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Mol limits renewal of expats' driving licenses to one year

Licenses of domestic drivers will continue to be renewed for 3 years

Sheikha Al-Zain submits credentials to President Biden

WASHINGTON: Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah submitted her credentials as the new Ambassador of Kuwait to Washington during a meeting with US President Joe Biden, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington said in a statement on Sunday. It indicated Ambassador Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah conveyed greetings from HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Biden.

The Kuwaiti ambassador affirmed she will work on measures to bolster historic relations linking the two countries, enhancing them in all possible domains.

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WASHINGTON: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Kuwait Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah submits her credentials to US President Joe Biden at the White House. — KUNA

By B Izzak and Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The traffic department said on Sunday that driving licenses of expats will now be renewed for only one year, down from three years at present. The decision went into effect on April 26, 2023. The department however said driving licenses of expats working as domestic drivers will be renewed for three years. Major Abdullah Bu Hasan, who announced the decision, did not say why they reverted to the one-year validity for the licenses.

But the interior ministry said several weeks ago that it is reviewing hundreds of thousands of driving licenses issued to expats to ensure they were issued in accordance with the law, amid reports alleging widespread corruption. Local media said thousands of licenses held by expats are likely to be canceled.

Kuwait applies strict requirements for expats who wish to obtain a driver's license. These include the expat should draw a monthly salary of at least KD 600, must have a university degree and must have stayed legally in the country for at least two years. Several professions like judges, engineers, doctors and others are exempted from these conditions.

Driving licenses for expats used to be valid for as long as 10 years in the past. Later, its validity was linked to the validity of their residency. The traffic department then reduced the validity to just one year for several years, before extending the validity to three years again in 2020.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem on Sunday sent out invitations to MPs and

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Biden laughs off age gags at comedy roast



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden smiles during the White House Correspondents' Association dinner at the Washington Hilton on April 29, 2023. — AFP

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden took it on the chin Saturday at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner as he laughed gamely through sharp jokes about his age, and hit back with a few of his own. Washington's political and media elites gathered for their annual big-night-out in the US capital for an event that ranged from the traditional comedy gags to somber calls to free reporters imprisoned abroad.

Headlining the after-dinner entertainment was "Daily Show" correspondent Roy Wood Jr, who gleefully mocked Biden, 80, for running for a second term in the White House that could mean he is still president at age 86. Wood noted recent angry protests in France against raising the retirement age. "They rioted because they didn't want to work until 64. Meanwhile, in America, we have an 80-year-old man begging us for four more years of work," he deadpanned, drawing a broad smile from Biden, sitting only yards away.

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Qatar spends big to beat post World Cup blues

DOHA: Months after hundreds of thousands of football fans packed into its hotels and stadiums, Qatar is seeking to remedy a bout of the post-World Cup blues by hosting more international events. Along with the departed football crowds, thousands of foreign workers left the Gulf state after Lionel Messi lifted the coveted trophy on Dec 18. Many of those who stayed on are counting the cost.

Luxury hotels built for the tournament have laid off hundreds of staff as rooms costing thousands of dollars a night during the tournament can no longer be filled. In a country normally hungry for labor, a shopping mall on the edge of Doha recently advertised 100 jobs and saw more than 1,000 people jostling outside for interviews. Qatar estimates that the World Cup, which residents once dreaded, brought

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DOHA: In this file photo taken on Dec 3, 2022, people pose for photos at the Corniche promenade as Doha's skyline is seen in the background. — AFP

India captures rice-loving tusker after six killed

IDUKKI, India: Indian forest officials have tranquilized and relocated a rice-loving wild tusker elephant that killed at least six people, media reports said. The male elephant — dubbed Arikomban, or "rice-tusker" — was infamous for raiding shops for rice and grains in the southern state of Kerala. On Saturday, a team of 150 forest officials caught the elephant, which resisted its captors even after being hit with five tranquilizer shots, the Indian Express

newspaper reported. With its legs tied and eyes bound with a cloth, it was finally pushed and nudged by four kumki elephants — trained elephants used to capture others — into a truck. It was then fitted with a GPS collar and taken to a wildlife reserve. This was not the first time that officials had tried to capture the elephant, believed to be around 30 years old. Arikomban was hit with tranquilizer shots in 2017, but managed to escape.

Last month, bearing in mind his penchant for rice and grains, officials erected a dummy ration shop to lure the elephant, but a court put a stop to the plan, the newspaper reported. Conservationists blame the rapid expansion of human settlements around forests and key wildlife corridors for an increase in conflicts between people and animals in parts of India. —AFP



IDUKKI, India: This picture taken on April 29, 2023 shows forest officials transporting 'Arikomban' the wild elephant in this district in Kerala state. — AFP

Erdogan, rival draw vast crowds ahead of election

ISTANBUL: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his main opponent staged massive rival rallies on Sunday, setting the stage for a bruising battle in the final two weeks of Turkey's election

campaign. The veteran Turkish leader filled a central Ankara square that can fit a few hundred thousand people with flag-waving supporters, showing no signs of an illness that sidelined him for three days this week.

"Are we ready to come out with a crushing victory?" Erdogan, draped in a scarf of the Turkish capital's main football club, demanded from the enthusiastic crowd. "On May 14, our nation, God willing, will eliminate them from the political scene," he said of secular leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu and his six-party opposition alliance.

The 69-year-old president has bounced back strongly from what was described as a digestive problem in the run-up to one of Turkey's most important elections of its post-Ottoman history. The illness shook Erdogan's strongman image, which he has cultivated over two decades of economic booms and busts, social transformation and crackdowns on dissent. "As you know I was sick recently, and from every house people were praying for me," Erdogan told the crowd. "I am trying to be worthy of those prayers."

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Local

Kuwait National Guard begins Command Centers exercise

Officers training on how to deal with emergency situations



Kuwait National Guard personnel meet with Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai (second left).



Kuwait National Guard personnel listen to a lecture during the CPX Nasr 18 exercise. —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: The General Headquarters of the National Guard announced the start of the activities of the Guard Command Centers exercise (CPX Nasr 18) held at the camp of HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah. The exercise commenced in the presence of the Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai. The exercise will continue until May 3. Rifai conveyed to the participants the greetings of the leadership of the National Guard represented by Chief of the National Guard HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

"We stress the importance of the exercise in honing the skills of leaders in facing crises by coordinating efforts, developing communication channels and strengthening capabilities in carrying out tasks, whether in the security or military aspect. We also provide support to all state agencies with high effi-

ciency to maintain the security of the homeland under our wise leadership," Lieutenant-General Rifai said, adding that the exercise seeks to train National Guard leaders from all units to deal with emergency situations and quickly make appropriate decisions to solve any issues.

"(CPX Nasr 18) is one of the major exercises that are held annually in the National Guard to raise the level of readiness and combat readiness," said Lieutenant-General Rifai. Director of the Operations Directorate of the National Guard and Director of the Exercise Brigadier General Saleh Mufleh said the exercise includes workshops and coordination meetings to discuss several topics, including cybersecurity. "The aim is to raise the capabilities of specialists in the National Guard to confront cyber-attacks and take proactive measures to avoid them," he said.

The last National Guard Command Centers exercise (CPX Nasr 17) was held five years ago in 2019,

before the COVID-19 pandemic. It saw the participation of delegates from the US, Britain, Vietnam, China, Jordan, Turkey, France and Italy.

Non-commissioned officers

In another development, the army has announced the enrollment of 400 Kuwaitis who passed the scheduled tests and medical examinations in the course of non-commissioned officers. According to a press statement, the admission of all applicants who have passed the tests and medical examinations comes in line with the high directives of the political leadership to support and encourage Kuwaiti youths and give them the opportunity to work and serve their homeland. The first batch of 227 students was accepted last March, with 350 applicants to be accepted next May. The rest of the applicants will be accepted and trained successively in schools and training wings of all army units. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Kuwait National Guard Lieutenant General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai speaks during the commencement of the CPX Nasr 18 exercise.

News in Brief

Construction worker dies

KUWAIT: An Egyptian construction worker fell from the roof of one of the houses under construction in Mutlaa while he was on duty. After receiving the report, security men and ambulances rushed to the accident site, where paramedics confirmed him dead. Forensic officials have launched investigation on the incident.

Man commits suicide

KUWAIT: A European man allegedly committed suicide in a swimming pool in one of the hotels where he worked. The body was found tied up. The Public Prosecution has been informed and investigation has been launched.

Schools to join TIMMS evaluation

KUWAIT: The National Center for Education Development announced that it will be conducting the TIMMS mathematics and science exams for grade 8 and grade 4 students. The test will be held in several schools across the country on May 2 as part of an international study that aims at evaluating the educational level of students in the country. The General Director of the center Amina Al-Jaber said students in 300 schools in Kuwait will be taking the test, which will be administered in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The outcomes of the evaluation will be studied and used to develop education in Kuwait. Conducted every four years since 1995, TIMSS measures how effective countries are in teaching mathematics and science. It's administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), headquartered in the Netherlands. —KUNA

Fire engulfs tent

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) managed to control a fire that erupted in Sulaibiya, without any injuries recorded. The public relations department at the KFF received a report about a fire that started in a tent outside the home. The firefighters were able to extinguish the fire without recording any injuries.



Mohammed Al-Wuhaib



KU, French research center organize citizenry conference

KUWAIT: The cultural panel in the Department of Philosophy at the College of Arts at Kuwait University launched a conference on the topic "Citizenry in the Arab World", in cooperation with the French Center for Research in the Arabian Peninsula at the southern building of the college in Sabah Al-Salem University City. The event is scheduled to last for two days. The Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Madaaj stressed that holding these conferences contributes to consolidating the concept of citizenship among the Arab peoples, in addition to opening scientific and academic horizons that serve the community.

"The issue of citizenry is a scientific topic worthy of research, as it did not receive sufficient attention. It is one of the basic pillars of any living society. It is the social link and the political fabric of individuals and society alike," Al-Madaaj said. The Senior Counselor at the French Embassy Fanny Fonquerone and representative of the Ambassador of France to Kuwait Claire Le Flecher expressed her happiness over the conference, which was organized by the Department of Philosophy at Kuwait University and the French Research Center in the Arabian Peninsula.

"This two-day conference brings together more than a dozen academics from different continents." "During these two days, discussions will take place on the issue of citizenry in its individual and collective manifestations, as well as its political and legal practices, hoping that these discussions will allow for the promotion of common knowledge and thus open new horizons for research and partnership between the two countries," she said.

"The conference was organized in the spirit of active cooperation between France and Kuwait. France constant-



KUWAIT: The cultural panel in the Department of Philosophy at the College of Arts at Kuwait University launched a conference on the topic "Citizenry in the Arab World", in cooperation with the French Center for Research in the Arabian Peninsula. —KUNA



ly shows its friendship with Kuwait through its diplomatic activity and the scope of its cooperation. The friendship between the two countries is old; it began in the seventeenth century and has grown strongly since then. It is a friendship that has extended for more than two centuries," Fonquerone said.

She indicated that the conference came after the International Symposium on Archeology in the Arabian Peninsula, which was held last month, and shows the usual research cooperation between the countries. "Cultural and scientific cooperation yields results from exchanges such as this conference, stressing that the relations developed at the conference enhance and develop academic and scientific cooperation between the two countries and more, hoping that this conference will be fruitful for all."

The Head of the Philosophy Department Dr Muhammad Al-Wuhaib, said that studying scientific concepts and academic ideas is one of the most important foundations at the university. "It serves the individual and develops society, in addition to encouraging research and careful studies." "The conference attracts a distinguished group of academics to enrich the topics of the conference over a period of two days to discuss one of the most contemporary and important topics, which is the concept of citizenry," he clarified.

It is worth noting that the conference also deals with the study of theoretical dimensions and practical aspects of what must be supported, consolidated, changed, or developed with regard to the reality of citizenship in the Arab world. —Agencies

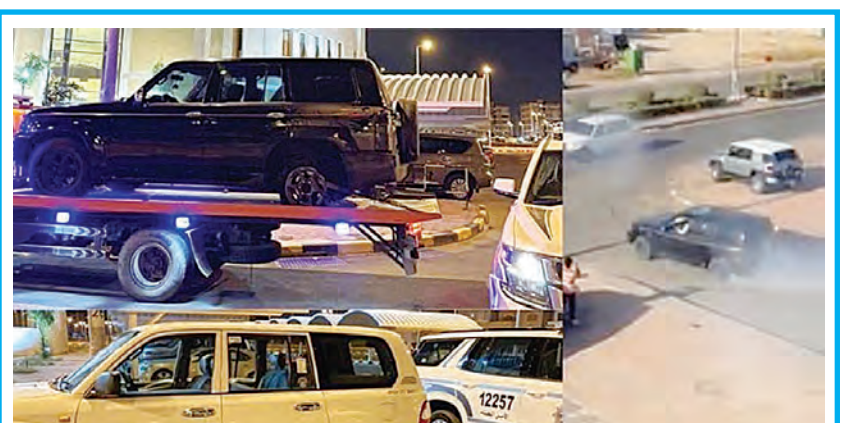
Municipality starts second phase of hygiene campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality announced that it started the second phase of the hygiene campaign launched last March called "Our country deserves it" in order to raise the hygiene quality across the country. The municipality confirmed that field teams in cleaning centers of the cleaning and road occupancy departments in all governorates will intensify their inspection campaigns to reduce hygiene violations in commercial, investment, craft, industrial and agricultural areas.

The aim of these field trips is to monitor violations and have cleaning inspectors follow up on cleaning work on a 24-hour shift basis in centers spread across the six gov-

ernorates. Inspectors will monitor the performance of cleaning companies in order to crack down on violations. It's worth noting that private commercial cleaning companies that sign contracts with real estate owners in the investment, commercial and industrial sectors are subject to the supervision and control of the Kuwait Municipality, but the municipality is not obligated to remove waste from these companies because they don't have contracts with it.

The municipality also indicated that it would intensify the efforts of its supervisory teams and will provide the required mechanisms, equipment and cleaning workers to raise the level of cleanliness. Legal action will be taken against those who violate construction and waste dumping regulations. The municipality emphasized the importance of sealing waste bags, putting them inside containers and taking them outside during specified collection times in order to avoid fines.



KUWAIT: Two drivers have been arrested for recklessly driving and endangering the lives of others after a video clip circulated on some social media sites that showed them in the Sulaibikhat area. The drivers of two vehicles were detained and have been referred to authorities for necessary legal action.

Local

Ministry of Health shuts 33 clinics over advert breach

Unrealistic beauty standards put people at risk

By Nebal Snan and Agencies

KUWAIT: Kuwait's ministry of health announced it has "temporarily" shut down 33 private cosmetic surgery clinics for breaking medical advertisement rules on social networking sites. In a press statement, the ministry said the move came after these clinics violated law 70/2020 on the profession of cosmetic surgeons and relevant ministerial decrees, mainly decree 87/2023 related to public morality, code of ethics and patient privacy.

Kuwait Times had reported on the psychological effects these advertisements could have on youth in January. Psychologist Hassan Al-Mousawi said consistent exposure to these images, whether on the streets or on social media, might result in a skewed perception of beauty among young women, often leading to more serious mental disorders, from anxiety to self-harm. The unrealistic beauty standards not only put women at risk, he said, but also men who have been recently going under the knife more frequently compared to previous years.

The ministry added that it had already taken legal action against the clinics by sending the violating doctors to concerned authorities and shutting down the clinics "temporarily" until rel-

evant investigations are over. Decree 87/2023, which was issued in May 2023, aims at regulating the huge volume of cosmetic surgery clinic ads both online and on the streets. The decree largely deals with two issues: The publicization of service costs in ads and the use and filming of photos or videos that depict customers at the clinic. This only applies to private clinics.

Superlatives, price tags off limits

Here are highlights from some of the 27 articles in the decree: On advertising prices: The decree prohibits advertising the prices of health services, including products and treatments, both online and on the streets. The article implies that it's not allowed to publicly respond to requests for pricing on social media, which usually happens in the comments section under posts. Health professionals, however, are allowed to advertise their experience.

It is not permissible to advertise medicines, medical preparations, mixtures, formulas, stimulants, special foods, devices, machines or equipment through any other advertising means without a license from the health ministry.

On filming patients: Physicians and healthcare practitioners are prohibited from filming patients

for purposes of education, documentation or research without written permission from the patient, practitioner and management of the clinic.

On the content of ads: Ads must not contain false or misleading medical information. Using exaggerated superlatives, such as "the best", "the only", "guaranteed", and "legendary" is also not allowed.

Brimming with issues

A quick look at the social media accounts of some cosmetic surgery clinics shows that many have stopped advertising their prices. A few had posted statements in early April, two weeks after the decree was issued, to urge customers to call the clinic for information on pricing because "it's not permitted to advertise pricing and offers on social media".

Following the health ministry's announcement on Saturday evening, people took to Twitter and Instagram mostly to voice their approval, despite misunderstanding the motivation behind the shutdowns. Comments on social media posts, which mostly contained vague information on the closures without explaining the nature of the violations, assumed the clinics had caused physical harm to patients and asked for those responsible to be prosecuted. Many brought to attention that some clinics are operating



without the necessary qualifications.

"(Errors) in medical procedures are more serious compared to violations of ad laws," said Zaina Al-Ras on Twitter. "Technicians working as cosmetic surgeons, (unqualified foreign workers) becoming dermatology technicians. (Cosmetic surgery clinics) are brimming with problems. The ministry of health needs to take a close look and bust those working illegally."



KUWAIT: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Mutlaq Burguba meets with renewable energy specialists to discuss future projects. —KUNA



KUWAIT: This file photo shows a construction site, part of the Gulf electrical interconnection expansion project.

Kuwait to speed up renewable energy projects

KUWAIT: Kuwait must accelerate its plans of producing no less than 15 percent of the electrical grid consumption from renewable energy sources by 2023, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Mutlaq Burguba told KUNA. The ministry noted in a statement that Burguba met with several renewable energy specialists and discussed relevant topics, current and future governmental projects,

their implementation and how to follow up on them.

The meeting focused on conserving energy and the steps needed for relying on renewable energy to produce 10 percent of the ministry's building consumption of electrical energy. The officials discussed the establishment of an organizational unit in the ministry to handle the tasks and projects related to renewable energy.

The meeting was attended by Acting Undersecretary Maha Al-Asousi, Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services and Main Concerns Sector Ahmed Al-Rashidi, Assistant Undersecretary for Electric Power Stations and Water Distillation Sector Haitham Al-Ali, and Assistant Undersecretary for Distribution Networks Engineer Saad Al-Rashidi. Electricity projects have made headlines last week,

with the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development announcing that 15 percent of the Gulf electrical interconnection expansion project with Kuwait has been completed until March 2023.

The interconnection project between the GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) and Kuwait is essential to producing sustainable energy and reducing the cost of production. The project includes establishing the Wafra station, which would connect the GCCIA's network with Kuwait's network through four circuits of 400 kV transmission at a total cost of \$270 million. According to the fund, Kuwait will be among the largest beneficiaries of the project, as it will raise the capacity supporting the local electricity network to about 3,500 megawatts. —KUNA

News in Brief

Authority for disabled to hold monthly diwaniya

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for the Disabled will have a monthly diwaniya to receive the disabled and to discuss issues of concern to them and their families, the authority said in a media statement. The diwaniya will be held on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm with the participation of NGOs. The authority asked those interested in attending to write to the authority through e-mail. The first diwaniya, said the authority, will discuss the special code of buildings and ease of use for the disabled in the presence of authority's director general and government representatives.

KPC announces LNG prices for May

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Sunday the liquefied gas prices, namely Propane and Butane for May. In a statement to KUNA, KPC added that Propane metric ton will be sold at the value of US\$ 555 during May, and the Butane metric ton at the same price. Both gases are used in production of petrochemicals as well as cooking and heating purposes, it added. The liquefied gas prices are affected by the increase and decrease of oil prices, market supply and demand and other factors. —KUNA

GCC committed to Sudan's security

RIYADH: GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi affirmed on Sunday the Council's keenness on Sudan's security, safety and stability and its commitment to supporting the country in facing all challenges to achieve the aspirations of its people. Budaiwi made the remark during a reception held at GCC headquarters in Riyadh for Special Envoy of the Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council in Sudan Ambassador Dafallah Al-Haj Ali. Budaiwi called on all sides to calm down, prioritize national interest and halt all forms of military escalation. Budaiwi also praised all humanitarian roles played by Saudi Arabia, the GCC and Arab countries and all international and regional efforts that aim to achieve security and stability and to end the crises in Sudan. —KUNA



Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munifi (center) during the joint meeting.

