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Guterres, Blinken hail Kuwait's humanitarian efforts globally

Sheikha Rima hosts annual Kuwait-America Foundation Gala Dinner



WASHINGTON: (Left) Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and Senators Chris Coons and Joe Manchin attend the Kuwait-America Foundation Gala Dinner on May 13, 2023. (Right) Sheikh Salem and his wife Sheikhha Rima Al-Sabah with First Lady Jill Biden. — KUNA photos



WASHINGTON: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken both commended Kuwait's extraordinary commitment to global causes and humanitarian efforts worldwide. This came during their participation in the annual Kuwait-America Foundation Gala Dinner in support of UNHCR and its impactful work worldwide held by the UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Sheikhha Rima Al-Sabah. For the last 18 years, Sheikhha Rima, wife of Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has gathered distinguished guests raising critical funds in support of vital causes around the world.

The focus of this year's gala dinner returns to the global refugee crisis, as over 100 million people around the world have fled their homes, which is the highest number ever recorded. The event featured US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as keynote speaker and honored US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, who received the Public Service Award, and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and Hollywood star Cate Blanchett, who received the Humanitarian Award. US First Lady Jill Biden was also in attendance as a special guest. — KUNA (See Page 2)

NIC records net profit of KD 1.1m at 1.3 fils per share in Q1 of 2023



NIC Chairman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

KUWAIT: National Investments Company (NIC) revealed its financial results for the first quarter of this year, including a detailed analytical presentation on its performance and financial position for 2023. In a statement to the press, NIC Chairman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi said the company's financial results for the first quarter of this year were supported by maintaining operations via executing a range of mergers, acquisitions, sales, restructurings and various advisory services leading

to positive results despite adverse fluctuations in the capital markets both in Kuwait and the region.

As one of the largest investment companies in Kuwait and the region and operating for more than three-and-a-half decades, NIC achieved outstanding successes within its multiple activities as a result of its ability to overcome all crises and exceptional situations, in addition to its ability to preserve the interests of its clients with high efficiency. (See Page 8)

252 candidates file nominations to contest polls

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: At the close of candidate registration on Sunday, 252 candidates including 15 women filed nomination papers to run in the June 6 parliamentary polls, called after the 2020 National Assembly was dissolved and after the constitutional court annulled the Sept 2022 elections. Forty-seven of the 50 members of the scrapped 2022 Assembly are bidding for re-election, hoping that Kuwaiti voters have not forgotten them in the past eight months.

In addition, 56 former MPs are also in the fray to win a seat in the 50-member house, 30 of whom



KUWAIT: An official shuts the doors of the interior ministry's electoral affairs department as candidate registrations closed on May 14, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

were also members of the scrapped 2022 Assembly. The total number of candidates is below the number in the Sept 2022 elections, when as many as 376 candidates registered for the polls. However, only 305

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Erdogan takes early lead in Turkish polls Shaky Gaza truce holds

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan took an early lead Sunday in Turkey's landmark election, state media reported, although the final outcome was likely to change substantially. Erdogan was winning 53.2 percent of the vote with 34.4 percent of the ballots counted, while opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu had 40.9 percent of the vote. Most of the early ballots appeared to have been counted in heavily pro-Erdogan districts of Turkey's north and east.

A spokesman for Kilicdaroglu's Republican People's Party (CHP) said the opposition's internal count showed a "positive" result. "We are seeing a positive picture, according to our data," CHP party spokesman Faik Oztrak said. "We will start to give the numbers when the number of opened ballot boxes reaches a meaningful level."

Istanbul's opposition mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, who could be named vice president if Kilicdaroglu wins, urged the nation not to believe the figures released by Turkey's official Anadolu state news agency. — AFP

GAZA: Calm returned to Gaza Sunday as a fragile ceasefire ending five days of fighting held, leaving Palestinians to count the cost of cross-border fire which has killed dozens. Fishermen took to their boats in the coastal Palestinian enclave, as Gazans emerged from sheltering in their homes during the fierce exchange of fire. The fighting broke out Tuesday with Zionist strikes on the Islamic Jihad militant group. It ceased late Saturday following days of

truce talks led by Egypt.

As the skies fell silent, residents were left to mourn the 33 people killed in the Gaza Strip. After the ceasefire took effect, ambulances and fire trucks drove in convoy in Gaza while Palestinians gathered in the streets to celebrate. More than 50 homes were destroyed and around 950 people displaced in Gaza, said the United Nations citing local officials.

"We're on the street, there's no home for my children or their children," said Mohammed Al-Louh, whose house was destroyed by Zionist strikes. "After the ceasefire, we have an ongoing tragedy because of the great scale of the

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Palestinians and supporters of the Islamic Jihad group celebrate after Palestinian factions and the Zionist entity reached a ceasefire agreement on May 13, 2023. — AFP

Ex-PM Khan calls for protests nationwide

LAHORE: Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan called for nationwide "freedom" protests on Sunday, after his brief arrest and detention this week triggered deadly unrest. The one-time cricket superstar — who has been tied up in dozens of legal cases since being ousted from power in April last year — was freed on bail on Friday after his detention was declared unlawful by the Supreme Court.

Enraged by the arrest, supporters set fire to government buildings, blocked roads and damaged property belonging to the military, which they blame for Khan's downfall. "Freedom does not come easily. You have to snatch it. You have to sacrifice for it," he said in an address broadcast on YouTube Saturday night. He called for supporters to hold protests "at the end of your streets and villages" across the country on Sunday evening for one hour starting at 5:30 pm (1230 GMT).

After five days of tumult across Pakistan, Sunday morning was quiet, but Khan has also pledged to return to campaigning on Wednesday for immediate elections. For months, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) party leader has waged a campaign of defiance against the military. His arrest on Tuesday came just hours after he was rebuked for claiming senior officials were involved in an assassination attempt against him last year. Pakistan's powerful military has directly ruled the country off and on for nearly half of its 75-year history, and continues to wield power over the political system. "The army chief's actions have made our military bad. It is because of him, not because of me," Khan said from his home in Lahore, although it was unclear whether he meant the serving chief, or his predecessor, whom Khan has held responsible for his ouster.

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Local

Guterres, Blinken commend Kuwait's commitment to humanitarian causes

Kuwait top donor to the UN refugee agency in the region: Foreign Minister

WASHINGTON: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken both commended the State of Kuwait's extraordinary commitment to global causes and humanitarian efforts worldwide.

This came during their participation in the annual Kuwait-America Foundation Gala Dinner in support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its impactful work worldwide, held by the UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Rima Al-Sabah. For the last 18 years, Rima, wife of Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has gathered distinguished guests raising critical funds in support of vital causes around the world.

The focus of this year's gala dinner returns to the global refugee crisis as over 100 million people around the world have fled their homes, which is the highest number ever recorded. The event featured US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as keynote speaker and honored US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, who received the Public Service Award, and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and Hollywood star Cate Blanchett who received the Humanitarian Award.

Secretary Blinken accepted the award on behalf of Secretary Raimondo, First Lady Dr Jill Biden, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres were also in attendance as special guests. In her welcoming remarks, Rima thanked Blinken, Guterres and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi for their presence at the gala and for "their work on behalf of tens of millions of people in need around the world." She also thanked all the donors who have so generously supported the refugee agency, adding, "this year alone we have, once again, raised over one million US dollars for UNHCR."

Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah emphasized the vital work of the refugee agency and its "urgent call to action."

He said that Kuwait is proud to be a longstanding supporter of UNHCR and stressed that in the last 10 years, Kuwait's contributions to the agency have been close to \$500 million, "establishing Kuwait as a top donor to UNHCR in the region."

"These funds have helped provide emergency humanitarian aid and protection to millions of men, women, and children around the world, and even as I speak, Kuwait continues to provide aid to Sudan and Ukraine," he remarked. He continued, "This profound commitment did not come about by accident ... It is who we are as Kuwaitis ... Our humanitarian ethos is inscribed in our history, spirit and DNA."

He added: "The Kuwait-US relationship is today as strong as it has ever been ... Kuwait and the US share a common pursuit of global peace and stability and a solid commitment to the international rules-based order. Ours is a partnership that is time and battle-tested."

"We in Kuwait remain faithful bridge-builders, neutral mediators, honest brokers, and unrelenting peacemakers ... It is who we are ... It is who we will always be," he said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken praised Rima for her extraordinary work and leadership. Blinken also congratulated Sheikh Salem in his new capacity as foreign minister, saying he is looking forward for them to continue working together. He said that the event highlights "the stronger and ever-growing partnership between Kuwait and the US, bringing us closer together to supporting refugees around the world as they seek safety and opportunity."

"We are grateful to partner with Kuwait in this endeavor," he remarked. "As UNHCR's largest donor in the Middle East, Kuwait has led the way again and again and again around the globe." He added that this gala reflected that supporting refugees is "a challenge we cannot solve alone, we need partners, we need partners across the board."

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres thanked



WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) is photographed with and his wife UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Rima Al-Sabah (left) and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and Hollywood star Cate Blanchett (center). — KUNA photos



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) is seen with UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Rima Al-Sabah (center) and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and Hollywood star Cate Blanchett (right) during the dinner. Blinken accepted the Public Service Award on behalf of US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. — KUNA

Rima for an outstanding service as a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and added: "As a former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I must say that the best decision I have made is to appoint you."

He noted that this event is an "extraordinary expression of generosity" and draws attention to one of the most existential causes of all time. Guterres praised Kuwait for being a country that is "a symbol of wisdom and solidarity ... a bridge builder and messenger of peace," highlighting the generosity of Kuwait as something he will never forget for the rest of his life.

Among attendees at the gala dinner were United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate

John Kerry, Senators Chris Coons, Joe Manchin, Ed Markey and Bob Menendez, in addition to Senior Advisor to the President Mike Donilon, Counselor of the Department of State Derek Chollet, Special Presidential Coordinator for Global Infrastructure and Energy Security Amos Hochstein and former Governor of Virginia Terry McAuliffe.

Also attending were Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Saudi Ambassador to the US Reema bint Bandar Al Saud and Qatar's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Meshal bin Hamad Al-Thani, as well as the ambassadors of Jordan, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Australia, France, Italy, Switzerland and the European Union (EU) among others. — KUNA

News in Brief

Agriculture Authority requests land for 'stray dogs shelter'

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources submitted a request to the Municipal Council regarding the allocation of a plot of land with an area of 10,000 square meters in an area far from residential and commercial districts to establish a shelter for stray dogs. The Authority stated its request in a letter addressed by the Acting Director General of the Authority Mishaal Al-Qurayfah to the President of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mehri. "The request comes in view of the exacerbation of the problem of stray dogs in the State of Kuwait as well as its negative social and health effects in addition to the large number of complaints of citizens and national institutions about this phenomenon," the letter said. Qurayfah indicated that the dogs will be taken to the shelter after they are collected and sterilized in accordance with a program implemented by a company specialized in "treating the problem of stray dogs".

Tenders issued for highway maintenance

KUWAIT: Kuwait Today published in its issue on Sunday, the details of the launch of 10 tenders for road repair on Monday, May 15. The tenders will be closed next June 15. According to the details of the tenders, each governorate will have an independent tender in addition to three tenders for the maintenance of highways and one for the Jaber Causeway, provided that the bidding session will be on the same day of closing, in the Great Meeting Hall in the Ministry of Public Works building. The bidding is preceded by a preliminary meeting with interested companies, to be held on June 1.

Family medicine conference first of its kind in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Treasurer of Kuwait Family Medicine Board and Chairwoman of the scientific committee of the Kuwait international Family Medicine Conference Dr Taibah Al-Hassan said the conference will start Thursday, May 18 under the patronage of Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadi and will be chaired by Chairman of Family Medicine Board Dr Mohammad Al-Azmi. She said the conference will be for three days, and it is the first of its kind in Kuwait.

Hassan said the conference aims at presenting the most recent medical information based on evidence and proofs, developments of family medicine and discussion of several medical strategies.

She added that the conference will include lectures, workshops and contests about scientific research as 60 doctors will participate in various specialties from Kuwait, GCC and the US. She said there will also be a meeting for the Gulf Family Medicine Society on the sidelines of the conference to discuss several strategies and have recommendations to improve family medicine status.

Charities continue humanitarian aid in Turkey, Syria, Sudan

KUWAIT: The International Islamic Charitable Organization launched on Sunday a psychological and social support center aimed at alleviating the negative effects that resulted from the repercussions of the earthquake that hit southern Turkey and northern Syria last February.

The earthquake, considered one of the biggest disasters to impact the region in recent times, left tens of thousands of people dead and many more injured. Thousands of buildings have collapsed, leaving countless people exposed to unforgiving winter conditions. Schools and hospitals have been destroyed.

Acting Director General of the Authority, Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa, said the goal of the center is to help guide, rehabilitate and treat those affected by the earthquake.

"We have 36 teams and volunteer initiatives, including many Kuwaitis. We have 818 activists who set the standards with regard to giving and creativity, contributing with sincere and diligent efforts to

alleviate the suffering of afflicted communities," he said. Head of Psychological Support at the "Tarahum" Volunteer Team in the organization, Dr Othman Al-Asfour, said: "Beneficiaries of the project in southern Turkey are 10,000 people and 50,000 people in Syria."

The project provides training and psychological treatment for survivors of the earthquake and includes psychological support for children, specialized treatment, a mobile center to provide psychological intervention as well as a field study to measure the impact of the earthquake on those affected. In other news, Kuwait has sent its seventh relief aid plane, filled with 10 tons of relief aid to Sudan, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Sunday.

KRCS' head of public relations and media Khaled Al-Zaid told KUNA that the campaign would hopefully lessen the suffering of the Sudanese people during their ordeal. The relief aid campaign would maintain the air bridge between Kuwait and Sudan to ensure the arrival of much needed materials, he affirmed.

The Kuwaiti government, under the directives of the leadership, kick-started a relief aid campaign to help brethren in Sudan as part of Kuwait's commitment towards this urgent humanitarian issue. — Agencies



Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) aid workers load up the seventh relief plane meant for Sudan before its departure. — KUNA

Preparations in full swing as election approaches

KUWAIT: The Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, on Sunday affirmed the security personnel's readiness to organize and secure the National Assembly elections due on June 6. The Ministry of Interior's Directorate General for Public Relations and Information said in a press release that Lt Gen Al-Barjas affirmed, during a visit to the headquarters of the election affairs department, necessity of tackling flaws that happened in the previous parliamentary polls.

Security apparatuses are ready to deal with any emergency to assure voters and candidates to portray Kuwait's true democracy, he said. Lt Gen Al-Barjas, during his visit to the election affairs department, examined all preparations that had been taken for the polling day. He was accompanied during the tour by Major General Abdullah Al-Rejaib, the assistant undersecretary for public security and the assistant undersecretary for traffic and operations.

In related news, the education ministry is reportedly working quickly to equip 123 schools to be used as polling stations during the upcoming elections, sources said. The ministry is conducting repairs at the designated schools and preparing them with the

Digitization a priority for serving clients: Minors Affairs

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Minors Affairs will continue intensifying its efforts to digitize its services as the number of those under its care has reached about 50,000 by the end of 2022.

The Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Chairman of the board of Directors of the Public Authority for Minors Affairs, Dr Amer



KUWAIT: Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas examines preparations at the headquarters of the election affairs department. — KUNA

necessary equipment, such as white boards and furniture, to ensure the elections run smoothly.

Sources said the ministry has allocated KD 123,000 for the process, with KD 1,000 per school.

Al-Rattam said the authority has already launched 46 electronic services through its website and 36 services through the government's (Sahel) application. The launch, he said, has helped the authority enhance its abilities to reach people who need their services.

Acting Director General of the authority Hamad Al-Barjas said the authority has achieved good financial results in recent years despite the challenges it faced as a result of health, political and economic developments that negatively reflected on the markets. Through the Sahel app and the authority's website, it was able to continue providing its services remotely, he said. — KUNA



The number of polling stations set by the Ministry of Interior are five main stations per district, in addition to 118 sub-committees distributed among the schools where the elections will be held. — Agencies

Local

Property, residency curbs complicate matters for expatriates in Kuwait

Expats find it challenging to plan for their future due to lack of stability

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Due to its oil industry and flourishing economy, Kuwait has been a popular destination for expatriates seeking better financial opportunities. However, life as an expat in Kuwait can come with its challenges and struggles. From expats who were born in Kuwait and have grown old here to expats who recently came to Kuwait, all of them face obstacles that can be resolved to ease their lives in Kuwait. From being a major part of Kuwait's community and playing an important role in Kuwait's workforce and financial stability, Kuwait Times focuses on a few expectations that expats would love to see in Kuwait.

Facilitate owning property

Fatma, an expat in Kuwait, said: "The difficulty of owning property is a major problem, as we are not able to invest our hard-earned money into a secure and tangible asset. It makes it difficult to plan for a long-term future in the country, so expats are left with no choice but to entrust their financial stability to the often-unpredictable rental market."

Not being allowed to buy prop-



erty is a significant issue that affects expats' quality of living. It limits their investment opportunities, creates instability in their lives and contributes to the feeling that they are not fully integrated into the society. Therefore, addressing this issue would not only benefit the expat community, but also contribute positively to Kuwait's overall economic growth and development.

Allow permanent residency

Fatma also highlighted the issue of

forcing some expats over 60 to leave. "Kuwait is seen as a home country by many expats. My uncle and wife were in Kuwait before the Iraqi invasion. They lived their life, worked and raised their children and grandchildren in Kuwait. However, they had to leave Kuwait because they reached 60 years of age. Due to such laws, besides visa restrictions, you can barely see expat families," she added.

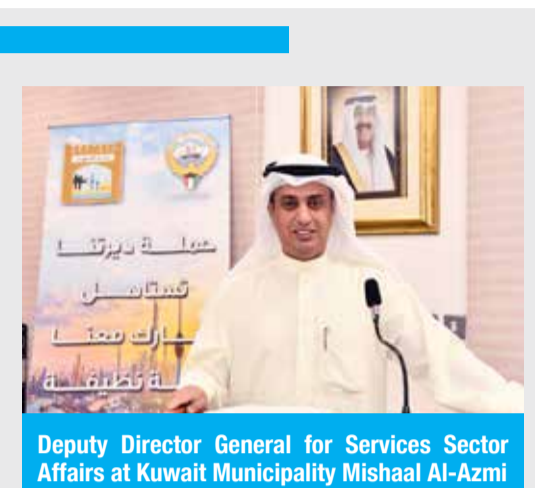
One of the most significant issues that expats face in Kuwait is the lack of permanent residency, because the

issue of forcing expats over the age of 60 to leave regardless of how long they have stayed and served the state feeds a sense of insecurity, which can impact their mental health and cause stress due to their inability to plan for their future in Kuwait.

