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HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and Minister of Information and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi congratulate Kuwait Times. (See Page 2)



Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan

## Kuwait Times turns 62

Kuwait Times, the first English daily in the Arabian Gulf founded by Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan, is marking its 62nd anniversary with a special retro edition. First published on September 24, 1961, the newspaper at that time was the perfect mechanism for bridging the communication gap with the rest of the world. Reputable and reliable, Kuwait Times has never looked back, and has grown to ensure that citizens and expatriates alike know what is happening in Kuwait and the rest of the world.

Op-Ed

## Kuwait Times: A legacy for the future



Abdullah Boftain  
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

**62** years celebrating culture and the art of information to the masses. A pioneer in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf still relevant in its timeless beauty. Connecting worlds beyond maps and creating a home for the press. As the years progressed, its vibrant doors expanded and welcomed the many faces of visitors from all facets of life. Providing a space for everyone looking for answers. A haven that carries the very memories that made this country. You can't help but feel a sense of nostalgia as it embraces you with its history and subtle hues of blue.

A brand built over decades, evolving and progressing through to find its path of transformation. In 2020, a partnership aligned setting a new vision in place. Kuwait News complemented the ever-evolving traditional media practices alongside the wave of digital transformation. This collaboration was the catalyst for something new, something for everyone.

Connecting communities of all nationalities and age groups, it took on a more refined role and responsibility. It became a nexus for content creation, paving way for a new generation to receive and share information. Injecting life into language and culture in pursuit of better times. The future is filled with hope and the very dreamers who want to make a change.

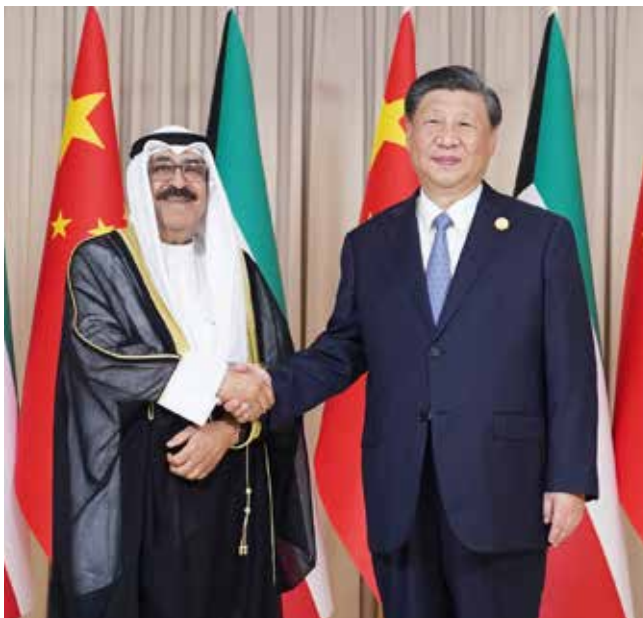
The objective was clear — adapt to changes and embrace alternative ways of reaching and resonating with the public; the voices of our future. We provide the very tools to nourish and guide them - the inquisitive writers, bold thinkers, truth seekers and journalists in their own right.

We are proud to help create a space for knowledge and provide opportunities for a new generation of talented creators. Reviving the foundation of quality journalism to reflect the values of truth and inclusivity.

This very home that I have spent the past three years rebuilding... a space with so much promise, integrity and inspiration. A time celebrated for its rich history and strength to keep going. The legacy of Kuwait Times and its unwavering path towards the future.

# KUWAIT, CHINA HAIL TIES

Sheikh Mishal meets Xi, attends opening of Asian Games



HANGZHOU: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sept 22, 2023. — KUNA

HANGZHOU, China: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping held summit talks at the West Lake in Hangzhou, China, on Friday. HH the Crown Prince conveyed greetings of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and extended an official invitation to Xi to visit Kuwait. The two leaders discussed the historic bilateral relations which date back to over 50 years and means of further strengthening them with the objective of boosting prosperity of the two peoples and contribute to progress and development.

The two leaders also discussed the desire to cement the strategic partnership between Kuwait and China, in addition to exchanging views over a host of regional and international development. The talks were held in an amicable atmosphere which reflected the spirit of understanding and friendship between the two countries and their desire to promote cooperation in all domains. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal and President Xi also witnessed the signing of a host of cooperation agreements. HH the Crown Prince also attended on Saturday the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games. — KUNA (See Pages 4, 6, 12, 38 & 39)



HH Sheikh Mishal gestures as he attends the opening ceremony of the Asian Games on Sept 23, 2023.

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## Congratulatory messages pour in



HH the PM Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

**W**e are pleased to send you our best congratulations and sincere wishes on the 62nd anniversary of the publication of your esteemed paper Kuwait Times. We are pleased on this auspicious occasion to express our appreciation of the information march of the newspaper, lauding its objective commitment in delivering its mission and presenting issues of interest to citizens domestically and abroad, and focusing on the achievements in our homeland.

We wish you and the Kuwait Times family continued success, and for our dear country continued prosperity under the wise leadership and generous care of HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince, May Allah protect them.



Abdulrahman Badah Al-Mutairi  
Minister of Information and Minister of  
Awqaf and Islamic Affairs

**O**n the occasion of the 62nd anniversary of the publication of Kuwait Times newspaper, I am pleased to congratulate you on this auspicious occasion, while I pray to Almighty Allah to help you to perform your duty at its best. We laud your major role in what you present in the form of important topics in order to strengthen the march of journalism and instilling the media message, and I value your efforts and that of Kuwait Times' family and all its employees. I pray to Almighty Allah for our efforts to be successful for the sake and interest of our beloved

country Kuwait, under the wise leadership of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah – may Allah protect him, and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah – may Allah protect them.



Dr Nasser Ahmad Muhaisen  
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information

**T**he Ministry of Information wishes you continued success. We are pleased to convey to your esteemed self and Kuwait Times family the most sublime greetings on the occasion of the 62nd anniversary of Kuwait Times, which was able to take its place in prominence among local and international papers due to the outstanding efforts of Kuwait Times'

family and their keenness on objectivity and media professionalism. We congratulate you for this good effort and ask Almighty Allah to guide you to the good and service of our beloved Kuwait, and we wish you more success.



Hamad Bader Saleh Al-Amer  
Director of the office of Kuwait PM

**I**t is our pleasure to send our best congratulations and blessings on the 62nd anniversary of the publication of the first edition of your esteemed paper "Kuwait Times". We are pleased on this auspicious occasion to express our appreciation of the distinguished information role the paper is putting out to enrich the media march of our beloved country, and we laud the objective coverage and continued keenness to publish topics of interest to the country and citizens. Our best congratulations and wishes to you and Kuwait Times family for continued success, and for our dear Kuwait constant prosperity under the wise leadership of HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince, May Allah protect them.

**Kuwait Times**



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## Congratulatory messages pour in



**James Holtsnider, Charge d'Affaires US Embassy**

Congratulations to Kuwait Times on reaching your 62nd anniversary. For many years, the Kuwait Times has played an important role in Kuwait's media landscape. Around the world, the United States applauds journalists and their work to consistently promote transparency and provide accurate and trusted news. The media's contributions are invaluable in every country, and we applaud your efforts in Kuwait to foster informed discussions. As you celebrate this milestone, I wish you continued success and look forward to seeing Kuwait Times thrive for many more years to come.



**Saleh Al-Kharousi  
Ambassador of Oman**

I am pleased to extend to your honorable person, my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 62nd anniversary of the issuance of the first issue of your distinguished newspaper, praising with pride the remarkable successes it has achieved, both at level of its professional performance and its credibility in dealing with various local, regional and international issues or at the level of its positive impact in clearly expressing the vision common to Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf states and the Arab and Islamic region. Kuwait Times represents the voice of truth that has been loud in defense of issues that we all believe in, especially as it was the first Kuwaiti daily newspaper to be published in English in the region. As I express to you our happiness with this brilliance and the continued success of your successful newspaper, I'm interested in praising the active role it has always played in introducing the civilized face of the Sultanate of Oman on various national and cultural occasions, as your efforts will always be deeply appreciated.



**Aliya Mawani, Canadian Ambassador**

On behalf of the Canadian Embassy in Kuwait, I would like to convey our warmest wishes and congratulations to all the dedicated professionals at the Kuwait Times on the occasion of the publication's 62nd anniversary. As one of the leading English news source in the GCC region, the Kuwait Times has proven itself over the years to be a reliable, transparent and objective source of information, with a strong commitment to press freedom, and which highlights issues of key importance for Kuwait and the global community. We thank the Kuwait Times team for years of excellent working relations and look forward to future opportunities for fruitful collaboration.



**Morino Yasunari  
Japanese Ambassador**

On behalf of the Embassy of Japan in Kuwait, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to the esteemed Kuwait Times Newspaper on its 62nd Anniversary. As freedom of press is sanctified by the constitution of Kuwait, over decades of remarkable news coverage and professional publishing, Kuwait Times has always been a pioneering credit worthy English-daily newspaper in Kuwait and the region, expanding information to non-Arabic speakers. I am impressed with the wide coverage of international news. I will continue to count on the trust-worthy information the Kuwait Times will continue to provide us and on its visionary thinking about the role of media in contributing to the development of mankind. I sincerely wish further success and prosperity for Kuwait Times for many years ahead. We, at the Embassy of Japan, look forward to having more collaboration opportunities with Kuwait Times in the future.



**Chitem Tenzin  
Bhutanese Ambassador**

I sincerely wish to congratulate the Kuwait Times and its distinguished and dedicated Editorial team on the happy occasion of its historic 62nd Anniversary celebration. During my past two years here, I have been reading Kuwait Times regularly and I found it very informative and educational both on local and international news and coverage. I like to wish Kuwait Times many more decades of success and progress.



**Claire Le Flecher, Ambassador of France**

I am pleased to send you my sincere congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of the sixty-second anniversary of your reputable and reliable newspaper, "Kuwait Times," the first English-language daily newspaper in the Arabian Gulf. I wish you to continue the path of progress and always maintain the highest levels of professionalism and credibility. I wish the entire Kuwait Times team continued success and prosperity for your esteemed newspaper.



**Miguel Aguilar, Spanish Ambassador**

I congratulate Kuwait Times on its 62nd anniversary. I visited this important institution in Kuwait three years ago, and I witnessed a big change and a very interesting transformation during my recent visit. I think institutions and newspapers should renew themselves and make a different approach in the world of the internet. I think the Kuwait Times is on the right path by targeting news appealing to a broader audience, especially the youth. Spanish Embassy and my team are very glad to accompany Kuwait Times in this important transformation. I wish Kuwait Times' Editor-in-Chief and its team the best in this important moment and hope for more success.



**Adarsh Swaika  
Ambassador of India**

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the team of Kuwait Times on its 62nd anniversary. Occasions like this are symbolic of the long journey of professionalism that Kuwait Times has built over the years. As India and Kuwait continue to cooperate and collaborate in various fields for a deeper partnership, the role of media outlets like Kuwait Times in projecting the strong bilateral bonds and promoting mutual understanding cannot be overstated. Your contributions to this endeavor are appreciated. May Kuwait Times continue to thrive and evolve, setting new standards in journalism including ethical journalism, and serving as a source of reliable information. Best wishes to the entire team of Kuwait Times for its continued success!

# CONGRATULATIONS KUWAIT TIMES FOR 62 YEARS OF JOURNALISTIC EXCELLENCE

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a modern university building. The building has a mix of grey concrete and large glass windows. A large, three-dimensional 'AUK' logo is mounted on the dark grey facade of one of the buildings. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy white clouds.

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The American University of Kuwait received its Institutional Accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC), Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait, and has a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with Dartmouth College (Hanover, N Hampshire - USA).

# Crown Prince attends luncheon with Xi



HANGZHOU: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday attended a luncheon held by Chinese President Xi Jinping, honoring the heads of State and other prominent leaders and figures invited to the inauguration ceremony of the 19th Asian Olympic Games in the Chinese city of Hangzhou. — KUNA photos (See Page 8)




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# Kuwait and China sign agreements

**HANGZHOU:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of cooperation agreements in a guest house at the West Lake in Hangzhou, China, on Friday. The two sides signed a joint statement regarding a cooperation plan for 2024–28. It was signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Wang Yi, member of the Communist Party politburo, Director of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Communist Party's Central Committee, and Foreign Minister.

Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah signed an MoU with National Development and Reform Commission Chairman Zheng Shanjie regarding a low-carbon recycling green system. Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah and Zheng also signed an MoU between the Ministry of Public Works and the National Development and Reform Commission regarding the infrastructure of water treatment stations. Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Jassem Al-Ostad signed an MoU with the

national energy department, which was represented by Zheng, regarding power systems and renewable energy.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr. Saad Al-Barrak, signed an MoU with Minister of Transport Li Xiaopeng regarding Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port. The Foreign Minister represented the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and signed an MoU with Chinese Minister of Trade Wang Wentao regarding economic and free zones. The Minister of State for Housing Affairs signed an MoU between the Public Authority for Housing Welfare and the Chinese Ministry of Trade regarding housing development. China was represented by Minister Wang.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping held summit talks at the West Lake in Hangzhou, China, on Friday. His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad



**HANGZHOU:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping witness the signing of cooperation agreements at a guest house in Hangzhou, China. — KUNA

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and extended an official invitation for President Xi to visit the State of Kuwait. The two leaders discussed the historic bilateral relations, which date back over

50 years, and means of further strengthening them with the objective of boosting the prosperity of the two peoples and contributing to progress and development. — KUNA

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# Kuwait considers deal to regulate Khor Abdullah waterway navigation 'valid'

## 'New Kuwait' vision aims to transform the country into commercial hub

**NEW YORK:** Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has affirmed that Kuwait considers the agreement to regulate navigation in the Khor Abdullah waterway valid and in full force. "Kuwait will consider the agreement to regulate navigation in the Khor Abdullah waterway and the security swap protocol effective because of their importance in maintaining the security and safety," His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf said in his speech at the 78th UN General Assembly in New York.

