which was due to kick off its inaugural season in 1993. Even in early middle age, the Brazilian inspired them to promotion and then to the runner-up spot in the J League - and the club changed its name to Kashima Antlers.

There is a statue of him outside Kashima's stadium and he draws great pleasure from the subsequent success of Japanese football - this month Urawa Red Diamonds won their third Asian Champions League crown. "It was all about starting from scratch and getting the direction right," Zico told FIFA.com last December. "And look at Japan today. They haven't missed one World Cup since the game went professional there. That's pretty pleasing."

### David Beckham - LA Galaxy 2007-2012

It was a coup when the MLS franchise secured the signature of arguably European football's highest-profile player at the age of 32, bringing to an end his time as one of Real Madrid's Galacticos. Beckham's five-year contract - paying \$6.5 million a year - reaped dividends for Galaxy in terms of a new shirt deal and a huge rise in season ticket sales. Of far more importance to the former England star, though, was the clause that stated he could buy an MLS franchise - with the exception of New York - in the future for a fixed rate of \$25 million.

He duly exercised that right in 2014, purchasing Inter Miami. "I'm not saying me coming over to the States is going to make soccer the biggest sport in America," said Beckham when he signed for Galaxy. "But I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't think I could make a difference." Beckham inspired Galaxy to two MLS Cup successes before he returned to European football - with Paris Saint-Germain. — AFP

## Haaland set to reign over Europe as City eye historic treble

LONDON: Erling Haaland has been backed to dominate the Champions League for years to come as the record-breaking Manchester City striker aims to fire his side to treble glory in Saturday's final against Inter Milan. Haaland has taken the Premier League by storm in his first season, scoring 52 goals in all competitions since signing from Borussia Dortmund. The 22-year-old fuelled City's successful bid to overhaul Arsenal in the title race before Pep Guardiola's side completed the second leg of the treble with their FA Cup final victory against Manchester United last Saturday.

City are firm favorites to win the Champions League for the first time when they face Inter in Istanbul this weekend. That would make City only the second English club after Manchester United in 1999 to lift the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup in the same season. Yet, ominously for defenders across Europe, Haaland believes he can only get better as he spends more time in Guardiola's unique system.

"I've been developing in a really positive way and that's important for me because I'm still really young," he said. "I'm 22, I've got a long career ahead of me and I still have to develop. That's also something I was thinking of over one year ago when I was thinking about my next move." It is a view shared by Inter striker Romelu Lukaku, who knows all about the ups and downs of life in the Premier League. Former Manchester United and Everton striker Lukaku, currently on loan at Inter from Chelsea, is a huge fan of Haaland, whose physical approach mirrors the Belgian's own style of play.

## 'Paris was our dream,' Alcaraz's coach says

PARIS: Few people know Carlos Alcaraz better than Kiko Navarro, the coach who shaped the Spaniard in his formative years into the fearless world number one targeting a second Grand Slam title at the French Open. The 38-year-old Navarro continues to teach tennis at the El Palmar club in Murcia, the sun-drenched city in southeastern Spain where Alcaraz, 20, was born and raised. It wasn't long ago that Alcaraz was his prized pupil, having coached the reigning US Open champion between the ages of nine and 17 before he linked up full-time with 2003 French Open winner Juan Carlos Ferrero. "You know that Paris has always been our dream," Navarro whispered in the ear of Alcaraz as he bid him farewell two weeks ago after bumping into him just prior to

his departure for Roland Garros.

On Friday Alcaraz will play 22-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic in an eagerly-anticipated semi-final in Paris. "I'll see it here at home," Navarro told AFP by telephone. "Unless tomorrow I unexpectedly go there..." he added, not ruling out the possibility. Navarro is bullish about his protegee's title prospects despite Djokovic standing in the way. "I made a bet with his father that he would win Barcelona, Madrid and Roland Garros, I already have two out of three," said Navarro. "He will beat Djokovic unless something strange happens, but he's coming into it in good shape so I don't think he'll get hurt."