Kuwait supports Arab financial institutions

RABAT: Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munifi affirmed late Saturday Kuwait's keenness to support the work of the Arab financial institutions to enhance the economic cooperation and integra-

tion. In a statement to KUNA, following the conclusion of the joint annual meetings held in Rabat, she stressed on Kuwait's keenness to accomplish the goals of the Arab financial institutions in order to achieve development and economic prosperity for Arabs.

Al-Munifi, who headed Kuwait's delegation, said that the financial institutions represent the Arab economic cooperation, integration and joint Arab action, noting that they succeeded

in financing economic and social projects in Arab countries. The Arab financial institutions concluded their annual meetings by selecting a chairman for the upcoming meetings, as well as approving the board of directors reports for the year 2022. Arab ministers of finance and economy and central bank governors participated in the meetings to discuss financing and supporting economic and social development programs in the Arab countries. —KUNA

oments in this sector, and he believes that presenting them through sessions, workshops, and training programs is a vital matter that will benefit all journalists and media workers. Several employees from KUNA, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) will participate in the aforementioned training program, which will last until May four.

In the world of journalism, technology have appeared in the production of press materials such as news, economic analyses, news stories, etc., using AI programs and technologies that extract huge data from the digital archives, then edit and audit them, and even direct the content automatically to a specific audience. AI journalism represents a new media revolution that is fully compatible with the modern technologies of the information and industrial revolution, and it is in great growth in the world of journalism and media. This center is concerned with increasing the skills of professional journalistic work, improving media content, and bringing theory and practice closer in the field of writing media materials. —KUNA



RABAT: Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munifi attends the joint annual meetings held in Rabat. Al-Munifi affirmed Kuwait's keenness to support the work of the Arab financial institutions to enhance the economic cooperation and integration. —KUNA photos

KUNA center holds training program on AI journalism

KUWAIT: The KUNA Center for the Development of Media Skills on Sunday started a training program entitled "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Journalism," dealing with metaverse journalism and its modern tech. The program, which is presented by the CEO of UAE Artificial Intelligence Journalism for Research and Forecasting (AIJRF) Dr Mohammad Abdelzaher is concerned with discussing metaverse journalism techniques, ways to benefit from AI, answering many questions in connection to it, and providing ideas and solutions to several challenges facing the media and related to the concept of future media.

In the training program, Dr Abdelzaher discusses the extent to which AI is linked to many complex devel-



KUWAIT: CEO of UAE AI Journalism for Research and Forecasting Dr Mohammad Abdelzaher presents 'Artificial Intelligence (AI) Journalism'. —KUNA

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News in Brief

Final school exam schedule ready

KUWAIT: The education ministry has completed the preparation of the end of the school year 2022-2023 exam schedule for secondary school students, the ministry announced Sunday. The schedule is pending approval by the ministry's Undersecretary and Chairman General of examinations Usama Al-Sultan. About 44,000 students in grade 12 will sit for exams from June 11 until June 22 in the general, private, religious, special and home education. The schedule was set as it was in previous years with rest days in between. There will be an extra 30 minutes for students with learning difficulties and another extra 15 minutes for each subject in order to give students time to read instructions and ensure they received the correct number of exam pages.

Islamic book fair launched Sunday

KUWAIT: The Social Reform Society has kicked off the 45th edition of the Islamic book fair Sunday. The official spokeswoman for the Ministry of Information Anwar Murad said in a statement to KUNA that the exhibition is closely followed by publishing and journalism sector. Murad said 49 publishing houses are participating in the book fair, including 19 from Kuwait and 30 from outside the country. She added that the ministry would provide all required logistical support to the exhibit to ensure its success. The exhibit will go on until May 6. —KUNA

Charity projects reach 623,000 people

KUWAIT: The Deputy Director General for Communications, Marketing and Information Technology Affairs at Mercy International Society, Dr Adnan Al-Haddad, announced that the number of beneficiaries from the Iftar, Clothing and Eid projects amounted to 623,000 beneficiaries, distributed over 29 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Arab world. He pointed out that Mercy International attaches great importance to the Iftar project, as it is one of the most important tributaries of virtue and righteousness, which enhances the spirit of interdependence and solidarity among Muslims in various parts of the world. With regard to the clothing and Eid project, Al-Haddad explained: "Thousands of orphans have benefited from the project, in a good humanitarian gesture that spread happiness and joy, in addition to spreading smiles around the world."

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: An aerial photo shows part of Kuwait City, including Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre overlooking the Arabian Gulf Street. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwaiti artist traces nostalgia, heritage post oil discovery

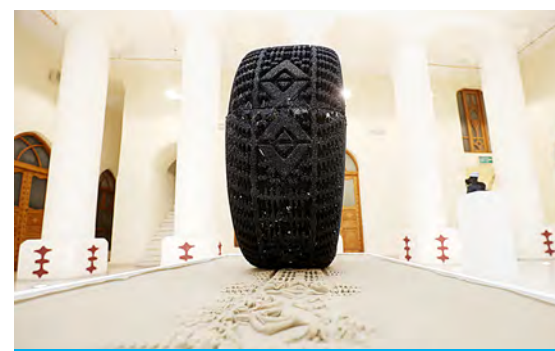
Hanadi Al-Marzouq presents five artworks at Sadu House exhibit



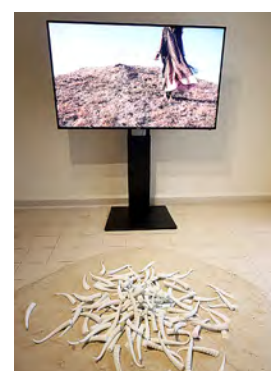
Kuwaiti designer Hanadi Al-Marzouq poses for a photo outside the exhibit held at Sadu House.



This photo shows "The Prophecy, 2023", one of the artworks at the exhibit.



This photo shows "The Trace, 2023", one of the artworks at the exhibit. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



This photo shows "Anthropocene, 2023", one of the artworks at the exhibit.



This photo shows "Inception, 2023", one of the artworks at the exhibit.

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti designer Hanadi Al-Marzouq is showcasing her artwork in "Traces of Nostalgia", a multidisciplinary exhibition where she expresses the changes that took place in Kuwait after the discovery of oil.

Marzouq's art pieces revolve around preserving Kuwait's heritage that is fading away after the country's rapid modernization. Five of her artworks that shift between Kuwait's past and present are displayed at the exhibition: 'The Trace', 'The Prophecy', 'The Awakening', 'Inception' and 'Anthropocene'. The exhibition opened at Sadu House on April 29, 2023 and will continue until May 6, 2023. During the exhibition, Marzouq told Kuwait Times about her artworks and highlighted the significance of each piece.

The Trace, 2023: Mixed media installation

Marzouq said 'The Trace' is an installation that deconstructs the language of traditional symbols found in Sadu textiles, embracing them as functional motifs rather than mere ornaments that are devoid of any purpose. The central part of this installation is a tire, a symbol of the consumerist mindset, manufactured from recycled rubber whose tracks reveal ephemeral Sadu impressions on the sand. This installation invites the viewer to reflect on our lost heritage, capturing fleeting moments before they disappear from our landscape.

The Prophecy, 2023: Mixed media sculpture

Describing 'The Prophecy', Marzouq said it is a composition of thoughts on Kuwait's brutalist architecture of the oil era, which is mostly demolished now as oil continues to be a catalyst for cycles of demolition and construction that are devoid of any permanence. This multi-layered abstraction fuses various materials such as ceramic and brass. This leads to the realization that the purpose of this study is not to recover what has been lost, but to expand on the potential of contemporary identities of Kuwaitis influenced by this dichotomous transition.

The Awakening, 2023: Mixed media installation

Extending her thoughts to a future that gives birth to other habitants, Marzouq said 'The Awakening' is an installation that transports the viewer into the future, with a glimpse of ruins at an imagined site where future habitants reflect on our legacy and pose questions to construct a collective memory of our past. The bleached burqas represent the diminished interest in locally crafted goods and the decline of the weaver's historic role in society, whereas the prototypes of an unfinished

project represent a constant state of cultural alienation. The installation also comments on the shift in gender roles that came about during this period of social and economic change, allowing the manifestation of petro-masculinity in many ways.

Inception, 2023: Textile, wool

Marzouq said the textile pattern mimics tire tracks found in the previous installation, a contrast of the past and present. While the weaver promotes cultural identity through their craft, the designer draws significance from culture using instruments that can channel this meaning into products. The result is a juxtaposition of the roles of the traditional weaver and the contemporary product designer as they collaborate to create products that generate social shifts.

Anthropocene, 2023: Film

Marzouq clarified the idea of the film, as she said that in a barren postapocalyptic landscape, an unnamed young bedouin woman — a relic of her bygone ancestry — attempts to summon a half remembered Sadu-weaving technique. She wanders through decayed cityscapes, desert landscapes and abandoned scrap yards in search of the one tool that would activate her memory and regenerate her once expert weaving skills — a weaving hom. The work explores spatial and temporal insights into the inevitable consequences of the current state of imbalance. By breaking the barrier between the screen and the spectator with a pile of horns, the narrative is extended to become a perceptual activity of the spectator.

the fields of natural sciences and social sciences and humanities. Research students must have completed 16 years of school education. They must be born on or after April 2, 1989. Eligible students will study, if accepted in the scholarship program, from April 2024 to March 2026 in the field of study majored at university or related to it. Years of study might extend depending on the major category.

Application forms, detailed information and other conditions can be downloaded from the embassy's Website: (https://www.kw.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/11_000001_00233.html). The embassy will start accepting applications from Sunday, May 7, 2023. The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday June 15, 2023 at 03:00 pm. Applications must be submitted to the embassy by hand. The application process consists of document screening, written exams, and personal interview. Applicants are advised to prepare for the exam by referring to the past exams. Link: <https://www.studyin-japan.go.jp/en/planning/scholarship/application/examination/>

For inquiries, please contact cultural section, Embassy of Japan by telephone at 2530 9458 or email at rania.alnass@kw.mofa.go.jp

Japanese embassy announces 2024 govt scholarship

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Japan is pleased to announce that the Government of Japan offers scholarship to those who wish to study at Japanese universities as undergraduate and research students. The Japanese Government Scholarship was established in 1954 in order to increase mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries as well as to make an international contribution to the intellectual field.

All Kuwaiti citizens who meet the following qualifications are eligible to apply: Undergraduate students must have completed a 12-year school curriculum at good academic standing. They must be born on or after April 2, 1999. Eligible students will study, if accepted in the scholarship program, for five years from April 2024 to March 2029 in

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US demands Beijing stop provocative acts in S China Sea

Turkey nears referendum on Erdogan’s two decades rule

Clashes rock Sudan despite truce

Millions have endured crippling shortages of water, food, medicines and other basic supplies



JEDDAH: Evacuees from Sudan disembark from a ship upon their arrival in Jeddah on April 30, 2023. Heavy fighting again rocked Sudan’s capital as tens of thousands have fled the bloody turmoil and a former prime minister warned of the “nightmare” risk of a descent into full-scale civil war. — AFP

KHARTOUM: Heavy fighting again rocked Sudan’s capital Sunday as tens of thousands have fled the bloody turmoil and a former prime minister warned of the “nightmare” risk of a descent into full-scale civil war. Army forces clashed with paramilitaries in Khartoum as deadly hostilities have entered a third week despite the latest ceasefire, which was formally set to expire at the end of the day.

“There has been very heavy fighting and loud gunfire ... since the early morning on my street,” a southern Khartoum resident told AFP. Clashes were reported around the army headquarters in central Khartoum, and the army also carried out airstrikes in the capital’s twin city of Omdurman across the Nile River.

Foreign nations have scrambled to evacuate thousands of their citizens by air, road and sea since the fighting plunged the poverty-stricken country into deadly turmoil on April 15. A first Red Cross plane brought eight tonnes of humanitarian aid to Port Sudan, from Jordan, on Sunday. It carried surgical material and medical kits to stabilise 1,500 patients, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

Millions of Sudanese have endured crippling

shortages of water, food, medicines and other basic supplies, while tens of thousands have fled to neighbouring countries, with more on their way. Satellite images showed long bus convoys at the Egyptian border, while the UN said tens of thousands had escaped to Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic.

The turmoil could deepen further in the power struggle between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, head of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Sudan’s former premier Abdalla Hamdok warned Saturday that the conflict could deteriorate into one of the world’s worst civil wars. “God forbid if Sudan is to reach a point of civil war proper... Syria, Yemen, Libya will be a small play,” Hamdok told an event in Nairobi. “I think it would be a nightmare for the world.”

Risk of famine

The violence has killed at least 528 people and wounded about 4,600, the health ministry said, although the real casualty toll may be higher from fighting in 12 out of Sudan’s 18 states including the Darfur region.

The UN World Food Programme has warned the unrest could plunge millions more into hun-

ger in a country where 15 million people already need aid to stave off famine. Some of those killed still lie on the roads of Khartoum, and the ICRC’s Africa regional director Patrick Youssef told journalists the Sudanese Red Crescent was “trying to get to the bodies in the streets”. Only 16 percent of hospitals are functioning in Khartoum, according to the World Health Organization, with many facilities shelled in the fighting.

The warring sides have agreed to multiple truces but none has taken hold, as chaos and lawlessness have gripped the capital city of five million and other regions. The latest three-day ceasefire—due to expire at midnight (2200 GMT) Sunday—was agreed Thursday after mediation led by the United States, Saudi Arabia, the African Union and the United Nations.

As the battles have raged regardless, the rival generals have taken aim at each other in the media. Burhan again branded the RSF a militia that aims “to destroy Sudan” while Daglo called the army chief “a traitor”. Local authorities in Khartoum on Sunday put civil servants on open-ended leave “due to the security situation”, though the majority of residents have already been hiding at home since the fighting broke out.

Tens of thousands flee

Sudan was ruled for decades by Islamist-backed strongman Omar al-Bashir, who was ousted by the military in 2019 after mass pro-democracy protests. The coup brought Burhan and Daglo to power, and they seized full control in another military takeover, in 2021, before turning on each other.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged negotiations to end the bloodshed. “There is no right to go on fighting for power when the country is falling apart,” he told Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television on Saturday. “My appeal is for everything to be done to support an African-led initiative for peace in Sudan.”

About 75,000 have been displaced by the fighting, the UN said. At least 20,000 have escaped to Chad, 4,000 to South Sudan, 3,500 to Ethiopia and 3,000 to the Central African Republic, it said. The fighting has also triggered a mass exodus of foreigners and international staff. Saudi Arabia said it had taken about 5,000 people to safety on ships across the Red Sea. A US-organised road convoy arrived in Port Sudan Saturday to join the exodus. And the UK Foreign Office said just under 1,900 Britons had been taken out on 21 flights, following large airlifts by France, Germany and other nations. — AFP

Pope appeals to Hungarians to be open to migrants

BUDAPEST: Pope Francis on Sunday called on Hungarians to be “open” toward migrants, as he wrapped up a three-day visit to the central European country whose nationalist premier has taken a staunch anti-immigration stance.

Tens of thousands thronged a central Budapest square to hear the pope lead an open-air mass during which he urged all, including “those with political and social responsibilities”, to be more open. “Let us encourage one another to be increasingly open doors,” the 86-year-old Argentine pontiff said, adding it was “sad and painful... to see closed doors”.

“The closed doors of our selfishness with regard to others... the doors we close towards those who are foreign or unlike us, towards migrants or the poor,”

he said. Throughout his visit to Budapest—his second since a brief 2021 stopover—Francis has emphasised a welcoming stance towards those fleeing poverty or conflict zones.

The comments have stood in stark contrast to those of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban who has regularly espoused anti-migration rhetoric to defend a “Christian Europe” since coming to power in 2010.

On Sunday, some 50,000 people thronged to hear the pope say mass under tight security at Kossuth Lajos Square, behind the parliament on the banks of the Danube, according to local authorities. “I feel emotional. He is very important in my life,” onlooker Ferenc Toth, 43, told AFP after the pope passed by in his popemobile.

‘Christian mission’

University student Levente Kiss said it was “unique” to see the pope up close. “It was good to see that the pope has taken a stance that really calls us to our Christian mission to support the people in migration crises, especially the war in Ukraine,”

the 21-year-old added. On Saturday, Francis gave a speech to refugees—mostly from neighbouring Ukraine—and poor people at a Budapest church. Orban’s government has welcomed those fleeing the war in Ukraine, which borders Hungary.

But activists say there is barely a support system in place and Orban’s insistence on maintaining ties with Moscow has also alienated Ukrainians. Francis’ 41st international trip since becoming pope in 2013 is taking place entirely in Budapest, the capital of the EU member where 39 percent of the 9.7-million population are Catholic. It comes a month after he was hospitalised for three months for bronchitis, so all eyes have been on the pontiff’s health. But despite persistent knee pain forcing him to move around in a wheelchair, the pope has appeared to be in good shape.

On Saturday, Francis met Budapest mayor Gergely Karacsony, a staunch Orban opponent. He also met with bishop Hilarion, who was ousted as head of the Russian church’s department for external relations by Russian Orthodox leader Patriarch Kirill, a staunch Kremlin backer. — AFP



BUDAPEST: Handout photo released by the Vatican Media on April 30, 2023 Pope Francis is greeted by believers wearing traditional Hungarian dresses as he celebrates a holy mass at Kossuth Lajos' Square during his visit in Budapest, on the last day of his three-day trip to Hungary. — AFP

Gas leak kills 11 in India

AMRITSAR: A gas leak killed 11 people in India on Sunday, an official said, in the latest deadly industrial accident in the vast developing economy of 1.4 billion people. The gas leak happened in Giaspora, an industrial area of Ludhiana in the northern state of Punjab.

“Eleven deaths are confirmed,” Mandeep Singh Sidhu, police commissioner of Ludhiana, told reporters, adding that four people were hospitalised. The cause of the leak was yet to be ascertained, Sidhu added.

“When the blood sample is matched with the sample that the NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) team takes, only then will we be able to tell you the exact cause, which kind of gas,” the police commissioner said. Five women were among those who died, broadcaster NDTV reported. The six other victims included two boys aged 10 and 13, the report added. Industrial gas leaks blamed on poor safety standards and insufficient checks are common in India. Last August, at least 112

women were hospitalised after a gas leak at an apparel manufacturing plant in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

That followed a similar accident in June when around 200 women fell unconscious after a gas leak in the same area, NDTV reported. In 2020, at least 15 people were killed and hundreds hospitalised after a gas leak at a chemical plant in Visakhapatnam, an industrial port city in the same state. Nearly 1,000 people were exposed to the gas and over 500 were hospitalised with symptoms of severe respiratory distress and skin and eye irritation. Residents were found slumped in the streets after being exposed to the gas, forcing a large-scale evacuation around the plant.

A government report accused the plant’s owner LG Polymers, a subsidiary of South Korea’s LG Chem, of negligence and said the disaster was due to a lack of safety protocols and poor emergency response. Two senior South Korean executives and 10 other local employees were arrested and charged with offences, including

the Indian legal equivalent of manslaughter.

That incident sparked memories of one of India’s worst industrial disasters. In 1984, gas leaked from a pesticide plant in Bhopal, a city in central India. At least 3,500 people living around the plant operated by Union Carbide died in the days that followed the leak. People continue to suffer the effects to this day.

Children are still born disfigured, with webbed feet and hands, and experience stunted growth because of the gas that affected their mothers. — AFP

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International

UN chief, envoys in key talks on Afghanistan crisis

Taleban govt will be absent from the talks with representatives from about 25 countries

DOHA: UN chief Antonio Guterres will gather international envoys at a secret location in Doha on Monday in an increasingly desperate bid to find ways to influence Afghanistan's Taleban rulers. Considered the world's biggest humanitarian crisis by the United Nations, Guterres's quandary has been deepened by the Taleban administration's move to stop girls going to school and most women from working, even for UN agencies.

The Taleban government, which took back power in August 2021, will be absent from the talks with representatives from about 25 countries and international organisations, according to diplomats. Ahead of the talks, a small group of women staged a protest in Kabul on Saturday to oppose any international recognition of the Taleban government. But the UN and Western powers are adamant this will not be discussed.