He underlined that the agreement and the protocol are crucial for preventing chaos, border violations, and the high possibility of an influx of illicit arms and drugs, which are the two main sources for financing various terrorist militias. His Highness the Amir's Representative pointed out that Kuwait, over nearly two decades and out of its belief in the principle of good neighborliness, has stood by the side of Iraq to develop and restore its regional and international status to achieve the hopes and aspirations of its people.

"However, we were astonished by the ruling of the Federal Supreme Court in Iraq, declaring as unconstitutional the law ratifying the agreement regulating maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah," His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf said, noting that the agreement was signed and ratified by Kuwait and Iraq in 2012 and deposited with the United Nations in 2013. He also regretted the historical fallacies about Kuwait mentioned in the court ruling.

"We were also stunned by the Iraqi government decision a few days ago to invalidate the security swap protocol inked between the leadership of the Kuwaiti Naval Force and the leadership of the Iraqi Naval Force in 2008," he said, cautioning about the negative repercussions of such a move on maritime security and navigation in the Khor Abdullah waterway. His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf called on the Iraqi government to act swiftly to address the fallout of the Supreme Court's verdict.

"From this platform, from which the multilateral diplomatic process was launched to maintain international peace and security, Kuwait urges the Iraqi government to take concrete, decisive, and urgent measures to address the repercussions



**NEW YORK:** HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers Kuwait's speech at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly. — KUNA

of the ruling and the historical fallacies mentioned therein in a way that preserves good neighborly relations," he stated.

He reiterated Kuwait's call for mutual respect of the security, independence, and territorial integrity of both countries, the signed bilateral agreements, and the relevant UN resolutions, most notably UN Security Council Resolution No. 833, which delineated the land and sea borders between the two sides up to the marine mark No. 162.

"We call on the brotherly Republic of Iraq to prove good intentions and complete the meetings of the relevant technical teams. "Till the demarcation of the borders beyond mark No. 162, in accordance with international laws and conventions, Kuwait reserves its full right to take whatever measures it deems necessary at the legal and international levels to preserve its established legitimate and legal rights in accordance with international resolutions and the international law provisions," he said.

### Submerged area

His Highness the Prime Minister stressed that the natural resources in the submerged area adjacent to the Divide Zone belong solely to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. "The natural resources in the submerged area adjacent to the Kuwaiti-Saudi Divided Zone, including the entire Durra field, belong solely to the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf said in his speech at

the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

"Only Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have full rights to exploit these resources," he affirmed. He reiterated "Kuwait's categorical rejection of any claim of right by any other party in this field or the submerged area adjacent to the Divide Zone". He also renewed Kuwait's call to the Islamic Republic of Iran to take serious confidence-building measures and to commence a dialogue based on respect for other countries, non-interference in their internal affairs, and guaranteeing the freedom of maritime navigation.

### Palestinian rights

The representative of His Highness the Amir renewed Kuwait's full support for the Palestinian people and their rights. "For 75 years, the Palestinian people have suffered due to the international community's failure to enforce the UN resolutions and the Zionist entity occupation's practices, which violate all international norms and laws," His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf said in his speech at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. He asserted the centrality of the Palestinian cause in the Arab and Muslim worlds. His Highness the Premier noted that Kuwait has submitted a written plea to the International Court of Justice to give its opinion on the consequences of the Zionist entity occupation's ongoing violations of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

### Development vision

His Highness the Prime Minister stated that the "New Kuwait" vision aims to transform the country into a financial, commercial, and cultural hub. Addressing the 78th UN General Assembly in New York, His Highness said the development vision seeks to keep pace with all international economic and financial indicators to achieve this goal. He noted that foreign policy is present in this expanded development process through diplomacy that takes initiatives stemming from the country's relief and humanitarian legacy.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmad renewed his country's commitment to cut carbon emissions. "In light of the deterioration of the environment worldwide, my country has voluntarily and thoughtfully made clear progress to fulfill obligations and according to available capabilities, especially in the field of rehabilitation of the oil, industry, and transportation sectors with the aim of reducing emissions, diversifying energy sources, improving their efficiency, and using alternative and renewable energy," he said, committing to Kuwait's previous pledge to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 in the oil sectors.

He said that the Gulf Cooperation Council States have been and continue to be pioneers in supporting the multilateral international community due to their belief in its centrality in addressing common challenges. He wished the success of the climate change conference "COP28," which will be held in the Emirate of Dubai in the sisterly United Arab Emirates.

He welcomed the announcement by Saudi Arabia on the establishment of a global water organization based in Riyadh in order to develop and integrate the efforts of countries and organizations to address water challenges in a comprehensive manner and ensure the sustainability of water resources. He welcomed Qatar's hosting of the upcoming Horticultural Expo entitled "Green Desert, Better Environment" in an effort to encourage innovative solutions towards the sustainability of desert areas.

### UN Human Rights Council

His Highness the Prime Minister called on UN member states to vote for Kuwait's bid to join the UN Human Rights Council. "We are

looking forward to the UN member states voting for Kuwait to obtain Human Rights Council membership for the period from 2024 to 2026 in the elections planned next October," he said in his speech at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. He pointed out that Kuwait, through its membership bid, seeks to meet the aspirations of the developing world by extending bridges of cooperation and working in a way that helps reach comprehensive and just solutions to human rights issues in accordance with the provisions of international law, international humanitarian law, and UN resolutions.

### Anti-Muslim hatred

Representative of His Highness the Amir called for international synergy to confront hate speech and media misinformation targeting Muslims. "As we look forward to boosting global dialogue and spreading the culture of coexistence, tolerance, and peace at all levels, Muslims are still facing irresponsible provocative attacks by a number of extremists," His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf said in his speech at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. He criticized the burning of copies of the Holy Quran in a number of capitals and cities under "flimsy justifications" of freedom of expression. He underlined the need for concerted international efforts to deal with hate speech and media misinformation targeting Muslims.

### Yemen, Sudan, and Syria

Sheikh Ahmad called for peaceful solutions to the conflicts in Yemen, Sudan and Syria. "We renew our support for the efforts undertaken by the United Nations through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen in order to resume the political process and reach a comprehensive settlement in accordance with the three agreed-upon terms of reference: the Gulf Initiative and its executive mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, and the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially UNSCR 2216, in a way that preserves the security and stability of Yemen and its territorial integrity," His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf said in his speech at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.—KUNA

# Alghanim INDUSTRIES صناعات الغانم



Alghanim Industries is one of the oldest and largest, privately-owned companies in the MENA region. Founded at the turn of the century, in Kuwait, the company today employs more than 15,000 people in 30 businesses across 40 countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia.

# Crown Prince's meeting with Huawei executives 'productive'

**HANGZHOU:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's meeting with executives of Huawei in Hangzhou on Friday was "very productive," Minister of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Al-Aiban said. The State of Kuwait seeks to enhance cooperation with Huawei, a giant company with many projects around the world, Al-Aiban, also Minister of State for Youth Affairs, told KUNA in a statement following His Highness the Crown Prince's meeting.

His Highness the Crown Prince informed the Huawei executives about their projects and urged them to continue providing information technology and communication (ICT) services for Kuwait, he said. "His Highness the Crown Prince promised to remove all obstacles facing them," said Al-Aiban. His Highness the Crown Prince, he added, was keen on the digital transformation contributing to a paperless environment in government departments.

Al-Aiban said Huawei was an advanced company in the ICT domain, and Kuwait sought to make good use of its expertise as an extended strategy. On Huawei's contribution to the development

plan 2023-27 and Kuwait Vision 2035, Al-Aiban said His Highness the Crown Prince was keen on meeting with the company's executives and discussing cooperation domains.

The executives, he added, showed readiness to contribute to the development plan, especially following the memoranda of understanding signed earlier. He said the MoUs included infrastructure, environment, recycling, and development projects. His Highness the Crown Prince is in Hangzhou at the invitation of Chinese President Xin Jinping to attend the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games. — KUNA



Mohammad Al-Aiban



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Huawei executives.

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**A WONDERFUL WORLD**

# Kuwaiti protesters rally for Gazans



KUWAIT: Protesters brandish placards during a rally calling for opening the ports of the besieged Gaza Strip at Irada Square in Kuwait City on September 23, 2023. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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# Page One: At the front and center of significant events

By Shakir Reshamwala

In the fast-paced world of journalism, the front page of a newspaper is the window to the world for readers, a snapshot of the day's most critical events, and a reflection of the newspaper's editorial priorities. As the front-page editor of Kuwait Times for nearly two decades, I have documented countless seminal events that have shaped and even altered the course of history.

The primary responsibility of the front page is to showcase the most important and relevant stories of the day. The front-page editor must carefully curate a selection that informs, engages and resonates with the target audience. These stories often carry significant social, political, economic or human-interest value.

To draw readers in, the front page requires compelling headlines and eye-catching visuals. These elements should accurately reflect the essence of the stories while piquing the reader's interest, while at the same time avoiding sensationalism or bias. News is often ephemeral, and the front page must stay current.

As Kuwait Times celebrates its 62nd anniversary, some of the front pages of the anniversary issues of the past six decades have been highlighted on this page, serving as a reflection of the key events of those times. Some of these milestone issues were published after tumultuous events (a few days after the 9/11 attacks in Sept 2001), while others were momentous for the newspaper itself (a few days after the paper resumed printing in Sept 1991 after the invasion and subsequent liberation of Kuwait), not to mention the first issue of Kuwait Times in 1961 (a few months after Kuwait's independence).

Crafting a compelling front page requires a blend of editorial judgment, journalistic integrity and an acute understanding of readers' needs. As long as newspapers continue to exist, the front page will remain a symbol of the essential role journalism plays in society.



1961

Presidents Tshombe, De Gaulle and Kennedy made the front page of Kuwait Times' inaugural issue in 1961. Late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, then the head of the printing and publication department, wrote a congratulatory message. Note the vintage TV ad!



1981

The fallout of the Iranian Revolution and creation of Bangladesh still reverberate in Kuwait Times' 20th anniversary edition.



1991

Kuwait Times' 30th anniversary edition was published only a few days after the paper resumed printing after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and liberation in 1991. Reports on Iraqi intransigence and smog in Kuwait due to the burning oilwells dominate the headlines.



2001

Coming a few days after the 9/11 attacks in the US, most stories on the front page of Kuwait Times' 40th anniversary issue focus on the 'war on terror'. A column marks four decades of the paper's existence.



2011

Palestine asking the UN to admit it as a full member state was the top story of Kuwait Times' 50th anniversary edition. A column celebrates the paper's golden jubilee.



2021

The life and times of Kuwait Times' founder Yousuf Al-Alyan was celebrated in the paper's 60th anniversary issue. With the milestone coming during the COVID crisis, stories on the pandemic also featured on the front page.

# For verified, authentic news and information, grab Kuwait Times

By Chidi Emmanuel

As the world transforms and evolves, so does the First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf—Kuwait Times (KT) Newspaper. The transition from analog to digital has been a significant trend in the media over the past few years. With the increasing prevalence of digital technology and the rise of the internet, Kuwait Times has harmonized traditional print publications with the online platform graphically and tactically. KT's archive and digital transformations have made it a cyberspace for the past, present and future.



Kuwait Times has moved from typewriter to just a click. Over the years, the newspaper has provided readers with digital content through its interactive websites, mobile apps and online portals. The print media and online platforms offer readers feature articles, edito-

rials, award-winning photos and up-to-date news related information. To enhance wider coverage and readership, the newspaper introduced a free digital subscription where readers pay just nothing to access the premium contents online and on their mobile phones. As if that were not enough, the Kuwait Times extended its tentacles to social media. This platforms have been very explosive and interactive. The social media handles are making it easier for people to voice their opinions and areas of concern.

These moves have allowed Kuwait Times to reach a wider audience, adapt to changing reader preferences and explore new revenue streams. Kuwait Times has sophisticatedly evolved and has been able to maintain its leading role in the industry while keeping the old media tradition. Just like other media industries across the globe, the transition from analog (the typewriter era) to digital has enabled KT to explore, expand its reach and engage with its readers in a new and informative way, thus creating a new business module.

KT traces convergence and innovation processes in an explorative manner, and that's what makes it unique. Above all, the management is top-notch. It has always evolved in an exponential and progressive manner. At every point in time, Kuwait Times has always employed

the best of the best. In the Kuwait Times, we always have good management (leaders) who are always at the forefront to guide and direct, thus making everyone a media scholar and researcher.

This change in business modules and media practices transformed KT into a faculty of the past, present and future. The change is also reflected in its journalism, focusing on topics that matter and more in-depth reporting. While video and social media reporting have turned out to be important elements in attracting new subscribers and readership, KT, however, retains its print media for tangibility sake.

The print newspaper is for a wide range of people who still prefer to hold, flip through and grab a copy of the newspaper. The tactile experience of a printed version can be enjoyable and remains satisfying for many people, and Kuwait Times acknowledges that. With a lot of fake information in the digital world, some people still perceive print media as more trustworthy and reliable. The physical nature of print media creates a sense of authenticity and reliability. Just like Jessica Clint (a Kuwait Times subscriber) said, "For verified and authentic information, please grab a copy of Kuwait Times."