Open visit visas for families

Visa restrictions' impact on expats in Kuwait has been a subject of significant concern for expats, as these restrictions lead to several challenges and limitations on expats living in Kuwait, which affects their daily lives, productivity and social connections. Ala'a, an expat, confirmed visa curbs have a significant impact on expats' social lives and connections.

"Expats are restricted from inviting family members and friends to visit them in Kuwait, which means they are away from their emotional and social support system, that is, their loved ones back home. This negatively affects their performance at work and creates a sense of disconnect between themselves and the state because they are only meant to earn money and leave, rather than investing their knowledge by growing their businesses and future in Kuwait," he opined.



Deputy Director General for Services Sector Affairs at Kuwait Municipality Mishaal Al-Azmi

Kuwait Municipality launches two-month cleaning campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality announced Sunday the launch of a cleaning campaign to educate people about the importance of maintaining public places hygienic. The campaign will continue until July 13.

Deputy Director General for Services Sector Affairs at Kuwait Municipality Mishaal Al-Azmi said: "The campaign aims to instill healthy habits in terms of public hygiene and environmental health and consolidate them for young people for future generations."

Azmi pointed out that the campaign aims to educate the public by spreading awareness about public hygiene as well as environmental protection. It mainly focuses on instilling the concept of correct disposal of waste and adhering to the specified garbage removal dates.

"It also aims to educate the public about the positive and negative effects with regard to public hygiene and their relationship to maintaining public health, as well as conducting a comprehensive survey, accurate monitoring and evaluation of places and sites that require intensifying hygiene services," he said. Azmi said that the campaign also aims to increase the rate of cleanliness and remove accumulated waste.

"The campaign includes raising awareness through a far-reaching campaign in coordination with concerned authorities and the participation of all administrative, technical and legal human cadres in the Kuwait Municipality," he added. "The mechanism also includes the participation of the public and private sectors represented by state ministries, government agencies and the private sector to contribute effectively to cleaning work and maintaining the health of the environment," Azmi clarified.

He explained that it also includes the provision of mechanisms, equipment, tools and labor to carry out the required public cleaning work in all governorates as well as the necessary action towards the observations and complaints received, if any, to achieve the desired objectives of that campaign.

"We call on everyone to adhere to the laws regulating public hygiene. Violators will be given a grace period for reconciliation and removal of the violation, and in the event of non-response, legal procedures will be applied against the violator." Azmi stressed that pertinent regulations will be applied to those who do not remove their waste wherever that might be and that inspectors will be fairly distributed to the six governorates to ensure the campaign runs smoothly. — KUNA.

Social media trend identifying single people stirs debate

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: A new trend has gone viral recently, calling singles to put a pear emoji in their social media bio to indicate they have a state of emotional emptiness. The trend has spread across various social networking sites, as hundreds of users have adopted it. Local buzz on Twitter and Instagram was about how such a trend will help singles in their love life, saying this trend, which is also spreading in the Middle East, will help others understand a person's availability and connect with singles.

Some social media users in Kuwait called the pear emoji phenomenon "ridiculous", while others

decried the far reach of social media on people's lives. Many others may have found the pear is the way to pair! This is not the first time such trends have spread to express people's emotional state. Ahmad Khattab said earlier there was the "numbers" trend, which was a way to express if the person had a crush on someone indirectly through a certain mathematical process.

"The trend was based on the numbers from 901 to 926, which is the number of letters of the English alphabet, where the number 9 expresses 'I love', and the numbers from 1 to 26 is the first letter of the name of the person who is the focus of admiration, while number 900 means the person is single," he said. "I think singles were upset by the numbers trend because they had no one, so they made the pear trend instead," Khattab said sarcastically.

Meanwhile, Mona Al-Sawaf said that the trend may cause problems in conservative communities, where hopping on such trends means you're searching for a boyfriend, adding girls will not be allowed to participate in the numbers or the pear trends due

to religious and traditional reasons, considering it as a bad dating solution.

The trend started when a company named Pear made special rings that make it simple to identify single people, allowing new connections to find partners in real life. While some people might be wearing rings, others resorted to putting a pear emoji in their bios and taking part in a social experiment in the US, UK, Germany, Canada and Australia. The company aims to eliminate the need for dating apps by encouraging singles all over the world to wear small green rings.

According to the latest government figures in Kuwait, the number of unmarried individuals is about 1.4 million, of whom 316,000 are Kuwaitis, while nearly 1.1 million are non-Kuwaitis. Statistics issued by the Public Authority for Civil Information on the marital status of the population show Kuwaiti single males number about 170,000, compared to 150,000 single Kuwaiti females. The number of non-Kuwaiti single males is almost four times the number of single females. Non-Kuwaiti single males number 850,000, compared to 230,000 non-Kuwaiti single females.

Summers to get increasingly hotter: Astronomer

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: In the last few years, the world has witnessed a huge increase in temperatures, especially during summer. Kuwait is considered one of the hottest countries in the world, as temperatures exceed 54 degrees under the shade and more than 75 degrees under the direct sun.

Kuwait Times spoke to President of Kuwait Astronomical Society Adel Al-Saadoun and discussed with him his point of view for the main reason behind the rise in temperatures, as well as the late arrival of the summer season in Kuwait compared to previous years. Saadoun opposes the theory that man is the main cause of high temperatures as a result of envi-

ronmental pollution and global warming.

Although Saadoun believes global warming is the main cause of high temperatures, he also adopts the theory that the earth is going through a normal environmental cycle, and humanity is innocent of causing global warming. He stressed the rate of manmade global warming that leads to high temperatures due to pollution doesn't exceed 5 percent, while the main cause is the rate of water evaporated due to earth's proximity to the sun, which is a normal environmental cycle that the earth experiences as a natural event.

Saadoun explained the earth is experiencing the opposite of the Ice Age, adding temperatures will rise in the next couple of years. He justified this global theory he adopts, saying this change depends on the changing distance between the earth and the sun, which is a main cause for rising temperatures on earth.

Saadoun simplified this theory, explaining the closer the sun reaches the earth, the higher the temperature gets, pointing out the inclination of the sun affects the earth's temperature depending on the angle of the sunrays that hit the ground. Meanwhile, he



Adel Al-Saadoun

explained the opposite is the same, as the farther the sun pulls away from the earth, the colder the temperature.

Saadoun said this is the main reason why we feel summers are hotter than before, adding the extremes in both cases are witnessed every couple of thousand years. He concluded by saying the only thing people are responsible for is to main-

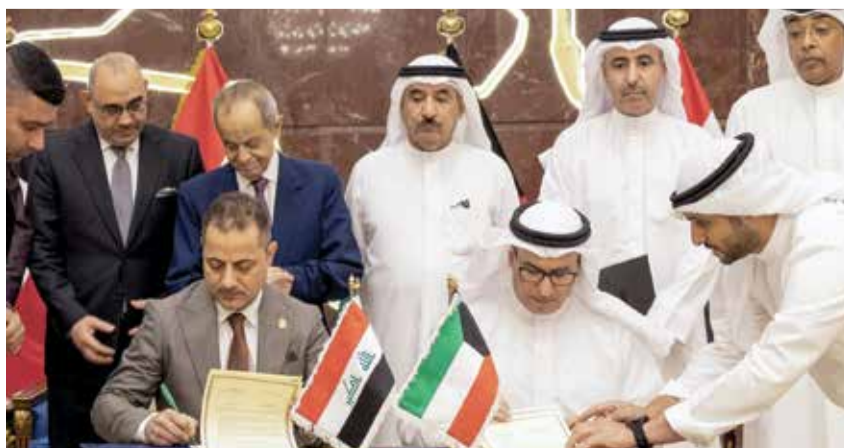
tain the earth's normal temperature, and this is what the international society is working on, to not exceed an increment of two degrees Celsius in the next 50 years, which can be controlled by reducing pollution of all types. He added the media around the world has played an important role in not delivering the true aspects about this issue for many reasons, reiterating what we are experiencing is a normal cycle for earth.



Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials discuss aspects of border demarcation during the meeting. —KUNA photos

Kuwaiti-Iraqi committee holds sixth meeting

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti-Iraqi technical committee held on Sunday its sixth meeting in Kuwait. The meeting was co-chaired by Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi and Iraqi Counsellor Othman Al-Aboudi. The two sides discussed technical and legal aspects for demarcation of the maritime borders beyond the mark (162). They agreed on pursuing the constructive dialogue in line with an approach to boost the brotherhood relations between the two countries. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi and Iraqi Counsellor Othman Al-Aboudi are seen signing papers during the meeting.

Online learning restricted to emergencies: MoE

KUWAIT: The Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Hamad Al-Adwani said Sunday online education through the application Microsoft Teams is restricted to cases when traditional study is not possible due to weather conditions, or if a school is unable to hold classes due to emergency maintenance work, or any emergency matter inside the school. The statement came in an official letter addressed to the undersecretary of the ministry and to be sent to all departments.

In other news, the Ministry of Education announced that it launched on Sunday, an electronic awareness campaign through its official social media accounts entitled "Get Ready", with the aim of providing the necessary support for male and female students in good preparation for exams.

The ministry's official spokesman, Ahmed Al-Wuhaida, said: "This campaign comes within the framework of continuous efforts to provide the necessary support to students in various stages of education, as it aims to find the best ways to prepare students to take the tests in the best educational, psychological and physical conditions."

Wuhaida explained that the campaign also aims to guide students to proper study methods and educate them to stay away from behaviors that could reflect poorly on their results. It will also help them form positive attitudes towards tests.

"The campaign also aims to raise awareness among all students and teachers of the Ministry of Education on the best ways to deal with exams and stay away from violations of its regulations," he added.

The program launched by the ministry within the framework of the campaign includes a podcast program that had senior officials in the ministry as guests. As part of the campaign, meetings were held with educational and psychological specialists who will educate students on how to best prepare for the tests and create the appropriate atmosphere to achieve success.

The campaign also includes a presentation of the regulations governing students' conduct during the examination process, in addition to several meetings held with male and female students and specialists from the field to provide them with the necessary support. — Agencies

News in Brief

Fire in Abdullah
Al-Salem co-op

KUWAIT: A fire broke out at the Abdullah Al-Salem Cooperative Society on Sunday morning. The Public Relations and Media department at the Kuwait Fire Force said Central Operations dispatched firefighting teams from Al-Shaheed and Kuwait City stations upon receiving a report that there was a fire at the cooperative. After investigation, they found that garbage was on fire on the roof of the cooperative's service building. The fire was extinguished without any injuries.

'Suspicious' driver
with cleaver arrested

KUWAIT: Patrolmen supporting the Jahra Security Directorate were able to arrest a Kuwaiti young man in his 30s who was found to be using drugs. The man was caught while driving a "suspicious" four-wheel drive car in the Saad Al-Abdullah area. Officers ordered him to pull over and searched his vehicle only to discover that he was in possession of narcotic substances, weapons, a cleaver and a sum of money. He was then referred to the General Administration for Drug Control along with the illegal substances.

219 residency
violators caught

KUWAIT: The General Directorate of Residency Affairs Investigations arrested 219 people who were found in violation of Kuwait's residency and work laws. The busts were made in Abdali, Wafra, Kabd and Salmiya through surprise inspection campaigns. This came through the establishment of checkpoints distributed in those areas by the General Directorate of Residency Affairs Investigation with the participation of the Public Authority of Manpower and the Ministry of Commerce. Those who were arrested were referred to the authorities in order to take all necessary legal measures against them.

Kuwait's efforts in Security Council highlight Islamic issues, human rights

Official recounts country's contributions as UN member

KUWAIT: Since joining the UN on May 14, 1963 as the 111th member, the State of Kuwait had been keen on collaborating with the organization to boost international cooperation and sustainable development worldwide. Speaking to KUNA on the anniversary of joining the UN, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Affairs Minister Plenipotentiary Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah commended the exemplary relations between Kuwait and the UN throughout the years.

The State of Kuwait had abided by the UN charter since joining the organization, affirmed Jarallah, who lauded the strong and strategic cooperation with the international organization. He thanked the UN for its unequivocal supportive stance towards Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion of 1990 and the subsequent efforts played by the UN and other international players in the liberation of 1991. The liberation of Kuwait had reflected the strength of international coordination in rallying support to a just cause, affirmed Jarallah.

In regards to the Kuwait's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council (UNSC) 2018-19, Jarallah said that Kuwait focused its efforts during its tenure to highlight Arab and Islamic causes as well as bolstering security and peace in several regions specifically the Middle East where the Palestinian cause is a focal issue that needed to be resolved.

The Kuwaiti efforts at the UNSC had resulted in various resolutions including 2019's resolution 2474, which gained approval from the majority at the UNSC. The resolution pertained to missing persons

during armed conflict. In joint efforts with Sweden, Germany, and Belgium in 2018, resolutions 2401 and 2449 came to fruition concerning the humanitarian situation in war-torn Syria and efforts to bring a peaceful resolution to the situation there. In April and May of 2018, Kuwait alongside several members of the Security Council visited Bangladesh to view the situation of the Rohingya refugees who fled the Myanmar due to being prosecuted.

In June of 2019, State of Kuwait representatives — then President of the UNSC — visited Kuwait and Iraq in coordination with a US delegation. The visit resulted in a press statement commending Kuwait for its efforts to bolster the stability and security in Iraq. The visit to Kuwait in particular was aimed at viewing Iraq's commitment to the cause of missing Kuwaiti citizens on Iraqi soil, Kuwaiti properties, and the national archives.

Asked about the highlights of the six decades membership of Kuwait in the UN, Jarallah said that his country made it its mission to support efforts for international stability and security, adding that Kuwaitis were also keen on assisting humanitarian causes far and wide. He noted that Kuwait's efforts within the humanitarian domain had earned the country the title of international humanitarian center in 2014.

The same honor went to His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who was named as a global humanitarian leader. Kuwait's relentless efforts made it a perfect candidate for hosting offices of UN agencies and affiliated



Assistant Foreign Minister for International Affairs Minister Plenipotentiary Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah. —KUNA

organizations. Kuwait is host to the United Nations House since 2009, who has plethora of organizations' offices under it including the OCHA, UNHCR, WHO, UNDP, IOM, UNICEF, WFP, UN HABITAT and others, pointed out the Kuwaiti diplomat.

Jarallah noted that the extensive diplomatic efforts by Kuwait enabled it to become a chair member in numerous UN organizations, namely the United Nations Human Rights Council 2011-14, United Nations Economic and Social Council 1967-69, and so on. Kuwait had hosted several international conferences connected with the crises in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen as well as a conference dedicated to the plight of the Rohingya, he revealed. — KUNA

Australian University first in Kuwait to join SAP program

KUWAIT: The Australian University (AU) is the first higher educational institution in Kuwait to enter into an agreement with SAP Middle East FZ LLC, enabling graduates to thrive in a digitally focused economy through the Dual Study Program.

In terms of the partnership, students will undertake SAP-certified training courses relevant to their major subjects during their academic education. The practical exposure to technology solutions means that students will be equipped to apply for jobs within the SAP ecosystem immediately upon graduation.

Prof Isam Zabalawi, President of the Australian University explained: "This partnership aligns with the Australian University student-centric approach as it gives our students a competitive edge in the workforce. On graduation, students will already have firsthand practical experience of industry-leading technology solutions to support their solid theoretical and other practical knowledge. The partnership elevates our training as it means students have exposure to SAP-delivered training in the latest technological applications, while our lecturers are free to focus on sharing their vast theoretical and industry knowledge. The result is a pool of well-rounded graduates who can immediately support the growth of Kuwait's digital economy."



The SAP Dual Study Program is run by the Digital Skills Center of SAP and includes business processes integration and certifications in analytics, material management, financial and control functions.

Sundus Bushahri, Vice President of Business Development at SAP Kuwait, commented: "The partnership with the Australian University shows

how private-public collaborations can support measurable skills development. The program trains students for a successful future in the SAP ecosystem, which is becoming increasingly important due to Kuwait's focus on digital transformation. We need to ensure that the future leaders of tomorrow are enabled today on the technological



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Lulu opens new branch in Khiran

KUWAIT: LuLu Group, leading retailer in the region, opened its latest hypermarket in the State of Kuwait. The store which is also 12th in the country was officially inaugurated by Abdul Wahab Al-Marzook, Vice Chairman of Tamdeen Group at Al-Khiran Outlet mall in Khiran City in the presence of Dr Matar Hamid Al-Neyadi, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu Group, and other dignitaries.

Also present on the occasion were Adarsh Swaika, Indian Ambassador, Manelisi Genge, South African Ambassador, a large number of diplomats, government officials and other dignitaries. Spread over 35,000 sq. feet, the market will offer a wide range of fresh fruits, vegetables, grocery food, non-food

items, health and beauty products, meat and seafood and a special area for local agricultural produces.

Some of the notable highlights of the store include: self-checkout counters for convenient shopping experience, as well as an area dedicated to a fresh juice station. In addition to this, shoppers can explore a wide selection of household items, toys, party supplies, seasonal products, and outdoor essentials, ensuring their diverse needs are met.

Al-Khiran Outlet Mall, which covers a vast area of more than three million square feet, is one of Kuwait's first hybrid malls, offering a unique shopping and entertainment experience. The mall boasts a parking space for 3,700 cars, ensuring convenient access for shoppers. Moreover, it features a marina with 900 berths, catering to maritime enthusiasts.

Also present on the occasion were Saifee Rupawala, CEO of Lulu Group, Ashraf Ali MA, Executive Director, Mohamed Haris, Lulu Kuwait Director, Sreejith, Regional Director of Lulu Kuwait and other senior officials.



Thai polls close with army-backed PM tipped for defeat

MONDAY, MAY 15, 2023

Tough new asylum rules spur many migrants to seek legal path to US

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Category 5 Cyclone Mocha hits Myanmar, Bangladesh

Volunteers emerged to remove fallen trees and other obstacles from the roads

KYAUKTAW: Cyclone Mocha crashed through Myanmar and southeastern Bangladesh on Sunday, sparing sprawling refugee camps but bringing a storm surge to swathes of western Myanmar where communications were largely cut off.

Mocha made landfall between Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and Myanmar's Sittwe packing winds of up to 195 kilometres (120 miles) per hour, in the biggest storm to hit the Bay of Bengal in over a decade. By late Sunday the storm had largely passed, AFP correspondents said, and India's weather office said it would weaken as it hit the rugged hills of Myanmar's interior.