Alcaraz's electrifying style draws plenty of admirers and Navarro says it's an approach that comes naturally to the Spaniard. "If you stick on a video of the boy you'll see he plays like he does now. He was a prodigy technically, in this sense his development hasn't been spectacular," said Navarro. "The forehand, the drop shot and the volley are innate.

## Liverpool, Mac Allister seal \$69 million deal

LONDON: Liverpool signed Argentine World Cup winner Alexis Mac Allister from Brighton on Thursday for a fee that could rise to a reported £55 million (\$69 million). The 24-year-old is the first piece in a midfield rebuild for Liverpool, who finished a disappointing fifth in the Premier League. "It feels amazing," said Mac Allister, who is understood to have signed a five-year deal at Anfield.

"It's a dream come true. It's amazing to be here and I can't wait to get started. "I wanted to be in from the first day of pre-season, so it's good that everything is done. I'm looking forward to meeting my teammates." "It was a fantastic year for me - World Cup, what we achieved with Brighton - but now it's time to think about Liverpool and try to be a better player and a better human being every day."

He expects the Norwegian to establish himself as the world's most feared forward alongside Paris Saint Germain's Kylian Mbappe. "I think he will dominate, with Mbappe, world football for the next 10 years," Lukaku told CNN. "They will be fighting from the new generation. They will really take over from Messi and Ronaldo in the next two years."

### 'One more'

The awe-inspiring statistics of Haaland's first season with City are enough to give Inter boss Simone Inzaghi sleepless nights. Haaland's 36 Premier League goals set a record for single season in the competition. Haaland's 12 goals in 10 Champions League appearances so far this season played a huge role in City's progress to only their second final in Europe's elite club competition. He is the first player to be voted Premier League Player and Young Player of the Year in the same season and was also named the Football Writers' Association (FWA) men's footballer of the year.

It has been a life-changing year for Haaland, who said: "I'm 196cm tall and have got long blond hair so wherever I go people are going to see me. So that's how my life is. "What can I do? There's nothing I can do, that's my life. I just have to try to enjoy it as much as I can. Try to relax when I'm home with good people around me, that's really important." It is hard to imagine now, but there was a brief period earlier this year when some critics suggested City were worse off with Haaland. After winning the title without a recognized striker in the previous two seasons, City had fallen behind Premier League pace-setters Arsenal as Haaland occasionally looked isolated up front. He has silenced those doubters in emphatic fashion, but Inter will have noted he goes into the final with only one goal in his last seven games.

Haaland's current four-match goalless run is his longest in a City shirt, and he hasn't gone as many games without scoring since April 2021. Yet Haaland had a warning for Inter just seconds after the final whistle

The serve has improved and the backhand cost him a little bit. Every now and then we briefly thought about changing it to one hand. "His development has been physically. We were afraid he would stay small but he has grown to a good height and he is like a beast."

### 'Very bad loser'

Alcaraz has set records tumbling and became the youngest men's world number one after last year's Grand Slam triumph in New York. Despite the pressure of being the top seed at Roland Garros, Alcaraz has never lost his smile this fortnight - a friendly assassin whose will to win is unrelenting. "At the age of 10 he was a very innocent boy, without any bad intentions on or off the court, very happy. But he didn't like to lose anything, he was very competitive," recalled Navarro.

"He's broken many racquets with me, he left the court crying and I had let him calm down before talking to him. He was a very bad loser, he wanted to



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland takes part in a team training session at Manchester City training ground in Manchester. — AFP

follow the FA Cup final. While hugging Ilkay Gundogan and Bernardo Silva on the Wembley pitch, Haaland exhorted his City team-mates to make one last push in Istanbul. "Come on, one more," he roared while pumping his fist. Few would be surprised if the intensely driven Haaland ends his drought by scoring the goal that makes history for City. — AFP

also win at padel, at board games and at cards. But to be number one you have to be like that. "The key was at 13 or 14 he realized that this was very serious. He had a cheerful, attractive game, wherever we went we were the centre of attention, both in Spain and in Europe. "He was already well known, he was breaking Rafa Nadal's records... So we had to work a lot on the head, the motivation and humility."

