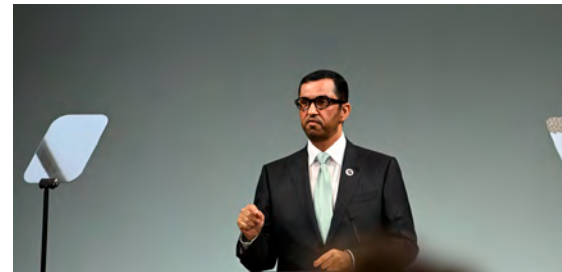


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## Candidates throw hat in ring

### Scores announce they are running in crucial snap polls

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** A large number of former MPs said on Tuesday they have decided to run in the upcoming elections which will be held after HH the Amir dissolved the National Assembly for the second time in nine months. Speaker of the dissolved Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem was the first to announce that he will be contesting for an Assembly seat from the second constituency, from where he had won an Assembly seat for more than 15 years. Ghanem did not run in the 2022 elections that were annulled by the constitutional court.

Former MPs who declared their candidacy include Fares Al-Otaibi, Abdulkarim Al-Kandari, Muhannad Al-Sayer, Muhallhal Al-Mudhaf and Hamad Al-Obaid, who said they will contest for a seat from the third constituency. Former lawmakers Obaid Al-Wasmi, Saud Al-Mutairi and Thamer Al-Suwaid said they will run in the fourth constituency, while Khaled Al-Otaibi announced his candidacy from the fifth district. Ex-MP Abdullah Al-Mudhaf is contesting in the first constituency.

Many more are expecting to announce they are running in the coming few days, especially after the interior ministry sets the exact date of the elections and opens

registration of candidates. HH the Amir on Monday issued a decree dissolving the 2020 National Assembly, which was reinstated by the constitutional court in a ruling issued on March 19.

The decree said the Assembly was dissolved based on the articles of the constitution, in respect of the will of the people and to safeguard the higher interests of the country and its stability amid international and regional economic changes. It said as a result of these reasons, it became necessary to go back to the people to choose their representatives.

This will be Kuwait's third parliamentary polls in less

than 30 months and the 10th elections since 2006 amid continued political crises between the governments and MPs. It will be the second election in less than nine months. This is also the second time that the National Assembly elected in Dec 2020 was dissolved by HH the Amir. It was dissolved for the first time in August last year because of political disputes between the government and the Assembly. As a result, snap polls were held in September, when the opposition scored a massive victory. But the 2020 assembly was reinstated eight months later by the constitutional court, which annulled the September elections and scrapped the 2022 Assembly.

### Kuwait Times bids farewell to veteran staffers



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times and Kuwait News staff pose for a group photo with Advertising and Marketing Manager Taleb Kanjo and Circulation Manager Fathi Al-Hakeem during their farewell on May 2, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Pages 4 & 5)

### Banks to be notified before public sector expats are laid off

**KUWAIT:** Government agencies have approved a request submitted by Kuwait Banking Association that banks should be notified before any decision is issued by authorities to lay off non-Kuwaiti employees, to deal early with any loans taken by the terminated expat workers. It was agreed to also inform service ministries that have direct contact with residents, such as the Ministry of Electricity and Water, which may have financial dues owed to it.

"In the past, the federation of banks directed such requests to specific ministries in which expatriates work in large numbers, but now the request is generalized for all public bodies. This move aims to preserve the financial rights of banks," sources told Kuwait

Times. They indicated that informing the banks about non-Kuwaiti employees who have been laid off and who have obtained loans safeguards the bank's finances by suspending the employees' accounts to prevent their departure without settling their debts.

The bank is also protected by the possibility of collecting their dues through coordination with the employers of the laid-off expat employees — any outstanding dues can be deducted from the end-of-service indemnity credited to an employee's account in the bank, and it is prohibited to pay any amount in cash, whether large or small. Previously, some expat employees left the country after their services were terminated without paying their dues to government agencies, which made these agencies sue them in their home countries.

In the same context, the ministry of education took the initiative to inform Kuwait Banking Association that it will deposit the end-of-service amounts of 2,000 male and female teachers whose services have been terminated in their bank accounts. The banks will then deduct any sums of money they are owed before releasing the remainder to the workers.

### Muslim population misinformation fuels Islamophobia in India

**NEW DELHI:** Amit Upadhyay repeats online misinformation as he claims to know why India's population is growing: he says his Muslim neighbors are having too many babies, so Hindu women have a responsibility to bear more of their own. A pharmacist by trade, Upadhyay is one of many social media influencers from India's majority faith to have cultivated large audiences by spreading false demographic data to claim the country is being refashioned into an Islamic state.

For them, last month's announcement that India had overtaken China to become the world's most populous nation was not a cause for celebration, but a call to action. "I tell all my Hindu customers to produce more children, to counter Muslims," Upadhyay, who in his spare time curates a popular Facebook page from his home in Uttar Pradesh state, told AFP. "Or else they will become a threat and eventually wipe out the Hindu religion from India."

Upadhyay regularly publishes widely shared Islamophobic posts to his nearly 40,000 followers. One post in April warned of an alleged plot by Muslims to "multiply their population to take control of India". India is home to 1.4 billion people, including around 210 million Muslims, but birthrates have declined across the board over recent decades in tandem with global trends.

The country's last National Family Health Survey in 2021 showed an overall fertility rate of 2.0 children per woman, rising marginally to 2.3

Continued on Page 8

### Outrage after Palestinian prisoner dies

**ARRABA:** A Palestinian hunger striker died in Zionist custody Tuesday, nearly three months after being detained over his ties to the Islamic Jihad militant group, drawing Arab condemnation of the Zionist entity and rocket fire from Gaza. The death of Khader Adnan was swiftly followed by three rockets fired by Gaza militants, which "fell in open areas", the Zionist army said. It reported no casualties.

Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Shtayeh described the death of Adnan, who was arrested in the occupied West Bank, as a "deliberate assassi-

nation". "By rejecting his request for his release, neglecting him medically and keeping him in his cell, despite the seriousness of his health condition," the premier said in a statement.

Adnan, 45, was the first Palestinian to die as a direct result of a hunger strike, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club. Other Palestinian detainees have died "as a result of attempts to force feed them", the advocacy group's director, Qaddura Faris, said. Palestinians shut shops as they observed a general strike in West Bank cities in response to Adnan's death.

The Arab League said Adnan's death was "the result of a policy of deliberate medical negligence, which is systematically practiced by the (Zionist) occupation authorities". A senior Zionist official described

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**GAZA:** A Palestinian woman and her son walk past a mural depicting Khader Adnan, a Palestinian hunger striker and top figure in the Islamic Jihad group, who died on May 2, 2023. — AFP

### 75 years after the Nakba, Palestinians still long for return

**GAZA CITY:** From her modest home in the blockaded Gaza Strip, Amina Al-Dabai remembers the very different world in which she grew up more than seven decades ago. Born in 1934, Dabai was still only a child when the Zionist entity was created on May 14, 1948. Now she is one of 5.9 million Palestinian refugees living in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria according to the United Nations.

They are descendants of more than 760,000 Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes 75 years ago. The event is known by Palestinians as the Nakba, or "catastrophe", during which more than 600 communities were destroyed or

Continued on Page 8



**GAZA:** A woman holds a sheaf of wheat and a key symbolizing the homes left by Palestinians in 1948, during a rally along the border east of Khan Yunis on May 1, 2023, marking the 75th anniversary of the Nakba. — AFP





## Local

# Municipal Council rejects draft regulation on parking shades

## 500 fils stipulated for every squared meter

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council, in its main session on Monday headed by Abdullah Al-Mehri, rejected a draft regulation for parking shades which stipulates a one-time fee of 500 fils for every squared meter of shade used. While deciding whether or not to impose fees on parking shades at private properties, the article ignited heated discussions between members of the municipality and the legal department in the executive branch due to a lack of a clear explanation regarding the article, which made it increasingly challenging to make a final vote.

Nine elected council members rejected the amendments, while the six appointed members abstained. Mehri said the suggested amendments to the article were riddled with mistakes but members have the right to reject or approve them. Council member Dr Hasan Kamal said approval of the amendment would lead to chaos.

The purpose of the proposed regulations, said Kamal, is to legislate control over the installation of parking shades, especially that some people randomly gate empty lots in commercial areas and use them for private purposes without obtaining the required permits, leaving the area without public parking spots. He said however that the amendments as they are currently drafted will wreak havoc.

The council had passed the regulations at first without ordering any fees, but previous Municipal Minister Rana Al-Fares demanded that money be collected for installing shades. The council then



Abdullah Al-Mehri

forwarded the draft regulation to the Council of Ministers, which approved the fee.

Municipal Council members this week were reportedly baffled as to why they were asked for feedback on a matter which has been decided by the Council of Ministers. Members had questions on who has the right to set fees and who decides the amount of the fee to be paid. The inquiries were forwarded

to the executive and legal arms within the Municipal Council for further study.

In related news, the Council approved the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to allocate a site for a main electricity transmission station in the agricultural area of Wafra. The council kept a member's question about the Kuwait Metro project and road studies to update the response from the executive body in the Kuwait Municipality. It was also satisfied with the response to a question about the development of entrances and exits of roads for the Jabriya area to King Fahd Road towards Kuwait City directly.



KUWAIT: The Municipal Council holds its main session on Monday. The Council rejected a draft regulation for parking shades. —KUNA photos



KUWAIT: (From left) Alia Al-Khaled, Bibi Al-Ameeri and other officials are pictured during the assembly. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



## EU Delegation message on World Press Freedom Day

Having lived under Soviet communism in Lithuania in the 1980s, I witnessed first-hand the dangerous effects of state control of the press, including censorship and misinformation. That experience fuels my commitment today, as an EU diplomat in the 21st century, to advocate for press freedom, freedom of expression and human rights as founding values of the European Union. These same values are also protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Kuwait's Constitution.

I came to Kuwait in 2020, at a time when the world was still coming to grips with COVID-19 and the trail of misinformation it left in its wake. Fortunately, journalists in Kuwait were able to provide us with reliable information about the virus, which helped counter the spread of rising disinformation in the early days of the pandemic. A free press is essential to any healthy democracy, and journalists everywhere should be able to speak truth to power without fear of retribution.

Press freedom is also crucial to advancing human rights, which is why we join UNESCO today, on the 30th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day, in highlighting freedom of expression as a driver of all other human rights. The EU remains committed to defending and promoting freedom of opinion and expression, one of the key human rights principles outlined in our "Strategic Partnership with the Gulf", an important roadmap for broadening ties and expanding cooperation with the GCC states, including Kuwait.

Engagement with Kuwaiti media professionals is a concrete example of this cooperation. More recently, as part of our strategic framework, the EU held a three-day workshop with the Information Ministry on strategic communications, bringing European experts to Kuwait to share best practices with our counterparts in the Kuwaiti government. There is ample room for expanding such cooperation further and sharing European expertise with our partners across the government and civil society.

In this day and age, protecting press freedom is everyone's concern. The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights later this year will also build new momentum for the international community to enhance pluralism and ensure freedom of expression as part of our shared commitment to advance human rights.



By Gediminas Varanavicius, EU Chargé d'Affaires

## Authorities work to assist people with disabilities

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: In collaboration with the General Authority for Disability Affairs, the Kuwaiti Society for Guardians of the Disabled held an assembly on facilitating access for people with disabilities at Dar Marafi in Dasma. Guests invited to the assembly included Chairperson of the Kuwaiti Society for Guardians of the Disabled Rehab Boresli, Director General of the Public Authority for the Disabled Dr Bibi Al-Ameeri, former MP Alia Al-Khaled, Municipal Council member Dr Hasan Kamal, Municipal Council member Farah Al-Roumi, Assistant Director of Planning and Development at the Ministry of Public Works Ahmad Al-Saleh, Kuwait Municipality representative Mohammad Al-Juwaisry and Kuwait Municipality member Abdulrahman Al-Shemali.

Boresli gave brief introduction about the Kuwaiti Society for Guardians of the Disabled, saying it is an association that cooperates with government agencies and national bodies working in the field of disability affairs. The association was founded in 2005 by the ministry of social affairs. The aim of the association is to convey the voice of people with disabilities, develop their capacities, raise public awareness of their demands and the need to uphold all their rights.

Boresli then spoke about an important topic that plays a major role in easing the lives of people with disabilities, which is access to all facilities. "We have put all our efforts to bring attention to the topic of facilitating access of disabled people to facilities and implementing this law, which was passed in 2010. Since then, and up to this day, we are looking into activating this law. The topic was raised by activ-



Chairperson of the Kuwaiti Society for Guardians of the Disabled, Rehab Boresli

ists at the Municipal Council and to the municipality minister," she said.

Boresli said members of the municipality were taken on a wheelchair to experience part of disabled people's struggles to Souq Mubarakiya, which is one of Kuwait's most important landmarks. She said this effort is not limited to helping people with physical needs, but also intellectually disabled people, by facilitating reading and understanding of signs and laws by providing miniature models of each law in the state, which makes it easier for them.

She also presented several brochures and booklets that were published in cooperation with engineers and associations that harnessed their experiences to facilitate the lives of the disabled, in addition to shedding light on the workshops that were held on this topic in both English and Arabic. In conclusion, Boresli questioned the representatives by asking: "Where is the problem? What is missing? What was the reason for not applying this law for disabled people until this day?" She then directed the question to the Municipal Council and all other authorities. She then gave a number of examples of places in Kuwait that are difficult for disabled people to access.



Abdullah Al-Salem University's Chairperson of the Founding Board of Directors Dr Moudhi Al-Humoud

to have a look at various majors available and they get answers to their inquiries.

She said after receiving a large number of applications for employment in various sectors be it administrative or academic at Abdallah Al-Salem university especially for the preparatory year of the university, the founding board will start attracting those who can help the university start operating in its first year, then the next administration will take over the required appointments at the university. AASU joins Kuwait University as the only public universities in the country.

## Abdullah Al-Salem University starts receiving applicants

KUWAIT: Abdullah Al-Salem University is set to receive its first batch of students at the start of the 2023/24 academic year, said Chairwoman of Abdallah Al-Salem University (AASU) Founding Board of Directors Dr Moudhi Al-Humoud. She added that the university faces a major challenge in getting ready for receiving the first class at the start of next academic year, adding that conditions of admission exams are presented to the government universities council for discussions and will be announced soon.

Humoud said that at the invitation of Kuwait University, Abdallah Al-Salem University participated in the ninth admissions exhibition to familiarize high school students expected to graduate with higher education establishments, adding the exhibition was well organized and had a large turnout by students. She said the exhibition is an opportunity for students to meet various education entities and allows them

In my view

## The real time



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

One third of 2023 is behind us, and our current year will not be better than the previous ones. It will go by very quickly, and 2024 will arrive, with many people complaining 2023 had evaporated. Those complaining about the rapid movement of the years are those deprived from making achievements, as time is not measured by the movement of clocks; rather it is measured by what man leaves behind.

You wake up, go to work, then return home without feeling that you achieved something new or made any change — a circle that is repeated, and you end up wondering about the secret behind the speed of time! This type of time is like a shadow that you barely feel, time that is devoid of any stops, time that lacks influence. So how is it for a time that is moving nonstop and goes without true feelings — how can we feel this time or even live it?

Researcher James M Broadway, a post-doctoral researcher of psychological and brain sciences at the University of California, said people estimate time from two different perspectives: The first is by foresight, which measures our awareness of time at the time of the event, and the second is by retrospection, which measures our awareness of time after the event. That is why time goes fast when we spend it in entertainment, as successive events at the time intensify our feeling of time's speed, while, when we remember an entertaining time in the past, we feel as if it took a longer time, because we recall it from a retroactive perspective.

We calculate the time of past events through the number of new memories which happened during the event. The more new memories, in a trip for example, we feel it is longer each time we remember it later. This phenomenon was later called the "vacation paradox", which deals with our awareness of time during holidays, and this indicates that beneficial time that includes discoveries is a time that remains with us longer, contrary to the time that has nothing new in it.

So, we all have a true time, and there is also the mirage time, which is the time that passes like a person we barely know, and we try to remember where we saw him, and in the end we do not pause much at it. Yet, our actual time is the one that lives with us and we live it, a time in which we sought knowledge, or we called for a virtue, a time in which we helped a truly needy person or participated in a project that brought benefit to others.

The day we spend while we are busy with science or work or discovering what is around us of people and civilizations becomes a full day of giving, but all days of the year are completed with sincerity. Most people today are preoccupied, regretfully, with searching for building glory without a serious job or beneficial knowledge; busy with trivial matters for self-glory, or preoccupied with disputes and struggles that will not benefit anyone. Because they are in such a way, the year passes fast like a mirage that does not have any blessing in it.

Most people do not live their full age — they exert much efforts to maintain their health and attempt to live longer, but to the contrary they let their years go quickly in front of them. Congratulations for those whose year went with positive actions, that are influential in favor of the human being. Congratulations for their good deeds, and most importantly congratulations for the life they lived in full, without having their years go by like a mirage that they did not feel.



## Local

# 'Save Sudan' campaign aimed at alleviating suffering of Sudanese

## KRCS organizes donation campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) on Tuesday announced a donation campaign to provide relief to Sudanese people suffering from the difficult conditions the country was going through. KRCS Board of Directors chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer stated to KUNA, that (Save Sudan) campaign came in solidarity with the difficult conditions in Sudan, stressing that their volunteering cadre were working hard on the success of this campaign. KRCS also called on everyone to donate through their website or direct donations at their headquarters via K-Net. Al-Sayer expressed his appreciation to everyone sending relief and medical aid to Sudan, noting that Kuwait is always

proactive in providing assistance to those affected by natural or manmade disasters.

### Life-saving operations

Meanwhile, the World Food Program (WFP) stated that it is immediately lifting the temporary suspension of life-saving assistance activities in Sudan which was put in place after the tragic deaths of three of its team members on April 15. "Distribution of food is expected to commence in the states of Gedaref, Gezira, Kassala and White Nile in the coming days to provide the life-saving assistance that many so desperately need right now," WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain an-

nounced in a press release. She pointed out that the security situation is still highly precarious.

"WFP is considering locations where humanitarian access is assured while strongly considering security, capacity and access-related considerations. "We will take utmost care to ensure the safety of all our staff and partners as we rush to meet the growing needs of the most vulnerable," she indicated. She called for an immediate end to the fighting to protect necessary humanitarian workers and the people of Sudan. McCain warned that over 15 million people faced severe food insecurity in Sudan before this conflict and these numbers are expected to grow significantly as the fighting continues. —KUNA



## Parents urged to evaluate and guide children's decisions

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Many parents spoil their children by raising them to be dependent, where they take decisions related to their lives instead of them, even in the most sensitive and fateful matters such as marriage and study. An expert said a dependent child grows up to be an ineffective individual, since the person is always dependent on his partners to do things. Child specialist and counseling psychologist Barehan Hassan told Kuwait Times there are people who at the age of 40 are still dependent on their mother to spend money and choose and buy clothes for them. They have also not succeeded in getting married because they haven't found a bride who likes their mother or replaces her as an authoritarian personality.