Some 400-500 makeshift shelters were damaged in camps housing almost one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar but there were no immediate reports of casualties, refugee commissioner Mizanur Rahman told AFP.

In Teknaf in Bangladesh volunteers emerged to remove fallen trees and other obstacles from the roads, an AFP correspondent said. Disaster official Kamrul Hasan said the cyclone had caused "no major damage" in Bangladesh, adding authorities had evacuated 750,000 people ahead of the storm.

Communications with the port town of Sittwe in Myanmar were largely cut off following the storm, AFP correspondents said. Streets in the town of around 150,000 people were turned into rivers as the storm surged ashore, tearing roofs from buildings and downing power lines.

The wind ripped apart homes made of tarpaulin and bamboo at one camp for displaced Rohingyas at Kyaukphyu in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Its residents were anx-

iously watching the rising sea tide, camp leader Khin Shwe told AFP.

"We are now going to check whether sea water is increasing to our place... if the seawater rises, our camp can be flooded," he said. Thousands left Sittwe on Saturday, packing into trucks, cars and tuk-tuks and heading for higher ground inland as meteorologists warned of a storm surge of up to 3.5 metres (11 feet).

"We are not okay because we didn't bring food and other things to cook," said Maung Win, 57, who spent the night in a shelter in Kyauktaw town further inland. "We can only wait to get food from people's donations."

'Major emergency'

The Myanmar Red Cross Society said it was "preparing for a major emergency response". In Bangladesh, authorities have banned Rohingya refugees from constructing concrete homes, fearing it may encourage them to settle permanently rather than return to Myanmar, which they fled five years ago following a brutal military crackdown.

The camps are generally slightly inland but most of them are built on hillsides, exposing them to the threat of landslides. Forecasters expect the cyclone to bring a deluge of rain, which can trigger landslides.

Hundreds of people also fled Bangladesh's Saint Martin's island, a local resort area right in the storm's path, with thousands more moving to cyclone shelters on the coral atoll. The storm had uprooted hundreds of trees on the island, councillor Noor Ahmed told AFP.

"But we don't have any reports of



KYAUKTAW: Local residents ride their motorbike amid a damaged street after Cyclone Mocha's crashed ashore, in Kyauktaw in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Cyclone Mocha crashed ashore in Myanmar and southeastern Bangladesh, uprooting trees, scattering flimsy homes in Rohingya displacement camps and bringing a storm surge into low-lying areas. — AFP

death. Two persons were injured as they were hit by fallen trees." Cyclone Mocha is the most powerful storm to hit Bangladesh since Cyclone Sitr, Azizur Rahman, the head of Bangladesh's Meteorological Department, told AFP.

Sitr hit Bangladesh's southern coast in November 2007, killing more than 3,000 people and causing billions of dollars in

damage. In recent years, better forecasting and more effective evacuation planning have dramatically reduced the death toll from such storms.

Operations were suspended at Bangladesh's largest seaport, Chittagong, with boat transport and fishing also halted. Cyclones -- the equivalent of hurricanes in the North Atlantic or typhoons in the North-

west Pacific -- are a regular and deadly menace on the coast of the northern Indian Ocean where tens of millions of people live.

Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar's Irrawaddy Delta in 2008, killing at least 138,000 people. Scientists have warned that storms are becoming more powerful as the world gets warmer because of climate change. —AFP

KEMS-Zajil Telecom awarded with global ISO & PCI DSS certifications

KUWAIT: KEMS-Zajil Telecom, Kuwait's leading Digital Solutions Provider on Monday announced that it has obtained the global ISO certifications for Information Security Management System (ISO 27001: 2013), Effective Environmental Management System (ISO 14001: 2015), Occupational Health and Safety Management System (ISO 45001:2018), Information Technology Services Management (ISO 20000-1:2018), ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22301:2019 and PCI DSS to keep in pace with international standards for the provision of telecommunications services.

These certifications are global standards for information security, occupational safety and proof of efficiency of telecommunications companies, which makes KEMS-Zajil Telecom one of the most accredited telecom providers in the Gulf region that follows international security and quality standards in building, operating, managing and protecting networks and in providing telecommunications and technology services information for customers.

On the company's success in obtaining ISO and PCI DSS certifications, Nezar Mohamed Al Saie, Chairman of the Board of Directors of KEMS-Zajil Telecom, stated: "This achievement is affirmation of the continuous efforts made by KEMS-Zajil Telecom to enhance its technology, transform its security infrastructure, prove its commitment to protecting customer data and implementing security controls so the customers and partners have a smooth experience in confronting cyber security risks."

In addition, he added: "Information Security is a continuous process, and KEMS-Zajil Telecom is committed to constantly developing it to reassure its customers full commitment to the security of its internal systems and customer information, in order to provide distinguished services and solutions that are more valuable and more beneficial in the information security."

KEMS-Zajil Telecom currently positioned in the market as a Digital Solutions Provider offers a wide portfolio of Enterprise focused cutting edge technology solutions like Connectivity, Voice & Communication, Cloud, Managed Networks, Cyber security, ICT, Datacenter, IoT & Big Data and these international certifications adds more



credibility and competency to the company.

About KEMS-Zajil Telecom (Part of Kalaam Telecom Group)

KEMS-Zajil Telecom, established in 1991 is the first Internet Service Provider in Kuwait to be officially licensed by the Communications & IT Regulatory Authority (CITRA) to provide connectivity services across the state. KEMS Telecom along with its associate company KEMS-Zajil Telecom are now subsidiaries of Kalaam Telecom Group, Gulf's leading Digital Solution Provider with a vision to drive digital transformation in the GCC region and beyond.

KEMS-Zajil Telecom offers managed services like connectivity, voice & communication, cloud, managed networks, cybersecurity, ICT, datacenter, IoT & big data to enterprises of all sizes and various industry segments backed by stringent SLAs. KEMS-Zajil Telecom services are supported 24x7 by regional service excellence centres.

KEMS-Zajil Telecom leverages innovative technologies to enable its enterprise & residential partners to become future-ready, agile, and resilient in the increasingly digital economy. With a strong owned infrastructure and an expanded network across the region and beyond, KEMS - Zajil Telecom is the partner of choice and trusted advisor for large enterprises to effectively support their strategic operations and boost their digital transformation.

For more details on KEMS-Zajil Telecom, visit www.zajil.com

To know more about Kalaam Telecom Group, log onto www.kalaam-telecom.com

ny's "powerful support" in the form of the armaments package, saying "everything in this security package will significantly strengthen our defence".

"Now is the time for us to determine the end of this war this year. This year, we can make the aggressor's defeat irreversible," he said. Ukrainian forces have been training troops and stockpiling Western-supplied munitions and hardware that analysts say will be key to reclaiming territory captured by Russia.

Once accused of reticence in supplying military gear to Ukraine, Germany has since become the second-biggest contributor of tanks, rockets and anti-missile systems to the country, after the United States.

Scholz on Sunday reiterated Berlin's firm backing, telling Zelensky directly: "We will support you for as long as it is necessary." Zelensky said he would urge Scholz to support Ukraine's bid for fighter jet deliveries, though he did not specify if he was seeking aircraft directly from Germany.

Together with Scholz, Zelensky will head later Sunday to the western German city of Aachen, which this year is awarding him and the Ukrainian people the Charlemagne prize—an honour awarded for efforts to foster European unity. —AFP

Ukraine's Zelensky calls Germany 'true friend'

BERLIN: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday called Germany a "true friend" in his country's battle against Russia, as Berlin pledged unwavering support for Kyiv ahead of a widely expected counter-offensive.

Berlin unveiled a new military package for Kyiv worth 2.7 billion euros (\$3 billion), its biggest yet for Ukraine, just before Zelensky's first visit to Germany since Russia's invasion. "In the most challenging time in the modern history of Ukraine, Germany proved to be our true friend and reliable ally, which stands decisively side-by-side with the Ukrainian people in the struggle to defend freedom and democratic values," Zelensky wrote in the guestbook at the German president's official residence.

He also thanked Chancellor Olaf Scholz for Germa-

Kuwait-based Leading Digital Solutions Provider KEMS-Zajil Telecom Awarded With Global ISO & PCI DSS Certifications

International

Tough new asylum rules spur many migrants to seek legal path to US

Asylum-seekers are supposed to set up an interview appointment through a smartphone application

MATAMOROS: With tough new asylum rules in place, many migrants on the US-Mexico border were seeking legal routes to enter the United States on Saturday, despite warnings of a chaotic surge in crossings.

Gustavo Rodriguez, who fled Venezuela after deserting the military, was among those who saw official channels as offering the best chance of being allowed to stay on US soil. "I want to enter legally," he told AFP in Matamoros, one of several Mexican cities along the border where thousands of migrants fleeing poverty, crime or persecution are gathered.

US President Joe Biden's right-wing opponents predicted a rush across the border after pandemic-era restrictions allowing for immediate expulsion ended at midnight Thursday. So far the surge failed to materialize, though thousands of migrants had tried to enter the United States in the days leading up to the rule changes.

That was because anyone crossing the border illegally now faces a five-year ban on applying for legal entry as well as possible criminal charges. Asylum-seekers are supposed to set up an interview appointment through a smartphone application called CBP One or processing centers the US plans in Colombia, Guatemala and other countries.

But migrants say using the app is a lottery, despite Washington's promise to increase the number of appointments available each day to 1,000. Jose Manuel Tovar was one of the lucky ones -- after four months of trying he finally got an appointment. "I cried. My family, all my colleagues were crying with joy," the Venezuelan told AFP.

Political controversy

The policy shift has been contentious, with Biden's supporters on the left saying the new rules are too

strict while opponents on the right have claimed, without evidence, that he is "opening the borders." Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador called for patience Saturday when reporters asked about the migration crisis during a visit to a border checkpoint in Matamoros.

Mexico said Friday that the number of US-bound migrants crossing its territory was ebbing and the situation at the frontier was calm. "The flux is dropping today. We have not had confrontations or situations of violence on the border," Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard told reporters. Around 26,500 migrants were estimated to be waiting in the main Mexican cities along the frontier, he said. The national immigration agency ordered its offices to stop issuing documents authorizing migrants to transit through Mexico, authorities announced.

Guatemala said that it was bracing for a major humanitarian situation there because it would have to offer shelter to migrants in transit applying for US asylum. Erika Guevara Rosas, Americas director at rights group Amnesty International, said the US government was "outsourcing its border enforcement to Mexico and now Colombia and Guatemala, but it's not willing to take responsibility for the chaos its policies have created."

The legal channels available to migrants also include family reunification programs and humanitarian permits for Venezuelans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Cubans. In any of these cases, however, migrants must process their claims before arriving at ports of entry.

There are a few exceptions, such as if they were denied asylum in a transit country, have been unable to use the CBP One app or in the case of unaccompanied children. A particular fear of human rights campaigners is that the situation will continue to be exploited by people smugglers who have turned ille-



FRONTON: Migrants wait for a bus to take them to a processing center after turning themselves over to US Border Patrol in Fronton, Texas on May 12, 2023. The US-Mexico border appeared calm on May 12 as tough asylum rules come into force, with senior officials in Washington expressing confidence that the new system would work. — AFP

gal migration into a multimillion-dollar business.

"Some of the most cruel solutions produce disorder and empower people smugglers," said David Miliband, president of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). "The IRC is convinced that there is a practical, safe and orderly way through the current situation, grounded in international experience," he added.

Despite the tough deterrents, Randy Vargas was doubtful that his fellow Venezuelans would stop arriving at the US-Mexico frontier. "We're talking about thousands of Venezuelans just on the border and thousands more coming," he told AFP in Ciudad Juarez, south of El Paso, Texas. "What are they going to do with them?... Migrants will never be stopped," he said. — AFP

Sudan becomes battleground for foreign fighters

KHARTOUM: Sudan has long sent mercenaries abroad, but now the country itself has become a battleground for foreign fighters and shadowy military backers lured by money and gold, experts say. Armed "fortune seekers" are flooding into the fight from across Africa's Sahel region including Mali, Chad and Niger, UN special representative Volker Perthes has said, warning that "their number is not insignificant". Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has accused the rival Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of recruiting fighters from troubled nearby countries, including "mercenaries from Chad, the Central African Republic and Niger".

Sudan's army has claimed to have killed "a foreign sniper" in the ranks of the RSF, and witnesses in Khartoum say they have heard some RSF paramilitaries speak French, the language of neighbouring Chad.

For the past month, Sudan has been rocked by deadly battles between de facto leader Burhan and his former deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hameed Daglo, also known as Hemei. The RSF under Daglo, a former camel trader, emerged out of the notorious Janjaweed militias which from 2003 pillaged villages in the Darfur region where they were accused of widespread atrocities and war crimes.

In recent years the RSF has sent guns for hire into the Yemen war, on the side of Saudi Arabia and

the United Arab Emirates against Iran-backed Huthi rebels, and to Libya, in support of different camps including eastern-based general Khalifa Haftar.

Washington and Brussels charge the RSF has ties with Russia's Wagner mercenary group, which is fighting in Ukraine and has long been active in multiple African countries, including Libya where it backed Haftar. Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin recently insisted that "for two years, not a single Wagner... fighter has been present in Sudan. And today there is none". Cameron Hudson, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that "the Wagner group is not fighting in Sudan, but they have technical advisors".

The European Union in February imposed new sanctions against Wagner, accusing it of human rights abuses in Ukraine as well as Sudan, Mali and CAR. After major fighting erupted in Sudan in mid-April, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken voiced "deep concern about the engagement" of Wagner there, charging that the group "brings more death and destruction" wherever it operates.

Western diplomats have reported seeing groups of mercenaries frequently passing through Khartoum's airport and hotels since the CAR government in 2018 called on Wagner to help repress a rebellion.

Daglo's family has long controlled gold mines in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, Africa's third-largest producer of the precious metal that has also attracted the attention of Wagner.

The US Treasury has accused Prigozhin of operating shadow companies in Sudan that were awarded gold-mining concessions, and the latest EU sanctions also targeted gold companies linked to Wagner in Sudan.

For Daglo, gold has provided a revenue stream to



ABU SIMBEL: Passengers fleeing war-torn Sudan arrive at Qastal land port crossing between Egypt and Sudan. Air strikes pummelled Khartoum, with representatives of Sudan's warring factions meeting in Saudi Arabia for talks to prevent a "humanitarian catastrophe" as the fighting entered a fifth week. — AFP

pay fighters, said Andreas Krieg, associate professor of security studies at King's College London. "The fact that Hemei has access to quite a lot of gold wealth and avenues to bring it to market means he can pay salaries in a way that many in sub-Saharan Africa or the Sahel cannot," Krieg told AFP. "We had people from Chad join the RSF as well over the years looking for salaries."

Hemei hails from western Darfur's pastoralist Arab Rizeigat people and has family roots in Chad, with which Sudan shares a long and porous border. Sudanese militias have long padded their ranks by offering "Chadian Arabs" access

to Sudanese citizenship and land abandoned by displaced non-Arabs", the Small Arms Survey research project found in 2017.

The RSF in its recent social media campaign has published videos of fighters in Chad and Niger voicing their support for them. While the RSF can draw on fighters from Chad and elsewhere, it is believed to receive weapons from Libya, analysts say.

Krieg said that areas under Haftar's control are now a likely "hub and node to deliver arms and supplies to the RSF". Weapons sent there in the past by the UAE "could now be proliferated with plausible deniability to the RSF", he said. — AFP

252 candidates file nominations...

Continued from Page 1

of them contested the elections after 71 hopefuls withdrew. The withdrawal door is open until seven days before election day.

Former speakers Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Ahmad Al-Saadoun are contesting and are expected to compete for the head of the Assembly's post after the polls. Ghanem told reporters after registering for the elections that he is ready to serve the people as a speaker or a member. Two groups are fighting this election. One is led by Ghanem and the other by Saadoun. The government has not said which side it will support.

Kuwait is divided into five electoral constituencies, with each electing 10 MPs to the 50-member

Assembly. In the first constituency, 10 members of the 2022 Assembly and four ex-MPs are contesting. In the second district, 10 members of the 2022 house and six former MPs are contesting.

In the third constituency, eight members of the 2022 Assembly and six former MPs are fighting for the 10 seats. In the fourth electoral district, nine members of the 2022 Assembly and five former MPs are in the fray. In the fifth constituency, all the 10 members of the 2022 Assembly and five former MPs are running.

Candidates have focused their attention on the need to restore elusive political stability after almost two decades of political crises in a country with just 1.5 million citizens and oil production exceeding 2.5 million barrels per day. The country has amassed foreign reserves exceeding \$700 billion, but public services and roads have badly deteriorated in the past several years as a result of non-stop political disputes. There are around 793,000 eligible voters in Kuwait.

While the Zionist entity and Islamic Jihad committed to the ceasefire, both warned they would not hesitate to resume fire if the other side violated the agreement. Tariq Salmi, an Islamic Jihad spokesman, said if the Zionist entity "commits any foolish act or any assassination... the resistance will resume where it left off".

There were multiple failed rounds of truce talks led by Egypt, sparking fears the conflict could escalate before a deal was reached, a diplomatic source close to the negotiations told AFP. Lebanese politician Bassel Al-Hassan was a "key facilitator" in contacting the Islamic Jihad leadership and getting the talks back on track, said the source, who was not authorized to speak publicly to the media.

Hassan chairs the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, an inter-governmental agency which confirmed his "instrumental role" in facilitating talks between Islamic Jihad leader Ziyad Al-Nakhala and truce mediators. "We managed to make certain arrangements so that there was a communication channel with the UN and the Egyptians," said a committee official, requesting anonymity due to the sensitivities of the negotiations. — AFP

Ex-PM Khan calls for...

Continued from Page 1

He previously told reporters that "one man, the army chief" was behind his arrest. But Khan distanced himself from the attacks against the military's installations at the protests, denying his party workers were involved and calling for an independent investigation into the violence. The army, which denies the accusations made by Khan, on Saturday warned against attempts to create "misperceptions" against the institution.

At least nine people died in the unrest this week, police and hospitals have said. Hundreds of police officers were injured and more than 4,000 people detained, mostly in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, according to authorities. At least 10 senior PTI leaders have been arrested since the protests began, one of Khan's lawyers said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the head of a shaky coalition, on Saturday warned that those involved in "facilitating, abetting and perpetrating" the violence should be arrested within 72 hours. "Those who demonstrated anti-state behavior will be arrested and tried in anti-terrorist courts," he said during a visit to Lahore. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has repeatedly vowed that police will re-arrest Khan, who remains wildly popular ahead of elections due in October.