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# KT: Pioneering transformation in media world

By Sajeev K Peter

I have been fortunate to witness the transition and transformation of Kuwait Times into a modern newspaper of the technology era. Ever since it was established in 1961, it has been evolving in tandem with the time, pioneering the change in the newspaper industry. By 1997, the time when I joined the newspaper, the Kuwait Times was on the threshold of a full-fledged computerization, leaving behind an era of typesetting and linotype machine composing.

Till then, we used to collect galleys from the telex machine or teleprinter machines, which would then be corrected by hand and proofread. Then the pages would be made up, imposed and printed while dis-



tribution was carried out by hand. But, with the advent of computers, copyediting, proofreading and the printing became easier, bringing in more flexibility in accommodating latest news.

The turn of the 21st century saw the rise of a new journalism medium for a new millennium: The Internet. While many newspapers remained diffident and sluggish in the face of the Internet revolution, Kuwait Times took the plunge, adapting to new platforms and technologies to stay in tune with the technology innovation.

Interestingly, followers of the old school of journalism have found it increasingly difficult to stay afloat in a media world where newer types of journalism have flourished and reigned, creating an altogether new media landscape. Today, with the vibrant and dynamic social media section such as X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, et al, Kuwait Times has carved out a niche for itself as a dynamic media house, pioneering the change along with other ma-

jor media houses across the world.

Although the impact of the Internet on journalism is simply a microcosm of the larger phenomenon of dramatic change brought about by the online digital revolution, the challenges for the media were multifarious in the fast-changing digital world. The Internet has irrevocably accelerated the pace of the news, as journalists race to stay ahead of each other as well as their readers' demands.

At the same time, the newspaper has to deliver the news in a fact-based and objective manner without compromising on objectivity. Kuwait Times is fully conscious about the fact that journalists in the digital age must operate in a world where the news cycle moves faster. So, it is vitally important for the newspaper to strike a balance between timely reporting and maintaining the veracity and truthfulness of the news that is being disseminated. At the same time, it is imperative to promote a perspective through a lens that includes fair framing, editing and reporting.

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# Between trends and legacy: Kuwait Times thrives in the digital age

By Nebal Snan and Ghadeer Ghloom

On its 62nd anniversary, Kuwait Times is unfolding two distinct eras, seamlessly intertwining within its printed pages and digital presence. A lot has changed over the past six decades in the way news is covered, reported, written and consumed, creating both challenges and exciting opportunities for news organizations. Journalists, both young and veterans, have stepped up to continue providing the audience with the information they need. Islam Al-Sharaa, who's seen it all having first joined Kuwait Times in the 1980s, and Khaled Al-Abdulahdi, a young journalist and translator who joined in 2022, share their thoughts about the rapidly-shifting news industry. The interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

**Kuwait Times: How would you describe the value of a newspaper as a source of news in the past as opposed to now?**

**Sharaa:** At that time, newspapers were a pivotal source of news as there was no social media or internet. ... Of course, not everyone had access to television, so people relied heavily on newspapers. Although you could get the news from the radio, the newspaper was the go-to source to find out more details. In the past, when something major happened in Kuwait, all international news agencies would contact Kuwait Times for more information. Many news reports published by these agencies credited Kuwait Times as a source. For example, during the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the calls to Kuwait Times never stopped.

Currently, since news is easily found all over social media and the internet, we are shifting focus towards breaking exclusive stories ... We also do our best to follow up on an event with detailed and clear information about its repercussions, which gives the reader more accurate knowledge of what happened. So, we can say that the newspaper is no longer the primary source of news as it used to be, but its importance stems from providing analysis and in-depth reporting. Despite the developments in our time, there are also those who enjoy reading the newspaper. Certainly, the number of readers is not as it used to be, but there are still many who prefer reading the newspaper for several reasons, including trust and credibility.

**Abdulahdi:** Newspapers obviously aren't as important as they used to be. ... But I do still feel that they hold a little bit of prestige. You can walk by any store, find their display of newspapers and by looking at the headlines, you know what's happening today. The newspaper format and style is very important because it's played a great role in shaping how we write news, even as



it's now published and consumed online and on social media.

**Kuwait Times: Earlier this year, Kuwait Times' partner Kuwait News created and unveiled Fedha, an AI-generated news presenter. Is having an AI-generated colleague something you could have foreseen?**

**Sharaa:** We never expected the emergence of artificial intelligence and the existence of a colleague like Fedha. But now that it's here, it doesn't feel strange. In fact, it feels like pop culture, especially science fiction films, have long prepared us for this moment.

**Kuwait Times: How do you feel about AI being utilized in the journalism industry?**

**Sharaa:** I do not see AI as a threat. In fact, I think AI can support people who work in this field. While AI can write a story about a topic, only humans can go out to interview people or use their connections to verify information. So, AI functions more like a guide for the reporters and could facilitate some aspects of their job but it cannot take over their place.

**Abdulahdi:** I think the development in AI has been great because it's helped us get the news out faster, which is essential because people need to know what's happening as soon as it happens. Also, in our day-to-day life, it's allowed us to get more work done with our limited time.

**Kuwait Times: What advice would you give younger generations when it comes to consuming news?**

**Sharaa:** Make sure to get your news from reliable sources. Don't rely on random people claiming to be influencers on social media who have no real connection to actual

news sources because due to the lack of oversight and credibility in their news reporting, the possibility of inaccuracies is greater than you expect.

**Abdulahdi:** There are two factors at play here. For one, you need to be aware of any affiliations the outlet providing you with news might have. You should also know that some news outlets unfortunately resort to clickbait

or overhype some topics to get more views, which is a very dangerous phenomenon since it significantly harms the credibility of our profession. To ensure these two factors don't have a negative effect on your judgment, I think people should always look at the news from multiple sources and come up with their own analysis of what's happening based on common sense.



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# 10 things you may not know about Kuwait Times

By Nebal Snan

**KUWAIT:** For 62 years, Kuwait Times has been telling stories of Kuwait and beyond. To mark the anniversary, here are ten facts you may not know about the newspaper.

1. Kuwait Times was established and still stands in Industrial Shuwaikh on Sahafa Street.
2. The first issue of Kuwait Times was printed at Mogahwi press and it consisted of four pages only.
3. The paper witnessed and participated in documenting the most notable events in Kuwait's modern history, starting with the establishment of democracy, the first parliamentary elections, and ratifying the constitution of the state.
4. At one point, Kuwait Times had 16-20 cats, taken care of by staff. It all started with a street cat named Lucy, which visited Kuwait Times on occasion in the early 2010s. Later, Islam

Al-Sharaa kept the cat in his office to ward off a mouse that drove him crazy. Lucy's family grew and Kuwait Times continued to care for the cats until a few years later, when they were all given away for adoption. Currently, another cat, also called Lucy, is a permanent visitor at the office.

5. Kuwait Times seized publishing during the Iraqi invasion. Few staff remained to protect the premises from Iraqi forces. Using thousands of school-books that were printed at the press but could not be delivered at the onset of the invasion, staff barricaded the printing press and offices to prevent soldiers from raiding equipment. Islam Al-Sharaa, who was among those working at the time, said he foiled an attempt by the Iraqis to obtain the telephone numbers of Kuwait Times editors for the purpose of recruiting them to publish news in service of the invasion. The paper resumed publication in 1991 with 12 pages.

6. Kuwait Times was the first newspaper in Kuwait to launch a website in 1992.
7. George Clooney appeared with an edition of Kuwait Times in an episode of sitcom "The facts of life", where he played a handyman and appeared from 1985-87. Clooney's character had the paper delivered to him by mail and said Kuwait Times helped him keep up with the country's news.
8. Kuwait Times communicated with the country's growing communities and became Kuwait's only multilingual newspaper, publishing in English, Urdu, Malayalam, and Tagalog.
9. In 2005, Kuwait Times started the first ever English language tabloid in Kuwait, the Friday Times — a 48-page weekly.
10. Kuwait Times and Kuwait News, founded in 2006, have joined forces in 2020, with a shared vision to provide the latest news and analyses truthfully and accurately.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times' IT Director Islam Al-Sharaa poses with two kittens at the Kuwait Times office in Industrial Shuwaikh. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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Kuwait Times Content Creator Dhoha Alessa amongst KT team members.

# KT through the lens

By Jana Khaldoun Alnaqeeb  
PR & CSR Manager



I have the privilege of working in a place established 62 years ago, with the intention of providing the public with news in a non-biased manner. Kuwait Times is attempting to change the printing media paradigm as it enters into a new digital era, while keeping in mind the enduring legacy of Mr Yousuf Al-Alyan and his team. To me, this era of Kuwait Times represents renewed visions of education, creativity, social responsibility, communication and journalism. Most importantly, using integrity as one of the primary virtues when providing the news and current events to the public.

In my humble attempt to simplify the world around me, I use black and white photography to remove all the noise that constantly surrounds us. Whether it is on our phone or laptop screens or billboards or even in our daily human interactions. My Leica M Monochrome, this tiny machine, is a great weapon for freezing moments and canceling the noise. We live in a time where everything is fighting for our attention, where technology and the processing of information is happening so quickly, that we forget to slow down and reflect on what we hear, read and see in the world. So I use my little machine to pay attention to the things around me and slow time in this rapid unyielding existence.

Hopefully, by capturing these images, I can both steal your attention for a fraction of a second and stop to notice what we might possibly notice. With this, I am inviting you to witness the world around you through my lens, in monochrome, so you can see all the things that I missed to notice. Take your time in gazing — I don't mind! Enjoy.



A day in the editorial office at Kuwait Times.



Miami Band's Khaled Alrandi and Mishal Layli visit Kuwait Times.



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Ink key duct machine, circa 2004.



Newspaper rolls



Comedian Mo Amer and Dhoha Alessa play the BTS headphone game.



Omar Alrahbani, lead singer of Rahbaniyat, during rehearsal.

# Pope urges Europe not to treat migrants as invaders

## Pontiff leads stadium mass in France

**MARSEILLE:** Pope Francis on Saturday led tens of thousands of worshippers packed into a stadium for a mass in Marseille after earlier striding into a politically loaded debate in the French Mediterranean city by urging European states not to treat migrants as invaders. The visit by Francis has been shadowed by the controversy over migrant arrivals in Europe, and his plea to welcome people puts him at odds with most EU governments in countries including Italy and France.

But the centrepiece of the visit was the mass at Marseille's main stadium the Velodrome - usually the venue for rugby or football matches. The Pope received huge cheers as he closed the service, asking the faithful in French to "pray for me, it's a difficult job" - his favored parting line. Marseille archbishop Jean-Marc Aveline declared that the pope had been "baptized as a citizen of Marseille", again drawing an ovation from the crowd.

The pontiff's visit to the Velodrome was "as if you went to every Marseille person's home," Aveline added. Francis had entered the stadium aboard his popemobile after being driven at walking pace in the open-top vehicle through the streets of the city to receive the greetings of residents waving Vatican and French flags. Clutches of black- or white-robed priests and nuns were scattered through the crowds during the service, while volunteers distributed communion wafers.

Fans of the much-loved Olympique de Marseille football team lifted up a giant

banner of a smiling Francis and the hilltop basilica of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, which he visited on Friday. According to local authorities there were 50,000 people in the stadium while 100,000 had lined the streets during the pope's tour.

### 'Graveyard of dignity'

The pontiff, 86, who looked sprightly despite often using a wheelchair between engagements, meanwhile showed no fear in entering the fraught debate on migrants. "Those who risk their lives at sea do not invade, they look for welcome," Francis said in a speech earlier Saturday, closing a conference of bishops and young people from around the Mediterranean.

Migration is "a reality of our times, a process that involves three continents around the Mediterranean and that must be governed with wise foresight, including a European response," he added. Noting the risk to the lives of migrants if they are not taken to safety, he warned against turning "the Mediterranean, the mare nostrum, from the cradle of civilization into the mare mortuum, the graveyard of dignity". Worshippers cheered when Aveline thanked the pontiff for his "powerful and courageous words", in an apparent rebuke to French President Emmanuel Macron, present in the stadium, whose government plans to toughen up controls on migrants.

The pope's forceful interventions came as the migration debate has been stoked by mass arrivals on the Italian island of Lampedusa earlier this month. A French presiden-

recent weeks reported making strategic advances in the Zaporizhzhia region. "Not as fast as it was expected, not like in the movies about the Second World War," Tarnavskiy said in the CNN interview, adding it was important "not to lose this initiative". Last month Kyiv declared a strategic victory when it recaptured the southern village of Robotyne. Tarnavskiy said a major breakthrough would be if Kyiv recaptured the city of Tokmak - 20 kilometers from the front line - which fell to Russian forces at the start of their invasion.

Retaking Tokmak would allow Ukrainian forces to push further toward occupied Melitopol and annexed Crimea. "I think it (a breakthrough) would happen after Tokmak," he said, but warned: "At the moment (Russian forces) are relying on the depth of their defensive line there." Tarnavskiy disagreed with some predictions that Ukraine's push could be further slowed in the coming winter months. "The weather can be a serious obstacle during advance, but considering how we move forward, mostly without vehicles, I don't think (it) will heavily influence the



**MARSEILLE:** Pope Francis waves to the crowd during a holy mass at the Velodrome stadium in Marseille, south of France. - AFP

tial official said that Macron and the pope had discussed migration in bilateral talks earlier. "France has nothing to be embarrassed about, it's a country of welcome and integration," the official said. Francis and the president were set to speak again at Marseille airport before the pontiff's departure.

Some politicians on the left have criticized Macron's decision to attend Saturday's mass as an infringement of state secularism. Others on the right have attacked Francis for interfering in domestic politics.

counteroffensive," he said.

