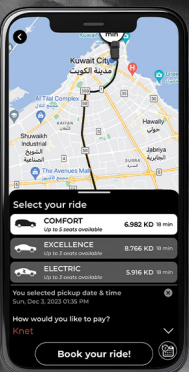



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- 3

Employers' abuse of power: Victims recount their ordeal


- 5

One dead after armed assault on Catholic church in Istanbul


- 6

Marcos, Duterte supporters rally as family rift deepens


- 16

Sinner storms back to win Australian Open



# Amir appoints Maousherji minister

## Cabinet members to be sworn in during special Assembly session



By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** An Amiri decree was issued on Sunday appointing Sharida Al-Maousherji as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs. Maousherji returns to the Cabinet after a 12-year absence. HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sunday at Seif Palace HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, who presented Maousherji as the new minister. Maousherji took the constitutional oath before HH the Amir in the presence of high-ranking officials. Maousherji raises the number of Cabinet ministers to 15, including HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and the government still needs one more portfolio for the interior ministry, which is currently being managed by Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah. Maousherji served for 14 years as the secretary general of the National Assembly before he was selected for his first Cabinet post in 2007. He remained in the Cabinet until 2012.

The Assembly will hold a special session on Monday to allow HH the Prime Minister to take the oath to become the Deputy Amir during the absence of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah abroad, based on a decree issued last week. Under Kuwaiti law, after assuming the post, the prime minister will effectively carry out the duties of the ruler, but he cannot head the government or attend its meetings and those of the National Assembly. The defense minister was appointed acting prime minister during this period. During the Assembly meeting, members of the new Cabinet will also take the oath to become members of parliament, in accordance with Kuwaiti law.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### 3 US troops killed in Jordan

**WASHINGTON:** US President Joe Biden vowed on Sunday to strike back after a drone attack he blamed on Iran-backed militant groups killed three US troops in Jordan. "Have no doubt — we will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner of our choosing," the president said. "On January 28, three US service members were killed and 25 injured from a one-way attack (drone) that impacted at a base in northeast Jordan, near the Syria border," the US Central Command said in a statement earlier. — AFP

#### Iran seizes foreign vessel

**TEHRAN:** Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized Sunday a foreign oil tanker carrying around two million litres of "smuggled fuel" near the country's southern coast. "A foreign vessel with the flag of a country from Oceania was identified with two million litres of smuggled diesel," reported Tasnim news agency. Fourteen crewmembers were also arrested, nationals of "two Asian countries". Iran, a major oil producer, has among the cheapest petrol prices in the world, which encourages fuel trafficking. Iranian forces regularly target tankers illegally transporting fuel in the Gulf. — AFP

#### Iran launches three satellites

**TEHRAN:** Iran on Sunday said it simultaneously launched three satellites into orbit, nearly a week after the launch of the Soraya research satellite by the Revolutionary Guards. The satellites were carried by the two-stage Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier and were launched into a minimum orbit of 450 km. The Mahda satellite is designed to test advanced satellite subsystems, while the other two, Kayhan 2 and Hatef, aim to test space-based positioning technology and narrowband communication. Iran has countered Western criticism of such launches, saying it is not seeking nuclear weapons and that its satellite and rocket launches are for civil or defense purposes only. — AFP

## MoI beefs up security as IS trio remanded

**KUWAIT:** A judge on Sunday renewed the detention for two weeks of three Tunisians accused of being members of a cell of the Islamic State terrorist group who were plotting to carry out suicide attacks on Shiite worship places. The three men denied in court all the accusations, saying they came to Kuwait to work for a delivery group. Kuwait's secret service announced on Thursday it had busted an Islamic

State cell, adding the trio were plotting attacks on Shiite mosques. The public prosecution on Saturday ordered their detention for 21 days pending further investigation and trial. It accused them of joining an outlawed group, plotting terrorist attacks in the country against places of worship of Shiites and carrying out surveillance of a number of such mosques. The public prosecution also said in a statement on Saturday that it ordered the detention of two Kuwaitis, accusing them of joining the Islamic State group. The two cells are not linked. Meanwhile, Acting Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah affirmed

Continued on Page 6

## UN defends UNRWA amid Gaza carnage

**GAZA:** Zionist forces were engaged Sunday in "intensive battles" in southern Gaza, the army said, as CIA chief William Burns met with Zionist, Egyptian and Qatari officials for ceasefire talks. As fighting raged, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pleaded for continued support for UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, threatened by a fierce row over alleged staff involvement in Hamas' Oct 7 attack.

Several of the agency's top donors including the United States and Germany have halted funding to UNRWA, which has been at the heart of humanitarian efforts in Gaza, over the Zionist claims. Guterres called on donor states to guarantee the flow of vital aid to the besieged Gaza Strip, saying late Saturday that "the dire needs of the desperate populations they serve must be met". The Zionist army reported "intensive battles" in Gaza's main southern city of Khan Yunis, where it said special forces eliminated "terrorists" and seized weapons. The health ministry in Gaza said at least 24 people were killed Sunday in Zionist strikes on Khan Yunis, where the sound of

Continued on Page 6

## Activists hurl soup on Mona Lisa painting

**PARIS:** Two protesters on Sunday hurled pumpkin soup at the bullet-proof glass protecting Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in Paris, demanding the right to "healthy and sustainable food", an AFP journalist and the museum said. The action, which comes as French farmers protest across the country, is the latest in a string of similar attacks against artworks to demand more action to protect the planet. Two women on Sunday morning

flung streams of orange soup onto the glass protecting the smiling lady to gasps from the crowd in the French capital's Louvre museum, according to an AFP journalist at the scene. "What is more important? Art or the right to healthy and sustainable food," the activists asked, standing in front of the painting and speaking in turn. "Your agricultural system is sick. Our farmers are dying at work," they said, before security staff evacuated the room. A police source said both activists had been detained. The Louvre museum said the women had hidden the pumpkin soup in a coffee thermos. Small quantities of food are allowed inside the museum, though eating is not allowed in the

Continued on Page 6





# ICJ ruling draws mixed responses from Arabs

## Arab League's extraordinary session on ICJ kicks off; GCC hails ICJ order

### Palestine envoy hails South Africa's stand

By Rami Tahboub  
Ambassador of Palestine



I express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Republic of South Africa for its courage in taking this significant step, which truly represented solidarity with Palestine and its people. I also extend my thanks and appreciation to the millions of people around the world who have not ceased to protest against this insane war on our people in the Gaza Strip and the entire occupied State of Palestine.

The decision made by the International Court of Justice is a historic one, lifting the immunity that the United States has granted to (the Zionist entity) over the past five decades. Accepting South Africa's lawsuit against (the Zionist entity) for committing the crime of genocide sends a clear message that no state is above the law and that justice applies to all without exception. It also puts an end to (the Zionist entity) escaping punishment for its crimes against the Palestinian people, spanning decades of occupation, oppression and apartheid.

We call on the international community to exert immediate pressure on (the Zionist entity) to cease its aggression, halt the crime of genocide and forced displacement, implement UN Security Council Resolution 2720 immediately, provide humanitarian aid and facilitate the return of displaced individuals to their homes. Furthermore, countries supplying (the Zionist entity) with weapons should immediately cease such actions to avoid becoming party to the case before international justice. We reiterate once again that the struggle of our Palestinian people is for the collective humanity, and it must not fail.

CAIRO: The ruling issued by the International Court of Justice in the genocide case against the Zionist entity triggered variant reactions from Arab countries, which pinned high hopes on the case to put an end to the Zionist brutalities against civilians in the Gaza Strip. The Hague-based ICJ affirmed in the ruling its jurisdiction to rule on the case raised by the Republic of South Africa, which signals that the Zionist occupation authorities committed crimes against humanity in contravention of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

However, the ICJ, the top judiciary body of the United Nations, failed to state clearly that the occupation forces must stop their aggression, which has continued over the past 113 days. The ruling fell short of stipulating an immediate ceasefire to protect the Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, it called for ensuring access to humanitarian assistance as part of provisional measures to ward off the specter of famine. Arab legal centers argue that the ICJ ruling failed to meet the aspirations of the Arab countries, notably stipulating the immediate cessation of Zionist attacks that claimed the lives of more than 27,000 Palestinian civilians and injured 35,000 others, besides thousands of missing people.

The Arab Human Rights Committee (Charter Committee of the Arab League) expressed reservations about the ruling. "We expected the ICJ to rule in favor of an immediate ceasefire," Chairman of the Committee Justice Jaber Al-Marri said in statements to KUNA. "The interim ruling represents a win for humanitarian values in the controversy over the wide-

spread violations of international humanitarian law in the war against Gaza, but it failed to stipulate an end to these violations," he explained.

The ICJ had ruled in similar cases in the past, like the one in Ukraine, in favor of an immediate ceasefire, Justice Al-Marri recalled. He wondered how the provisional measures could be implemented to protect the civilians in Gaza without stipulating a ceasefire clearly in the ICJ ruling. The genocidal acts being committed by the Zionist entity, the occupying power, against civilians, including women and children, are aired live around the clock and are viewed by millions of people around the globe, so the ICJ response should be more robust, he argued.

On a similar note, Chairman of the Arab Bridge Center for Human Rights Development Amjad Shammout said the ICJ ruling gave the occupation entity "a space to go unpunished." "Instead of a robust, clear-cut legal tone, the ICJ ruling bore a rather diplomatic one that can hardly ensure protection for civilians," he regretted. Shammout believes that the ruling was disappointing and failed to live up to the aspirations for ending the crimes against humanity and the crimes of war being committed against the Palestinians.

Despite reservations about legal and human rights centers, the Arab League welcomed the ruling as an interim one that could lay the groundwork for intensive legal and political action against violations of international humanitarian law. Secretary-General of the League Ahmad Abul-Gheit said the provisional measures demanded by the court compel Zionists to prevent genocidal acts, and the occupying power is le-

gally bound to implement them. "We expected the ruling to provide for immediate and comprehensive cessation of hostilities against the Gazans, but it just paved the way for intensive legal and diplomatic action on the Arab and international scales to stop the aggression," he added.

Abul-Gheit's remarks echoed a statement released by the Arab Parliament soon after the Friday ruling. The statement welcomed the ruling but raised questions on the likelihood of implementation of the provisional measures without a ceasefire. It called for effective action by the international community, notably the UN Security Council, to force the occupying power into full implementation of the measures.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi of the Gulf Cooperation Council said the interim ruling, adopted by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), sends a clear indication that the Zionist entity is committing barbaric crimes against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. The ruling on the genocide case, brought by South Africa, indicates that the brutalities being committed by the occupation forces in their war on Gaza are in breach of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, he said in a statement by the GCC Secretariat.

Hailing the ruling as historic, Al-Budaiwi commended the ICJ's efforts to verify and document the atrocities and pursue the case thoroughly as a prelude to taking the appropriate measures in the future. The ruling is in consistency with the international laws and conventions relating to the protection of

innocent civilians, notably the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, he said. The GCC chief commended the exemplary efforts made by South Africa and its legal team in bringing the case to court and pursuing its proceedings.

He urged the international community to apply pressure on the occupation entity to force it to halt the ongoing brutalities that claimed dozens of thousands of civilian lives, mainly women and children, over more than three months. He reaffirmed the commitment of the GCC states to supporting the Palestinian people in their struggle for legitimate rights under the UN resolutions and the Arab peace initiative, notably the right to establish an independent state within the June 4, 1967, borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In another development, the Arab League held an extraordinary session at the level of permanent delegates on Sunday to discuss a unified Arab position vis-à-vis the resolution of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against the occupation forces. The meeting, headed by Morocco, was held in response to a request by Palestine and in coordination with Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan, supported by member states.

The conferees discussed the ICJ resolution, demanding that the occupation forces adhere to the rules in accordance with the case that had been filed by South Africa against the occupation forces for committing genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. Kuwait's delegation to the extraordinary session is headed by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the Arab League, Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi. — KUNA

## MoH inaugurates food handlers testing center

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health has launched the Food Handlers Examination Center at the old Farwaniya Hospital to be the second center of its kind. This is within the framework of ensuring the safety of workers at all stages of food processing and the safety of professional groups working directly with community members.

The assistant undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Health Affairs, Dr Al-Munther Al-Hasawi, said in a press statement on Sunday that the Farwaniya center is the second center to provide this service nationwide, explaining that it will work with a total capacity of about 2,000 references daily by booking an appointment in advance via the Sahel application.

Al-Hasawi added that the center will provide services, including the examination of all food handlers, workers in food industries, and other professional groups that rely on direct and close interaction with members of the community. It is imperative for them to obtain a health fitness card as a prerequisite for practicing their work. He pointed out that the center is responsible for testing and conducting laboratory tests, including a blood test, to ensure that there is no HIV infection and also to ensure that there are no hepatitis B and C viruses.

These examinations will also be carried out on employees of beauty salons and health institutes. Besides that, it will conduct chest X-rays for all the targeted groups to ensure they are free from tuberculosis. Also, food handlers will be tested to make sure they are free of bacteria and parasites that may be transmitted through their hands.

One of the examinations that will be carried out by these centers is a virtual fitness examination by specialized doctors to ensure general hygiene and to make sure workers are free from skin diseases, burns, wounds, respiratory, and throat diseases. Al-Hasawi said that these centers will also provide vaccinations against typhoid, hepatitis A, tetanus, and influenza.

The director of the Health Communication Center and the official spokesman of the Ministry, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sindh, said that the inauguration of the center came within the framework of the ministry's keenness to ensure the quality and safety of food and in compliance with the relevant health standards. Al-Sindh explained that the segment covered by the services of these centers amounts to about half a million people annually, which in turn relieves the pressure on the other inspection centers. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Minister of Social Affairs Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah, and the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadi visit the Center for Addiction Treatment. The inspection tour is to ensure the quality of implementation and to speed up the pace of work.



## Ministers inspect Center for Addiction Treatment

KUWAIT: The Minister of Social Affairs Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah and the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadi, inspected on Sunday the progress of work on the Center for Addiction Treatment. The inspection tour is to ensure the quality of implementation and to speed up the pace of work. They also discussed the requirements for its opening in accordance with health standards. The Minister of Social Affairs called for coordination with the Ministry of Health team to identify observations and overcome obstacles in order to

avoid any delay that may disrupt the delivery of the project and its operation.

During the tour, the minister confirmed the efforts to implement the recommendations of the political leadership and the Council of Ministers in fighting the scourge of drugs and promoting awareness against illicit drugs. The Minister of Health praised the efforts exerted and the initiative to establish the center, pointing out that a technical team has been allocated to identify shortcomings and obstacles so as to facilitate the delivery of the center as soon as possible.

The project is built in the Shuwaikh area on an area of 6,720 square meters and contains suites that will accommodate 208 people. It has health clinics, rehabilitation centers, and sports suites. During the tour, the two ministers were accompanied by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi; the assistant undersecretary for



financial and administrative affairs, Dr. Badr Al-Adwani; the assistant undersecretary for engineering and projects affairs at the ministry, Ibrahim Al-Naham; and the director of the Addiction Treatment Center, Dr. Adel Al-Zayed. — KUNA



## CAN trains 2,983 doctors on thyroid cancer detection

KUWAIT: The Cancer Awareness National Campaign (CAN) announced that it trained 2,983 doctors, mostly primary care physicians and dentists, on the early detection of head, neck, and thyroid cancers. CAN board chairman Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh said in his final speech on Sunday, during the annual thyroid awareness campaign, that they would be training doctors all year round to be able to detect first signs for a faster diagnosis and treatment.

Dr. Al-Saleh talked about the importance of training the nursing staff on dealing with cancer patients



Dr Iman Al-Shimmari and Dr Khalid Al-Saleh are pictured during the event.

and their families. 2,585 of them were trained to raise community awareness and learn how to identify risk factors and signs. Cooperation with the Ministry of Health aims to help with the readiness of medical and nursing staff, said Dr. Al-Saleh, while campaigns aim

to help the target audience recognize the signs of thyroid cancer.

A person can get thyroid cancer at any age, but women are at greatest risk between the ages of 40 and 50, while men are at greatest risk between 60 and 70 years. This is three times more common in women than in men. Campaign officer Dr. Eman Al-Shemmari reiterated Dr. Al-Saleh's words by saying how important it was to raise awareness and provide an integrated service to combat thyroid cancer from detection to treatment.

She also talked about the necessity for someone with a family history of cancer to do regular tests at home, seeing as how thyroid cancer symptoms are easy to detect by appearing on the skin, hair, and nails. Thyroid cancer is one of the most curable cancers and causes few deaths if diagnosed early. It is the most common but least dangerous cancer. — KUNA



## Local

# Zain hosts drone photography workshop

## To cultivate a culture of creativity by empowering use of technology



Zain's team with the participants at ZINC.