It was a lot to take onboard but Navarro never doubted that Alcaraz had the character required to make it to the very top. "I knew that because of his way of being and his tennis he was going to reach people, even more than Rafa, who is more serious. Carlos gives off more joy," he said. "In the many hours we spent in the car or the plane, I always gave him talks so that he would continue to keep his feet on the ground. And I feel very proud. He knows where he comes from, his roots and who his people are. It's not easy to become a global star so quickly." — AFP



Alexis Mac Allister

and someone with proper game intelligence." Mac Allister, who made 112 appearances for Brighton, has played 16 times for Argentina, including in the World Cup final victory against France in December. "Since I won the World Cup, I said that I want to win more trophies and I think that this club will help me to do that," he said. "That's the aim and when you are in a big club like this one you have to win trophies. So, that's what I want." — AFP



Sports

# City old boy Dzeko caps career with Champions League final

## Former club standing in the way of triumph

MILAN: Edin Dzeko has the chance to crown his career with the biggest prize in football, his former club Manchester City standing in the way of a Champions League triumph which no-one would have expected when he signed for Inter Milan two years ago. Now 37 years old and coming to the end of his time as an elite striker, Dzeko has had an Indian summer at Inter since arriving from Roma two years ago.

He was brought in as a cheap replacement for Romelu Lukaku after he set off on a disastrous, big-money return to Chelsea, a symbol of how financial problems had forced a club which had just won the Serie A title to downgrade. Seven league goals in his sixth and final season at Roma seemed to signal the end of an attacker who had risen from a traumatic childhood in war-torn Bosnia to become his country's all-time top scorer and a multiple league title winner.

Those seasons in the Italian capital failed to yield a single trophy despite playing in a gifted series of teams which featured the likes of Mohamed Salah, Alisson Becker, Daniele De Rossi and ageing icon Francesco Totti. The high point was undoubtedly reaching the semi-finals of the Champions League in 2018 after coming back from three goals down to eliminate Barcelona, a season after rattling in a club-record 39 goals.

But although Dzeko has not broken the 20-goal barrier since reaching the last four he is considered key by Inter coach Simone Inzaghi, the glue which holds together their attack. "Edin is a great player who helps the team in both attack and defense," said Inzaghi in November. "He adds a lot and he will con-

tinue to do so. If it were up to me I would renew his contract." Dzeko has scored just five times in 2023 but could still start in Istanbul due to his ability to turn up when it matters. It is why he is favorite for Simone Inzaghi's starting XI and also why he is set to extend his stay at Inter for another season despite his diminishing scoring ability and advancing years.

### Rise from the rubble

Dzeko missed out on the Serie A title by two points last season but under Inzaghi added two Italian Cups and Super Cups to the three league titles he won at City and Wolfsburg, where he got his big break.

Now he faces the biggest match of his life against the team he helped come the powerhouse it is today. His equalizer against Queens Park Rangers in May 2012 set the stage for Sergio Aguero's last-gasp winner which snatched City's first league title since 1968.

The on-field success is a far cry from his childhood during the Bosnian War in Otoka, a area on the outskirts of Sarajevo filled with 30-storey tower blocks in view of the Serbian snipers lurking in the hills above. Children in his neighborhood would wait for gunfire in the bitter ethnic conflict to die down before they would head out to kick a ball around. One day during the bloody siege of Sarajevo, Dzeko's life was saved by his mother who stopped him from going out to play with his friends - seven of them would soon after be killed by a bomb which exploded on the pitch.