He gave some insight into the type of fighting taking place in the south, 19 months into Moscow's invasion, saying "Right now, neither the enemy nor us uses large formations, companies, battalions or brigades. We use assault squads, groups of 10 to 15 men". "They conduct titanic work of concentrating enemy fire on them and using all the means they have to use to survive." The interview was published a day after Kyiv struck Russia's Black Sea Fleet headquarters in the Crimean port of Sevastopol, claiming to have killed "senior" commanders.

The army said the strike happened during "a meeting of the Russian navy's leadership". Kyiv's intelligence chief Kyrylo Budanov said the attack killed "at least nine people", including generals, in comments to Voice of America. "The details of the attack will be revealed as soon as possible and the result is dozens of dead and wounded occupants, including senior fleet commanders," the Ukrainian army said. AFP is not able to verify this information. Russia has said one of its

The pontiff did nothing Saturday to dodge such allegations, appearing to weigh in on two of Macron's projects—assisted dying and inscribing the right to abortion in the constitution. Old people risk being "pushed aside, under the false pretences of a supposedly dignified and 'sweet' death that is more 'salty' than the waters of the sea", Francis warned. He also spoke of "unborn children, rejected in the name of a false right to progress, which is instead a retreat into the selfish needs of the individual". — AFP

servicemen is missing after the attack. Kyiv has vowed to take back Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014.

Tarnavskiy said the counteroffensive's success depends not only on what happens on the front, but also on "destroying command centers" that create "a mess on the battlefield". He added that strikes on Crimea improved morale for Ukrainian troops: "It helps us but it also gives us hope for the future." The Russian-installed head of Sevastopol had warned of a possible new Ukrainian missile attack on Saturday. "Attention! Missile danger!" Sevastopol governor Mikhail Razvozhaev said on Telegram.

But soon after he announced the "danger is over". Meanwhile, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky met Friday with Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who pledged additional aid to the war-torn country. Zelensky earlier this week addressed the United Nations and held talks in Washington with the US Congress and President Joe Biden, who pledged the imminent arrival of US tanks to bolster Ukraine's arsenal. — AFP

## Ukraine breaks Russian lines, kills 'top officers'

**KYIV:** Ukraine has reported breaking through Russian defense lines in the south as its army said Saturday that senior Russian navy commanders were among dozens killed or wounded in a missile attack on Moscow's Black Sea Fleet headquarters in Crimea. In the latest claims of progress in the Zaporizhzhia area, the Ukrainian general leading the counteroffensive there told US media that the advance was still underway. "On the left flank (near the village of Verbove) we have a breakthrough and we continue to advance further," general Oleksandr Tarnavskiy told CNN in an interview published Friday. Ukraine launched its counteroffensive to claw back territory from Russian forces in June.

Progress has been slow, with much of the territory heavily mined, but Kyiv has in

# Waiting for loved ones at Karabakh's locked gates

## Armenians agonize over evacuation

**KORNIDZOR:** Chain-smoking cigarettes, the worried men wait with paper cups of coffee at the last Armenian checkpoint, thinking about their loved ones stuck agonizingly close on the other side in Nagorno-Karabakh. Some have been here for days, sleeping in their cars, waiting for the moment the border finally opens and their Armenian families and friends can come out of Azerbaijan's historically disputed enclave.

Baku reclaimed full control of the mountainous, mainly winegrowing region in a lightning offensive this week that raised international alarm about the fate of its roughly 120,000 residents. Many inside have switched off their phones to save battery power. Those who occasionally call or text report electricity outages, shortages of the fuel needed to run power generators, a lack of basics and a general sense of fear about what the approaching Azerbaijani forces might do.

Surrounded by shepherds in the faded grass, the Armenian soldiers in the tiny border town of Kornidzor move aside to let through Russian humanitarian convoys, which have started to intermittently pass in the past week. But otherwise, the only Armenian road leading into Nagorno-Karabakh, dubbed the Lachin Corridor, remains closed by Azerbaijan as it has been since December, trapping its residents and keeping out aid. In Kornidzor, everyone has a story to tell about the closed road and their loved ones on the other side.

### Waiting for news

Scanning the horizon with a telescope borrowed from a friendly soldier, one local tried to see the scale of the damage in a village at the other end of the valley. "There used to be a church there. I can't see the bell tower anymore. It was destroyed," he grumbled before walking away in

a huff. Garik Zakaryan, a more talkative 28-year-old, lived in that village until December. Sensing danger, he moved his family out three days before Azerbaijan closed the Lachin Corridor.

On Tuesday, Zakaryan's village was bombed. No one was killed and its 150 residents found refuge near a Russian army camp. On Tuesday, two youngsters tried to return to the village to collect some food, Zakaryan said. They ended up dropping to the ground before running back to the Russian camp after coming under Azerbaijani fire. Zakaryan said he was told this tale by a friend on the other side whom he managed to contact. "I've been here for three days and nights, sleeping in my car," he said. "I don't have much hope of seeing them soon, but I couldn't just do nothing. Just being here, being able to see the Russian base, I feel better."

### '44-day war'

Things began looking grim for the Armenians when Baku reclaimed swathes of the territory in what many here now call the "44-day war" — a brief but brutal 2020 conflict in which much of the separatists' army was destroyed. Many Armenians suspected that Baku would eventually try to take back the entire region, which is internationally recognized as part of mostly Muslim Azerbaijan but is almost exclusively populated by Christian Armenians. Azerbaijan did just that on Wednesday, launching a punishing air assault that forced the rebels to sue for peace within 24 hours. The Armenian government in Yerevan says there is "no direct threat" to Nagorno-Karabakh civilians. But it has still made preparations to receive 40,000 families if needed. Should the road open and people begin coming out, they would first see a reception center set up by the Armenian foreign ministry and a local NGO run by Yana Avanesyan, 29. — AFP



**SHUSHA:** This photo shows an Armenian Armored Personnel Carrier vehicle (left) displayed as a trophy in front of a building with a flag of Azerbaijan on its facade in Shusha in Azerbaijan's controlled region of Nagorno-Karabakh. — AFP

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# Blame and accusations in dead Sikh separatist's village

## India confiscates property of Nijjar's top ally

**BHARSINGPURA:** A notice demanding Hardeep Singh Nijjar appear in court is still stuck on his house in Punjab, where the Sikh separatist's village neighbors believe Canada's accusation that India was responsible for his killing.

An activist for the creation of an independent Sikh homeland called Khalistan, Nijjar was wanted by Indian authorities for alleged terrorism and conspiracy to commit murder and was shot dead by two masked assailants near Vancouver in June.

A raging diplomatic row erupted this week after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said there were "credible reasons to believe that agents of the government of India were involved" in Nijjar's death. New Delhi dismissed Trudeau's allegations as "absurd", tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions followed, and India has stopped processing visa applications by Canadians.

But in Bharsingpura, Nijjar's sleepy but prosperous farming village in the Sikh-majority northern state of Punjab, Ottawa's charges find a receptive audience. Himmat Singh, Nijjar's uncle, blamed agents of India's foreign intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), for his nephew's killing. "I believe this is the handiwork of the Indian government," the 79-year-old farmer told AFP. "Yes, the agents of RAW are involved in this. There is no way the prime minister of a country will make such an allegation



**BHARSINGPURA:** In this photograph taken on Sept 21, 2023, a police personnel stands outside the house of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. — AFP photos

without any proof," he added. "The Indian government can label anyone as a terrorist as they want."

Sikhism is a minority religion originating in northern India that traces its roots back to the 15th century and drew influences from both Hinduism and Islam. The Khalistan campaign was largely considered a benign fringe movement until the early 1980s, when a charismatic Sikh fundamentalist launched a violent separatist insurgency.

It culminated with Indian forces storming the Golden Temple, the faith's holiest shrine in the city of Amritsar, where separatists had barricaded themselves. India's prime minister Indira Gandhi was subsequently assassinated by two

of her Sikh bodyguards. The insurgency was eventually brought under control and the Khalistan movement's most vocal advocates are now among the large Sikh diaspora, particularly in Canada, Britain and Australia. But memories of the violence — in which thousands died in all — still haunt India, which has outlawed the Khalistan movement and listed several associated groups as "terrorist organizations".

On Saturday, India's top investigation agency confiscated the properties of a prominent Sikh separatist and close ally of Nijjar. Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a lawyer believed to be based in Canada, was designated as a terrorist



**QUETTA:** Members of Pakistan's Sikh community shout slogans as they hold banners during a protest on Sept 23, 2023, to condemn the killing of Nijjar.

by Indian authorities in 2020 and is wanted on charges of terrorism and sedition. He is also the founder of the US-based group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), whose Canada chapter was headed by Nijjar before he was gunned down.

Pannun jumped into the raging row and issued a video telling Canadian Hindus to "go back to India", claiming they had adopted a "jingoistic approach" by siding with New Delhi. In an interview with an Indian news channel, Pannun said Nijjar had been his "close associate" for over 20 years and was like a "younger brother" to him. He also blamed India for Nijjar's killing. Soon after his interview was aired, the Indian government issued an

advisory to news networks asking them to refrain from giving a platform to people accused of "heinous crimes". Armed with court orders, officials of India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday confiscated Pannun's house in Chandigarh, the capital of the Sikh-majority state of Punjab, it said in a statement.

The NIA also confiscated agricultural land belonging to him in Amritsar, it added. It accused Pannun of "actively exhorting Punjab-based gangsters and youth" on social media "to fight for the cause of independent state of Khalistan, challenging the sovereignty, integrity and security of the country". —AFP

## Flood-hit Libyan cities struggle to recover

**SUSA:** As much of the world's attention has been focused on the port city of Derna since last week's flooding in eastern Libya, other cities are mired in the resulting damage. Ahmed Saleh, a 34-year-old civil engineer clad in a traditional white jalabiya, is still in shock at the scale of the destruction in his home city, Susa.

More than 10 days after the deadly storms lashed eastern Libya, he says they still have great difficulty accessing drinking water after a desalination plant was badly damaged.

Volunteers "bring water from nearby cities in big trucks. That's a big problem for us". Though the casualties in Susa were not as high as those in Derna, the tsunami-size September 10 storm razed the city's summerhouses, or "chalets" as they are known there, and left electric grids and roads in disrepair. Local officials say the floods killed 19 people in Susa.

Abdelhakim Bachir, the head of the mayor's office in Susa, said reconstruction was the absolute priority. "We need to restore all the infrastructure. We didn't have electricity for three days and now we still don't have water," he told AFP.

### No water

Before the flood, the desalination plant by the coast provided water to 320,000 people in Susa and the nearby cities of Al-Bayda

and Cyrene. Milad Saleh, a worker at the plant, said that when the disaster hit, there was complete chaos. "On the first night there was a blackout, we couldn't see anything. Pipes were blocked by wood, rocks and mud," the 63-year-old said. "At the moment we're working as hard as we can to clean the water plant," he added.

The plant's director, Ezz El-Gedri, said it would take at least a week to be able to restart the machines. "For now, we are checking each piece of equipment to see what works or what needs to be repaired or replaced." Susa, about 60 kilometers (38 miles) west of Derna, is a local tourism spot on the Mediterranean coast famed for its beachfront chalets and sea rock formations. "Between 20 and 25 chalets were entirely or partially destroyed in the touristic quarter," Bachir said.

In the nearby city of Cyrene, home to

the ancient UNESCO-listed ruins of the same name, the rain sent boulders tumbling down the nearby Jabal al-Akhdar mountain range. Water from the sewage system now circulates around the ruins, threatening their foundations. An AFP team saw bubbling water pooling around the ancient site, releasing a foul odor into the air. Officials fear that the wastewater could damage the columns of the monuments, which include the second century AD Temple of Zeus, bigger than the Parthenon in Athens.

The floods also severely damaged the farms in eastern Libya, where the only arable land is located along the Mediterranean coast. In Marawa, about 65 kilometers (40 miles) south of Al-Bayda, 29-year-old Salem Fadhel laments the loss of his annual harvest. "It is a complete catastrophe ... we were about to sell our products," he said. —AFP



eye



# EU seeks to put brakes on China without hurting ties

## EU trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis heads to China

**BRUSSELS:** When the EU launched an investigation into Chinese electric car subsidies, Brussels wanted the world to know that it will protect the automotive sector that is the jewel in Europe's industrial crown, even if it upsets Beijing.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was resolute when she announced the probe on September 13, denouncing unfair practices that undercut European competitors, but sparked an angry retort from China. Beijing warned the investigation would harm trade ties and accused the EU of "naked protectionism", triggering fears of a trade war. Those tensions will no doubt be there when EU trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis heads to China for a four-day visit starting Saturday to Shanghai, Suzhou and Beijing.

Dombrovskis has sought to mollify Beijing, insisting that Europe wants to "keep dialogue open" with China. The EU faces an almost impossible balancing act in its relations with China, which the bloc variously describes as a partner on global issues, an economic competitor and a systemic rival.

On one hand, Brussels wants to maintain ties with Beijing to help resolve issues it believes can only be solved on a global level, such as climate change. On the other, the EU is seeking to reduce its dependence on China, heeding lessons from its past over-reliance on Russia for fossil fuels.

Experts say this latest move demonstrates that the EU is willing to take action in line with its oft-repeated claim that it will "de-risk" but not "decouple" from China.

"This is sufficiently aggressive for it to have been carefully thought through," Elvire Fabry, a researcher at Jacques Delors Institute, told AFP. Without presuming the probe's outcome, Fabry said she did not believe the commission would have "taken such a step without already having a

solid basis", pointing to China's massive subsidies in many parts of its economy.

### Changing gears

The driving force behind von der Leyen's announcement was the EU's bitter experience with China over solar panels. During her speech last week, she pointed to firms pushed out by cheaper Chinese solar panels that flooded the European market in the late 2000s, while others were forced to file for bankruptcy.