**KUWAIT:** The Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) hosted a special workshop that covered the basics of drone photography and videography, presented by the talented Kuwaiti photographer and content creator Omar Alsayed Omar. The workshop was joined by many enthusiasts and beginners looking to explore aerial photography and improve their skills. This session is a continuation of a series of specialized workshops Zain hosts from time to time to foster a culture of creativity in the community using technology. Through such initiatives, the company hopes to empower individuals to use tech innovation and pursue their passion for art, by bringing the best local content creators to share their insights and expertise with them.

During the workshop, Omar Alsayed Omar, a talented Kuwaiti photographer and popular content creator, explained the basics of aerial photography and videography using drones, focusing on both theoretical and practical approaches. He also asserted the importance of obtaining official permits before flying drones and

emphasized the necessary steps to ensure safety while flying. Omar Alsayed Omar also shared tips and tricks on how to operate drones, how to use the controller, how to prepare shots and take unique angles not possible with traditional cameras, and how each and every photographer can reflect their own personal touch in their work.

The workshop was well-received, having featured participation from many photography and camera enthusiasts. The participants varied in their skill levels, with beginners, intermediate, and advanced photographers successfully enrolling to upskill their passion in aerial photography and videography. Zain continues to cultivate a culture of creativity in the community by empowering talented people to take advantage of technology. The company continues to collaborate with local content creators to offer programs and sessions to encourage the public – especially young people – to pursue their passions and foster their innovation, creativity, and technology skills.



Omar Alsayed Omar presenting the workshop.

## Employers' abuse of power: Victims narrate their ordeal

By Zainab Al-Mashoor

**KUWAIT:** In the realm of employment, some individuals find themselves tied to oppressive workplaces, compelled to endure mistreatment out of fear of jeopardizing their livelihoods. Workplace bullying, harassment, and discrimination manifest in various forms, ranging from isolation to verbal threats, leaving victims with anxiety, depression, fear, physical and social harm. Dina sought therapy, Qadir was deported, Esraa was humiliated, Sara was bullied, Sumayya was threatened, and Zeina was overworked. Kuwait Times heard from individuals that have undergone employers' abuse of power and took legal expert comments on employees' rights.

### Dina's struggle for recognition

"I ended up at a therapist". Dina endured two years of unfair treatment, stereotype, jealousy, unappreciated compared to her co-workers at her workplace by her manager. Being treated as she did not belong or accepted. With no guidance nor support. Despite her attempts to be accepted through gifts and contributions, she faced isolation, aggression and mistreatment.

"Spending days crying at the washroom, eating alone, depressed, and being mistreated did not only affect my working hours but also my personal life. I couldn't even smile at home." Being emotionally and mentally devastated, Dina sought therapy which empowered her to value herself, to fight for her rights to able to deal with workplace

challenges and to not expect much. Dina adds, "If others mistreat you or show a sign of jealousy doesn't mean you aren't good enough, but they are scared of your success."

### Qadir's deportation

Qadir, employed for nine months, endured overtime without compensation. Upon refusing unpaid overtime, he faced termination, non-payment of salary, and an absconding case filed against him. Qadir then pursued legal action to secure his rights but was left unemployed as they didn't allow him transfer his residence which led to its expiring. At a random police check, he was imprisoned for 15 days and deported to his country.

### Esraa's humiliation

Esraa has undergone a harsh experience by her boss, "He involved himself into tasks for which he lacked experience and knowledge, consistently demeaning me by asserting that I knew nothing. His behavior escalated to bullying, notably during a meeting with clients where he publicly embarrassed and insulted me, dismissing my input with a harsh 'shut up, you know nothing.' He went further, calling me shameless and questioning my self-worth. When I showed distress and shed tears, he cruelly dismissed my emotions, stating that my tears were as insincere as crocodile cries. His insults extended to mocking my intelligence, deeming my master's degree useless. His mistreatment affected me, making me feel insignificant and unintelligent. Faced with this hostile environment, I felt compelled to leave the job. It became apparent that his dislike to me was from my friendly and cheerful character."

### Discrimination and bully

Sara faced discrimination and insults despite disclosing her English language proficiency and educational background during the interview. "He embarrassed and humiliated me in front of my co-workers and clients highlight them." Above that, the lack of

motivation and acknowledgment for her efforts led to frustration and demotivation. Sara's decision to resign underscored to her boss the importance of working in environments that value and respect individuals.

### Sumayya's probation threat

Sumayya, during her probation period, worked for 12-13 hours daily without overtime payment nor breaks. "All my boss cared about was for the work to be finished at any cost" and the cost could be the employee. Her boss closely monitored her every move via CCTV, and questioning her about the minutes she took using the washroom. The overwhelming pressure led to her being hospitalized for (IBS). Upon resigning, Sumayya faced verbal abuse and blackmail on not paying her salary from her boss. Sumayya advocated on the need for a respectful and appreciating work environment and highlights, "We work together for each other, we aren't "owned" by a higher party".

### Overwhelming responsibilities

Zena's initial job as a fresh graduate didn't go as expected. She didn't what she was going through. Joining as a secretary but worked as Secretary, Receptionist, Translation, HR, PR with minimal compensation and no extra benefit. Overworked and handling diverse responsibilities, Zena felt mentally and physically drained, prompting her decision to leave for the sake of her well-being.

In context, Legal researcher Atef Mohi Eldeen emphasizes that employers have no right to treat employees inappropriately, affirming that Kuwait is a state where rules apply to all. Addressing employer abuse of power, he notes: Employees can refuse overtime unless a contract stipulates an agreement for such work. If an Employee is subjected to bully, threats or harm at work, a legal action can be taken leading to a punishment by paying fine or imprisonment for 1-3 years or both, depending on the severity the case.

## Kuwait committed to renewable energy, sustainable future

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is committed to expanding its renewable energy projects, Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr Salem Al-Hajraf said. The target is to use a minimum of 15 percent of electricity at prime time from renewable sources by 2030, noted Al-Hajraf, who doubles as state minister for housing affairs, in a press release marking International Clean Energy Day.

Hajraf stressed the intent to accelerate the implementation of the Al-Shaqaya Renewable Energy Project, with a production capacity of 4,500 megawatts through solar energy, leading to a sustainable future for the country. The UN General Assembly adopted January 26 of each year as International Clear Energy Day, which is concerned with promoting awareness around the world by working for a complete transition to clean energy. — KUNA



Dr Salem Al-Hajraf

## Tapping into the power of intuition

By Passant Hisham

**KUWAIT:** That distant calm voice coming from within, with its very gentle spark that ignites in certain situations — it's your intuition speaking to you. "If a person really needs to make choices that reflect their soul, and fulfills them from the inside, they definitely need to listen to their inner voice," said Mariam Ibrahim, a conscious healer and coach. She believes the power of intuition lies in its distinctive ability to break away from the boundaries of our minds and connect us with the Divine's subliminal messages and signs.

Intuition, which usually comes from the gut, is mostly underestimated by people. Unfortunately influenced by society, most of us have been programmed to ignore these gut feelings, in favor of logical and rational thinking. We have been taught that this is the safest way towards avoiding any risks or making any mistakes, Ibrahim noted.

While she emphasized the importance of the rational mind, she warned its abilities are still largely limited, as they just work on analyzing facts and data. She referred to a study from HeartMath institute, which proved that neurons not only exist in the mind, but also in our hearts and guts, which explains why scientists call them 'the three brains'. "This means that there's always extra information that one will be missing, if they completely ignore their gut feeling," Ibrahim noted.



Mariam Ibrahim



In fact, discerning gut feelings from emotional feelings is essential, she said. It's true that the concept of feelings is common in both, but emotional feelings are more intense, with a pulsing energy, as if you're trying to force yourself to make a certain decision. They can also sometimes be impulsive and biased because they are usually influenced by previous negative experiences or painful memories, she added.

For instance, a person with a history of a previous failed relationship will probably have feelings of fear before approaching another relationship. Therefore, one must understand where their emotional feelings come from, as they require discipline and control before being followed. On the contrary, gut feelings are more grounded and wiser. They are usually accompanied by feelings of ease, causing your body to relax. Even if they direct you toward a decision that doesn't seem logical at the time, they bring a sense of reassurance and trust, as if it's certainly moving you toward your best interest. "It feels more like an

inspiration from God," said Ibrahim.

That's why, she suggested, that ahead of making any decision, it's best if a person approached it with their intuitive feelings first, to validate if it's worth the experiment or not. After that, by assessing all memories, past learnings, personal needs and preferences, the mind, heart and gut work harmoniously together, to help one make the wisest decisions, given the context. Reaching this balance is very challenging, and it might take years for people to reach it, and sometimes there are people who never even make it there, Ibrahim pointed out.

While it is uneasy for some people to bear the uncertainty of trusting their intuition, Ibrahim believes that it's worth the risk. "The more I personally decided to follow my intuition, the more I felt it becoming stronger and clearer with time," she said. She pointed out that all what it takes is having faith in God, and in that little voice inside. "I wish more people could know that there's another way to live life," she said.

## Ministry of Education to hire 700 teachers

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Education has announced an opening to hire non-Kuwaitis (locally) in many disciplines to meet the needs of public schools for the next academic year. Informed sources confirmed that the Ministry needs about 700 teachers in 12 specialties to fill the vacancies in the public schools. The public education sector will start receiving applications on the official website of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education stressed the need to adhere to the 'requirements' which include three years for those with non-educational qualifications and two years for those with educational qualifications. The Education Ministry excluded 'experience requirement' for the following categories: Holders of a doctorate degree and those with high university grades; Holders of a master's degree; Graduates from the College of Education (Kuwait University and the College of Basic Education in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training); and all other government colleges in Kuwait.

Admission is limited to passing the personal interview, and no case or specialization is excluded. The ministry stressed that priority will be given to Kuwaitis, children of Kuwaiti women of undetermined nationality, citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and finally expatriates, respectively.



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## Gold prices down to \$2,018 ounce

KUWAIT: Gold prices dipped to \$2,018 an ounce at last week's trading, recording losses for two consecutive weeks, Dar Al-Sabaek reported on Sunday. Dar Al-Sabaek said that the positive American economic data negatively affected the price of gold as investors turned to the US market after the personal consumer spending index rose by 2.6 percent. It added that the US economy improvement lines with the expectations of economists to slow inflation pressure and thus ease the US Federal Reserve (the Central Bank) of its tough measures towards raising interest on the dollar, which leads to increased optimism in future rises for the US stock market.

The US economy has shown more flexibility despite higher borrowing costs amid expectations that the United States will make the first interest rate cut next May. Investors are awaiting the comments of Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, which will be released soon and could provide more information about the beginning of the interest rate reduction cycle. All these factors led to a decrease in the price of gold in global markets, as future prices of gold stabilized at \$2,017 per ounce for February delivery after reaching \$2,028, a clear sign of a decrease in speculative appetite in the precious metals market as the stock market recovered.

This week, data will be released on US monetary policy and labor market data amid a state of anticipation of the conflict in the Middle East and events in the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab Al-Mandab, all of which directly affect gold prices. On the local market, the report stated that the price of a gram of 24 caliber reached KD 10.13 (about \$61.3), while the 22 caliber reached KD 18.4 (about \$56.1), and silver closed at \$270 (about \$823) per kilogram.

### Dollar remains stable

Meanwhile, the US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar was stable at KD 0.307 on Sunday, while the euro dropped 0.20 percent to KD 0.333 compared to last Thursday, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) on Sunday. The CBK added in its online daily bulletin that the exchange rate of the Pound Sterling was stable at KD 0.390, the Swiss Franc at KD 0.355, and the Japanese Yen at KD 0.002. — KUNA

# Embassy of Vietnam celebrates Lunar New Year, UN recognition



KUWAIT: Vietnam Embassy in Kuwait hosted a reception at the Al-Kout Beach Hotel to celebrate the Lunar New Year and its recognition from the United Nations.

— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: On January 26, the Embassy of Vietnam in Kuwait hosted a reception at the Al-Kout Beach Hotel (where the first Vietnamese coffee shop is located) to celebrate the Lunar New Year, on the occasion of the holiday - getting its recognition from the United Nations. The reception welcomed people from the Vietnamese community, ambassadors, UN representatives and other dignitaries in Kuwait.

As one of the Asian countries celebrating the Lunar New Year festival, which often falls on late January and early February each year, Vietnam has its own traditions and customs that have been practiced through many generations. Coming to the reception, guests got the chance to taste traditional cuisine served by the Vietnamese chef, Hieu Le and have calligraphy writings from Hoang Ngo - who is staying in Kuwait for an upcoming art exhibition.

The reception was also lit up by performances from the Vietnamese students who are studying the Arabic language in the Kuwait University. Thanking the Vietnamese community for supporting the Embassy's work in the past years, Ambassador Ngo Toan Thang reiterated the importance and meaning of the Lunar New Year - also known as "Tet" - which is to reunite family members and look back on the achievements and memories in the past year.

Ambassador Ngo Toan Thang took the time to send his best wishes for the upcoming Lunar New Year, hoping that the Vietnamese community will contribute to the development of Kuwait, proudly representing the home country in the area, contrib-



uting to the relationship between Vietnam and Kuwait. Previously, in a resolution adopted on December 22, 2023, the United Nations General Assembly "acknowledges the significance of Lunar New Year

which is observed in many Member States" - a big step towards the international community's recognition of traditional Asian culture in a world of diverse culture and harmony.



## KUNA chief, Russian envoy discuss media cooperation

KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Dr. Fatma Al-Salem, discussed with the Russian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Vladimir Zheltov, cooperation strengthening joint media. During the reception at KUNA's headquarters on Sunday, Dr. Al-Salem and Ambassador Zheltov also touched on various media topics of common interest.

Dr. Al-Salem pointed out the importance of bolstering media cooperation between Kuwaiti and Russian media institutions, noting the need to work on the agreements between KUNA and the Russian News Agency (TASS) in exchanging news and professional expertise in training. The KUNA Director also stressed the importance of cultural openness



Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr. Fatma Al-Salem receives the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait, Vladimir Zheltov. — KUNA

among people, which portrays the real image of their cultures and values, and achieving a civilizational dialogue and human communication.

The Russian Ambassador, on his part, affirmed the depth of the Russian-Kuwaiti ties, which are witnessing constant development, pointing to the recent increase of Kuwaiti tourists in Russia. Ambassador Zheltov praised the freedom of the Kuwaiti media, whether official or private, noting that media is considered one of the most important modes of communication between people. — KUNA

## Cairo Book Fair registers record-breaking number

CAIRO: The Egyptian Ministry of Culture announced on Sunday that the Cairo International Book Fair achieved record-breaking number in its 55th edition, with over three million visitors after three days of its opening. The Minister of Culture, Dr. Nevine Al-Kilani, affirmed in a statement that the significant crowd attendance at the fair marks a promising start, indicating the exceptional nature of this edition of the fair's history, reflecting its importance, cultural impact, and artistic content it offers to the public, in addition to maintaining progress and developments in diverse fields.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Kilani added that the number of visitors on the third day reached 404,931 people, praising the interest of the Egyptians and their eagerness to receive "cultural nourishment." She also acknowledged their awareness of the value of knowledge for bettering and building societies.

The current edition of the book fair is held from January 25th until February 6th in Cairo's International Exhibition Center under the sponsorship of the Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, with the slogan, "We create knowledge, we preserve the word." Kuwait's participation in the fair includes an impressive pavilion with publications from the Kuwaiti Ministry

of Information, the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL), the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait (CRSK), and many more.

### NCCAL publications

Publications of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) have a long history of attracting the interest of Arab visitors, an official said on Saturday. This came in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). NCCAL's book fairs department and Kuwait International Book Fair participated in the 55th session of the Cairo International Book Fair (CIF).

He said that CIF is one of the oldest and largest cultural forums in the Arab world, noting that it is an important platform where Arab and Gulf cultures meet. About NCCAL participation in CIF, Al-Enezi said that the council offered publications such as "Al-Arabi Magazine," "Alam Al-Fikr" (World of Intellect), "Ebda'at Alamia" (World Creativities), "Al-Thaqafa Al-Alamia" (World Culture), "Al-Athar Books" (Antiquities Books), NCCAL special editions, and books by Kuwaiti authors.

He pointed out that demand for book sales reflects the interest of visitors and readers in learning about Kuwaiti culture, especially NCCAL publications. The Cairo International Book Fair kicked off on January 25 under the slogan "We create knowledge, we preserve the word" and will continue until February 6 with the participation of 1,200 publishing houses from 70 countries. — KUNA



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Displaced Palestinians trapped in Gaza's south languish in winter

Marcos, Duterte family rift deepens

Page 6

Page 7

# Fear, grief a year after Turkey quake

## Hatay lost same number of buildings in seconds as is usually built in a decade: Report



ANTAKYA: A woman walks past a flooded street as diggers work to clean the rubble of collapsed buildings eleven months after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake wiped out swathes of Turkey's mountainous southeast. — AFP

ISTANBUL: Over 65 nightmarish seconds of the pre-dawn hours of February 6, 2023, the ground swallowed swathes of entire cities across Turkey's southeast, resulting in more than 50,000 deaths.