"Any kind of recognition of the Taleban is completely off the table," said US State Department spokesman Vedant Patel. Apart from confirming that the Taleban leadership is not on the list of participants, the UN has refused to provide any specifics including the location in Qatar's capital or who will join Guterres.

The Taleban's deputy minister for refugees Mohammad Arsala Kharoti said on Sunday that "such meetings will not have any results." "As long as they don't establish proper relations with the Emirate (Taleban-ruled Afghanistan) and no representation of the Emirate is

present, these meetings won't be successful to a great extent," he told AFP at Kabul airport.

In Doha, the UN secretary-general is also to give an update on a review of the world body's critical relief operation in Afghanistan, ordered in April after authorities had stopped Afghan women from working with UN agencies, diplomats said.

The UN has said it faces an "appalling choice" over whether to maintain its huge operation in the country of 38 million. Torn apart over the Ukraine war and other global tensions, the UN Security Council powers united on Thursday to condemn the curbs on Afghan women and girls and urge all countries to seek "an urgent reversal" of the policies. The Afghan foreign ministry rejected the call and said the ban "is an internal social matter of Afghanistan".

UN 'in a trap'

Richard Gowan, UN expert for the International Crisis Group, an independent NGO, said the UN is "in a trap over Afghanistan". "Guterres has to untangle a very complicated knot. He needs to find a way to keep aid flowing into Afghanistan, but the Taleban ban on women is a huge blow to the UN's ability to operate in the country," Gowan said the international community wants the UN to maintain its critical presence.

"There are lots of differences among Security

Council members over Afghanistan. But everyone, including Russia and China, agrees it is better to have the UN in Kabul than not." The United Nations has given few indications of what proposals could be made at the meeting.

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Friday the aim "is to reinvigorate international engagement around common objectives for a durable way forward on Afghanistan". The global body also wants "unity or commonality of message" on women's and human rights, countering terrorism and drug trafficking.

"Recognition is not an issue," Dujarric insisted. Whether the Taleban government takes up Afghanistan's UN seat is for the UN General Assembly to decide. But the UN and other groups have been holding increasingly intense discussions on how to engage with the Taleban authorities and possibly offer incentives for change.

US Afghanistan envoy Thomas West has been travelling across West Asia in recent weeks meeting different governments and groups. Last year the United States moved \$3.5 billion of seized Afghan assets into a Swiss-based fund to pay for relief and imports that are not controlled by the Taleban authorities.

Suggestions have been made that the US administration should consider easing sanctions. "Much as we might prefer to see regime change in Afghanistan,



GENEVA: File photo shows UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres looks on during a conference on aid for Afghanistan, in Geneva. Guterres will gather international envoys at a secret location in Doha on May 1, 2023. —AFP

for the foreseeable future a reasonably stable and sufficiently capable Taleban government is needed to help facilitate humanitarian programs, neutralise ISKP (Islamic State), and avert state collapse and civil war," Washington think tank the Middle East Institute said in a report last week. —AFP

Iran's Raisi to visit Damascus since Syria war

TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi will travel to Damascus on Wednesday, Iranian state media reported, touting a "very important" two-day visit against the backdrop of increased regional engagement with the Syrian regime.

"Dr Raisi's trip to Damascus next Wednesday is a very important trip due to the changes and developments that are taking place in the region," IRNA state news agency on Sunday quoted Iran's ambassador to Syria, Hossein Akbari, as saying.

According to IRNA, Raisi will lead a "high economic-political delegation" in his two-day trip at the official invitation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Tehran, a major ally of Assad, has supported his government during Syria's 12-year-old conflict, but no Iranian president has visited there since the war started in 2011.

The visit comes weeks after a landmark rapprochement agreement between regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, which has also underlined greater Arab willingness to re-engage with the once isolated Syrian government.

"This trip will not only be beneficial for Tehran and Damascus, but it is also a very good event that other countries in the region can also take advantage of," Akbari was reported as saying. There was no immediate official comment from the Syrian presidency.

The last Iranian president to visit the Syrian capital was Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in September 2010. Assad last visited Tehran in May, in his second reported trip to the Islamic republic since the war began. —AFP

Turkey nears referendum on Erdogan's rule

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan dives Sunday into the final two-week stretch before a momentous election that has turned into a referendum on his two decades of divisive but transformative rule. The 69-year-old leader looked fighting fit as he strutted back on stage after a three-day illness and tossed flowers to rapturous crowds at an Istanbul aviation fest on Saturday.

It was the perfect venue for reminding Turks of all they had gained since his Islamic-rooted party ended years of secular rule and launched an era of economic revival and military might. He was flanked by the president of Azerbaijan and the Ankara-backed premier of Libya—two countries where drones built by his son-in-law's company helped swing the outcome of wars.

Istanbul itself has become a modern and chaotic megalopolis that has nearly doubled in size since Erdogan came to power in 2003. But hiding beneath the surface are a more recent economic crisis and fierce social divisions that have given the May 14 parliamentary and presidential polls a powder keg feel.

'Political coup attempt'

The nation of 85 million appears as splintered as ever about whether Erdogan has done more harm than good in the only Muslim-majority country of the NATO defence bloc. Polls show him running neck-and-neck against secular opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu and his alliance of six disparate parties.

The entry of two minor candidates means that Erdogan and Kilicdaroglu will likely face each other again in a runoff on May 28. But some of Erdogan's more hawkish ministers are sounding warnings about Washington leading Western efforts to undermine Turkey's might through the polls.

Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu referred Friday to US President Joe Biden's 2019 suggestion that Washington should embolden the opposition "to take on and



İZMİR: A handout photograph taken and released on April 29, 2023 by the Press Office of the Presidency of Turkey, shows Turkish President and Leader of the Justice and Development (AK) Party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, greeting citizens during an electoral rally at Gundogdu Square in Izmir, on April 29, 2023. —AFP

defeat Erdogan". "July 15 was their actual coup attempt," Soylu said of a failed 2016 military putsch that Erdogan blamed on a US-based Muslim preacher. "And May 14 is their political coup attempt."

Splintered society

Erdogan continues to be lionised across more conservative swathes of Turkey for unshackling religious restrictions and bringing modern homes and jobs to millions of people through construction and state investment. Turkey is now filled with hospitals and interconnected with airports and highways that stimulate trade and give the vast country a more inclusive feel. He empowered conservative women by enabling them to stay veiled in school and in civil service—a right that did not exist in the secular state created from the Ottoman Empire's ashes in 1923.

And he won early support from Turkey's long-repressed Kurdish minority by seeking a political solution to their armed struggle for an independent state that has claimed tens of thousands of lives. But his equally passionate detractors point to a more authoritarian streak that emerged with the violent clampdown on protests in

2013 -- and became even more apparent with sweeping purges he unleashed after the failed 2016 coup attempt.

Erdogan turned against the Kurds and jailed or stripped tens of thousands of people of their state jobs on oblique "terror" charges that sent chills through Turkish society. His penchant for campaigning and gift for public speaking enabled him to keep winning at the polls. But the current vote is turning into his toughest because of a huge economic crisis that erupted in late 2021.

Democratic traditions

Erdogan's biggest problems started when he decided to defy the rules of economics by slashing interest rates to fight inflation. The lira lost more than half its value and inflation hit an eye-popping 85 percent since his experiment began.

Millions lost their savings and fell into deep debt. Polls show the economy worrying Turks more than any other issue—a point not lost on Kilicdaroglu. The 74-year-old former civil servant pledges to restore economic order and bring in vast sums from Western investors who fled the chaos of Erdogan's more recent rule. —AFP

Sheikha Al-Zain submits credentials...

Continued from Page 1

She revealed that boosting commercial and economic ties are very important, stressing that it is necessary to provide small and medium-size enterprises with a chance to contribute to the rich and diverse relations.

Sheikha Al-Zain also noted the two countries are keen on extending strategic cooperation within the

political and military sectors to bolster her country's security and stability, in addition to achieving the interests of both parties. She added that boosting cultural cooperation is also a priority for the embassy, adding she will hold regular meetings with Kuwaiti students in the US to look into their needs and encourage them to excel.

Ambassador Sheikha Al-Zain also affirmed that she will coordinate efforts of the Kuwaiti health office in the US to look into the affairs of Kuwaiti patients and their family members seeking treatment in the country. — KUNA

the Assembly, which was dissolved in August last year, but was reinstated by a constitutional court ruling. The agenda of the session includes allowing members of the new government to take the oath to become members of the Assembly if the session takes place.

Meanwhile, judges from the constitutional court on Sunday brought some documents related to the 2022 Assembly elections which were annulled by the court on March 19. The judges also sealed the ballot boxes that include all votes cast by Kuwaiti voters.

president and vice president in attendance restored a tradition last observed in 2016, the final dinner before Trump entered the White House. "Folks, it is wonderful to be back here again, proving I haven't learned a damn thing," said Biden.

The occasion is meant to celebrate the constitution's First Amendment guarantees of free speech and to advocate for a free press worldwide. Before the dinner, Biden met with the family of Evan Gershkovich, a Wall Street Journal reporter arrested and imprisoned in Russia last month on espionage charges. US officials strenuously deny the allegations, and a large media campaign has been launched to push for his release.

Gershkovich, who previously worked for AFP, is the first foreign journalist arrested in Russia on spying charges since the collapse of the Soviet Union. "We are working every day to secure his release. We're looking at opportunities and tools to bring him home. We keep the faith," Biden said. This week Moscow said it had denied a consular visit to Gershkovich in retaliation for Washington not issuing visas to several Russian journalists, as bilateral ties remain frozen more than a year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Also among the dinner's star guests was basketball player Brittney Griner, who was released by Russia as part of a prisoner swap last year and who has vowed to fight for other detainees. — AFP

Qatar spends big to beat post...

Continued from Page 1

1.4 million people to the state. Akhtar Patel, who runs a jewelry store in Doha's Souq Waqif market, said business in comparison is "quiet". "We really miss those fans now," he said. The Eid al-Fitr Muslim holiday brought back some shoppers, but the decline has been such that Sandeep Kumar, who runs a print workshop, sent two of his four staff back to India because he could no longer afford to pay them. "We miss the vibe, but we miss the business even more," he said.

On Doha's seafront promenade, host to a World Cup fanzone, some jobless workers have been reduced to asking for cash handouts, leading the interior ministry to issue a public warning against "uncivilized" begging. But Qatar's economy remains healthy. After recording a trade surplus of nearly \$100 billion in 2022, growth in 2023 — bolstered by its natural gas riches — is predicted by the World Bank to hit 3.4 percent, among the highest in the Middle East. And a wave of newcomers has added nearly 100,000 to the population since the World Cup final, taking it to over three million, according to official figures.

Erdogan, rival draw vast crowds...

Continued from Page 1

Kilicdaroglu, 74, and his multi-faceted alliance are posing Erdogan's toughest election challenge since the Turkish leader's Islamic-rooted party first swept to power in 2002. Erdogan became prime minister a year later, consolidating control as a powerful president under a new constitution in 2018. The upcoming vote is too close to call and likely heading to a runoff on May 28.

Kilicdaroglu and his allies have fanned out across the country, holding daily events that are starting to get coverage on pro-government media that dominate Turkey today. He staged an equally massive rally along the embankment of the oppo-

Akbar Al-Baker, head of Qatar's tourism agency and Qatar Airways, said hotel occupancy in the months after a World Cup is "always low". The tiny country has made investments in tourism and hosting more major events a focus, Baker added, predicting Qatar will welcome more than five million visitors this year — more than twice the number in pre-pandemic 2019. Mechanical diggers are laying the ground for a six-month horticultural expo from October, which Qatar hopes will draw one million foreign visitors.

Concrete is also being poured at a new racetrack to host the second Qatar Formula One grand prix on Oct 8. On Friday, Qatar was revealed as the host of the 24-nation basketball World Cup in 2027, despite having no tradition in the sport. Culture Minister Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad Al-Thani said that when Qatar first launched its Years of Culture series with other countries a decade ago it was a struggle to find candidates. "Countries are now queuing to be part of the Years of Culture," he told an event for this year's partner, Indonesia.

New prime minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani took office in March and is expected to soon announce new economic initiatives, in part a response to growing competition from neighboring Saudi Arabia, which has embarked on many reforms. — AFP

sition-controlled Aegean city of Izmir, where Erdogan drew slightly smaller crowds on Saturday.

"These elections are elections to rebuild our democracy," Kilicdaroglu, a former civil servant told the cheering crowd after walking out on stage with his wife, Selvi. "We will bring peace to this country. I will bring brotherhood to this country," Kilicdaroglu said. The massive turnout is a sign of the huge interest Turks have in the election, which has turned into a referendum on Erdogan's rule.

His party is also in danger of losing control of parliament, which it holds through an alliance with an ultra-nationalist group. Erdogan in 2019 lost landmark municipal votes in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir — Turkey's three biggest and most economically powerful cities. But his decision to campaign in all three hints at the close nature of the vote. "Ankara has a huge responsibility," Erdogan told the crowd. — AFP

Continued from Page 1

the government to attend the regular Assembly session on Tuesday and Wednesday. The government however is not expected to attend the session after HH the Amir said two weeks ago he intends to dissolve

Biden laughs off age gags at...

Continued from Page 1

"Let me finish the job" — That's not a campaign slogan, that's a plea," Wood added. "Say what you want about our president, but when he wakes up from that nap, work gets done." Biden aimed one of his barbs at media mogul Rupert Murdoch, the 92-year-old owner of conservative TV network Fox News. "You might think I don't like Rupert Murdoch, that's simply not true. How can I dislike a guy who makes me look like (29-year-old pop star) Harry Styles?" Biden joked.

He also targeted CNN presenter Don Lemon who was sacked allegedly after sexist and ageist on-air remarks. "Call me old — I call it being seasoned. You say I am ancient — I say I'm wise. You say I'm over the hill — Don Lemon would say that's a man in his prime." The dinner institution had started to wither — first boycotted by Donald Trump, then shut down altogether to fend off COVID-19.

Even last year, strict COVID testing, frequent use of masks and diminished attendance resulted in a low-key affair. But this year's event for 2,600 guests was sold out, and attended by both Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. Having the

International

US demands Beijing stop ‘provocative and unsafe’ acts in South China Sea

Marcos insists he will not let China trample on the Philippines’ rights in the sea

WASHINGTON: The United States called on China Saturday to stop “provocative and unsafe conduct” in the disputed South China Sea after a recent near-collision with a Philippines coast guard boat there, ramping up rhetoric ahead of a visit by the Filipino president to the White House.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, in a statement two days before President Joe Biden is to host his Philippine counterpart Ferdinand Marcos Jr., said the incident was a reminder of China’s “harassment and intimidation” of Philippine vessels in the contested waterway.

“We call upon Beijing to desist from its provocative and unsafe conduct,” he said, adding that any attack on Philippine armed forces would trigger a US response. Biden has been working to bolster relations with Asian allies as the US-Chinese relationship remains in a historically deep chill, and the Philippines’ proximity to key sea lanes and Taiwan gives it particular strategic importance.

The near-miss Sunday off the Spratly Islands was the latest in a long string of maritime incidents between China and the Philippines. Beijing claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, ignoring an international ruling that the assertion has no legal basis.

A near-miss

AFP was one of several media outlets that witnessed the incident after journalists were invited to join two Philippine Coast Guard boats on a six-day patrol of the waters, visiting a dozen islands and reefs. The Philippine vessels approached Second Thomas Shoal, known in China as Ren’ai Jiao, in the Spratly archipelago.

As one boat, the BRP Malapascua, which was car-

rying Filipino journalists, neared the shoal, a Chinese Coast Guard vessel more than twice its size sailed into its path. AFP journalists watched the incident from the other Philippine Coast Guard boat, which was less than a kilometer (0.6 miles) away.

The Malapascua’s commanding officer said the Chinese ship came within 45 meters (50 yards) of his boat and only his quick actions avoided the steel-hulled vessels crashing into each other. The Chinese foreign ministry said Friday that the Philippine boats had “intruded” without China’s permission and called it a “premeditated and provocative action.”

Manila pushes back

But Manila hit back, saying that “routine patrols in our own waters can be neither premeditated or provocative” and insisting they will continue to conduct the patrols. The near-miss came just a day after Marcos hosted Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang for talks in Manila aimed at defusing tensions in the waterway.

Marcos has insisted he will not let China trample on the Philippines’ rights in the sea, and has gravitated toward the United States as he seeks to strengthen defense ties. Early this month, the Philippines identified four additional military bases—in addition to five existing sites—to which US forces will have access, including one near the Spratly Islands.

The two countries also carried out their biggest ever military maneuvers in recent weeks. This shift has alarmed China, which has accused Washington of trying to drive a wedge between Beijing and Manila.

‘Ironclad commitment’

US-Philippine ties were badly frayed under



File photo shows a member of the Philippine coast guard vessel BRP Malabrigo mans his post while being shadowed by a Chinese coast guard ship at Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands in the disputed South China Sea. — AFP

Marcos’s predecessor, the authoritarian Rodrigo Duterte. Marcos has sought to allay public fears that the reviving alliance with the US could bring the Philippines into the conflict if China were to invade Taiwan.

He has said that with Biden he will discuss the

“need to tone down the rhetoric” over the South China Sea, Taiwan and North Korea. White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said earlier in the month that Biden intended, in the meeting with Marcos, to “reaffirm the United States’ ironclad commitment to the defense of the Philippines.” — AFP

Polls open in Paraguay election, with Taiwan ties in the balance

ASUNCION: Voting stations opened Sunday across Paraguay as its citizens pick a president they hope will tackle endemic corruption, rising crime and economic inequality, with the election potentially impacting the country’s future ties with Taiwan.

A center-left coalition is aiming to end the almost unbroken, seven-decade hegemony of the ruling conservative Colorado Party in the closest race in many years. Some 4.8 million of the South American country’s 7.5 million inhabitants are eligible to vote in the election for the president and legislature that will be determined in a single round.

Lawyer Efraín Alegre, 60, of the Concertacion center-left coalition is leading narrowly in opinion polls amid a recent anti-incumbency trend in Latin American elections. His main challenger is Santiago Pena, a 44-year-old economist and former finance minister hoping to continue the rule of the Colorado Party that has governed almost continually since 1947 -- through a dictatorship and since the return of democracy in 1989.

Though they differ on economic and international policy, the two frontrunners are both socially conservative, defending strong anti-abortion and anti-gay marriage stances in an overwhelmingly Catholic nation. As polls opened, Alegre and Pena urged Paraguayans to vote, a call echoed by outgoing President Mario Abdo Benítez, who is constitutionally limited to a single term. “The higher the turnout, the greater the legitimacy of democracy,” Abdo said after being one of the first to cast a ballot in the capital Asunción.

‘Back to Jerusalem’

The outcome could have important consequences for Paraguay’s international relations. It is among only 13 countries to recognize Taipei over Beijing. But Alegre has vowed to reconsider this if he wins, telling AFP: “Relations with Taiwan mean the loss of one of the largest markets, which is China.”

He added: “Paraguay makes a very big effort, a very big sacrifice to have relations with Taiwan, but

Polling stations opened at 8:00 am (0300 GMT), according to the Uzbek Election Commission. They will close at 8:00 pm. There is little doubt the amendments will be adopted, in a country where the media is heavily controlled.

The government has gone to some lengths to give the vote a veneer of legitimacy, enrolling local celebrities at large rallies and concerts to praise the proposals and the president. Billboards around Tashkent, the biggest city in Central Asia, encourage people to vote.

The campaign appears to be working. “The new constitution will change my life,” Shamsiddin Zhurayev, a 40-year-old businessman, told AFP outside a Tashkent polling station. “But I don’t really know in what way.” Yet the prospect of Mirziyoyev clinging on to power unnerved some.

“Everything is done so that the president remains in power for life,” said 70-year-old pensioner Nurkhamil, who refused to give his last name. He conceded that Mirziyoyev had “made some reforms and tries to change things” but worried the Uzbek leader is following the footsteps of longtime Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“Our authorities are copying Putin’s system,” he

government has just postponed until the autumn, “is a racist law, which aims to criminalise foreigners” and lead to “more deportations”, said Aboubacar, 31, an undocumented Malian.

“The problem is not immigration, it’s exploitation and rogue bosses,” said the post office sub-contractor who, with colleagues, has been fighting for 17 months to obtain his official documents to live and work in France. The protesters also took aim at Operation Wuambushi (Take Back) being carried out by the authorities on the French Indian Ocean Island of Mayotte to send back illegal immigrants, most from neighbouring Comoros, currently housed in unsanitary shanty towns.