"Women do not like weak personalities without self-confidence, who are unable to make the simplest decisions of their lives. There are mistakes we can avoid while raising our children in order to not destroy their personalities, and most importantly train and encourage them to make decisions," Hassan noted. The expert pointed out the first decisions in your child's life come from the first years of their lives.

As they discover the world around them, they begin to realize they have personalities that are independent of their parents and that they have the ability to think and make decisions, which gives them the ability to object to things they do not like and do not want. Throughout the day, children make several simple decisions, such as which toys they want to play with, which children's books and stories they want to read, and which cartoons and TV shows they want to watch.

"As children get older, more and more complex decisions will be waiting for them to make, especially after they reach school age. Parents must give them the space to choose even in the simplest matters of their lives, such as determining the type



Wooden signpost with "help, support, advice, guidance" arrows against blue sky.

of food, candy, toys or the color of their clothes," Hassan said, explaining that when a parent wants for example to buy something, they must pick two items and give the choice to the child to make.

"When buying clothes, you can choose two shirts and ask your child to choose one of them. There is no doubt that the family environment in which the child grows up plays the most important role in the development of their self-confidence or weakness in the next stages of their lives. If education relies on imposing control over children and the refusal of one or both parents to listen to their opinions and desires, then this is reflected in their personalities, making them hesitant and fearful, limiting their ability to think and make decisions and destroying their self-confidence," she explained.

Hassan stressed the importance of parents who can evaluate their children's decisions and guide them, then explain characteristics such as a good or bad idea or wise or weak decision and their reasons, bearing in mind the child does not have enough ex-

perience yet to make decisions. The expert called on parents that in order to raise an independent child based on knowledge and understanding of child development and psychology, parents should encourage self-expression and listen to their thoughts and opinions without judgment and provide a safe and supportive environment to explore and discover their interests and passions.

"The top tips for parents are that they must teach their child to make decisions independently by giving them opportunities to choose, which will help them develop critical thinking skills and become more confident in their ability to make good choices, as well as promoting problem-solving skills, allowing room for mistakes, assigning age-appropriate responsibilities like chores to develop a sense of independence and a good work ethic, being a good role model and being accountable for your actions. Raising an independent child is a gradual process that requires patience, consistency and a lot of love and support," Hassan added.

## Kuwait scouts keen on partaking in Arab forums

RABAT: The Kuwaiti Scouts Association (KSA) is eager to take part in the forums held in the Arab countries as they have a key role in enhancing bonds of cooperation among Arab youth. KSA board of directors' member Najm Abdullah said Monday. Speaking to KUNA in a statement on the sidelines of the Arab scouts forum in Morocco, Abdullah said this participation helps cement the value of voluntary action, tolerance and coexistence among different societies.

Taking part in such forums is based on "our faith in the importance of noble goals and principles" aiming to build individual's personality to help his/her society, he said. The forum, which includes 350 persons representing different Arab scouts associations, has several purposeful activities and workshops, he added. Being held under the patronage of Morocco's King Mohammed VI, the forum kicked off Saturday and will run until May 5.

The Kuwait Boy Scouts Association is the national scouting organization of Kuwait. Kuwait Scouting features out-of-school education in character development, skills and traditions and clean living. Community service projects include partici-



Kuwaiti Scouts Association participate in Arab scouts forum in Morocco. —KUNA

pation in environmental services, World Health Day and conducting youth work camps. Scouts also assist several charitable organizations in co-operative

activities. The Scouts have also offered considerable aid and assistance to other Scout organizations in the Gulf area. —Agencies

strong and healthy. Parents should also supervise their children's brushing to ensure they are doing it properly and help them develop good brushing habits.

In addition to brushing, flossing is also important for removing food particles and bacteria from between teeth that brushing alone may miss. Parents should encourage their children to floss daily, especially if they have gaps between their teeth.

A healthy diet is also crucial for maintaining healthy teeth. Parents should limit their children's intake of sugary foods and drinks, which can lead to tooth decay. Instead, they should offer their children plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, which contain essential nutrients for healthy teeth, such as calcium and vitamin D. Encourage your child to drink water, milk, or unsweetened beverages instead of soft drinks and juices, which can be high in sugar.

Regular dental check-ups are also important for maintaining good oral health. In Kuwait, parents should take their children to the dentist for regular check-ups and cleanings, at least once

every six months. During these visits, the dentist can detect any dental problems early and provide preventive treatments, such as fluoride treatments and dental sealants, which can help protect children's teeth from decay.

Parents can also make dental care fun for their children. Brushing and flossing can be boring, so play music or set up a reward system for good oral hygiene habits. You can also involve your child in choosing their own toothbrush and toothpaste, which can make the process more enjoyable for them. If your child plays sports, encourage them to wear a mouthguard to protect their teeth from injury. Mouthguards can help prevent chipped, broken, or knocked-out teeth, which can be costly to repair. Parents should also discourage their children from sharing utensils or cups with others, as this can spread bacteria that can lead to dental problems.

Finally, if your child experiences tooth pain or discomfort, seek professional dental care immediately. Delaying treatment can lead to further complications

## Kuwaiti, Saudi, Jordan FM's discuss relations

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah received on Tuesday a phone call from Saudi counterpart Faisal Farahan Al-Saud and discussed the tightly-knit relations between the two nations. The two also touched on the results of Amman consultative meeting held between Foreign Ministers of Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi on the Syrian matter, with the participation of Syrian top diplomat.



Also, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister received Tuesday a phone call from his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi, conversing about the strong ties that bind both sides together. Safadi informed Sheikh Salem about the progress of the Amman Consultative Meeting attended by foreign ministers of Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia to resolve the Syrian crisis. Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah appreciated the active role played by Jordan in the framework of strengthening the joint Arab action. During the call, he welcomed the final statement issued by the meeting regarding finding solutions to the Syrian crisis.

Arab foreign ministers who held a meeting in Amman affirmed priority of resolving the Syria's crisis through a political settlement that would safeguard its sovereignty and meet the people's aspirations. The call came in the final statement of the meeting that grouped foreign ministers of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt. It was a follow-up to a gathering that comprised foreign ministers of the GCC states with their peers from Jordan, Iraq, Egypt on Syria, held in Saudi Arabia on April 14.

The ministers in the end of the freshly-concluded meeting in Amman called for creating proper conditions for safe and voluntary return of the Syrian refugees to their homeland, ridding Syria of terrorism, withdrawing all illegitimate foreign forces from the country and achieving national conciliation. The final statement indicated that there would be more meetings at this level in the future to work on attaining the objectives outlined in the Security Council Resolution 2254. —KUNA



## Tons of tobacco seized

KUWAIT: Servicemen of the inspection and warehousing control found a secret stash of chewing tobacco (Tinpak) hidden in the ceiling of a caravan at the port of Shuwaikh. The inspection was done after instructions from the Acting Director of the Customs Department of the Northern Ports and the Director of the Customs of the Southern Port Saleh Al-Harbi. Examination revealed that 234 tobacco packs were found, each of which contained 20 packets, and each packet contained 25 pack of 50 grams, with a total of 117,000 grains. The weight of the seized tobacco was approximately 5,850 kilograms, and accordingly, the necessary customs procedures were taken. Director General of the General Administration of Customs Sulaiman Al-Fahad thanked the workers at Shuwaikh Port for their efforts and vigilance.

## How to care for children's baby teeth

By Dr Saad Al-Saleh  
Sabah Al-Salem North Polyclinic

Good oral hygiene habits are essential for children's overall health and well-being. In Kuwait, parents can take several steps to ensure their children's teeth are healthy and strong. First and foremost, parents should encourage their children to brush their teeth twice a day, using a fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride is a mineral that helps prevent tooth decay by strengthening tooth enamel. In Kuwait, tap water is often treated with fluoride, so encourage your child to drink plenty of water to help keep their teeth



and more serious dental problems. In conclusion, taking care of children's teeth in Kuwait involves a combination of regular brushing and flossing, a healthy diet, regular dental check-ups, and good oral hygiene habits. By following these simple steps, parents can help their children maintain healthy, strong teeth and ensure their lifelong oral health.



# Kuwait Times bids fond farewell to Taleb Kanjo and Fathi Al-Hakeem



KUWAIT: Kuwait Times and Kuwait News staff pose for a group photo during the sendoff held in honor of Taleb Kanjo and Fathi Al-Hakeem.—Photos by Hussain Assad and Yasser Al-Zayyat



Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain honors Taleb Kanjo.



(From left) Fathi Al-Hakeem, Abdullah Boftain and Taleb Kanjo.



Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain honors Fathi Al-Hakeem.



(From left) Barrak Al-Hindi, Mustafa Qamhiya, Taleb Kanjo, Fathi Al-Hakeem and Watheq Darweesh pose for a photo at the sendoff.

By Shakir Reshamwala

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times and Kuwait News gave a rousing sendoff on May 2, 2023 to Advertising and Marketing Manager Taleb Kanjo and Circulation Manager Fathi Al-Hakeem, who are leaving the newspaper after 20 years and 18 years respectively. At a gathering of all staff members at Kuwait Times' creative space, Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain appreciated the efforts of Kanjo and Hakeem and their contributions to the success of the newspaper.

Managing Editor Mustafa Qamhiya also thanked the two long-serving employees for their years of loyal work, wishing them all the best in their future endeavors. Kanjo and Hakeem said they were overwhelmed by all the love shown to them and warmly recalled the time they spent at Kuwait Times. Boftain then handed both veteran employees mementos of appreciation, followed by a buffet lunch and endless rounds of photos.



Advertising and Marketing Manager Taleb Kanjo and Circulation Manager Fathi Al-Hakeem sit together at their sendoff. Kanjo and Hakeem are leaving the newspaper after 20 years and 18 years respectively.



(From left) Abdulraheem Abdeen, Munir, Robin Joseph, Jino Areeckal, Munir, Shaikh Munir, Parvez Hussein, Raed Bajbooj and Watheq Darweesh are pictured at the sendoff.



Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain speaks during the farewell.



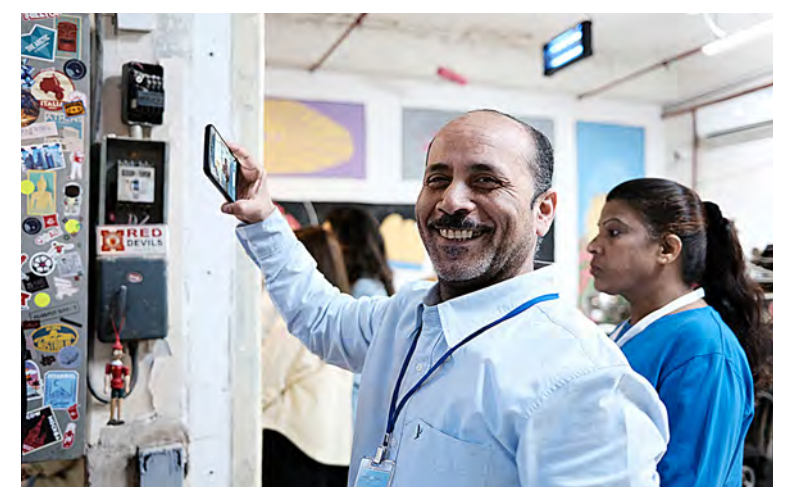
Mohammad Kawar



Chidi Emmanuel (left) is seen with Taleb Kanjo.



Tony Coelho (left) poses for a photo with Fathi Al-Hakeem.



Ashraf Barkah



Local



Abdullah Boftain



Taleb Kanjo



Fathi Al-Hakeem



Mustafa Qamhiya (right) speaks to Kuwait Times and Kuwait News staff at the sendoff.



Kuwait Times and Kuwait News staff pose for a group photo.



Kuwait Times and Kuwait News staff listen to a speech during the farewell.



(From left) Barrak Al-Hindi, Taleb Kanjo, Watheq Darweesh, Fathi Al-Hakeem, Rob-in Joseph and Sayed El-Eshri.



Shakir Reshamwala (left) and Mustafa Qamhiya (center) chatting with Abdullah Boftain.



Hawra Al-Yaqoub (left) and Rachele De Leon.



(From left) Ahmad Jabr, Dhoha Alissa and Ismael Al-Ruwaini.



(From left) Rachele De Leon, Safaa Mahmoud and Mary Shaker.



(From left) Nael Abu Attiya, Taleb Kanjo and Sajeev Peter.



Kuwait Times and Kuwait News listen to Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain.





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# UN warns of 'catastrophe' in Sudan

## Over 800,000 people flee fighting in Sudan for neighbouring countries



KOUFROUN: Sudanese refugees cross into Chad near Koufroun, Echbara. Hundreds of Sudanese, most of them women and children, each day cross a small, dry stream to find safety in neighbouring Chad. —AFP

**KHARTOUM:** Fierce fighting between rival generals raged on in Sudan Tuesday despite the latest truce, as warnings multiplied of the potential for a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Bloodshed has gripped Sudan since April 15 when tensions erupted into armed exchanges between regular army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy turned rival, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Hundreds have been killed and thousands wounded as air strikes and artillery exchanges have gripped swathes of greater Khartoum, sparking the exodus of thousands of Sudanese to neighbouring countries. Many more cannot afford the arduous journey to Sudan's borders, and have been forced to hole up inside the city of five million people with dwindling supplies of food, water and electricity.

"We are hearing some sporadic gunfire, the roaring of a warplane and the anti-aircraft fire at it," said one resident of south Khartoum. Other witnesses reported air strikes in north and east Khartoum. In a Monday briefing, the top UN aid official in Sudan, Abdou Dieng, warned that the situation was turning into "a full-blown catastrophe".

Kenyan President William Ruto said the conflict

had reached "catastrophic levels" with the warring generals declining "to heed the calls by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and the international community to cease fire".

In a virtual meeting with senior UN officials, Ruto said it was imperative to find ways to provide humanitarian relief "with or without a ceasefire". Burhan and Daglo, who fell out after carrying out a 2021 military coup which derailed Sudan's transition to elective civilian rule, have flouted multiple ceasefires, the latest a 72-hour extension agreed late on Sunday.

UN head of mission Volker Perthes said discussions involving Saudi and US mediators were underway with the rival generals to firm up a ceasefire. The two sides "told us that they are ready to start talks on technical level over a ceasefire," Perthes told Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television in an interview released on Tuesday.

### Relief trickles in

Foreign governments have scrambled to evacuate their citizens. Over the past 10 days, thousands of foreigners have been brought to safety by air or sea in operations that are now winding down. Russia's armed forces said on Tuesday they were evacuating

more than 200 people from Sudan on four military transport planes.

Nearly 500 people arrived in the Saudi port of Jeddah on Monday aboard two vessels, one a US Navy ship, the other Saudi. On Tuesday, the UN said its 2023 aid appeal for Sudan was \$1.5 billion short. Top UN humanitarian official Martin Griffiths arrived in Nairobi on Monday on a mission to find ways to bring relief to the millions of civilians trapped inside Sudan.

"The situation unfolding there (in Sudan) since April 15 is catastrophic," he said on Twitter. Sudan's turmoil has seen hospitals shelled, humanitarian facilities looted and foreign aid groups forced to suspend most of their operations. At least 528 have been killed and some 4,600 wounded in the violence, according to the health ministry. The UN refugee agency said it was bracing for "the possibility that over 800,000 people may flee the fighting in Sudan for neighbouring countries".

The World Health Organization warned that the fighting was pushing Sudan's already ailing health sector toward "disaster" with only 16 percent of health facilities in Khartoum still functioning. The WHO said that it had delivered six containers of medical equipment to Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast, including supplies for treating trauma injuries and severe acute

malnutrition. It had also distributed scarce fuel to hospitals which rely on generators for power.

Beyond Khartoum, lawlessness has engulfed the West Darfur state capital, El Geneina, where at least 96 people have been reported killed since the start of the fighting, according to UN figures. More than 330,000 people have been displaced, over 70 percent of them in West and South Darfur states, according to the International Organization for Migration. "The health system has completely collapsed in Geneina," the doctors' union said, adding that looting of clinics and camps for the displaced had forced several agencies to carry out "emergency evacuations" for their teams.

On Friday, Doctors Without Borders said the fighting had forced it to halt "almost all activities in West Darfur". The Darfur region is still scarred by a war that erupted in 2003 when then hardline president Omar al-Bashir unleashed the Janjaweed militia, mainly recruited from Arab pastoralist tribes, against ethnic-minority rebels. The scorched-earth campaign left at least 300,000 people dead and close to 2.5 million displaced, according to UN figures. The Janjaweed—which rights groups have accused of atrocities in Darfur -- later evolved into the RSF, which was formally created in 2013. — AFP

## Biden, Marcos discuss securing tense S China Sea

**WASHINGTON:** Responding to Beijing's aggressive expansion into the trade routes and strategic islands of the South China Sea headlined talks Monday between President Joe Biden and his Philippines counterpart Ferdinand Marcos at the White House. Marcos is on a four-day trip that follows last week's state visit to Washington by South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and a White House meeting in January between Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Greeting Marcos in the Oval Office, Biden underlined the "ironclad" US commitment to defending the country. Marcos referred to "difficult times" and said the Philippines finds itself in a region with "arguably the most complicated geopolitical situation in the world right now."

"So it is only natural for the Philippines to look to its sole treaty partner in the world to strengthen, to redefine, the relationship that we have and the roles that we play in the face of those rising tensions that we see now around the South China Sea and Asia Pacific," he said.

A senior US official said the Marcos visit -- which began with a military honor guard outside the White House -- was the first "at this level and intensity" between the two countries for decades. "It is clear that we're in a deeply consequential period in terms of our Indo-Pacific engagements," the official told reporters, speaking on condition of anonymity.

### Ships in near collision

Alarm bells are ringing for Washington and its Asian allies as China moves ever more confidently to assert claims to sovereignty over almost the whole South China Sea -- ignoring an international ruling that this has no legal basis. The tension, combined with constant saber rattling over Taiwan -- the democratically run island that Beijing claims but Washington vows to help defend -- has prompted the Biden administration to rapidly bolster its military capabilities.