LAHORE: An activist of Tehreek-e-Insaf party listens to Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan's speech on a phone in Zaman Park on May 13, 2023. — AFP

The Islamabad High Court ruled that Khan should be given protection from arrest until Monday. "If Pakistan had a Doomsday Clock, it would be reading sixty seconds to midnight," read a Sunday editorial in Dawn, the country's leading English language newspaper. "There is a very real possibility that we may see the unleashing of total chaos if someone doesn't push the reset button," it said.

Khan won the 2018 election on an anti-corruption campaign, voted in by an electorate weary of decades of dynastic politics. Independent analysts say he was brought to power with the support of the military, before falling out with the generals. "Everyone

knows who it is. It's the military behind (Khan's arrest)," 21-year-old PTI supporter Mohsin Khan told AFP outside the party chief's home. The pushcart seller added that he wanted the military and politicians "to work together".

The political crisis has simmered for months, with Khan attempting to disrupt the coalition government by dissolving two provincial parliaments he controlled and agitating for early elections. Mobile data services and access to social media platforms including Facebook and YouTube, which were cut shortly after Khan's arrest on Tuesday, had been partly restored around the country as of Saturday. — AFP

Shaky Gaza truce holds...

Continued from Page 1

destruction," his relative said, standing beside the rubble. Medics said 190 people were wounded in Gaza.

UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland welcomed the truce and said he was "deeply saddened by the loss of life and injuries". Pope Francis said "weapons will not bring security and stability" to Zionists and Palestinians. "On the contrary, they will continue to destroy any hope of peace," the pontiff said during his Sunday address at the Vatican.

Sunday also saw the Zionist entity reopen its two crossings with Gaza, also paving the way for supplies of medicine, food and fuel to reach the impoverished territory. The closure had affected Palestinians with work permits or permission to access essential medical treatment not available in Gaza, which has been under a crippling Zionist-led blockade since Islamist group Hamas rose to power in 2007.

International

Thai polls close with army-backed prime minister tipped for defeat

Millions of Thais cast ballots at 95,000 polling stations scattered across the country

BANGKOK: Vote counting got under way in Thailand's general election Sunday with pro-democracy opposition parties tipped to defeat the conservative military-backed government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha after almost a decade in power. Opinion surveys pointed to a resounding defeat for ex-army chief and coup leader Prayut after a campaign that played out as a clash between a young generation yearning for change and the traditionalist, royalist establishment.

The main opposition Pheu Thai party, fronted by the daughter of billionaire former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, was ahead in final opinion polls. But in a kingdom where victory at the ballot box has often been trumped by coups and court orders, there are fears the military could seek to cling on, raising the prospect of fresh instability.

Polling stations closed at 5:00 pm (1000 GMT) after a smooth day of voting, with no major problems reported by Thai media. Preliminary results are expected later in the evening, though the final number of seats won by each party will not be officially confirmed for several weeks.

After casting her ballot in Bangkok, Pheu Thai's main candidate Paetongtarn Shinawatra showed no signs of nerves. "Today is going to be a good day. I have very positive energy about it," the 36-year-old told reporters, smiling broadly.

Millions of Thais cast ballots at 95,000 polling stations scattered from the lush-forested mountains of the north to the idyllic sands of the southern beaches. A turnout of 90 percent in last Sunday's early round of voting pointed to an electorate looking for change, but the opposition faces an uphill battle to secure power, thanks to the junta-scripted 2017 constitution.

The new premier will be chosen jointly by the 500 elected MPs and 250 senate members appointed by Prayut's junta—stacking the deck in the army's favour. In the controversial last election in 2019, Prayut rode senate support to become prime minister at the head of a complex multi-party coalition.

Protest legacy

The election is the first since major youth-led pro-democracy protests erupted across Bangkok in 2020 with demands to curb the power and spending of Thailand's king—breaching a long-held taboo on questioning the monarchy.

The demonstrations petered out as COVID-19 curbs were imposed and dozens of leaders were arrested, but their energy has fuelled growing support for the more radical opposition Move Forward Party (MFP).



BANGKOK: Pheu Thai Party's prime ministerial candidate Paetongtarn Shinawatra (2R) waits in a queue as she arrives with her mother Pojaman Na Pombejra (2L) and sister Pintongta Kunakornwong (L) to cast their ballot at a polling station during Thailand's general election in Bangkok. —AFP

As he arrived to vote in Bangkok, MFP leader Pita Limjaroenrat, 42, said he expected a "historic turnout". "Younger generations these days care about their rights and they will come out to vote," he told reporters.

While MFP is looking for support from millennial and Gen Z voters—who make up nearly half the 52 million-strong electorate—Pheu Thai's base is in the rural northeast where voters are still grateful for the welfare policies implemented by Thaksin in the early 2000s.

Prayut also urged voters to turn out in large numbers as he cast his ballot on Sunday. The former general has made an unashamedly nationalist pitch to older voters, painting himself as the only candidate capable of saving Thailand from chaos and ruin.

But he has lagged badly in the polls, blamed for a sputtering economy and feeble recovery from the pandemic, which battered the kingdom's crucial tourism industry. Voter Pakorn Adulpan, 85, said he was impressed by the quality of this year's contest.

"I am very hopeful because there is strong competition between many talented candidates,

compared to the elections in the past," he told AFP. Rights groups accuse Prayut of overseeing a major crackdown on basic freedoms, with a huge spike in prosecutions under Thailand's draconian royal defamation laws.

The country has seen a dozen coups in the last century and has been locked over the last two decades in a rolling cycle of street protests, coups and court orders dissolving political parties. The Shinawatra family's bitter tussle with the royalist-military establishment has been at the heart of the drama, with Thaksin ousted in a 2006 coup and his sister Yingluck unseated by Prayut in 2014.

An unclear or disputed result this time could lead to a fresh round of demonstrations and instability. Adding to the uncertainty, rumours are already swirling that MFP could be dissolved by court order—the same fate that befell its predecessor Future Forward Party after it performed unexpectedly well at the 2019 poll.

Once results come in, attention will turn to the Electoral Commission, the judges and the generals to see what the next steps will be. — AFP

Ghana chooses Mahama for 2024 race

ACCRA: Ghana's largest opposition party chose the country's ex-president John Dramani Mahama as its flagbearer Sunday for the 2024 presidential election. Delegates of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) voted in primaries on Saturday through Sunday to choose a candidate for both the presidential and parliamentary polls.

Mahama was declared the overwhelming winner after polling 297,603, or 98.9 percent, of the votes while his challenger former Kumasi mayor Kojo Bonsu scored 3,181, or 1.1 percent. The primaries come as Ghana holds talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over a \$3 billion bailout to help overcome an economic crisis, and as it faces a growing jihadist threat from a conflict in neighbouring Burkina Faso.

On Saturday, more than 355,000 NDC party delegates converged at 401 voting centres across the country for the ballot. Despite defeats in 2016 and 2020 elections by incumbent President Nana Akufo-Addo, 64-year-old Mahama had been eyeing a return and had faced off with former central bank governor Kwabena Duffuor and Bonsu.

But Duffuor withdrew from the race late on Friday, saying the party was not ready to conduct a "free and fair election". Mahama had already been tipped by most political analysts to win the primary, based on his experience and influence in the opposition party.

"He has been tried and tested and comes with a lot of experience," Kwame Asah-Asante, a political science lecturer at the University of Ghana, told AFP. "Mahama is the most marketable candidate in the party now. I don't see the delegates voting against him. The party stands a better chance of returning to power with Mahama than any other candidate."

Duffuor, also a former finance minister, has a large base in the Ashanti Region—the stronghold of the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP). He had reversed his decision earlier on Friday to place a court injunction on the primary race after expressing reservations about discrepancies in the electoral roll. — AFP



BELEDWEYNE: Men walk through floodwater in Beledweyne, central Somalia. Around 200,000 people have been displaced due to flash flooding in central Somalia, a regional official told AFP, as the Shabelle River burst its banks and submerged roads. —AFP

22 people killed in Somalia floods

BELEDWEYNE: Flash flooding in central Somalia has killed 22 people and affected over 450,000, the UN's humanitarian agency OCHA said Sunday, after the Shabelle River burst its banks, forcing tens of thousands out of their homes.

Heavy rainfall earlier in the week sent water gushing into homes in Beledweyne town in Hiran region, submerging roads and buildings as residents grabbed their belongings and waded through flooded streets in search of refuge.

"Initial estimates indicate that the flash and riverine floods across Somalia have affected at least 460,470 people, of whom nearly 219,000 have been displaced from their homes mainly in flood-prone areas, and 22 killed," the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said.

The floods "have left a trail of destruction... inundating homes and farmland, washing away livestock,

temporarily closing schools and health facilities, and damaging roads," the agency said in a situation report. The disaster comes on the heels of a record drought that has left millions of Somalis on the brink of famine, with the troubled nation also battling an Islamist insurgency for decades.

Residents told AFP earlier that the floods have become a familiar ordeal to many of them, with experts saying that extreme weather events are happening with increased frequency and intensity due to climate change.

Fartun Ali -- not her real name -- said it was her fifth time fleeing flash flooding in Beledweyne. "Whenever the river breaks the banks, we flee," the 35-year-old mother of eight told AFP. East and central Africa often suffers from extreme weather during the rainy seasons.

Earlier this month, 135 people were killed and more than 9,000 left homeless after heavy rains lashed Rwanda, triggering floods and landslides in several parts of the hilly nation. More than 400 people lost their lives due to torrential downpours, floods and landslides last week in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. — AFP

arrest of external contractors involved in supporting strike calls in the same area. The authorities had announced in late April that they had begun replacing 4,000 workers who were striking to demand better wages and working conditions.

However, the pro-labour news agency ILNA reported that the strikers in South Pars had "continued to assert their union demands". Their key calls included a "79 percent increase in wages", as well as ending discriminatory practices and allowing for freedom of association.

In 2022, Iran experienced several waves of strikes by teachers and bus drivers who denounced low salaries and the high cost of living. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in late April that some labour protests had been beneficial to the country because they helped the state understand workers' demands. Iran's economy has long suffered under Western sanctions, having recently been hit by high inflation and a record devaluation of its national currency. — AFP

Iran arrests eight over workers' strike

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities have arrested eight people for "leading" a workers' strike at a key gas site in the south of the country, local media reported on Sunday. "Eight main leaders of the workers' strike in the South Pars projects have been arrested by the intelligence services," Akbar Pourat, the deputy local governor, was quoted as saying by Tasnim news agency.

Some 40,000 people are employed at the South Pars/North Dome mega-field, the largest known gas reserve in the world, which Iran shares with Qatar. "Eight companies and subcontractors active in this area have been blacklisted for incitement to strike," Pourat added. In early May, local media reported the

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Business

MONDAY, MAY 15, 2023

NIC records net profit of KD 1.1m at 1.3 fils per share in Q1 of 2023

Achievements made despite challenging local and regional market environment



Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

- The company's solid financial position lies behind successfully overcoming challenges and leveraging available investment opportunities.
- Q1 results are supported by maintaining operations despite the capital markets' negative performance in Kuwait and the region.



Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Mukhaizim

- One of NIC's significant achievements is seizing the best investment opportunities and attracting new clients, investments and advisory deals during Q1 2023.
- The excellent investment performance reflects the management's success in adopting strategies that achieve financial returns for clients and maintain the company's position in the market.

KUWAIT: National Investments Company (NIC) revealed its financial results for the first quarter of this year, including a detailed analytical presentation on its performance and financial position for 2023.

In a statement to the press, NIC Chairman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi said the company's financial results for the first quarter of this year were supported by maintaining operations via executing a range of mergers, acquisitions, sales, restructurings and various advisory services leading to positive results despite adverse fluctuations in the capital markets both in Kuwait and the region.

As one of the largest investment companies in Kuwait and the region and operating for more than

Outstanding customer service
Al-Kharafi also highlighted NIC's ability to provide diversified and innovative investment products according to customers' requirements and ambitions while guiding them to achieve their investment goals, which contributes to achieving geographical investment diversity and expanding the scope of the company's investment services to new areas regionally and internationally through a clear risk management strategy.

This allowed the Wealth Management Sector to obtain one of the most important awards at the level of the financial industry regionally, which is the "Best Wealth Management Company in Kuwait for 2023" by the global platform Euromoney, based on specific criteria,

terized by diversity and inclusiveness. NIC continued to initiate and support many initiatives and programs, including sports activities and events, providing a platinum sponsorship to the Padel Open Tournament and Championship, which included several social enterprises. The company has also cooperated with the Kuwait Food Bank and Relief to provide Eid Al-Fitr clothing to underprivileged families. This initiative has had a positive impact on these families.

To conclude, Al-Kharafi expressed his sincere appreciation to NIC's customers and confirmed that the company's key objective is to achieve further positive results in the future. He also thanked the regulatory authorities, wishing everyone success.

Powerful performance and ongoing opportunities

Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Mukhaizim, Board Member and CEO of the National Investments Company, praised the remarkable performance and efforts of the Financial Advisory Services Department along with the company's extensive network, its strategic vision in attracting investments and advisory services during the first quarter of this year. These deals included a capital increase agreement for a closed joint stock company. NIC has played an independent investment advisor role for a reverse merger deal within the food and beverage sector. The company's Alternative Investments team achieved two deals in the real estate sector in the United States of America and France during the first quarter of the this year.

On the performance of the MENA's Priced Investments Sector, Al-Mukhaizim pointed out that the first quarter of 2023 witnessed an excellent performance of investment funds, reflecting the success of management in adopting strategies that achieve financial returns for clients while maintaining the company's position in the market.

Looking at the performance of funds during this period, Al-Mukhaizim stated that despite the negative factors behind the market volatility and concerns related to global and local political and economic conditions, mainly the global political tensions and conflicts, which made expectations for global economic growth, weak; also, the rise in international inflation rates and the continued tightening of monetary policy by the Federal Reserve by raising interest rates to control inflation. Some of our investment funds have yet achieved outstanding performance compared to the rest of the local funds established in Kuwait, thanks to rational decisions and prudent management of funds, making investment decisions consistent with good and wise investment practices in achieving rewarding returns for unit holders by investing in the shares of preferred companies with high revenues, solid management, and a clear future

vision, which had a significant impact on stability at the level of cash distributions and grants.

Zajil Services & Telecommunications Fund has achieved a positive performance of 7.18 percent in addition to Mawarid Industrial and Petroleum Services Fund, which also recorded a positive performance of 2.17 percent. On 20/4/2023, cash dividends were distributed to the unit-holders of Al-Wataniya Investment Fund for the second half of 2022, at 24 fils per unit of capital to net unit value as of 31/03/2023, thanks to NIC's specialized and experienced team.

Al-Mukhaizim also highlighted that NIC had expanded its portfolio as a Market Maker by joining Dalqan Real Estate Company, bringing up to 11 companies listed on Bursa Kuwait, as part of its continuous efforts to contribute to the development of the market.

The real estate investment sector has also witnessed a significant upgrade, as occupancy rates within the company's properties and properties managed by it have been raised to unprecedented rates of 100 percent in some properties, renting vacant units to increase the occupancy rate and moving forward with the renovation and development of Wataniya Resort during the current year.

Digitization of services

Regarding digital services, innovation and offering solutions to the company's customers, National Investments Company has continuously introduced new choices within the electronic trading service and several other features for customers' smooth and flexible use.

It has also developed an electronic real estate system to enable tenants to follow up on all matters related to their units, such as maintenance requests and electronic payments and property owners to follow up on their assets and financial flows. The size of real estate portfolios has been increased with several additional properties managed by the sector, which has increased the revenues by 4.5 percent.

Positive work environment

To conclude, Al-Mukhaizim praised NIC's human resources efforts in creating a positive work environment for employees during the first quarter. One of the initiatives undertaken by the department was relaunching a program dedicated to offering first aid certificates to the company's employees to respond to emergencies. NIC has also provided a health insurance program that provides additional coverage and benefits to all employees. Additionally, the company has held several events and activities to create an effective communication environment between employees.

- The company continues its digital transformation strategy and expansion in the application and development of intelligent solutions to meet the needs and aspirations of customers.

- The company's Market Maker portfolio has expanded with 11 companies listed on Bursa Kuwait.

three-and-a-half decades, NIC achieved outstanding successes within its multiple activities as a result of its ability to overcome all crises and exceptional situations, in addition to its ability to preserve the interests of its clients with high efficiency.

Al-Kharafi reviewed the financial results achieved by the National Investments Company during the first quarter of 2023. The company earned a net profit of KD 1.1 million at 1.3 fils per share, explaining that the reasons for the decrease in net profit is due to the change in interest rates in the region and the world, which led to a negative reflection in the performance of GCC market indices, where these indices declined by 3.3 percent in Kuwait, 6.9 percent in the UAE market and 5.4 percent in the Qatari market.

Total assets under management at the end of the first quarter of 2023 amounted to KD 1.090 billion, while the mother company's total shareholders' equity reached KD 192.9 million during the first quarter of this year.

a lengthy evaluation process, a comprehensive study on factors such as key performance indicators and financial ratios in addition to innovation and new services. The Euromoney awards and classifications have extended for over 50 years, attracting thousands of entries from international financial institutions.

Digital transformation

The National Investments Company's strategy is to ensure reaching the highest levels of customer satisfaction through constant communication with them sharing studies and surveys, and moving on with digital transformation to expand the application of intelligent solutions and develop them to make a qualitative leap in innovative while developing investment services and products that meet all the needs and aspirations of the company's customers.

Al-Kharafi also revealed the company's remarkable corporate social responsibility efforts, charac-

terized by diversity and inclusiveness. NIC continued to initiate and support many initiatives and programs, including sports activities and events, providing a platinum sponsorship to the Padel Open Tournament and Championship, which included several social enterprises. The company has also cooperated with the Kuwait Food Bank and Relief to provide Eid Al-Fitr clothing to underprivileged families. This initiative has had a positive impact on these families.

In addition, analysts say, Iranian users have online safety concerns when using the approved local apps.

"We have to understand they have needs," said Amir Rashidi, director of digital rights and security at the New York-based Miaan Group. "As an Iranian citizen, what would you do if registering for university is only based on one of these apps? Or what would you do if you need access to government services?" he said.

The locally developed apps lack a "clear privacy policy", according to software developer Keikhosrow Heydari-Nejat. "I have installed some of the domestic messaging apps on a separate phone, not the one that I am using every day," the 23-year-old said, adding he had done so to access online government services. "If they (government) shut the internet down, I will keep them installed but I will visit my friends in person," he said.