The car industry is significant for Europe, providing direct and indirect jobs to around 14 million Europeans, some 6.1 percent of all EU employment. China's carmakers are a growing threat, and this year it became the world's largest exporter of cars, overtaking Japan for the first time.

The share of Chinese electric car brands in Europe is surging, reaching 6.1 percent between January and July this year, according to automotive data company Jato Dynamics, rising from a low base of 0.5 percent in 2019. China's success is in large part due to its early investment in batteries and its domination of critical raw materials used in much clean tech. The EU is also rushing to pass a law to move away from relying on China for key materials such as lithium as part of a broader approach to bring more production to Europe and diversify its trading partners.

Not everyone is convinced that China is guilty of unfair practices. Ferdinand Dudenhofer, an expert at the Center Automotive Research in Germany, accused von der Leyen of making "unfounded" claims, stressing that China's success was due to "long-term" thinking and a "very strong" focus on developing electric cars. France pushed for a probe because "the French car industry is almost invisible in Chi-



**BEIJING:** European Commission Vice President Vera Jourova (right) and Ambassador of the European Union to China Jorge Toledo attend a press conference on the EU-China High level digital dialogue in Beijing on September 19, 2023. — AFP

na", Dudenhofer said, accusing Paris of seeking to protect its manufacturers at the expense of Germany's carmakers, since 40 percent of their sales are in China. The EU will decide over the next 13 months whether to slap tariffs on Chinese electric cars above the standard 10 percent EU rate if it concludes there are unfair practices. "If everything becomes very confrontational and tariffs, etc are applied immediately, that would be something to which China could react and therefore trade links between Europe and China could be put at stake," said Simone Tagliapietra, a senior fellow at the Bruegel think tank. — AFP

## UK's colossal HS2 project in danger of going off the rails

**LONDON:** HS2, the UK's second high-speed train line after the one leading to the Channel Tunnel, has suffered spiraling costs despite the route being cut short, raising fears the project could be further derailed. Designed to bring the major cities in the north of England closer to London, its cost was estimated at £37.5 billion (\$46 billion) in 2013. It has since soared to around £100 billion.

"It's one of the most expensive railway projects in the world, in cost per mile," said Sam Dumitriu, head of policy for the economic growth group Britain Remade, which has compared infrastructure projects in 14 countries. The 134 miles (215 kilometers) of track between London and Birmingham, the first section of the line, will cost £396 million per mile (£247 million per km), more than eight times as much as the Tours-Bordeaux high-speed line that entered service in 2017, the organization estimated.

Dumitriu pointed out that building railways, tramlines and roads is much more expensive in the UK than in other European countries. This is partly due to the broad opportunities given to local residents and environmentalists to make objections, which "are often taken onboard," he explained.

In the case of HS2, this has led to an increase in the number of tunnels. There is also a lack of qualified personnel



**Work on the first section of HS2 began in April 2020, with the first trains due to run between 2029 and 2033.**

due to the rarity of major projects (HS2 is the first line to be built in north London in 150 years), and projects are often more ambitious—and therefore more expensive—than in other countries. "Why is it more expensive to build in Britain than in say China?" asked HS2 chairman Sir Jon Thompson in a Daily Telegraph article published in February.

"Here we do not ride roughshod over the environment, over planning law, over local authorities and local people. "We have some of the strictest planning and environmental legislation in the world," he explained. — AFP

## Saudi GDP crosses trillion-dollar mark

**RIYADH:** According to a report by the Saudi Chambers of Commerce, released in celebration of the country's 93rd National Day, Saudi Arabia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached SR4.155 trillion, exceeding the trillion-dollar mark for the first time and joining the global trillion-dollar economies. This achievement comes ahead of the state's 2025 targets and is accompanied by an impressive growth rate of 8.7 percent, the highest among G20 nations.

This growth is primarily attributed to its robust productive capabilities, leading to a self-sufficiency rate of 81.2 percent and an increased investment rate, reaching 27.3 percent. These developments have bolstered confidence in the Saudi economy, leading to an uptick in trust in the Saudi riyal. Deposits in the local currency now account for 67.7 percent of total savings, up from 66.5 percent in 2021.

Internationally, Saudi Arabia has secured the 17th position in the global economic rankings and ranks 17th out of 64 countries as the most competitive economy globally, according to the annual Global Competitiveness Report by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). The country also ranks second globally in the growth rate of international tourists and 51st in the Global Innovation Index. The Saudi economy's integration into the global economy has increased to 63.1 percent. — Agencies

# All-new Toyota Crown 2023: Toyota's premium sedan

## Bold, breathtaking exterior that exudes luxury

**KUWAIT:** Building on the legacy of one of the world's best-loved vehicles since the 1950s, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons EST Co and Toyota have launched the 16th generation Toyota Crown in Kuwait. The highly-anticipated flagship vehicle is ready to turn heads and inspire car enthusiasts with its unique combination of bold design, powerful acceleration, and premium comfort. The Crown has been built to provide an intuitive driving experience that will exceed expectations and establish a new benchmark in the premium segment throughout the region.

The Crown first debuted in 1955 as the "Toyopet Crown," Toyota's first mass produced passenger vehicle. When the first generation was launched, Crown came to symbolize "innovation" and "pushing the limit" within Toyota. Since then, it has gained recognition in Japan as Toyota's premium sedan. It was also the first Japanese sedan to hit Middle East shores back in 1960, last being sold in the region in 2000. Akihiro Sarada, Chief Engineer in charge of development, said: "We are delighted to introduce the new Toyota Crown. With 'innovation,' 'challenge,' and uncompromising passion built into its DNA, this vehicle embodies our commitment to surpassing the ever-evolving expectations of our customers. With a rich history dating back to its debut in 1955, the Crown has always held a special place as Toyota's flagship model, captivating customers worldwide. Drawing inspiration from its illustrious heritage, we infused this new model with cutting-edge technology and advanced features, all while upholding the highest standards of ride comfort, safety, maneuverability, and driving performance. We eagerly anticipate bringing this vehicle to customers across the Middle East."

Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "We are thrilled to announce the return of the legend and introduce the highly-anticipated new Toyota Crown in the Middle East. Built to deliver an intuitive driving experience, this new premium vehicle brings powerful acceleration and confident handling, along with supreme comfort for a sophisticated ride, all wrapped in a bold new design. Introducing the Crown with hybrid electric powertrains further demonstrates our wholehearted dedication to achieving carbon neutrality. We extend our gratitude to our customers in the region and beyond for continuously inspiring us as we strive to innovate and create 'ever-better cars' that surpass their expectations."

The new Toyota Crown is built around the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA-K) platform. This delivers excellent body rigidity and a low center of gravity, guaranteeing a more rewarding driving experience. The vehicle features a new MacPherson strut-type

- Spacious interior that guarantees premium comfort for all on board
- Available exclusively with two hybrid electric powertrains to accelerate the realization of a carbon-neutral society
- State-of-the-art safety technologies including the latest Toyota Safety Sense for greater peace of mind for drivers and passengers



All-new Toyota Crown 2023

suspension at the front and a new multi-link suspension system at the rear, contributing to outstanding stability and handling to create exceptional ride comfort.

To achieve a more exciting driving style, the new Toyota Crown comes exclusively with a choice of two environmentally friendly powertrains. The first hybrid electric powertrain consists of a front electric motor and Toyota's first-ever 2.4-liter inline four-cylinder turbo engine, mated with direct shift six-speed automatic transmission. A rear wheel eAxle that includes a high output water-cooled electric motor is coupled with the hybrid electric system to directly transmit force to the four wheels. These ensure a thrilling throttle response and linear acceleration throughout the power band, along with a combined power of 343 hp and 550.8 nm of torque.

The second hybrid electric powertrain consists of two electric motors and a 2.5-liter four-cylinder petrol engine, generating a total power of 218 hp. The hybrid-electric system, paired with an Electric Continuously Variable Transmission (e-CVT), achieves the lowest fuel efficiency, with a consumption rate of 21.6 km/l, while elevating the driving experience to new levels.

Striking a seamless connection between stylish design, exquisite luxury, and enhanced convenience and comfort, the new

powered trunk that can be activated using a foot-operated system when the user's hands or arms are full. Toyota Crown has passengers plugged-in when it comes to charging devices. On the driver's side, a vertical-type wireless Qi charger with enhanced space efficiency comes standard.

As with any Toyota vehicle, safety is a top priority for the new Crown. Drivers can enjoy complete peace of mind, thanks to the Toyota Safety Sense, an advanced safety and driver assistance system that includes a Pre-Collision System (PCS) with an expanded detection range for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcycles, together with new features such as Automatic Emergency Brake, Emergency Steering Assist, and Acceleration Suppression at Low Speed. The system also includes all-speed range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC) with a multitude of features. Among these is Turn Signal Control (TSC), which enhances highway overtaking safety and smoothness by providing an initial increase in acceleration when the driver engages the turn signal. Additionally, Curve Speed Reduction (RSR) suppresses the vehicle's speed when entering a bend and offers additional acceleration upon exiting. Drivers can also benefit from Lane Tracing Alert (LTA), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), and Adaptive High-beam System (AHS).

Furthermore, the new Crown also features Toyota's first-ever Safe Exit Assist (SEA), which uses the Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) to help prevent accidents. This system detects approaching traffic or cyclists from the rear and automatically cancels door opening to avoid potential collisions. Additionally, the vehicle features eight SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Parking Assist Monitor (PAM), Parking Support Brake (PKSB), Drive-Start Control (DSC), Panoramic View Monitor (PVM), Rear Camera Cleaning System, and Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), among many others.

The new Crown offers a selection of seven captivating exterior hues that complement the vehicle's striking visual appeal, including Precious White Pearl, Precious Silver, Precious Metal, Massive Gray, Black, Emotional Red II, and Precious Bronze. Further personalization is made possible with the addition of several dual-tone variants Black can be combined with Precious White Pearl, Precious Silver, Precious Metal, Massive Gray, Emotional Red II, or Precious Bronze. The vehicle's interior features an equally stylish color scheme, with two options either from age or black. The new Toyota Crown also offers a choice of three aluminum wheel designs: a 19 and 21-inch machine-finished black and a 21-inch dark premium metallic, further enhancing its luxurious appearance.



The new Crown's cabin is accentuated by a range of advanced features.

Crown's cabin is accentuated by a range of advanced features. These include a 12.3-inch touchscreen multimedia system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, a 12.3-inch TFT color meter that allows users to choose from 12 patterns to suit their tastes, a color head-up display (HUD), a dual-zone automatic air conditioning system with rear AC vents, a 11-speaker JBL surround sound system, a panoramic roof, multi-adjustable power and ventilated front seats, and power reclining rear seats.

For added convenience, the new Crown is equipped with a hands-free, electrically

# Volkswagen weighs up savings as electric production line stalls

## Chinese, American carmakers well ahead of Volkswagen

**DRESDEN, Germany:** Volkswagen's factory in the heart of the east German city of Dresden was conceived as a showcase for the auto giant's electric future but on a September afternoon the production line stands still.

Rather than serving as a shining example, the site, where the group's flagship electric model ID.3 is finished, is more of an illustration of the challenges facing Volkswagen's transition away from internal combustion engines. Production of battery-powered vehicles at the plant is small scale and slower than its foreign rivals, which have left the storied German group for dust.

Chinese and American carmakers, such as BYD and Tesla, are well ahead of Volkswagen on the key components needed to make electric vehicles — notably in the area of battery technology.

Volkswagen is pouring tens of billions of euros into its pivot to electric vehicles. But with the economic outlook less than rosy, chief executive Oliver Blume has pledged to "work hard" on cutting

costs to boost performance. The slashing of 269 temporary posts at another key e-cars factory in nearby Zwickau recently has raised questions about the future of the workforce in Dresden, where only around 35 cars are produced every day out of the daily total of 40,000 made by Volkswagen worldwide.

The group this week admitted that it is "currently examining, with an open mind, how the (Dresden) site can be oriented in a sustainable and future-proof manner", even as it insisted that "no adaptations are planned in the short-term".

There were "no plans to stop production" of battery-powered cars at the plant, stressed Christian Sommer, spokesman for the Volkswagen unit in Saxony, after talks between workers and management. VW executives were also at pains to underline that the jobs of some 300 people employed at the Dresden plant are safe for the time being.

But the emblematic plant's purpose may have to be reimagined as Volkswagen's electric ambitions struggle to get off the ground.



**DRESDEN:** A prototype of the ID.3 car model is seen inside the 'Transparent Factory' (Glaeserne Manufaktur) production site building of German carmaker Volkswagen in Dresden, eastern Germany, on September 21, 2023. — AFP

### 'Weak market'

On a tour of the "Transparent Factory" in Dresden, the future of the plant is also a question posed by visitors and answered equivocally. One bemused guest wonders why the factory is not running full-time if the wait time for a new VW ID.3

is still around six months. Volkswagen sold 321,000 battery-powered vehicles in the first half of 2023 — about 50 percent more than in the same period last year and roughly seven percent of its total sales. But the sector has been blighted by low levels of demand.

"The car market is weak because the world economy is weak," Ferdinand Dudenhofer of the Centre Automotive Research told AFP. High inflation and the end of key government subsidy schemes have dampened the clamor for electric vehicles.—AFP

## Microsoft nears takeover of 'Call of Duty' maker

**LONDON:** British regulators on Friday dropped their objections to Microsoft's attempt to buy video game firm Activision Blizzard, the maker of "Call of Duty", paving the way for the US tech titan to close one of the biggest technology acquisitions ever. Microsoft launched its blockbuster \$69-billion takeover in January last year, an acquisition that would make it the world's third-largest gaming company by revenue, but it faced stiff scrutiny from US regulators and the UK's Competition and Markets Authority.