The Philippines, which lies close to key sea lanes and Taiwan, is of particular interest. Marcos signaled



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and US First Lady Jill Biden participate in a welcome ceremony for Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his wife Louise Araneta-Marcos, at the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

as he left for Washington that he is wary of being caught between the superpowers, telling reporters: "We will not allow the Philippines to be used as a staging post for any kind of military action."

However, this month, the Philippines identified four military bases -- in addition to five existing sites -- where US forces will be given access, including one located near the tense Spratly Islands. The two allies also carried out their largest-ever military maneuvers in recent weeks.

That has alarmed China, which accuses Washington of trying to drive a wedge between Beijing and Manila. In a reminder of how diplomatic tensions can quickly echo in the real world, a Chinese ship on April 23 narrowly missed colliding with a much smaller Philippine Coast Guard vessel in the Spratly Islands.

### New military muscle

The focus of talks between Biden and Yoon last week was on another regional flashpoint: nuclear-armed, communist North Korea. Expressing disappointment that China has not done more to rein in North Korea, US officials announced that a US nuclear submarine would make a visit to South Korea soon -- the first in decades.

During Kishida's visit, Biden also underlined the US treaty commitment to defend Japan. Tokyo is meanwhile on a shopping spree to buy an ar-

senal of US-made Tomahawk missiles. The senior official briefing journalists ahead of Marcos's visit said Manila is likewise "looking for reassurance and a strong desire to maintain peace and stability in this complex period."

"Recent events have caused much greater focus in both capitals on taking the necessary steps to up our game, to improve engagement on the security side between the United States and the Philippines." Although giving few details, the official said new "bilateral defense guidelines" would see "a series of steps to support the Armed Forces of the Philippines modernization."

In an acknowledgement of Philippine sensitivities about the US troop presence, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby emphasized that the sites slated to be used by the United States remain part of the Filipino military and "every single step of the way will be done in complete coordination." "It's about our ability to be better allies to one another and meet our commitments to each other," he said. The shifting geostrategic situation in the Asia-Pacific region will be a major topic when Biden visits Japan for a G7 meeting later in the month.

The US official said Biden would also meet separately during that trip in a trilateral format with the leaders of Japan and South Korea. He then heads to Australia for a session of the Quad group: Australia, India, Japan and the United States. — AFP

## China FM meets Myanmar junta chief: Military

**YANGON:** China's foreign minister met Myanmar's junta chief on Tuesday, the military said, the highest-ranking Chinese official to meet the country's top general since a coup more than two years ago. Myanmar has been riven by violence since the putsch that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's government in February 2021.

China is a major ally and arms supplier of the internationally isolated junta and has refused to condemn the military takeover. China "stands with Myanmar on the international stage", Foreign Minister Qin Gang told junta chief Min Aung Hlaing, according to a Burmese-language statement from the junta's information department.

China's foreign ministry did not offer any immediate comment following the meeting. Qin—the most senior Chinese official to meet Min Aung Hlaing in Myanmar since the coup—will remain in the country until Thursday, according to the junta.

Myanmar state media footage showed the Chinese official being received by Min Aung Hlaing in a meeting hall decked with gold curtains and red wallpaper. The two discussed "diplomatic relations, friendly cooperation, the recent situation in Myanmar, border trade, investments and cooperation on energy and electricity", the junta statement said.

Qin also met Myanmar's military-appointed Foreign Minister Than Swe, the statement added. Several Beijing-backed infrastructure projects are slated to run through northern Myanmar and link China's landlocked Yunnan province with the Indian Ocean.

Beijing also backs and arms several ethnic rebel groups along its border with Myanmar, analysts say. Some of these groups have clashed repeatedly with the Myanmar military in the aftermath of the coup, and an alliance of China-backed rebels in March called for Beijing's help to defuse the crisis.

Qin's predecessor, Wang Yi, visited the country in July last year, meeting with his Myanmar counterpart but not the junta chief. China appointed a special envoy to Myanmar, Deng Xijun, in December, who has met the junta leader at least twice since then, as well as ethnic rebel leaders. — AFP



## International

# US authorities hunt alleged killer of five Texas neighbors

## Governor offers \$50,000 reward for information leading to capture of Oropesa

HOUSTON: A vast search was underway in Texas on Monday for the man suspected of shooting dead five neighbors, including a nine-year-old boy, after they asked him to stop firing his rifle in his yard late at night.

The FBI in Houston said that more than 250 law enforcement officers from a dozen agencies were "actively searching" for the man, Francisco Oropesa, a 38-year-old Mexican national. Oropesa is accused of attacking his neighbors on Friday night in the small town of Cleveland, in southeastern Texas, after they allegedly asked him to stop shooting his semi-automatic AR-15 because the noise was keeping a baby awake.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott offered a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the capture of Oropesa, who he said was "in the country illegally." The short statement by Abbott, a Republican, also referred to the suspect as having "killed five illegal immigrants," sparking immediate criticism on social media over his focus on the victims' immigration status. "Five human beings lost their lives and Greg Abbott insists on labeling them 'illegal immigrants,'" tweeted Julian Castro, the former Democratic mayor of the Texas city of San Antonio.

On Monday, Abbott's office walked back his comments, saying in a statement carried by US media that "one of the victims may have been in the United States legally." The victims were originally from Honduras. Abbott also said he would "continue working with state and local officials to ensure they have all available resources to respond to this horrific crime."

"Our hearts go out to the families and loved ones of the five victims that were taken in this senseless act of violence," he added. CNN reported that Oropesa had been deported from the United States at

least four times since 2009, citing a source from US immigration authorities, adding that his current immigration status was unclear.

Greg Capers, the sheriff of San Jacinto County, where the shootings took place, said his thoughts were with the slain "little boy," whose age was previously stated as eight. "I don't care if he was here legally," Capers told reporters over the weekend. "I don't care if he was here illegally. He was in my county. Five people died in my county and that is where my heart is."

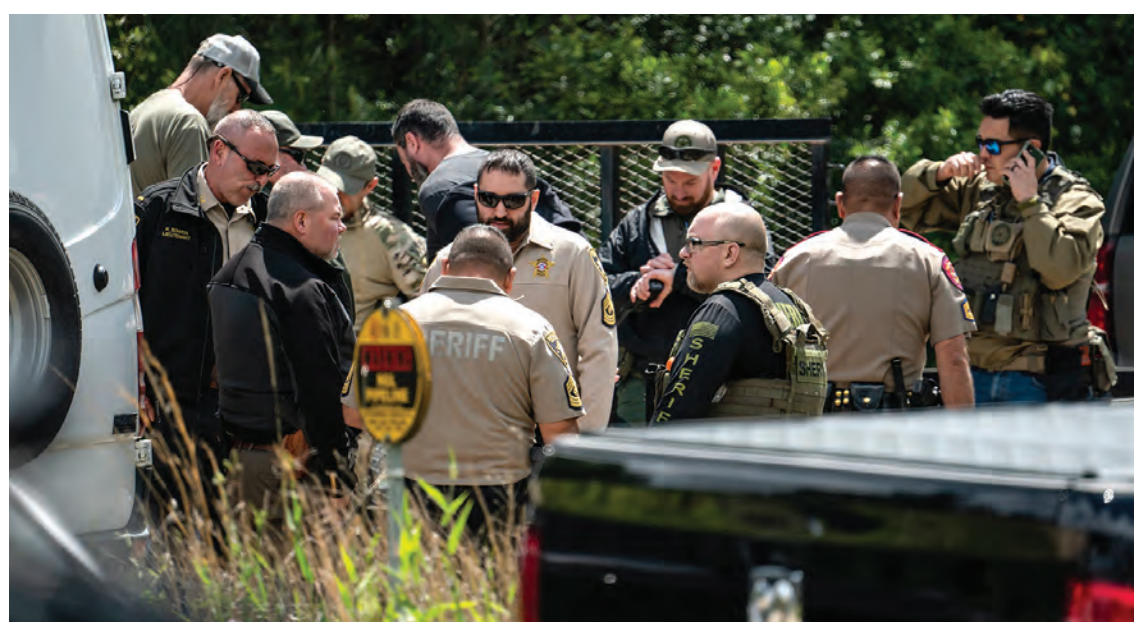
### 'I'll do what I want'

The FBI offered an additional \$25,000 reward for Oropesa. Capers described a horrifying scene when the authorities arrived at the victims' residence after receiving a call about "harassment" around 11:30 pm Friday.

Bodies were strewn from the front door to an inside bedroom, where two deceased women were found lying on top of two traumatized children who survived the massacre. "In my opinion, they were actually trying to take care of the babies and keep them babies alive," Capers told ABC's Houston station KTRK.

All the victims had been shot "from the neck up, almost execution style, basically in the head," the sheriff said. Several residents were in critical condition with multiple gunshot wounds. Capers said the suspect "had been drinking" and allegedly told his neighbors "I'll do what I want to in my front yard," before barging into their house and opening fire.

The Honduran foreign minister, Enrique Reina, called for the gunman to face "the full weight of the law." In response to yet another US mass shooting, White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre



CLEVELAND: Law enforcement search for the suspect a few miles from the scene where five people, including a 9-year-old child, were killed after a shooting inside a home in Cleveland, Texas. — AFP

told reporters Monday that "the president believes prayers alone are not enough."

"Congress must act," Jean-Pierre said. "Because what makes tragedies like this one all the more heart-wrenching is the fact that it is entirely within our power to take these weapons of war off our streets."

The Texas killings appeared to be the latest in a series of US shootings spawned by normally banal interactions: a teenager mistakenly knocking on the

wrong door, a cheerleader accidentally stepping into the wrong car, someone driving into the wrong driveway, a ball rolling into a neighbor's yard.

There have been more than 180 mass shootings — defined as four or more people wounded or killed — so far this year in the United States, according to the Gun Violence Archive. With more firearms than inhabitants, the United States has the highest rate of gun-related deaths of any developed country: 49,000 in 2021, up from 45,000 the year before. — AFP

## Japan PM Kishida to visit South Korea next week

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will visit South Korea next week, Japan's foreign ministry said Tuesday, as the two US allies pursue warmer ties.

Kishida will hold talks on Sunday with President Yoon Suk Yeol on the first trip to South Korea by a Japanese premier since 2018. It comes after the leaders agreed to end tit-for-tat trade curbs at a March summit in Tokyo, de-escalating a bitter dispute over Japan's use of wartime forced labor. Japan's foreign ministry and the South Korean presidential office both confirmed the May 7-8 trip after Kishida told reporters that it was being arranged.

He called the visit "a good opportunity to hold a

candid exchange of opinions over accelerating Japan and South Korea's relationship, and the rapidly changing international situation."

Kishida, who is on a tour of four African nations and Singapore, added that his trip to South Korea would "give momentum to 'shuttle diplomacy'" between the neighbors.

The two leaders had pledged in March to restart regular mutual visits, a practice suspended for over a decade, and Kishida has invited Yoon to the G7 summit in Hiroshima later in May.

"Through Prime Minister Kishida's visit to Korea, shuttle diplomacy between the leaders will begin in earnest," South Korea's presidential office said in a statement.

Often-testy relations between the countries deteriorated after South Korea's Supreme Court in 2018 ordered Japanese firms to compensate victims of forced labor in World War II. But Yoon, who took office a year ago, has been keen to end the spat and form a united front against regional challenges including North Korea.

ing union in September 2016.

Letby, originally from Hereford in western England, was initially placed on clerical duties before her arrest in July 2018. She told the court she "could not believe it" when she was blamed. "It was devastating. I don't think you could be accused of anything worse than that," she added.

Prosecutors have previously presented as evidence notes written by Letby that were found during police searches of her Chester home. One note, written in capital letters, read "I am evil I did this".

Another stated: "I don't deserve to live. I killed them on purpose because I'm not good enough to care for them. I am a horrible evil person". Asked about the notes in court, Letby said she wrote the latter one "because I felt at the time I had done something wrong".

"I thought I'm such an awful, evil person... that I had made mistakes and not known," she added, noting that being removed from the neo-natal unit had affected her mental health. Myers questioned what exactly it was that she thought she had done.

"That somehow I had been incompetent and I had done something wrong to affect these babies. I felt I must be responsible in some way," Letby responded. She is facing 22 charges — seven of murder and 15 of attempted murder, as she allegedly tried to kill

president to unite the country and swiftly enact the reforms needed to rescue its economy from crisis," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement.

"Lebanon's leaders must not put their personal interests and ambitions above the interests of their country and people." A caretaker cabinet with limited powers has been at the helm since May last year after legislative polls gave no side a clear majority.

Former president Michel Aoun's term then expired in October, with no successor lined up. Numerous parliamentary votes have been held since, but no candidate has garnered enough support to succeed Aoun. The Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement, which holds huge sway over political

incident. The MPs were seeking to deliver a petition over what Azimio has described as the "unacceptably high" cost of food, fuel and electricity. The demonstrations took place despite a police ban after protests in March spiralled into chaos and violence that left three people dead.

A number of other incidents were reported in the capital on Tuesday although across most of the city the situation was calm. Several vehicles including a bus and a truck were torched in Nairobi, while youths set tyres ablaze and blocked roads in several slums, witnesses said.

"What kind of protests are these now, why are they stoning people? My car has been damaged and I am just doing my own business," said taxi driver Duncan Mukuche, whose vehicle had come under



Fumio Kishida

Earlier this year, Seoul announced a plan to pay those affected without Tokyo's involvement. In further efforts to thaw ties, Japan's trade ministry said last week it had started the process to add South Korea back to a so-called "white list" of trusted trade partners, having downgraded it in 2019. — AFP



Lucy Letby

some children more than once.

The youngest alleged murder victim — a boy who was born prematurely — was just a day old and "well" but died within 90 minutes of Letby coming on duty on June 8, 2015, the court has been told. Medical experts said his death was consistent with a deliberate injection of air or something else into his circulation minutes before his collapse.

Discoloration on the boy's skin was consistent with some of the other cases in which Letby is alleged to have injected air into a victim's bloodstream, the jury has heard. — AFP

life in Lebanon, has endorsed pro-Syrian Sleiman Frangieh for the presidency.

In November, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said the group wanted whoever is selected as Lebanon's next president to "reassure" the group and stand up to the United States, as Hezbollah's members in government cast blank ballots during voting.

Iran's foreign minister last week also called for the country to overcome its political deadlock and elect a president. Countries including France, the United States and Saudi Arabia hold regular consultations on Lebanon. Their representatives met in February in Paris to discuss the crisis, without achieving any tangible progress. — AFP

attack. Protesters also set fires and used rocks to block roads in and out of Odinga's lakeside stronghold of Kisumu in western Kenya, they said. Violence erupted during the March demonstrations as police fired tear gas on demonstrators, including Odinga's own motorcade, and gangs went on the rampage, attacking people and property.

Nairobi regional police commander Adamson Bungei had announced Sunday that Azimio had been denied permission to hold the new demonstrations.

But the coalition had insisted the action would go ahead. "Police cannot decide in advance that there shall be violence and then proceed to ban political activities that are protected by the constitution. That is the making of dictatorship," it said in a statement Monday. — AFP

## Zionist strikes on Syria kill 7, knock out Aleppo airport

BEIRUT: Zionist strikes on north Syria's Aleppo province overnight killed four Syrian officers and three Iran-backed fighters, putting the area's international airport out of service, a war monitor reported Tuesday. During more than a decade of war in Syria, the Zionist entity has launched hundreds of air strikes on its territory, primarily targeting Iran-backed forces and Lebanese Hezbollah fighters as well as Syrian army positions.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Zionist missiles targeted "the Aleppo international airport area and the Nayrab military airfield area" nearby late Monday, reporting explosions at both facilities and "severe damage". Strikes "completely destroyed" a munitions depot in the Nayrab airfield area, killing four Syrian army officers and "three pro-Iran foreign fighters", said the Britain-based monitor, which relies on a vast network of sources on the ground, raising the toll from four dead.

Zionist missiles also slammed into Syrian air force factories in the Safireh area of Aleppo province, "causing extensive material damage", it said, adding that the sites were used by pro-Iran fighters. The Observatory and state media said the strikes knocked out the Aleppo airport. Officials did not immediately provide further information on when the facility was expected to reopen or the nature of the damage.

"At around 11:35 pm (2035 GMT)... the (Zionist) enemy carried out an air attack with several missiles... targeting Aleppo international airport and a number of sites in the vicinity of Aleppo," state news agency SANA said, citing a military source. "A soldier was killed and seven people were wounded including two civilians," SANA said, reporting "material losses". Previous Zionist strikes have put both Aleppo and Damascus airports out of service.

While the Zionist entity rarely comments on the strikes it carries out on Syria, it has repeatedly said it will not allow its arch-foe Iran to extend its footprint in the war-torn country. Iran-backed militias have a heavy presence in the Aleppo region after providing key ground support to the army in its recapture of rebel-held districts of the city in 2016.

On March 22, a Zionist missile strike destroyed a suspected arms depot used by Iran-backed militias at Aleppo airport, the Observatory said at the time, with authorities saying that raid put the airport out of service. On March 7, three people were killed in a Zionist strike on the airport that also brought air traffic to a halt. On Saturday, three civilians were wounded in Zionist air strikes near the Syrian city of Homs, state media reported, with the Observatory saying a Hezbollah munitions depot at the Dabaa military airport was destroyed. — AFP

## UK nurse denies murdering babies in trial questioning

LONDON: A nurse accused of murdering seven babies at the UK hospital where she worked denied on Tuesday ever trying to harm them, as she gave evidence at her trial. Lucy Letby, 33, who is also accused of attempting to kill another 10 babies in the neo-natal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in northwest England, has pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

She has been on trial at Manchester Crown Court for the past seven months but entered the witness box for the first time to face questions about the spate of deaths in 2015 and 2016. Confirming she had cared for hundreds of babies during that period, she was asked by her lawyer, Ben Myers, if she ever wanted to hurt them.

"No, that's completely against being what a nurse is," Letby replied. The neo-natal nurse was first informed she was being blamed for the deaths in a letter from the Royal College of Nurs-

## US urges Lebanese parliament to elect president

WASHINGTON: The United States on Monday called on Lebanon's parliament to elect a new president, as the country marks six months without a leader at the helm amid grinding political and economic turmoil.

"The United States calls on Lebanon's political leadership to move expeditiously to elect a

## Kenya police fire tear gas as oppn stages new protests

NAIROBI: Kenyan riot police fired tear gas on opposition MPs Tuesday during a new round of anti-government demonstrations over a cost-of-living crisis and last year's disputed election. Tear gas canisters were launched at members of opposition leader Raila Odinga's Azimio la Umoja (One Kenya) coalition near President William Ruto's office in downtown Nairobi, according to footage of the

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## International

# Kenyan pastor to face terror charges over cult massacre

## Odero is suspected of murder, aiding suicide, abduction, crimes against humanity

**MALINDI:** A Kenyan pastor who appeared in court Tuesday will face terrorism charges over the deaths of more than 100 people found buried in what has been dubbed the "Shakahola forest massacre," prosecutors said.