In a further effort to push people onto the domestic

Iranians pushed to take up homegrown apps as net tightens

TEHRAN: Banned from using popular Western apps, Iranians have been left with little choice but to take up state-backed alternatives, as the authorities tighten internet restrictions for security reasons following months of protests. Iranians are accustomed to using virtual private networks, or VPNs, to evade restrictions and access prohibited websites or apps, including the US-owned Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

The authorities went as far as imposing total internet blackouts during the protests that erupted after the September death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, following her arrest for an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's dress code for women. Connections are back up and running again, and even those who are tech-savvy are being corralled into using the apps approved by the authorities such as Neshan for navigation and Snapp! to hail a car ride. As many as 89 million people have signed up to Iranian messaging apps including Bale, Ita, Rubika and Soroush, the government says, but not everyone is keen on making the switch.

"The topics that I follow and the friends who I communicate with are not on Iranian platforms," said Mansour Roghani, a resident in the capital Tehran. "I use Telegram and WhatsApp and, if my VPN still allows me, I'll check Instagram," the former municipality employee

said, adding that he has not installed domestic apps as replacements. At the height of the deadly Amini protests in October, the Iranian government cited security concerns as it moved to restrict internet access and added Instagram and WhatsApp to its long list of blocked applications. "No one wants to limit the internet and we can have international platforms" if the foreign companies agree to introduce representative offices in Iran, Telecommunications Minister Issa Zarepour said last month. Meta, the American giant that owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has said it has no intention of setting up offices in the Islamic republic, which remains under crippling US sanctions. The popularity of the state-sanctioned apps may not be what it seems, however, with the government encouraging people to install them by shifting essential online public services to the homegrown platforms which are often funded by the state.

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In a further effort to push people onto the domestic



TEHRAN: In this picture taken on April 19, 2023, an advertisement for the Iranian messaging app Bale is displayed in a street in Tehran. — AFP

platforms, the telecommunications ministry connected the four major messaging apps, enabling users to communicate across the platforms. "Because the government is going for the maximum number of users, they are trying to connect these apps," the analyst Rashidi said, adding all of the domestic platforms "will enjoy

financial and technical support". Iran has placed restrictions on apps such as Facebook and Twitter since 2009, following protests over disputed presidential elections. In November 2019, Iran imposed nationwide internet restrictions during protests sparked by surprise fuel price hikes. — AFP

Business

'Zain Omantel International' to revolutionize telecom landscape

ZOI, a first-of-its-kind JV to become Mideast's premier wholesale powerhouse

KUWAIT: Zain, a leading telecommunications operator providing digital and ICT services in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, and Omantel, Oman's leading integrated telecommunications services provider and the preeminent regional wholesale provider, announce the launch of 'Zain Omantel International' (ZOI), an unprecedented joint venture that will establish itself as the Middle East's premier international wholesale services provider. This groundbreaking partnership aims to revolutionize the wholesale telecommunications sector by offering a unique proposition that combines the strengths of both parties to deliver unparalleled service and support to customers worldwide.



- A partnership to create new opportunities for growth and innovation with Zain and Omantel customers benefiting from quality internet connectivity, voice, roaming, and messaging
- Sohail Qadir appointed as CEO of ZOI

ZOI signifies a substantial advancement in the telecommunications industry and is poised to become a global powerhouse due to Zain's extensive regional presence and success in the retail and digital arenas, combined with Omantel's exceptional wholesale capabilities and comprehensive international subsea and terrestrial networks. The joint venture will cater to the end-to-end telecommunications needs of operators in the Middle East, as well as international carriers, data centers, hyperscalers, content, and cloud providers seeking services within the region and beyond.

As a result, ZOI will manage all international wholesale requirements of Zain and Omantel operations in eight countries, serving over 55 million customers. Furthermore, ZOI will optimize the existing wholesale businesses of both companies by reducing operating costs and increasing competitiveness through access to state-of-the-art low-latency and high-capacity services over its extended footprint.

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi comment-

ed, "This strategic value-enhancing partnership reflects the next stage of industry collaboration and advancement, and represents another significant milestone of our '4Sight' profitable growth strategy. It also demonstrates our commitment to transforming the business and creating synergies while extending our reach and capabilities to provide the highest quality services to our customers. ZOI is ideally positioned to evolve into a significant international player on the wholesale telecommunications scene that will benefit both Zain and Omantel on financial, commercial and operational levels."

Talal Al-Mamari, Omantel CEO, added, "The joint venture with Zain is a testament to our unwavering commitment to transforming the international arm of Omantel group into a

leading global provider, building on our existing position as a top regional wholesale player. ZOI is poised to become the primary gateway from our region to the rest of the world, leveraging the combined strengths of Omantel and Zain. With these differentiating factors, ZOI is the preferred partner with a truly unique presence in the international telecommunications landscape."

ZOI, in collaboration with the Omantel and Zain Group operating companies, will ensure that Zain and Omantel customers continue to experience supreme quality in international services such as internet connectivity, voice, roaming, messaging and more. Some noteworthy projects that ZOI will undertake, along with its consortium partners include the development of Blue-Raman; Africa-1; Jeddah to

Marseille (J2M) subsea systems and an extensive terrestrial network connecting most of the regional countries to the landing stations and data centers. Such high-profile projects, to name a few, will create an ecosystem that is unrivaled in the region.

Sohail Qadir has been appointed as the CEO of ZOI. With a proven track record of success, Qadir has spearheaded the development and expansion of Omantel's international wholesale business. During his 13-year tenure as the Vice President of Wholesale at Omantel, he successfully positioned the company on the global map and increased revenues ten-fold. Under Qadir's leadership, Omantel Wholesale had a remarkable transformational journey that resulted in investments in more than 20 subsea cables, hosting of global hyperscalers, direct interconnections with all major international service providers and extensive roaming coverage all over the world.

Sohail Qadir, ZOI CEO said, "The region has matured in terms of the scope and consumption of reliable wholesale services, and this strategic partnership in this integral part of the telecommunications business is well-timed to capitalize on global trends. I look forward to leading ZOI in delivering differentiated services to regional and international customers alike, and providing increased value and enhanced customer-experience to all associated stakeholders across our extensive operational footprint."

ZOI is set to be a game-changer in the telecommunications wholesale industry, offering a wide portfolio of services and solutions to meet the increasing demands of wholesale customers. This strategic partnership between Zain and Omantel embodies the realization of wholesale synergy, aimed at consolidating each party's international operations and growing the investment at the group-level.

Senior Fed official says monetary policy is 'on track'

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve is "on track" in its fight against inflation, with the full impact of its interest-rate hikes likely yet to be felt, a top Fed official said Friday. The US central bank has hiked its benchmark lending rate 10 times in quick succession since last year in a bid to tackle rising prices, which remain above its long-term target of two percent.

"We are 'doing what is necessary or expected' of us," Fed governor Philip Jefferson told a California conference in prepared remarks, referring to the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of being "on track." "Furthermore, monetary policy affects the economy and inflation with long and varied lags, and the full effects of our rapid tightening are still likely ahead of us," he said.

Jefferson, who President Joe Biden nominated earlier Friday to become the next vice chair of the Fed, sounded a more optimistic note on inflation than two of his peers on the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC). This suggests policymakers on the FOMC are divided over the likelihood of a further interest-rate hike when the committee next convenes June 13-14. "Should inflation remain high and the labor market remain tight, additional monetary policy tightening will likely be appropriate," Fed governor Michelle Bowman told a conference in Germany earlier Friday.

On Tuesday, New York Fed President John Williams also left the door open to a further interest rate hike to combat inflation. "We haven't said we're done raising rates," he told the Economic Club of New York. "I think what we're going to need to do—as we always do—is be data dependent," he said. Futures traders see the probability of another rate hike on June 14 as slim, although the odds of further tightening have increased in recent days, according to data from CME Group. — AFP



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KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 11 MAY 2023

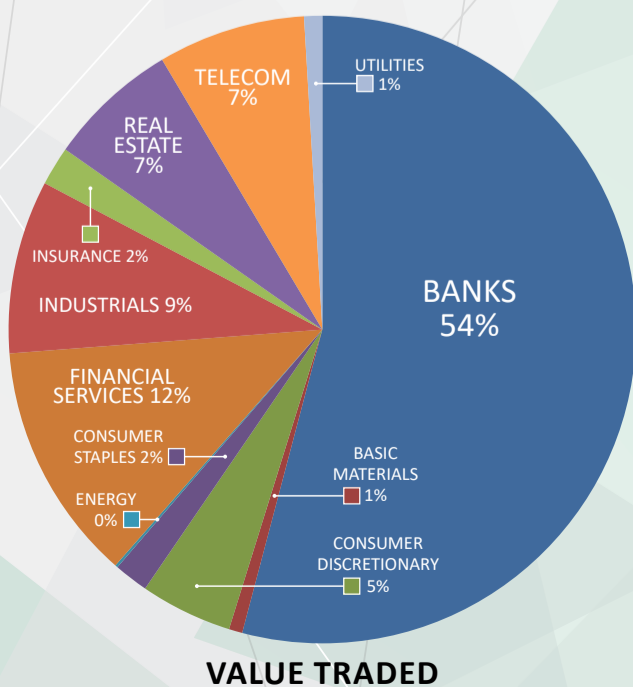
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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	21,729	7,670.96	-1.4%	-3.1%	-5.5%	351,090,281	143,263,190	30,459	16.4	1.2	70.6%
Main Market	9,056	5,531.05	-0.5%	-1.3%	-1.2%	149,542,913	21,019,956	10,084	14.0	0.7	29.4%
All Share	30,785	6,946.97	-1.2%	-2.7%	-4.7%	500,633,194	164,283,146	40,543	14.4	0.8	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	14,646	1,707.64	-1.5%	-2.8%	-4.8%	171,568,921	88,899,977	15,144	20.8	1.2	47.58%
Basic Materials	490	868.64	1.6%	-2.6%	0.4%	2,031,345	1,138,198	708	7.9	1.5	1.59%
Consumer Discretionary	994	1,481.95	2.8%	1.7%	-0.3%	26,461,816	7,799,758	2,427	13.2	0.9	3.23%
Consumer Staples	149	490.75	8.7%	7.4%	2.3%	7,570,665	2,912,453	719	NM	0.9	0.49%
Energy	204	973.96	-0.5%	-0.5%	-14.5%	2,174,717	223,651	365	9.9	0.6	0.66%
Financial Services	3,803	1,199.20	-1.0%	-2.5%	-4.6%	146,511,851	20,246,554	7,528	19.5	0.7	12.35%
Health Care	225	457.01	-1.2%	0.0%	-1.0%	3,987	1,916	2	11.8	1.0	0.73%
Industrials	3,401	979.11	0.0%	-2.6%	-9.2%	29,950,363	14,677,413	5,574	15.2	0.8	11.05%
Insurance	872	2,112.57	0.1%	-0.1%	36.2%	3,349,179	3,295,900	280	10.9	0.8	2.83%
Real Estate	2,376	1,105.52	1.1%	-3.4%	-8.5%	79,553,119	11,076,942	4,279	14.1	0.5	7.72%
Technology	8	582.00	-4.6%	0.0%	-16.4%	2,000	160	1	NM	0.7	0.03%
Telecommunications	3,416	1,113.36	-4.7%	-5.2%	-5.8%	23,003,658	12,478,050	3,026	11.2	1.4	11.10%
Utilities	200	478.95	2.2%	4.0%	-3.2%	8,451,573	1,532,174	490	13.8	1.7	0.65%

Top Gainers					Top Losers						
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFOUC	414	20.35%	1,150,927	453,684	301	KHOT	134	-25.14%	776	118	7
AMAR	60.1	14.91%	100,907	5,247	8	THURAYA	95.2	-21.97%	40,856	4,688	47
MEZZAN	411	10.48%	7,472,575	2,903,138	681	RKWC	95	-18.80%	1,191,326	120,690	12
FTI	47.4	9.98%	62,479	2,752	4	KAMCO	99	-11.61%	1,496,556	162,070	192
INJAZZAT	82.9	8.08%	5,586,316	458,544	138	MASAKEN	16.9	-11.05%	120,601	2,169	17

Top Volume					Top Value						
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	731	-0.95%	61,077,904	44,632,666	6,115	KFH	731	-0.95%	61,077,904	44,632,666	6,115
WARBANK	217	-3.13%	25,451,680	5,585,498	1,134	NBK	960	-2.04%	17,184,573	16,630,430	2,875
ZAIN	527	-6.06%	21,462,193	11,598,199	1,857	ZAIN	527	-6.06%	21,462,193	11,598,199	1,857
GBK	267	-3.26%	18,319,176	4,965,495	1,200	BOUBYAN	620	-3.13%	15,036,328	9,476,487	2,049
AAYAN	142	2.90%	17,951,576	2,518,968	416	AGLTY	617	1.98%	9,263,557	5,691,020	1,998



Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value dropped 14% and 19%, while Main Market dropped 25% and 4%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes are yet to overcome the resistance area. The market is under pressure are lacking motivation.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 6946, with support levels at 6933, 6918, and 6862, and resistance at 6959. The Premier index closed at 7670, with support levels at 7657, 7639, and 7597, while resistance at 7701. The Main index closed at 5531, with support levels at 5526, 5513, and 5495, while resistance at 5550.

Business

Al-Othman named 'Retail Banker of the Year in MENA' for second year in a row

In MEED's MENA Banking Excellence Awards for 2023

KUWAIT: Mohammed Al-Othman, GM-Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, was named "MENA Retail Banker of the Year", for the second year in a row, by MEED international magazine, within its MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2023. The award honors Al-Othman's keen endeavors and remarkable achievements in providing the best-in-class banking services as well as excellence in digital banking innovations.

For more than five years, Al-Othman has led the Consumer Banking Group team in the Kuwait's leading bank and one of the top banks across the region. During this, he set policies, goals and implementation mechanisms, and made a difference, not only in the lives of NBK Customers and their banking experience, but also in terms of the tremendous development achieved in the banking industry in Kuwait and the region during this period, thanks to the superior innovative digital products and services, and payment solutions comparable to global peers. As a result, NBK's name was associated, during those years, with pioneering and market-leading banking products and services.

MEED accentuated the significant and extended impact of these strides, noting that MENA Retail Banker of the Year, the award won by Al-Othman for the second year in a row, demonstrates the hard work and commitment of the banking leaders in the winning institutions. They helped drive progress and innovation, and made effective contributions to advance, not only their organizations, but the whole industry.

Pride and responsibility

Commenting on winning the award, Al-Othman said: "I feel proud and overjoyed with this recognition. However, I am well aware of the increasing responsibility with every success we achieve, as we have to double efforts to remain at the top, as the gap between us and our closest competitors widened over the past years. We also strive to maintain the precious trust of our customers by living up to their growing expectations, as we make more achievements."

"Throughout my career, I have made and seen many successes and achievements. However, I regard our achievements as a team over the past years as a completely different thing. We worked amid unprecedented adverse circumstances and exceptional challenges, ranging from the pandemic, to fast-paced technological advancement, and successive global crises."

NBK's culture

Al-Othman continued, saying: "But we, as usual in NBK, see things from a different perspective from others, as we focused on the entailed opportunities in these exceptional circumstances and challenges."

IPO activity in MENA remains strong: EY report

KUWAIT: The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region saw 10 IPOs with the combined proceeds of \$3.4 billion, an EY report showed this week. IPO activity in the MENA region retained strong momentum despite the weaker global sentiment, according to the EY MENA IPO Eye Q1 2023 report. This represents a 33 per cent drop in the number of listings and a 14 per cent decrease in value compared with Q1 2022.

Globally, Q1 2023 saw a total of 299 IPOs, raising \$21.5b – a 61 per cent decrease in volume year-on-year (YoY). This follows the trend for 2022, when IPO-bound companies and investors faced ongoing macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainties, exacerbated by stress in the global banking system. IPO windows are short, and funding conditions are getting tougher, with investors prioritizing value over growth.

The MENA region, however, remains buoyant, with a promising pipeline for the rest of the year, driven by various enabling initiatives, such as the Abu Dhabi IPO Fund (ADIPOF). Six companies in Saudi Arabia have announced their listing plans on the Saudi Exchange (Tadawul) Main Market. These include Ghida Al-Sultan Company, Foods Gate, Meyar Construction Co, Saudi Lime Industries Company, First Mills Company and HyperPay, said the EY report.

"Volatility experienced in the MENA equity market during 2022 continued into Q1 2023 due to rising interest rates, inflation concerns, unexpected global banking turbulence and geopolitical uncertainties, which has impacted investor sentiment. At the end of the quarter, six out of the 10 MENA IPOs had a positive return compared to their IPO price, with Presight AI Holding PLC achieving the highest gain of 146.3 per cent," the report said.

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

US inflation stubborn and decelerating

KUWAIT: Looking at FX, the greenback ended the week on a strong footing as sticky inflation figures and expectations strengthened the case that rates might stay at current levels for longer. The EUR/USD currency pair broke below the 1.0900 level, last closing around 1.0848. Meanwhile, the GBP/USD currency pair broke below the 1.2500 mark following the release of mixed GDP data, closing the week around 1.2457. Finally, the USD/JPY currency pair traded below the 135.00 level, yet, it was able to recoup and was last seen trading around the 135.71 mark.

US inflation decelerates

The decelerating yet stubborn trend of inflation in the United States continues, after annual CPI for April came in at 4.9 percent versus a previous and consensus figure of



KUWAIT: Mohammed Al-Othman receives "MENA Retail Banker of the Year".



Mohammed Al-Othman

lenged the obstacles. This is the prevailing mindset and culture in NBK as a business edifice and a banking school, which always make it stand out in times of crises and come out of it even stronger and better positioned for excellence."

"NBK's culture and work environment, which is characterized by innovation, decentralization, and open-door management as key drivers of all success,

- I am fortunate to work within a team of high-caliber professionals and talents
- We contribute to shaping the future of the banking industry, not only anticipating and preparing for it
- We launched the first digital bank in Kuwait, which remains the only one so far
- We believe in the capabilities of Kuwaiti youth and find it imperative to develop them to lead the future

require that all brilliant ideas should undergo careful study of customer preferences and extensive scientific analysis of their needs, based on the communication channels working day and night, and using the most advanced technologies," he remarked.

Streak of advanced offerings

Highlighting the key leading banking products and services launched by NBK in the Kuwaiti retail banking market over the recent past period, Al-Othman said: "During the past period, we succeeded in introducing a streak of market-leading products and services to our customers, the Kuwaiti market and the regional banking industry. We continue to work

to provide more, hoping to maintain our customers' image of NBK as the bank they know and trust."