“The way undocumented Comorans are treated is unworthy of a country like France,” said Marie-Christine Vergiat, vice-president of the French Human Rights League and a former member of the European parliament. The Darmanin bill and the op-

we are not seeing from Taiwan the same effort.” Latin America has been a key diplomatic battleground.

China considers self-ruled, democratic Taiwan part of its territory to be retaken one day, and does not allow other countries to recognize both Beijing and Taipei. Nicaragua shifted its allegiance to Beijing in 2021, as did El Salvador in 2018, Panama in 2017 and Costa Rica in 2007.

Pena has said he would retain ties with Taiwan but move Paraguay’s embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Paraguay had previously moved its embassy in 2018, but reversed its decision within months. “Yes, I would go back to Jerusalem,” Pena told AFP before the vote. — AFP



TASHKENT: Handout photograph released by the Press Service of the President of Uzbekistan on April 30, 2023, shows Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visiting a polling station in Tashkent. — AFP

said. “They (leaders) are not eternal, you have to respect your people.” Following Karimov’s death, Mirziyoyev spearheaded a series of reforms in Uzbekistan, including a clampdown on forced labour in the cotton fields. — AFP

eration in Mayotte are linked, Said Mhamadi, a Comoran civil leader, said in the southern port city of Marseille, where up to 300 people demonstrated.

The controversial bill, entitled “Controlling immigration while improving integration”, is aimed, among other things, at providing greater scope for deportation, especially for foreigners who commit crimes. It would require a minimum level of French before a multi-year residence permit could be granted, would introduce mandatory fingerprinting, and tighten requirements for the renewal of long-term permits.

On Wednesday, the French government once again failed to reach consensus on the immigration bill, which is considered too divisive in an already abrasive social climate. The government is promising a balance between the expulsion of foreigners who threaten public order and better integration of undocumented migrants, in particular by regularising workers in sectors where manpower is needed. — AFP

News in Brief

Boat sinks at reef

MANILA: Rescuers were searching for four people Sunday after a boat carrying more than a dozen scuba divers sank at a World Heritage-listed marine sanctuary in the Philippines, authorities said. The Philippine Coast Guard said 28 people were rescued after “Dream Keeper” went down on Sunday morning in the pristine waters at Tubbataha Reef off the western province of Palawan. Four Chinese nationals were among those on board the dive boat. The owner of the vessel, a dive master and two guests were still missing, coast guard spokesman Rear Admiral Armando Balilo said. A coast guard vessel and about 10 dive boats were searching the waters. “It’s full of diving enthusiasts now and it’s on their bucket list. It’s a dream dive,” said Balilo, referring to Tubbataha. The 97,000-hectare (240,000-acre) Tubbataha Reef is one of the country’s largest marine protected areas and was listed as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations in 1993. — AFP

Two killed in strike

MOSCOW: Two people were killed when a Ukrainian missile hit a Russian village near the countries’ border, the regional governor said Sunday. Missiles hit the village of Suzemka, to the east of the frontier between the two countries, according to Alexander Bogomaz, the governor of Bryansk oblast. “As a result of the strike inflicted by Ukrainian nationalists, unfortunately, two civilians were killed,” he said in a message posted on Telegram. “According to preliminary data, one residential building was completely destroyed, two more houses were partially destroyed.” It comes after a week in which Russia renewed heavy missile attacks on Ukrainian cities, killing 23 people including a baby boy, and a massive fire broke out in Moscow-annexed Crimea after a suspected drone attack. Moscow-installed officials in eastern Ukraine also reported that Ukrainian shelling had killed nine people including an eight-year-old girl in the city of Donetsk. — AFP

Colombia volcano

BOGOTA: Authorities in Colombia on Saturday recommended that towns closest to a rumbling, notorious volcano be evacuated, ahead of a possible eruption. The Disaster Risk Management Office said it was moving to evacuate communities that are located within 15 kilometers (nine miles) from the main crater of three that make up the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in the Colombian Andes. Seismic activity has increased at the volcano, which killed 25,000 people in an eruption in 1985. That blast was the worst natural disaster in Colombian history and one of the deadliest volcanic eruptions of the 20th century. There has recently been a “significant increase in seismic activity,” the ministry of mines said in a statement while Colombia’s SGC geological service warned of a “probable eruption within days or weeks.” The 5,300-meter (17,400-foot) colossus in western Colombia is one of the many volcanoes along the Ring of Fire, a path around the Pacific basin characterized by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes. On November 13, 1985, it erupted and emitted so much heat that it melted the snow that caps the mountain. — AFP

Thousands protest French government’s immigration plans

PARIS: Thousands of people, including many undocumented migrants, marched in Paris and other French cities Saturday, protesting planned changes to immigration laws and evictions from the Indian Ocean island of Mayotte. In the French capital, demonstrators marched behind a banner proclaiming “No to the Darmanin law. Against repression, imprisonment and deportations, for a welcoming migration policy”, a reference to Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin.

Organisers said that 2,300 people turned out for the protest in Paris. The immigration bill, which the

MONDAY, MAY 1, 2023

Business

KFH posts historic net profit of KD 162.1 million for Q1 2023

Net profit increased by 133.2% • Earnings per share reached 11.06 fils

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, reported historic net profit of KD 162.1 million for the first quarter of 2023 for KFH shareholders; an increase of 133.2 percent compared to the same period last year, taking into consideration the benefits of the acquisition. Earnings per share for the first quarter of 2023 reached 11.06 fils; an increase of 67.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

Net financing income for the first quarter of the year reached KD 226.0 million; an increase of 42.1 percent compared to the same period last year.

Net operating income for the first quarter of the year reached KD 251.2 million; an increase of 69.5 percent compared to the same period last year.

Financing receivables as of the end of the first quarter of 2023 reached KD 19.2 billion, ie, an increase of KD 318.8 million or 1.7 percent compared to the end of last year. Total assets as of the end of the first quarter of 2023 reached KD 36.9 billion, ie, at the same level as the end of last year. The same applies to the shareholders' equity, which amounted to KD 5.3 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2023.

Depositors' accounts as of the end of the first quarter of 2023 reached KD 23.4 billion, an increase of KD 962.3 million or 4.3 percent compared to the end of last year. In addition, the capital adequacy ratio reached 17.50 percent which is above the minimum limit required by regulators. This ratio confirms the solid financial position of KFH.

Strong growth

Al-Marzouq said that the strong growth KFH achieved in all financial indicators during the first quarter of 2023 confirms the successful and efficient strategy of the Bank. He added that KFH successfully maintained remarkable ratios in terms of profitability, ROA, ROE, improving asset quality, the coverage ratio of provisions for non-performing debt, cost-to-income ratio as well as all key financial indicators.

Al-Marzouq explained that "KFH enjoys solid capital



Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq



Abdulwahab Iesa Al-Rushood

base and high liquidity ratios that support its business growth and credit strength. With around KD 11 billion market capitalization, KFH topped the largest listed companies on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization".

Clear strategy

Al-Marzouq stressed that KFH continues its strategy to improve the role of core banking activity in achieving profitability and sustainable growth, keeping pace with developments in the fields of digitization, applying artificial intelligence, innovation in financing and investment products and solutions, increasing investment in green sukuk in the total financing portfolio, expanding linking investments to sustainable development goals, optimal investment in human resources and enriching knowledge, supporting entrepreneurship and youth, and providing corporate banking, supporting SMEs, and developing harmony between the Group's banks to boost KFH's leading position globally.

He added that the growth resulted from the successful acquisition of Ahli United Bank constitutes a driving force for KFH to achieve its ambitions, not to mention moving forward in its regional and international expansion to record significant growth ratios in profits and in customer service level.

Prominent societal role

Al-Marzouq explained that KFH plays a prominent societal role characterized by diversity and inclusiveness, in a way that reinforces the implementation of sustainability criteria, indicating that KFH has implemented strategic social initiatives with added value and a real positive impact on society. The initiatives, for example, include KD 20 million debt settlement of defaulting debtors, KD 8 million reconstruction of Al-Mubarakiya, and support for the "Kuwait is by your side" campaign to relief those affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria with an amount of \$20 million, in addition to signing various agreements with social welfare organizations to support its various social and relief efforts inside and outside Kuwait.

Profit maximization

KFH Acting Group CEO Abdulwahab Iesa Al-Rushood said that "the recent financial results and the double-digit growth maintained by KFH for several years came as a result of the optimal implementation of KFH's strategy. This success was reflected in the strong operational performance, the growth in operating income, financing portfolio, and customer deposits, return on equity, optimization, adherence to applying best responsible banking practices, risk management, balanced priorities, and strengthening the bank's financial solvency and creditworthiness".

Leadership in digitalization

Al-Rushood pointed out that KFH continues to lead in digital transformation, achieving a remarkable growth in the customers' use of digital banking services through KFHonline on mobile and website, where the rate of increase in usage in Q1 2023 compared to the same period of the previous year reached about 43 percent. He also stressed that KFH will continue to lead the competition and be unique in offering innovative financial solutions that meet customers' aspirations and add to KFH's leadership locally and globally.

Talent acquisition

Al-Rushood said that KFH has qualified talents and

personnel that are able to implement the strategic goals of the bank. Indeed, the successful talent acquisition and development strategy of KFH resulted in having the largest number of Kuwaiti employees at the level of Kuwaiti banks and all private sector institutions, while the percentage of attracting Kuwaitis for new appointments reached about 100 percent in recent years.

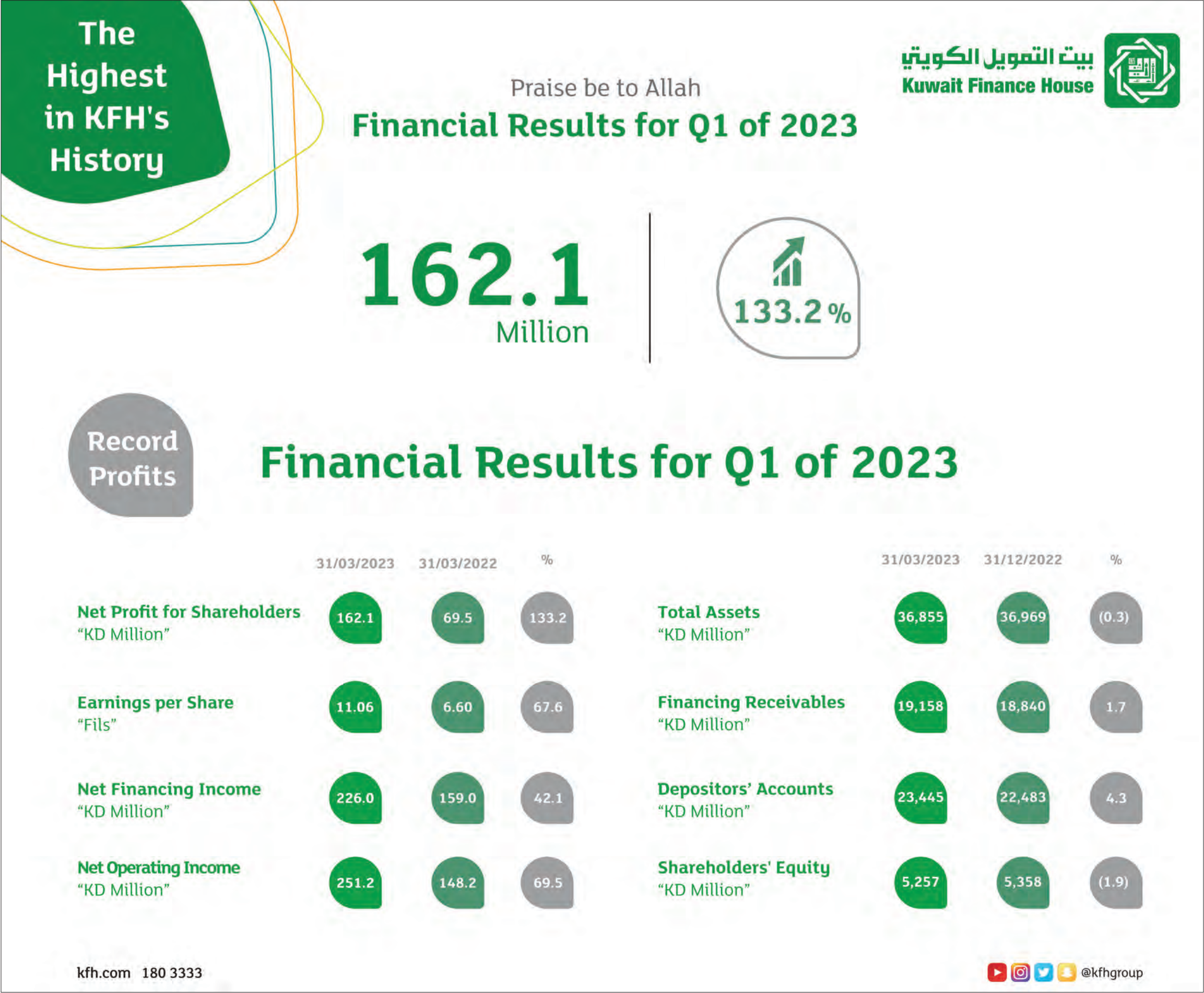
Sustainability

Al-Rushood stressed the continued application of transparency, environmental standards, social values, governance, financial inclusion, empowering women and expanding their representation in KFH's workforce, and increasing green and sustainable financing efforts as part of the integrated sustainability strategy adopted by the bank, in which it has made great strides. He also indicated that KFH signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to support sustainability efforts, and launched the (Keep it Green) program, which implements several sustainability initiatives under its umbrella, as well as KFH being the first bank in Kuwait to receive the GSAS-Gold Level certificate.

Global recognition

Al-Rushood pointed out that KFH received global recognition for its outstanding innovative products and services, reliability, broad geographical outreach, digital development, solid financial position, and its strong brand. Accordingly, KFH won various awards, most notably: "Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East", "Best Bank in Kuwait" and the Sustainability award in the Middle East from EMEA Finance magazine, as well as "Best Digital Offering in Kuwait" award from Islamic Finance News (IFN), in addition to many prestigious awards.

In conclusion, Al-Rushood expressed his confidence in continuing the strong and positive results, appreciating the trust of shareholders and customers and the support of the Board of Directors. He also thanked the regulatory authorities and praised the efforts of employees and all partners and stakeholders and emphasized that KFH is keen to reinforce its leadership worldwide.



Business

Hikes in tariffs fuel merchants' discontent in impoverished Gaza

Zionist entity collects a range of fees on behalf of Palestinian Authority

GAZA CITY: Hikes in import and export tariffs imposed by the Islamist rulers of the Gaza Strip since last year have fuelled discontent among merchants in the impoverished, blockaded territory. In March, Gaza's Hamas rulers imposed new duties on the import of fruit and the export of fish.

Although the fruit levy was later reversed after traders went on strike, the seafood duty remains. Traders refusing to pay risk having their perishable goods stalled at crossing points from the enclave. The increases are the latest in a series of new levies on goods entering and exiting the coastal territory where 2.3 million Palestinians struggle to survive.

In July 2022, Hamas imposed tax increases on 24 other items including bottled water and certain clothes, forcing traders to remove some brands from the market when shoppers could not afford the newly-inflated prices. Wassim Al-Hilu, a food importer-exporter and member of Gaza's chamber of commerce, said Gazans are already saddled with taxes paid to Zionist entity — which collects a range of fees on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

A split between Hamas and the PA, which administers the Zionist entity-occupied West Bank, often leads to disputes over taxation and Hilu said the new fees are harming Gaza's "already ailing economy". The territory has been under a crippling Zionist entity-led blockade since Hamas — designated a "terrorist" entity by the United States, the European Union and Zionist entity — took power in 2007. The poverty rate has reached 53 percent, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and unemployment has hit 45 percent, the International Monetary Fund said.

Rising prices

In October, dozens of Gazan merchants took legal

action against last year's tax hikes, which were then frozen pending a court ruling. But in supermarkets, traders have already reduced their reliance on imports pending the court decision, said Riyad Sawafiri, from the chamber of commerce.

Critical imports of bottled water, which the territory's residents depend on due to shortages of potable water, have halved as a result. Osama Nofal, director of planning at Gaza's economy ministry, said the levies aim to encourage consumers to "support the local producer," referring to a desalination plant that makes drinking water. Since the introduction of the tariffs on imported bottled water, bulk prices for consumers have jumped from 1.67 shekels (\$0.36) per bottle to 2.17 shekels.

Baby formula is another product whose price has escalated since last year's tax increases. A pharmacist in Gaza City told AFP that for some types of formula prices went from one shekel per box to nine shekels. Gaza-based economist Mazen Al-Ajlal said the new fees are "illegal".

With Gazans already suffering from a dire economy, the administration should reduce taxes on imported raw materials and offer free electricity to factories, he said. The latest increases prompted a two-week strike by traders, forcing a reversal to the tariffs on fruit imports.

But authorities refused to budge on the seafood tax affecting an industry that employs around 4,500 people. The levy on fish is six shekels per kilogram (2.2 pounds) if it comes from Egypt and is then shipped on to the West Bank. For fish locally caught off Gaza the export tax is three shekels a kilogram.

But perishable goods are not the only ones affected. Garment traders decry a new 10 shekel tariff on some clothing items. Nahed Al-Souda, secretary



GAZA CITY: A picture taken on April 29, 2023, shows a Palestinian woman looking at garments at a clothing shop in a Gaza City market. — AFP

of the clothes traders' syndicate, said a compromise was eventually reached, allowing for the tax-free importation of 600,000 pairs of jeans and 150,000 abayas per year. Those exemptions are extremely small considering trade volumes in the sector, Souda said, calling the decision to impose the new tax unjust. For the economist Ajlah, imposition of the levies resulted from an "arbitrary" assessment by Gaza's rulers. "This reflects a lack of professionalism—and blackmail," he said. — AFP

In my view

Cautious optimism over oil output cuts



By Sajeev K Peter

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drop observed mainly in stage 2 and 3 portfolios, indicating an improvement in credit quality.

- ROA (1.3 percent in 2022) increased by 0.2 percent compared to the prior year, owing to the rise in profitability being higher than the asset growth.

- Cost-to-income ratios reduced compared to 2021 (40.9 percent to 39.9 percent), reflecting the continued focus on cost reductions and operating efficiency initiatives.

- Share prices overall remained stable year on year with a marginal increase of 0.7 percent compared to the previous year.

The report also highlighted a 1.2-percent decrease in return on equity (ROE), compared to 2021, as equity growth brushed past profitability increases. Dividend payout ratio in the region also witnessed a near-identical drop of about 1.3 percent as GCC banks looked to safeguard their earnings to further bolster equity positions and support future growth. According to the report, GCC banks continued extending adequate coverage for their performing loan book as stage 1 net provision charges grew six-fold compared to 2021. Furthermore, while well above the minimum regulatory requirements across all GCC countries, the average capital adequacy ratio dipped marginally (0.3 percent) to reach 18.6 percent.

The GCC listed banks' results anticipates banking sector in the region to continue its pursuit of building on its strong foundation, aided by a robust economic environment. As banks in the region aim to look past the COVID-19 crisis, it is expected that accelerated innovation plans, technology focus and continued government investment will witness further growth in the future.

the region, increasing by 36.3 percent to reach 412.9 percent for the year 2022. Kuwait's banking sector's y-o-y growth with regard to coverage ratios on stage 3 loans was also the highest, rising by 7.1 percent compared to 2021. Albeit marginal, Kuwait's banking sector's returns on equity and assets grew by 0.8 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively.

In terms of average capital adequacy ratio, the banks in Kuwait had a healthy percentage of 17.3 percent, compared to the 18.3 percent in 2021, and well above the 12 percent limit required by the Central Bank of Kuwait. However, the banks in Kuwait saw an increase in the cost-to-income ratio which went up by 4 percent to reach 46.6 percent, compared to the 42.9 percent in 2021.

The following salient findings emerged from the financial results' analysis for the year-ended 31 December 2022 for the GCC region as a whole:

- Profitability saw another double-digit increase of 25.3 percent, driven particularly by a growth in loan book, increased interest margin, lower loan impairment and a continued focus on cost efficiencies.

- Asset growth remained robust as banks increased their asset base by 9.9 percent, which was driven by lending to high quality customers.

- Net interest margins increased by 0.2 percent, as a result of the rising interest rate environment, which helped drive profit growth.