The initial 7.8-magnitude earthquake shook the ground as far away as Egypt. Bridges collapsed, roads and airport tarmacs cracked, and millions of lives across 11 Turkish provinces were upturned by the time the rest of the country woke up, stunned.

A year later, hundreds of thousands remain displaced, many of them living in container cities, while the rest of the quake-prone country waits in fear for the next big shake.

"I had 3,700 registered voters. Only 1,300 are left," said Ali Karatosun, a mukhtar (village chief) in Kahramanmaraş province, not far from the epicenter of Turkey's worst disaster of modern times.

More than 850,000 buildings crumbled in the initial quake and the thousands of aftershocks that followed, including a 7.5-magnitude one that afternoon.

In the Syrian border province of Ha-

tay, where the ancient city of Antioch — now called Antakya — formed the cradle of Muslim and Christian civilizations, just 250,000 of the original 1.7 million inhabitants remain. "Our Hatay is gone. Completely gone," said Mevlude Aydin, 41, who lost her daughter, husband and a dozen relatives.

**'No money. No jobs'**

The disaster put enormous political pressure on President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who faced re-election later that year. Responding to criticism that rescuers were too slow to react, leaving many initial survivors trapped under rubble in the freezing cold, the veteran leader promised to build 650,000 housing units within a year.

Eleven months later, the construction of 307,000 housing units has been launched, of which 46,000 have been delivered, according to environment and urbanization ministry data. In the meantime, families that chose to stay in the disaster zone and were unable to find accommodation have been housed in metal

container homes the size of small studios. The containers have access to free running water and power, offering safety and warmth. But families have few surviving possessions and their immediate prospects are unclear. The Hatay region lost the same number of buildings in seconds as it usually takes a decade to build, an Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) report found.

In Adiyaman province, at the opposite end of the quake zone, 40 percent of the buildings collapsed. "The earthquake will create a financing need of approximately \$150 billion over a five-year period," the economic policy institute said in a comprehensive report.

"The cost of reconstruction and rehabilitation will have a significant and long-term negative impact on the Turkish economy." The affected region was already under intense economic strain, being home to half of the 3.7 million refugees who fled civil war in neighboring Syria. "No money. No jobs. We are far from returning to normal," said Kadir Yenice, a 70-year-old in Kahramanmaraş, echoing

the worries of many across the disaster zone. "People don't know what to do."

**'Band-aid solutions'**

The instant collapse of so many buildings in one of the world's most earthquake-prone regions points to the greed of unscrupulous property developers and corruption among bureaucrats who signed off on unsafe building projects, experts say.

In two of the more egregious examples, nearly all 22 buildings in one high-rise complex collapsed in Kahramanmaraş, claiming 1,400 lives, and hundreds more died when their luxurious Renaissance residence crumbled in Antakya. The handful of willful negligence cases opened so far have avoided prosecuting officials, focusing on contracts instead.

Meanwhile, Turkey is no better prepared for another earthquake than it was one year ago, experts say. "There is still much to be done," said Mihai Kadioglu, a disaster management professor at Istanbul Technical University. "Measures

should go beyond mere band-aid solutions and require a real and more fundamental reform."

While it caused temporary panic, particularly in quake-prone cities such as Istanbul, the disaster "did not lead to a change in behavior among the public or officials", Kadioglu said. And even if safety standards are better enforced, buildings could still fall if erected without proper soil studies or on dangerous terrain such as riverbeds, as was the case in Kahramanmaraş, he said.

Dilfuroz Sahin, who heads the town planning chamber in southeastern Diyarbakir, struck a more optimistic tone, saying officials were updating their seismic maps and conducting "stricter, more numerous inspections".

Zihni Tekin, an engineering consultant, strongly disagreed, expressing disappointment that Erdogan overcame the quake to secure re-election last May. Turkey's problems cannot be solved by "completely corrupt and ignorant people", he said, referring to Erdogan's AKP party. — AFP



BAMAKO: A demonstrator holds a sign reading "Down with ECOWAS", during a mass demonstration to protest against sanctions imposed on Mali and the Junta in this file photo. — AFP

## Burkina, Mali, Niger abandon ECOWAS bloc

BAMAKO, Mali: The military regimes in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger announced Sunday their immediate withdrawal from the West African bloc ECOWAS, saying it has become a threat to member states. The leaders of the three Sahel nations issued a statement saying it was a "sovereign decision" to leave the Economic Community of West African States "without delay".

Struggling with jihadist violence and poverty, the regimes have had tense ties with ECOWAS since coups took place in Niger last July, Burkina Faso in 2022 and Mali in 2020. All three — founding members of the bloc in 1975 — were suspended from ECOWAS with Niger and Mali facing heavy sanctions as the bloc tried to push for the early return of civilian governments to power.

The sanctions were an "irrational and unacceptable posture" at a time when the three "have decided to take their destiny in hand" — a reference to the coups that removed civilian administrations. The three nations have hardened their positions in recent months and joined forces in an "Alliance of Sahel States".

The leaders' joint statement added that 15-member ECOWAS, "under the influence of foreign powers, betraying its founding principles, has become a threat to member states and peoples". They accused the grouping of failing to help them tackle the jihadists who swept into

Mali from 2012 and then on to Burkina and Niger. But leaving ECOWAS could make trade more difficult for the three land-locked nations, making goods more expensive, and could also see visa requirements re-imposed for travel. Under pressure from the military regimes, former colonial power France has removed ambassadors and troops and watched Russia fill the void militarily and politically.

The French army's withdrawal from the Sahel — the region along the Sahara desert across Africa — has heightened concerns over the conflicts spreading southward to Gulf of Guinea states Ghana, Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast.

**'Bad faith'**

The prime minister appointed by Niger's regime on Thursday blasted ECOWAS for "bad faith" after the bloc largely shunned a planned meeting in Niamey. Niger had hoped for an opportunity to talk through differences with fellow states of ECOWAS which has cold-shouldered Niamey, imposing heavy economic and financial sanctions following the military coup that overthrew elected president Mohamed Bazoum.

Niger's military leaders, wrestling with high food prices and a scarcity of medicines, have said they want up to three years for a transition back to civilian rule. In Mali, the ruling officers under Colonel Assimi Goita had pledged to hold elections in February this year, but that has now been pushed back to an unknown date.

Burkina Faso, which has not been put under sanctions although Captain Ibrahim Traore seized power in September 2022, has set elections for this summer, but says the fight against the insurgents remains the top priority. — AFP

## 1 dead after armed assault on Catholic church in Istanbul

ISTANBUL: One man died after armed assailants opened fire in an Italian church in Istanbul during Sunday mass in an apparent assassination attempt that was swiftly condemned by Pope Francis and Turkish officials.

The attack occurred at around 11:40 am (0840 GMT) at the Santa Maria church in the Sariyer district of Istanbul on the European side of Turkey's largest city and was carried out by two masked men, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said on social media.

Turkish officials said it looked like a targeted attack against one person rather than against the Catholic church. The minister said an individual identified only as CT — who was among those attending Sunday's service — was the target of the gun attack and lost his life.

Yerlikaya added that an investigation had been launched to find the attackers, who fled the scene after the shooting. Local officials said around 40 people attended the mass, and suggested that there could have been more casualties.

"After the second shot, the gun didn't work, then they (attackers) ran. At this moment, everyone lied on the floor. There were around 35 to 40 people inside," Sariyer district's mayor Sukru Genc told reporters. Istanbul governor Davut Gul said that there were no other injuries.

**'Closeness to community'**

Television images showed police and an ambulance outside the ornate 19th century church. "We strongly condemn this vile attack," Yerlikaya said. Security footage ahead of the attack showed a pair of men wearing black ski masks

with their hands hidden in their pockets and one was seen wearing black sunglasses.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was in the central Anatolian province of Eskisehir for his party's rally ahead of March local elections, expressed condolences during a phone call with the priest of the Italian church and other local officials. He assured that "necessary steps are being taken to catch the perpetrators as soon as possible", according to his office.

Pope Francis expressed his support for the Catholic church after the attack. "I express my closeness to the community of the Santa Maria" church in Istanbul, the Argentinian pope said at the end of his weekly Angelus prayer in St Peter's Square at the Vatican.

**'Firm condemnation'**

Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani also expressed his "condolences and firm condemnation" over the attack, and backed the Turkish authorities to find the killers. The incident comes more than a week after Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni met with Erdogan in Istanbul.

Turkey's ruling AKP party spokesman Omer Celik said the attackers took aim at a citizen during the mass. "Our security forces are conducting a large-scale investigation into the matter," he said. "Those who threaten the peace and security of our citizens will never achieve their goals."

Istanbul's popular mayor Ekrem Imamoglu said: "We will never allow those who aim at our unity and peace by attacking houses of religion in our city." The motive for the attack was also not immediately clear.

In December last year, Turkish security forces detained 32 suspects over alleged links with so-called Islamic State jihadists who were planning attacks on churches and synagogues, as well as the Iraqi embassy. IS extremists have carried out a string of attacks on Turkish soil, including against a nightclub in Istanbul in 2017 that left 39 people dead. — AFP



ISTANBUL: An ambulance leaves from Santa Maria church as Turkish anti-riot police officers block the street after an attack on Jan 28, 2024. — AFP



## International

# Marcos, Duterte family rift deepens

## Supporters of president, predecessor rally in 'elite' war that doesn't serve public interest: Expert

**MANILA:** Thousands of supporters of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte gathered for rival rallies on Sunday, putting on a public display of a deepening rift between the powerful clans.

In the nearly two years since Marcos swept to victory with the help of his vice-presidential running mate Sara Duterte — the former president's daughter — their so-called "Unity Team" has fractured. As thousands of flag-waving people massed at a seaside park in the capital Manila hours ahead of an early evening rally headlined by the president, his predecessor's youngest son Sebastian Duterte was openly daring Marcos to step down.

"If you don't show love and aspiration for the country, better resign," Sebastian told supporters in his family's southern stronghold of Davao, blaming Marcos for the drug and communist insurgency problems in the region.

His sister, Sara Duterte, briefly appeared at the Marcos rally in Manila, saying the education department that she also heads was "one with all the other government agencies in pushing for a New Philippines". Afterwards, she attended the Davao rally where she addressed a smaller crowd of Duterte fans.

Relations between the families have deteriorated as they seek to shore up their respective support bases and secure key positions ahead of next year's mid-term elections and the 2028 presidential race, which Sara Duterte is widely expected to contest.

In the latest rift, Marcos has backed a campaign for the 1987 constitution, introduced after his dictator father and namesake was ousted from power, to be changed to allow in more foreign investment — something the Dutertes

have publicly opposed.

Critics warn the effort could pave the way for Marcos to get another six-year term, which is currently prohibited. "Our constitution is fine ... why do we give ourselves a headache when we know all along that this is in order to, you know, you want to stay in power," ex-president Duterte said in a recent interview.

Marcos has said the constitution's political provisions, including term limits for public officials, should be tackled later. Marcos launched his "Bagong Pilipinas" (New Philippines) campaign at the Manila rally but did not mention the constitution in his speech.

"We face a complex and changing world that calls for a united vision that would make our nation strong, our economy sound and our children's future secure," Marcos told the crowd. The Duterte patriarch appeared at the Davao rally organized by opponents of constitutional change.

An ever-shifting coalition of powerful families has long ruled the Philippines, holding onto power for generations. Left-wing political party Akbayan branded the rallies as a "dynastic war among ruling elites" that did not serve the interests of regular Filipinos.

Police estimated 400,000 people were at the Manila rally, many of them government workers, while more than 40,000 were at the Davao event. "This would be the most public and deliberate way of letting the people know that the Unity Team is no more," University of the Philippines political science professor Jean Franco told AFP.

### Unravelling alliance

In Manila, some members of the crowd told AFP they believed in Mar-



**MANILA:** Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr (center) waves the national flag during the kick-off rally for the New Philippines movement on Jan 28, 2024. — AFP

cos, although they said they knew next to nothing about the constitution controversy. "If he runs again why not, for as long as he is doing a good job for the country," Manila resident Dennis Ardea, 53, told AFP. "The Dutertes belong to the past. We should go with another (leader)," Ardea added.

The unlikely alliance between the two families began to unravel soon after the 2022 election, with Marcos giving Dute-

rte the problem-plagued education portfolio instead of her preferred post of defense secretary.

The deterioration has gathered pace since then, with the powerful House of Representatives Speaker Martin Romualdez, who is Marcos's cousin and also widely expected to seek the presidency in 2028, demoting influential congresswoman Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, a former president and

close ally of Sara Duterte. Romualdez also spearheaded efforts to strip the vice presidency and the education department of millions of dollars in special confidential funds.

And the House, where Marcos has a majority of support, has pushed for a pro-Duterte radio and television broadcaster to be stripped of its license after one of its hosts made accusations against Romualdez over his travel budget. — AFP

## Endless Civil War? America's wound that won't heal

**LEXINGTON:** Men in picturesque Virginia street sport Confederate uniforms, waving rebel battle flags mixed with Donald Trump campaign banners. This is 2024 in America, where the Civil War not only hasn't been forgotten — it never truly ended. "Carry on the fight!" urged Susan Lee at an event in the town of Lexington, as several hundred fellow Southern sympathizers gathered this month to honor generals from the slave-owning 19th century Confederacy. "God save the South!"

The Confederates — a separatist rebellion seeking to preserve the South's slavery-based economy — almost destroyed the United States before finally losing in an 1861-65 war that killed as many as 800,000 people. But for the Lexington crowd — musket-carrying men wearing grey Confederate army uniforms, and women in period dress singing the antebellum song "Dixie" — the rebels remain heroes, not traitors or racists.

"We do not need the permission of carpetbaggers and scallywag politicians" to honor Southern generals, Lee said before the group paraded through the streets. That passion is far from confined to history buffs — particularly as America gears up for November's presidential election.

Mingling with the Confederate paraphernalia were "Trump 2024" banners, an iconic symbol for right-wingers who often describe themselves as fighting their own kind of contemporary rebellion against Washington.

Trump has repeatedly shown sympathy for Confederate-friendly culture of the rural South. He has praised Civil War losing general Robert E. Lee as a "genius" and angrily opposed President Joe Biden's decision to rename US

military bases previously named in honor of Confederate, pro-slavery figures. This month, the increasingly far-right Republican leader caused a stir by saying the Civil War could have been "negotiated" — downplaying the epic battle led by Abraham Lincoln to extinguish slavery and maintain a single country at all costs. The Civil War may have happened 160 years ago, but the echoes are everywhere. "It really is the ground zero for so many issues that have shaped American history," Boston University professor Nina Silber told AFP.

### Racial reckoning

The clearest reminders are the monuments still scattered across the South — whether streets or entire towns named after rebel figures or statues celebrating the Confederacy. The statues have become targets for cultural skirmishes between conservatives and diversity-supporting progressives. Last month a Confederate monument was quietly removed from Arlington National Cemetery, the official resting place for American war heroes.

Slavery's deeper legacies have proven far harder to remove. While the war led to emancipation of four million enslaved people, providing them basic access to civic and political life, a whitewashing of history followed. So did century-long violent suppression and segregation of Black Americans, further embedding racism in the systems that undergird US society, Silber said.

"As a Black person in (South Carolina) you can't escape slavery," Democratic National Committee chairman Jaime Harrison said on social media platform X. "For Black folks it impacts everything and almost every waking moment."

That lack of a clear break with the past came under a harsh spotlight in December when Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley, a former South Carolina governor, told an audience the Civil War was about "freedom" and "government," not slavery.

Haley earned plaudits for ordering the Confederate flag removed from the state capitol in 2015 after a church massa-



**LEXINGTON, UNITED STATES:** Confederate re-enactors and supporters march through Lexington, Virginia, during Lee-Jackson Day celebrations on Jan 13, 2024. — AFP

cre of nine Black Americans by a white supremacist. But this month Biden returned to Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston and delivered a fierce rebuke of Haley. "Slavery was the cause. There is no negotiation about that," he said.

Defenders like Lee insist Southerners fought the Union not over slavery, but states' rights and preservation of their values. Biden stridently rejected that romanticized, nostalgic ideology known as the "Lost Cause." "Now we're living in an era of a second Lost Cause ... a lie which, if allowed to live, will once again bring terrible damage to this country," he said, referring to Trump's baseless claim that the 2020 election was stolen.

### 'Heritage'

All marchers in Lexington who spoke to AFP said slavery was abhorrent but defended celebrating the Confederacy. It is "the heritage of having Confederate ancestors, and believing in the cause to this day," said Chuck Dransfield, a retired state employee dressed in his replica uniform.