Al-Othman referred to the many services that NBK was the first to introduce in Kuwait, including NFC payments, noting that NBK anticipated the pandemic and resulting repercussions by providing the first payment services using digital wallets at the beginning of 2020, as we introduced Fitbit Pay and

Garmin Pay, followed by the most popular digital payment solutions: Samsung Wallet, Apple Pay, and most recently Google Pay.

"We laid the foundation for a new era of digital payments in Kuwait, and made transactions easier, faster, and more secure," he remarked.

The future of the industry

Al-Othman explained that the key to many of NBK's achievements is its forward-looking approach, not only in anticipating future changes, but also by contributing in making that future, as he said: "We are already contributing to making a promising banking future, while everyone was competing

to provide digital banking services that we were the first to introduce, we were thinking of launching "Weyay", the first fully digital bank, which remains the only one in Kuwait so far, more than one year and a half after its launch."

"We managed to develop a comprehensive vision for how future branches operate by launching self-service branches, setting an example for the future branch whose services are integrated with our superior digital services, to provide a comprehensive and exceptional banking experience," he added.

Well-deserved recognition

The Consumer Banking Group is located on the 27th and 28th floors of NBK's soaring HQ building. The team is evidently characterized by the one-family spirit, dedication and a burning desire for more successes, and a leader who believes in the capabilities of Kuwaiti youth and sees it imperative to develop and prepare them as future leaders.

Based on that, Al-Othman commented on the team's role in achieving this success, saying: "I consider myself fortunate to work within a team bringing together a group of high-caliber professionals and talents. Recognizing their tireless efforts with awards and honors is absolutely well-deserved."

"Every member in the team puts the needs of our customers as a source of inspiration, achieving customer satisfaction and contributing to enriching their comprehensive banking experience, being the key driver to pursue hard work and innovation," he added.

Nespresso Kuwait launches a color revolution with Vertuo Pop

KUWAIT: Nespresso has launched the Vertuo Pop machine to complement its Vertuo range as the smallest and most affordable machine for Vertuo to date. Vertuo offers over 30 unique coffee blends and single origins in a range of cup sizes for coffee lovers to enjoy their favorite drink any way they like, whatever the moment from just the touch of a button.

Francisco Nogueira, Business Executive Officer for Nespresso Middle East & Africa explained. "By introducing Vertuo in Kuwait, we are expanding at-home coffee options for coffee lovers and meeting the needs of consumers across the country who enjoy large cups of coffee with the high-quality Nespresso is known for. With Vertuo Pop we are introducing the most compact and colorful machine in our Vertuo range, without compromise on versatility or convenience for every taste and moment, delivering the full Nespresso experience."

Nespresso Vertuo Pop machine adds a burst of color to any coffee corner, no matter how big or small. With six new colorways, Vertuo Pop allows coffee lovers to make a statement that suits their style. The newest member of the Vertuo family provides Nespresso customers with the freedom to personalize and add a style statement to their space in colors, from classic Li-quirice Black or Coconut White, to vibrant and playful Spicy Red, Mango Yellow, Aqua Mint or Pacific Blue.

Vertuo technology

As with the rest of the Vertuo range, Vertuo Pop has Centrifusion technology. At the touch of a button, the intelligent system uses barcode technology to recognize the coffee variety being brewed and automatically adjusts the extraction parameters – such as infusion time, water temperature and flow rate, rotational speed and cup length – to the precise levels selected by coffee



experts for each blend. This ensures each cup is tailor-made to the specific coffee blend, revealing quality aroma and crema each time.

The infusion phase allows the water to saturate the roasted and ground coffee. The capsule then spins up to 4,000 rotations per minute, optimizing the flow of water to extract the flavors and create a dark full-bodied coffee, finished with a silky and generous crema.

Versatility – enjoying the Vertuo range

Vertuo range proposes coffee lovers over 30 exceptional permanent coffees and seasonal limited editions. The different-sized capsules tailor to the range of coffee cup sizes, each carefully blended and roasted to deliver a quality coffee experience.

Whether you are in the mood to impress your friends over brunch or if you're looking to indulge in your favorite latte, Vertuo Pop offers versatility for every taste, and moment with four cup sizes available, Mug (230ml),

Gran Lungo (150ml), Double Espresso (80ml) and Espresso (40ml), perfect to pair with the Nespresso Aeroccino milk frother to recreate your favorite coffee recipes at home.

Nespresso's commitment to sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of everything Nespresso does. The company is committed to making a positive difference for people and the planet, while bringing some of the most exquisite coffees to consumers. In line with this approach, all Nespresso coffee capsules, including the Vertuo range, are made from 80 percent recycled aluminum, which carefully protects the freshness, quality and taste of the coffees. Nespresso has invested in its recycling programs and is committed to making it as simple and convenient as possible for consumers to recycle their used capsules. The Vertuo Pop coffee machine is made with 35 percent recycled plastic, with the packaging made of 99.5 percent recycled materials.

BoE hikes rates

The Bank of England raised interest rates by 25 bps taking key rates to 4.5 percent, the highest level seen since 2008. This represents the 12th consecutive hike as it attempts to fight stubborn inflation, which is currently the highest in the G7 at 10.1 percent, double the level of the United States and the eurozone. However, the focus is on whether the BoE would hold rates or hike even more for the remainder of this year after the most recent increase. Speaking on the decision to raise rates, Governor Andrew Bailey said that "we are approaching the point when we should be able to set in terms of the level of rates." However, the central bank warned that "if there were to be evidence of more persistent pressures, then further tightening of monetary policy would be required." The United Kingdom's economy shrunk in March after the data showed a 0.3 percent contraction versus a previous and consensus of no change. Despite this, first quarter GDP showed an increase of 0.1 percent, in line with expectations.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30640.

on the services sector of the economy, which has specifically been extremely stubborn when it comes to inflation and is expected to weigh in on key interest rate decisions.

Labor market softening

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits have hit highs not seen since October 2021, with 264k Americans filing for unemployment versus a consensus of 245k and a previous figure of 242k. Numbers within the 270k-300k range typically indicates a deteriorating labor market. The Federal Reserve, which is considering a potential pause after 10 consecutive rate hikes, have continuously lamented about the imbalance and stubbornness of the labor market. Signs of softening in the labor market will be a welcome sight for the Fed and could prove to be a key factor in deciding when to pause rate hikes.

Consumer sentiment in the US deteriorated in early May with the University of Michigan's (UoM) Preliminary Consumer Confidence Index falling to 57.7 from 63.5 in April. This reading came in below the market expectation of 63. Meanwhile, inflation expectations rose to 3.2 percent despite the current level of interest rates, meaningfully raising the probability of another Fed hike in June.

Business

Boubyan Bank gets Uptime Institute's 'Tier III Gold Certification of Operational Sustainability'

Al-Yaqout: Certification highlights level and quality of services at our data center

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank made a new achievement that adds to its international rankings and ratings received since the beginning of this year, as the bank's New Data Center received the "Tier III Gold Certification of Operational Sustainability" from Uptime Institute, the international institute specialized in certification of international data and information centers.

On this occasion, Waleed Al-Yaqout, General Manager at Boubyan Bank said: "The new data center's receipt of this certification highlights the ceaseless efforts of Boubyan to improve the level and quality of services, especially in the area of operational sustainability, thus reinforcing our abilities to offer the best services to our customers, the thing which is one of our priorities during the development of business plans at Boubyan."

"This certification is leading as it is the top certification adopting recognized international standards to evaluate the reliability of the performance of data centers along with practices and risks considered to be of priority to the their operations, in addition to commitment to recommended practices to achieve optimal performance of the installed infrastructure, mitigating down-time risks, and avoiding human errors", he added.

He elaborated: "Receiving this prestigious cer-

tification complements the accomplishments of Boubyan Data Center, which has previously earned the Tier III Design Certification, for design of data centers worldwide in 2020, in addition to the Tier III Constructed Facility Certification, for actual implementation and operation in 2022 from the same entity," he said.

Al-Yaqout added: "Boubyan will continue investing in infrastructure and in the development of the data center as per international leading practices adopted in building data centers in a manner that guarantees the bank's leadership in terms of complying with the best industry standards worldwide in operational sustainability."

"Our accomplishments since the beginning of this year can be attributed to setting up a clear strategy, assembling an experienced executive team, returning to basics of banking business, focusing on customer service, investing in digital banking services, investing in our human resources, and focusing on national cadres," he highlighted.

Certification criteria

The new Boubyan Bank Data Center was awarded the Gold Certification following audits by Uptime Institute to inspect data centers, their operational efficiency, and infrastructure, in addition to

the Institute's assessment of the proposed ideas for the best practices and innovative solutions to make further achievements and maintain excellence in sustainability and operation.

It is worth mentioning that Uptime Institute is the leading international body in the assessment of data centers based on their satisfaction of standards and criteria required by international leading practices for data centers' design.



Waleed Al-Yaqout

Boubyan Data Center

The building of Boubyan Bank's new data center was designed and delivered as per the standards of Uptime Institute Tier III Certification. All the equipment operated in the building has backup in order to guarantee uninterrupted service along with continuous cooling in line with the Tier III requirements of operational sustainability.

The data center is spanned over 3 floors (Basement, Ground Floor, and 1st Floor), and compris-



es of 99 data cabinets, in addition to two power adapters, and two power generators in order to guarantee uninterrupted power supply in case of any power failure.



A group photo of Gulf Bank's Corporate Communications Team.

Gulf Bank concludes second edition of Oud Fashion Talks

KUWAIT: Amidst a wide presence of fashion enthusiasts and ongoing events, Gulf Bank and Oud, concluded the second edition of Oud Fashion Talks, which was held over two days at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, from May 11 to 12, 2023. The conference witnessed the participation of international and Kuwaiti designers, as well as representatives of the sponsoring companies: Tamdeen Group, Maserati Kuwait, Yeprem Jewelry and Beidoun Company.

During his press statement, the Deputy General Manager of Gulf Bank, Ahmed Al-Amir, expressed his happiness with the success of the conference in achieving its objectives, for the second consecutive year, and for the ability of Kuwaiti designers to attract the attention of their international counterparts, with their magnificent and unique designs.

Al-Amir said: "We continued to work on the second edition to provide more support for young designers and creators, and to help provide them with a global opportunity – given the importance of this sector and the increasing interest and demand from entrepreneurs and youth in Kuwait."

He added: "We were keen to enrich this year's conference with a larger number of designers and added workshops to encourage the exchange of experiences between international and Kuwaiti designers. This helps young designers gain new experiences, enabling them to keep pace with the latest developments in the fashion industry."

Al-Amir pointed that the first edition of the conference shed light on sustainable fashion, and we were keen to develop the second edition by adding interactive workshops that provide the necessary environment for young Kuwaiti designers to interact with international experts, adding that: "without interactions and engagement, there will be no cooperation or development of talents and ideas."

Al-Amir mentioned that Gulf Bank will spare no effort in financing entrepreneurs in the fashion industry who meet the SMEs criteria, in order to help them grow and expand. He also referred to Gulf Bank's role in supporting various initiatives, aimed at consolidating the principles of sustainability in society; especially those related to youth, entrepreneurs and SMEs. Al-Amir noted that such initiatives aid in enhancing the Bank's role in developing the national economy and support Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy and Kuwait Vision 2035.

He continued: "At Gulf Bank, we believe in our role in supporting young talents and helping them grow and expand in the fashion industry – by providing the required support to develop their talents, their ideas and help them achieve their dreams, building their projects and lead their future."

In his final statement, he advised young people, and talented designers wishing to develop, to aim high and to work with diligence and perseverance – stressing that those who have a talent will inevitably find someone to support them in achieving their goals and developing their project, adding: "We will support and empower youth wherever they are."

Youth and entrepreneurs

During the fourth session of the conference, Gulf Bank's Corporate Communications Manager Lujain Al-Qenaei, reviewed Gulf Bank's role in supporting youth and entrepreneurs in the field of entrepreneurship, including designers and talented young people in the fashion industry.

Al-Qenaei stressed Gulf Bank's keenness to actively participate in various events that support young talents in Kuwait, as part of its continuous efforts to spread the culture of entrepreneurship among young people, help them achieve their ambitions and grow their businesses.

She added: "With the increase in the number of entrepreneurs and the demand of young people for self-employment, supporting economic sustainability has become a necessary requirement in Kuwait, which is why Gulf Bank has placed SMEs at the forefront of its priorities within its 2025 strategy."

Al-Qenaei mentioned that the bank provides SMEs with a wide range of financing and non-financing services, that are designed specifically to help them develop and expand, adding, "During the conference, we were keen to host entrepreneurs

- Ahmed Al-Amir: Gulf Bank will be there to support and empower youth wherever they are
- Lujain Al-Qenaei: The bank places entrepreneurs at the forefront of its priorities
- Abdullah Al-Mulaifi: We are pleased with the large attendance of the public and those interested in fashion

who have succeeded in many economic sectors to review their experiences and be a source of inspiration for young people."

Youth energies

Gulf Bank's Assistant Manager of Corporate Communication Abdullah Al-Mulaifi said: "We are pleased today with the large attendance of the public, and those interested in the world of fashion and their keenness to participate in five discussion sessions and various workshops."

He added: "At Gulf Bank, we are eager to support youth energies in various fields, and help them excel and develop – by providing all means of success that support their access to higher levels. Kuwait is full of passionate and creative youth who have creative ideas that deserve attention and support."

Six discussion sessions and four workshops

The first day of the conference witnessed six discussion sessions with the participation of a group of experts and specialists, and the second day of the conference witnessed the four work-



Ahmed Al-Amir speaking at the gala dinner.

shops moderated by Kuwaiti and international experts and designers.

International experts praise innovations of Kuwaiti designers

During their tour of the exhibition throughout the conference, international experts praised the various exhibits created by young Kuwaiti designers – noting that the exhibition witnessed pieces by 11 Kuwaiti designers, where two of them were jewelry designers and two shoe designers.

Mohammad Jaafar: It's only a matter of time before we hear of successful fashion entrepreneurs from Kuwait.

In the second session, "Making Kuwaiti Fashion Companies an Attractive Investment," the Managing Partner of Faith Capital Holding Mohammed Jaafar stated that, "When it comes to fashion, it's clear that it is a huge segment internationally, but we need to see more of it locally."

He added: "We know that life of an entrepreneur is very difficult, and they always need to find a way to survive. The issue of very talented individuals is not exposure, but it's how to take

their business to the next level. We help diminish those frustrations and support them on their journey."

He concluded saying: "I truly believe that with persistence and patience, it's only a matter of time before we hear of successful fashion entrepreneurs from Kuwait."

The third session: The gap between this region and the rest of the world narrows

The third session witnessed the Founder of Ibrah, Shahad Al-Sabeeh and the Head of Design at The Giving Movement, Khairunisa Suhail, discussing the topic of "Shaping A New Era of Arab Style." The speakers in the session pointed that the gap is narrowing between the GCC region and other countries globally, noting that Kuwaiti customers are extremely fashion forward, bold, and brave and that they keep all of this in mind for their designs. They added: "We've got so much culture, history, and a bright future here, and really embracing the heritage, is key for this generation and helps us revolutionize our fashion and shape our aesthetic."



Patrick Sawaya speaks during a workshop on fashion development.

Saudi builds largest grains storage capacity in Mideast

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has built the largest advanced grain storage capacity in the Middle East, increasing the total by 40 percent from 2.5 million tons in 2016 to 3.5 million tons. The Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture (MIEWA) revealed in a report that the system has record achievements in the agricultural sector as part of its strategies to achieve Saudi Vision 2023.

According to the report, the ministry's efforts had a clear impact on recording the highest domestic product in the sector's history, indicating that achieving food security in the Kingdom is one of the priorities of the system that finds unlimited support from the government. The report emphasized that the Saudi food security strategy provided a model for maintaining the stability of food supply chains during crises and in areas of cooperation with the private sector.

The strategy, supervised by the General Food Security Authority (GFS), empowered the private sector by fully privatizing the mills after restructuring, distributing them to four independent companies, and transferring their ownership, worth about \$1.5 billion. It also included a national program to reduce food waste, setting the baseline for the food loss index at 33.1 percent.

The strategy developed organic agriculture by raising production at a rate of 79.5 percent, from 56.26 thousand tons in 2016 to 101,000 tons. The report indicated that the Ministry's efforts also increased self-sufficiency in several agricultural and animal products, which enhances food security and safety. The Ministry boasts several international achievements, including the Guinness World Record for the longest agricultural trip in the world after the agricultural guidance convoy, dispatched by the Ministry, crossed 8,320 kilometers. The report explained that the government support programs were a significant reason for the Kingdom's topping global positions in many fields, including the first rank in dates exports.

Saudi Arabia also won the World Summit Award and topped the Information Society for 2022 in the category of digital agriculture and electronic services provided through the Nama portal.

According to the report, the system is moving towards achieving food security and sustainable agricultural development within strategies, plans, programs, and initiatives to achieve citizens' well-being and prosperity. It also supports farmers, livestock breeders, and poultry and fish producers to provide safe food and sustainable infrastructure. —Agencies

Vietnam shoemaker for Nike, Adidas cuts 6,000 jobs

HANOI: One of Vietnam's largest shoe manufacturers for brands such as Nike and Adidas will cut thousands of workers at the end of next month, blaming a slump in orders, state media said Saturday. The country is among the world's largest exporters of clothing, footwear and furniture, but has been badly affected by the cost-of-living crisis in Europe and the United States, with the buying power of worldwide consumers shrinking.

PouYuen Vietnam, a unit of Taiwan-based Pou Chen Group, told local authorities it would lay off almost 6,000 workers with permanent contracts from the end of next month, VNEExpress reported.

"This will be the biggest layoff since PouYuen started its operation in Ho Chi Minh City in 1996," the state media outlet said. The firm is among the commercial capital's largest employers, with an estimated 50,000 workers. But it made a similar move in February letting go almost 3,000 permanent staff, and a further 3,000 temporary employees did not have their contracts renewed.

A third of production facilities in the city experienced reduced workforce demand in the first quarter of the year, according to a survey by Ho Chi Minh City's labour department. The downturn mostly impacted shoes, clothing, construction and food processing industries, officials said. PouYuen put 20,000 of its workers on paid leave in rotation last year. More than 630,000 workers lost their jobs or had their hours cut in Vietnam last year, according to the labor ministry. —AFP

Loreen makes history as Sweden claims seventh Eurovision victory



Sweden's singer Loreen performs after winning the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023.



Singer Loreen performing on behalf of Sweden celebrates with the trophy after winning the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023 at the M&S Bank Arena in Liverpool, northern England. —AFP photos



(From left) Hosts Alesha Dixon, Graham Norton, Hannah Waddingham and Julia Sanina on stage during the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023.