The deeply religious Christian-majority country has been stunned by the discovery of mass graves last month in a forest near the Indian Ocean coastal town of Malindi. Self-proclaimed pastor Paul Nthenge Mackenzie, who set up the Good News International Church in 2003 and is accused of inciting followers to starve to death "to meet Jesus", appeared in the dock in Malindi.

The small courtroom was packed with relatives of victims as Mackenzie, dressed in a pink and black jacket and brown trousers, was brought in by about half a dozen police officers along with eight other defendants. After a brief hearing, the case was moved to the high court in Kenya's second-largest city of Mombasa, where the suspects will face terrorism charges, prosecutor Vivian Kambaga told AFP.

"There is a court (in Mombasa) that is gazetted to handle cases under the prevention of terrorism act," Kambaga told a magistrate during the hearing in Malindi, asking for the case to be moved to the high court.

Ezekiel Odero, a wealthy and high-profile televangelist, is also expected at the high court in Mombasa following his arrest in Malindi on Thursday in connection with the same case. A total of 109 people have so far been confirmed dead, most of them children. The first autopsies from Shakahola were carried out Monday on nine children and one woman. They confirmed starvation as the cause of death, though some victims were asphyxiated, the authorities said.

### 'Vulnerable followers'

Odero is suspected of murder, aiding suicide, abduction, radicalisation, crimes against humanity, child cruelty, fraud and money laundering. The prosecution is seeking to detain him for a further 30 days, citing credible information linking the corpses exhumed at Shakahola to the deaths of several "innocent and vulnerable followers" from Odero's New Life Prayer Centre and Church.

Cliff Ombeta, one of Odero's lawyers, told reporters upon arrival at the court that there was no evidence connecting the pastor to the Shakahola discoveries. "Evidence must be brought. It is a case where you must prove," he said.

A crowd of Odero's supporters gathered outside

the court, singing and praying, while some were in tears. In addition to the terrorism charges prosecutors plan to file, Mackenzie stands accused of murder, kidnapping, cruelty towards children among other crimes in court documents seen by AFP.

The former taxi driver turned himself in on April 14 after police acting on a tip-off first entered Shakahola forest, where some 30 mass graves have now been found. Prosecutors have linked Odero and Mackenzie, saying in court documents that they share a "history of business investments" including a television station used to pass "radicalised messages" to followers. In his filing to the court, Odero said he wanted to "strongly disassociate" himself from Mackenzie and disagreed with his teachings.

Questions have been raised about how Mackenzie, a self-styled pastor with a history of extremism, managed to evade law enforcement despite his prominent profile and previous legal cases. The horrific saga has seen President William Ruto vow to intervene in Kenya's homegrown religious movements, and thrown a spotlight on failed efforts to regulate unscrupulous churches and cults that have dabbled in criminality.

This week Ruto will set up a task force on how to govern religious activities in Kenya, home to about 4,000 churches, Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki said



**MALINDI:** Self-proclaimed pastor Paul Nthenge Mackenzie (C), who set up the Good News International Church in 2003 and is accused of inciting cult followers to starve to death "to meet Jesus", talks to his lawyers Elisha Komora (R) and George Karuki (L) while appearing in the dock with other co-accused at the court in Malindi. —AFP

Monday. He said the government must "make sure we don't infringe on the sacred right of the freedom of worship, opinion and belief". "But at the same time we don't allow criminals to misuse that right to hurt, kill, torture and starve people to death." —AFP

## Taleban authorities warn UN over Afghan talks exclusion

**DOHA:** UN chief Antonio Guterres held a second day of talks with world powers Tuesday on how to deal with Afghanistan's Taleban leaders amid warnings from the Kabul administration that the meeting could be "counter-productive".

The talks in Doha were arranged by Guterres after the Taleban government banned Afghan women from working for the United Nations, prompting the world body to put its huge relief operations in Afghanistan under review.

Women are also banned from working for other NGOs, and are barred from almost all secondary and university education and most government jobs. The talks involve envoys from the United States, Russia, China and 20 other countries and organisations, including major European donors and neighbours such as Pakistan, but exclude the Taleban government.

"Any meeting without the participation of IEA (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) representatives—the main party to the issue—is unproductive and even sometimes counter-productive," said the head of the

Taleban political office in Doha, Suhail Shaheen.

"How can a decision taken at such meetings be acceptable or implemented while we are not part of the process? It is discriminatory and unjustified," he said. Meanwhile, Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi will lead a delegation to Islamabad at the end of the week for talks with Pakistani and Chinese officials, the ministry said Tuesday.

Muttaqi, who is subject to a UN travel ban, has previously been given exemptions to travel to the neighbouring country for talks. The UN Security Council last week unanimously condemned the ban on its Afghan women staff, which the world body says has seriously threatened its efforts to aid the population.

Women's groups staged protests on Saturday fearing the Doha meeting could propose steps toward recognition of the Taleban administration that returned to power in August 2021. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Monday however that "is not up for discussion" at the talks, which are being held behind closed doors.

The meeting would discuss human rights, including women's rights, Afghanistan's governance and ways to counter terrorism and drug trafficking, Dujarric said. Guterres wants "a common understanding with the international community on how to engage with the Taleban on these issues", he added. The UN review of its Afghanistan operation is due to be completed on Friday. The world body has said it faces an "appalling choice" on whether to stay in the country. —AFP



**HONG KONG:** (L-R) Hong Kong's Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Erick Tsang, Hong Kong's Chief Secretary for Administration Eric Chan, Hong Kong's Chief Executive John Lee, Hong Kong's Secretary for Justice Paul Lam and Hong Kong's Secretary for Home Affairs Alice Mak attend a press conference to announce an overhaul of district council elections. —AFP

## Hong Kong cuts elected seats on municipal bodies

**HONG KONG:** Hong Kong dramatically slashed the number of elected seats in its local district councils on Tuesday, effectively gutting the city's last remaining set of democratic institutions. The change is part of a widespread crackdown by Beijing on political freedoms in Hong Kong following massive pro-democracy protests in 2019. The last elections for Hong Kong's district councils were held at the peak of those demonstrations and returned a landslide win for the city's pro-democracy bloc. But city leader John Lee announced Tuesday that directly elected seats to the councils will be cut from more than 90 percent to 20 percent to ensure they are controlled by Beijing loyalists.

He said the reforms would "put wrongs to rights" and the councils elected in 2019 were "platforms of protest violence and Hong Kong independence". "Many council members refused to pledge their allegiance... they refused to recognise the People's Republic of China as Hong Kong's sovereign state," Lee said at a press conference.

Lee announced the change weeks after China's top official on Hong Kong affairs said the district councils could no longer fall into the hands of "anti-China destab-

ilising forces". The percentage of elected seats is now lower than when the district councils were created in 1982 under British colonial rule, rolling back decades of democratisation efforts.

Eighty percent of their seats will be filled by government-appointed members. "What is good for Hong Kong has to be taken into consideration and what happened in the past and what will happen in the future," Lee said.

Candidates for election will have to secure nominations from three government-appointed committees and will be vetted for political loyalty and national security risks. Such vetting is already in place for candidates running for seats in Hong Kong's legislature, which underwent an overhaul after the protests to ensure only "patriots" can stand.

Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong to crush dissent after the huge and at times violent pro-democracy protests four years ago, which brought millions onto Hong Kong's streets. Since then more than 300 democratically elected district council members have been unseated or resigned—with some fleeing the city. Kenneth Chan, a political scholar at Hong Kong Baptist University, told AFP that the change "confirms the perception that a pathway towards democracy has ended for good".

"It now looks like the district councillors... would just be the echo chambers serving mostly the administration rather than channelling bottom-up views and expectations from the community level." —AFP



**WASHINGTON:** Activists hold banners during a demonstration in front of the White House in Washington, DC, on April 30, 2023. —AFP

## Outrage after Palestinian....

Continued from Page 1

Adnan as "a hunger striker who refused medical attention, risking his life". "In recent days, the military appeal court decided against releasing him from detention solely on the merit of his medical condition," said the official, who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly to the media.

Adnan was described by the official as an "operative" of Islamic Jihad, who was facing charges related to his activities within the militant group. The Zionist entity has occupied the West Bank since the Six-Day War of 1967 and its forces regularly detain Palestinians, who are subject to Zionist military courts. Islamic Jihad, which is considered a terrorist organization by the European Union and the United States, warned the Zionist will "pay the price for this crime".

"The free hero, Khader Adnan, died as a martyr in a crime committed by the enemy in front of the world," the militant group said in a statement. The Zionist prison service said Adnan was in jail for the

10th time and his wife, Randa Mousa, previously told AFP her husband had carried out multiple hunger strikes in detention.

Speaking on Tuesday, Mousa said: "We will only receive well-wishers, because this martyrdom is (like) a wedding, a (moment of) pride for us and a crown on our heads." But she cautioned militants against launching a violent response. "We don't want a drop of blood to be shed," she told journalists in the family's hometown of Arraba in the northern West Bank. "We don't want anyone to respond to the martyrdom. We don't want someone to launch rockets and then (Zionist) strikes Gaza," she said.

In his final message, Adnan said he was "sending you these words as my flesh and fat has melted". "I pray that God accepts me as a faithful martyr," he wrote, in a message published Monday by the Palestinian Prisoners' Club. Physicians for Human Rights in the Zionist entity previously sent a medic to assess Adnan's condition but said their appeals to Zionist authorities to have him transferred to hospital were refused. "Only with the means available in a hospital could he be adequately monitored and his life could be saved in case of deterioration," the group said Tuesday. — AFP

## Muslim population misinformation...

Continued from Page 1

for Muslim women. A forecast issued the same year from the Pew Research Center said that India's Muslim community would grow to 311 million by 2050. But despite their growing share of the national population, Muslims would remain a small minority in a country of 1.7 billion people by mid-century, according to the US-based think tank's projections.

That has not stopped the spread of viral disinformation on Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media platforms claiming India is soon to become a Muslim-majority country. One Facebook post sarcastically greeted news that India's population had overtaken China's by thanking Muslims "for producing 5-10 children" each. Another post on Twitter said that the

Hindu faith would soon disappear from India, while a supposed Muslim majority would replace the country's constitution with "Islamic law".

Conspiracy theories that allege a Muslim plot to secure the faith's numerical supremacy in India have been a staple of Hindu nationalist ideologues for years. Similar theories of immigrants and minorities "replacing" majority populations have also been embraced by the far-right in other countries. At times the theories have been indulged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has come to dominate national politics partly through its muscular appeals to the country's Hindu majority.

BJP lawmaker Rakesh Sinha introduced into parliament a population control bill in 2019 that proposed to limit all Indian households to two children, garnering the support of 125 other MPs. The bill was withdrawn after critics accused Sinha of targeting Muslims when he gave a speech on the supposedly glaring disparity between Hindu and Muslim birth rates — an accusation he denied. — AFP

## 75 years after the Nakba, Palestinians...

Continued from Page 1

depopulated by Jewish forces, according to Zionist organization Zochrot. The memory of the Nakba, which is commemorated on May 15, has become a rallying point for the Palestinian quest for statehood.

It falls a day after the Zionist entity declared statehood in 1948, prompting an invasion by five Arab armies which the nation defeated. Ahead of the anniversary, AFP spoke to eight Palestinians in their 80s and 90s who were exiled during the Nakba to the Gaza Strip.

Dabai recalled the day "Jewish soldiers in disguise" arrived in her hometown of Lydda, now known as Lod in the central Zionist entity. Because the fighters' faces were covered in keffiyehs, a scarf that has come to symbolize the Palestinian struggle, locals thought they were reinforcements sent from Jordan. People were so delighted they "rushed for the fountain" in the town center to celebrate.

But realizing the soldiers were Jews, they "fled into the mosque and their homes". "They (soldiers) stormed the mosque and killed everyone inside," she added. "I was young and saw it with my own eyes."

Planned deportation, expulsion or voluntary exile? A massacre of hundreds of civilians and unarmed fighters in a conflict? The events of July 12 to 13, 1948, during the capture of Lod by Zionist forces, remain the subject of debate and intense controversy even to this day. One thing seems certain: The town was emptied of almost all of its 30,000 Arab residents practically overnight.

Following the war, the West Bank fell under Jordanian rule while Gaza was controlled by Egypt. "We lived comfortably" until that point, recalled Dabai, as she reminisced about children playing on swings, the central market, and the trickling of water from a large fountain surrounded by shops. But she is bitter about what she lost: "We were a weak country and we did not have powerful weapons."

The day after the disguised soldiers arrived, she said, they returned with orders — leave Lod, or be killed. "We said we don't want to leave. They said they would kill us. So all the poor people left, and we were among them," said Dabai. The family fled on foot, walking for several days until they reached the Christian town of Bir Zeit, near Ramallah in the

West Bank, then moving on towards Egypt.

But the journey was too expensive and so the family settled in Gaza instead. Like many, they were sure they would be back soon. Only after the Oslo Accords established the Palestinian Authority in the 1990s did Dabai manage to obtain a permit to visit her old neighborhood in Lod. "I put my hand on the wall of our house and said: 'My love, my grandfather's house, is destroyed, and our neighbors' homes are inhabited by Jews'", she said.

She told AFP she would not accept any compensation for the home, and no longer expected to return, but insisted that "future generations will liberate the country and return". "No one was filming the massacres and what was happening, in the way we do today," she added, her voice breaking.

Umm Jaber Wishah was born in 1932 in the village of Beit Affa, near Ashkelon in what is now the southern Zionist entity. Decades later, with her greying hair covered by a white shawl, she painfully recounts how things were initially peaceful. When Jews first came to the area of the village, "they did not harm us and we didn't harm them," she told AFP from her home in the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. "The Arabs worked for them (Jews) without problems, in safety," she added.

Yet the coexistence did not last long. She remembers the day in May 1948 that it shattered. "I was baking bread, and they surrounded the village," she said, fighting back tears. "They (Jewish soldiers) began besieging the village from the eastern side, and we hid from the shooting until the next day. The men were tied up and were then taken prisoner, the children were screaming," she said.

According to Zochrot, Beit Affa was taken by Jewish forces the first time in July 1948 for a few days. During this period the residents in all likelihood left, ahead of the village's decisive capture later that year. As in Palestinian refugee camps across the region, Bureij has long since traded temporary tents for more permanent structures of brick and wood. But many displaced still live in poverty. Wishah, a wooden walking stick resting against her leg, said her Bureij home "means nothing". "Even if they gave me the whole Gaza Strip in exchange for my homeland, I wouldn't accept it. My village is Beit Affa."

Ibtihaj Dola, from the coastal city of Jaffa, also remembers living side-by-side with Jews before the Zionist entity was established. One of her relatives through marriage was Jewish and the city's large Jewish minority "could speak Arabic", said the 88-year-old. Dola remembered returning home from school one day to find her family packing and preparing to flee. — AFP



## Business

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023

## COP28 chair urges tripling of renewables capacity by 2030

## Al-Jaber's call marks a public endorsement of IEA target

BERLIN: Sultan Al-Jaber, the president of this year's UN climate talks hosted by the United Arab Emirates, on Tuesday called on participants to drastically ramp up their use of renewable energy. "We will accelerate delivery in sectors like renewables that must triple capacity by 2030 and double it again by 2040," Al-Jaber said in a speech at the opening of the Petersberg Climate Dialogue — a meeting of climate diplomats in Berlin.

Al-Jaber's call marked a public endorsement of a target laid out by the International Energy Agency. Last month at a closed-door meeting with G7 leaders in Japan, he had also raised the target. At the same time, he did not call for a complete end to the use of fossil fuels.

Rather, the COP28 chair said the focus must be on removing the emissions they produce while stepping up renewables. "We must be laser focused on phasing out fossil fuel emissions, while phasing up viable, affordable zero-carbon alternatives," said Al-Jaber in his speech ahead of the climate summit in November.

Earlier this year, the UN's climate expert panel said the world risks crossing the key 1.5-degree Celsius global warming limit in about a decade, urging a dramatic reduction in planet-heating emissions. While solar and wind power are already increasing dramatically, the UN report said that

existing fossil fuel infrastructure will be enough to push the world beyond 1.5C, absent the use of costly and emerging technology to capture and store the carbon pollution.

The COP28 chair also used his speech to call on developed countries to deliver a long promised \$100-billion climate package for developing countries. "This is holding up progress. And as part of my outreach, I am requesting donor countries to provide a definitive assessment on the delivery of this commitment before COP28," Al-Jaber said.

In 2009, the chaotic UN climate summit in Copenhagen saw rich nations promise \$100 billion a year by 2020 to the Global South, but last year the OECD said the amount delivered was still \$17 billion short. At the same time, the funding needed for developing countries to stop burning planet-heating fossil fuels and prepare for tomorrow's climate disasters has already far outstripped that sum.

Campaigners are pushing for a redesign of the global financial architecture to help countries cope, as many emerging nations grapple with rising costs, soaring debts and extreme weather events. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who is hosting the Petersberg dialogue, however, reported that the pledged sum may finally be in reach. "The good news is we are on the way to finally reaching this \$100-billion sum this year," she said. — AFP



BERLIN: Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and COP28 UAE President-Designate Sultan Al-Jaber speaks at the Petersberg Climate Dialogue (Petersberger Klimadialog), on May 2, 2023 at the Foreign Office in Berlin. — AFP

## Jazeera Airways achieves KD2.3m net profit in Q1 2023

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways has achieved a net profit of KD 2.3 million for the first quarter of 2023, compared to KD 3.8 million in the first quarter of 2022, when the strong demand post-pandemic was reflected in higher fares. Total revenue for the quarter reached KD 48.3 million, up 35.2 percent, while operating profit was at KD 3.62 million. Passenger traffic rose by 56.6 percent to 1.1 million in this quarter and load factor reached 82.1 percent with an increase of 6.9 percent compared to the Q1 2022.

Announcing the results, Marwan Boodai, Chairman, Jazeera Airways said: "2023 has started off on a positive note for Jazeera Airways. Despite fuel prices putting pressure on margins for the first quarter, a continued focus on operating costs enabled us to deliver profits in line with our aggressive growth targets and on the track to be a fantastic year. Load factor in this quarter reached 82.1 percent, the highest ever for Jazeera in any quarter, especially for Q1 which is typically not the stron-



gest. This demonstrates the strength of our business model and sound validation from our customers."