Noting the Trump banners, he said "for the most part his platform ... aligns with ours." Americans are split again, acknowledged Dransfield, 65. "I don't think there will ever be a time when they will come together... At least not in my lifetime." — AFP

## MoI beefs up security as IS...

### Continued from Page 1

on Sunday, the necessity of dealing with all events and taking all measures to confront any violations against anyone who dares to tamper with the security, stability and safety of the country. This came in a press statement issued by the ministry during an inspection tour conducted by Sheikh Salem to the northern border center of Um Sedeira.

Sheikh Salem emphasized the importance of maintaining the highest levels of readiness, vigilance and constant preparedness for the ministry's personnel stationed at the northern and southern borders of the country. He conveyed the regards and appreciation of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah for their great efforts and dedicated work carried out around the clock to preserve the security of the country and the safety of its borders.

Sheikh Salem explained that this role is not surpris-

ing for the personnel of the ministry of interior, who have dedicated themselves to serving Kuwait, confirming that the border security sector is the vigilant eye on the security of the nation. He praised the spirit of joint work of all those working at the border crossings and the supervisory role played by the ministry's affiliates at all sites and in various specialties, expressing pride and appreciation, and calling for the continuation of work and the exertion of more effort and cooperation to accomplish all tasks with precision and mastery.

During the tour, Sheikh Salem received a detailed explanation from the Director of the Northern Borders Brig Faisal Al-Subaei about the security system in the northern borders. He also reviewed the tasks and workings of the center, the security system and the preparedness of the security force, as well as the technical and administrative equipment at the center.

Sheikh Salem earlier directed the widespread deployment of traffic patrols on all main and secondary roads and intersections during the morning period for smooth flow of traffic, calling to launch daily traffic campaigns and being firm in confronting any wrong behavior, monitoring recklessness and intensifying awareness campaigns to enhance security and traffic culture. — Agencies

state to allow people to buy selected food items at reduced rates through a specialized social security card. Under the scheme, democratic assemblies would choose the food to be subsidized. "We want citizens to really be able to... decide what is on their plates," he told AFP.

Culture Minister Rachida Dati criticized the soup attack. "The Mona Lisa, as our heritage, belongs to future generations. No cause can justify targeting it," she wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Sunday's action comes as French farmers have been protesting for days to demand better pay, taxes and regulations.

The government has been trying to keep discontent among the agricultural workers from spreading months ahead of European Parliament elections, which are seen as a key test for President Emmanuel Macron's government. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal on Sunday scrambled to announce new measures as some farmers threatened to block roads into the capital on Monday. — AFP

## UN defends UNRWA amid...

### Continued from Page 1

gunfire reverberated throughout the day. Strikes were also carried out in central and northern Gaza, the army added.

Meanwhile, Burns was in Paris on Sunday for talks with top Egyptian, Zionist and Qatari officials, sources close to the participants said, after media reports suggested some progress in negotiations towards a halt to hostilities. More than three months of war have led to a spiraling humanitarian crisis and mass displacement within the Palestinian territory, with many Gazans driven south towards the Egyptian border.

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, warned that suspending UNRWA funding "overtly defies" an order issued Friday by the International Court of Justice to allow more aid into Gaza. The UN's top court also said the Zionist entity must prevent genocidal acts in its war with Hamas, but stopped short of calling for an end to the fighting.

UNRWA on Friday said it had it had fired several employees over the Zionist entity's accusations that some of its staff were involved in the Oct 7 attack that sparked the war. The Zionist entity's ensuing military offensive has killed at least 26,422 people in Gaza, most of them women and children.

Bassam Al-Masry, displaced from north Gaza to Rafah in the far south, said if aid was cut off it would be "a major disaster" and "there will be famine". The agency "are the ones giving us flour, food and drinks," he said. Guterres said the "abhorrent alleged acts" of some UNRWA staff should not mean that its thousands of other humanitarian workers should be penalized. "I strongly appeal to the governments that have suspended their con-

tributions to, at least, guarantee the continuity of UNRWA's operations," Guterres said.

The agency's chief, Philippe Lazzarini, warned in a social media post that funding cuts meant its operation in Gaza was close to collapse. A statement from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' office said the threat to UNRWA's operations could "disproportionately punish millions of our people without just cause".

The Zionist entity's envoy to the UN, Gilad Erdan, charged that funding for the agency "will be used for terrorism" and urged donors to await "a comprehensive investigation of the organization". Zionist Foreign Minister Israel Katz called on Lazzarini to quit after saying earlier the body, whose ties with the Zionist entity have been strained for years, "must be replaced with agencies dedicated to genuine peace and development".

With combat ongoing, diplomatic efforts to find a solution have gathered pace. The New York Times said on Saturday US-led negotiators were getting closer to an agreement under which the Zionist entity would suspend its war in Gaza for about two months in return for the release of more than 100 hostages. Quoting unidentified US officials, it said negotiators had developed a draft agreement that would be discussed in Paris on Sunday.

The Kerem Shalom crossing in the Zionist entity, where aid is inspected and sent into Gaza, was blocked on Sunday by protesters including the families of hostages, Zionist officials said. AFP TV footage showed multiple aid trucks turning back and leaving the crossing point to return to Egypt. Trucks were also blocked on Thursday and Friday.

Palestinians are meanwhile fleeing south towards Rafah, on the Egyptian border, where the UN says most of Gaza's estimated 1.7 million displaced people have reached. Many of them live in "conditions of desperation conducive to a complete breakdown in order", said Ajith Sunghay of the UN Human Rights Office. — AFP

## Activists hurl soup on Mona...

### Continued from Page 1

exhibition rooms. The museum said the artwork had suffered "no damage", and the room housing the masterpiece had reopened to the public after closing for around an hour.

A group called Riposte Alimentaire ("Food counterattack") claimed responsibility for the stunt. They said the soup throwing marked the "start of a campaign of civil resistance with the clear demand... of the social security of sustainable food". They referred to a survey of 996 people last year by the Ipsos polling group that found that one in three French people were not always able to afford enough healthy food for three meals a day.

Member Till Van Elst said the group wanted the



## International

# Displaced Palestinians trapped in Gaza's south languish in winter

## Families sleep in makeshift tents, on the streets without basic supplies



**KHAN YUNIS:** This photograph taken on Jan 22, 2024 on the southern outskirts of Khan Yunis shows Palestinian families fleeing the city on the coastal road leading to Rafah. — AFP photos

**RAFAH:** It took Palestinian woman Umm Imad three days to reach Rafah, braving rain and cold weather in hopes of reaching safety as fighting rages across the besieged Gaza Strip. But in the border town, on the Palestinian territory's southern edge, the 70-year-old was forced to sleep rough like hundreds of thousands of other Palestinians displaced by Zionist war on Gaza, now in its fourth month. "I didn't find shelter, I didn't find a tent, I didn't find anything", said Umm Imad, her black headscarf ruffling in the wind.

Heavy rains in recent days have given way to the return of a blue sky over the coastal strip, but the cold remains. Rows of tents stretch into the distance behind Umm Imad, now a common sight all over Rafah. Some of the tents are pitched along a hill of sandy earth, crisscrossed by barbed wire fences several meters (yards) high.

Many of the displaced Palestinians in Rafah have travelled there from Khan Yunis, southern Gaza's

main city about seven kilometers (four miles) to the north which has become the epicenter of the Zionist military's offensive. "I spend the night in the street, under pouring rain, without shelter or anything, and I have orphaned children with me," Umm Imad said.

Holding back tears, Abdallah Halas, 24, said: "I don't know where we will go and sleep. Children, women, elderly and sick family members are in the streets." Nearby, streams of waste water flow through the streets littered with rubbish.

According to the United Nations, 1.3 million people — more than half of Gaza's population of 2.4 million — are now trapped in Rafah, crammed together in "desperate conditions". On the 113th day of the war, Palestinians continue to move from one area of Gaza to another, fleeing the Zionist invasion that began in the north before moving steadily south. They move by foot, on donkey carts or crammed into the backs of diesel-powered trucks — a costly option with hardly any fuel left in Gaza.



**RAFAH:** A displaced Palestinian woman stands at the entrance of a tent flooded by heavy rain, at a makeshift camp set up by displaced Palestinians on Jan 27, 2024.

The Zionist entity's relentless ground and air military campaign has killed more than 26,257 people, around 70 percent of them women, children and adolescents, according to figures from Gaza's health ministry. The entity claims the bombardment is aimed at destroying Hamas after the Palestinian resistance group attacked southern Zionist communities and military bases on Oct 7, 2023. Around 1,140 people, mostly civilians, died in the attack and subsequent Zionist military operation aimed at regaining control of communities targeted by Hamas.

### 'Nothing left in Gaza'

In Rafah, drivers must go at walking speed as they make their way on the overcrowded streets. Road-side vendors sell basic supplies: canned goods, mattresses, blankets and tents. Similar items are being delivered into Gaza in humanitarian aid shipments, but these have slowed to a trickle since the war erupted. A bag of potato chips costs eight

shekels (\$2) — an eight-fold increase from its pre-war price.

Hind Ahmed, 29, waited with her three children on a busy street in west Rafah, hoping to find a taxi or a donkey cart that would take her to her husband at a makeshift camp. "We were staying in a school classroom for over a month ... We shared the classroom with over 50 people, the air was polluted and the school is overcrowded", she said. "So we decided to go live in a tent despite the cold weather," Ahmed said, her youngest son in one arm, a sponge mattress and a bag of clothes in the other.

The family has been displaced several times and their situation has become "illogical", she said. "Open the crossings and let us leave, there is nothing left in Gaza, no schools, no education, no basic life necessities." A man crossing the street interrupted, angrily shouting: "We will not leave Gaza. The (Zionists) are the ones who came to us, they are the ones who must leave." — AFP

## Finland elects president amid Russia tensions

**HELSINKI, Finland:** Finns headed to the polls Sunday to elect a new president, an office whose importance has grown on increased tensions with neighboring Russia since the invasion of Ukraine. While the president's powers are limited, the head of state — who also acts as supreme commander of Finland's armed forces — helps direct foreign policy in collaboration with the government, meaning the changing geopolitical landscape in Europe will be the main concern for the winner.

Two top politicians lead the pack of nine candidates: former conservative prime minister Alexander Stubb, and ex-foreign minister Pekka Haavisto of the Green Party who is running as an independent. Just behind the frontrunners are far-right Finns Party candidate Jussi Halla-aho, who experts believe could also make it to the second round.

The polls opened at 9:00 am (0700 GMT) and closed at 8:00 pm. Voter Hannu Kuusitie told AFP the country needs a president with "leadership" and "humanity". "Of course, he must also be tough when necessary," he added.

Relations between Moscow and Helsinki deteriorated following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, prompting Finland to drop decades of military non-alignment and join NATO in April 2023. Russia, with which Finland shares a 1,340-kilometre (830-mile) border, swiftly warned of "countermeasures".

## 20,000 march in Madrid against Gaza 'genocide'

**MADRID:** Around 20,000 people marched in Madrid Saturday in support of Palestinians, a day after the UN's top court said the Zionist entity must prevent genocidal acts in its war on Gaza. Many of the marchers carried banners and placards denouncing the "genocide" in Gaza, which has been under relentless bombardment for four months.

Some carried Palestinian flags and shouted slogans denouncing the Zionist entity. Others had banners thanking South Africa for having brought the case against the Zionist entity to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). South Africa accused the Zionist entity of breaching the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, set up after World War II and the Holocaust.

In its ruling on Friday, the ICJ said the Zionist entity must prevent genocide and allow aid into Gaza, but stopped short of calling for an end to the fighting. The ruling was denounced by Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as "outrageous" and while many countries welcomed the ruling, others, such as Britain expressed reservations.

Spain, one of the most critical voices in Europe of the entity's offensive against Hamas, was one of those to welcome Friday's ruling. Relations between the two countries have soured over Madrid's position on the issue. The Zionist entity recalled its top diplomat in Madrid in November after Spanish



**ESP00, Finland:** A voter casts a ballot to vote during the presidential elections on Jan 28, 2024. — AFP

### Independent and ally

By August 2023, Finland observed an influx of migrants entering through its eastern border without visas. Helsinki claimed Moscow was pushing the migrants in a hybrid attack to destabilize it, and Finland closed the eastern border in November. "We are in a situation now where Russia and especially Vladimir Putin is using humans as a weapon," Stubb said Thursday evening during a final televised debate. "It's a migrant issue, it's a ruthless, cynical measure. And in that case we have to put Finland's security first," he added.

Main rival Haavisto stressed that Finland had to "send Russia a very clear message that this can't go on". In the post-Cold War period, Helsinki maintained good relations with Moscow. Incumbent President Sauli Niinisto — who is stepping down after serving two six-year terms — once prided himself on his close ties with Russian President Vladimir Pu-

tin before becoming one of his most trenchant critics.

Against this backdrop, all the presidential candidates champion both Finland's independence and its new role as a NATO member, said Hanna Wass, vice dean at the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Helsinki.

"They all seem to have a strong idea emphasizing self-sufficiency, in that in the future Finland should be in charge of its defense independently and also be an active contributor in building a shared European defense and Nordic cooperation," Wass told AFP.

With such similar stances, the election will focus more on the candidates' personalities, according to Tuomas Forsberg, professor of foreign policy at the University of Tampere. "This will be more about electing an individual, where you look at the person's credibility and reliability and perceived qualities as a leader of foreign policy," Forsberg said.

### Similar views

A poll published by public broadcaster Yle gave Stubb a first round lead with 27 percent of the vote, Haavisto in second on 23 percent and Halla-aho 18 percent. Stubb was prime minister of Finland between 2014 and 2015, while Pekka Haavisto has held several ministerial posts. "They both have broad experience in both domestic and foreign politics, which voters seem to value the most," Wass said.

While sharing similar political views, Haavisto and Stubb represent different backgrounds, Forsberg noted. "Their background and values ... are seen as quite different because Alex is more a representative of the right and Haavisto of the left, even if Haavisto has tried to underline that there is nothing red about him, that he has taken the middle road as a Green," Forsberg said. — AFP



**MADRID:** Protestors wave Palestinian flags and light flares as they demonstrate in support of Palestine in Madrid on Jan 27, 2024. — AFP

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez expressed doubts about the legality of the entity's war in Gaza. She returned in January.

### 'Children are dying'

"They have been without water, without food, with-

out anything, for almost 110 days," one Madrid demonstrator, 54-year-old Lobna Elnakhala, said of the situation in Gaza. "Children are dying and living in a very difficult situation." Some banners called for sanctions to be levied against the Zionist entity. The Madrid authorities put the turn-out at 20,000. — AFP

## Trump stokes opposition against Biden migration bill

**LAS VEGAS:** Joe Biden and Donald Trump traded verbal jabs Saturday over a bipartisan plan for border reform aimed at stemming a surge in migrants crossing into the United States from Mexico. With immigration one of the hottest electoral issues in what increasingly looks like a Trump-Biden rematch for the White House this year, the fate of the bill being negotiated by the Senate has become a high-stakes battleground.

Republican primary frontrunner Trump has put immigration front and center in his campaign, issuing dire warnings about the porous nature of the border — yet has simultaneously pushed back hard against a deal, even as Biden tacks right and promises to temporarily "shut down" the border.

Biden threw his weight behind the proposed bill on Saturday, insisting it would usher in the "toughest" — ever set of border reforms. "It would give me as president the emergency authority to shut down the border until it can get back under control," Biden said in a speech in South Carolina. "If that bill was law today, I'd shut down the border right now and fix it quickly."

Trump has instead continued to castigate Biden over "open borders" as an influx in migrants roils domestic politics. "The border is in play (politically) like it's never been in play before," he said at a campaign speech in Las Vegas on Saturday.

Following Trump's extensive lobbying, Mike Johnson, the speaker of the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, said in an open letter Friday that any such bill adopted by the Senate would be "dead in the water" and never get passed by the House. "They're blaming it on me, I said, 'That's OK, blame it on me, please,'" Trump said Saturday. "I'd rather have no bill than a bad bill."

As Republican Texas Governor Greg Abbott and the federal government engage in a standoff over control over the border, Trump said he would give the state his "full support" and "deploy all necessary military and law enforcement resources to seal up the final section of border."

In keeping with his often-dark rhetoric on immigration, the former president said there was a "100 percent chance that there will be a major terrorist attack in the United States" carried out by people crossing the border. "We will begin the largest domestic deportation operation in America," he said, as the oft-repeated campaign pledge brought cheers from the audience.

The deal being negotiated in Congress carries high stakes, and not just for the presidential candidates. In addition to addressing Americans' concerns about the influx of migrants arriving via Mexico, it would provide vital military assistance for Ukraine in its war against Russian invaders.

A bipartisan deal tying aid for Kyiv, a Biden priority, with money for border security, as Republicans have demanded, had seemed in the cards just days ago. White House Deputy Press Secretary Olivia Dalton said Thursday that Biden's administration had been working in "good faith" with Republicans to reach a deal and hoped they would "remain at the table so we can do that." — AFP



MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2024

# Business

## EU celebrates ‘change’ as Apple opens App Store to competition

### Significant overhaul to take place in March with EU’s Digital Markets Act

**BRUSSELS:** The European Union’s digital enforcer celebrated the “change” underway in the tech world after Apple yielded to a new EU law by announcing it would allow alternative app stores on the iPhone for the first time.