Singer Loreen performing on behalf of Sweden celebrates with the trophy after winning the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023.



Metal band Lord Of The Lost performs on behalf of Germany.



Band Joker Out performs on behalf of Slovenia.



Singer Monika Linkyte performs on behalf of Lithuania.

Sweden won the Eurovision Song Contest early Sunday, as singer Loreen beat out 25 competitors in the finale of the world's biggest live music event, hosted by Britain on behalf of war-torn Ukraine.

A previous victor in 2012, Loreen is the first woman to win the eccentric, much-loved competition twice and only the second person to do so after Johnny Logan for Ireland in the 1980s.

It is a record-equalling seventh Eurovision crown for Sweden, and means the Scandinavian nation will host next year's contest on the 50th anniversary of ABBA's win -- the country's first -- with breakthrough hit "Waterloo".

Loreen -- real name Lorine Talhaoui -- told reporters that her victory with dance-

pop track, "Tattoo", felt "surreal" and "so beautiful", and had left her "seriously overwhelmed". Born in Sweden to parents of Moroccan Berber origin, the 39-year-old's win for Sweden over 25 other countries competing in the final was celebrated in her homeland. "It feels wonderful," she said.

She narrowly triumphed over Finland's Kaarija after the public and jury votes were combined following an evening of typically eclectic musical acts in Liverpool. Third place went to Zionist entity, with Noa Kirel's "Unicorn", as more than 160 million estimated viewers watched on television around the world.

'Proud'

Last year's runner-up Britain selected Liverpool -- home of The Beatles -- to stage

the Europop music festival after organisers ruled it was impossible for 2022 victors Ukraine to do so amid Russia's ongoing invasion. During the glittering spectacle in northwest England, reports emerged that Moscow was unleashing a fresh barrage of bombs on Ukraine.

The attack included Ternopil, the hometown of Ukraine's entry this year.

Band Tvorchi were performing electro-pop offering "Heart of Steel", which was inspired by the siege of the Azovstal plant in Mariupol, as air raid sirens rang out across their city. "Ternopil... was bombed by Russia while we sang on the Eurovision stage about our steel hearts, indomitability and will," the band said on Instagram. "Europe, unite against evil for the sake of peace!"

Throughout the contest, Britain sought to keep Ukraine front and centre.

Central Liverpool was awash in the yellow and blue of the country's flag while displaced Ukrainians were among the 6,000 fans packed into the M&S Arena host venue. "It feels like I'm home," Vasylyna Kindrat, who fled Lviv in December, told AFP as she headed into the waterfront arena. The 25-year-old added she was hoping for victory not in Eurovision "but for the war".

Earlier, British spectators echoed the sentiment. "We're supporting Ukraine, our heart is bleeding for them," said Jenny Birchett, 70, a theatre worker dressed in Ukrainian colours. "We feel it's theirs, the Eurovision, more than ours," she added, flanked by her daughter.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak lauded the "fantastic celebration" shortly after Loreen's win. "Liverpool, you've done the United Kingdom and Ukraine proud," he said.

Continued on Page 13



Singer and songwriter Mimicat performs on behalf of Portugal.



Ukrainian comedian Verka Serdushka performs during the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023.



Singer and songwriter La Zarra performs on behalf of France.

Lifestyle



Music duo Teya & Salena performs on behalf of Austria.



Singer and songwriter Mae Muller performs on behalf of the United Kingdom.



Ukrainian fans cheer during the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023.

War and peace

Sweden and Finland had been the bookmakers' favourites heading into the contest beloved for its kitschy, quirky performances.

Sweden's biggest broadsheet Dagens Nyheter on Sunday hailed Loreen's victory an "enormous, unbelievable feat", praising her ability to touch audiences "like few others do". "She's a strange combination of vague and ethereal," it mused.

Rapper Kaarija, representing Finland, came a close second after a memorable performance of "Cha Cha Cha", delivered in his distinctive green

bolero-style jacket with spikes around the neck, which has become a craze in his homeland.

The home crowd went wildest for the UK's entry, Mae Muller, who flopped in the vote count.

Britain's Sam Ryder, runner-up in 2022, performed his latest song -- with Queen's Roger Taylor on drums -- during the voting for this year's spectacle.

He was pipped to the coveted glass microphone trophy by last year's winners, Ukraine's Kalush Orchestra, who also reappeared Saturday to kickstart the night.

The band performed in a pre-recorded video -- featuring a surprise appearance by the Princess of Wales, Kate, playing the piano -- and also gave a live performance.

Although there was the usual riot of colour, camp and unbridled joy, several of the contest's songs evoked the Ukraine war. Switzerland's young singer Remo Forrer conveyed a message of peace with his track "Watergun".

Meanwhile, Croatia's extravagantly moustachioed Let 3 performed "Mama Šć", seen as a veiled attack on Russian President Vladimir Putin

and "human stupidity".

Politics preceded the finale, with a row erupting Friday over a proposed appearance by Volodymyr Zelensky.

For fear of politicising the event, the European Broadcasting Union refused an invitation for the Ukrainian president to send a message.

That came despite Russia being barred from participating and the overtly political message of some songs, and prompted criticism from the UK government. —AFP



Band Vesna performs on behalf of the Czech Republic.



Music duo Tvorchi performs on behalf of Ukraine.



Singer Pasha Parfeni performs on behalf of Moldova.



Singer Gustaph performs on behalf of Belgium.



Singer Alike performs on behalf of Estonia.



Eurovision song contest winner in 2016, Susana Jamaladinova, known as "Jamala" performs during the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023.



Singer Marco Mengoni performs on behalf of Italy.



Music duo Albina & Familja Kelmendi performs on behalf of Albania.



Singer Blanca Paloma performs on behalf of Spain.



Singer Andrew Lambrou performs on behalf of Cyprus.



Singer Remo Forrer performs on behalf of Switzerland.



Singer and songwriter Luke Black performs on behalf of Serbia.



Band Voyager performs on behalf of Australia.



Rapper Kaarija performs on behalf of Finland.



Rock band Let 3 performs on behalf of Croatia.

Ukrainian Eurovision act's hometown bombed during final performance

As Ukraine's Eurovision act Tvorchi delivered a thumping bass under strobing yellow and blue lights in Liverpool on Saturday night, air raid sirens back in their hometown Ternopil were signalling the latest Russian assault.

Moments after the electronic duo finished performing, they posted on Instagram that Ternopil was under attack.

"Our hometown...was bombed by Russia while we sang on the Eurovision stage about our steel hearts, indomitability and will," Tvorchi posted, dedicating their performance to "all cities of Ukraine that are shelled every day."

"Europe, unite against evil for the sake of peace!"

The duo's song, "Heart of Steel", was inspired by Ukrainian attempts to resist a months-long siege at the Azovstal steel factory in Mariupol.

At one point during the show, the black sunglasses-wearing musicians held up a handwritten sign saying "Ternopil" while a group around them waved Ukraine's blue and yellow flags.

The head of Ternopil's regional military administration Volodymyr Trush said early Sunday morning that two people were injured in the strike, which sparked fires at warehouses owned by commercial and religious groups.

"Two civilians were injured. Preliminary, shrapnel wounds and burns. The victims are in hospitals," Trush posted on Telegram.

Firefighters were still battling the blaze at the time of his post and he said that "specialists will be at the scene all night."

Tvorchi -- composed of 27-year-old producer Andriy Hutsuliak and 25-year-old vocalist Jimoh Augustus Kehinde -- is no stranger to Russian fire.

At the end of April, hours after a massive shelling, air raid sirens forced them to take shelter in a cellar when they were due to perform in Kyiv's main rail station.

After the alert, the group surprised passengers with an impromptu performance in the entrance hall of the vast Stalin-era station.

On Saturday, Sweden won the campy Eurovision Song Contest, succeeding Ukraine's Kalush Orchestra, which was victorious last year with a "Stefania", a song mixing hip-hop and local folk music.

Because of the Russian invasion, Ukraine was unable to organise the 67th edition of the contest and the Beatles' hometown Liverpool hosted instead. —AFP



Music duo Tvorchi of Ukraine appears on stage during the final of the Eurovision Song contest 2023.—AFP

Sports

News in Brief

Palou wins IndyCar GMR GP

WASHINGTON: Alex Palou of Chip Ganassi Racing won IndyCar's GMR Grand Prix at Indianapolis on Saturday to take over at the top of the championship standings. Spain's Palou won by 16.8 seconds from Arrow McLaren's Pato O'Ward with Arrow's Alexander Rossi finishing third. Denmark's Christian Lundgaard, who had claimed his first IndyCar pole, had to settle for a season-best fourth place finish on the road course at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Starting third on the grid, Palou's first victory of the season came after he made a decisive start, powering his Honda into first place on the opening lap. Making smart use of tire changes, Palou then took control when he overtook Lundgaard on Lap 42 to grab a lead which he never looked in danger of losing. Palou praised his team for their pit and tire strategies including starting on the Firestone alternate "red" tires. —AFP

NBA Suns fire Williams

LOS ANGELES: Monty Williams, last season's NBA Coach of the Year, has been fired as coach of the Phoenix Suns after their second-round playoff loss to Denver, the team said on Saturday. Williams went 194-115 in four seasons with the Suns, but was dumped only two days after the Denver Nuggets ousted the Suns 4-2 in their best-of-seven Western Conference series. "We are filled with gratitude for everything Monty has contributed to the Suns and to the Valley community," said Suns president of basketball operations James Jones in a tweet confirming multiple reports of the firing. The visiting Nuggets prevailed 125-100 in a must-win game for the Suns, who trailed by 30 points at halftime. New Suns owner Mat Ishbia, who reportedly made the decision to fire Williams on Saturday, made a blockbuster deal just after taking over the team, obtaining Kevin Durant from the Brooklyn Nets at the February trade deadline. —AFP

Shakib ruled out for 6 weeks

DHAKA: Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has been ruled out for around six weeks with a finger injury, the cricket board said on Sunday. Shakib hurt the tip of his right index finger attempting a catch during Friday's second one-day international against Ireland at Chelmsford, England, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said. "An X-ray today (Saturday) confirmed a fracture on the base of the index finger. Such injuries usually take around six weeks to heal," national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan said. The injury means Shakib is not available for Sunday's final ODI against Ireland. Bangladesh currently lead the three-match series 1-0. They won Friday's second match by three wickets, knocking off a target of 320 runs after the opening match of the series was rained off. Sunday's ODI against Ireland is the final fixture of the ICC ODI Super League in the current cycle. —AFP

Leeds fan charged with assault

LONDON: A Leeds fan who confronted Newcastle manager Eddie Howe during Saturday's Premier League clash has been charged with assault by West Yorkshire Police. Leeds have banned the supporter for life after he climbed out of the stands at Elland Road and entered the technical area where the altercation with Howe took place. The man appeared to push Howe and shout at him before he was led away by stewards. West Yorkshire Police on Sunday confirmed that the man has been charged with assault and will appear before magistrates in July. "Police have charged a man with assault and entering the field of play following an incident at Elland Road football stadium during the Leeds United versus Newcastle United football match yesterday," a statement said. "The man has been bailed to appear before magistrates on 21 July." —AFP

Moloney wins world crown

LOS ANGELES: Australia's Jason Moloney won his first world title on Saturday, taking a majority decision over Vincent Astrolabio of the Philippines for the vacant World Boxing Organization bantamweight crown. The 32-year-old from Melbourne won on judges' scores of 115-113 and 116-112 with the third judge scoring a 114-114 draw in the showdown at Stockton, California. Moloney improved to 26-2, suffering his only losses in his two prior world title bouts, falling to Puerto Rico's Emmanuel Rodriguez in 2018 and Japan's Naoya Inoue in 2020. Astrolabio, 26, fell to 18-4. Also on the card, WBO middleweight champion Janibek Alimkhanuly of Kazakhstan knocked out Canada's Steven Butler at 2:35 of the second round to defend his crown for the first time. After stunning the challenger with a left uppercut, Alimkhanuly pummeled Butler again and again with lefts, dropping him to the canvas three times before referee Jack Reiss stopped the onslaught. —AFP

Riner wins 11th judo title

DOHA: French judo star Teddy Riner won a record-extending 11th individual judo world championship title in Doha on Saturday, six years after his last, as he gears up for the 2024 Paris Olympics. The 34-year-old beat Russian Inal Tasoev in the +100kg final to become the oldest world champion in history. "I really hope it will come off (again) at Paris 2024 but it can only come off when you have days like that," he said. "It's been a long time since I heard the Marseillaise (French national anthem) on a world podium, it feels good." Riner dispatched world number one Temur Rakhimov in 30 seconds in the semi-finals, but needed overtime to defeat Tasoev by waza-ari. "I think it's one of the biggest days of my entire career," he added. "No rhythm all day, so what do we use? The mind, that's all that's left." —AFP

Punjab, Lucknow boost IPL play-off hopes; Delhi out

Prabhsimran, Brar shine as Punjab end Delhi's IPL hopes

NEW DELHI: Opener Prabhsimran Singh hit his maiden IPL century to set up a 31-run win for Punjab Kings and push Delhi Capitals out of the play-off race on Saturday, while Lucknow Super Giants beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven wickets. Sunrisers batsman Heinrich Klaasen was docked 10 percent of his match fee for showing dissent after a controversial no-ball call that sparked the home crowd to shout abuse at the Lucknow dug-out.

The match was briefly stopped as the umpires spoke to the Lucknow bench, including an animated coach Andy Flower, whose team moved back into the top four. In the second game of the day, Punjab kept their play-off hopes alive after Prabhsimran hit 103 off 65 balls and guided his team to 167-7. Harpreet Brar then returned figures of 4-30 with his left-arm spin as Delhi suffered a collapse to end on 136-8 despite a strong start from skipper David Warner, who hit 54 off 27 balls.

"The way we brought the game back was amazing," Punjab skipper Shikhar Dhawan said. "Credit goes to the spinners and then the fast bowlers for closing it out." Punjab moved to sixth in the 10-team table led by holders Gujarat Titans. Delhi remain bottom of the heap and are out of the running. Warner seemed to have taken the game away with his power hitting but Brar led the spin charge, removing Phil Salt for 21 as Delhi slipped from 69-0 to 88-6. Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar joined in to trap Mitchell Marsh lbw before Brar struck twice in an over to dismiss Rilee Rossouw and Warner, who registered his 60th IPL fifty. Warner said his team had "found the right combination" during the tournament after a nightmare start.

'Wrong decision'

In Hyderabad, Indian batsman Prerak Mankad's 64 and a series of key partnerships including an unbeaten 58-run stand with Nicholas Pooran, who hit a

13-ball 44, steered the team's successful chase of 183 with four balls to spare. Mankad first set the pace with a 73-run partnership with Marcus Stoinis, who hit a 25-ball 40. Mankad raced to his maiden IPL fifty before West Indies international Pooran smashed three consecutive sixes in a 31-run over to start his sparkling innings.

Earlier, Hyderabad's Abdul Samad, who hit an unbeaten 37 in a 58-run stand with Klaasen, received a waist-high delivery that was called a no-ball by the on-field umpire but overturned on review. The delivery appeared to be above the batsman's waist but the review went in Lucknow's favor, cancelling out the run and the free hit, with the home crowd venting their anger. "Disappointed by the crowd to be honest, that's not what you want," said Klaasen after his 29-ball knock. "That also broke the momentum, not great umpiring either, but you can't take matters in your own hands." —AFP

Romero wins on controversial 9th round stoppage

LOS ANGELES: American Rolando Romero defeated Venezuela's Ismael Barroso on a controversial ninth-round stoppage to win the vacant World Boxing Association super lightweight title on Saturday. Referee Tony Weeks stopped the bout at 2:41 of the ninth round in Las Vegas, Nevada, with Romero swinging but not landing against Barroso in the corner. "He was a warrior. He wanted to keep going. He should have been able to keep going," Romero said after the victory. "I wanted to keep going. He wanted to keep going. We both wanted to keep going."

Instead, Romero improved to 15-1 with his 13th victory inside the distance, capturing a world crown in his debut at the 140-pound division. Barroso, a 40-year-old southpaw, fell to 24-4 with two drawn, missing a chance to become only the 10th boxer to win a world title past his 40th birthday. "I think it was an injustice to stop this fight," Barroso said through a translator. "I was giving the best shots."

Romero, 28, was knocked down for only the second time in his career by a punishing left to the head from Barroso late in the third round. "I boxed the entire time," Romero said. "I came in a little cold, I got cracked and I finished the round like a champion and I kept going and I got the victory." Romero was somewhat inactive for several rounds, being careful to avoid more punishing shots, the South American landing another hard left to Romero's head in the sixth.

"I took my time, moved around. The man is strong.



NEVADA: Rolando Romero knocks down Ismael Barroso in the ninth round of their fight for a vacant WBA super lightweight title on May 13, 2023. —AFP

I had to be careful with him," Romero said. "You think I wanted to get caught by one of those? I knew he could crack." At the finish, Romero knocked down Barroso in the opening seconds of the ninth round, although Barroso called it more of a push down. "The first punch is where I had him hurt," Romero said. Romero began swinging wildly in the corner without success late in the round before Weeks stepped in to end matters.

"He just stopped the fight. He didn't tell me anything," Barroso said. "You could see it clearly. I was

hitting him. There was nothing he was hitting me with clearly. I don't understand." Romero had not fought since being knocked out a year ago by unbeaten he wanted a rematch with Davis or to US southpaw Gervonta Davis, but said fight Ryan Garcia, who lost to Davis last month. Unbeaten Dominican Alberto Puello, 21-0 with 10 knockouts, was to have defended the title against Romero but he had an A-sample test positive for a performance-enhancing substance last month and was made a "champion in recess" on Wednesday. —AFP



KUWAIT: The International 'Aquathlon' Championship witnessed strong competitions on the Marina beach, in the presence of the Deputy Director of Public Authority for Sport for Competitive Sports Bashar Abdullah, President of Kuwaiti Triathlon Federation and Club Rashid Al-Kandari, and members of the board of directors.

Kuwaitis shine at Aquathlon Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The International "Aquathlon" Championship, which was organized by Kuwait Triathlon Federation and Club witnessed strong competitions on the Marina beach, in the presence of the Deputy Director of Public Authority for Sport for Competitive Sports

Richardson and Omanyala storm to victory

NAIROBI: American sprint star Sha'Carri Richardson signaled her return to form with an easy win in the women's 200m at the Kip Keino Classic in Nairobi on Saturday while local sensation Ferdinand Omanyala streaked to a world-leading time this year in the 100m. Already the fastest woman in the world this year in the 100m, the 23-year-old American obliterated the field to win in a new meet time of 22.07 seconds. Her victory in the 200m came a week after she won the 100m in a world-leading 10.76 seconds at the season-opening Diamond League meeting in Doha.