Jazeera Airways launched direct flights in February from Kuwait to Moscow, the first airline to fly the route. In March, the airline also started flying to Samarkand, its third destination in Uzbekistan following Tashkent and Namangan. New destinations have been announced for Q2 including Larnaca, Cyprus, Belgrade, Serbia and Tirana, Albania. In addition, the airline also announced the resumption of its flights to Prague, Czech Republic and Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer months.

The Jazeera T5 terminal, was under refurbish-

In 2022, Google and OpenAI — the start-up behind the popular AI chatbot ChatGPT — started building systems using much larger amounts of data than before. Hinton told the Times he believed that these systems were eclipsing human intelligence in some ways because of the amount of data they were analyzing. "Maybe what is going on in these systems is actually a lot better than what is going on in the brain," he told the paper.

While AI has been used to support human workers, the rapid expansion of chatbots like ChatGPT could put jobs at risk. AI "takes away the drudge work" but "might take away more than that", he told the Times. The scientist also warned about the potential spread of misinformation created by AI, telling the Times that the average person will "not be able to know what is true anymore."

Hinton notified Google of his resignation last month, the Times reported. Jeff Dean, lead scientist for Google AI, thanked Hinton in a statement to US media. "As one of the first companies to publish AI Principles, we remain committed to a responsible approach to AI," the statement added. "We're continually learning to understand emerging risks while also innovating boldly."

derway and that the deal is expected to close in late 2023 or early 2024. Pfizer's profits in the first quarter were \$5.5 billion, down 30 percent from the year-ago period. Revenues fell 29 percent to \$18.3 billion following a \$10 billion drop from COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty. Bourla described 2023 as a "transition year" for its COVID-19 products.

The company expects vaccine utilization to decline in 2023 and 2024, but to see an uptick starting in 2025 "assuming the successful development and approval of various COVID combination vaccines," Bourla said in prepared remarks. Pfizer has also forecast a 2023 decline in revenues in Paxlovid, its COVID-19 therapeutic. The company attributes the decline this year to earlier purchases by governments to build inventories.

"We then expect that in the years 2024 and beyond the courses sold and used will more closely align," Bourla said, describing Paxlovid as a valuable tool in blocking the virus from progressing to a severe condition in infected patients. Shares were up 0.8 percent at \$39.52 in pre-market trading. — AFP

## Financial and Operational Highlights

## Q1 2023 Highlights:

- Operating revenue: KD48.3 million, up 35.2% from Q1 2022
- Operating profit: KD3.62 million, down 31.3% from Q1 2022\*
- Net profit: KD2.3 million, down 39.7% from Q1 2022\*
- Passengers: 1.1 million, up 56.6% from Q1 2022
- Load factor: 82.1%, up 6.9%
- Yield: KD41.1, down 13.6%

\*Post Covid-19 effect.

ment with three new restaurants opening for travelers — two on landside and one airside, operational since February.

## 2023 outlook

Over the next few months of this financial year, Jazeera will welcome four additional aircraft into its fleet. Following an "Approved Training Organization" certification from the Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) last year, Jazeera Airways placed an order for an Airbus simulator. Expected to be delivered by the end of 2023, this simulator will enable in-house pilot training and monitoring to ensure the highest levels of safety for both crew and passengers. The airline also intends to collaborate with a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) approved training organization to launch our own Multi-Pilot License (MPL) program.



Geoffrey Hinton

In March, tech billionaire Elon Musk and a range of experts called for a pause in the development of AI systems to allow time to make sure they are safe. An open letter, signed by more than 1,000 people including Musk and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, was prompted by the release of GPT-4, a much more powerful version of the technology used by ChatGPT. Hinton did not sign that letter at the time, but told The New York Times that scientists should not "scale this up more until they have understood whether they can control it". — AFP

## Fed begins rate talks that could herald end of hikes

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve kicked off a two-day meeting Tuesday morning to decide whether to raise its benchmark lending rate for a 10th — and possibly final — time to tackle rising prices. The Fed has been on an aggressive campaign of interest-rate hikes since March last year, rapidly raising rates to help target high inflation, which remains above its long-term target of two percent.

With the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) widely expected to raise its base rate a quarter-point on Wednesday, analysts will be looking for any "revisions to the forward guidance in its statement," Goldman Sachs' chief US economist David Mericle wrote in a recent note to clients. "We

## Lebanon eyes \$9bn cash boost from 2.2m visitors in 2023

BEIRUT: Lebanon expects to host 2.2 million tourists and earn about \$9 billion in much-needed tourism revenue this year as it grapples with on-going political deadlock and its worst economic crisis since independence. This is slightly up from the 1.7 million visitors the Arab country hosted in 2022, when it received a similar \$9 billion in cash flow from tourism, Walid Nassar, Lebanon's Minister of Tourism, told reporters on the sidelines of the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai.

Of the 2.2 million expected visitors, 75 per cent are expected to be Lebanese that live abroad who will return home for the holidays and the remaining 25 per cent foreigners mainly from Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, he said. The projected tourist numbers stand far below the pre-COVID level of seven million visitors in 2019, he said. "You can expect a really hot summer in terms of tourism in Lebanon," the minister told a panel at the annual travel event.

Lebanon's economic and financial crises have been exacerbated by a political impasse that has blocked the formation of a new government and the enactment of reforms required to unlock billions of dollars in aid from the International Monetary Fund and other international donors.

Asked how the crisis-hit country will attract a little more than two million tourists this year, the minister said that the Lebanese pound's devaluation has made services and accommodation cheaper for international tourists spending hard currency. Lebanon's central bank devalued the pound in early February, with the official exchange rate changing to 15,000 to the US dollar, compared with the peg in place since 1997 of 1,507.50 to the greenback.

This led to a surge in consumer prices in March and the Lebanese pound trading in the parallel market at as much as 140,000 to the dollar earlier this month. Inflation in Lebanon hit an annual rate of about 264 per cent in March. Warming diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran will also have a positive impact on Lebanon's tourism performance, the minister said. — Agencies

expect the Committee to signal that it anticipates pausing in June but retains a hawkish bias, stopping earlier than it initially envisioned because bank stress is likely to cause a tightening of credit," he said.

Futures traders also see a more than 95 percent chance that the Fed will raise its benchmark lending rate by 25 basis points on Wednesday, according to CME Group. Such a move would bring the interest rate to between 5 and 5.25 percent — its highest level since before the global financial crisis.

## Uncertainty remains

Like the Fed's previous rate decision, the FOMC meeting on May 2 and 3 takes place shortly after one of the largest bank failures in American history. First Republic's failure on Monday beat Silicon Valley Bank's (SVB) dramatic collapse to second place in the unenviable list of the largest commercial banking failures in US history. In March, the Fed held off a larger rate hike, instead opting for a quarter-point rise amid a banking crisis unleashed by SVB's collapse. — AFP

## 'Godfather of AI' quits Google to warn of dangers

WASHINGTON: A computer scientist often dubbed "the godfather of artificial intelligence" has quit his job at Google to speak out about the dangers of the technology, US media reported Monday. Geoffrey Hinton, who created a foundation technology for AI systems, told The New York Times that advancements made in the field posed "profound risks to society and humanity".

"Look at how it was five years ago and how it is now," he was quoted as saying in the piece, which was published on Monday. "Take the difference and propagate it forwards. That's scary." Hinton said that competition between tech giants was pushing companies to release new AI technologies at dangerous speeds, risking jobs and spreading misinformation. "It is hard to see how you can prevent the bad actors from using it for bad things," he told the Times.

## Pfizer profits drop as it adapts to lower COVID-19 revenues

NEW YORK: Pfizer reported a drop in first-quarter profits Tuesday on declining COVID-19 vaccine revenues, but said it was on track for a heavy series of product launches later in 2023.

Shares of the pharma giant edged higher as Pfizer Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla touted an "unprecedented" number of new launches to help offset an ebbing of COVID-19-related sales that have boosted profits in recent years. These include the migraine drug Zavzpret and the Pevnar pneumonia vaccine for children. Pfizer is also targeting growth in cancer treatments, having announced in March an acquisition of biotech company Seagen for \$43 billion.

Bourla said integration planning for Seagen is un-



## Business

# 'Bankee' program succeeds in promoting financial literacy among school students

## Students continue to demonstrate high engagement during the program's pilot phase



KUWAIT: Isam J Al-Sager addresses the students during the visit to Hudhaifa Bin Al-Yaman Primary School.



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a visit to Hudhaifa Bin Al-Yaman Primary School as part of the executive management's tours to follow up on the pilot phase of the "Bankee" financial literacy program for government and private schools' students. The program is an initiative launched by NBK in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority "Nazaha".

The visitors were headed by Isam J Al-Sager, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Rajaa Buarki, the Assistant Undersecretary for the Administrative Affairs and Administrative Development Sector in the Ministry of Education, and Sumayah Al-Jasem, founder, Managing Director at Creative Confidence.

A large number of parents of participating students attended the visit and discussed the program's benefits with their children. They were delighted to see significant improvements in their children's financial behavior and knowledge. Additionally, they engaged in discussions with teachers about the program's impact on the students.

During the visit, participants reviewed all the details of implementing the "Bankee" program. From the virtual bank experience that allows students to have a financial account in which they can trade using the "Bankos" virtual currency, and how students receive bonuses as a result of accumulating the program's currency in their accounts. They also visited the classrooms to witness how the program has become part of students' daily lives and how they were rewarded for their academic excellence and positive behavior.

On this occasion, Al-Sager said: "We are delighted with the high engagement and success of the Bankee program in promoting financial inclu-



**Isam J Al-Sager: We are delighted with the Bankee program's remarkable progress among government and private schools' students. The program aligns with NBK's broader objective of promoting financial inclusion among all segments of society.**

sion and raising financial literacy among government and private school students, by providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge to enable them make sound financial decisions throughout their lives."

Al-Sager highlighted that sponsoring Bankee program aligns with NBK's broader objective of promoting financial inclusion among all segments

of society saying: "We are committed to contributing to this cause by educating young individuals on prudent financial management and helping them establish a strong financial foundation that will serve them throughout their lives."

"We believe that through proper financial education and support, students will be able to manage their finances in an efficient and constructive man-

ner, thus building financial security for them and their families going forward," he continued.

Al-Sager remarked that NBK harnesses all its unique capabilities and extensive financial experience to actively contribute to promoting awareness regarding financial stability and independence for this generation of young people. "We expect that the initiative will have a positive impact on the lives of young people and their families, as they will be more capable of managing their personal finances and take better decisions that support their financial future," he added.

The "Bankee" program was introduced by NBK in selected Kuwaiti schools, with a view to promote financial literacy among government and private schools' students by introducing them to financial culture through practical and engaging experiential methods.

The program is the first-of-its-kind in Kuwait to be created by a team of young trainees under NBK's sponsorship to explore innovative solutions that promote sustainable financial literacy among society members. The program's primary goal is to introduce students to core financial concepts such as earning, spending, saving, and financial responsibilities. This objective is achieved by employing applied learning and gamification techniques to simulate a real-world economy within the classroom.

The pilot phase will span the entire 2022/2023 academic year, with nine schools from various governorates (for boys and girls), including six government and three private schools. The primary objective of this phase is to evaluate the program's implementation settings by engaging teachers and students in introductory workshops to assess, enhance and modify implementation features to align with the existing educational curriculum.

## Qantas appoints Vanessa Hudson as first woman CEO

SYDNEY: Australian airline Qantas named company veteran Vanessa Hudson as its first woman chief executive on Tuesday, replacing the cost-cutting Irish-Australian Alan Joyce. Qantas, which returned to profit late last year after taking large losses during the Covid-19 pandemic, said Hudson would become chief executive and managing director when Joyce retires in November after 15 years in the top job.

Hudson, who has been in Qantas' executive ranks for nearly three decades, will remain in her role as chief financial officer until then, the airline group said. "I have worked for Qantas for 28 years and that excitement of the first day that I felt walking into Qantas, I feel still today," Hudson told a news conference.

"We are in an incredibly strong position. We have got many things in the pipeline. That is not to say the past three years have not been challenging — they have," she added. "There will be many challenges. I am sure, ahead," she said, stressing that taking care of customers was "absolutely at the centre of everything". Hudson said she was "incredibly proud" as a woman to reflect both on her own promotion at Qa-

ntas and on "some of the other amazing females that are running very big organizations across Australia and across the globe".

### 'Qantas downfall'

Joyce, who had already been expected to leave Qantas at some point this year, praised his successor as an "outstanding executive". "There are not many female CEOs of the worldwide aviation industry," he told the news conference. "And it's a credit to this country that a gay Irish man was appointed 15 years ago to be CEO of the company. And now we have the first female." Joyce said he had extended his time as chief executive at the board's request to deal with the pandemic. "If it had not been for Covid I would have retired a few years ago."

Qantas posted a profit of Aus\$1.43 billion (\$974 million) before tax in the second half of 2022, after accumulating Aus\$7 billion in losses across the previous three years, weighed down by the pandemic.

Under Joyce, however, Qantas was heavily criticized by union leaders for sacking or standing down thousands of staff to keep a lid on costs at the height of the outbreak. "After 15 years of Qantas downfall under Alan Joyce's management, a new CEO has the opportunity to serve the hard-working people who built the spirit of Australia," the Transport Workers' Union said in a statement.

"Current and illegally sacked workers deserve courageous management to take Qantas in a new direction." The airline has also angered customers post-lockdowns with sky-high fares.

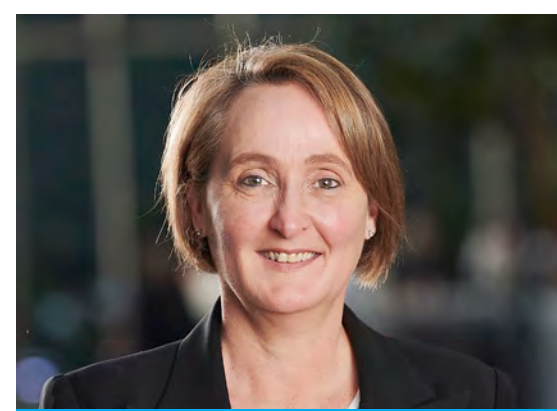
and the city's exports dwindle, leading to a drop in GDP in all four quarters in 2022.

At the beginning of 2023, Hong Kong's finance chief unveiled a US\$97 billion budget aimed at resuscitating the city's fortunes. The revival measures included cash handouts for more than six million people, a series of tax breaks and welfare allowances, and a new campaign to revive tourism in the city. First quarter private consumption expenditure increased by 12.5 percent year-on-year, compared to 1.7 percent in the preceding quarter.

"Private consumption expenditure showed notable growth as sentiment improved sharply along with the removal of anti-epidemic measures in both Hong Kong and the mainland," a government spokesperson said. Both import and export of goods registered declines, by 14.5 percent and 18.7 percent respectively, though the figures had improved compared to the fourth quarter of 2022.

Exports continue to face "significant challenges" as slower growth in advanced economies will diminish external demand, the spokesperson added. Officials from the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday that Hong Kong's government finances are "still in a very strong position".

Thomas Helbling, deputy director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, said the government was "gradually unwinding" fiscal support policies implemented during the pandemic.



Vanessa Hudson

Qantas says the restructuring, which saved the airline almost Aus\$1 billion, was crucial to the company's financial post-lockdown rebound. Hudson said she looked forward to meeting with the unions and "developing a constructive relationship".

Qantas had been upfront in recognizing the "customer experience was not where we wanted it" during the pandemic, she added. But the airline had invested heavily in improving its performance "and it is back where we were pre-COVID," she said. Qantas chairman Richard Goyder said the airline was "extremely well positioned", with a clear strategy, strong balance sheet and record profitability.

Qantas shares were trading 2.4 percent lower in mid-afternoon trade. — AFP



HONG KONG: A customer (right) buys vegetables at a market in Hong Kong on May 2, 2023. Hong Kong's economy grew in the first quarter of 2023, the city's leader said on May 2, ending a disastrous year-long spell in which the finance hub was effectively closed for business over pandemic restrictions. — AFP

Hong Kong entered a deepening recession in 2019 and 2020 after the former British colony was roiled by pro-democracy protests and the start of the pandemic. The city found brief respite in 2021, as its strict COVID-19 controls largely kept it virus-free, with the economy rebounding by 6.4 percent—gains later wiped out by the 2022 outbreak. — AFP

### News in Brief

#### Morgan Stanley plans more job cuts

NEW YORK: Morgan Stanley is planning to cut more jobs after reporting a drop in profit during the first three months of the year, US media reported on Monday. The bank aims to trim its headcount nearly 4 percent this quarter after ending March with more than 82,000 employees, according to the reports. The US investment and financial services giant said in a recent earnings report that its profit dropped 20 percent in the first three months of this year amid a slowdown in mergers and acquisition advising. The global financial institution at the end of last year trimmed about 2 percent of its staff or some 1,600 positions, CNBC reported at the time. The new round of cuts is expected to involve about 3,000 jobs. Word of more layoffs at Morgan Stanley came as JPMorgan Chase's takeover of First Republic resolved the fate of the last major bank caught up in recent upheaval. — AFP

#### JAL logs annual net profit

TOKYO: Japan Airlines logged Tuesday an annual net profit for the first time in three years, buoyed by soaring domestic and international demand for travel after pandemic restrictions were eased. The carrier, Japan's second-largest by market share, said net profit for the year to March was 34.4 billion yen (\$250 million) — a turnaround from a net loss of 177 billion yen in the previous financial year. "Air passenger demand recovered steadily as the shift toward balancing the COVID-19 pandemic's prevention and socioeconomic activities gained momentum," a company statement said. JAL's results were last in the black in the year to March 2020, just before Covid-19 began to cause global chaos. — AFP

#### Samsung bans ChatGPT use for staff

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics is banning employees in its mobile and appliances division from using generative AI services such as ChatGPT, the company said on Tuesday, after instances of "misuse" of the technology. Interest in artificial intelligence chatbots has soared since the Microsoft-backed ChatGPT debuted in November. ChatGPT caused a global sensation for generating essays, songs, exams and even news articles from brief prompts. Critics have fretted over how ChatGPT and its competitors collect and process data. Major financial firms, including Goldman Sachs, have banned or restricted employees' use of ChatGPT-like platforms in recent months. — AFP

## Hong Kong reports Q1 GDP growth after 2022 contraction

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's economy grew in the first quarter of 2023, the city's leader said Tuesday, ending a disastrous year-long spell in which the finance hub was effectively closed for business due to pandemic restrictions. Chief Executive John Lee said the city's quarterly gross domestic product had grown 2.7 percent on-year, reversing contractions in the previous four quarters, including a 4.1 percent drop in the last stretch of 2022.

"A series of large-scale promotional events have boosted tourism and consumption and improved the economy," Lee said at a press briefing. "As the mainland economy continues to grow at a fast pace and local aviation capacity speeds up its recovery, I believe Hong Kong's economy in the second quarter will be better than that of the first."