The significant overhaul, which will take place in March when the European Union’s sweeping Digital Markets Act comes into force, will curtail the dominance of the App Store, which has been a mainstay of the iPhone since 2008. “The DMA will open the gates of the internet to competition so that digital markets are fair and open,” European internal market commissioner Thierry Breton said when asked by AFP about Apple’s announcement. “Change is already happening.”

Breton said that from March 7, when the law comes into force, the European Commission will assess the proposals of tech companies, “with the feedback of third parties”.

“If the proposed solutions are not good enough, we will not hesitate to take strong action,” he warned.

He said the DMA means “more choice for consumers and more opportunities for smaller innovative tech companies.” With the major changes announced by Apple on Thursday, users will for the first time be able to download software from outside the App Store and they will be given new options to process payments.

Other changes include giving users the option to download an alternative web browser when they first open Safari in the latest version of the iOS operating system. Until now, users had to go into the settings

to change the default browser. In its announcement, Apple criticized the DMA for creating “privacy and security risks” and said the company is installing safeguards to reduce them. Apple said the new options for processing payments and downloading apps “open new avenues for malware, fraud and scams, illicit and harmful content”.

“Even with these safeguards in place, many risks remain,” it said. “The changes we’re announcing today comply with the Digital Markets Act’s requirements in the European Union, while helping to protect EU users from the unavoidable increased privacy and security threats this regulation brings,” said Apple’s Phil Schiller, who leads the App Store.

The EU has bolstered its legal armory to rein in Big Tech, with stricter rules to protect European users online and to boost competition in an industry dominated by US giants such as Apple, Amazon, Google, Microsoft and Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram. Companies found infringing the Digital Markets Act expose themselves to fines that could reach as high as 20 percent of their global turnover, or even orders to be broken up in serious cases. Meta and Chinese-owned TikTok have launched legal challenges to the law.

Apple said it would give EU users “guidance” in March to help them “navigate complexities the DMA’s changes bring — including a less intuitive user experience”. A senior European official noted that Apple had similarly complained about — and ultimately complied with — EU rules that force phone makers to adopt a universal, USB-C charging cable.



**HANGZHOU:** People line up to purchase newly-launched iPhone 15 mobile phones at an Apple store in China’s eastern Zhejiang province on Sept 22, 2023. — AFP

“It’s the same story as the common charger. They make drama but eventually they comply,” the official said on condition of anonymity. “If they are worried about security, it means they have not done the job

right and the commission can go after them because a degradation of product and service features, like security, would not be in line with DMA obligation,” the official added. — AFP

## Egypt’s economy in dire straits as inflation soars

**CAIRO:** Egypt’s economy is reeling from an unprecedented inflation with consumers affected by steep price hikes of essential commodities and a sharp drop in traffic through the Suez Canal impacting one of the government’s main sources of foreign exchange. To exacerbate the matter, billions of dollars of loan repayments are due throughout 2024 for the country.

Ordinary Egyptians, who have struggled with soaring inflation and austerity measures since the country’s economic troubles began in March 2022, feel the pinch of the economic hardship in the New Year, according to reports.

Despite Egypt’s headline inflation dropping to 33.6 per cent in December, down from 34.6 per cent the previous month, food prices remain stubbornly high in January. Some items, such as beans, doubled in price between December and January, while dairy products and cooking oil rose by about 30 per cent and 15 per cent.

On Jan 1, state-owned and private telecoms companies raised internet charges by more than 30 per cent. At the same time, steel companies raised prices by about 10 per cent, resulting in a similar rise in construction costs. The Egyptian Transport Ministry also raised metro prices by 20 per cent at the start of the month. The situation was only made worse by the black market exchange rate for the US dollar, which sank to a record low of 64 Egyptian pounds per greenback, more than double the official exchange



**INFLATION IN EGYPT**  
Despite Egypt’s headline inflation dropping to 33.6 per cent in December, food prices remain stubbornly high in January.

rate of 31 pounds. Due to a shortage of US dollars in the country’s banks, importers, industrialists and manufacturers, all of whom rely on imported components, have to purchase any FX they might need to run their businesses through the black market.

Egyptians who can afford it have also been purchasing gold to preserve the value of their savings, which has driven up the price of bullion. The rising demand drove the price of one gram of 21-carat gold to about 3,800 Egyptian pounds (\$123) on Thursday, compared to about 3,200 on Dec 1.

Egypt’s government has turned to the International Monetary Fund for loans to help it through the crisis,

but this comes with strict conditions such as reducing public spending and a free float of the local currency. The fund says that floating the currency will ease fears about the stability of the Egyptian pound and encourage foreign direct investment. Apart from encouraging parallel markets, this has reduced direct remittances from Egyptians working abroad — an important source of foreign currency — by about 30 per cent in the first quarter of the current financial year which started in July. According to experts, 2024 would be tougher for Egypt than 2023 on account of the \$32 billion that Egypt has to repay to various creditors over the year. — Agencies

## US Fed rate cuts become question of when, not if

**WASHINGTON:** The US Federal Reserve is widely expected to start cutting interest rates in the coming months, as inflation edges closer to its long-run target of two percent. What is less clear, however, is when the first of those cuts will come.

While the US central bank is almost certain to announce it is holding its key lending rate steady at its next rate decision on Wednesday, analysts think it could also drop some more hints that cuts are coming. In economic forecasts published alongside the last Fed decision, policymakers indicated that they expect as many as three quarter percentage-point rate cuts this year — although they did not indicate when they might begin.

During a press conference after the rate decision was announced, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said policymakers had even discussed when it would be “appropriate” for the Fed to begin cutting interest rates, without providing any additional details. Divisions have opened up between analysts and traders who believe the Fed’s rate-setting committee will start cutting rates in March, and those who think a move later in the year would make more sense. “If we are right on our outlook for a rate cut in March, it is likely because a majority of participants focus on more aggregated measures of inflation than specific components,” Bank of America economists wrote in a recent investor note.

Meanwhile, Wells Fargo chief economist Jay Bryson told AFP Friday that recent inflation data is keeping hopes of a March cut “live,” but added: “I still think that’s a little bit premature.” “There may be some members who are willing to contemplate rate cuts as soon as March, I just don’t think you can get a supermajority to agree to that,” he said in an interview.

Recent economic data showed that growth in the United States reached 2.5 percent in the year to December, underscoring the enduring, unexpected strength of the world’s biggest economy. In more good news, the Fed’s favored measure of inflation has dipped below three percent, and the unemployment rate has hugged close to record lows — raising expectations the United States can bring down inflation without causing a recession. The Fed has a mandate to act independently of the US Congress, but its upcoming decisions will nevertheless be closely parsed by politicians on both sides of the aisle.

That’s because 2024 is a presidential election year, with a likely rematch in the cards between President Joe Biden and his predecessor Donald Trump. Fed interest rate cuts can help reduce the cost of consumer loans, making everything from cars to mortgages more affordable for millions of households. The Biden administration is hoping that growing consumer confidence in the economy will translate into more votes for Democrats, while Republicans are betting that unhappiness over historical inflation could cause voters to turn to them instead.

Fed officials have used recent public remarks to indicate support for a more cautious approach to cutting interest rates than the financial markets were predicting immediately after December’s rate decision. At the time, traders were pricing in six 25 basis point interest rate cuts for 2024, with the first of them arriving in March. — AFP

## 42% drop in Suez traffic following Houthi attacks: UN

**UNITED NATIONS:** The volume of commercial traffic passing through the Suez Canal has fallen more than 40 percent in the last two months after attacks by Yemen’s Houthi rebels, according to the United Nations, raising concerns for global trade.

The Houthis say they are targeting what they consider Zionist-linked commercial and military shipping in the region in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, pushing some cargo carriers to take longer and more expensive routes to avoid attack.

“We are very concerned that the attacks on Red Sea shipping are adding tensions to global trade, exacerbating (existing) trade disruptions due to geopolitics and climate change,” UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) head Jan Hoffman told reporters Thursday.

According to the UNCTAD, ships diverting from the Red Sea — sailing instead around South Africa’s Cape of Good Hope — has led to a 42 percent drop in transit through the Suez Canal in the last two months. The Suez Canal, in Egypt, connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea.

More than 80 percent of the volume of international goods trade is done via sea, Hoffman said.

“Maritime transport is really the lifeline of global trade,” he said. The number of weekly container ship transits through the Suez has fallen by 67 percent



**FELIXSTOWE, UK:** Stacks of containers are pictured on the deck of the MSC Allegra container ship, docked beside container cranes at the UK’s largest freight port, in Felixstowe on the East coast of England, on January 27, 2024. — AFP

year-on-year, according to the UNCTAD, as more than 20 percent of the world’s container trade goes through the Suez Canal.

“Given that it’s above all the larger container ships that divert from the Suez Canal, the decline in container carrying capacity is even bigger,” Hoffman said. Tanker traffic has dropped 18 percent, the transit of bulk cargo ships carrying grain and coal is down six percent and gas transport is at a standstill.

Overall, between 12 and 15 percent of world trade — 20,000 ships per year — passes through the Red Sea, providing a link between Europe and Asia. The

situation is made even more dire as other global maritime trade routes also face disruption, with transit through the Black Sea severely restricted since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine two years ago, sending global food prices soaring.

And a drought in Central America has led to a drop in water levels in the Panama Canal, significantly reducing the amount of traffic able to cross the essential route. “Prolonged disruptions in major trade routes would disrupt global supply chains, leading to delayed deliveries of goods, increased costs and potential inflation,” the UNCTAD warned. — AFP



NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

# US PMI figures strong, focus on Fed; ECB keeps rates unchanged at 4.0%

## China’s consumer demand remains fragile, property sector awaits support

KUWAIT: PMI figures released out of the United States show improved sentiments and expansion, with composite PMI rising from 50.9 to 52.3. Services PMI accelerated to 52.9 from 51.4 previously. Meanwhile, the manufacturing index moved into expansion territory, with PMI coming in at 50.3 in January from 47.9 in December. The report indicated that firms were optimistic about the outlook and improvement in operating conditions, especially as new orders rose while inflation continues to drop.

The US economy stunned the market in the fourth quarter, with the latest GDP q/q growth of 3.3 percent eclipsing the forecasted growth figure of 2.0 percent. Economists believe that the ever so resilient labor market is the driver behind the unexpected growth in the economy, exhibited by low layoffs and significant wage gains. That is backed by the fact that personal spending was the economy’s main growth engine, rising at 2.8 percent. Business investment and housing also helped fuel the larger-than-expected advance last quarter. All eyes will be on the Fed’s meeting next week, although expectations remain that the Fed will keep its policy rate unchanged at the 5.25 percent-5.50 percent range.

### PCE price index

The latest core PCE price index m/m figure increased 0.2 percent last month, after dropping by 0.1 percent in November, in line with expectations. For the third consecutive month, the annual increase in inflation remained below 3 percent. Additionally, this is the sixth month in the last seven where monthly inflation has printed at a rate equal to or below the Fed’s 2 percent target. On a year-to-year basis, the Core PCE Price Index increased by 2.9 percent, marking the smallest gain

since March of 2021. As the PCE Price Index is seen as the Fed’s preferred gauge for inflation, the latest data allows the Federal Reserve to happily start thinking about cutting interest rates imminently. The US Dollar index closed the week at 103.433.

### UK PMI

The latest PMI data to be released from the UK was better than expected. The Flash Manufacturing PMI came in at 47.3, exceeding the 46.7 forecasted figure. Similarly, The Flash Services PMI, posted at 53.8, was better than the forecasted 53.1 figure. For a third consecutive month, business activity has grown in the UK, and business confidence as a result has increased to the highest since May. The surprising strength of growth in January may push the BOE to keep interest rates higher for longer, despite market expectations of imminent rate cuts, especially amidst fears of inflation in manufacturing as a result of trade being disrupted in the Red Sea.

### ECB monetary policy

In line with expectations, the European Central Bank kept interest rates unchanged at 4 percent on Thursday. The ECB stopped its vicious rate hike cycle in September and markets are now anticipating rate cuts, however, ECB President Christine Lagarde boldly stated that “the consensus around the table was that it was premature to discuss rate cuts.” Lagarde made it clear that the ECB’s future decisions will largely rely on incoming data, and that the fight against inflation continues by adding that “we need to be further along the disinflation process to be confident that inflation will be at target - sustainably so.” When asked about the impact of the disruptions to trade because of attacks

Rates - 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.0890	1.0811	1.0932	1.0852	1.0730	1.0915	1.0893
GBP	1.2690	1.2646	1.2774	1.2702	1.2615	1.2790	1.2709
JPY	148.27	146.64	148.70	148.16	147.40	149.20	146.10
CHF	0.8681	0.8605	0.8728	0.8644	0.8520	0.8700	0.8563

on shipping in the Red Sea, Lagarde stated that ECB “are observing it very carefully,” amidst fears of energy and freight costs adding onto inflation.

### Eurozone PMI

Business activity in Europe was seen declining in the month of January, with the eurozone Composite PMI rising to 47.9. While the PMI data shows a slight rise from December’s 47.6 figure, manufacturing remains in contraction territory for the 8th consecutive month. A closer look at the PMI figures shows a slight recovery in manufacturing in Germany and France, Europe’s two largest economies with the index rising to 45.4 and 43.2 respectively. Meanwhile, the flash services PMI showed a decline for the two economies, at 47.6 and 45.0.

### Asia Pacific

The Bank of Japan decided to maintain its ultra-loose monetary policy settings in its latest meeting in January. Keeping the short-term rate unchanged at -0.1 percent, and the 10-year bond limit at 1 percent, maintaining its yield curve control policy. The move made by the BoJ was considered widely expected, as policymakers see a sustainable path to 2 percent inflation. The news release came

amid a surge in Japanese equities to 34-year highs, with the Nikkei index climbing 1 percent, bringing year to date gains to 9.8 percent.

### China lending rate

China’s benchmark lending rates were held steady as expected, with the one-year loan prime rate remaining at 3.45 percent, and the five-year rate staying at 4.2 percent. This comes at a time when consumer demand in the country remains fragile, while the property sector is still facing issues. Moreover, the latest data indicate that China is facing deflationary pressures, as elevated rates are increasing real borrowing costs. Policymakers in China are trying to balance between introducing fiscal stimulus to boost demand and achieve a rebound in prices, while also making sure that the Yuan does not fall behind major currencies, especially the US dollar, which could result in further devaluation.

The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week at 148.16, while the USD/CNY currency pair ended the week at 7.1763.

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30745.


## Swiss cement giant Holcim to spin off N American business

GENEVA: Swiss cement giant Holcim said Sunday it was planning to fully spin off its North America business, and also announced it would appoint a new chief executive. Holcim said in a statement that it intended to list its North American business in the United States during the first half of 2025 “with full capital market separation”.

It said it would communicate about the final structure later this year, but that the move would create a leading pure-lay North American building solutions company. Holcim said the plan was to “execute an accelerated growth strategy to achieve more than \$20 billion in net sales” and industry-leading margins by 2030.

The company also announced that it would appoint Miljan Gutovic, who currently heads its European operations, to replace Jan Jenisch as chief executive officer from May 1. Jenisch will remain on as chairman of the group and will lead the US listing process, it said. Jenisch explained the spin off decision, pointing to Holcim’s “superior earnings profile with industry-leading margins and a strong balance sheet”. “The success of our North American business makes it the leading pure-play building solutions company in the region,” he said in the statement.