When he was picked up as a boy to play in the youth ranks at Zeljeznicar, one of Bosnia's top



Inter Milan's Bosnian forward Edin Dzeko

clubs, he would have to train in a school gym as their stadium was on the frontline and ploughed with trenches. That experience growing up left a big mark on Dzeko, who does humanitarian work for sick children in his home country with his wife

Amra, with whom he has four children. "Edin is solid, strong, stable. He's been through a lot in life and in football," his father Midhad said to AFP two years ago. "He knew how to deal with pressure and how to cope." — AFP

## Kuwait gymnastics team participate in Pharaohs Cup championship

KUWAIT: Kuwait's rhythmic gymnastics girls team are participating in the Pharaohs Cup championship, which started Wednesday in Cairo, Egypt, with great ambitions to make yet more new achievements for Kuwait's gymnastics sport. Kuwait's team left for Cairo on Thursday to participate in the championship that will continue until Monday. The delegation is headed by the presidents of Kuwait and the Arab Gymnastics Federations. The delegation (with 10 players) will participate in different categories: Maha Al-Saqer (Open Category); Nour Al-Ruzaihan (Juniors Category); Sarah Al-Bannai, Rayah Al-Qassar, Fawziya Al-Abdelkareem, Nabeela Al-Kharafi, Lamar Al-Foudary, Amina Al-Kandary, Talia Behbehani, and Liyan Behbehani (in the Starters Category). The delegation also includes Suad Al-Kandary, an official, and the two Ukrainian coaches.



## Chelsea owners see brighter future after torrid season

LONDON: Chelsea's owners insist they remain committed and optimistic about the future under new manager Mauricio Pochettino after a disastrous season for the Premier League club. The consortium led by American businessman Todd Boehly and US-based Clearlake Capital has endured a torrid first year in charge, sacking managers Thomas Tuchel and Graham Potter before a miserable end to the campaign under interim boss Frank Lampard.

Chelsea's 12th-place finish was their worst since 1994 despite a spend of more than £500 million (\$624 million) on new players in the new owners' first two transfer windows. Former Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain boss Pochettino was hired last week with the task of reviving the troubled club, who won the Champions League under Tuchel just two years ago. "It's been just over a year since we completed our purchase of Chelsea," the owners said in an open letter published on Thursday. "It was and remains a privilege for us to be custodians of our wonderful club."

They added: "Our promise to you was to make our fans proud. We remain completely committed to the long-term and sustainable success of our club and fulfilling that promise we made to you. "We know the huge potential we must grow to develop Chelsea FC and it is a role we take seriously. Everybody working here is relentlessly focused on driving us forward." The owners admitted that it had been a "disappointing" season for the men's team, who failed to win a trophy for only the second time since 2016, saying "there is a lot we can and will do better".

They added: "For all the challenges of the past year, we are optimistic about the future." The owners praised the women's team, who won a fourth straight Women's Super League title. "Our women's team has celebrated another astonishing season, winning the double with an unprecedented fourth successive WSL title and third successive FA Cup," they said. "There are not enough positive things to say about (manager) Emma Hayes, her backroom staff, and squad who have dealt with adversity, injury and Emma's period of absence. "Their character and hunger to win is second to none." — AFP



## Kuwait to take part in Special Olympics

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: In a grand ceremony at the historic temple Zappeion Megaron in Athens, and in the presence of Greek President Katerina Sakelloropoulou, Greece witnessed the kindling of the flame of the 15th Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023, to be held in the German capital from June 17th until June 25th. 7,000 athletes from 170 countries will be participating. They will compete in 26 Olympic games.

Kuwait is participating with a delegation of 57 individuals, including 30 athletes of both genders in addition to five non-disabled

athletes who will participate in the inclusion games. Following the kindling, the torch of the "flame of hope" was handed to special Olympics athletes Vassiliki Katsoudi and Natascha Wermelskirchen, who, along with Berlin police officer Maja Seidel, began the first flame that went through Athens streets to the German School.

The first German runner with the flame of hope, who is also a football player in the Special Olympics will participate in the Berlin 2023. Natascha Wermelskirchen, said, "What a day. To be one of the first torch runners in Athens makes me very proud. I am looking forward to bringing the flame to Berlin for the Games".

The flame of hope will arrive in Berlin, where the tour of German cities will start through Brandenburg Berlin from June 14th to June 17th and stop in many host towns until it arrives in Berlin on June 17th. In addition, the so-called



"Inclusion Day powered by Special Olympics" will take place on June 13th as an additional program to the traditional final leg. Host towns all over Germany have the opportunity to draw attention to the Special Olympics movement with their own torch runs.