- The overall NPL ratio for the GCC banking sector decreased by 0.1 percent and now stands at 3.8 percent, reflecting the conservative approach to credit risk management.

- Net impairment charges on loans and advances decreased by an average of 11.2 percent, with the

trading at about LBP 100,000 to the dollar, which means that the national currency has lost 98 percent of its value since the economic crisis started in the last quarter of 2019. The World Bank also said the failure to address the financial sector losses, estimated at about \$72 billion, more than three times the gross domestic product, deepens the impact of the crisis.

Recent field surveys have shown that the poverty rate continues to rise, as three out of five families classify themselves as poor or very poor, especially among those who do not receive remittances from abroad. While unemployment levels have decreased, the majority of people are now working in low-quality jobs. In the updated forecasts, the World Bank estimated that the economy in Lebanon would contract by 0.5 percent at the end of this year, contrary to previous expectations of a decline in growth by 5.4 percent, as a result of a better-than-expected performance for some economic indicators, such as the tourism sector. According to the World Food Program (WFP), and with the continued rise in food prices, food insecurity is expected to affect about 1.46 million Lebanese people and about 800,000 refugees by the end of this month. — Agencies

basis points. Currently many analysts are betting on a quarter point hike, due to slowing inflation as well as a stable outlook in the 20-nation currency club.

Data last week showed the eurozone economy expanding 0.1 percent in the first quarter.

While modest, EU officials said the figure indicated "resilience" against the challenging backdrop of the energy crisis. However, several data releases due on Tuesday — including a first estimate of eurozone inflation for April — may change calculations.

"Both a 25-basis point and a 50-basis point rate hike seem to be on the table," said ING economist Carsten Brzeski, adding there was a growing debate between "hawks" and "doves" about the impacts of tightening. But he added that given the divide within the ECB, a quarter point increase would be a "typical European compromise".

Still, if eurozone inflation comes in higher than expected, the "hawks" may yet win the argument for a larger hike. But easing inflation in Germany for April may be the harbinger for lower consumer prices too



BEIRUT: Lebanon recorded the highest nominal food price inflation rate in the world during the February 2022 – February 2023 period, according to World Bank.

elsewhere in the eurozone. On Friday, the IMF's European department director Alfred Kammer urged European central banks to push on with tightening and "kill the beast" of inflation. In March, consumer prices in the eurozone rose by 6.9 percent on an annual basis — the lowest rate in a year, and much below the peak of 10.6 percent in October.

But ECB officials are concerned that core inflation, excluding volatile energy and food costs, is stubbornly high. The bank's three main rates currently sit in range between 3.00 and 3.75 percent, the highest levels since October 2008. A day ahead of the ECB's announcement, the US Federal Reserve is set to unveil its latest rate decision, with traders expecting another quarter point hike. Ahead of their last meeting in March, European policymakers faced calls to abandon a previously announced rate hike due to turmoil on markets. The collapse of three regional US lenders and the enforced takeover of Credit Suisse by rival UBS triggered the upheaval, and sparked fears of a broader financial crisis. — AFP

Kuwait's banking sector posts solid growth: KPMG

KUWAIT: With banks looking to navigate through pandemic-driven difficulties toward economic recovery and stability, KPMG published the eighth edition of its GCC listed banks' results. Titled 'Cautious optimism', the report offers a thorough analysis of the financial results and key performance indicators (KPIs) of leading listed commercial banks in the region, in comparison with the previous year, to highlight the main financial trends in the GCC countries.

Bhavesh Gandhi, Partner and Head of Financial Services, KPMG in Kuwait, said: "There are promising indicators of steady financial growth in Kuwait. Our results point out double-digit y-o-y growth in total assets and net profit by average in Kuwait, which is optimistic considering banking sector in the country is fresh off the COVID-19 crisis. It is expected that banks will press forward aggressively in certain aspects, such as digital transformation, but the collective disposition for growth will remain cautious."

Compared to 2021, Kuwait's banking sector witnessed the highest y-o-y growth in terms of total assets (by average) in the region, climbing by 21.4 percent. Kuwait's banking sector's net profit (by average) also had the most significant growth rate in

World Bank: Lebanon tops world's food price inflation rate

BEIRUT: In its latest reports on food security around the world, the World Bank said that Lebanon recorded the highest nominal food price inflation rate in the world during the February 2022 – February 2023 period. The country registered 261 percent annual change in the food Consumer Price Index (CPI), followed by Zimbabwe (128 percent).

With regard to the real inflation rate, the report monitored an increase in the annual change in food prices in Lebanon by 71 percent during the comparison period, followed by Zimbabwe by 40 percent, Rwanda by 32 percent, and Egypt by 30 percent.

In a separate report on poverty, the World Bank warned that the economic situation in Lebanon was rapidly deteriorating, noting that the exchange rate of the national currency against the US dollar was

ECB poised to hike again but analysts divided on how much

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank is expected to deliver another interest rate increase Thursday, but analysts are divided on how big the hike will be against a backdrop of stubborn inflation and market turmoil. There is little doubt the central bank will hike borrowing costs for the seventh consecutive time as consumer price increases are still way above its two-percent target.

The Frankfurt-based institution has already lifted rates 3.5 percentage points since July last year to tame energy and food costs that surged after Russia invaded Ukraine. But there is debate about whether the ECB will opt for a 50-basis point hike — as it did at its previous three meetings — or downshift to 25

Inflation data backs US Fed hike

US consumer confidence drops, BoJ maintains ultra-low interest rates

KUWAIT: The US dollar index closed last week unchanged for the most part, ending at the 101.659 level after peaking at 102.172 in response to wor-rying inflation data. Meanwhile, the latest news coming out of Japan sent the yen crashing against the dollar, with the pair reaching the 136.56 mark, representing a 1.74 percent decline on Friday alone. In Australia, the AUD/USD pair dropped from its opening price of 0.6686 this week, down to 0.6607.

Inflation pressures persist

The Federal Reserve's preferred measure of core inflation rose in March, gaining 0.3 percent m/m and 4.6 percent y/y according to the Commerce Department report released on Friday. The headline figure eased, rising 4.2 percent y/y, down from an upwardly revised 5.1 percent in February. However, it's the persistent strength in underlying inflation pressures that may drive the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates again at their next meeting.

Another closely watched measure by the Fed - the Labor Department's measure of employment costs - increased 1.2 percent q/q in the first quarter of the year, exceeding forecasts. The data reinforces forecasts of the Fed raising its benchmark interest rate another 25 bps, and brings into question how much further the central bank will have to go. Evidently, although annual inflation has peaked, the path back to the central bank's 2 percent goal is proving bumpy.

Consumer confidence

With the Conference Board's index falling to 101.3 from 104.0 in March, US consumer confidence dropped to its lowest level since July 2022, reaching a figure much lower than the forecasted 104.1. The leading factor in this decline is the board's expectations index dropping to a measure of 68.1, which is the lowest in 9 months. Consumer inflation expecta-

tions over the next 12 months slipped to 6.2 percent, which is far off the peak 7.9 percent reached last year. In terms of business conditions, 18.1 percent of consumers labeled business conditions as "bad", compared to 19.3 percent from last month. When it comes to the labor market, 47.9 percent of consumers said that jobs were "plentiful" last month, compared to 48.4 percent this month.

Additionally, 11.4 percent of consumers thought that jobs were hard to get last month, while this month that percentage has dropped to 11.1 percent. Only 12.5 percent of respondents expected there to be more jobs available in the coming months, a near seven year low. The US new home sales number came in at 683K, beating the forecasted 633K increase. The median prices for homes also increased from \$438,200 to \$449,800. An increase in mortgage applications was witnessed, as the banking sector crisis eased mortgage rates.

Economy grows at slower pace

US first quarter GDP rose at a rate of 1.1 percent, significantly lower than the forecasted 2.0 percent growth. The unaccounted for warm January weather boosted consumer spending in January, as spending rose by an annualized 3.7 percent, down from the 2.6 percent rate in the last quarter of 2022. For the first time in one and a half years, there has been a decline in private inventory investments, amounting to a \$1.6 billion decline. This may be seen as a blessing in disguise for the economy as it faces a possible recession by the end of the year. This decline in private inventory investment cut GDP growth by 2.26 percent, the most in two years. Moreover, government spending was strong, rising 4.7 percent. Meanwhile, residential investment dropped for the eighth consecutive quarterly measure by 4.2 percent, while the non-residential fixed investment grew by 0.7 percent.

Rates - 30th April, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.0989	1.0961	1.1095	1.1020	1.0910	1.1125	1.1080
GBP	1.2437	1.2385	1.2583	1.2572	1.2445	1.2800	1.2597
JPY	134.08	133.00	136.56	136.28	135.20	139.40	134.44
CHF	0.8922	0.8850	0.8976	0.8941	0.8745	0.9075	0.8853

A dovish BoJ

The Bank of Japan expectedly kept ultra-low interest rates on Friday, as new governor Kazuo Ueda took a cautious stance in his first ever monetary policy meeting as governor in his bid to fight his predecessor's massive stimulus program. It has been decided that the BoJ will maintain the negative interest rate of -0.1 percent to short-term interest rates, while purchasing a significant amount of Japanese government bonds, allowing 10-year yields to remain at 0 percent. Despite deciding on maintaining the ultra-loose policy, Ueda kept the door open for future changes, stating that the BOJ will spend a good one to one and a half years reviewing the monetary steps taken over the past 25 years during Japan's battle with deflation and low inflation, signaling that the BoJ might eventually end its ultra-loose policy.

The question moving forward is how soon the BoJ will decide to end its ever so famous ultra-loose policy, especially as the increase in wage growth is accompanied by slowing global growth. Analysts believe that the Fed's expected pause in interest rate hikes could not have come at a better time as that has

massively helped with the BoJ's 10-year yield having fallen below its 0.5 percent cap.

Australia's Inflation eases

For the first quarter of 2023, inflation in Australia eased from its previous reading of 1.9 percent to 1.4 percent. Annually, CPI declined to 6.3 percent from 6.8 percent previously. After two years of gradual increases, the annual inflation of goods dropped from 9.5 percent to 7.6 percent, aided by the discounted prices of clothes, appliances and furniture. Meanwhile, the higher prices for medical services, rents, travel and restaurants, has caused the annual inflation in services to rise by 6.1 percent, a figure not seen since 2001. Following the release of the CPI data, markets are still pricing in no rate hikes, as increasing evidence shows that inflation in Australia could have reached its peak. All eyes are on the interest rate decisions by the Reserve Bank of Australia next Tuesday.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30595.



SHENMU, China: This photo taken on April 25, 2023 shows a miner working underground at the Hongliulin coal mine near Shenmu, in China's northern Shaanxi province, during a media tour organized by Chinese telecoms giant Huawei. — AFP

‘Smart mines’ show coal embedded in China’s future

SHENMU, China: One hundred meters underground inside a pit in northern China, miners extract lumps of coal with the flick of a finger on a smartphone, as the country tries to drag the traditionally dangerous and dirty work into the digital era.

The Hongliulin "intelligent mine" in coal-belt Shaanxi province is a flagship facility in a drive to modernize China's thousands of coal mines, even as the nation pledges to peak greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

China is the world's biggest emitter of the pollutants driving climate change, and its promises to curb them are essential to keeping global temperature rises below two degrees Celsius.

But mine digitalization — which aims to improve safety and productivity — shows the continued importance of coal in a country that last year produced nearly 60 percent of its electricity from the fossil fuel. Smart mines are common in other coal-producing nations like Canada, but China has lagged and now the government is aiming to achieve basic digitalization of all mines by 2035.

On a tour organized by telecoms giant Huawei — whose technology underpins the changes at Hongliulin — AFP journalists saw sensors, smart cameras and 5G relay boxes crisscrossing the facility. Inside a control room crammed with screens displaying numbers, graphs and images, technical manager Wang Lei said he could monitor the air, temperature and other data in real time.

Digitalization "has reduced the intensity of our work", 33-year-old electrician Ruan Banlin, who has worked in the mine for 10 years, told AFP.

Climate change

Huawei said the new methods had increased output per shift by almost a third. That's good news for China's energy grid — but not the planet. Greenpeace this week reported Beijing has approved a surge in coal power this year, green-lighting as much in the first three months as for the whole of 2021.

"We're seeing a decrease in the number of coal mines while the clustering of production increases along with total output," the NGO's Xie Wenwen told AFP.

Asked about smart mining, Xie said it should be scrutinized closely. "Obviously the safest thing we can do is leave the coal in the ground. That goes for climate as well as other risks," she said.

According to official figures, China had 4,400 coal mines at the end of 2022.

If it delivers on emissions pledges, those mines would be operating at minimum capacity and at a loss over coming decades, according to Greenpeace. But Huawei's involvement suggests China is betting on coal retaining its importance in fuel supply for years.

The company — whose net profit melted 69 percent year-on-year in 2022 — is diversifying after US sanctions over cybersecurity and espionage concerns hampered its business.

Xu Jun, head of mining digitalization for Huawei, said many competitors were setting up teams in the field. "The investment in smart mining solutions is not contradictory to Huawei's investment in clean energy," the firm told AFP. — AFP

China factory activity cools in April: PMI

BEIJING: China's manufacturing activity contracted in April, official figures showed Sunday, due to tapering global demand and slow domestic recovery after COVID-related curbs were lifted.

The official manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) — a key gauge of Chinese factory output — fell unexpectedly to 49.2 in April from 51.9 in March, and below the 50-point mark that separates expansion and contraction in activity, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed. Analysts polled by Bloomberg News had expected April factory activity of 51.4.

The drop comes after February recorded the highest reading in more than a decade as factories returned to normal following a surge in COVID cases. China's economy grew 4.5 percent in the first three months of the year as the country reopened after dropping strict health controls that helped keep the coronavirus in check but battered businesses and supply chains. But the world's second-largest economy is also beset by a series of other crises, from a debt-laden property sector to flagging consumer confidence, global inflation, the threat of recession elsewhere and geopoliti-

Grand Hypermarket opens its 33rd outlet in Hawally

KUWAIT: Grand Hypermarket, Kuwait's leading retail chain, inaugurated its 33rd outlet in Hawally, Kuwait. The new center has been set up in Block 11, Qutaibaha Bin Muslim Street, opposite Wafa Boys School, in an area of 11,000 sqft. Jassim Mohammad Khomeez Al-Sharah, Saad Mohammad, Jamal Al-Dosari and Grand Hyper Regional Director Ayub Kacheri opened the new outlet for customers. CEO Mohammad Suneer, DRO Tahseer Ali, COO Rahil Basim, Aslam Chelat, other special guests, management representatives and well-wishers attended the inaugural ceremony in a festive atmosphere.

The new outlet offers a range of fresh products including fruits, vegetables, meat and seafood from around the world of the Grand Hypermarket. The store features an in-house bakery and hot food products prepared with care and hygiene. The store offers a wide variety of products that cater to the tastes and needs of expatriates and Kuwaiti nationals ranging from groceries, home appliances, electronics, mobile phones, apparel and footwear.

US Fed likely to hike again despite signs of slowing economy

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve is widely expected to raise its benchmark lending rate for a tenth — and possibly final — time on Wednesday, as it continues its fight against high inflation.

The US central bank is likely to take this decision despite growing signs that the American economy is slowing down, with many economists predicting the US will enter a mild recession later this year. Analysts and traders expect the Fed to hike interest rates by 25 basis points and then hold them high in a bid to bring inflation back towards its long-term target of two percent without spurring a deeper, more painful recession.

"We expect the Fed to hike by 25bp next week and

cal tensions with the United States.

The official non-manufacturing PMI, which measures growth in the services and construction sectors, fell to 56.4 from 58.2 in March. The March reading was the highest since May 2011, as the country saw a surge in demand for travel, entertainment and other leisure services unavailable for nearly three years during the pandemic. The government has set a comparatively modest growth target of around five percent this year, a goal Premier Li Qiang has warned could be hard to achieve.

The Communist Party's top policy-making body said in a statement Friday that the economy still faced headwinds from weak demand at home and the slow pace of reforms.

"China's economy is mainly in the process of recovering, with (internal) driving forces still weak and demand insufficient," the Politburo said, according to a report by state-run Xinhua News Agency.

"Economic transition and upgrading face new headwinds, and hardships... are still to be overcome to promote high-quality development."

Travel rush

Beijing has promised further state support for the private sector, which is still reeling from a regulatory crackdown on the property, technology and private education industries. Policymakers are also looking for ways to push up domestic demand, as China's export and manufacturing sectors struggle amid tepid global demand. One bright spot in recent months has been households



BEIJING: People walk through a shopping mall on the second day of the 5-day Labor Day holiday in Beijing on April 30, 2023. — AFP

spending piled-up savings on travel.

Bookings for air and train tickets and hotel reservations for the five-day Labor Day holiday starting Saturday all surpassed the levels recorded in the same period in 2019, before the pandemic hit, according to online Chinese travel agency Fliggy.

"China's service sector continues to grow strongly while the manufacturing sector shows signs of weakening," Zhang Zhiwei, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management, said.

"These mixed signals will likely keep the pressure on the government to continue its supportive fiscal and monetary policies in the second quarter," he said. — AFP



KUWAIT: The inauguration of Grand Hypermarket's 33rd outlet in Hawally.

signal a pause in June, with a weak upward bias for rates going forward," Bank of America economists wrote in a note to clients on Friday. A further rate hike Wednesday would mark the Fed's tenth rate hike in a row, bringing the benchmark to between 5 and 5.25 percent — its highest level since 2007. More than 80 percent of futures traders also expect the Fed to raise interest rates by another 25 basis points, according to data from CME Group.

Banking turbulence

The meeting of the rate-setting Federal Open Markets Committee (FOMC) on May 2 and 3 will be held under very different circumstances than its previous one in March, which took place amid a short, sharp, banking crisis unleashed by the rapid collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) a few days earlier. SVB's swift demise after it took on excessive interest-rate risk raised concerns of banking contagion, which were amplified by the collapse of New York-based Signature Bank a few days later. Against the backdrop of ongoing turbulence in the banking sector, the Fed held off a larger rate hike on March 22, instead opt-

ing for a quarter-point rise. Concerted efforts by US and European regulators in the aftermath of SVB's collapse helped calm financial markets and appear to have prevented further high-profile casualties in the banking sector.

"With stress in credit markets easing, Fed officials look set to push ahead with a 25bp rate hike at the early-May meeting," Oxford Economics' lead US economist Michael Pearce wrote in a recent note to clients. But despite calmer financial markets, SVB's collapse has nevertheless had a lasting impact on the banking sector, with banks tightening lending conditions in the weeks since.

Fed officials have noted that the tighter lending conditions could act like an additional rate hike, possibly reducing the number of hikes necessary to bring inflation back down to two percent. Fed governor Christopher Waller said in mid-April that "a significant tightening of credit conditions could obviate the need for some additional monetary policy tightening." But he cautioned against "making such a judgment" before good data on the effect of the financial turmoil and bank lending was published. — AFP

Business

AL-SHALL ECONOMIC REPORT

Value of world's sovereign funds touches \$11.6 trillion, says SWFI

KUWAIT: The latest report of the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI), published on April 12, 2023, stated that the value of all sovereign funds in the world scored about \$11.6 trillion. The share of the 10 largest funds within it scored about \$8.2 trillion, with about 71 percent of the total for China, including two funds, with about \$1.35 trillion for the first and with about \$1 trillion for the second. They ranked the second and the third largest funds; however, they are owned by the Chinese state with a total amount of \$2.35 trillion. In addition, China also owns the Hong Kong fund of China, which ranks eighth, with a value of about \$514 billion.

The grand total of the three funds is about \$2.87 trillion. The largest Norwegian Government Pension Fund comes next in size. Its grand total alone makes it the second after the merger of Chinese funds with a value of about \$1.37 trillion. As we have repeatedly mentioned, it does not invest in Norway so as not to cause inflation in the prices of local assets, and neither does it finance the public budget except by a small percentage, and in cases of extreme necessity.

It is a fund for generations. Its information can be monitored every second, away protected from the mess of politicians. Singapore comes next with two funds: the first alone is in sixth place with a value of about \$690 billion, and the second is in seventh place with a value of about \$497 billion the two funds together provide Singapore, which has the third largest sovereign savings, with about \$1.187 trillion. Norway and Singapore have very developed and sustainable economies. They finance their public finances from taxes on economic activity.