Hong Kong recorded one of the world's highest per capita COVID death rates as it dealt with a wave of the highly transmissible Omicron variant early last year. A series of restrictions on travel and social gatherings saw chunks of its economy shut down



## Business

# GCC countries fuel global Islamic industry growth in 2023-24: S&P

## Saudi, Kuwait drive growth in Islamic banking assets

By Sajeev K Peter

**KUWAIT:** The global Islamic finance industry continues its growth path and it is expected around 10 percent growth across the industry in 2023-2024 after expanding by a similar number in 2022 (excluding Iran) while the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, notably Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, largely fueled this performance, supported by a large, one-off acquisition in the latter, according to a report released by S&P Global Ratings on Monday.

The rating agency said in its latest report that growth was either muted or held back by local currency depreciation. At the same time, sukuk issuance continued to spur the industry's expansion despite slowing issuance volumes overall. While S&P generally expects volumes to diminish in 2023, it still believes that new issuance will exceed maturing sukuk, resulting in another positive contribution of the sukuk market to industry growth in 2023. The Islamic funds and takaful sectors are also likely to continue to expand. The agency however excludes Iran from its calculations due to the lack of disclosure by Iranian banks, the report said.

Structural weaknesses still curb the industry's broader geographical and market appeal. Progress toward greater standardization — in part supported by the digitalization of sukuk issuance for example — could enhance the industry's structural growth potential. "At the same time, the increasing focus on sustainability-related themes by core Islamic finance players will create new opportunities for the industry. We expect the contribution of sustainability-linked sukuk to continue increasing in the next 12-24 months, albeit from a low base," the agency said.

### Strong growth to continue

The Islamic finance industry continued to expand in 2022, with assets up by 9.4 percent compared with 12.2 percent in 2021, supported by growth in banking

assets and the sukuk industry, the report estimated.

GCC countries, mainly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, spurred 92 percent of growth in Islamic banking assets. In Kuwait, this was mainly due to Kuwait Finance House (KFH's) acquisition of Ahli United Bank (AUB). Over the next couple of years, S&P expects the latter to convert its conventional activities to sharia compliance in line with its acquisition plans.

In Saudi Arabia, the implementation of 'Vision 2030' and continued growth in mortgage lending supported the 2022 performance. The agency expects a material slowdown in GCC economies' real GDP growth in 2023-2024, compared with 2022, largely based on lower oil production. However, it thinks that Saudi Arabia's banking system performance will continue to underpin a large portion of the expanding Islamic finance industry. In other GCC countries, growth of about 5 percent appears plausible in the absence of new major government investment cycles.

In South-East Asia, S&P expects the Islamic banking industry to grow at around 8 percent over the next couple of years, despite an economic slowdown in the major markets of Malaysia and Indonesia.

Meanwhile, in Turkey, the depreciation of the lira has been a constraint. Pressure on the Egyptian pound is also unhelpful for the industry, although the contribution of Egypt and Turkey to the industry's banking assets generally remains modest.

### Declining sukuk issuance

S&P Ratings said sukuk issuance volumes will continue to fall in 2023, albeit at a slower pace than in 2022. We expect lower and more expensive global liquidity, greater complexity related to structuring sukuk, and reduced financing needs for issuers (due to fiscal surpluses from higher oil prices) in some core Islamic finance countries to deter the market. Corporates are likely to contribute to issuance volumes, particularly in countries where governments have announced transformation plans. This is the

developments in various economic sectors.

Al-Attar emphasized that Gulf Bank is keen to fulfill its social responsibility towards youth, especially those at high school and university levels, including recent graduates. The bank provides youth with basic concepts related to business, exploring professional interests and opportunities; in addition to developing job skills and field training. She further indicated that Gulf Bank's strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait has led to a variety of successes in 2022 — including training 8,830 high school and university students through more than 14 international training programs. Furthermore, 50 volunteers from Gulf Bank participated and assisted in various training activities offered by INJAZ Kuwait, of which include: Innovation Camp, Personal Finance, Career Success, Head Start, Job Shadow Day, and the Company Program.

It is worth noting that INJAZ Kuwait is part of the global network of Junior Achievement worldwide, a non-profit (NPO), non-governmental organization (NGO) driven by Kuwait's private sector. Through strategic partnerships with Kuwait's business and education sectors, and with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers, INJAZ delivers both Arabic and English language educational programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills, to

and the takeover of embattled Credit Suisse by its Swiss peer UBS.

### No crisis 'on horizon'

"We do not believe there is a global banking crisis on the horizon," chief executive Noel Quinn told reporters Tuesday. "We do not believe it's global systemic issues." He added that SVB UK, which HSBC acquired in March, was a "well run" business with a "good" quality loan book that was a "natural fit" for the group.

The acquisition had allowed HSBC to attract significant inflows, Quinn said.

Rising interest rates worldwide, aimed at fighting sky-high inflation, have weighed particularly heavily on the operations of midsize US banks, which have seen their financing costs surge. But larger, well-capitalized banks have used their strength to reap bumper profits and revenues as they hike interest rates on loans, while at the same time offering more attractive returns on savings. "In the US, particular turmoil has been felt lower down the food chain with the smaller and midsize banks," Richard Hunter, markets analyst at Interactive Investor, told AFP. "By contrast, the larger banks on both sides of the pond have the financial strength to deal with such turmoil, which the smaller banks generally do not."

### 'Positively exposed' to rates

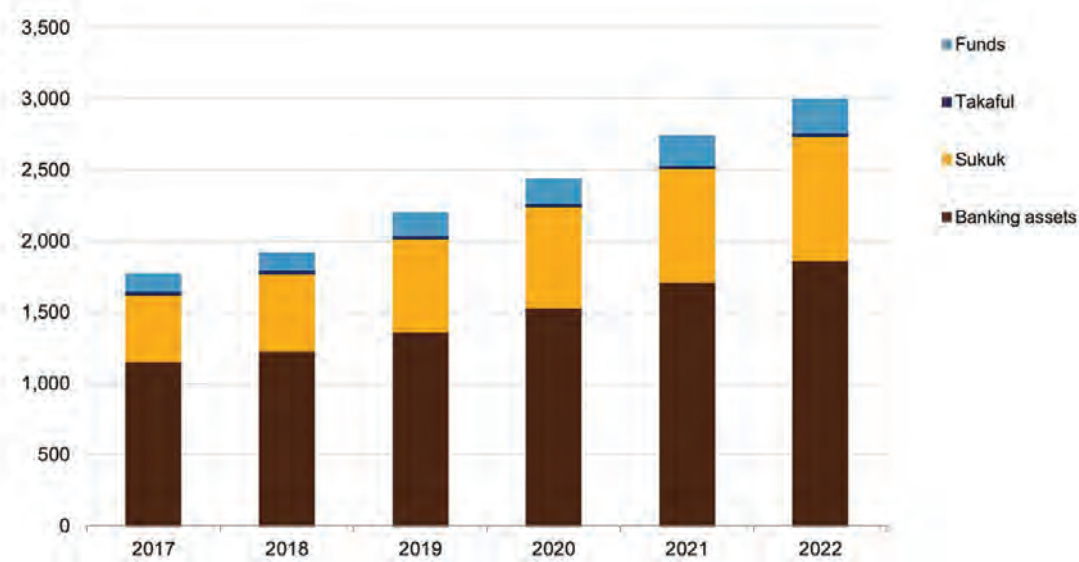
HSBC said it was "positively exposed to rising in-

crease will be. Following Russia's assault on Ukraine last year, energy prices soared and helped push consumer prices higher across the single currency area, hitting a peak of 10.6 percent in October.

Inflation later fell thanks to a slowdown in the rate of energy price rises, but it still remains well above the ECB's two-percent target. Food and drink prices keep climbing, putting pressure on European households, but the pace of the increase slowed to 13.6 percent in April after 15.5 percent in March, Eurostat said. Energy prices increased 2.5 percent after falling 0.9 percent in March.

"The unexpected increase is the result of a bounce back in energy price inflation, after the strong negative base effect in March, and slightly higher service price inflation," ING economist Carsten Brzeski said in a note. The eurozone's core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, fell slightly to 5.6 percent in March from 5.7 percent a month earlier. "We expect headline inflation to continue falling,

### Crossing the \$3 trillion mark



Source: Central Banks, CIBAFI, Eikon, S&P Global Ratings, S&P Global Market Intelligence.

case in Saudi Arabia, where the banking system will be limited in its capacity to finance multiple projects related to Vision 2030 implementation. Issuers with high financing needs, such as those in Egypt and Turkey, are also likely to tap the sukuk market as part of their strategy to mobilize all available resources. "For example, Egypt has established a \$5 billion sukuk program and issued its first sukuk in early 2023 for a total of \$1.5 billion. We understand that this attracted significant investor interest, with more than \$6 billion demand and a 59 percent allocation to investors from the Middle East and North Africa," S&P stated.

### Takaful and fund industries

Despite their small contribution to the industry, S&P expects the takaful and fund sectors to continue to grow. The agency expects takaful to expand at an annual rate of around 10 percent, supported by continued nominal GDP growth, the expansion of infrastructure investment and medical insurance covers, and some inflation-related tariff adjustments. Fund growth will hinge on the performance of the capital markets, given its structure — around one-quarter equity funds and another 60 percent money market or sukuk funds. Overall, a growth rate of about 10 percent is achievable for the industry over the next two years.

## INJAZ Kuwait honors Gulf Bank

**KUWAIT:** INJAZ Kuwait recently honored Gulf Bank, among a number of institutions and companies sponsoring its activities, for supporting and training young people and providing them with the skills required by the labor market. Additionally, the Bank is constantly making efforts in preparing a new generation of young entrepreneurs.

Gulf Bank has renewed its 17-year strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, to embark on yet another year of supporting Kuwaiti youth in 2023. This is part of the Bank's continuous efforts to support Kuwaiti youth, who represent one of the main pillars of the Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, and Kuwait Vision 2035. On this occasion, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, Maysoun Al-Attar, expressed her pride in the successful partnership with INJAZ Kuwait for the last 17 years, as they work together to support the next generation of young entrepreneurs and leaders, amidst the rapid

build successful careers.

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

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



Maysoun Al-Attar

## Eurozone banks tighten lending criteria sharply

**FRANKFURT:** Eurozone banks tightened lending criteria in the first quarter at their fastest pace since the 2011 sovereign debt crisis, while demand for loans fell heavily, according to a European Central Bank survey released Tuesday.

The results highlight the impact of aggressive monetary tightening combined with recent banking sector turmoil, and could encourage the ECB to opt for a smaller interest rate increase on Thursday.

Banks' lending criteria were toughened further for loans to both firms and households, reflecting the "ongoing pass-through of higher market rates to lending rates," the survey found.

A net 27 percent of banks reported a tightening of credit standards for loans to companies, meaning it is harder for the enterprises to borrow. Meanwhile banks reported that demand for loans from firms fell heavily, with the decrease "the strongest since the global financial crisis", with higher borrowing costs reported as the main driver, the ECB said.

Demand for housing loans also declined, while there was a smaller decrease when it came to consumer credit and other lending to households, it said. Banks also reported that access to funding deteriorated, possibly due in part to the banking sector upheaval in March.

The collapse of three regional US lenders and the enforced takeover of Credit Suisse by rival UBS rocked markets and triggered fears of broader problems in the banking sector.

US authorities announced Monday that another bank, First Republic Bank, had collapsed, and sold to JPMorgan Chase, adding to investor uncertainty. A separate ECB survey also showed that growth of credit to the private sector — households and businesses — continued to slow, decreasing to 3.8 percent in March. The ECB has hiked rates by 3.5 percentage points since July last year as it seeks to rein in soaring inflation.

The bank is expected to lift borrowing costs at its next meeting Thursday, with an increase of either 25 or 50 basis points seen as possibilities. But while the ECB surveys might encourage the central bank to opt for a smaller increase, data released Tuesday showed that eurozone inflation remains stubborn, rising to seven percent in April. — AFP

## HSBC profit rockets on rising interest rates

**LONDON:** Global banking giant HSBC reported Tuesday a surge in quarterly net profit, boosted by rising interest rates and its rescue of the UK arm of failed US lender Silicon Valley Bank.

Profit after tax almost quadrupled to \$10.3 billion in the three months to March from a year earlier, UK-headquartered HSBC said, while also pouring cold water on talk of a global industry crisis. The bank also benefitted from its reversal of a \$2.1 billion writedown that had been linked to the planned sale of its French consumer banking activities to the US fund Cerberus.

That deal is now thought to be at risk of falling through. HSBC shares rallied 5.5 percent in midday London deals on Tuesday, as the bank announced a stock buy-back worth up to \$2 billion and issued a bright outlook.

The optimism came despite the move by US regulators on Monday to seize the lender First Republic and orchestrate its sale to JPMorgan Chase.

It was the latest government intervention after the recent collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB)

## Eurozone inflation sees surprise rise after 5-month fall

**BRUSSELS:** Annual inflation in the eurozone rose to seven percent in April, the EU's statistics agency said Tuesday, the first increase after five consecutive months of declines. Consumer prices edged up from 6.9 percent in March, which could further encourage the European Central Bank (ECB) to raise interest rates on Thursday. Analysts for FactSet and Bloomberg had predicted the rate would remain stable. The ECB has hiked rates repeatedly since July last year to rein in red-hot inflation, and analysts expect the Frankfurt-based institution to raise them again, though they are divided on how big the in-



terest rates" and forecast \$34 billion in net interest income this year. The bank also announced its first quarterly dividend since 2019 alongside the hefty share buy-back. It comes after group revenue leapt 64 percent to more than \$20 billion in the first quarter, while pre-tax profits more than tripled to almost \$13 billion.

Pressure has been mounting on HSBC since its largest shareholder, the Chinese insurer Ping An, called for the bank to break up its business as part of a "strategic restructuring" to unlock shareholder value. The bank has urged shareholders to vote down the proposal at its annual general meeting in the central English city of Birmingham on Friday. HSBC axed 35,000 jobs during the Covid-19 pandemic to focus on its most profitable areas in Asia and the Middle East. — AFP

while core inflation will remain sticky," Brzeski said.

### Smaller rate hikes?

Among the 20 countries that use the euro, Luxembourg had the lowest inflation rate, at 2.7 percent in April, Eurostat said. The data showed that inflation in Germany, the EU's biggest economy, slipped to 7.6 percent in April from 7.8 percent a month earlier. But in France, consumer prices rose 6.9 percent last month after 6.7 percent in March, Eurostat said.

Many economists say the ECB will opt for a rate increase of 50 basis points on Thursday — as it did at its previous three meetings — while others think it will downshift to 25 basis points. "Sticky inflation data clearly stresses the need to continue hiking but with last week's weaker-than-expected GDP growth report and today's weak loan growth and loan demand data, the case for slowing down the pace and size of rate hikes has become stronger," said ING's Brzeski, who expects a 25-basis-point increase. — AFP



BRUSSELS: Annual inflation in the eurozone rose to seven percent in April, the EU's statistics agency said Tuesday.



# Stars shine bright in New York as Met Gala honors Lagerfeld



Brazilian model Gisele Bundchen arrives for the 2023 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on May 1, 2023, in New York. — AFP photos



US actress Glenn Close

Artists from the worlds of fashion, film, politics and sports celebrated the late king of couture, Karl Lagerfeld, at the annual Met Gala on Monday, bringing their top style game to New York, oozing glamour - and delivering serious baby news. Pop superstar Rihanna showed up late as usual but shut down the red carpet all the same, tennis legend Serena Williams and supermodel Karlie Kloss debuted their baby bumps with flair - and two celebs dressed up as Lagerfeld's cat. Oscar winners Nicole Kidman and Michelle Yeoh, singers Cardi B and Bad Bunny, WNBA superstar Brittney



US model Karlie Kloss



US actor Jeremy Pope



Brazilian singer Anitta



US actor Jared Leto



US-Australian actress Nicole Kidman

Griner and supermodels Gisele Bundchen and Kate Moss were also among the hundreds of invitees at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The guest list is tightly curated by Anna Wintour, the editor-in-chief of Vogue who took over the charity gala in the 1990s and transformed it into one of the world's buzziest fetes.

This year, the extravaganza - which always falls on the first Monday of May, save for a pandemic-era schedule change - celebrates Lagerfeld, and ushers in the opening of a Costume Institute exhibition dedicated to the iconic designer, who died in 2019.

"Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty" pays homage to his decades in the industry at the helm of Chanel, Fendi, Chloe and his own line, all the while molding the future of fashion. And the celebs in attendance understood the style assignment, most of them sporting vintage looks from the elegant German-born designer - or silhouettes that reflected his aesthetic. Rihanna was cloaked in white Valentino, with airy camellias - the flower synonymous with Chanel - adorning the hood of her cape. Her white fingerless gloves mirrored those favored by Lagerfeld. Underneath? A sexy fitted white gown with spaghetti straps. The singer, who is pregnant with her second child, told reporters on the red carpet she was "feeling good" as she entered the venue hours later than most guests.

"It feels amazing. I'm happy to be a dad," said her partner, rapper ASAP Rocky, when asked about the impending arrival of their new child.

Williams timed the announcement of her second pregnancy with the event, writing on Instagram: "Was so excited when Anna Wintour invited the 3 of us to the Met Gala" - meaning her, her husband Alexis Ohanian and their new child.



Barbadian singer Rihanna and her partner ASAP Rocky



English singer-songwriter Dua Lipa



Spanish actress Penelope Cruz



Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh





British model Cara Delevingne

**Diamonds and cats**

Kidman sported a blush Chanel gown that cascaded to the floor in feathers - a dress she first wore in an ad for the house's iconic No. 5 perfume nearly 20 years ago. "I'm so glad I'm still able to wear it," she told AFP on the red carpet. Singer Dua Lipa wore a cream-colored Chanel bridal gown from the 1990s, accented with black stitches and accessorized with



Cardi B

a stunning Tiffany diamond necklace she said was taken from the jeweler's vault. Actress Olivia Wilde reached into another archive, wearing a Chloe "violin" gown designed by Lagerfeld in the 1980s. Many attendees wore shades of black, white and cream, though a few pops of color emerged (and a bit of silver body paint on Lil Nas X). And two guests showed up as Lagerfeld's beloved cat Choupette - singer Doja Cat in full makeup, and actor Jared Leto in a full furry costume.