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

#### Hospitals

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

Physiotherapy Hospital 24874330/9

#### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507

Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### Change of Name

I, **Ajij**, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3828425, having permanent address: Aziz Arif, S/o Saifuddin Arif, 107, Ward No. 18, Saket Residency, Barwani, M.P. - 451551, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Aziz (given name) and Arif (surname). **(#3802) 09/06/2023**

I, **Ahmed**, holder of Indian Passport No. M8390696, having permanent address Bohrwadi -313027, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Ahmed (given name) Semari (surname). **(#3801) 08/06/2023**

Automated enquiry about the CivilID card is 1889988



## Nuggets overcome Miami Heat

### Jokic and Murray dominate, make triple-doubles

**MIAMI:** Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray dominated the Miami Heat, both making triple-doubles as the Denver Nuggets took a 2-1 lead in the NBA Finals with a 109-94 win in game three on Wednesday. Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Jokic scored 32 points with 21 rebounds and 10 assists, an unprecedented triple-double combination in an NBA Finals game. Murray scored 34 points and grabbed 10 rebounds and 10 assists - completing his own triple-double with a rebound in the waning seconds.

It was the first time any team in a Finals had two players making triple-doubles in the same game - and the first time in any NBA game, regular season or playoffs, that two teammates posted 30-point triple-doubles. Miami simply could not find a way to handle the 6 foot, 11-inch (2.11m) Jokic and unless coach Erik Spoelstra can come up with a plan before Friday's game four, the Heat are going to face an uphill battle. Jokic became the first player in NBA history to reach the 30 points, 20 rebounds, 10 assists mark in a Finals game but took little interest in that achievement. "I'm just glad that we won a game," he said.

Denver head coach Michael Malone was full of appreciation for his two game-winners. "Regarding Nikola, nothing he does surprises me, ever. This guy has shown time and time again that he's built for these moments. He thrives in these moments, the biggest stage and he did that once again tonight," he said. "I'm really proud of Jamal and I could tell being around him the last 48 hours he was putting a lot of game two on him. And it wasn't just him, it was me and every one of our players. But that's what champions do. That's what warriors do, they battle back," he said.

After Miami's win in Denver on Sunday, the Nuggets provided the perfect response with the kind of imposing display that Malone had demanded after heavily criticizing his players. Neither team could get on top in the first quarter, which ended 24-24 after a wonderful



MIAMI: Jamal Murray #27 of the Denver Nuggets battles for the ball against Haywood Highsmith #24 and Caleb Martin #16 of the Miami Heat during the fourth quarter in Game Three of the 2023 NBA Finals on June 07, 2023. — AFP

turnaround, fadeaway, jump shot from Miami's Kyle Lowry. But the Heat struggled to contain Murray, who put up 20 points in the first half, while Jokic almost had a triple double by half-time - the giant Serbian claiming 14 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists in the opening two quarters.

The Nuggets led 53-48 at the half, helped by Miami's lack of precision in the paint where they missed 16 of 25 attempts. Early in the third though, Denver took a grip on the contest, quickly opening up an 11-point lead. Miami couldn't find either the defensive answers or the offensive potency to get back in the game. Denver had pushed the lead to 21 with 8:28 left in the fourth quarter and although Miami narrowed the deficit as the Nuggets took their foot off the gas, a third straight loss on home court leaves Spoelstra with plenty to ponder.

#### Elite-level

Miami, seeking to be the first eighth-seed to win the finals, have made a habit of fighting back whenever they have been written off but the combination of Jokic and Murray on-form leaves no room for such a below-par performance. "It's a great duo. Their games really complement each other," said Spoelstra. "You have to expect there to be elite talent in the Finals.