The CMA blocked the deal in April over fears it would damage competition in the fast-growing cloud gaming sector, where games are bought virtually and players can use a variety of devices rather than just consoles. Microsoft eventually submitted a new bid that the CMA said in a statement on Friday had made important changes and



"opens the door to the deal being cleared", adding that it would consult on the "remedies" before making a final decision.

Both the companies involved in the deal praised the CMA's change of heart. Microsoft vice chairman and president Brad Smith, who had labelled the initial rejection in April as "probably the darkest day" of the firm's time in the UK, called Friday's statement a "positive development".

He said Microsoft would aim to get approval to close the deal by October 18. Activision Blizzard CEO Bobby Kotick, whose company also makes the popular games "Diablo" and "Candy Crush", said the UK regulator's announcement

was "a significant milestone for the merger". Analysts said the takeover now looked like a shoo-in and all sides were able to claim victory — the regulator showed its teeth and forced a concession and the firms got their deal over the line.

If the deal goes through, Microsoft will muscle in to form a "big three" in the sector — just behind China's Tencent and Japan's Sony.

### 'Real value'

Microsoft, which makes the Xbox console and already has a stable of games under its belt including "Minecraft", "Elder Scrolls" and "Fallout", is already the dominant player in the cloud-gaming world — its Game Pass service claims 25 million subscribers. The original deal would have seen hugely popular Activision games including "Call of Duty", "Overwatch" and "World of Warcraft" added to its cloud roster, which was too much for the UK regulator to stomach. Under the new deal, Microsoft has agreed it would not take control of the cloud portion of Activision's business, which will be transferred to French studio Ubisoft for 15 years.—AFP

## New Thai PM meets Musk, US tech chiefs

**BANGKOK:** Thailand's new prime minister has met Tesla boss Elon Musk and executives from other US tech and investment firms including Google and Microsoft as he seeks to boost the country's flagging economy. Srettha Thavisin, a former property mogul who took office last month, has pledged to pep up the kingdom's financial fortunes, which were hit hard by the halt to tourism during the pandemic.

He met Musk on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, where he stressed Thailand's commitment to sustainable development goals. "We had a good conversation on @Tesla, @spaceX, and @starlink technology," Srettha posted on X, formerly Twitter, early Friday. "We look forward to further discussions."

Thailand is one of Southeast

Asia's leading car producers, and is looking to transition production to electric vehicles. Traditionally much of the output has been dominated by Japanese manufacturers, but Chinese EV makers are moving in.

Srettha also posted photos from meetings with Google and Microsoft executives, and the CEO of investment house BlackRock, Larry Fink. "The meeting aimed at possible investment in Thailand, in particular in support of clean energy-related enterprises' investment expansion and production in Thailand," Srettha wrote of his encounter with Fink.

Forecasts for Thai growth for this year range from 2.5-3.5 percent, but Srettha is aiming to boost this to five percent in the coming years after a period of stagnation during nearly a decade of military-backed government. His tech exec charm offensive comes as other countries in the region look to cash in on US investments in clean technology — and Washington's desire to diversify away from overdependence on China for key components and resources.—AFP

# US, China announce new economic working groups

## Effort to stabilize ties between world's biggest economies

WASHINGTON: The United States and China on Friday announced two new working groups on economic and financial policy, in the latest effort to stabilize fraught relations between the world's biggest economies. The formation of the groups was agreed during talks in July between US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in Beijing, the Treasury Department said.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV also announced the launch of an "Economic Working Group" and "Financial Working Group," saying both will hold "regular and irregular meetings to strengthen communication and exchange on relevant issues." "My trip to China aimed to establish a durable channel of communication between the world's two largest economies, consistent with President (Joe) Biden's guidance following his meeting with President Xi (Jinping) in Bali," said Yellen in a social media post announcing the new groups.

"It is vital that we talk, particularly when we disagree." The Economic Working Group will discuss macroeconomic issues, while the Financial Working Group will focus on regulatory and financial stability issues, a senior US Treasury Department official said.

"The two groups will meet at the Vice Minister level on a regular cadence and report to Secretary Yellen and Vice Premier He," said

the Treasury Department. The economic group will be led by the US Treasury and China's finance ministry, while the financial group will include the Treasury and the People's Bank of China, the US statement said. The United States and China saw relations hit their lowest point in years in February, when US forces shot down a balloon Washington said was being used by Beijing to spy on its territory.

That followed a visit to Taiwan last year by Nancy Pelosi, then the speaker of the US House of Representatives, which made her the most senior US politician to visit the island in over two decades.

Beijing claims Taiwan as its own territory and balks at any official contact Taipei has with other countries. Since the balloon incident, the two sides have restarted high-level contacts, with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visiting Beijing in June, with several others—including Yellen—following after.

The Biden administration has, however, continued imposing restrictions on trade with China in areas it considers crucial to national security, including high-end semiconductors. In August, Biden signed an executive order restricting certain American investments in sensitive high-tech areas in China—a move Beijing blasted as being "anti-globalization". — AFP

## Japan sticks to ultra-loose monetary policy

TOKYO: The Bank of Japan stuck to its ultra-loose monetary policy Friday, though officials face increasing pressure to turn more hawkish as the yen weakens and after fresh data showed inflation remains stubbornly high.

While most other major central banks have pressed ahead with a campaign of interest rate hikes in a bid to tame prices, the BoJ has refused to shift from its long-term program of sub-zero borrowing costs in order to kickstart the world's number three economy.

Policymakers have for several months hinted that they are willing to adopt a more normalized policy, such as minor tweaks to its yield curve control scheme, which sees the bank control the band within which government bonds are allowed to move. But there are growing calls for it to move quicker, and they will not have been tempered by data Friday showing the consumer prices—excluding food and energy—jumped 4.3 percent in August, a three-decade high.

In a post-meeting statement, the BoJ stuck to its guns, as expected, but said it "will not hesitate to take additional easing measures if necessary". "With extremely high uncertainties surrounding economies and financial markets at home and abroad, the Bank will patiently continue with monetary easing while nimbly responding to development in economic activity and prices as well as financial conditions," it said.

Analysts have said the BoJ's outlier policy is harming the economy by skewing the bond market and exacerbating the yen's weakness, in turn making imports more expensive.—AFP



BEIJING: The formation of the groups was agreed during talks in July between US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen (left) and Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng (right) in Beijing. — AFP

In rain  
or sun...  
on sand  
or stones...  
in slush  
or dry roads...  
on good roads  
or bad...



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Ad published in March 1, 1981



## New-look Gucci goes back to the classics



**G**ucci's new creative director made his long-awaited debut in Milan on Friday, offering a timeless, feminine collection with the aim of relaunching the luxury brand. French owners Kering brought in Sabato de Sarno in January to replace star designer Alessandro Michele, who transformed Gucci over seven years with his eccentric, gender-fluid designs and offbeat shows. But while Michele reached out to a younger and more diverse audience, sales lagged behind those of Gucci's rivals. De Sarno, who spent more than a decade at Valentino, unveiled his first collection in front of an A-list crowd including actors Julia Roberts and Ryan Gosling.

The event got off to a tricky start after the catwalk had to be moved from the streets of Milan to inside Gucci's headquarters

due to a forecast of rain. In the end the setting was starkly minimalist, the models dressed in a palette ranging from grey and navy blue to pistachio and burgundy red walking under a path of lights around a huge, pitch-black space. There was leather in all its forms, whether slitted knee-high skirts or tiny shorts with low waists, jackets and bra tops.

An activist with animal rights group Peta stepped briefly onto the catwalk with a sign saying "Gucci: Ban Exotic Skins". Coats also took pride of place, including the one that opened the show, with a masculine cut with a slit at the back bordered by Gucci's trademark grosgrain ribbon. The collection was dubbed "Ancora" ("Again") - "it's a story of everything, again, but this time expressed through joy", De Santo said in the show notes.



Models walk the runway of the Hugo Boss fashion show during the Milan Fashion Week Womenswear Spring/Summer 2024.



Hugo Boss

**New chapter**

De Sarno's appointment came as something of a surprise, as the 40-year-old from Naples was largely unknown to the general public. But he is far from a novice. After stints at Prada and Dolce & Gabbana, he spent 14 years at Valentino, rising to become director of the men and women's collections and right-hand man to creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli.

There has also been a change of management at Gucci this year with the departure of Marco Bizzarri, chief executive since 2015, who formally steps down Friday. The deputy CEO of Kering,

Jean-Francois Palus, a confidant of the company's chief executive and owner Francois-Henri Pinault, will take the reins on a temporary basis. Alessio Vannetti also returned to Gucci this month after a stint at Valentino to become chief brand officer.

"Many things are happening at the same time at Kering," said Luca Solca, senior analyst in global luxury goods at Bernstein, describing it as akin to "spring cleaning". "Of course, by far the biggest change is the new creative chapter at Gucci. If this works, Kering works," he told AFP. "Gucci needs new ideas and a new chapter. Put-

ting them into practice would increase turnover and profits."

But it will take time for De Sarno to have an impact, with Solca pointing to the end of 2024. "There is time," he said. In July, Kering reported its net profits fell 10 percent in the first half of the year to 1.79 billion euros, blamed on stagnating sales at Gucci. While Kering's overall revenue rose by two percent to 10.1 billion euros, it dipped by one percent year-on-year at Gucci. — AFP



## Paris Fashion Week starts after Balmain robbery

The hectic fashion season reaches its last stop in Paris on Monday, with the biggest intrigue being whether beloved brand Balmain can recover from the theft of 50 outfits last week. "Our driver called us to say that he had been attacked by a group of people. More than 50 items were stolen," Balmain's creative director Olivier Rousteing said on Instagram on September 16.

"My team and I have worked very hard. We will work even harder, day and night," he added, though even by the breakneck pace of the fashion world, it is a tall order to pull a collection together by the time his show opens on Wednesday night. The fashionistas are wishing him well.

"I know that you and your creativity will be able to overcome this!" wrote Donatella Versace in the comments. The spring-summer 2024 womenswear collections in Paris come with buyers, bloggers and influencers still digesting the hundreds of new trends put forward in London, New York and Milan through September.

The nine days in the French capital add a further 107 brands - including mainstays like Christian Dior, Saint Laurent, Chanel and Celine - of which 67 are doing runway shows and 40 online presentations. Analysts say the fashion market is waning slightly after a red-hot phase following the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

"Consumers are sobering up from the post-pandemic euphoria and luxury spending growth will undoubtedly moderate," head of luxury goods research



French fashion designer Olivier Rousteing greets spectators after presenting Balmain Womenswear Fall-Winter 2023-2024 collection during Paris Fashion Week in Paris. — AFP

at Bernstein, Luca Solca, wrote for online magazine Business of Fashion. But he added that "rising income and wealth inequality are boosting spending power at the top of the socio-economic pyramid" and that brands are becoming experts at targeting the top five percent of clients, who account for 40 percent of sales.

**Royal connection**

Balmain has more immediate concerns. It's a "unique" case, said fashion expert Serge Carreira, of Sciences Po university. "A package might get lost in transit occasionally," he told AFP. "But the number of pieces lost here is impressive."

The closest precedent is perhaps when Marc Jacobs had an entire

collection stolen on a train from Paris to London, but he had already held his show. This week will also see the last collection from Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen after more than 20 years at the helm. She took over following the suicide of Lee Alexander McQueen in 2010 and distinguished herself the following year by designing the wedding dress of Kate Middleton for her marriage to Prince William.

Another royal connection - Dior's Maria Grazia Chiuri presents on Tuesday just after a high-profile commission designing the flowing navy-blue dress for Queen Camilla during her state dinner at Versailles on Wednesday. Dior was also a favorite label of Princess Diana, the former wife of King

Charles - immortalized in the Lady Dior bag named in her honor before her death in 1997.

Meanwhile, fashion week opens as usual with a day dedicated to emerging talent, including avant-garde Belgian designer Marie Adam-Leenaardt. Pierre Cardin returns this week - having made its first appearance at Paris Fashion Week in 25 years back in March, under the direction of the founder's nephew, Rodrigo Basilicati-Cardin. However, the house is mired in controversy over the succession of the empire, with members of the family accusing each other of fraud and other crimes. — AFP

## Adidas boss apologizes for controversial Ye comments

The head of Adidas has apologized after speculating that Kanye West did not "mean what he said" with anti-Semitic remarks that put an end to his collaboration with the German sportswear brand. Bjorn Gulden, who joined Adidas at the beginning of 2023 after the scandal erupted, made the comments last week in an interview with the podcast "In Good Company". West - now formally known as Ye - had made "some statements, which wasn't that good", Gulden told the podcast.

"Very unfortunate, because I don't think he meant what he said and I don't think he's a bad person - it just came across that way," Gulden said. The Norwegian CEO subsequently apologized for his remarks, after they provoked a public uproar.

"Our decision to end our partnership with Ye due to his unacceptable comments was absolutely the right one. Our attitude has not changed," Adidas said in a statement to AFP Friday.



Kanye West at Milk Studios on June 28, 2016 in Hollywood, California.



This photo shows Caribbean box jellyfish, or *Tripedalia cystophora*, in a laboratory of Kiel University, northern Germany. — AFP

# No brain, no problem: Tiny jellyfish can learn from experience

Caribbean box jellyfish are barely a centimeter long and have no brain. But these gelatinous, fingernail-sized creatures are capable of learning from visual cues to avoid swimming into obstacles—a cognitive ability never before seen in animals with such a primitive nervous system, researchers said.

Their performance of what is called “associative learning” is comparable to far more advanced animals such as fruit flies or mice, which have the notable benefit of having a brain, the researchers said. The Caribbean box jellyfish, or *Tripedalia cystophora*, is known to be able to navigate through

murky water and a maze of submerged mangrove roots.