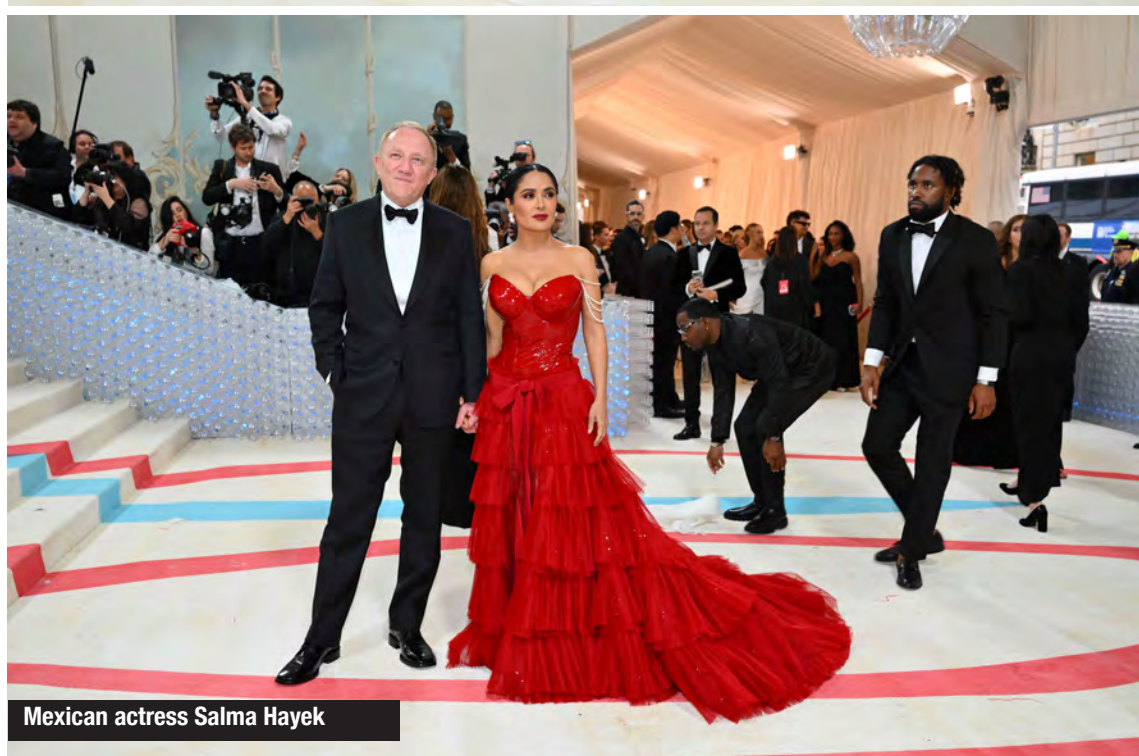
**'Immense talent'**

Of course, Lagerfeld is not controversy-proof - despite his own public struggle with his weight, he criticized curvy women. And late in life, he derided the #MeToo movement and those who came forward with claims of sexual misconduct. "The show is really focusing on Karl the designer, his works rather than his words," said Costume Institute head curator Andrew Bolton. "We haven't included any of his more controversial or offensive comments." Carla Bruni, a former model and once the first lady of France, told AFP before the event that she remembered Lagerfeld for his "immense talent," "creative power" and "bewitching charm."

This year, Wintour invited actresses Penelope Cruz and Michaela Coel, retired tennis legend Roger Federer and Dua Lipa to co-chair the gala. The guest list was shrouded in secrecy until the main event, but some 400 people are reportedly expected. The ball is invitation-only, with single tickets costing \$50,000 and tables starting at \$300,000. — AFP



US actress Maya Hawke



Mexican actress Salma Hayek



English model Kate Moss



US designer Jeremy Scott and US model/actress Devon Aoki



French designer Olivier Rousteing (right) and guest



Italian-French singer Carla Bruni



English model Naomi Campbell



## Sports

# Breccel forecasts Europe's snooker boom after Championship triumph

## Selby becomes the first player to make maximum 147 break

## News in Brief



Kuwaiti shooter Abdullah Malallah wins silver medal

### Kuwait wins silver medals

**TUNIS:** The Kuwaiti team won three silver medals in the 12th Arab Archery Tournament hosted by the Tunisian island of Djerba. The Kuwaiti shooter Abdullah Malallah won a silver medal in the category: Individual men, composite bow, while the Kuwaiti woman athlete, Hanan Al-Mayas, came second in the category: Individual women. In the mixed games, Malallah and Al-Mayas bagged the silver one. The four-day tournament concluded on Sunday. The games involved teams from Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE, Algeria and the host country, Tunisia. —KUNA

### Girona blank Sevilla 2-0

**SEVILLE:** Girona beat Sevilla 2-0 at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan in La Liga on Monday to give themselves hope of European football next season. Juanpe sent the visitors in front in the first half and Taty Castellanos doubled their lead early in the second to inflict Sevilla's first defeat in the eight games since Jose Luis Mendilibar took over in March. The Andalusian side are in the Europa League semi-finals where they take on Juventus, are 11th in La Liga, 10 points above the relegation zone. Girona, eighth, have 44 points, and are five behind Real Betis in sixth, a Europa Conference League qualifying spot. Castellanos continued his good form after hitting four against Real Madrid last week at Montilivi as Girona routed the champions 4-2 — AFP

### Long jump champion dies

**LOS ANGELES:** Ralph Boston, the 1960 Olympic long jump champion who broke the world record several times, has died aged 83, USA Track and Field said. Boston broke Jesse Owens' remarkable stranglehold on the world record when he leaped 8.21m in 1960 in Walnut, California. Three weeks later at the Rome Olympics, Boston, then 21, won gold with 8.12m, just a centimeter further than his US teammate Bo Roberson, breaking Owens' Olympic record that dated back to the 1936 Berlin Games. He also won the silver medal behind Britain's Lynn Davies at the 1964 Tokyo Games before taking bronze behind the remarkable 8.90m world record jump of Bob Beamon at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. USA Track and Field said Boston died on Sunday after suffering a stroke. — AFP

### Grosso's Frosinone promoted

**MILAN:** Frosinone reached Serie A on Monday after the team led by Italy's 2006 World Cup hero Fabio Grosso beat Reggina 3-1 to obtain promotion with three matches to play. The win at the Stadio Benito Sturpe put Serie B leaders Frosinone 10 points clear of third-placed Bari and ensured their third spell in Italy's top flight. It came thanks to goals from Gennaro Borelli, Italy forward Lorenzo Insigne's younger brother Roberto and Giuseppe Caso. Coach Grosso is most famous in Italy as a key figure in the Azzurri's triumph in Germany 17 years ago. — AFP

### Leeds announce Orta's exit

**LONDON:** Relegation-threatened Leeds have parted company with director of football Victor Orta by mutual consent, the Premier League club announced on Tuesday. The Spaniard took up the post at Elland Road in 2017 and helped the team make their long-awaited return to the Premier League three years later. But Leeds have endured a tough season and are outside the bottom three on goal difference alone, with just four games to play. "I am deeply saddened by the way that this chapter closes as Victor has been responsible for some of the best moments of my time as owner of Leeds United and I thank him and his people for all they have done in the past six years," said Leeds owner Andrea Radrizzani. "However, it is clear that it is time to change direction and therefore we have agreed that Victor will leave the club. "I understand supporters are hurt and upset, but now is a time for unity. — AFP

**LONDON:** Belgium's Luca Breccel said European snooker would "explode" after he became the first player from the continental mainland to be crowned world champion. Breccel withstood a fightback from four-time champion Mark Selby to triumph 18-15 at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre on Monday. Victory also meant Breccel joined Canadian Cliff Thorburn (1980), the Republic of Ireland's Ken Doherty (1997) and Australian Neil Robertson (2010) as only the fourth modern-era world champion from outside the United Kingdom.

Having overturned huge deficits to defeat both seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan and Si Jiahui in the quarter and semi-final rounds respectively, Breccel held his nerve after Selby had eroded his lead to just one frame. The 28-year-old Breccel, an outstanding junior talent but a player who had never won a match at the World Championship before this year's edition, started Monday's concluding session 15-10 up.

Selby, however, won five of the next six frames as he closed to just 16-15 behind. But the Englishman then missed a black off his spot and Breccel capitalized to move within a frame of victory at 17-15. Breccel then demonstrated excellent cue-ball control around the black in a superb match-winning break of 112. "It's amazing, I can't see any more, I don't know why," Breccel told the BBC. "So tough, he (Selby) is the worst opponent to have in a final, he just keeps coming back, he's such a fighter, when it was 16-15 I didn't fancy winning at all, I was missing balls by a mile but then I made a good break."

## Sabalenka ends Andreeva adventure, books Open quarters

**MADRID:** World number two Aryna Sabalenka made light work of 16-year-old Mirra Andreeva on Monday with a 6-3, 6-1 win to reach the Madrid Open quarter-finals. Iga Swiatek, top of the world rankings, followed her into the last eight with a hard-fought three set win over Ekaterina Alexandrova, 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3. In the men's tournament world number three Daniil Medvedev beat his friend and Russian compatriot Alexander Shevchenko, while Frances Tiafoe and Cameron Norrie crashed out against underdogs. Russian youngster Andreeva, a wildcard, became only the third 15-year-old to win a WTA 1000 main draw match when she beat 2021 US Open finalist Leylah Fernandez last week.

She went on to beat two top 20 players in Beatriz Haddad Maia and, on her 16th birthday, Magda Linette, but overcoming 2021 Madrid winner Sabalenka was a bridge too far. "Of course I'm happy with the win. I wish I would have played at Madrid when I was 16," said Sabalenka. "I think my first few games I was trying to adjust for her rhythm and her

## Fiery Kohli fined again after IPL post-match row

**NEW DELHI:** Indian cricket star Virat Kohli was fined on Tuesday for the second time in this IPL season after a post-match altercation with former national team-mate Gautam Gambhir. Both were docked their entire match fee, the Indian Premier League said, while Naveen-ul-Haq was fined 50 percent of his for breaching the league's code of conduct.

Kohli and Afghan bowler Naveen were seen having sharp words on the field during a tense match between Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore and Lucknow Super Giants on Monday. Kohli, who has often run into trouble with his aggressive approach, had to be restrained by opposition batsman Amit Mishra during the match. Bangalore eventually won by 18 runs.

Afterwards, Lucknow's Kyle Mayers had to be led away from an exchange with Kohli before other players tried unsuccessfully to stop a visibly furious

## Urawa looking to raise roof in final showdown

**TOKYO:** Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds are looking to "harness the power" of their boisterous fans when they host Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in Saturday's Asian Champions League final second leg. The two sides drew 1-1 in last week's first leg in Riyadh, with defending champions Al Hilal taking a 13th-minute lead through Salem Al Dawsari before Shinzo Koroki leveled for Urawa early in the second half. Away goals still count as a tie-breaker in Asia's premier club competition, and close to 60,000 fans will be at Saitama Stadium, north of Tokyo, for the return leg.

Goalkeeper Shusaku Nishikawa was part of the Urawa team that beat Al Hilal to lift the title in 2017 and he believes the club's fans can spur them on to glory again. "Make no mistake, the atmosphere at home will be fantastic and it will allow us to play more than we did in the first leg," he told reporters on Tuesday. "It's not just the players on the pitch - the players coming off the bench and those not playing are also doing a great job. "We want to harness the power of playing at home," the 36-year-old added.

Al Hilal will be without Al Dawsari after the star winger picked up a late red card for kicking out at midfielder Ken Iwao in the first leg. The two teams are

### 'Crazy week'

Asked what his win would mean for European snooker, Breccel replied: "It's going to explode, I was so nervous because I wanted it to happen for Belgium and Europe and now I can't wait to see what it brings, I'm so happy I did it." Something of a throwback, the crowd-pleasing Breccel's path to the final was notable for his unconventional approach to match preparation. "It's been a crazy week, no practice just partying, it shouldn't be legal!", he said.

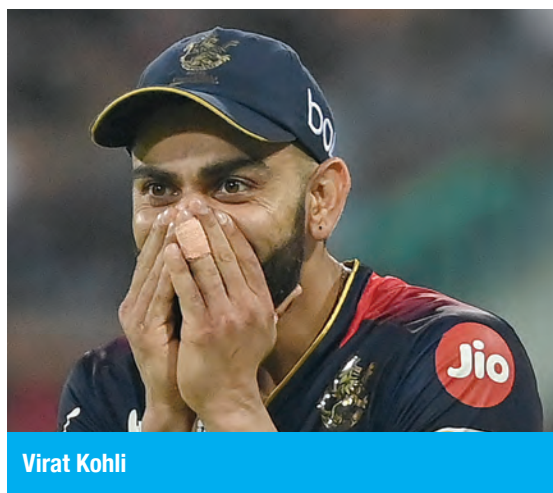
Selby, who on Sunday became the first player to make a maximum 147 break in a World Championship final, paid tribute to the new champion by saying: "Congratulations to Luca, he's a great talent and a great lad, a great family. Enjoy the year, you deserve it mate, you played fantastic. "It was great to make a 147 at the Crucible, never thought I would do it in a final, the atmosphere was amazing and something I will remember for rest of my life." The 39-year-old Englishman added: "But it's not about me today, Luca played fantastic." Breccel had previously seen his early 6-2 advantage on Sunday reduced to a slender overnight lead of 9-8.

But Breccel made three hundreds in four frames during a blistering start to Monday's play to go 13-8 up before heading into the concluding session five frames in front. Breccel had already proved himself a comeback king on his way to the final. He won seven straight frames to beat seven-time world champion O'Sullivan, with Breccel then reeling off 11

game, and then I kept trying to play my game, be aggressive and fight for every point." The Australian Open champion will face Egyptian Mayar Sherif in the next round after she beat Elise Mertens 6-4, 0-6, 6-4 earlier Monday.

Sherif, 26, is the first Egyptian to reach a WTA 1000 quarter-final. Two-time French Open winner Swiatek recovered from an early break by world number 17 Alexandrova to take the first set in what proved a trickier clash than it seemed on paper. The Pole surrendered a 5-2 lead in the second and failed to convert a match point on the way to a tie-break, in which Alexandrova hit three aces to force a third set. Swiatek broke for 2-1 and held on to that advantage before breaking to love to clinch victory in two hours and 27 minutes, finishing at past 1:00 am Tuesday morning.

"(Playing so late) wasn't easy for sure," said Swiatek. "It's tough, you have to sleep in the middle of the day to be fresh in the evening." Swiatek will face Croatian Petra Martic, who upset Czech player Barbora Krejickova 6-3, 7-6 (7/1). Third seed Jessica Pegula beat Italy's Martina Trevisan 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 and will face Veronika Kudermetova, who beat Daria Kasatkina in a tight all-Russian battle 7-5, 1-6, 7-2 (7/2). Maria Sakkari beat home favorite Paula Badosa 6-4, 6-4 to set up a quarter-final clash with Romanian Irina-Camelia Begu.



Virat Kohli

Gambhir, Lucknow's team mentor, from confronting him. Kohli took to social media on Tuesday with a cryptic Instagram post quoting a famed Roman emperor and philosopher: "Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth. - Marcus Aurelius." Gambhir and Kohli, who played together when India won the 2011 World Cup, had a shouting match before Bangalore skipper Faf du Plessis intervened. — AFP

meeting in the final for the third time in six years - Urawa came out on top in 2017 but Al Hilal got revenge two years later. The winter World Cup in Qatar and travel complications arising from the pandemic mean the final is taking place almost nine months after Urawa won through from their semi-final.

Nishikawa said he had "goosebumps" thinking about the atmosphere that awaits Saturday's game but warned his team-mates not to get carried away by the occasion. "Rather than thinking about anything special, the challenge is to prepare for the game as normal," he said. Al Hilal will pose Urawa a threat even without Al Dawsari, with former Manchester United striker Odion Ighalo set to play up front alongside ex-Porto man Moussa Marega.

Ighalo scored four goals in Al Hilal's 7-0 semi-final thrashing of Qatar's Al Duhail, and Urawa midfielder Atsuki Ito knows the Nigerian is capable of pouncing again in the final. "If we prepare for the game thinking we're going to do it because we got a 1-1 draw and we get too far ahead of ourselves, we'll get burnt," he said. "Al Hilal are a strong team, so we need to be careful and make sure we don't allow that kind of atmosphere."

Ito was born in Urawa's home city of Saitama and remembers the club's previous two Champions League triumphs, in 2007 and 2017. He said the competition is "special" for a club known for having the biggest support in Japan. "I've been watching it since I was a little kid and there's a special atmosphere for Champions League games," said the 24-year-old. "I want to win the title and celebrate with all the fans." — AFP



SHEFFIELD: World champion Belgium's Luca Breccel poses with the trophy during a press conference after winning against England's Mark Selby during their World Championship Snooker final match at The Crucible in Sheffield on May 1, 2023. — AFP

in a row from 14-5 down to defeat China's Si Jiahui. All had looked good for Breccel as his impressive potting continued with a break of 67 in the session opener that moved him to within two frames of victory at 16-10. — AFP



MADRID: Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka serves to Russia's Mirra Andreeva during their 2023 WTA Tour Madrid Open tennis tournament singles match at the Caja Magica in Madrid. — AFP

In the men's competition second seed Medvedev, 27, edged out his friend Shevchenko 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 to reach the fourth round. He will face Aslan Karatsev, who beat Alex de Minaur 6-3, 4-6, 6-4. "When you win 7-5 in the third, it's always mentally a brutal match, so I'm happy that I managed to win it," said 2021 US Open winner Medvedev. Argentine player Pedro Cachin, ranked 67th, took out world number 11 Tiafoe with a 6-1, 7-6 (7/2) victory and will face lucky loser Jan-Lennard Struff in the next round. — AFP

## Bangalore defend 126 against Lucknow in IPL

**LUCKNOW:** Royal Challengers Bangalore's bowlers started to secure an 18-run victory against Lucknow Super Giants in a low-scoring Indian Premier League match on Monday. Skipper Faf du Plessis top-scored with 44 to guide Bangalore to 126-9, a total their bowlers defended by bowling out Lucknow for 108 on a tough batting pitch. Bangalore pace spearhead Mohammed Siraj dismissed Kyle Mayers for a duck from the second ball of the chase and Lucknow soon slipped to 38-5 with Virat Kohli taking two good catches.

Lucknow's batsmen seemed to be in a hurry to get the runs as Nicholas Pooran, on nine, and Marcus Stoinis, on 13, fell to Kam Sharma's leg-spin and the innings witnessed two run outs. Lucknow suffered an early blow when skipper KL Rahul seemed to hurt his thigh while fielding before limping off and then came into bat last. Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood returned figures of 2-15 from his three overs in his first IPL appearance this season.