Both those guys are elite-level talent. "At our best version, we find ways to overcome that, make it tough on them and then certainly not lose the overwhelming majority of those physical battles, the 50/50 battles, the ball in the air, ball on the floor battles," he said. Jimmy Butler led Miami with 28 points while Bam Adebayo had 22 points and 17 rebounds but combined they shot just 10 of 30 in the paint. Denver won the rebound battle 58-33 and Butler said they had to find their edge again in game four. "We didn't play our best tonight. I feel like we just got to come out with more energy and effort, and that's correctable. That's on us as a group," he said. — AFP

## Messi joins MLS side Inter Miami after PSG exit

**BARCELONA:** Lionel Messi on Wednesday said he will sign for Major League Soccer side Inter Miami, choosing the United States as his next destination over a Barcelona reunion or blockbuster deal to play in Saudi Arabia. The Argentine forward, 35, has spent the last two seasons at Paris Saint-Germain, playing his final game for the club on Saturday, after moving from Barcelona in 2021, where he spent the majority of his career. MLS and Inter Miami confirmed the news on social media, although the American league noted "work remains to finalize a formal agreement".

"I've taken the decision that I am going to Miami. I don't have (the deal) 100 percent sealed or maybe there's something left to do, but we decided to continue our path there," Messi told Spanish newspapers Diario Sport and Mundo Deportivo. "After winning the World Cup and not being able to go to Barca, it's time to go to MLS to live football in a different way and enjoy my day to day life more." Messi is a seven-time Ballon d'Or winner and is expected to earn the individual accolade once more after leading Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar in December.

The football world was eagerly awaiting Messi's decision after PSG confirmed this week the playmaker, widely considered the best player in the history of football, was departing. The romance of a Barcelona return and prospect of eye-watering riches in Saudi Arabia fell by the wayside as Messi opted to join MLS, with Miami a city he has holidayed in on previous occasions. "If it had been a question of money, I would have gone to Saudi Arabia or elsewhere," said Messi. "It seemed a lot of money and the truth is that my decision went another way and not for money."

Inter Miami, co-owned by former England international David Beckham and founded in 2018, sacked coach Phil Neville last week with the team bottom of the Eastern Conference. Some reports say key MLS sponsors including Adidas and Apple TV, who own the league's domestic broadcasting rights, may be contributing to his deal. Messi, who turns 36 later this month, is now set to finish his club career outside the spotlight of top-level European football.

#### 'Wanted to come back'

Messi said he would have loved to return to Barcelona but was afraid that the financial complications which stopped the Catalan club extending his deal in 2021 would interfere again. "I really wanted to come back. I was really looking forward to it," continued Messi. "But, on the other hand, after having lived through what I lived through, after the exit I had... I didn't want to go through the same situation again and have to wait to see what was going to happen."

"I didn't want to leave my future in the hands of



MIAMI: A Miami Heat fan holds a Lionel Messi jersey during Game Three of the 2023 NBA Finals against the Denver Nuggets at Kaseya Center on June 07, 2023. — AFP

others. Somehow, I wanted to make my own decision for myself, for my family." Messi said he plans to live in Barcelona again in the future and be involved with his former side in some way. "I don't know at what moment and when, but hopefully I can return one day to contribute something to the club," he said.

Before that, though, Messi will give the growth of football in the United States another jolt of momentum with his arrival, which comes just three years ahead of the 2026 World Cup being co-hosted in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Having spent the past two seasons of his career at a lavishly funded PSG side, Messi will be going to a more modest set-up in Miami. In their first game since Messi's announcement on Wednesday, Miami defeated Alabama non-league side Birmingham Legion 1-0 in the US Open Cup to reach the semi-finals.

#### Glittering history

Messi joined Barcelona's academy at 13 years old after leaving his homeland. He became the Catalan club's greatest icon, scoring a record 672 goals in 778 games, winning 35 trophies, including four Champions League triumphs and 10 La Liga titles. After his unexpected Barcelona departure, Messi linked up in Paris with his former team-mate Neymar and Kylian Mbappe in a star-studded attacking trident, but PSG flattered to deceive during his time at the club.