The sovereign funds of the GCC countries come next in value. The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority is the largest among them with about \$853 billion, then Kuwait with a value of about \$750 billion. Saudi Arabia comes next with a value of \$650 billion which intends to increase its value to \$2 trillion by 2030, and finally Qatar with a value of about \$475 billion.

All the countries that own these sovereign funds have economies that have either reached a stage of maturity and achieved sustainability and achieved with it sustainability of their public finances by financing them either from taxes on economic activity or are actively seeking to achieve this approach. All of them seek to develop the size of their funds, except for Kuwait, which has proposals to distribute the revenues of its fund. In fact, Kuwait, with the critical situation of its economy and public finances, no longer has the option to ensure the sustainability

Rank of Top 10 Largest Sovereign Wealth Fund - April 2023			
Rank	State	Sovereign Fund	Total Assets (1 billion USD)
1	Norway	Government Pension Fund Global	1,371.80
2	China	China Investment Co.	1,350.90
3	China	SAFE Investment Co.	1,019.60
4	UAE	Abu Dhabi Investment Authority	853
5	Kuwait	Kuwait Investment Authority	750
6	Singapore	GIC Private Limited	690
7	KSA	Public Investments Fund	650
8	China	Hong Kong Monetary Authority Investment Portfolio	514.2
9	Singapore	Temasek Holdings	496.6
10	Qatar	Qatar Investment Authority	475
Total Value of 10 Sovereign Wealth Funds			8,171.1
Total Value of Global Sovereign Wealth Funds			11,575.70
%of the Largest 10 Sovereign Wealth Funds in the World			70.60%

of its public finance but to preserve and develop the asset of its sovereign fund and change its function by allocating part of its revenues to be a source of financing to extinguish the inevitable fire of its public finance with the first related drop in oil prices, and to work later on the sustainability of its economy.

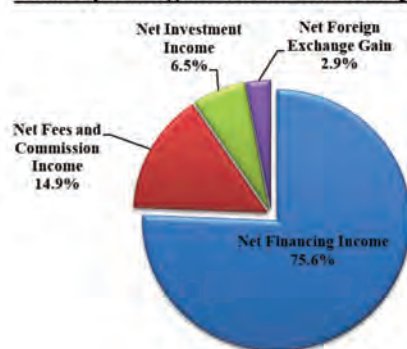
We know that the new Cabinet formation is a copy of previous formations, but we believe that the economic team within it is aware of the impossibility of sustaining the economy and public finances. Therefore, perhaps it will change the function and goals of the sovereign fund and protect it from tampering as one of its first priorities. We will provide an example of other priorities proposed for the economic team in a paragraph in our current report.

	31/03/2023 (Thousand KD)	31/03/2022 (Thousand KD)	Change Value	%	
Total Assets	8,030,951	7,459,870	571,081	7.7%	↑
Total liabilities	7,065,071	6,709,540	355,531	5.3%	↑
Total Equity attributable to the equity holders of the bank	790,252	562,095	228,157	40.6%	↑
Total Operating Revenues	52,561	49,700	2,861	5.8%	↑
Total Operating Expenses	25,006	23,667	1,339	5.7%	↑
Provision and Taxation	8,113	9,011	-898	-10.0%	↓
Net income	19,442	17,022	2,420	14.2%	↑
Ratios					
**Return on Average Assets (ROA)	0.98%	0.92%			↑
**Return on Average Equity Relevant To The Bank Shareholder (ROE)	10.4%	12.0%			↓
**Return on Capital (ROC)	20.8%	21.4%			↓
Earnings per share (EPS) - (Fils)	4.44	4.17	0.27	6.5%	↑
Closing price - (Fils)	643	939	-296	-31.5%	↓
*Price to Earnings Per Share Multiplies (P/E)	36.2	56.3			
*Price to Book Value Multiplies (P/B)	2.5	4.0			

* Indicators Ended March 31, 2023 on an annual basis.

** Calculated based on the average rate of the financial data at the end of December 2022 and 31 March 2023.

Total Operating Income in the First Quarter 2023



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 27 APRIL 2023

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,238	7,939.94	0.1%	1.5%	-2.2%	166,402,267	57,442,747	14,295	17.2	1.2	78.9%
Main Market	9,166	5,606.14	0.3%	1.9%	0.2%	114,801,186	10,093,503	5,935	14.2	0.7	21.1%
All Share	43,404	7,162.54	0.1%	1.6%	-1.8%	281,203,453	67,536,251	20,230	14.6	0.8	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	26,359	1,762.27	0.0%	0.5%	-1.8%	56,232,267	32,503,340	6,734	21.7	1.3	60.73%
Basic Materials	504	892.56	1.2%	4.1%	3.2%	938,408	588,949	230	8.3	1.6	1.16%
Consumer Discretionary	978	1,465.78	2.1%	0.3%	-1.4%	30,459,711	3,126,899	1,708	13.8	0.9	2.25%
Consumer Staples	140	460.72	2.3%	3.5%	-4.0%	909,888	340,694	77	NM	0.9	0.32%
Energy	209	998.70	-1.8%	0.1%	-12.3%	344,421	29,279	106	10.7	0.7	0.48%
Financial Services	4,397	1,229.70	-0.4%	2.8%	-2.2%	119,058,862	13,243,823	5,113	17.0	0.7	10.13%
Health Care	229	462.45	0.0%	1.5%	0.1%	0	0	0	12.0	1.1	0.53%
Industrials	3,479	1,003.51	0.7%	1.7%	-7.0%	14,843,782	6,879,870	2,432	15.4	0.8	8.02%
Insurance	864	2,110.47	-1.8%	10.5%	36.1%	562,449	761,611	71	10.4	0.8	1.99%
Real Estate	2,412	1,142.08	0.9%	5.7%	-5.5%	47,215,678	4,576,538	2,019	14.2	0.5	5.56%
Technology	8	582.00	-1.8%	-8.5%	-16.4%	860	69	2	NM	0.7	0.02%
Telecommunications	3,632	1,184.12	0.5%	4.6%	0.2%	9,265,435	5,246,767	1,615	12.6	2.0	8.37%
Utilities	193	460.53	0.6%	-1.1%	-6.9%	1,371,692	238,411	123	13.3	1.6	0.44%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
MUNSHAAT	68	19.30%	626,589	37,098	27
IFAHR	23.1	15.50%	2,722,339	59,948	162
IFA	92	14.00%	11,460,486	998,304	386
ENERGYH	73	12.31%	143,639	10,540	54
ALAQARIA	32.8	11.95%	12,698	394	8

Top Losers

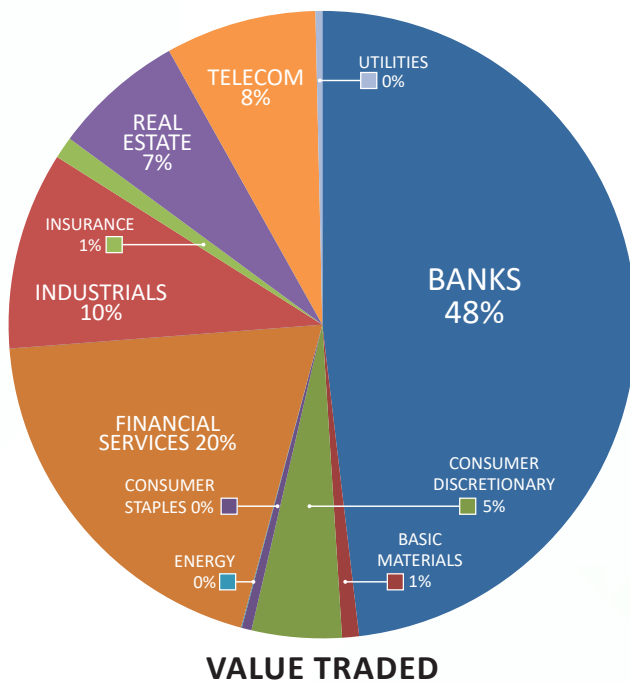
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
EQUIPMENT	36.9	-9.34%	27,309	1,026	9
MARAKEZ	52.2	-8.26%	55,471	2,874	27
UPAC	184	-7.07%	31,028	5,794	13
TAAMEER	14.7	-6.96%	708,271	10,262	42
ALDEERA	145	-6.45%	78,224	11,313	67

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
JIYAD	21.1	4.98%	23,380,944	496,893	600
KFH	744	-0.13%	21,984,538	16,396,970	2,801
KRE	115	2.68%	16,979,582	1,942,587	445
GFH	77.2	-1.53%	16,846,257	1,298,502	566
KPROJ	130	-2.26%	16,194,232	2,145,923	352

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	744	-0.13%	21,984,538	16,396,970	2,801
NBK	1,003	0.80%	6,491,894	6,498,448	1,301
ZAIN	569	0.71%	8,540,056	4,818,156	1,376
BOUBYAN	674	-2.46%	5,771,707	3,936,486	1,055
GBK	281	-0.35%	10,008,476	2,814,116	599



Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value dropped by 9% and 14%, while Main Market increased by 48% and 15%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes are trading above support levels which shows strength and stability. We're yet to have a high volume.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7162, with support levels at 7162, 7105, and 7041, and resistance at 7178. The Premier index closed at 7939, with support levels at 7864, 7827, and 7784, while resistance at 7977. The Main index closed at 5606, with support levels at 5601, 5575, and 5550, while resistance at 5616.



Dancers take part in a rehearsal for 'Black Sabbath - the Ballet' at the Birmingham Hippodrome in Birmingham, central England. — AFP photos



A dancer takes part in a rehearsal for 'Black Sabbath - the Ballet' at the Birmingham Hippodrome in Birmingham.



Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi (second right) and composer and musical director Chris Austin (right) watch dancers taking part in a rehearsal for 'Black Sabbath - the Ballet' at the Birmingham.

In a rehearsal studio in central England, dancers are getting to grips with new, heavy metal-inspired ballet steps. Moving gracefully in unison, the team pirouettes with air guitar, leaps with head banging.

Welcome to "Black Sabbath — The Ballet", the brainchild of Cuban dance superstar Carlos Acosta,

irmingham, the pioneering group's home city, in September before going on tour. Rehearsals have just begun.

Bat incident

According to writer Richard Thomas, the ballet is the "rags-to-riches story" of four young men who went from the "factory floor to one of the most successful bands in rock history", although he stressed it would not be a documentary set to music and dance. The legendary group's original line-up was Osbourne, Iommi, bassist Geezer Butler and drummer Bill Ward.

They were instrumental in creating heavy metal in the early 1970s with dark and high-volume guitars coupled with a keen interest in the occult.

"It's very simple. It's like Black Sabbath meets the Birmingham Royal Ballet," Thomas said.

There would, however, be use of archive interviews and also some famous Black Sabbath stories such as how Iommi lost the tips of two fingers in an industrial accident on his last day working at a sheet metal factory.

Also making an appearance will be the tale of the "Stonehenge" set that had to be dumped after a measurements mix-up meant it was so big it wouldn't fit into auditoriums.

And he said there might "possibly be a brief mention of the bat incident", in which Osbourne thought a fan had thrown a rubber bat onstage only to discover — after he took a bite — that it was real. For Acosta, 39, there had been an immediate rapport with Iommi after he first approached him with the project. "I didn't know the man (or) how we were going to hit it off, but

obviously we both come from the same background in terms of working-class and poor families... and the chemistry was instant," he said. The former star dancer said he came to the music of Black Sabbath late due to growing up in Cuba.

'Stratospheric'

"I grew up in the 1980s, I wanted to be Michael Jackson. I didn't know anything about Black Sabbath," he said, adding that he only discovered the group through a friend in the late 1990s.

"This was the music of those who are marginalized so I found it very interesting." Musically, composer Chris Austin said it had been difficult to know where to start as the Black Sabbath back catalogue was so huge.

But he said once they narrowed it down it had been easy to be inspired by the music's "glorious irregularity" and "enormous shifts of tempo", combined with Osbourne's early "stratospheric" vocals.



Dancers take part in a rehearsal for 'Black Sabbath - the Ballet' at the Birmingham Hippodrome in Birmingham.

The show will be a treat for fans after the group, including three of the original members, ended their last-ever tour with a final concert in Birmingham in 2017. Iommi said he was as interested as everyone else to discover how the ballet would turn out, but that he had been confident in Acosta and his team from the start.

"I know from our fans that there is a lot of excitement to come to the show," he said, adding that he expected people would be particularly keen to join in. "I think it will be great." — AFP



Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi

artistic director of the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Determined to celebrate the cultural treasures of the UK's second city since his arrival in 2020, Acosta took his idea to Black Sabbath co-founder and guitarist Tony Iommi, who gave it his blessing along with the group's original vocalist Ozzy Osbourne.

"I was fascinated with the idea. I thought 'How are they going to do that'," Iommi, 75, told AFP Thursday in Birmingham.

"I just couldn't imagine how they'd do ballet to Black Sabbath and then I thought well maybe they're going to use the... softer tracks, but no they went for 'Black Sabbath', 'War Pigs', 'Iron Man'," he said.

"I think I was just really intrigued."

The full-length, three-act ballet opens in Bir-

US teen saves the day as school bus driver faints

A 13-year-old American boy became a hero by managing to safely stop a school bus carrying dozens of kids when the driver lost consciousness.

The drama unfolded Wednesday in the northern state of Michigan, when a teenager named Dillon Reeves got up and grabbed the steering wheel when he saw the driver had fainted, and brought the vehicle to a halt in the middle of the road using the hand brake, school district superintendent Robert Livernois said.

The bus was carrying nearly 70 students from Lois E. Carter Middle School in the town of Warren when the driver lost consciousness, as seen in a video released by the authorities.

Children are heard screaming as Reeves takes control of the bus and yells out for someone to call the 911 emergency rescue service



number. "The City of Warren is very proud of our 7th Grade Hero Dillon Reeves," Warren city councilor Jonathan Lafferty wrote on Facebook. "This young man jumped into action when his school bus driver experienced a medical emergency, bringing the bus to a stop and avoiding what could have been a very tragic accident," he wrote. — AFP

Bond actress Eva Green wins UK court case over film fee

James Bond star Eva Green on Friday won a court case in the UK over her \$1 million (£810,000) acting fee for the never-made science fiction film "A Patriot".

The French actress had sued UK-based production company White Lantern Film at the High Court in London for the fee but the firm countersued, saying she derailed the £4-million project by making "unreasonable demands". Judge Michael Green ruled the 42-year-old actress was entitled to the sum and dismissed the counter-claim.

"In particular, I find that Ms Green did not renounce her obligations under the artist agreement; nor did she commit any repudiatory breaches of it," the judge said.

Green, famous for her role as Vesper Lynd in 2006 Bond film "Casino Royale", was due to play a soldier. She signed up to the project in 2018, but became increasingly uneasy as funding issues meant that UK producer Jake Seal began to assume more control. The star attended a trial in January, where messages between her and production staff were read out.

At one point, she blamed her "Frenchness" for calling a film director "weak and stupid". Green said in a statement on Friday that her "professional reputation has been upheld."

"I fought tooth and nail to defend the beautiful film that I loved and had signed on for. I stood my ground, and this time, justice prevailed," she said.

"I wish I could say that this ordeal has made me stronger, better, wiser. But to have my personal life dragged through the press and the court was more painful and damaging than I can say."

Max Mallin, lawyer for White Lantern, argued during the trial that Green had shown a "categorical and unequivocal refusal to perform" and repeatedly made "unreasonable demands". Green told the court that "I don't care about the money. I live to make good films. It's my religion." The actress was also angry that production was shifting from Ireland to Black Hangar studios in southern England. — AFP



Eva Green

Lifestyle

Cleopatra was light-skinned, Egypt tells Netflix



Egypt's antiquities ministry insisted on Thursday that Cleopatra had "white skin and Hellenistic characteristics" in an ongoing row over a Netflix drama-documentary depicting the famed beauty of antiquity as black.

"Queen Cleopatra", produced by Jada Pinkett Smith and starring Adele James, is due for release on the streaming platform on May 10.

"As Egypt's last pharaoh, Cleopatra fights to protect her throne, family and legacy in this docudrama featuring reenactments and expert interviews," the Netflix site says in promoting its upcoming production. But even before its release, "Queen Cleopatra" has already caused a storm of controversy in the North African nation.

An online petition accusing the production of rewriting history has already garnered more than 40,000 signatures.

And in a country where calls for Netflix to be banned for content deemed offensive to Egypt or "its family values", MP Saboura al-Sayyed has again urged parliament to ban the platform.

On Thursday, the antiquities ministry weighed into the dispute, publishing a lengthy statement that included statements from experts it said all agree: Cleopatra had "white skin and Hellenistic characteristics".

"Bas reliefs and statues of Queen Cleopatra are the best proof," the statement said, embellishing its text with illustrations showing Cleopatra with European traits.

For Mostafa Waziri, head of the Supreme Antiquities Council, depicting the famous queen as black is nothing less than "a falsification of Egyptian history".

He insists there is nothing racist in this view, which is motivated by "defending the history of Queen Cleopatra, an important

part of the history of Egypt in antiquity". Commentators in Egypt often decry campaigns among mostly African-American groups claiming the origins of Egyptian civilization.

Cleopatra belonged to the Macedonian Lagides dynasty descended from Ptolemy, one of Alexander the Great's generals, who founded the Ptolemaic dynasty on the banks of the Nile.

While legend hails the queen born in around 69 BC as a great beauty, her appearance and the color of her skin are largely open to interpretation. A BBC documentary in 2009 claimed that Cleopatra had African blood, an assertion that passed without incident. — AFP

Obama to spotlight US workers in Netflix documentary

Barack Obama will be back in the public view next month in a Netflix-produced documentary series in which the former US president explores the role of work in American lives.

"I'm excited to share the trailer for 'Working,'" Obama tweeted.

"In this series, I talk to American workers across various industries — from hospitality and technology to home care — to understand their jobs and hopes for the future," he added.

In the series entitled "Working: What We Do All Day," Obama takes on hot topics such as the appeal of certain jobs, repercussions of the development of artificial intelligence and even the

quest for finding meaning at work.

The trailer for the documentary was released Thursday.

His approach was inspired by the book "Working" by Studs Terkel (1912-2008), an influential figure of the American left.

Obama, who left office in 2017, employs his famous speaking voice to narrate the series, which will "explore ways to find meaning at work, and to create a bond through the experiences and the difficulties," the US streaming giant said on its site.

The series was produced by Concordia Studio and Higher Ground, a production company founded by Obama and Michelle Obama, in 2018, which bought distribution rights to the Oscar-winning 2019 documentary "American Factory," which also looked at the culture of work within the United States.

The documentary series will be broadcast from May 17 on Netflix. — AFP



Former US President Barack Obama (center left) and his wife Michelle (center right) walk in a street of Barcelona. — AFP

DiCaprio and Scorsese talk 'Killers' as Rihanna hits CinemaCon



US film director Martin Scorsese speaks on stage promoting "Killers of the Flower Moon" during Paramount Pictures' presentation at CinemaCon 2023, the official convention of the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO), at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP photos

Martin Scorsese unveiled the first footage from his film "Killers of the Flower Moon" Thursday at CinemaCon, where his lead actor Leonardo DiCaprio and pop superstar Rihanna were among the surprise guests.

Dark Western "Killers" is Scorsese's sixth movie with DiCaprio, and his tenth with Robert De Niro — but the first time the legendary director has ever brought his go-to A-listers together. A true story of greed, love and murder set in the 1920s, when members of the newly oil-rich Osage Nation in Oklahoma began dying and disappearing in mysterious circumstances, the twisty crime drama hits theaters in October.

Footage played at the movie industry summit in Las Vegas showed DiCaprio's Ernest Burkhart in a romantic relationship with a Native American woman (Lily Gladstone) while seemingly caught in the middle of brutal conflict between the Osage and encircling oil-hungry white capitalists.

De Niro plays William Hale, who is seen conspiring with Burkhart, while Jesse Plemons appears as lawman Tom White, sent from the newly formed Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to investigate the murders.

Originally, DiCaprio was set to play White, but after spending time with the Osage, he and Scorsese decided to make a "big change" to the script, and center the movie less on the FBI and instead on Burkhart.

Scorsese said they were interested in exploring how "some of these people could have done what they did" to the Osage, and how they could rationalize violence — even against those they loved — by simply claiming: "It's civilization. One group comes in, and another goes out."

DiCaprio, hosting a Q&A with Scorsese, described the movie's events as a "forgotten part of our past."