“With a US listing, we will unleash its full potential to be the partner of choice for our customers in one of the world’s most attractive construction markets.” Following the spinoff, Holcim would meanwhile remain listed on the main SMI index on the Swiss stock exchange as a “leader in innovative and sustainable building solutions”, the company said. “The transaction is intended to unlock value by creating two distinct and compelling investment profiles with attractive shareholder returns,” it said. — AFP



AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

# KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 25 JANUARY 2024

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,678	8,062.68	1.8%	7.8%	7.8%	743,842,018	218,199,997	36,961	17.3	1.4	77.7%
Main Market	9,926	5,973.82	0.8%	7.3%	7.3%	595,722,932	92,599,213	39,636	12.8	0.8	22.3%
All Share	44,604	7,342.98	1.6%	7.7%	7.7%	1,339,564,950	310,799,210	76,597	14.4	0.9	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	26,696	1,783.58	1.9%	8.3%	8.3%	226,850,679	89,225,684	13,348	18.2	1.2	59.85%
Basic Materials	435	770.53	-0.2%	3.3%	3.3%	6,236,973	3,792,762	1,283	10.4	2.3	0.97%
Consumer Discretionary	1,132	1,649.21	-2.9%	2.8%	2.8%	35,837,867	11,667,642	3,900	13.5	0.9	2.54%
Consumer Staples	211	693.60	2.2%	5.3%	5.3%	6,305,587	2,121,132	551	14.7	1.3	0.47%
Energy	219	1,047.73	6.2%	10.4%	10.4%	29,635,574	3,469,996	1,701	11.6	0.8	0.49%
Financial Services	4,816	1,352.29	1.5%	11.6%	11.6%	621,716,289	103,577,251	24,424	20.8	0.9	10.80%
Health Care	239	482.45	2.7%	0.1%	0.1%	50	23.500	1	13.0	1.0	0.54%
Industrials	3,409	985.66	1.9%	8.6%	8.6%	69,501,387	28,492,967	7,320	12.7	1.0	7.64%
Insurance	978	2,394.18	-0.2%	4.4%	4.4%	23,410,518	4,072,412	3,847	9.8	1.1	2.19%
Real Estate	2,658	1,238.17	0.6%	2.1%	2.1%	252,832,530	43,426,286	13,067	17.7	0.6	5.96%
Technology	27	1,949.70	-1.8%	237.1%	237.1%	32,515,123	8,559,278.13	3,499	NM	2.3	0.06%
Telecommunications	3,593	1,175.94	1.7%	6.4%	6.4%	15,946,791	9,150,613	2,837	10.6	1.5	8.06%
Utilities	190	455.26	-2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	18,775,582	3,243,163	819	13.4	1.4	0.43%

#### Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
WARBACAP	140	26.13%	18,026,207	2,803,888	1,831
GIH	378	18.50%	1,668,578	577,784	475
ENERGYH	76	14.29%	90,109	6,212	30
INJAZZAT	96.4	13.15%	467,164	44,037	52
CATTL	110	11.68%	3,414,348	388,289	224

#### Top Losers

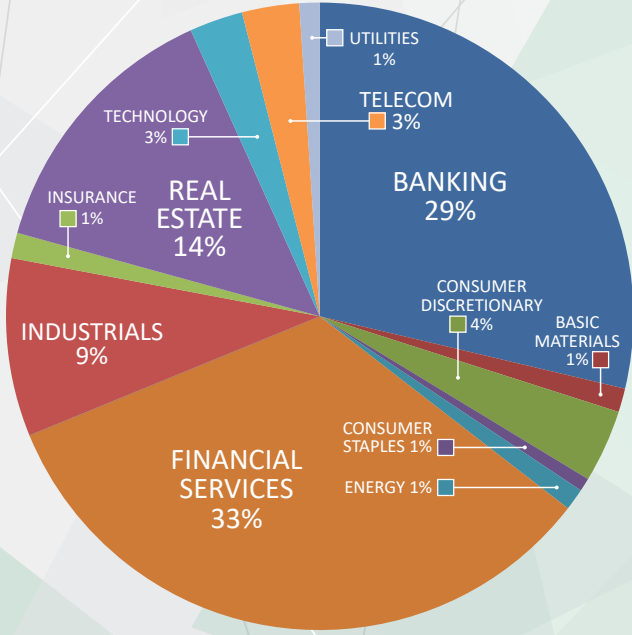
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
FTI	245	-21.97%	10,122,545	2,709,063	2,825
IFAHR	854	-13.74%	2,504,832	2,296,571	1,013
SANAM	204	-12.82%	35,553,925	7,448,428	2,768
GFC	53.2	-11.33%	22,904	1,344	21
PAPER	182	-10.34%	4,293,503	826,687	750

#### Top Volume

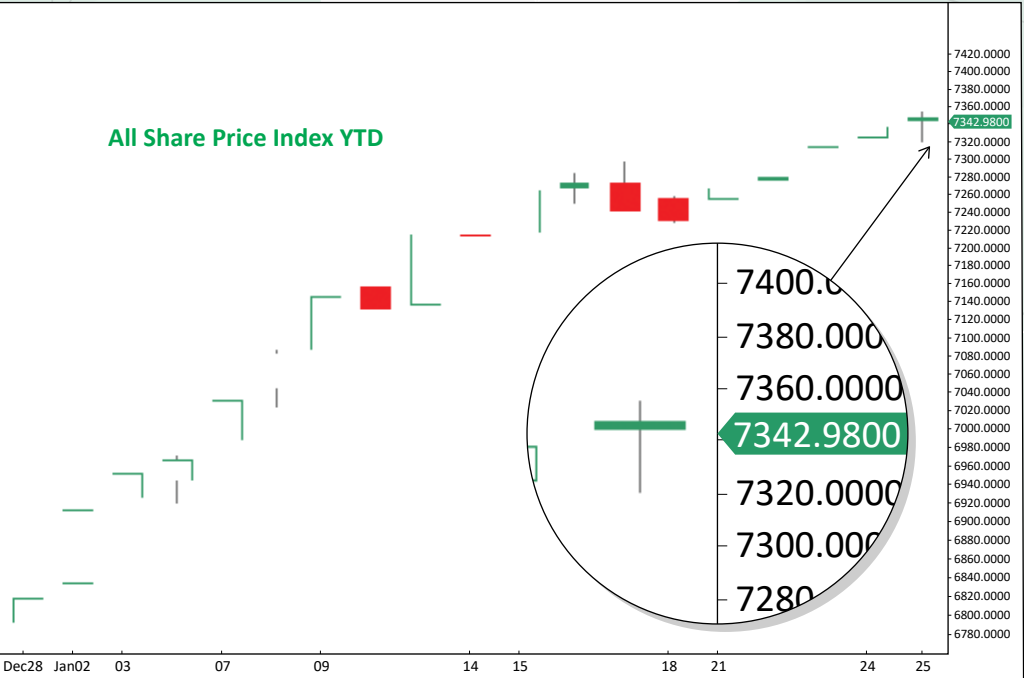
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KINV	175	10.06%	109,327,003	18,202,639	2,195
KRE	242	4.31%	74,625,996	17,971,466	2,504
AAYAN	188	2.17%	56,168,925	10,551,473	925
GBK	297	4.58%	50,326,912	14,649,303	1,699
NIND	234	2.18%	46,608,305	10,789,064	1,079

#### Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	786	1.81%	40,049,932	31,313,158	4,097
NBK	987	2.07%	18,665,537	18,272,218	2,484
KINV	175	10.06%	109,327,003	18,202,639	2,195
KRE	242	4.31%	74,625,996	17,971,466	2,504
GBK	297	4.58%	50,326,912	14,649,303	1,699



VALUE TRADED



All Share Price Index YTD

### Market Summary:

- Premier and Main Markets volume and value dropped 1% and 3%, 41% and 43%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes are holding positions with expectations to proceed.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7342, with support levels at 7318, 7286, and 7233, and resistance at 7379. The Premier index closed at 8062, support levels at 7997, 7945, and 7916, and resistance at 8116. The Main index closed at 5973, with support levels at 5970, 5959, and 5925, and resistance at 5990.



## Business

# NBK launches short ads to promote financial culture among students

## Bank seeking to enhance impact of 'Bankee' financial literacy program

**KUWAIT:** As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the reach and impact of the "Bankee" program, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has launched a series of short ads on financial literacy and positive behaviors, with the aim of spreading awareness, promoting financial culture, and instilling moral values in the students of private and public schools in Kuwait.



**Asmaa Bin Hussain**  
Hussain: Ads focus on positive values like integrity, honesty, saving and cooperation

"Bankee" is the first program of its kind in Kuwait, which was officially launched last October by NBK, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), with a view to promote financial inclusion, especially among school students, to elevate sustainable financial culture among all members of society in the future.

Commenting on this, Asmaa Bin Hussain, Public Relations Officer at National Bank of Kuwait, said, "The program aims to familiarize students with key financial concepts including earning, spending, and saving, and financial responsibilities, through the classroom economy model, which simulates a real-world economy in a practical and interactive manner." "The series of ads includes short video clips to familiarize students with "Bankee" content and objectives, encourage them to adopt positive behaviors in early educational stage, and instill basic values, like self-development, responsibility, and teamwork spirit. This reflects NBK's dedication to raising a generation of young Kuwaitis who understand the importance of financial stability and independence and possess the required financial skills and knowledge to contribute to achieving sustainable development and economic welfare for individuals and society," she explained.



NBK seeks to promote financial culture and instill moral values in the students of private and public schools in Kuwait.

**'Bankee' is the first program of its kind in Kuwait to promote financial inclusion among school students.**

**The program aims to instill basic moral values and financial concepts in students at an early educational stage.**

"The video clips focus on many positive values that help raise a new generation on the right foundations, such as integrity, honesty, saving, differentiating between desires and needs, cooperation, and kindness," she added.

Within Bankee activities, NBK's executive management organizes frequent visits to government and private schools to follow up on the latest updates on the implementation on the program, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Nazaha and Creative Confidence.

These visits see large attendance of the parents of participating students who express their pleasure with the significant improvements in their children's financial behavior and knowledge, as the program has become part of their daily life in the classroom. Bankee's remarkable success encouraged more schools and students to join it, with 150 schools applying to join, and a total of 15,000 students and 3,000 teachers enrolled in it. Seeking to enhance the content, Bankee's website was launched in Arabic and English, as well as social

media pages on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, to enable all participants to benefit from the provided content, activities and events held at different schools all year round.

Bankee is designed based on the classroom economy model, which simulates a real-world economy within the classroom. This is done in an innovative and interactive way enabling students and teachers to leverage an online tool to make different financial transactions using "Bankoz", the program's digital currency. The program gives students the chance to apply for classroom-specific or school-wide jobs, which offer them an opportunity to earn additional income or salary. Classroom jobs are tailored to each classroom and encompass roles such as attendance monitor or teacher's assistant. On the other hand, school jobs involve participating in extracurricular activities at the school level, such as joining the student council. The program also instills responsibility and accountability in the student through incorporating financial expenses as an integral part of the program. Students are required to manage their finances by making payments for classroom-related expenses, such as renting desks and paying utility bills such as water and electricity.

Among the central components of Bankee is the Bankee Store, where students can engage in real-life simulated transactions using the virtual currency, Bankoz. It serves as a practical and interactive platform within the classroom economy, allowing students to experience the process of buying tangible and intangible items, thereby enhancing their financial literacy and decision-making skills. The store also offers a wide variety of items and services that are relevant and appealing to students, such as school supplies, toys, stationery, and school privileges.

NBK firmly believes that joint private public sector initiatives to provide the young generation with the required knowledge and skills are instrumental to individual as well as social wellbeing and prosperity. It is worth mentioning that NBK recently received the Bronze Award for its "Bankee" program in the Social, Sustainable & Responsible Banking category, which recognizes the innovations made by institutions to integrate ESG standards into their operations.

## Boeing executive apologizes over MAX 9 problem

**WASHINGTON:** A top Boeing executive has apologized for the problems highlighted by the mid-flight blowout of a door plug on an Alaska Airlines flight, as two airlines began returning the troubled 737 MAX 9 planes to service. The comments Friday from Stan Deal, CEO of Boeing's commercial plane unit, came three weeks after a door plug on an Alaska Air flight blew out in mid-air, focusing intense scrutiny on the huge aviation manufacturer and forcing the grounding of 171 planes for safety checks.

Alaska Air, a major user of the model, began returning its MAX 9 planes to service Friday, and United Airlines followed on Saturday. "Our long-term focus is on improving our quality so that we can regain the confidence of our customers, our regulator and the flying public," Boeing's Deal wrote in a note to staff. "Frankly, we have disappointed and let them down. We are deeply sorry."

United Airlines, whose fleet of 79 Max 9 planes is the world's largest, used the model for a flight Saturday morning from Newark, New Jersey, to Las Vegas, Nevada, with 181 passengers and crew on board. It said other flights would follow. The MAX 9 accounted for around 8 percent of United's capacity in the first trimester, said CEO Scott Kirby.

Analysts say MAX 9-related disruptions could cost airlines millions of dollars. Boeing's Deal said that in the weeks since the Alaska Airlines incident, several steps had been taken "to strengthen quality assurance and controls." They included adding new levels of quality checks for affected models and appointing a retired navy admiral, Kirkland Donald, to oversee an independent review of Boeing's safety and quality practices.

This week, 10,000 Boeing employees working on 737 MAX production paused their work for a day to discuss ways of improving safety practices, "a quality stand-down at a scale we have not done before," according to Deal. He added that along with Alaska Airlines and United, Aeromexico and Turkish Airlines are set to return their 737 MAX 9's to service "in the coming days."

The US Federal Aviation Administration grounded 171 MAX 9 planes after the January 5 incident, in which a door plug blew out mid-flight. While nobody was seriously injured, inspectors have said the episode could have been catastrophic. The US Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has been investigating the incident and is expected to report on its findings next week. — AFP

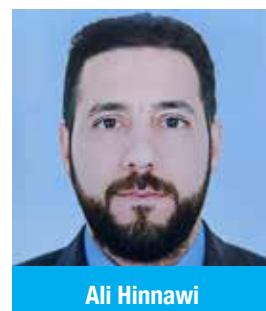
## KIB announces winners of 5th, 6th 'Surprises for Every Season' prize draws

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the fifth and sixth 'Surprises for Every Season' prize draws, marking the end of the campaign designed for its Visa cardholders. The Bank revealed the names of the six winners of the special prize designated for the November campaign period. Sulaiman Khalaf Al-Hussaini, Abdulrahman Salem Al-Ajmi, Sultan Muhanna Al-Adwani, Ahmed Faisal Al-Otaibi, Abdullah Omar Al-Shaalan and Anas Noor Eddin Ghuzlan each received an all-inclusive trip for two to Winter Wonderland London, with a five-night stay in the capital.

Meanwhile, the winners of the final draw for the December period received a private stay for an exceptional weekend getaway in each of Villa Yaldez, the A Frame Farm in Al-Wafra, and the Four Seasons Hotel. The winners were Jaber Ahmed Al-Abdullah, Mohammad Mahmoud Metwalli, Halal Mohamed Al-Mutairi, Ameera Ezzaldeen Ali, Alaa Waleed Al-Sallal, Athari Motlaq Al-Mutairi,



Khalid Al-Hulaibi



Ali Hinnawi

and Fahad Shaaf Al-Harbi.

Throughout the past year, this unique KIB campaign contributed to elevating its customers' banking experience, constantly rewarding KIB's Visa Credit, Prepaid and Debit Cardholders with exceptional offers, benefits and prizes that exceed their expectations. The campaign took place in partnership with global digital payments leader, Visa, while its monthly draws were conducted under the supervision of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Khalid Al-Hulaibi, Segments Manager at KIB, said: "Today, we proudly conclude this strategic initiative, and it brings us great pleasure to announce the names of the lucky winners in the last two draws of 'Surprises for Every Season'. Since its launch, the campaign

has received significant interest from our customers. More importantly, its spectacular seasonal prizes have contributed to enhancing their overall banking experience. In line with our main 'Bank for Life' slogan, we strive to continue providing our customers across all segments with unique benefits, services and products that cater to their needs and keep pace with their modern lifestyles."

For his part, Ali Hinnawi, Visa's Business Development Lead for Kuwait, said: "KIB's campaign is an effective way to reward local consumers when they pay or shop with their Visa cards. It also supports local businesses and encourages digital commerce, aligning with key priorities of the Kuwait government. We believe in creating a rewarding and enriching payment experience for our Visa cardholders, and we look forward to bringing more such exciting opportunities to Kuwait in the future." It is worth mentioning that KIB spares no effort in providing a wide range of banking solutions that ensure the comfort of its customers and enhance their banking experience, in line with their aspirations, needs, and modern lifestyles. The Bank also continues to encourage its customers to follow its digital platforms to stay updated on the details of the various seasonal campaigns it will launch in the coming stages, as well as information related to exclusive banking products and services designed to meet their needs throughout the year.



Cake-cutting ceremony.



Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika inaugurates 'India Utsav' promotion at LuLu Hypermarket.

## LuLu Hypermarket marks Indian Republic Day with 'India Utsav'

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, celebrated the 75th Indian Republic Day with a special 'India Utsav' promotion that was held from Jan 24 to Jan 30, 2024. The event was inaugurated by the Ambassador of India Dr Adarsh Swaika in the presence of Sanjay K Muluka, counselor – Commerce, Indian Embassy and LuLu Kuwait's top management on Jan 27 at the hypermarket's Al-Rai outlet.

During the week-long promotion, customers were treated to amazing discounts and offers on a wide range of Indian branded products. The discounts and promotional offers extended to groceries, meat, fruits and vegetables, non-food items, health and beauty products, fresh and frozen items, fashion and garments, footwear, and more. In addition, there was a special promotion where customers



Students pose with their trophies.

could receive half pay-back on Indian sarrees and churidars.