While they won Ligue 1 twice, they suffered two devastating Champions League last-16 exits, with Messi a target for supporters' anger. Already being booed by fans, he took an unauthorized trip to Saudi Arabia, where he is a tourism ambassador, and was fined and suspended by PSG. Messi returned from suspension to play his 75th and final match for PSG last weekend in a defeat by Clermont, during which he was jeered once more and could not add to his tally of 32 goals for the club. "They were two years which were in general difficult for me, but they are behind me now," said Messi. — AFP

## West Ham win Europa Conference League

**PRAGUE:** Jarrod Bowen's dramatic 90th-minute goal secured West Ham their first major European trophy since 1965 with a 2-1 win over Fiorentina in the Europa Conference League final on Wednesday. It is the second European trophy for West Ham after they won the now defunct Cup Winners' Cup 58 years ago with a team including England World Cup heroes Bobby Moore and Geoff Hurst. Bowen picked up a superb through ball from Lucas Paqueta, before sending a low shot past a helpless Pietro Terracciano in the Fiorentina goal.

"I obviously dreamed of scoring but to score the winner in the last minute. It's what you always say you want to do," Bowen told BT Sport. "To do it in front of these fans. I thought I was going to cry. I'm just happy." Said Benrahma had opened the scoring for West Ham in Prague as he blasted a penalty past Terracciano on 62 minutes after VAR had caught Cristiano Biraghi handling the ball while trying to stop Bowen in the box. Giacomo Bonaventura leveled five minutes later, beating West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola with a fine, low right-footed effort. Bonaventura capitalized on a superb header back from Nicolas Gonzalez who had leapt over West Ham full-back Emerson.

The champions' name will be the second ever on the Conference League trophy following Roma, who won the maiden edition of the competition last year. West Ham have also clinched a spot in next season's Europa League with the win, while Fiorentina will miss out on European competition after finishing eighth in the Serie A. West Ham's previous major trophy was back in 1980 when they won the FA Cup. They spent most of the last season battling the prospect of relegation, finishing 14th in the Premier League in the end.

"We had a dream, we haven't had the best season, myself included, but to give these fans this moment, I'm

over the moon," Bowen said. "This is the biggest game of my career. The emotion, there was time for one more chance. I'm just so happy." West Ham manager David Moyes hailed the "incredible" last two years in which his team reached the Europa League semi-final before winning the trophy in Prague. "Last year we won the group, got to the semi-final, this year we won the group, got unbeaten, now we won the final," said the 60-year-old Scot. "It's been an incredible achievement to do so well in Europe. I've been really fortunate. I've got a great group of players, I'm with a club who have incredibly supported me."

The game got off to a slow start, although Michail Antonio tested Terracciano with a low shot on 40 seconds. Fiorentina dominated possession and looked more organized in a largely uneventful first half. But they did not come close to scoring until injury time when Christian Kouame headed against the post from Gonzalez's cross. Fiorentina striker Luka Jovic then tapped the ball across the line on a rebound but his goal was ruled out for offside.

#### 'A really big blow'

Declan Rice's 13th-minute shot from outside the box whizzed just past the post in the Hammers' best chance of the first half. Rice may have played his last game for the East Londoners as he is being courted by the likes of Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester United. The game changed after the goals as both sides suddenly looked far more lively, earning corners and creating chances. But Rolando Mandragora sent his shot just wide and Sofyan Amrabat was denied by Areola, while Tomas Soucek's header was saved by a diving Terracciano.

Fiorentina manager Vincenzo Italiano said it hurt to lose his second final in two weeks after the Viola lost to Inter Milan in the Italian Cup final, also 2-1. "In the future, we will talk about two disappointments in a single season," he said. "It's a really big blow. I'm upset because we were really close." Before the game, Prague police said they had detained 16 people as Fiorentina fans attacked West Ham supporters in a bar in central Prague. Three people sustained light injuries. — AFP



PRAGUE: West Ham players including West Ham United's English midfielder Declan Rice (center) celebrate with the trophy after winning the UEFA Europa Conference League final football match between ACF Fiorentina and West Ham United FC on June 7, 2023. — AFP