These scenarios throw up plenty of dangers that could damage the jellyfish’s fragile gelatinous membrane which envelops its bell-shaped body. But they avoid harm thanks to four visual sensory centers called rhopalia, each of which has lens-shaped

eyes and around a thousand neurons. For comparison, fruit flies are packing 200,000 neurons in their tiny brains. Cnidarians—the animal group which includes jellyfish, sea anemones and coral—are brainless, instead getting by with a “dispersed” central nervous system. —AFP

## We got a pilot in our house, homeowner tells dispatcher after F-35 ejection

A recording was released on Friday of a 911 emergency call from a homeowner reporting that the pilot of a US Marine Corps F-35 had parachuted into his backyard after ejecting from the stealth jet. “I guess we got a pilot in our house,” the homeowner said. “He ejected from the plane. I guess he landed in my backyard and we were trying to see if we could get an ambulance to the house.” “I’m sorry, what happened?” said the bewildered 911 dispatcher who fielded the unusual call over the weekend.

The pilot parachuted safely into a neighborhood in North Charleston, South Carolina, on Sunday after ejecting from the \$80 million jet, which continued flying in what some called a “zombie state.” The plane eventually crashed about 60 miles (100 kilometers) north of where the pilot ejected and the wreckage was located on Monday after the authorities asked the public to help find the missing jet.

After the homeowner spoke to the dispatcher, the pilot himself got on the phone and tried to explain the situation. “I’m a pilot in a military aircraft and I ejected so I just rode a parachute down to the ground,” he said. “Can you please send an ambulance?”

The dispatcher at this point did not appear to understand that she was speaking to the pilot himself. “How far did he fall?” she asked. “I was at 2,000 feet,” the pilot said. “Okay, and what caused the fall?” the dispatcher asked.

“An aircraft failure,” the pilot responded. He told the dispatcher he was “not sure where the airplane is” and asked if there had been any reports of an airplane crash. “I have not seen any come up yet,” the dispatcher said. The wreckage of the F-35 was found in Williamsburg County, South Carolina, northeast of Joint Base Charleston, where the plane took off on a routine training flight. —AFP



This file US Navy photo shows a US Navy aviation boatswain’s mate handler with the Essex Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) launching an F-35B Lightning II from the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2). —AFP

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# BTS' SUGA starts mandatory alternative service, agency says

A member of K-pop juggernaut BTS started his mandatory alternative service Friday, the group's agency told AFP, after SUGA was declared unfit for the regular military draft due to health reasons. The septet has become a global cultural phenomenon, selling out stadiums and dominating charts while raking in billions for South Korea's economy and building an international legion of fans known as ARMY. But all able-bodied South Korean men must serve at least 18 months in the military, and after a year-long debate about whether BTS deserved an exemption, Jin, the oldest member of the group, began his service in December, with J-Hope starting basic training in April.

SUGA "has started his alternative service from today," an official with their agency HYBE told AFP. He will work as a social service agent, the Yonhap News Agency reported, saying SUGA had been "ruled unfit for the regular combat duty." While all able-bodied



SUGA

men must serve in the military, people with health issues may be assigned to 21 months of alternative services, which can include working in an office for a municipal government.

The reasons for the decision on Suga have not been disclosed, however it is believed to be related to shoulder surgery he had in 2020, Yonhap said. On Friday, SUGA told fans: "I have made it this far thanks to you all." "The time has come," to begin my service, he wrote on social media. "I

will return after diligently fulfilling my service... Let's all meet again in 2025!" he added.

## 'The king will return'

Fans of SUGA - real name Min Yoon-gi - vowed that the alternative service would not be a hindrance to his career. "Dearest Yoongi, Stay safe, stay healthy, stay well... We'll be right here waiting for you. Yoongi is worth the wait. The king will return," one fan wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "2 years apart is nothing compared the lifetime we'll have together," another wrote.

HYBE also asked fans not go to SUGA's new place of duty, which could be anything from a metro station to a municipal office. "We ask fans to refrain from visiting SUGA's work location during its alternative service period. We ask that you only give a warm send-off and encouragement to SUGA from your heart," is said in a statement.

The spectre of conscription has long hovered over BTS, with many experts pointing to South Korea's

mandatory military service for the septet's current break. The band had initially cited exhaustion and the pressures of stratospheric success when they initially announced they would go on "hiatus" last year, saying they were taking a break to focus on their solo careers.

HYBE said this week that all seven members of BTS would renew their contracts with the agency. The company did not disclose details of how long the new contracts were or when they would expire, but the latest announcement indicates that all seven members of the group will likely remain with the label even after they have completed their military service. Analysts have questioned what the future holds for the group after all seven members complete their military service. Some male K-pop stars have struggled to resume their careers after military service in a cut-throat industry where artists are easily replaceable. — AFP



## Ethiopian prince's hair returned after over 140 years in UK

A lock of hair from an Ethiopian prince who died in 1879 and artefacts looted by the British during a 19th-century battle have been returned to the east African country. Items returned to the Ethiopian embassy in a ceremony late on Thursday in London include three silver cups and a shield. The artefacts were pillaged during the battle of Magdala in 1868 when 13,000 British soldiers besieged Emperor Tewodros II's fortress.

The lock of hair is from the emperor's son, Prince Alemayehu. It was reportedly returned by a descendant of Captain Tristram Speedy, a member of the British expedition who became the prince's guardian. After the battle, seven-year-old Prince Alemayehu was taken to England. He spent the next decade in Britain but died in 1879 at the age of 18.

At the reported request of Queen Victoria, he was buried in the catacombs of St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, the royal residence west of London. The British monarchy, however, has declined a request from the family of the prince to repatriate his remains due to the need to "preserve the dignity" of others buried at the chapel. — AFP

## 'Eiffel Tower' lights up quiet suburb in Chinese city

As decorative fountains frame a view of the Eiffel Tower and a fashionable young woman walks a poodle nearby, you might mistake China's Tianducheng neighborhood for Paris - if not for the concrete towers in the distance and Chinese signs on every shopfront. Built in the 2000s, the residential area lies on the outskirts of Hangzhou, the city hosting around 12,000 athletes for the Asian Games that open on Saturday - a key stop for many of the world's top athletes before the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Tianducheng is a quirky relic of the country's turn-of-the-century craze for everything foreign. Apartment blocks decorated with the City of Light's iron balconies and mansard roofs flank a "boulevard" where motorized delivery tricycles zip past a braised duck-head stall. Pensioners clutching plastic bags of groceries pause to take in the sights under a grey sky, while weathered horse statues rear up from a fountain that could have come out of the Jardin

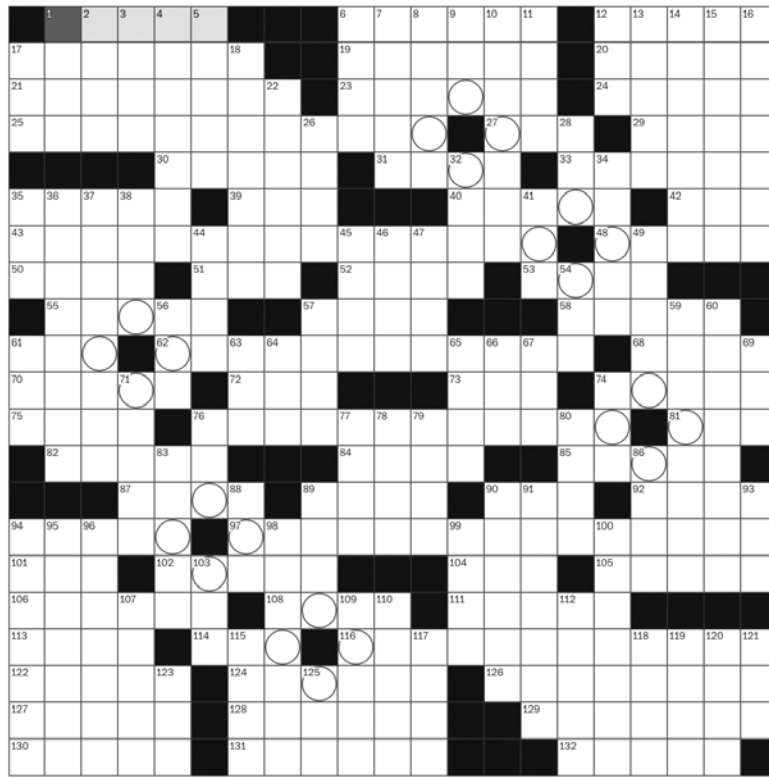
du Luxembourg.

Once advertised as a luxury community and a venue for French cultural festivals, Tianducheng languished for years with unfilled shop units and uninhabited apartments before Hangzhou's booming tech industry brought eager buyers to its leafy avenues. The tower is one of many replicas of Western architecture that dot the country where developers once looked to Europe and North America for inspiration, including a British-inspired Thames Town in Shanghai and a subtropical Interlaken in tech hub Shenzhen.

And in Jujun, a 2001 development in outer Beijing that literally translates to "Orange County", McMansions complete with parched lawns bring a slice of Southern California to the Chinese capital. They are relics of a bygone era, with China's communist leaders clamping down on "bizarre", foreign-inspired structures in recent years. — AFP



## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

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- 73 Unhittable serve
- 74 Hunts, with "on"
- 75 French silk
- 76 "Deadliest Catch" catch
- 81 Pool float filler
- 82 Immune system component
- 84 New York canal

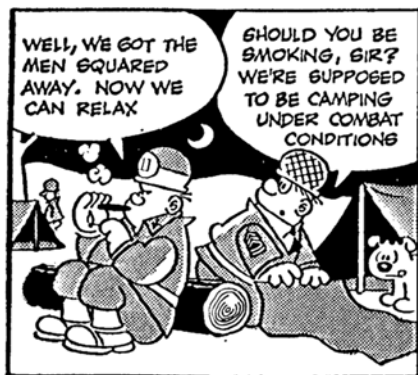
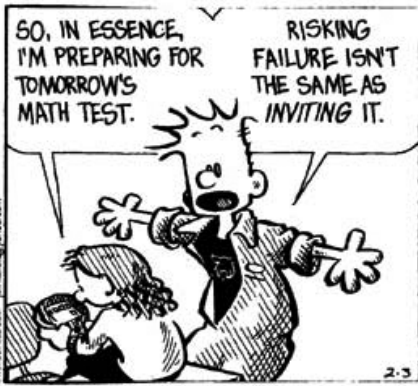
- 85 Library IDs
- 87 Pollen pouches
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- 102 Australian greetings
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- 105 Old Testament prophet
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- 129 Most prized
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### DOWN

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# Kuwait Times and Kuwait News in Hangzhou to cover Asian Games

## Determination and passion in representing Kuwait is inspiring



Kuwait Times and Kuwait News content creator Dhoha Alessa with videographer Mohamed Kawur in China.



By Dhoha Alessa

Being assigned to cover the Asian Games 2023 in Hangzhou, China, is both exhilarating and daunting. Traveling with and covering the athletes has been rewarding. Witnessing their determination and passion in representing Kuwait is inspiring. Seeing them give their best has motivated both Mohamed and me to reflect the same level of commitment into our work here.

Hangzhou has meticulously prepared itself to host 45 competing nations and has been warm and eager to share its vibrant culture with us all. This confluence of various cultures is beautiful, and win or lose, we are honored to be a part of this international tapestry. From our flight to arrival, and throughout the games, we feel united.



# 'Fired up' Verstappen takes Japanese GP pole position

## Bezzecchi grabs pole at India MotoGP

**SUZUKA:** A "fired up" Max Verstappen took pole position on Saturday for the Japanese Grand Prix, as he looks to take a giant stride towards a third-straight world title this weekend. The Red Bull driver bounced back from a fifth-place finish at last week's Singapore Grand Prix to top the timesheets ahead of McLaren pair Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris.

Verstappen said "Singapore didn't happen" after he roared round the Suzuka circuit in a fastest time of 1min 28.877sec - 0.581sec quicker than Piastri. The runaway championship leader warned there was more to come in Sunday's race, saying he was "very fired up to have a good weekend here".

"As soon as we put the car on the track it's been very enjoyable to drive, very predictable, which I think is the most important," said Verstappen. "Lap after lap in qualifying was getting better." Verstappen, who leads teammate and nearest rival Sergio Perez by 151 points in the championship standings, cannot clinch the title on Sunday but a favourable result can set him up to seal the deal at the Qatar Grand Prix next month.

He has won 12 of 15 races so far this season, including a record streak of 10 in a row that ended in Singapore. He and Perez can help Red Bull clinch the constructors' championship in

Japan. "That was the aim, especially coming from Singapore, I wanted to have a really strong weekend," said Verstappen, who finished fastest in all three Suzuka practices.

Meanwhile, McLaren teammate Norris was third fastest, 0.035sec behind Piastri. Norris, who finished second behind Ferrari's Carlos Sainz in Singapore, said it had been "a good day". "I think we've been strong all weekend," he said.

"We're hoping for an easy race but it's never going to be an easy race around here." Ferrari's Charles Leclerc qualified fourth ahead of Perez and Sainz. Mercedes pair Lewis Hamilton and George Russell were seventh and eighth, respectively.

"The car has generally felt nice to drive today—that was a relief as yesterday was a bad day," said Hamilton. "We typically have at least one suboptimal day each weekend, so Friday was likely that."