Bangalore, still searching for their first IPL title, moved up a place to fifth in the 10-team table with five wins in nine matches. Lucknow dropped to third. Du Plessis, who returned to captain the side after he played as a batsman in the previous few matches led by Kohli, set up victory for Bangalore with a knock that stood out in an otherwise disappointing show by the star-studded line-up. Du Plessis and Kohli put on 62 runs for the first wicket despite a shaky start but none of the other batsmen could survive the test of Lucknow bowlers.

Spinners Ravi Bishnoi and Amit Mishra took two wickets each and Afghanistan fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq returned figures of 3-30. Bishnoi took down Kohli, stumped for 31, and Glenn Maxwell, lbw for four, with his leg-spin and soon Mishra and Naveen joined forces in an innings which was interrupted by a brief spell of rain. Du Plessis, who reclaimed the top spot in the batting charts with 466 runs after overtaking Yashasvi Jaiswal (428) of Rajasthan Royals, attempted to hold the innings but fell to Mishra — AFP



Sports

# Blackburn's play-off hopes hang by a thread after Luton 1-1 draw

## 4th-placed Middlesbrough secure play-off berth

LONDON: Blackburn's hopes of qualifying for the Championship play-offs are no longer solely in their own hands following a 1-1 draw at home to Luton on Monday. Hayden Carter headed in his first Rovers goal four minutes from time at Ewood Park and the hosts almost snatched a win late on when Sammie Szmodics volleyed against the crossbar. Wales international Tom Lockyer had given third-placed Luton, already in the play-offs, the lead from Carlton Morris' cross shortly after half-time.

Blackburn must now beat Millwall in their final game of the regular season to have a chance of a top-six finish, but they would still fall short if either West Brom or Sunderland won as well. Earlier, Rotherham guaranteed their Championship survival

with a 1-0 win over 10-man Middlesbrough. The Millers had been relegated in each of their previous three second-tier campaigns. But Hakeem Odoffin's second-half winner ensured their safety with one game to spare.

Rotherham cannot be caught by third-bottom Reading who, following their six-point deduction, currently hold the final relegation spot. The Royals can now only leapfrog Huddersfield, who are three points above them, have a game in hand and a better goal difference. Fourth-placed Middlesbrough have already secured a play-off berth but were hoping to pass Luton. Instead, Michael Carrick's team lost Anfernee Dijksteel to a straight red card just before half-time and could find no way back once Odoffin netted three minutes into the second half. — AFP



Hayden Carter of Blackburn Rovers

## Napoli to shake off title blow with one more point to go

NAPLES: Naples woke up on Monday still digesting the disappointment of Napoli not sealing their first Serie A title in over three decades, but knowing glory is just a few more days away. Everything was set up for Napoli to win their third Scudetto a record-breaking six matches before the end of the season on Sunday when their closest challengers Lazio collapsed late on at Inter Milan, leaving Luciano Spalletti's side needing a win over Salernitana to seal the deal.

And when Mathias Olivera headed Napoli into the lead the city exploded in celebration, with blue smoke engulfing the Stadio Maradona and fireworks being let off outside with the rapidity of machine gun fire. However all that joy had to be bottled back up, ready to be unleashed at Udinese on Thursday, after Boulaye Dia's superb equalizer six minutes from the end spoiled the party and pushed Salernitana further towards safety.

Fans were not too downhearted however, hardcore supporters marching back from the Stadio Maradona into central Napoli with flares lit and in fine voice, the festivities in the city only dampened by a Spring downpour later in the evening. "From my point of view we've just postponed the party, I'm very comfortable with where we are in the league," Spalletti told

DAZN with a wry smile. "All it's doing is lengthening the party."

To say that Napoli are close to their goal of emulating the 1987 and 1990 triumphs led by Diego Maradona would be an understatement. Spalletti's team, who are at Udinese on Thursday, need just one more point from their final matches to be crowned champions. And even though results have dipped, and the ferocious attacking play which bewitched Europe has become more stilted, since the March international break it is borderline impossible that Naples does not get its long-awaited party.

### Title glory close

A 17-point lead on Lazio means Napoli could even win the league without kicking another ball, as the capital city club must beat Sassuolo on Wednesday in order to mathematically stay in the fight. But in reality the Scudetto has been a near-certainty for months, as Italy's traditional big three have failed to keep up with the runaway leaders' blistering form in the run up to and aftermath of the World Cup.

Between the start of September and end of February Napoli won 19 of 20 league matches, a run which left soon-to-be-dethroned champions AC Milan, Inter Milan and Juventus trailing way off in the distance. That trio are now involved in a six-team battle for the three remaining available Champions League positions, with six points separating Lazio from seventh-placed Atalanta. Inter currently hold the final spot in fourth ahead of their trip to survival-seeking Verona on Wednesday, but only lead Milan and Roma on goal difference with potentially season-defining fixtures coming up over the next fortnight.

Saturday is a repeat of this weekend's clash between the cities of Rome and Milan as Roma host



NAPLES: Napoli's Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen reacts at the end of the Italian Serie A football match between Napoli and Salernitana at the Diego-Maradona stadium in Naples. — AFP

Inter and Lazio travel to the San Siro for the second time in seven days, while Atalanta host third-placed Juve who have collected just one point from their last four league fixtures. The two Milan clubs then have to prepare for the biggest derby for a generation in the first leg of their blockbuster Champions League semi-final.

Roma, who drew 1-1 with Milan on Saturday despite Tammy Abraham opening the scoring in the 94th minute, also have their Europa League last four clash with Bayer Leverkusen next week with a raft of injuries complicating their run-in. Jose Mourinho's Roma travel to Monza on Wednesday without defenders Rick Karsdorp, Chris Smalling, Diego Llorente and Marash Kumbulla, while Netherlands midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum and Andrea Belotti are also sidelined and Nemanja Matic is suspended. — AFP

## Wolfsburg face Barca in Women's Champions League final

LONDON: Wolfsburg will play Barcelona in the Women's Champions League final after Pauline Bremer's last-gasp winner sealed a dramatic victory against Arsenal on Monday. The Germans won 3-2 in the semi-final second leg at the Emirates Stadium as Bremer's goal in the closing seconds of extra time sealed a 5-4 aggregate success. Stina Blackstenius put Arsenal ahead, with Jill Roord and Alexandra Popp netting for Wolfsburg before Jennifer Beattie leveled for the Gunners, setting the stage for Bremer's decisive goal.

Barcelona, who beat Chelsea in the other semi-final, lie in wait for Wolfsburg in the final at Eindhoven's PSV Stadium on June 3. Wolfsburg, who beat Arsenal in last season's quarter-finals,

are back in the final for the first time since losing the showpiece to Lyon in 2020. "It was a tough game. I thought it was going to go to penalties but we won," Roord said.

"Credit to Arsenal, they've been through a lot as a team but they made it super hard. At the end they could have won, we could have won. We were the lucky ones." Arsenal are the only Women's Super League club to have won the Women's Champions League, lifting the trophy in 2007. But their hopes of another crack at the trophy were dashed in the most painful fashion. The Gunners had battled back to draw the first leg 2-2 in Germany despite trailing by two goals after just 24 minutes.

Yet Jonas Eidevall's side were ravaged by injuries to Beth Mead, Vivianne Miedema, Leah Williamson, Caitlin Foord and Kim Little and the attrition eventually took its toll. "It's tough. No doubt about it, because it was a game of such fine margins and they're not on our side tonight," Eidevall said. "But I also choose to look at it that we came to the Champions League semi-final with all the injuries we have, with all the challenges we

have. That is actually incredible."

In front of a sold-out Emirates crowd of more than 60,000 - a record attendance for a women's club match in England - Arsenal took the lead in the 11th minute. Blackstenius forced the mistake from Kathrin Hendrich with her tenacious pressing and applied the finishing touch after rounding the keeper. Manuela Zinsberger preserved Arsenal's advantage when she palmed away a fierce long-range strike from Lynn Wilms.

But Wolfsburg had the momentum and Roord equalized in the 41st minute, curling into the far corner from the edge of the area after Popp headed down a free-kick. Wolfsburg's pressure paid off again as Popp put them ahead in the 58th minute. Felicitas Rauch's corner was met by a glancing header from the Wolfsburg captain that flashed past Zinsberger. Beattie forced extra time when she equalized in the 75th minute with a clinical header from Wubben-Moy's cross. But with a penalty shoot-out just seconds away, Wolfsburg booked their final berth as Jule Brand's cross was turned in by Bremer. — AFP

### Today's matches

English Premier League		
Liverpool v Fulham	22:00	beIN Sports HD 2 English beIN Sports Connect
Manchester City v West Ham	22:00	beIN Sports 2 HD Premium beIN Sports Connect beIN Sports 1 HD Premium
Spanish League		
Valencia v Villarreal	20:30	beIN Sports HD 1 beIN Sports HD 3 English beIN Sports 1 FR beIN Sports Connect
Atletico de Madrid v Cadiz	23:00	beIN Sports HD 1 beIN Sports HD 3 English beIN Sports 1 FR beIN Sports Connect
Super Sport LaLiga HD		
Getafe v Celta de Vigo	23:00	beIN Sports HD 3 beIN Sports Fr 8 HD max beIN Sports Connect
Italian League Serie A		
Atalanta v Spezia	19:00	Sky Sport Calcio 1 AD SPORTS Premium 2
Juventus v Lecce	19:00	AD SPORTS Premium 1
Salernitana v Fiorentina	19:00	beIN Sports Fr 4 HD max
Sampdoria v Torino	19:00	beIN Sports Fr 5 HD max
Hellas Verona v Inter Milan	22:00	beIN Sports Fr 5 HD max AD SPORTS Premium 2
Lazio v Sassuolo	22:00	beIN Sports Fr 4 HD max
AC Milan v Cremonese	22:00	beIN Sports 2 FR AD SPORTS Premium 1
Monza v AS Roma	22:00	SuperSport Variety 2
French League		
Stade brestois v Nantes	22:00	beIN Sports HD 2 beIN Sports Connect

## Women's World Cup: FIFA threatening TV blackout in Europe

GENEVA: FIFA president Gianni Infantino has threatened a television blackout of this year's Women's World Cup in major European countries unless broadcasters improve their offers for rights. Infantino in October criticized broadcasters who he said had offered "100 times less" to screen the Women's World Cup compared to the men's tournament. He went on the attack again on Monday, less than three months before the start of the tournament in Australia and New Zealand, calling for a "fair price" for media rights.

FIFA is yet to sell rights for the tournament to some major markets, football's governing body said in a statement. "The offers from broadcasters, mainly in the 'Big Five' European countries, are still very disappointing," he said at the World Trade Organization in Geneva, stressing that the revenue will go back into women's football to help grow the game. Infantino accused broadcasters of offering between \$1 million and \$10 million to show the Women's World Cup, compared to the \$100-200 million they pay for the men's version. — AFP

# 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
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
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### Change of Name

**I, PALA HARIBABU**, holder of Passport No. P9481361, do hereby change my name to Ali (as given name) MOHAMMED (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name, ALI MOHAMMED and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#3521) 3/5/2023

**I, TASNIMA**, holder of Indian Passport No. U0747486 having permanent address Dungarpur, Rajasthan, India 314001 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name TASNIMA and surname COCHIN. (#3518) 3/5/2023

**I, RASHIDA**, holder of Passport No. L5937183, do hereby change my name to RASHIDA (as given name) KUTUBUDDIN (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name RASHIDA KUTUBUDDIN and I also un-

dertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#3522) 3/5/2023

**I, SARRAH**, holder of Indian Passport No. T1942619 issued at Embassy of Indian, Kuwait. I am a permanent resident of Dungepur 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 Teh-

sil Aspur district, Dungepur 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 PO. 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 Civil ID card is 1889988



## Foxes climb out of bottom 3

### Everton rescue draw at Leicester



LEICESTER: Everton's English striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin (center) reacts following a foul on him during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Everton on May 1, 2023. — AFP

LEICESTER: Everton's Alex Iwobi rescued a 2-2 draw against relegation rivals Leicester, but it was the Foxes who climbed out of the Premier League's bottom three after Monday's pivotal showdown. Iwobi scored a second-half equalizer at the King Power Stadium after James Maddison wasted a chance to put Leicester 3-1 up when his penalty was saved by Jordan Pickford.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin put Everton in front with an early penalty, before Leicester hit back with goals from Caglar Soyuncu and Jamie Vardy. Leicester, who have won one of their last 12 league games, moved out of the relegation zone on goal difference. The Foxes, Premier League champions in 2016, are fighting to avoid playing in the Championship for the first time in nine years. "We missed a penalty for 3-1, but also in the first half we were second best for long periods," Leicester boss Dean Smith said.

"We knew the result today would not define what happens. We came out of the bottom three, but there are still four games to go." Everton, who last played in the second tier in 1954, remain in 19th place. Sean Dyche's side are one point from safety with four games left for each of the bottom five clubs. Everton narrowly escaped relegation last season under Frank

Lampard, but their struggles again this term led to Dyche's appointment in January.

The Toffees beat Arsenal and Leeds in two of Dyche's first three games, but have won just one of the 11 games since then, sparking furious fan protests against the club hierarchy. "We held our nerve, kept trying to create things and overall it's a good performance, although we didn't get the three points," Dyche said. "I didn't come here for a walk in the park. I knew it was going to be a challenge. The only crime tonight was two really soft goals, but the mentality is what we want." Despite the mutinous mood among Everton's travelling fans, they took the lead in the 15th minute.

Timothy Castagne needlessly conceded a penalty with a rash shove on Calvert-Lewin as the striker tried to control Seamus Coleman's lofted pass. Calvert-Lewin smashed the spot-kick into the roof of the net for his first goal since October and only his second of an injury-plagued campaign. Leicester needed a response and they delivered emphatically with two goals in the space of 11 minutes. Harvey Barnes' 22nd-minute cross was headed back across goal by Wout Faes and Soyuncu pounced with a half-volley that eluded Jordan Pickford's weak attempted save.

#### Vardy rolls back the years

Everton's creaky defence was exposed again after 33 minutes. Iwobi lost possession too easily and Vardy rolled back the years with a blistering run to reach Maddison's pass and round Pickford for a cool finish. Everton were in disarray at the back and Michael Keane conceded a penalty in first-half stoppage time when he blocked Barnes' cross with his out-stretched arm. But Maddison blasted his penalty straight at Pickford to give Everton renewed hope. The save was also a tribute to England keeper Pickford's preparation. Television cameras showed an image of his water bottle in the back of the net covered in details about potential Leicester penalty takers, including the note: "James Maddison - Stay - 60 percent centre".

"I did my homework. I called it this morning where I would go. He is a good player and he would've expected me to move but I double-bluffed him," Pickford said. Iwobi made Maddison pay for his miss as the Everton midfielder equalized in the 54th minute, drilling a fine finish past Iversen from 10 yards after Calvert-Lewin flicked on McNeil's cross. In a tense finale, Vardy's header was nodded off the line by James Tarkowski, while Iversen saved at Calvert-Lewin's feet, then repelled Abdoulaye Doucoure's rocket. — AFP

### Miami ace Butler battling to be fit



NEW YORK: Jimmy Butler #22 of the Miami Heat reacts after he falls in the third quarter against the New York Knicks during game one of the Eastern Conference Semifinals at Madison Square Garden. — AFP

NEW YORK: Jimmy Butler is battling to be fit as Miami Heat look to take a stranglehold on the playoff series against the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday. Butler, who rolled an ankle during Miami's game one victory over the Knicks, is listed as questionable for game two of the Eastern Conference semi-final series, Miami confirmed.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra told reporters on Monday that Butler was undergoing intensive treatment in a bid to be fit for the game, adding that a final decision on his fitness would be left to the last minute. "Same as last night," Spoelstra told reporters on Monday when asked about Butler's status. "He's doing treatment around the clock. We probably won't have any update until before the game."

Any injury absence involving Butler would be a huge blow to Miami. Butler has been in scintillating form during the postseason, producing huge performances in the first round of the playoffs as Miami stunned the top-seeded Milwaukee Bucks. The Knicks meanwhile are also sweating on injuries to key players as they look to level the series on Tuesday. Forward Julius Randle, who sat out game one on Sunday due to an ankle sprain, is again listed as questionable, as is Knicks guard Jalen Brunson, who is nursing right ankle soreness. — AFP

### Sixers stun Celtics; Jokic downs Suns

NEW YORK: James Harden scored 45 points as the Philadelphia 76ers stunned the Boston Celtics in the NBA playoffs on Monday before Nikola Jokic and the Denver Nuggets took a commanding 2-0 series lead over the Phoenix Suns. In a pulsating Eastern Conference duel in Boston, Harden produced a vintage performance - including a pivotal go-ahead three-pointer with 8.4 seconds remaining - to leave the TD Garden in stunned silence as the Sixers snatched a 119-115 game one victory.

The Sixers' win was achieved without their best player, injured talisman Joel Embiid, who watched from the bench after failing to recover from a knee injury. "We're just a resilient team," Harden said. "Even without Joel, we've got the confidence to come here and win games." "We've been doing it all year long, that's a good one for us." Harden's points haul came from 17-of-30 shooting and included seven three-pointers. "He was awesome," Sixers coach Doc Rivers said. "Kept his cool, knew when to attack, knew when to give it up."

Tyrese Maxey provided offensive support with 26 points while Tobias Harris added 18 and De'Anthony Melton 17. The Celtics were led by 39 points from Jayson Tatum while Jaylen Brown chipped in with 23 points and Malcolm Brogdon 20. With Boston exploiting the absence of Embiid to score freely in the paint, the Celtics jumped out to lead by 12 in the second quarter. But Harden and Maxey's scoring ensured that the Sixers remained in touch coming down the stretch with only a handful of points separating the two teams in the closing stages.

A loose pass from Brogdon with 32 seconds left on the clock handed Maxey an easy uncon-



BOSTON: Marcus Smart #36 of the Boston Celtics dives for the ball after being fouled by PJ Tucker #17 of the Philadelphia 76ers during the second half in game one of the Eastern Conference Second Round Playoffs on May 01, 2023. — AFP

tested layup to put Philadelphia 114-113 up, before Tatum hit back with two free throws to give Boston a slender 115-114 advantage. But with the clock running down, Harden advanced up the court and took his time before nervelessly sinking a sublime three-pointer from 25 feet to give Philadelphia a 117-115 lead with just seconds remaining.

Rivers said Harden's ice-cool three-pointer at the death was a rebuttal to critics who have long

accused the 33-year-old former NBA Most Valuable Player of folding under pressure. "I thought he had just the perfect mindset tonight," Rivers said. "I'm so happy for him because it just tells you what he can do on a given night. "It's amazing - the guy's a Hall-of-Famer and all you hear is the other stuff about him. He's fantastic." Game two of the best-of-seven series takes place in Boston on Wednesday. — AFP