"The race was amazing. I came here to Kenya

knowing that I have no excuse but to do my best," said Richardson, who missed the 2020 Tokyo Olympics after testing positive for cannabis at the US trials. "I know I have more to do for my fans, for my loved ones." It was her first victory in the 200m this year after finishing second in the Botswana Grand Prix, the second leg of the World Athletics Continental Gold Tour in Gaborone on April 29.

With her Jamaican sprint rival Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce pulling out of the Nairobi event after suffering a knee injury on Thursday, Richardson was the star attraction at her maiden appearance in Kenya. Omanyala also thrilled the home crowd as he beat off rivals including second-placed Kenny Bednarek of the USA in a time of 9.84, the best in the world this season. Bednarek came in at 9.98 with compatriot Marvin Bracy-Williams third in 10.03.

'Expected better time'

But he failed to top his African record of 9.77 seconds set at the same event in 2021, and the 27-year-old Kenyan said he had hoped for a better perfor-

took first place; the second went to Loula Al-Rifai; and the third went to Fatima Al-Ghanim. In the age groups of 15-19 years (women), the title was won by Phoebe Kemp from Britain and the second by Lulwa Al-Rifai from Kuwait. Kuwait's female players dominated the top three positions, first by Fatima Al-Ghanim, the second by Huda Al-Saleh, and the third by Al-Mulla.

The Chairman of the Kuwait Triathlon Federation and Club, Rashid Al-Kandari, congratulated the players who won first places at the conclusion of the international "Aquathlon" Championship. He pointed out that the strong competition in the championship between competitors from different parts of the world is the best proof of the championship's success.

"I expected a better time, but it's a win and a world lead and I am happy about it," Omanyala told reporters. "Remember I said I would not lose any 100-metre race this year. That's the plan."

He faces the biggest test of his career when he meets Italian Olympic 100m gold medalist Lamont Marcell Jacobs and world champion Fred Kerley of the United States at the Rabat Diamond League in two weeks' time. "I don't look at the competitors. I am just the best there is right now, they are not going to beat me," declared the Commonwealth gold medalist.

American Twanisha Terry made the most of her compatriot Fraser-Pryce's absence to win the women's 100m meters, her second successive victory in the series. Terry was unchallenged at the way she breastst the tape in 10.86 with New Zealand's Zoe Hobbs a distant second in 10.97 and Rani Rosius of Belgium third in 11.08secs. Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh continued her domination of the women's high jump when she leapt to a season best of 2.00 meters. —AFP

Sports

Dortmund stun Gladbach to stay on Bayern's heels

Bayern demolish Schalke 6-0

DORTMUND: A stunning first-half performance from Sebastian Haller helped Borussia Dortmund move back within a point of Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich with two matches remaining after a 5-2 thrashing of Borussia Moenchengladbach on Saturday. After Bayern demolished Schalke 6-0 earlier in the day, Dortmund struck four times in the opening 32 minutes against Gladbach, with Haller having a hand in each of the goals.

"We showed today that we will keep believing until the end and we will chase everything until the end," said Dortmund coach Edin Terzic. "We still have two games, after that we will see whether it was enough. Bayern have to step on the gas and we will as well."

Haller unleashed a shot after five minutes, with Donnyell Malen pouncing on the rebound, scoring his eighth goal in his last eight matches. Haller was then brought down in the box, with England teenager Jude Bellingham converting from the spot to double Dortmund's lead. Haller got a goal of his own just three minutes later, superbly backheeling in a cross from Malen. The Dutchman set up Haller again shortly after, giving Dortmund a 4-0 lead.

Gladbach's Rami Bensebaini, who is rumored to be headed to Dortmund next season, converted a penalty with 15 minutes remaining and Lars Stindl curled in another for the visitors, but US forward Gio Reyna scored a fifth to seal the result. The victory kept Dortmund right behind Bayern, who recorded their biggest win under Thomas Tuchel by putting six goals past struggling Schalke. Veteran Bayern captain Thomas Mueller slotted in after 21 minutes, his first goal in eight matches. Joshua Kimmich doubled Bayern's lead shortly after, converting

a penalty despite losing his footing after Jamal Musiala copped an arm in the box.

Serge Gnabry added two more early in the second half, with French teenager Mathys Tel also scoring before Noussair Mazraoui chalked up his first goal in Bayern colors. "We made a step in the right direction—our buried self confidence is coming back," said Tuchel. "But there's no reason for euphoria, we'll be tested again on Saturday (against RB Leipzig)." The loss leaves Schalke, who had climbed out of the relegation places for the first time since September with last week's win at Mainz, in the relegation playoff spot.

Union 'keep dreaming'

Union Berlin solidified their hopes of a first Champions League appearance, leapfrogging RB Leipzig into third and going three clear of fifth-placed Freiburg with a 4-2 home win over the Black Forest side. Union set up the victory with a first-half blitz, Sheraldo Becker scoring twice in two minutes after Kevin Behrens opened the scoring with five minutes gone. Freiburg's Manuel Gulde pulled one back 10 minutes into the second half and a comeback looked on when Vincenzo Grifo chipped in from the spot with 20 minutes remaining. Becker however snuffed out the visitors' hopes, collecting the ball on the break and finding an unmarked Aissa Laidouni who knocked in Union's fourth.

"The fans can keep dreaming," said an elated Union coach Urs Fischer. "We had to go for it today." Eintracht Frankfurt won their first game in 11 tries despite coach Oliver Glasner's stadium ban, thrashing Mainz 3-0 at home, thanks to goals from Dai-



DORTMUND: Moenchengladbach's Algerian defender Rami Bensebaini (3rd right) scores the 4-1 goal from the penalty spot during the German first division Bundesliga football match between BVB Borussia Dortmund and Borussia Moenchengladbach on May 13, 2023. — AFP

chi Kamada, Aurelio Buta and Randal Kolo Muani. Frankfurt, who midweek decided to part ways with Glasner at season's end despite the Europa League holders reaching the German Cup final, responded in emphatic fashion to go above their derby rivals.

Bochum took advantage of Schalke's poor result in Munich, beating Augsburg 3-2 at home to lift

themselves past the Royal Blues out of the relegation places by a single point. Wolfsburg responded from last week's 6-0 thrashing by Dortmund to beat Hoffenheim 2-1 at home, moving into sixth place, the Europa Conference League spot. The loss leaves Hoffenheim just two points clear of the relegation spots with two games to play. — AFP

PSG edge closer to title as Messi jeered on return

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain closed in on a record 11th French league title with a 5-0 home win over Ajaccio on Saturday as Lionel Messi received a mixed reception on his return from suspension. Fabian Ruiz opened the scoring on 22 minutes at the Parc des Princes and Achraf Hakimi added a second goal before Kylian Mbappe struck twice shortly after half-time. Mohamed Youssouf compounded a miserable night for the Corsicans with an own goal for PSG's fifth, while Hakimi and Ajaccio midfielder Thomas Mangani were sent off after a late bust-up.

PSG need four points from their final three games - against Auxerre, Strasbourg and Clermont - to secure the Ligue 1 title after restoring their six-point lead over second-placed Lens. "The players were very determined to put in a proper display. They want to be champions and they realise that Lens aren't giving up and a misstep could raise the pressure," said PSG coach Christophe Galtier.

Messi's name elicited a combination of whistles and applause when it was read out before kick-off

after he was banned by the club for last weekend's match over an unauthorized trip to Saudi Arabia. The Argentine again drew jeers with his early touches in what was likely his penultimate appearance in Paris ahead of a reported move to Saudi Arabia for the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner.

"So there are whistles but very quickly a large part of the stadium made sure to drown them out to support Leo," said Galtier. "He stayed focused with the desire to liven up the game and create chances. He's used to it because he's been in difficult situations in his career." Three defeats in their past four home games for PSG had allowed Lens to stay in an unlikely title race, but Ajaccio offered little resistance as their relegation to Ligue 2 was confirmed.

Daniilo's threaded pass was flicked into the path of Ruiz and the Spain midfielder took a couple of smart touches before finishing clinically for his second goal in as many games. Hakimi then swept in the rebound after Mbappe's effort was parried by Francois-Joseph Sollacaro, with the goal allowed to stand despite the France striker using his arm to control in the build-up. Mbappe hit the 25-goal mark for the fourth time early in the second half, slotting beyond Sollacaro after a scramble in the box to take over again as the league's top scorer this term.

He then produced a brilliant first-time volley to lash in PSG's fourth minutes later after a long ball forward from Sergio Ramos glanced off the head of



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (left) high fives with Paris Saint-Germain's Argentinean forward Lionel Messi during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Ajaccio on May 13, 2023. — AFP

a backtracking defender. An unfortunate Youssouf diverted a shot from Marquinhos into his own net on 73 minutes and both teams finished with 10 players after a challenge on Messi triggered a needless scuffle. Hakimi, who was sent off against Lorient two weeks ago, received his second red card in as many outings after getting into an altercation with Mangani that also led to his dismissal. — AFP

Inter triumph as Milan slump

ROME: Inter Milan warmed up for their Champions League semi-final showdown with AC Milan with an entertaining 4-2 win over Sassuolo on Saturday while their city rivals floundered 2-0 at Serie A strugglers Spezia. A Romelu Lukaku brace on his 30th birthday, a further strike from Lautaro Martinez and an unfortunate Ruan Tressoldi own goal were enough for Inter to claim a seventh straight win in all competitions and move level on 66 points with second-placed Juventus.

"The coach told us the game was a match-point for the top four, and we're in good shape as we've been winning a lot of games recently," said Lukaku to Sky Sport. "We can still win two trophies and on Tuesday we have a very difficult match against the team that won the league last season." Inter hold a 2-0 lead over Milan ahead of Tuesday's second leg and Simone Inzaghi's side look almost certain to reach their first Champions League final since they last won it in 2010.

Their chances of qualifying for next season's edition of Europe's top club competition were also greatly improved by Saturday's win, which came after top four rivals Lazio, Milan and Atalanta all dropped points. Inter are five points ahead of fifth-placed Milan but after looking like they were going to cruise to the win they didn't end up having it their own way. Lukaku put Inter ahead with a rasping effort shortly before the break after both Domenico Berardi and Joaquin Correa both had goals ruled out for offside.

Ten minutes after the restart Tressoldi headed Raul Bellanova's cross into his own net and the match seemed over three minutes later when Martinez's effort was deflected in again by Tressoldi. Headers from Matheus Henrique and Davide Frattesi pulled Sassuolo back into the game until Lukaku finally sealed the points with a fine low finish with two minutes remaining. Przemyslaw Wisniewski and Salvatore Esposito struck their first Serie A goals in the final 15 minutes to sink Milan and give Spezia their first win in two months. Leonardo Semplici's team are still in the relegation zone but Saturday's win moves them level on 30 points with Verona, who sit one place above the bottom three and host Torino on Sunday. — AFP

Rangers dampen Celtic celebration

GLASGOW: Rangers dampened Celtic's Scottish Premiership title celebrations by ending a six-game winless run against their Glasgow rivals with a 3-0 victory on Saturday. Todd Cantwell, John Souttar and Fashion Sakala scored the goals as Michael Beale secured his first Old Firm win as Rangers boss. "It's been a tough season overall for the fans and that one today should send them home with a bit more oxygen and optimism for what it going to be an exciting summer at the football club," said Beale. "If we can bring that energy from the stands, I'll push the boys on the pitch to bring the same energy and then next season we can give ourselves a big chance to do something we can really be proud of."

Celtic retained their title with four games to spare last weekend but defeat means Ange Postecoglou's men now cannot set a new club record points tally. The roles were reversed from previous meetings between the sides this season as Celtic paid for a slow start and a failure to take their chances. "It was a disappointing day for us. We never really got going," said Celtic boss Postecoglou, who gave some of his fringe players a chance to shine.

"We had a couple of really good opportunities to get back in the game and we let ourselves down in those areas," Cantwell smashed home the opener just five minutes in after Joe Hart parried John Lundstram's fierce strike. The visitors should have been level immediately as Oh Hyeon-gyu hit the post when one-on-one with Robby McCrorie. Liel Abada also missed a glorious chance to equalize before Rangers doubled their lead through Souttar's header from a corner.

McCrorie was making just his second appearance

of the season with the youngster given his chance to stake a claim to be number one next season by Beale. He could not have done his chances any harm as he produced another stunning save just after the break to prevent Matt O'Riley pulling a goal back. A bad day for Postecoglou's men was summed up 20 minutes from time when a calamitous mix-up between captain Callum McGregor and Carl Starfelt allowed Sakala to run clean through and round Hart before slotting into an empty net.

Just Celtic's second league defeat of the season sees the gap between the top two reduced to 10 points with three games remaining. At the other end of the table, a Jordan White hat-trick lifted Ross County off the foot of the table at Dundee United's expense with a 3-1 win at Tannadice. Kilmarnock also boosted their survival hopes by beating Livingston 2-0. Motherwell are now mathematically safe after a 2-0 win at St Johnstone lifted them up to seventh. — 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

Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733

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Embassy of India
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TENDER NOTICE

Embassy of India, Kuwait invites bids from interested companies for renovation of 3 Wooden Pergola structures installed in the Embassy residence.

Prospective / Interested companies are advised to bid and present their offers in a sealed cover marked "Offer for renovation of Wooden Pergola Structures- to be opened by addressee only" and addressed to the "Head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Arabian Gulf Street, Safat 13015, Kuwait." The bid must be submitted at the Embassy on or before 4th June 2023. The detailed tender document along with its annexures may be downloaded from Central Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/cppp/> and also the official website of the Embassy of India, Kuwait from <https://indembkwf.gov.in/tender-kuwait-in-india.php>.

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Man City move closer to title

West Ham miss chance to seal survival in defeat at Brentford

LIVERPOOL: Manchester City closed in on retaining the Premier League title as Ilkay Gundogan scored twice in a 3-0 win on Sunday that kept Everton looking over their shoulders in the relegation battle. Pep Guardiola's men move four points clear of Arsenal, who are in action later at home to Brighton, with three games remaining for both sides. City's superior goal difference means five points from their remaining matches will likely be enough for a fifth title in six seasons.

Everton remain just one point outside the relegation zone and could slip into the bottom three if Leicester beat Liverpool on Monday. By contrast to the Toffees' troubles, City are still well on course for a treble and could afford the luxury of an afternoon off for some of their stars ahead of Wednesday's Champions League semi-final, second leg against Real Madrid. Guardiola made four changes from the side that drew 1-1 in the first leg in the Spanish capital on Tuesday with John Stones, Bernardo Silva, Kevin De Bruyne and Jack Grealish left on the bench.

It took the visitors 35 minutes to find their rhythm, by which point they should have been behind as Mason Holgate somehow spooned over a glorious chance to open the scoring after James Tarkowski headed down a corner. Within three minutes of Holgate's sitter, the game was over as a contest. Guardiola had stern words for Gundogan despite the German scoring twice in last weekend's 2-1 win over Leeds after the midfielder missed a late penalty having been given the chance to complete his hat-trick by Erling Haaland.

Gundogan made amends with a stunning touch to control and then flick home Riyad Mahrez's cross in one movement to break the deadlock. Moments later, he created the second with a floated cross that invited Haaland to power home his 52nd goal of the season with just his third touch in 39 minutes. Everton boss Sean Dyche showed he too was already thinking about his side's final two games of the season by replacing talismanic striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin, who has missed most of the season through injury, with Neal Maupay at half-time. Guardiola could not have wished for a more serene second half to

prepare for the visit of the European champions in midweek as another moment of brilliance from Gundogan made it 3-0 six minutes after the restart. The 32-year-old is probably into the final month of his seven-year stay in Manchester with his contract up at the end of the season and Barcelona reportedly ready to pounce on a free transfer, but looks set to go out on a high.

Gundogan curled a free-kick beyond the desperate dive of Jordan Pickford for his ninth goal of the season. Goal difference could be decisive in the battle to beat the drop and Everton did at least manage to stop the bleeding at three. Indeed the home side came closest to scoring in the final quarter when Amadou Onana's header came crashing back off the crossbar.

West Ham miss chance

West Ham wasted a chance to seal their Premier League survival as goals from Bryan Mbeumo and Yoane Wissa clinched Brentford's 2-0 victory on Sunday. David Moyes' side would have been guaranteed to avoid relegation with a victory in west London. But Mbeumo and Wissa netted in the first half to leave the Hammers still needing one win from their last two games to be sure of staying up.

West Ham are six points clear of third bottom Leeds, who have just two matches left. However, second bottom Leicester would move within four points of the east Londoners if they beat Liverpool on Monday. With games against relegation rivals Leeds and Leicester to come in their remaining fixtures this was a missed opportunity for West Ham to put their lingering relegation fears to bed. West Ham are dreaming of a first major trophy since the 1980 FA Cup after beating AZ Alkmaar 2-1 in the Europa Conference League semi-final first leg on Thursday.

But they have now only won one of the seven top-flight matches that have come within three days of them playing in Europe this season. Moyes had made nine changes with Thursday's second leg at Alkmaar looming. Declan Rice and Jarrod Bowen dropped to the bench, with Michail Antonio missing out due to a calf injury. The gamble backfired and Brentford's lively



LIVERPOOL: Everton's English goalkeeper Jordan Pickford (up) fights for the ball with Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Manchester City on May 14, 2023. — AFP

start was rewarded in the 20th minute as a flowing move cut through the West Ham defense.

Mathias Jensen's pin-point pass teed up Mbeumo and he caressed a cool finish past Lukasz Fabianski. Brentford had lost just once when opening the scoring this season, while West Ham had only one victory when conceding the first goal. There looked little chance of those sequences reversing as Brentford kept up the pressure. Damsgaard spotted Aaron Hickey's run into the area and the defender squared for Wissa, whose low strike was saved by Fabianski.

It was a warning West Ham failed to heed as Wissa doubled the Bees' lead in the 43rd minute.

Jensen's long throw was flicked on by Ben Mee and Wissa headed powerfully past Fabianski. Danny Ings' shot was pushed away for a corner by David Raya in a rare moment of menace from West Ham. Wissa fired wide after a sloppy mistake from Tomas Soucek that summed up West Ham's lethargic display. Mikkel Damsgaard should have made it three for Brentford but he volleyed over after Jensen's corner was flicked on by Mee. — AFP

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