Japan's Yuki Tsunoda, who signed a new deal to race for AlphaTauri again next season, qualified ninth in his home grand prix, ahead of Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso. Liam Lawson, Pierre Gasly, Alex Albon, Esteban Ocon and Kevin Magnussen were all eliminated in Q2. The first qualifying session was red-flagged when Logan Sargeant crashed his Williams at the final corner. — AFP



**SUZUKA:** Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen chats with a Pirelli official as McLaren's Australian driver Oscar Piastri looks on, after taking the pole in the qualifying session for the Formula One Japanese Grand Prix at the Suzuka circuit, Mie prefecture on September 23, 2023. — AFP

## Caribbean nations named as T20 WCup venues but no Jamaica

**MIAMI:** Seven Caribbean countries will host matches at next year's T20 World Cup, including Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Friday.

The ICC awarded the hosting of the event, to be held in June 2024, to the West Indies and the United States in November 2021.

Dominica, Guyana, St Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have also been named as hosts. "The matches will again give cricket fans the unique experience of enjoying cricket in the Caribbean," said ICC chief executive Geoff Allardice. Matches will also be held in New York, Florida and Texas in the United States, the first time a major ICC event has been held in the country.

One notable absence from the list of Caribbean host nations is Jamaica, whose Sabina Park ground in the capital Kingston is one of the iconic homes of West Indies cricket. Jamaica has the largest population of the main cricket-playing nations in the Caribbean but did not submit a bid to host the tournament. —AFP

## Coyotes edge Kings as the NHL descends to Southern Hemisphere

**MELBOURNE:** Arizona Coyotes spoiled the Los Angeles Kings debut of Canadian star Pierre-Luc Dubois in Melbourne on Saturday with a 5-3 pre-season victory in the National Hockey League's first foray into the Southern Hemisphere.

A new-look Coyotes, who have never won the Stanley Cup and failed to reach last season's playoffs, sealed the result in the dying stages when Barrett Hayton scored from close range. There was much focus on dynamic forward Dubois, who was recently traded from Winnipeg Jets and signed an eight-year, \$68-million contract with the Kings.

Dubois did not hit the scoreboard, but was aggressive in his debut for the Kings, who are desperate to rebound from a first round playoff exit last season. While popular in North America and parts of Europe, ice hockey is a niche sport in Australia as the NHL attempts to expand its global footprint.

The pre-season event was nearly a decade in the making and attracted a near capacity 13,000 crowd at Rod Laver Arena. "The crowd was loud and energetic. They got to see a lot of goals, it's fun to do this," said forward Nick Bjugstad, who has returned to the Coyotes after a short stint at Edmonton.

It was a stalemate early with both teams dusting off the cobwebs. The contest sparked to life when Josh Brown and Jacob Doty came to blows, energising the rowdy fans. The Kings took control only to be continually denied by goalie



**MELBOURNE:** Los Angeles Kings' #11 Anze Kopitar lines up for a face-off against Arizona Coyotes' #17 Nick Bjugstad during the NHL Global Series match between the Los Angeles Kings and the Arizona Coyotes at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne on September 23, 2023. — AFP

Connor Ingram, as the first period ended scoreless. After the interval, a rejuvenated Coyotes drew first blood when Clayton Keller scored from close range and then Matias Maccelli fired home a bullet. The Kings hit back through Adrian Kempe on an assist from Jordan Spence, who is the first Australian-born NHL player.

The contest's tempo lifted in a goal frenzy with the Coyotes holding a 4-3 lead after the second period. Both teams started tiring as the goals dried up before Hayton stepped up late. The Melbourne tour marks the fifth edition of the NHL's Global Series, where games are staged outside of North America, but first to be held beyond Europe. —AFP

# Manchester City move five points clear

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester City moved five points clear at the top of the Premier League despite having Rodri sent-off in a fiery 2-0 win over Nottingham Forest on Saturday. Phil Foden and Erling Haaland struck inside the first 15 minutes as City extended their perfect start in the Premier League to six games. Pep Guardiola's men have now won 20 consecutive home matches in all competitions, but were made to work much harder by Rodri's moment of madness.

The Spaniard grabbed Morgan Gibbs-White around the neck less than 60 seconds into the second-half and could face a costly suspension as a three-game ban would see him miss the Premier League visit to Arsenal next month. City were at their ruthless best early on to seemingly put the game to bed. Foden smashed home a sweet volley from Kyle Walker's cushioned cross to open the scoring. Guardiola said after losing Bernardo Silva to injury in a 3-1 win over Red Star Belgrade that his squad was in trouble due to a number of injuries.

Mateo Kovacic and John Stones remain sidelined, while Jack Grealish was only fit enough for a place on the bench. But the absences gave Matheus Nunes a chance to make his first league start since joining from Wolves and he made a positive impact by setting up the second goal. The Portuguese played a neat one-two with Foden before chipping the ball across for Haaland to power home his ninth goal of the season. Julian Alvarez could have added to City's lead when his effort from point-blank range was blocked behind.

But the European champions did not appear in any danger until Rodri lost his cool. Taiwo

Awoniyi had Forest's best chance to get back into the game when the in-form Nigerian lifted over under pressure from Ederson. Awoniyi and the Brazilian goalkeeper were then lucky not to also see red as they went head-to-head in a fiery confrontation. City, though, restored order as Guardiola switched to a back five to withstand an aerial bombardment from the visitors. Haaland should have had his second when he spooned over with the goal gaping from Nathan Ake's cross late on.

### Man Utd under pressure

Elsewhere, Luton picked up their first ever Premier League point but let a huge opportunity slip in a 1-1 draw at home to Wolves. The visitors at Kenilworth Road were reduced to 10 men when Jean-Ricner Bellegarde saw red on 39 minutes. Pedro Neto still fired Wolves in front early in the second-half, but Carlton Morris' penalty salvaged a point for Luton. Crystal Palace and Fulham remain in the top half after a 0-0 draw at Selhurst Park. Manchester United are aiming to avoid a fourth consecutive defeat when they travel to Burnley later on Saturday.

The Red Devils' title aspirations already appear over as they sit 12 points adrift of City and they lost 4-3 in their Champions League opener to Bayern Munich in midweek. Burnley are still seeking their first win since returning to the Premier League and another United defeat would pile huge pressure on Erik ten Hag. All the pack directly behind City at the top of the table are in action on Sunday. Arsenal host Tottenham in the north London derby, while Liverpool host West Ham and Brighton take on Bournemouth. — AFP



**MANCHESTER:** Nottingham Forest's English midfielder #14 Callum Hudson-Odoi (left) vies with Manchester City's Dutch defender #06 Nathan Ake during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Nottingham Forest on September 23, 2023. — AFP

## Messi out but Miami seek derby win as playoff race heats up

**MIAMI:** Inter Miami head into Sunday's Florida derby against Orlando City with their Major League Soccer playoff destiny in their own hands but without star performer Lionel Messi. Messi and his former Barcelona teammate Jordi Alba both limped out of the first half of Wednesday's 4-0 win over Toronto and were immediately ruled out of the Orlando game by coach Tata Martino.

On Friday, Martino confirmed that Messi is coping with some old "scars" while Alba has "muscle fatigue". Martino said that while Messi's problem is not serious, he cannot "play freely" in his current condition.

"It's bothers him. I don't know if it hurts. I can't really explain as it's more a medical topic," said the Argentine coach. Miami already won the Leagues Cup since Messi's arrival, the club has a US Open Cup final against Houston on Wednesday and will hope to have the seven-times Ballon d'Or winner back for that game.

But without Messi, Finnish winger Robert Taylor made the most of his opportunity, scoring twice in a 4-0 win over Toronto. The victory, along with other results going Miami's way, boosted the team's playoff hopes with six matches remaining in the regular season. — AFP



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# Xi declares biggest

## HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal attends opening ceremony



**HANGZHOU:** Members of Kuwait's delegation take part in the athletes' parade during the opening ceremony of the 2022 Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium on Sept 23, 2023. — Photos by Dhoha Alessa, Mohamad Kawur and AFP



**HANGZHOU:** Chinese President Xi Jinping opened the 19th Asian Games in a colorful ceremony in Hangzhou on Saturday, launching a two-week sporting extravaganza that boasts more athletes than the Olympics. After being delayed by a year because of China's now-abandoned zero-Covid policy, more than 12,000 competitors from 45 nations and territories will battle it out in 40 sports.

In front of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other visiting leaders, Xi officially opened the Games at the 80,000-capacity Hangzhou Olympic stadium, also known as "the Big Lotus". Xi was given a rapturous reception by spectators waving mini Chinese flags. Assad, on his first visit to ally China since the civil war erupted in Syria in 2011, stood up and applauded as his country's team entered the arena and the crowd cheered when his image flashed up on a big screen.

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach was also among the dignitaries. Leaders from Cambodia, Syria and Nepal, among others, were in attendance. "Finally we can gather for the 19th Asian Games," Raja Randhir Singh, acting president of the Olympic Council of Asia, told the crowd to more cheers. "The one-year postponement was unprecedented in OCA history," he added.

The theme of the ceremony was water and it also celebrated Hangzhou's ancient history and landscape, while giving a nod to the city's reputation as the unofficial home of China's tech industry. A "digital torch bearer" strode into the stadium and was projected onto a large screen behind the Games cauldron at the climax. "I feel very happy and excited," a 35-year-old woman spectator surnamed Zhang said. "I feel it's a great honor for the city."

Jung-Woo Lee, sport policy expert at the University of Edinburgh, told AFP the Games were "China's post-pandemic soft-power exercise". China's status as a sporting and business destination took a severe hit during the pandemic, when snap lockdowns and strict travel rules saw almost all international events cancelled in the country. The event has been rocked by a row between New Delhi and China over three Indian martial arts fighters, with a trip to the city by India's sports minister cancelled on Friday.



# Asian Games open



Performers take part in the opening ceremony of the 2022 Asian Games.



China denied Indian claims that the trio had been barred from entering the country.

**'Open to all'**

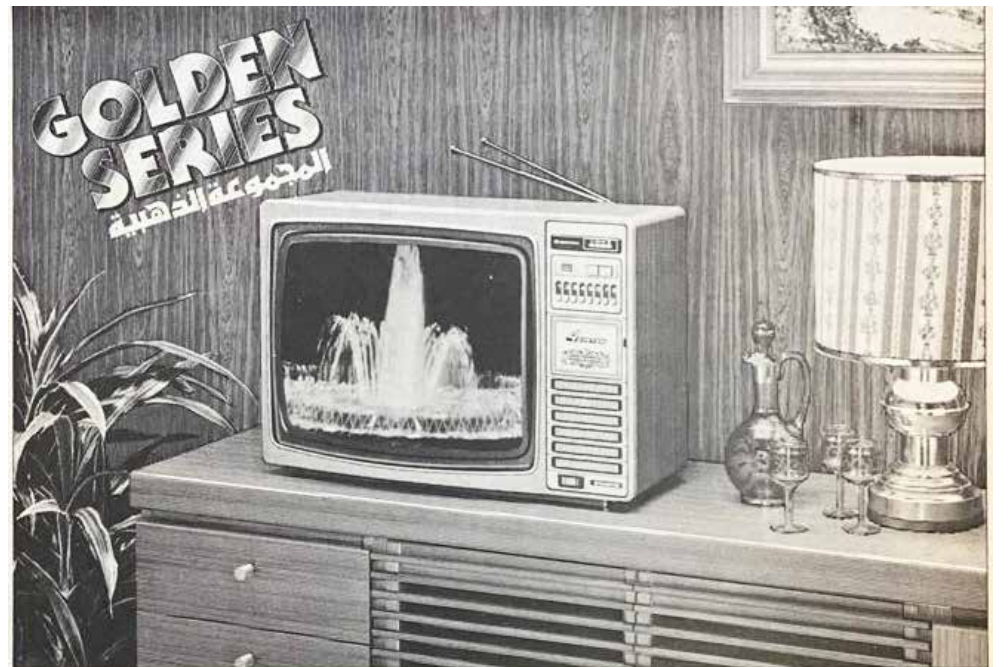
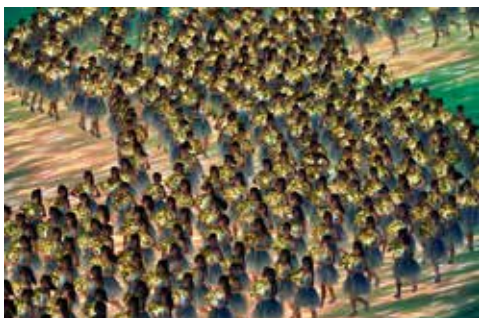
North Korean athletes, who like those from Taiwan were given loud cheers as they entered the ceremony, are contesting their first major international competition since the pandemic. But the biggest cheer of all was reserved for hosts China, who are overwhelming favorites to top the medals table, with Japan and South Korea battling for second. Games athletes will fight for medals in Olympic staples such as athletics, swimming, football, gymnastics and cycling.



Esports will make its debut as a medal event at the Games, in what is seen as a step towards inclusion in the Olympics. There will also be regional specialties including dragon boat racing, the Chinese martial art wushu and kabaddi. Nine sports — among them boxing, break dancing and tennis — will serve as Asia qualifiers for next year's Paris Olympics. A sprinkling of world and Olympic champions adds some stardust, including India's javelin king Neeraj Chopra, Qatari high jumper Mutaz Essa Barshim and Chinese swimming royalty Qin Haiyang and Zhang Yufei.



Olympic Council of Asia honorary life vice-president Wei Jizhong said having so many sporting disciplines was about giving opportunity to as many athletes as possible. "We are open to all. This means our Games are not concentrated only for elite sportspeople," he said. Although the Games officially opened on Saturday, sports such as football, cricket, volleyball and table tennis had already begun. The Games will be staged at 54 venues — 14 newly constructed — mostly in Hangzhou but also extending to cities as far afield as Wenzhou, 300 km south. — AFP



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