The event was made even more memorable with the performance by a band of Indian school students playing traditional Indian welcome music. The students also showcased their talents by performing patriotic Indian songs during the event. One of the highlights of the promotion was the 'Indian Fancy Dress Competition' exclusively for students of Indian schools in Kuwait. Over 400 students participated in the competition, with first, second, and third prize winners

receiving valuable gift vouchers, certificates, and trophies, as well as consolation prizes for participants.

Another competition conducted specifically for students of Indian schools was the 'Great Indian Quiz', which witnessed participation by students for over 20 Indian schools in the preliminary round. The final competition took place on the day of the India Utsav inauguration at Al-Rai, with four top teams competing. The winning teams of the quiz received gift vouchers, special certificates, medals, and trophies. The India Utsav promotion also featured various other attractions and highlights, including cutouts of traditional Indian monuments, vivid decorations and a creative display of India's own 'Vandhe Bharat' train. Food stalls offering popular Indian dishes and special food sampling counters that provided shoppers with a tantalizing taste of Indian foods.

Additionally, the week-long event served as a springboard for the launch of several new Indian products, including a wide range of Indian organic products and several varieties of Indian millets. LuLu Hypermarket's 'India Utsav' promotion was a grand celebration of India's 75th Republic Day that presented to shopper's incredible offers, engaging competitions, and a vibrant Indian cultural experience.



## Business

# The MG Cyberster makes an electrifying entrance to Kuwait

## Brand celebrates 100 years of automotive excellence



Alghanim family



The MG Cyberster

**MG Cyberster, MG's first-ever fully electric 2-door sports car, begins its expedition in Kuwait, celebrating a centenary of passion and showcasing revolutionary electric mobility.**

**KUWAIT:** The highly-anticipated MG Cyberster has made its first appearance in Kuwait as it passes through the country on a unique global and transcontinental driving tour marking the British-born brand's 100-year anniversary known as: Centenary of Passion.

The presence of the Cyberster in the country signifies the importance of the state to MG and its global vision. The Cyberster, which started its global tour in London in September, with Shanghai being its ultimate destination, is a groundbreaking 2-door electric roadster that pays respect to the brand's heritage, and in particular its renowned MGB model.

Visiting Kuwait for a total of four days, the Cyberster's itinerary is encompassing captivating stopovers such as Kuwait towers, Mubarakiya, and Gulf road. The Turner twins, Ross and Hugo, who are professional adventurers from Great Britain with an inspirational story to tell, are behind the wheel of the Cyberster, exploring the local landmarks while engaging with local communities and automotive enthusiasts.

Ross Turner said: "When Hugo was 17, he sustained a broken neck and after six months of surgery, that kind of spurred us on to travel the world and was the start of our first big adventure back in 2011 when we rowed the Atlantic." The twins' mission is to help people learn about our world through new technology and purposeful expeditions. Having rowed across the Atlantic Ocean and traversed Greenland's

Ice Cap, they were looking for their next major adventure when the opportunity to tackle this 10,000-mile journey in MG's fully electric 2-door sports car came up.

Marzooq Adel Alghanim, President of Alghanim Sons Group stated: "As we proudly welcome the MG Cyberster to Kuwait, we celebrate not only a century of automotive excellence but also a bold leap into the future of electric mobility. This groundbreaking 2-door sports car, with its innovative design and sustainable technology, pays homage to our rich heritage and signifies MG's commitment to shaping the future of the automotive industry. We are excited to witness the Cyberster's journey through Kuwait, connecting with local communities and enthusiasts alike, and reinforcing our dedication to pioneering advancements in the world of electric vehicles."

In line with our commitment to unparalleled customer service, MG is pleased to announce the opening of a new service center in Shuwaikh, bringing our total number of service centers across Kuwait to an impressive 12. This strategic expansion ensures that MG owners have convenient access to top-notch maintenance and support. Additionally, we are thrilled to share that a new showroom in Jahra is set to open its doors in February, offering our customers in the region a first-hand experience of MG's latest lineup and cutting-edge automotive technology.



The Cyberster is more than a car; it's a testament to MG's legacy and our vision for a sustainable and electrifying future." Managing Director of MG Motor Middle East Tom Lee, said: "The MG Cyberster embodies the revival of our beloved and timeless 2-door sports sedan, paying respect to the iconic MGB. This modern reinterpretation, now powered by an all-electric battery, redefines the essence of innovation and heritage in automotive design. As it journeys through various landscapes, this activation echoes MG's commitment to pioneering the future of electric mobility."

The MG Cyberster, the brand's flagship 2-door fully electric sports car, represents an exquisite combination of futuristic design, exhilarating performance and MG's dedication to sustainable mobility solutions. Using MG's classic MGB as inspiration, The MG Cyberster's captivating aesthetics – envisioned by a joint collaboration between the company's London-based design team and factory in Shanghai – include a distinctive low nose and curvaceous rear haunches, as well as striking scissor doors and a Kammbach tail.

This modern, all-electric reinterpretation



Marzooq Adel Alghanim

of MG's classic 2-seater sports car showcases MG's commitment to pioneering the future of electric mobility. In terms of power and performance, MG Cyberster is available in a single-motor model with 64 kWh battery capacity and a dual-motor model with the battery capacity of 77 kWh. The most powerful variant can accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h within 3.2 seconds. With the MG Cyberster leading the charge, the brand envisions the cultivation of a global community, a world where electrifying technology converges with environmental responsibility.

## Climate crisis forces Biden to halt new gas export facilities

**WASHINGTON:** The United States, which ships more liquefied natural gas than any other country, is hitting pause on approving new export facilities, the Biden administration announced Friday in a step seen as vital to tackling the climate crisis.

It comes as President Joe Biden looks to shore up youth voters energized by environmental issues in a tough election rematch this year. He will likely face Republican candidate Donald Trump, who calls human-caused global warming a "hoax" and has vowed to torpedo his Democratic opponent's climate agenda. "This pause on new LNG approvals sees the climate crisis for what it is: the existential threat of our time," Biden said in a statement. "While MAGA Republicans willfully deny the urgency of the climate crisis, condemning the American people to a dangerous future, my Administration will not be complacent."

The US only began exporting LNG in 2016 but rapidly became the world's biggest supplier, driven in part by Europe turning away from Russian gas following its invasion of Ukraine. Under the plan, new export applications would be subjected to a review, of unspecified length, that considers climate and wider environmental and economic impacts, imperiling the future of more than a dozen planned facilities.

If all were authorized, LNG shipped from the US would be responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than the entire European Union, according to one analysis. Facilities impacted include Venture Global's proposed Calcasieu Pass 2 (CP2) in Louisiana, which would be the biggest terminal in the country and cause annual emissions equivalent to those of 42 million cars, according to a letter penned to Biden in December by 170 scientists.

Scientists and environmental activists welcomed the review—which excludes plants already approved but not yet built, and has exceptions for national security emergencies.

"This is the most significant move any President has ever made on stopping fossil fuels," tweeted Climate Defiance, a youth-led group that engages in civil disobedience. White House national climate advisor Ali Zaidi credited young people for being "a central part of the coalition that really helped the president imagine this climate agenda, and secure it every step of the way."

Fossil fuel industry groups responded negatively. The Independent Petroleum Association of



**WASHINGTON:** National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi speaks at the daily press briefing alongside Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, at the White House on Jan 26, 2024 in Washington, DC. — AFP

America said in a statement that the plan would "bolster Russian influence" in the European gas market, while Republican House speaker Mike Johnson called the decision "outrageous" and said Biden was "bending the knee to climate activists."

Robert Howarth, an environmental scientist at Cornell University, told AFP that while natural gas has something of a reputation as a cleaner fossil fuel, "that's based on advertising from the oil and gas industry." While it does produce less carbon when burned than coal or oil, this does not factor in the full life cycle of production and transport to end users, which involves leaks of the powerful greenhouse gas methane throughout. According to Howarth's research, the overall greenhouse impact of LNG is roughly 25 percent worse than coal, even when the best technologies are employed.

Exporting LNG was historically barred to safeguard domestic gas supplies, but the ban was lifted after the fracking boom—and the exports have led to gas and electricity price hikes to US consumers, he added. For Anne Rolfes, director of the campaign group Louisiana Bucket Brigade, the pause couldn't come soon enough. Existing LNG development has destroyed coastal wetlands and left residents more vulnerable to the impacts of hurricanes, she said.

"People have already had to move away because of rising sea level and increasing storms, yet this industry plans to build on that fragile coast," she told AFP.

Fisherman Travis Dardar added that catches were down by more than 50 percent in his native Cameron Parish, as LNG companies bought and tore down fishing docks. "They're sacrificing the seafood industry for the petrochemical industry," he said. — AFP

## French PM to visit farm as unions vow Paris 'siege'

**PARIS:** French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal will visit a cattle farm on Sunday, his office said, as agricultural unions prepare to mount a "siege" on the French capital to pressure the government into meeting their demands on pay, tax and regulations. The leaders of two of France's largest farming unions said Saturday that members from the regions around Paris "will begin an indefinite siege of the capital."

"All the major roads leading to the capital will be occupied by farmers," they added. Farmers from the Lot-et-Garonne region, one of the hotspots of the protest movement in southern France, had already announced their intention to "go to Paris" on Monday. They intend to blockade the massive Rungis wholesale food market south of the capital. French farmers are furious at what they say is a squeeze on purchase prices for produce by supermarket and industrial buyers, as well as complex environmental regulations.

But the last straw for many was the phasing-out of a tax break on diesel for farm equipment. Attal's visit to a cattle farm in the western region of Indre-et-Loire comes two days after he announced a number of concessions following blockades by farmers of major routes into Paris and in the south of the country. "You wanted to send a message, and I've received it loud and clear," said Attal, who is facing his first major crisis as prime minister.

Attal said the government would "put an end" to the rising cost of diesel fuel used for farming machinery, a consequence of tax breaks on the fuel having been phased out. There would also be an emergency fund to help cattle farmers battle illnesses among their livestock. Early on Saturday, some roadblocks were being lifted and traffic began running normally on motorways.

But the latest announcement by the FNSEA farmers' union and the Jeunes Agriculteurs ("Young Farmers"), which together represent most farmers in France, puts the pressure back on Attal.

His concessions have "not calmed the anger, we need to go further", said FNSEA President Arnaud Rousseau. "We have a government that doesn't care about its farmers," said Lucie Delbarre, general secretary of the Pas-de-Calais FDSEA branch.

"As you can see, it's a pressure cooker ready to explode." The demonstrators have also attacked free trade agreements between the European Union and food exporters, especially a deal with the South American bloc Mercosur that is still in the works.

One group of protesters hung an effigy of a farmer in overalls from mock gallows by the A10 motorway west of Paris. But farmers appeared to be divided over whether Attal's concessions were enough.

The government has been trying to keep discontent among farmers from spreading just months ahead of European Parliament elections, which are seen as a key test for President Emmanuel Macron's government. Francois Ruffin, a lawmaker with the left-wing France Unbowed (LFI) party, said the government needed to "set a course for French agriculture".

"We need to tell it what it should be doing: is its aim to compete with factory farms in Brazil or Ukraine, or is its aim to feed the French properly?" — AFP



**BEAUVAIS, France:** President of the farmer union FNSEA (Federation Nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles) Arnaud Rousseau speaks to protesting farmers taking part in a blockade at the A16 highway, near Beauvais some hundred kilometers north of Paris, on Jan 28. --AFP



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2024

## Royal Caribbean's 'Icon,' world's largest cruise ship, sets sail



Royal Caribbean's "Icon of the Seas," billed as the world's largest cruise ship, sails from the Port of Miami in Miami, Florida.

The world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean's Icon of the Seas, set sail from Miami on its maiden voyage Saturday, carrying what amounted to the population of a small city.

The ship, built over 900 days at a shipyard in Turku, Finland, is a monument to enormity, longer than the Eiffel Tower is tall, with 20 decks and room for more than 5,600 passengers (7,600 at maximum capacity) and a crew of 2,350.

To ensure no one goes bored or hungry, the monster ship, registered in the Bahamas, has seven swimming pools including a 40,000-gallon "lake," six water slides, a carousel, what Royal Caribbean says is the largest ice arena at sea, and more than 40 dining venues and bars.

Still bored? There will be 50 musicians and comedians as well as a 16-piece orchestra.

The \$2 billion Icon -- the first in Royal Caribbean's new Quantum Class of ships -- is stuffed



with the latest technology and, despite its mammoth size, claims to be more eco-friendly than some smaller cruise ships.

The Icon is powered by what its owners say is eco-friendly Liquefied Natural Gas (though some experts say LNG systems can leak damaging amounts of methane gas into the atmosphere).

It also features a system -- microwave-as-

sisted pyrolysis -- for converting waste to energy-producing gas, and a reverse osmosis system to provide nearly all the fresh water the ship needs, the company says.

The Icon was christened in style on Tuesday, when global soccer star Lionel Messi, now with the Inter Miami side, pushed a button to send a bottle crashing against the ship's bow.

After leaving its Miami home base Saturday on its sold-out inaugural cruise -- the company says ticket demand was "unprecedented" -- the Icon will spend a week in the Caribbean before returning to Miami.

At 2,000 feet long (365 meters), the Icon will be taking the title of world's largest from a Royal Caribbean stable-mate, the slightly smaller Wonder of the Seas.—AFP



A man carries a flag with the Royal Caribbean's logo as "Icon of the Seas" sails from the Port of Miami.



Royal Caribbean's "Icon of the Seas" sails from the Port of Miami in Miami, Florida.



## TAIWAN NIGHT MARKET SERVES UP VIRAL DANCE

Swinging side-to-side to a Chinese ditty, Taiwanese teenagers and kids performed at a recent night market competition, showing off their loose-limbed moves while executing the viral "subject three" dance that has taken social media by storm.

The competitors included young men in leather jackets and high-tops, siblings matching in denim jackets and sunglasses, and even dancers improvising with pop-and-lock hip-hop moves.

But all stuck to the original spirit of the "kemusan" dance -- translated as "subject three" in Mandarin -- which calls for dancers to look like they are almost twisting their ankles, as they flick their wrists rapidly to traditional Chinese music mixed with disco beats.

"My impression? Lots of slippery motions," said Chang Feng, a bemused homemaker who came to Taipei's popular Ningxia night market with her daughter to watch the aspiring trend-setters on a small stage. Nearby, diners waited for oyster omelettes and Taiwan's famed stinky tofu at food stalls, with curious onlookers wandering over to check out the dancers.

"Seems like all the kids know how to dance kemusan -- it's a trendy thing I suppose," Chang said.

The dance is believed to have originated from Douyin, China's version of TikTok, with avid users jumping on the trend by performing their versions of it, drawing millions of views.

Even businesses have tried to capitalise on it --

like popular hotpot chain Haidilao, whose employees twist and jerk their limbs when customers order "kemusan", according to online anecdotes and videos posted on Douyin.

Fifth-grader Nancy Wu said she learned it from the platform. "We also dance it at school. It has a demonic attractiveness to it," the 10-year-old told AFP with an impish grin.

**Dance controversy**

But the infectious music and jaunty moves have come with a dose of controversy -- some Taiwanese users on Facebook have accused the night market organisers of using the dance as a Chinese propaganda tool to brainwash Taiwanese youth.

Self-ruled Taiwan held an election this month, in which China's claim over the island was a dominant talking point among the presidential hopefuls.

The winner was independence-leaning president-elect Lai Ching-te, who has been slammed by Chinese officials as a dangerous separatist.

Now political chatter appears to have migrated into the territory of viral internet dances as well.

"Looks like this is Douyin night market in mainland China," commented one user on the post advertising the competition, which drew more than 230 "thumbs up".

Lin Ting-wei, chairman of Ningxia Night Market Association, told reporters that Thursday night's dance competition was purely for commercial profit.

"We are using music and dance to try to increase consumer spending and promote Ningxia Night Market to the younger generation," Lin said.

"This event is very straightforward. Don't associate too much with it."—AFP



Local dancers perform the Komusan or Subject 3 dance at the Ningxia Night Market in Taipei.—AFP photos



## Sketch attributed to Michelangelo to be auctioned in New York

A simple square scribbled on a yellowed piece of paper believed to have been drawn by Renaissance genius Michelangelo will go on sale in April in New York, auction house Christie's announced on Friday.

The company's experts were examining a drawing by another artist of the same period for a forthcoming sale when they saw, stuck to the back of the frame, "this little piece of paper with a drawing and a letter," Stijn Alsteens, international head of the Old Master Drawings department at Christie's, told AFP.

Cosimo Buonarroti, Michelangelo's last direct descendant, indicates in the November 3, 1836 letter that he is offering "the enclosed essay" by his "illustrious forefather Michelangelo" to Sir John Bowring, the future governor of Hong Kong, whose signature appears at the bottom of the sheet. The piece under inspection was sold to Christie's in London in 1986, with the catalog indicating the presence of a square "probably in Michelangelo's hand," though the reference did not initially generate any special interest.

Christie's has since estimated the square's worth at nearly \$10,000.