The film was shot at the true, real-life locations where grisly events took place, and Scorsese said the script was reworked until the last day of shooting, as he spent time with the Osage people and was anxious to "do right by them."

"It was about immersing ourselves in that world," said the New Yorker, despite the "110-degree heat" and the unsettling presence on the surrounding prairies of coyotes and wild horses.

The film is adapted from David Grann's acclaimed 2017 non-fiction book of the same name, and will premiere at next month's Cannes film festival.

"Killers" will be Apple's highest profile big-screen release yet, as the tech giant launches the film in theaters — a splashy launch that it hopes can consequently drum up interest in its Apple TV+ streaming platform.

"I'm really thrilled to have a wide theatrical release before it becomes available at home," said Scorsese, joking that small-screen viewing is only "ok" by comparison.

Apple bought the film from Hollywood studio Paramount after the cost of the lavish, nearly three-and-a-half-hour production began to spiral to a reported \$200 million, and the two companies struck a deal to distribute the film to theaters.



US film director Martin Scorsese (left), recipient of the Legend of Cinema Award, and US actor Leonardo DiCaprio arrive for the Big Screen Achievement Awards during CinemaCon 2023 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada.

from other upcoming films, including "Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part One" and "Transformers: Rise of the Beasts."

Star Dominique Fishback told AFP the presence of more "Black and brown people" and voices in "Transformers" would open up the seven-movie, billions-grossing franchise to "more and more hearts and households."

"It almost feels like we're starting the franchise over," said co-star Anthony Ramos.

The presentation featured a surprise appearance from pop superstar Rihanna, who joked that her newly announced role in "The Smurf Movie" would earn her "cool points" with her children.

The Barbados-born artist will voice the role of Smurfette, as well as write and sing original music and produce the film, out February 2025.

"I tried to get the Papa Smurf part but it didn't work out," she joked on stage at Caesars Palace.

Animation means "I get to show up in my pajamas in my third trimester and play a little boo badass," said Rihanna, who is pregnant with her second child.

"I hope this gives me a little bit of cool points with my kids one day. I'm just hoping." — AFP

Sacred Scottish stone taken to London for coronation

The Stone of Destiny, a sacred slab of sandstone that became a symbol of Scottish nationhood, has left Edinburgh Castle for London, where it will play a key role in King Charles III's coronation.

It has not been taken out of Scotland since 1996 when it was officially returned following a 700-year absence.

The 152-kilogram (335-pound) stone, seized from the Scots by the king of England Edward I in 1296, is being taken to Westminster Abbey in London for the May 6 ceremony.

Officials at Edinburgh Castle, where it is kept with the Scottish crown jewels, held a special ceremony to bid temporary farewell to the legendary stone that left for London late Thursday.

The Stone of Scone, as it is also known, was transported south from Edinburgh under tight security and will be placed beneath the Coronation Chair at the abbey for Charles's enthronement.



The Duke of Buccleuch Richard Scott (center), flanked by two members of The Royal Company of Archers, stands by the Stone of Destiny during a special ceremony at Edinburgh Castle before it is transported to Westminster Abbey for the Coronation of Britain's King Charles III. — AFP photos

Legend has it that the stone was brought from the Holy Land through Egypt, Sicily and Spain to Ireland before being placed in a monastery in Scone in Scotland in the 9th century.

It was then used for centuries in the inauguration of Scottish kings.

But David Breeze, a professor of history and archaeology from the University of Edinburgh, said it is highly likely that the stone originates from the ancient Pictish kingdom of Scotland.

"The origin of the stone has long been shrouded in myth," he told Times Radio.

"The connection with the Middle East is strong and in the Middle Ages the idea that the stone had been Jacob's pillow was used to justify territorial aggrandisement."

'Tremendous privilege'

Edward ordered the stone to be built into the Coronation Chair in London in 1296. "Edward was making a statement



The Stone of Destiny lies in Edinburgh Castle during a special ceremony before being transported to Westminster Abbey for the Coronation of Britain's King Charles III.

about the status of Scotland," said Ewen Cameron, a professor of Scottish history at the University of Edinburgh.

"One chronicler stated that its removal to London was 'in recognition of a kingdom surrendered and conquered.'"

The stone remained in Westminster Abbey for most of the next 650 years, until Christmas Eve 1950 when a group of Scottish students took part in an audacious raid to retrieve it.

A manhunt was launched, with check-

points set up at the Scottish border, but the students succeeded in smuggling the stone into Scotland. The students later recounted that they had to secretly employ a stonemason to repair the 335-pound stone after they dropped it and broke it into two as they carried it to their car. The stone was later found on the site of the High Altar at Arbroath Abbey where, in 1320, Scottish nationhood was declared under the leadership Robert the Bruce. — AFP



The Stone of Destiny is carried out of the Great Hall in Edinburgh Castle during a special ceremony before it is transported to Westminster Abbey for the Coronation of Britain's King Charles III.

Sports

Zaman hits 3rd successive ton as Pakistan beat New Zealand

Pakistan grab 2-0 lead in five-match series

News in Brief

Al Dawsari scores, sees red

DUBAI: Salem Al Dawsari went from hero to villain as he scored an opener for Al Hilal but then saw red in the final minutes for kicking Ken Iwao, as the reigning champions drew 1-1 with Urawa Red Diamonds in the AFC Champions League final first leg in Riyadh on Saturday. Al Dawsari's opening-half strike was cancelled by a 53rd-minute equalizer from Shinzo Koroki in what was an eventful affair at King Fahd International stadium. No stranger to delivering on big occasions, Al Dawsari had scored for Al Hilal in the semi-finals and final of the AFC Champions League last season, netted the winner for Saudi Arabia against Argentina at the 2022 World Cup last winter, and converted two penalties in the FIFA Club World Cup semi-finals against Flamengo in February to send his side into the final for the very first time. — AFP

Glasgow see off Scarlets

LONDON: Glasgow reached their first European final with a 35-17 Challenge Cup success away to Scarlets in Llanelli on Saturday. The Scottish club will now face either French side Toulon or Italy's Benetton in the final of the second-tier tournament at Dublin's Aviva Stadium on May 19. Glasgow centre Stafford McDowall scored two tries, with scrum-half George Horne, flanker Rory Darge and replacement hooker Johnny Mattheus also crossing Scarlets' line. Horne also kicked five conversions for a 15-point haul as Glasgow came from behind to win after going down 17-14 early in the second half. Steff Evans scored Scarlets lone try, with fly-half Sam Costelow landing four penalties. — AFP

Wigan sink, relegated

LONDON: Wigan were relegated from the Championship after a 1-1 draw at Reading on Saturday, while the race to reach the second tier play-offs is set to go down to the wire. Wigan defender Charlie Hughes headed home from close-range nine minutes from full-time to give the bottom of the table Latics hope of staying up. But third bottom Reading equalized in stoppage-time through Yakou Meite to confirm Wigan's relegation. Wigan, FA Cup winners in 2013, had been making a late bid to avoid relegation after beating Stoke and Millwall in their previous games. But they slipped into League One after failing to secure another victory at the SCL Stadium. Reading, without a win in 12 games, are level on points with fourth bottom Huddersfield, who have three games to play compared to only one for the Royals. — AFP

Binder win MotoGP sprint

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA: South African Brad Binder won the sprint at the Spanish Grand Prix on Saturday edging reigning world champion Francesco Bagnaia. KTM's Binder finished 0.48sec ahead of Bagnaia on a Ducati as the Italian cut compatriot Marco Bezzecchi's lead in this year's standings after the Mooney-Ducati rider collected just one point for eighth. After dominating practice and qualifying for two days Spaniard Aleix Espargaro crashed his Aprilia on the sixth lap. Binder and Bagnaia had finished outside the top 10 in practice and been forced to ride in the opening qualifying earlier in the day where they grabbed the last two spots in the shootout for the first four rows on the grid. — AFP

Knight seizes lead at LPGA

LOS ANGELES: Cheyenne Knight curled in a 15-foot eagle putt on the way to a four-under par 67, grabbing a two-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the LPGA's LA Championship. The 26-year-old American fired one of only two bogey-free third rounds at Wilshire Country Club to stand on nine-under 204 after 54 holes. Australian Hannah Green birdied five of the last six holes to shoot 69 and grab a share of second on 206 with South Korea's Ryu Hae-ran, who carded a 67. Scotland's Gemma Dryburgh was fourth on 207 after a 66, one stroke ahead of China's Lin Xiyu and India's Aditi Ashok, the 36-hole leader. Knight opened with eight pars before closing the front nine with a birdie, then grabbed the lead with her sensational eagle at the par-5 13th and sank a 10-foot birdie putt at the 17th to stretch her lead. — AFP

Rahm charges into contention

MEXICO CITY: Top-ranked Masters champion Jon Rahm charged into contention with a spectacular 10-under par 61 on Saturday to lie two strokes behind leader Tony Finau at the US PGA Tour Mexico Open. Spain's Rahm, the defending champion, matched his career-best PGA round score, barely putting a foot wrong in a round that featured 10 birdies without a bogey for a course record at Vidanta Vallarta. "Today, everything just seemed perfect," Rahm said. "Made a lot of great swings and the ones that weren't great, still gave myself a good result." — AFP

RAWALPINDI: Fakhar Zaman smashed a third consecutive century to guide Pakistan to a seven-wicket victory over New Zealand in the second one-day international on Saturday. The 33-year-old left-handed opener hit an undefeated 180 off 144 balls for his tenth ODI hundred. It followed his 117 in the first match and 101 against the same opponents in January as Pakistan chased a stiff 337-run target in 48.2 overs.

The win gives Pakistan a 2-0 lead in the five-match series with the last three matches in Karachi on May 3, 5 and 7. Along with Zaman, skipper Babar Azam hit a brisk 66-ball 65 and Mohammad Rizwan a 41-ball 54 not out as Pakistan achieved their second highest successful ODI chase behind 349 against Australia in Lahore last year. New Zealand were guided to 336-5 by a second successive hundred for Daryl Mitchell, who made 129, Tom Latham's 98 and 51 by Chad Bowes.

Zaman is the 12th batsman to score three or more hundreds in consecutive ODIs with Sri Lankan Kumar Sangakkara the only man to hit four on the trot. Azam has achieved the feat twice. When on 98, Zaman joined West Indian Shai Hope as the second fastest to 3,000 ODI runs in 67 innings. South African Hashim Amla is the fastest to the milestone in 57.

Once Imam-ul-Haq fell for 24 with

the team's total at 66, Zaman and Azam added 135 for the second wicket and even the fall of Azam and Abdullah Shafique (seven) did not derail Pakistan's chase. Azam hit five boundaries and a six in his 25th ODI fifty. "It was my lucky day to score again against New Zealand as I got chances," said Zaman. "I try to take my time at the start and then with five players in the circle it becomes easier to score." Visiting skipper Latham described Zaman as "outstanding". "We were very happy at the halfway mark," said Latham. "Fakhar played an outstanding knock. They were able to build partnerships and that was a big tick in the batting department."

Mitchell in the runs

Zaman, who smoked six sixes and 17 fours, completed the chase with Rizwan in an unbroken fourth wicket stand of 119. New Zealand rued dropping Zaman on 55 when Mark Chapman grassed a catch off James Neesham. Earlier, Mitchell improved on his 113 in the first ODI on Thursday with a 119-ball knock after New Zealand were sent in to bat.

Mitchell smashed three sixes and eight boundaries and consolidated the innings through a third-wicket stand of 183 with skipper Latham, as the pair took full advantage of a flat pitch. Mitchell was finally caught brilliantly by

59, and Marsh. Hyderabad hit back with three wickets in three overs through their spinners and once Salt and Marsh departed the chase lost track.

Rising Indian leg-spinner Mayank Markande stood out with figures of 2-20 including getting Salt, a wicketkeeper-batsman from England, caught and bowled. Batsmen set up victory after left-hand opener Abhishek Sharma smashed 67 off 36 balls after Hyderabad skipper Aiden Markram won the toss and elected to bat first. Hyderabad seemed to slip after they lost a few wickets but Klaasen, who struck his first IPL half-century, put on a couple of partnerships including a sixth-wicket stand of 53 with Abdul Samad to boost the total.

Gujarat on top

In the first match of the day, a fine partnership between Vijay Shankar and David Miller steered holders Gujarat Titans to the top of the table with a seven-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders. Chasing 180 for victory, Gujarat were in trouble at 93-3 when Shankar (51) and the left-handed Miller (32) combined to achieve victory with 13 balls to spare at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

Bowlers Mohammed Shami (3-33), Josh Little (2-25) and Noor Ahmad (2-21) set up victory after they kept down Kolkata to 179-7 despite a sparkling 81 by Rahmanullah Gurbaz in a match which started 45 minutes late due to rain and wet outfield. "They got us back into the game and kept us in the hunt," skip-



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman plays a shot during the second one-day international (ODI) cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi. — AFP

Mohammad Nawaz off pacer Naseem Shah in the 46th over, while Latham was caught behind off Haris Rauf an over later. It was Naseem who gave Mitchell an extra life four short of his hundred when he dropped a simple catch off spinner Usama Mir at mid-on.

That allowed Mitchell to complete his hundred off 102 balls – the third of his ODI career. Latham hit eight boundaries and a six off 85 balls. Bow-

es and Will Young gave New Zealand a 33-run start before pacer Rauf had Young caught behind for 19 in the sixth over. Bowes, who hit seven boundaries in his maiden ODI half century, steadied the innings with Mitchell as the pair added 86 for the second wicket. It was Rauf again who broke the stand when he trapped Bowes leg before wicket in the 19th over. Rauf was the pick of bowlers with 4-78. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Delhi Capitals' David Warner fields the ball during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 29, 2023. — AFP

per Hardik Pandya said of man of the match, and Ireland fast bowler, Little and Ahmad, a left-arm wrist spinner from Afghanistan. "Because the way Gurbaz batted, after a long time I saw the bowling team was bowling good balls, but he was playing with such conviction and clarity of thought. I would have taken 180 on that pitch." — AFP

Hyderabad down Delhi in IPL despite Marsh's show

NEW DELHI: Sunrisers Hyderabad overcame a sparkling all-round performance by Mitchell Marsh to down Delhi Capitals by nine runs in the Indian Premier League on Saturday. South Africa's Heinrich Klaasen hit an unbeaten 53 to steer Hyderabad to 197-6, a total their bowlers defended by restricting Delhi to 188-6 at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground.

Marsh returned bowling figures of 4-27 including a maiden over and then hit a 39-ball 63 but the effort was not enough for bottom-placed Delhi, who fell to their sixth loss in eight matches. "Took me a few games to get going, but a disappointing loss," said Marsh, who became the third player to be named man of the match from the losing side this season. "We've been on the wrong end of a few (close matches) but we do feel there is a long way to go in this tournament."

Former champions Hyderabad, who won their only title in 2016 under current Delhi skipper David Warner, bounced back from their three losses to move up one spot to eighth. Warner fell for a two-ball duck but Delhi's chase looked good during a 112-run second-wicket partnership between Phil Salt, who made

Nuggets thrash Suns in semi-final opener

LOS ANGELES: The Denver Nuggets, fueled by 34 points from Jamal Murray, dominated Kevin Durant and the Phoenix Suns 125-107 Saturday in game one of their NBA Western Conference semi-final series. Denver's two-time reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic scored 24 points and grabbed 19 rebounds as six Nuggets players scored in double-digits to give the top seeds a convincing victory against the potentially explosive Suns.

Jokic had gone so far as to say the Suns could be considered favorites in the series, and Phoenix looked dangerous as they connected on 66.7 percent of their shots from the field in a nip-and-tuck first quarter that featured 14 lead changes. But they led by just one heading into the second period, and the Nuggets inexorably took control to lead 68-51 at halftime.

The Nuggets responded to every run the Suns produced and Phoenix — led by 29 points from two-time NBA champion Durant and with 27 from Devin Booker — didn't get the deficit below 10 points in the second half. With five minutes remaining, Phoenix waved the white flag and pulled their stars. Deandre Ayton scored 14 points and Chris Paul had 11 for the Suns, but Denver had 16 three-pointers to Phoenix's seven and scored 18 points off 16 Suns turnovers.

Denver out-rebounded Phoenix 49-38. Murray



DENVER: Kevin Durant #35 of the Phoenix Suns drives against Kentavious Caldwell-Pope #5 and Michael Porter Jr #1 of the Denver Nuggets in the third quarter at Ball Arena on April 29, 2023. — AFP

drained back-to-back three-pointers to launch a 14-0 fourth quarter run that carried the Nuggets to a 120-95 lead. "Just some big, big shots when they were trying to go on runs — Jamal seemed to stop it almost every time," Nuggets coach Mike Malone said. It was more than a glimpse of the impressive form Murray flashed in the 2020 playoffs, when the Nuggets reached the Western Conference finals in the Covid-protective bubble.

hosts' lone score of the half. The clock, however, was always against France as England clinched a fifth successive Women's Six Nations title in coach Simon Middleton's last game in charge after eight years at the helm. "I am super proud, the whole squad in this Six Nations has got us to where we are today and it is amazing," England captain Marlie Packer told the BBC. "We knew they (France) would be tough, they played to the 80th minute and kept asking questions of us so credit to them."

An emotional Middleton said: "You couldn't wish for more than this. It's been an honor and privilege to do this job. I have been very lucky." France, the last side to beat England in the Six Nations five years ago, dominated the opening 15 minutes at a sun-drenched Twickenham but determined defense kept them at bay. England, by contrast, scored with their first attack of the match. Helena Rowland made a break and right

wing Abby Dow went over in the corner.

England extended their lead when flanker Packer powered over from close range for her seventh try of the tournament. France's day went from bad to worse when fly-half Jessy Tremouliere, in her final Test before retirement, was shown a yellow card for a deliberate knock-on as England pressed for a try in the 31st minute. And from the ensuing scrum, No 8 Alex Matthews charged over, with Rowland adding the extras.

England were awarded a penalty try as French prop Rose Bernadou was sin-binned for making a tackle from an offside position. And with France two players down and the clock in the red, England ran in their fifth try with Zoe Aldcroft going over for a converted score. France, however, began their recovery when full-back Emilie Boulard capped a slick move for a 48th-minute try before Gabrielle Vernier's clever dummy reduced the deficit still further. — AFP

Sports

Barcelona thrash 10-man Real Betis 4-0, move closer to winning La Liga

Benzema nets treble as Madrid turn on style against Almeria

BARCELONA: Barcelona thrashed 10-man Real Betis 4-0 on Saturday to move a step closer to winning La Liga for the first time since 2019. Real Madrid beat Almeria 4-2 to cut the gap to eight points earlier on but Barcelona triumphed to restore their 11 point advantage. Andreas Christensen, Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha struck for Barca at Camp Nou with Guido Rodriguez netting a late own goal to round off the rout. Edgar Gonzalez's early dismissal made it an easy night for Xavi Hernandez's side to protect their lead with six games remaining.

With his side comfortably winning, Xavi brought on 15-year-old forward Lamine Yamal to become the club's youngest ever player to debut in La Liga. Betis also brought on veteran Joaquin Sanchez, 41, for his final appearance at Camp Nou before he retires at the end of the season, and he was afforded a standing ovation by Barcelona supporters. The Catalans bounced back from a 2-1 defeat by Rayo Vallecano in midweek. "We generated a reaction," said Xavi. "We improved a lot, it was a very good reaction from the whole team. "We went 1-0 up and after the red card, it was in our favor." Xavi brought Christensen into the starting line-up after injury and he made a quick impact on his return. Raphinha whipped in a vicious ball which Ronald Araujo narrowly missed but Christensen followed in behind to power a header home. Betis were set back further when defender Edgar was dismissed for two bookings after half-an-hour.

Lewandowski pounced soon after to net his 19th league goal of the season after Jules Kounde set him up with a low cross. The Pole, La Liga's top scorer, reacted after Real Madrid's Karim Benzema earlier netted a hat-trick to move within

one of his tally. Three minutes later Raphinha struck the third, making a clever run in behind the defence and finishing from Sergio Busquets' chipped pass. Xavi brought on Ousmane Dembele with little over 15 minutes to go, with Camp Nou delighted to see the winger back. Rodriguez deflected in Ansu Fati's cross as Barcelona added a fourth goal in the 82nd minute. Almost 90,000 home supporters were also treated to 15-year-old Yamal's debut in the final stages, and the winger came close to scoring with a shot repelled by Rui Silva. "We were talking about this on the bench, when I was at 15 I think I was playing for my neighbourhood team," added Raphinha. "And seeing him come on in this stadium, with all these people, is incredible."

Stylish Madrid

Benzema climbed to 17 goals in La Liga this season with his treble, now two behind Lewandowski. Benzema netted his treble in the first half and Rodrygo added the fourth early in the second for Madrid, while Lazaro and Lucas Robertone struck for the visitors, 15th. Almeria coach Rubi made several changes to his regular side, clearly unconvinced his team could take points from the Santiago Bernabeu—the visit of Elche on Tuesday should be more profitable in their survival bid.

Madrid played with freedom in attack during an entertaining game, albeit one low on tension with their hopes of retaining the title minimal. "In attack the team is very dangerous, with the quality of Karim, Vini, Rodrygo, with the ball we play very well," coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters. "There are games where the offensive level looks very good, like today."

Vinicius Junior teed up Benzema for a tap-in to break the



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Uruguayan defender Ronald Araujo heads the ball next to Real Betis' Ivorian midfielder Paul Koukou (left) and Real Betis' Brazilian defender Abner Vinicius (right) during the Spanish league football match between FC Barcelona and Real Betis on April 29, 2023. —AFP

deadlock early on. Rodrygo's assist for Benzema's second goal was one of the highlights of the game, with the forward backheeling the ball to himself to escape Samuel Costa. "I think it was a pass to myself, I didn't have anywhere to go, it was a

nice pass to myself with my heel," Rodrygo told DAZN. The 35-year-old Benzema completed his hat-trick after 42 minutes from the penalty spot after Largie Ramazani clumsily fouled Lucas Vazquez. —AFP

Leverkusen stalemate dents Union's hopes

BERLIN: Union Berlin's slim hopes of a remarkable Bundesliga title were dented by a 0-0 draw at home against Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday. Unbeaten at home in the league this season, Union's best chance came midway through the second half when Sheraldo Becker hit a Jerome Roussillon cross wide of the post. A win would have taken Union three points behind first-placed Borussia Dortmund in just their fourth season of top division football.

Despite the draw, Union remain third and on course for a maiden Champions League placing with four matchdays remaining. Describing Leverkusen, who are unbeaten in 14 matches, "the most in-form team in the league", Union manager Urs Fischer praised his side's "intense, great performance" in "neutralizing" the visitors.

The stalemate also hurt Leverkusen's narrow chances of qualifying for the Champions League, with the Xabi Alonso-coached side now eight points outside the top four. "Union has not lost here yet this season, and we could sense why," said Alonso. In Saturday's late game, second-last Schalke picked up a crucial three points in their battle to beat the drop, Dominick Drexler scoring in the second minute of injury time for a 2-1 home win over Werder Bremen.

Trailing 1-0 due to Marvin Ducksch's fourth goal

in two games with 10 minutes remaining, Liverpool loanee Sepp van den Berg slammed in a low strike to level the scores. Drexler finished off a length-of-the-field move with the clock winding down, to send Schalke five clear of last-placed Hertha and one point from safety with four games remaining. Despite the loss, Bremen remain seven points clear of the relegation spots in 12th place.

Freiburg flying

Elsewhere, Freiburg solidified their chances of following Union to a first-ever Champions League qualification, a second-half Ritsu Doan tap-in taking them to a 1-0 win away at Cologne. The win took Freiburg to fourth, behind Union on goal difference, two clear of RB Leipzig who also won 1-0 on Saturday. Leipzig beat Hoffenheim thanks to Christopher Nkunku's first league goal since November.

Nkunku, handed his first start since returning from injury, collected a pass from Emil Forsberg and sent a left-footed finish into the right corner of the goal, chalking up his 13th goal in 21 league matches this season. Leipzig are fifth, six points ahead of Leverkusen. Stuttgart leapfrogged Bochum out of the relegation places with a 2-1 home win over a ten-man Borussia Moenchengladbach. The home side took the lead thanks to a classy Serhou Guirassy back-heel finish after 22 minutes.

Gladbach's Julian Weigl converted a penalty with 22 minutes remaining but Stuttgart were awarded a spot kick of their own five minutes later when Ko Itakura was shown a straight red for bringing down Ti-



BERLIN: Leverkusen's Czech forward Adam Hlozek (front) and Union Berlin's German defender Robin Knoche both jump to head the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match on April 29, 2023. —AFP

ago Tomas. Stuttgart's Tanguy Coulibaly converted the penalty to give his side a welcome boost ahead of Wednesday's German Cup semi-final against Eintracht Frankfurt. Frankfurt drew 1-1 at home against Augsburg, extending their winless run to nine matches and likely extinguishing any slim hopes the Europa League holders have of a return to Europe. —AFP

handball in the penalty area but Neville breathed a sigh of relief when the referee blew the final whistle.

Bicycle kick

Former Liverpool and Aston Villa striker Christian Benteke claimed his fifth goal in 10 games for Wayne Rooney's DC United with a brilliantly executed bicycle kick in a 3-0 win over Charlotte. A 34th minute Taxiarchis Fountas penalty put DC on their way before Belgium international Benteke doubled their advantage with his stunner in the 75th minute. Jacob Greene, a home-grown 20-year-old midfielder, wrapped up the win with a composed side-foot finish in stoppage time for his first league goal. Expansion club St Louis City went into week 10 on top of the Western Conference but fell to a 2-1 defeat at home to the Portland Timbers.

Brazilian Evander put the visitors ahead with a 63rd minute penalty but his compatriot Celio Pompeu brought St Louis level with a first-time finish from a Tomas Ostrak pull-back. But within three minutes, Portland regained the lead as substitute Yimmi Chara fired home a low, diagonal shot after good work from Santiago Moreno. The Seattle Sounders take over at the top of the West, despite only managing a goalless draw at Real Salt Lake, in a game which saw Pablo Ruiz sent off in stoppage time for the home side after a second yellow card. —AFP

Cincinnati hold MLS leaders; Miami end losing streak

MIAMI: Eastern Conference leaders New England Revolution were held to a 1-1 draw at home to second-placed FC Cincinnati while Inter Miami ended a run of six straight losses with a win at Columbus in MLS on Saturday. New England, who head the Supporters Shield standings for the best overall record, suffered an early blow when Colombian international winger Dylan Borrero was stretched off with a knee injury.

Cincinnati then wasted a chance to grab the lead when Revs keeper Djordje Petrovic saved Luciano Acosta's penalty kick after a Justin Rennicks handball. But the Ohio side got in front in the 31st minute with a Yerson Mosquera header from an Alvaro Barreal corner. Bruce Arena's New England drew level though on the stroke of half-time with right wing-back Brandon Bye powering down the right and delivering a low cross to the back post which was turned in by Ghanaian striker Emmanuel Boateng.

Petrovic was in fine form in goal for New England, producing a great save from Sergio Santos after good work from Acosta but Cincinnati should have claimed all the points at the death when Nick Hagglund was left wide open but headed wide. "Considering we went a goal down and came back at the end of the first half to equalize, I guess it was a positive and I thought we brought a lot of energy to the game in the second half," said Arena, the former US national team coach.

"I guess we walk off the field and think it's OK but we have to do better," he added. The pressure on Inter Miami coach Phil Neville eased after his team ended their barren run with an impressive win at Columbus. Neville left close-season signing Josef Martinez on the bench, opting for a strike pairing of Ecuadorian Leonardo Campana and 18-year-old youth product Benjamin Cremaschi and the decision paid off instantly.

Campana opened the scoring in the seventh minute, firing home after Cremaschi had cleverly headed down a Nicolas Stefanelli cross into his path. But the Miami lead lasted only three minutes with Colombian Cucho Hernandez curling a beautiful shot into the far corner to make it 1-1. Campana restored Miami's lead three minutes before half-time with an angled header from a Jean Mota corner which snuck in at the near post. Miami survived a late scare with a VAR review for a potential

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
Khaldiya	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

Change of Name

I, SARRAH, holder of Indian Passport No. T1942619 issued at Embassy of Indian, Kuwait. I am a permanent resident of Dungerpur Rajasthan, India and presently residing in Kuwait hereby declare my given name is SARRAH and surname is SHAKIR. **(#3517) 1/5/2023**

I, HAJA MYDEEN MOHAMED HUSSAIN, holder of Passport No. L4533271, do hereby change my name to JAHIR HUSSAIN (as given name) HAJAMAIDEEN (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known as in the name JAHIR HUSSAIN HAJAMAIDEEN and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. **(#3516) 1/5/2023**

I am Rajendra Suthar, father of Gopalji Suthar, resident of Bankoda Tehsil Aspur district, Dungarpur and I am known and recognized

by both name Rajendra Suthar and Rajendra Gopalji Sharma. Both names are my own and there is no other person with this name. **(#3515) 1/5/2023**

I, YAQOOB, holder of Indian Passport No. T8206521, having permanent address Ward No. 30 Mohalla Hussaini Chowk P.O. Fatehpur Sikar Pin: 332301, Rajasthan, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as YAQOOB and Surname SAYYED. **(#3514) 1/5/2023**

I Fakhruddin, holder of Passport No. Z5712375, do hereby change my name to Fakhruddin (as given name) Shamash Ali (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Fakhruddin Shamash Ali and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

Automated enquiry about the CivilID card is 1889988

Man City return to top

Haaland equals record; Southampton sink deeper



LONDON: Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Fulham and Manchester City at Craven Cottage in London on April 30, 2023. — AFP

LONDON: Record-breaker Erling Haaland was on target again as reigning champions Manchester City returned to the top of the Premier League table with a 2-1 win over Fulham on Sunday. Victory left Pep Guardiola's men a point clear of Arsenal and with a game in hand over the Gunners. Meanwhile high-flying Newcastle sent basement club Southampton nearer the drop after a 3-1 success. Manchester United also remained in the hunt for a top-four finish with a 1-0 win at home to Aston Villa.

Bournemouth pulled further clear of the bottom three with a 4-1 defeat of Leeds that left the visitors just a point above the relegation zone. It took City just three minutes to go ahead with Haaland scoring from the penalty spot at Craven Cottage after Julian Alvarez was brought down by Tim Ream.

Haaland's 34th league goal was a record by a player in a 38-game Premier League season and equaled the number set by Andrew Cole and Alan Shearer in 42-game campaigns. Fulham, however, equalized in the 15th minute with Carlos Vinicius beating Ederson with a powerful first-time shot. But Alvarez, in for Kevin De Bruyne, restored City's lead nine minutes before half-time with a brilliant

whipped shot into the far corner from just outside the box.

United protest

Before kick-off at Old Trafford a group of United fans demanded the Glazer family complete a full sale of the club amid continuing uncertainty over the future ownership of the Red Devils. Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe both made their third and final offers to buy the English giants on Friday. The US-based Glazers have long been unpopular with large sections of United support since their leveraged takeover in 2005 and some fans are concerned that if Ratcliffe's bid for majority control succeeds they could remain involved in some capacity.

A protest march from central Manchester continued on to Old Trafford as fans displayed a giant banner reading 'Full Sale Only'. Bruno Fernandes scored the only goal of the game in the 39th minute when he followed up at the far post after Emiliano Martinez had pushed away a low Marcus Rashford shot. Newcastle dominated the opening 40 minutes at St James' Park only to surprisingly fall behind when Stuart Armstrong scored on the counter-attack.

The Magpies though equalized in the 54th minute when substitute Callum Wilson capped a period of sustained pressure by turning in Alexander Isak's low cross. And they then hit Southampton with two quickfire goals in as many minutes, Saints' Theo Walcott diverting a cross into his own net before Wilson rounded the goalkeeper for his second of the match.

Defeat left the Saints anchored to the foot of the table and six points adrift of safety. Colombia midfielder Jefferson Lerma rocked struggling Leeds with two goals in four first-half minutes as Bournemouth moved 10 points clear of the relegation zone. Lerma fired the Cherries ahead with a well-struck shot in the 20th minute and doubled the south coast side's lead soon afterwards when he scored at the back post after Leeds goalkeeper Illan Meslier flapped at Ryan Christie's cross.

Leeds equalized in the 32nd minute when Patrick Bamford headed in Wilfried Gnonto's superb whipped cross. But Dominic Solanke restored the hosts two-goal advantage. Poor defending allowed the unmarked Dango Ouattara to charge into space before his low ball was turned in by Solanke in the 63rd minute. The goal stood after a VAR check for offside before Antoine Semenyo struck in stoppage time. Liverpool and Tottenham continue their quest to break into the top four when they meet in Sunday's 1530 GMT kick-off at Anfield. — AFP

'King of the streets' Perez lifts Red Bull



BAKU: Red Bull Racing's Mexican driver Sergio Perez celebrates with the trophy after winning the Formula One Azerbaijan Grand Prix at the Baku City Circuit in Baku on April 30, 2023. — AFP

BAKU: Sergio Perez won Sunday's Azerbaijan Grand Prix with teammate Max Verstappen in second to ram home Red Bull's supremacy over the rest of the Formula One grid. Ferrari's pole-sitter Charles Leclerc completed the podium, a respectable third. "Vamos!" exclaimed the Mexican on the team radio after making it a hugely profitable weekend in Baku where he also claimed Saturday's sprint race.

Red Bull boss Christian Horner acknowledged Perez's "sensational weekend". He added: "He's always been outstanding on this track, I don't know what it is about Azerbaijan, but he absolutely excels here." Red Bull's roll through 2023 after four races now reads four wins plus Saturday's sprint, three poles, and three 1-2s. Verstappen leads the drivers' championship by just six points ahead of the fifth round of the record 23-race season in Miami. Perez' engineer told him on the team radio he was the "king of the streets" and with justification as five of his six F1 wins - not counting Saturday's sprint - have come on street circuits, twice in Baku alongside victories in Saudi Arabia, Monaco and Singapore.

The popular Perez, who believes he can really challenge Verstappen for the title, said: "It really worked out today for us (me), we managed to keep the pressure on Max. I think it was very close between us, we pushed to the maximum, we both hit the wall a few times but we (I) managed to keep him under control." Leclerc conceded that for the time being at any rate Red Bull were in "another league once it comes to the race". "Over 51 laps it was not possible, they have so much more pace than we do. Everyone is working flat out to understand what we can do in the races to close the gap."

The warmest day of a frenetic sprint weekend had the drivers arriving onto the grid, umbrellas perched on their cars. After a resounding rendition of the national anthem the covers came off the tyres and the lights went out with pole-sitter Leclerc holding off Verstappen to the 90 degree turn one. The Dutch ace had the Ferrari in his cross hairs though, waiting to pounce. The inevitable happened on lap four as the Red Bull star nipped past, leaving Leclerc sandwiching the Red Bulls. Perez inched closer to the slower red rival and duly coasted past on lap six. — AFP

Napoli Serie A title party put on hold

NAPLES: Napoli will have to wait a bit longer to seal a first Serie A title in 33 years after being held to a 1-1 draw by Salernitana on Sunday. Runaway league leaders Napoli needed to win to secure their third league crown with six games remaining in the season after Inter Milan beat closest challengers Lazio 3-1 earlier in the day.

And Naples thought a generation of frustration was set to come to an end when Mathias Olivera headed the hosts into the lead just after the hour mark. But the long-awaited Scudetto party will have to be put on hold for at least a few more days after Boulaye Dia's stunning strike six minutes from time ensured Salernitana escaped with a point.

However the coming midweek round of matches could finally end Napoli's long wait for glory. Luciano Spalletti's team are 18 points ahead of Lazio but Juve can close that gap to 17 by winning at Bologna in Sunday's late match and moving into second place. Depending how that match and Juve and Lazio's games on Wednesday go Napoli could be crowned champions before they take the field at Udinese on Thursday night.

Regardless, a win in Udine will ensure Napoli's current stars emulate Diego Maradona, who led southern Italy's biggest club to their only previous league titles in 1987 and 1990. Pushed by a feverish crowd, decked out in blue and white, Napoli started on the front foot and almost went ahead seconds after kick-off when Victor Osimhen headed Hirving Lozano's cross just wide. However Serie A's leading scorer Osimhen was the hosts' only threat in a what turned out to be a frustrating first half in which Salernitana defended deep and largely kept Napoli at bay.

Napoli frustrated

The best chance of the opening period fell to Osimhen in the 23rd minute, the Nigeria forward meeting Piotr Zielinski's deep free-kick with a powerful header which was brilliantly pushed away by Guillermo Ochoa. Ochoa then batted aside Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa's long-range drive three minutes before the break as

Gnabry and Coman sink Hertha; Bayern top Bundesliga table

BERLIN: Second-half goals from Serge Gnabry and Kingsley Coman have sent Bayern top of the Bundesliga table with four matches remaining with a 2-0 home win over rock-bottom Hertha Berlin. Lowly Hertha defended astutely against a Bayern side still struggling to find the fluency they displayed earlier in the season and with 25 minutes to go it appeared the match was heading for a 0-0 draw.

Gnabry had other ideas however, heading in a Kimmich chip in the 69th minute, his first league goal since early February. The goal broke Hertha's stubborn resistance, Coman scoring ten minutes later, again assisted by Kimmich. The win puts Bayern one point clear



NAPLES: Napoli's fans who gathered on the seafront in Naples to celebrate, react after Napoli and Salernitana drew in their Italian Serie A football match on April 30, 2023. — AFP

Napoli struggled to create any opportunities against a Salernitana side not yet sure of Serie A safety but now unbeaten in nine matches.

The crowd was increasingly apprehensive until Olivera headed home the opener, causing an eruption of joy inside and outside the stadium. Blue smoke engulfed the stands while fireworks audibly blasted outside the stadium, the acrid smell of spent firecrackers wafting through the ground. Those fans in the stadium had begun queuing outside the stadium nearly five hours before the 1300GMT kick-off, with flags, flares and horns creating a colorful, cacophonous atmosphere.

Bars and restaurants around the stadium heaved with people as cars, scooters and police vehicles tried to weave their way through a sea of fans and vendors who spilled out onto the road. The city centre was

of Dortmund and on course for a record 11th straight Bundesliga title. Coman, named man of the match, said his side "need to keep believing in ourselves", telling DAZN "we can be champions. We will try everything."

A smiling Bayern manager Thomas Tuchel said the win "will do us good, it'll give us a bit more self-confidence and trust." Hertha manager Pal Dardai, coaching just his second match after returning to the dugout to save the struggling side, said his team could take plenty out of the match to use in their relegation battle. "The team fought hard. I saw a team today." Bayern came into the game knowing a win would return them to the top of the ladder past Dortmund, who were controversially held 1-1 at lowly Bochum on Friday.

Dortmund were denied a late penalty against Bochum which the referee Sascha Stegemann and the German FA later admitted was an error. Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke issued a statement on Sunday saying "threats and hostility would not be tolerated", after it emerged Stegemann was under police protection due to the error. The visitors started the match stranded in last place, five points

closed to traffic shortly before kick-off, and more than 5,000 police officers had been deployed to maintain security, according to local newspaper Il Mattino. But it was all to be in vain as Dia stunned the whole city into silence when he bundled past Osimhen and then lashed home an unsavable shot past Alex Meret.

That strike, Dia's 12th of the Serie A season, meant that Inter's win over Lazio was only good to move Simone Inzaghi's team into the Champions League positions. A Lautaro Martinez brace and another strike from Robin Gosens, which all came in the final 13 minutes, moved Inter into the top four ahead of AC Milan and Roma on goal difference. Inter are also four points behind Lazio, who are back in a serious fight for a place in next season's edition of Europe's top club competition. — AFP

behind 17th-placed Schalke, who beat Werder Bremen 2-1 late on Saturday.

Bayern started brightly, Man City loanee Joao Cancelo forcing a save from Hertha goalkeeper Oliver Christensen after 90 seconds. Bayern's next chance came through another defender, France centre-back Benjamin Pavard, who blasted a powerful, lifting drive inches over the bar from well outside the box. With the clock winding down in the first half, Gnabry forced another reflex save from Christensen, allowing Hertha to hold the scores at 0-0 at the break.

After defending deep for the opening 25 minutes of the second half, Hertha went on a rare incursion into Bayern territory but the hosts won the ball back to go on the attack against the off form visitors. Bayern captain Joshua Kimmich dinked the ball over the retreating visitors, finding Gnabry who headed past Christensen. The goal was just the second strike from a Bayern forward in the club's past six matches. Coman, arguably Bayern's form forward during their recent lean run, followed Gnabry's initiative, calmly slotting a ball from Kimmich between Christensen's legs. — AFP