Though it is unsigned by the great artist, Christie's said it guarantees it is "100 percent Michelangelo."

While working on his famed Sistine Chapel ceiling, the Italian painter, sculptor and architect created a series of small diagrams indicating the type of marble block he would need, according to Alsteens.

The square on auction, with the label "simile" or similar, is believed to be one such drawing.

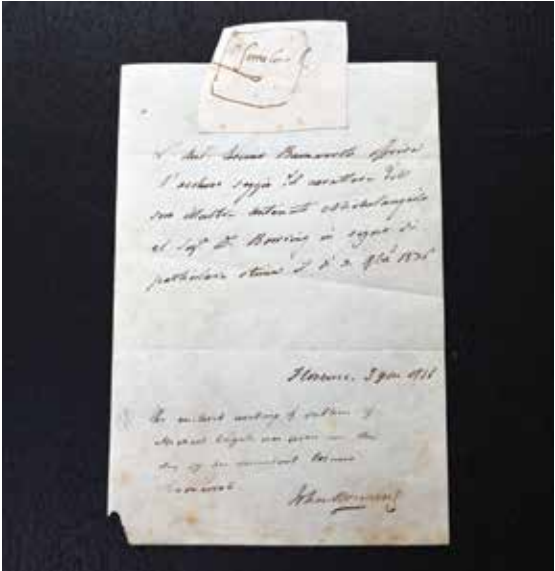
Before his death in Rome in 1564, Michelangelo burned most of his drawings and sketches.

Those his family managed to preserve were bequeathed to "Casa Buonarroti," a museum celebrating the artist in a building where he lived in Florence.

But Buonarroti was also in the habit of offering small fragments containing Michelangelo sketches as tokens to friends and acquaintances.

Many of these gifted pieces included block drawings and were sold at auction or entered various foreign collections, art historian Mauro Mussolin wrote on the San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts website.

According to Alsteens, only a handful of the



A drawing (top) attributed to Italy's Renaissance genius Michelangelo is displayed with a letter written by Cosimo Buonarroti, Michelangelo's last direct descendant, at Christie's in New York.—AFP photos



master's drawings and manuscripts are still in private hands.

The work goes on display Friday at Christie's New York headquarters as part of a sale devoted to old masters, which opens next week. The square itself will go under the hammer in April.—AFP



Lifestyle



Li Yan uses a gong during a one-hour sound healing session at her sound healing studio in Beijing.



This photo shows people sleeping during a one-hour sound healing session at the Yiyan sound healing studio in Beijing.—AFP photos



Li Yan makes sounds with a rain stick during a one-hour sound healing session at the Yiyan sound healing studio.

# China's young workers nap away their worries with singing bowls

It's just after midday in a quiet studio in Beijing, and Xuan Yi is finally getting the deep sleep she's craved for months. Xuan is one of an estimated 300 million Chinese people suffering from insomnia, the product of a high-stress, high-pressure culture that has left many young people choosing to "lie flat" instead.

She tried everything, she tells AFP -- from psychological counselling to essential oils. "I had a lot of work pressure. I could not go to bed before 2 or 3 am and had to get up at 7 am to start work," she says.

"I also worked weekends, and my sleep was not very good for a long time." But when the curtains close and the singing bowls start humming at healer Li Yan's studio, she can finally drift off.

To the sounds of a gong, Ukrainian water drum, rainstick and handpans, Xuan and her fellow millennials enter a gentle slumber. Fifty minutes later, they awake after what they say is the best sleep they've had in years -- at a cost of 180 yuan (\$25).

"Dozens of people with tense minds

lay down together and want to give their brains a short break," Li tells AFP. "It's like charging your cell phone battery from three percent to 100 percent."

**'Lie flat concerts'**

"Pressure", "anxiety" and "insomnia" are the words Li hears most often. She says she often fields calls from clients desperate for a break. "I need this therapy right away, in half an hour, I'm so tired," Li says they tell her.

Many come from China's competitive IT industry, which has some of the highest incidents of depression and anxiety in the country, according to a National White Paper on Health.

Giants like Alibaba -- whose CEO Jack Ma was notorious for demanding that his employees work long hours -- have even used Li's sessions as team-building exercises. Li calls her work "lie flat concerts", a reference to a popular meme extolling the virtues of trading the high-pressure life for something a little more easygoing.

But the singing bowls also tie into another growing trend: "short escapes", in

which young people snatch small, zen moments for themselves to escape the daily grind.

**Happiness a 'luxury good'**

Surrounded by office buildings in the heart of Beijing, Li's studio offers time slots tailored to the busy routines of young workers. She says she has seen growing demand in the so-called sleep economy since the COVID-19 pandemic, which the World Health Organization says sparked a 25 percent increase in incidents of depression and anxiety worldwide in its first year.

"Many emotions and problems have come to the surface and people need to deal with their inner selves," according to Li. "Many are actively seeking solutions since the pandemic."

And in a country where many turn to video games or shopping to unwind, she says, "relaxation and happiness seem to be a luxury good". Xuan, for one, is happy to shell out for some decent sleep. "If I don't pay for these healing sessions, I might have to pay for the doctor." —AFP



Li Yan uses a gong during a one-hour sound healing session at her sound healing studio.



A cameraman takes footage of the painting 'Bildnis Fraulein Lieser' (Portrait of Miss Lieser) by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) during a press conference of the Kinsky Art Auction House. —AFP photos

## Long-lost Klimt painting resurfaced in Austria

A late painting by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt has resurfaced in a private collection and will be sold in April, Viennese auction house Kinsky said Thursday. "Bildnis Fraulein Lieser" (Portrait of Miss Lieser) was commissioned by a wealthy Jewish industrialist's family and painted by Klimt in 1917 shortly before he died.

The well-preserved painting, which shows a dark-haired woman, was presented to the public in Vienna for the first time on Thursday.

It is due to be auctioned off on April 24 on behalf of the current Austrian owners and the legal successors of the Lieser family on the basis of an agreement in accordance with the Washington Principles. That 1998 international agreement set out the procedure for returning art stolen by the Nazis.

The work was last seen at a Viennese exhibition in 1925, documented by a black-and-white photo cited as the only previous proof of its existence. The photo identifies the last owner of the painting as a member of the Lieser family, who lived at Vienna's "Argentinierstrasse 20".

Henriette Lieser, who had remained in Vienna despite the Nazi rule, was deported in 1942 and murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. The unfinished portrait re-emerged when the current owner sought legal advice from lawyer and art law expert Ernst Ploil before inheriting it.

**Tracing its provenance**

Despite extensive research, it remained unclear how the family of the current owner, who has possessed the artwork since the 1960s, obtained it, Ploil told journalists Thursday. "We have a gap between 1925 and the 1960s," he added.

But he stressed that they had found no evidence that the work had been looted, stolen or unlawfully seized before or during the Second World War. The back of the painting is "completely untouched" and has "no stamps, no stickers, nothing", Ploil said. "There are no indications of any illegal confiscation during the Nazi era, i.e. the usual stamps from the Gestapo or a shipping house where looted art was stored," he added. —AFP



A cameraman takes footage of the painting 'Bildnis Fraulein Lieser' (Portrait of Miss Lieser) by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) during a press conference of the Kinsky Art Auction House in Vienna, Austria.

## Daniel Clowes wins at French comics festival

US comic book Daniel Clowes picked up the award for Best Comic Book at this year's Angoulême comics festival in France, considered the world's most prestigious awards for graphic novelists.

Clowes, whose previous work has been adapted for cinema, picked up the award for "Monica", the festival jury announced on Saturday. The graphic novel describes the life of an ordinary American woman through a multitude of very different stories.

Clowes, 62, received enough votes from his fellow authors for the award, highly acclaimed by critics and others, to reach the final of this year's Grand Prix, the top prize at the festival.

But the American was beaten to that prize by Britain's Posy Simmonds, who was crowned winner on Wednesday evening. Clowes has helped to adapt several of his previous works, such as "Ghost World", "Art School Confidential" and "Wilson" for the cinema. —AFP



French comic book author Guillaume Singelin poses after receiving the "Eco-faune" award.



French comic book author Jeremy Perrodeau poses after receiving the High-school students' award during the 51st Angoulême International Comics Festival in Angoulême.—AFP photos



US cartoonist Daniel Clowes poses in Paris.



Japanese comic book author Moto Hagio poses after receiving the Special lifetime achievement award.



French comic book author Matthieu Chiara poses after receiving the Revelation award.



French comic book author Sophie Darcq poses after receiving the Jury's special award.



French Culture Minister Rachida Dati (front right) visits the 51st Angoulême International Comics Festival in Angoulême.



French comic book authors Julie Birmant (left) and Simon Bouleau (center) pose after being awarded respectively with the "Prix Rene Goscinny" of best scenario - and the best young scenarist award.



## Sports

# KIB inaugurates second season of KIB, The Stadium

## First-of-its-kind sports initiative in Kuwait



Bottom Row: (From right to left) Othman Tawfeq, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, Ahmed Al-Majed, CEO of Suffix Events, Abdulrazzaq Salah Al Mutawa, Independent Board Member of KIB, Masoud Hayat, President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of Kuwait International Bank, Anwar Jawad Bukhamseen, Board Member of KIB, Marwa Marafie, Manager of Marketing and Corporate Communication at KIB and Abdulaziz Al-Thawab, Marketing and Corporate Communications Specialist at KIB.



(From right to left) Yousef Al-Baidan, Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, Dawood Maarafi, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Communications, Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of Kuwait Olympic Committee and Ahmed Al-Majed, CEO of Suffix Events.

**KUWAIT:** In an official opening ceremony, the second season of KIB, The Stadium, the leading professional sports championship and the first of its kind in Kuwait, was launched. Set to take place between January 26 and February 17, this year's event puts a special focus on equestrian sports. Representing a significant leap in local sports initiatives, the championship will host a unique show jumping competition on Marina Beach with the participation of local and international teams for the first time. The championship highlights the importance of sports in Arab societies as a tool for development and a field for creativity. It also serves as a platform to showcase rising local talents and Kuwaiti achievements in the world of sports, especially in equestrianism.

The second season of the championship was inaugurated in the presence of Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Dawood Maarafi; President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah; Director General of the Public Authority for Sports Yousef Al-Baidan; President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation Masoud Hayat; Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB Raed Jawad Bukhamseen; and CEO of Suffix Events Ahmed Al-Majed, in addition to members of KIB's Board of Directors, Executive Management, and the Bank's employees.

Speaking about the championship and the opening ceremony, Marwa Marafie, Manager of Marketing and Corporate Communication at KIB, expressed her pride in the successful event and organization of this exceptional sports activity, stating: "KIB, The Stadium reflects our firm commitment to promoting sports and providing an optimal environment to celebrate our Kuwaiti sports talents, especially the younger ones. Our shift this year to equestrian sports reflects the evolution of the event and our readiness to offer a unique experience to equestrian enthusiasts, aligning with our continuous efforts in



Sheikh Dhari Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) and Anwar Jawad Bukhamseen, Board Member of KIB.

social responsibility throughout 2024 to support and enhance equestrian sports in Kuwait."

She added: "We are excited to launch the second season of the championship. After the great success we achieved last season, we look forward to providing a wonderful and unique experience this year, especially with our focus on equestrian sports. We continue our commitment to maintaining our leading position in supporting the sports sector in Kuwait." She pointed out that KIB has been preparing for months to present an exceptional and surprising edition of the championship, offering a real opportunity for greater community engagement, whether among athletes or sports enthusiasts.

On his part, Ahmed Al-Majed, the Chief Executive Officer of Suffix Events, the organizing company for the event, said: "We are proud to have announced the first-ever 3-star show jumping competition in Kuwait since 2008. This year's edition of KIB, The Stadium, which features an exceptional lineup of Kuwaiti and international riders, promises to be a pioneering event that elevates the local sports scene, of-



A parade of participating champions from elite equestrians.

fering us an opportunity to reaffirm our presence in this field at the local level."

Al-Majed also extended his gratitude to KIB, praising the strategic partnership that resulted in holding such a unique sports event of such magnitude along the Marina Beach front. In addition, he thanked all the sponsors and partners, including United Real Estate Company (URC), for their invaluable support and contribution to the success of KIB, The Stadium, marking a significant milestone for Suffix Events.

This professional sports championship reaffirms KIB's commitment to its comprehensive social responsibility program, focusing on sports development and supporting the youth, in line with Kuwait's journey towards excellence in local, regional, and international sports forums. This season of KIB, The Stadium represents a significant shift in the world of sports in Kuwait, with a world-class equestrian track along Marina Beach and various monetary prizes for the winners.

The organization of this year's championship in-

cluded a grand opening ceremony on Friday, January 26, featuring a parade of participating champions from elite equestrians. The Bank designated a VIP lounge for distinguished guests attending the launch ceremony to ensure an exceptional experience throughout this unique event, along with exclusive suites for event sponsors and areas for F&B vendors to cater to the needs of attendees and participants during the championship.

The local show jumping competition officially kicked off on January 26 and continued until January 27. Meanwhile, an international competition is set to take place on February 8, 9 and 10, followed by the final competition of KIB, The Stadium on February 15, 16 and 17, before ending with a closing ceremony.

It is worth noting that as a "Bank for Life", KIB continues to give priority to supporting and launching inspiring community initiatives and events that positively impact all segments of society and contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

## Hartley stars as England stun India in opening Test

**HYDERABAD:** Debutant spinner Tom Hartley took seven wickets as England pulled off a dramatic 28-run upset win over India marked by a stellar batting performance by Ollie Pope in the opening Test on Sunday. "Since I've taken the captaincy on... it's 100 percent our greatest victory," England skipper Ben Stokes said.

Chasing 231 for victory, India were bowled out for 202 in the final over of an extended third session of play on the fourth day in Hyderabad, as Hartley got Mohammed Siraj stumped with his left-arm spin to trigger celebrations from the England camp.

Pope stood out with his 196 to bring England bouncing back from being 190 behind at the start of their second innings to lead the five-match series 1-0. Hartley, who got his five-wicket haul after he bowled wicketkeeper-batsman K.S. Bharat, kept coming back to return figures of 7-62 and a match tally of nine wickets.

"It's unbelievable," Hartley said after the match, adding that the win was "not going to sink in" for some time. "I'm over the moon", he added. India came into the high-profile encounter as favourites on home soil, with an unbeaten Test series record since 2012 when Alastair Cook's England beat them 2-1.

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma said it was "hard to pinpoint where it went wrong", and congrat-



HYDERABAD: England's captain Ben Stokes (L) and his teammates celebrate after winning the first Test cricket match between India and England at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on January 28, 2024. — AFP

ulated England for "exceptional" batting. "You've got to take your hat off, and say 'well played' to Pope," he said. India started well in their chase, before Hartley struck twice in one over to send back Yashasvi Jaiswal (15) and Shubman Gill (0) in the space of three deliveries. Rohit looked good in his knock of 39, but got rapped on the pads by Hartley's darting ball into the right-hander and walked back after his failed review on the lbw.

The left-handed Axar Patel (17) was promoted up the order and began attacking the bowling but

West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite struggled to contain his emotions after the match. "It means everything, playing with the legend Brian Lara watching, playing in Australia, a place we haven't won in a number of years," he said.

"To come here with this young group, seven or eight uncapped players is nothing but amazing and special. For us to come and do it against the number one team in the world, here in Australia, is amazing.

"It shows that once we have the belief and the heart, we can do anything," Joseph was outstanding Sunday, bowling 11.5 overs of hostile pace to finish with 7-68 in just his second Test, despite the pain in his foot. "Kraigg kept coming up and asking if I was alright, but I said I'm not coming off," Joseph said.

"I said I wanted to do it for the team. I think this win is very important for us and it's just the beginning for West Indies cricket." Australian captain Pat Cummins said that while the loss hurt he could see the benefit it would have on cricket in the West Indies. "It hurts — they outplayed us," Cummins said. "I know a lot of the talk coming into this series was

was dismissed after the tea break and India soon slipped to 119-7. Premier spinner Jack Leach took the field with an injured knee, after he banged it on day one and two, and bowled 10 overs for the wicket of Shreyas Iyer, for 13. Bharat and Ravichandran Ashwin attempted to pull things back in their partnership of 57 but Hartley got them out to end India's hopes. Rohit's team posted 436 in their first innings in response to 246 by England and had the tourists in trouble at 163-5 on day three, when Pope played an innings for the ages and struck his fifth Test ton. — AFP



BRISBANE: Australia's team poses for a photo after retaining the series during day four of the second cricket Test match between Australia and West Indies at the Gabba in Brisbane on January 28, 2024. — AFP

there's a lot of (West Indian) debutants, but once you put them in an international eleven, you know it's going to be tough. — AFP

## France's Pavon takes historic PGA Tour triumph

**LOS ANGELES:** Matthieu Pavon rattled in a birdie putt at the 72nd hole to win the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines on Saturday, becoming the first French golfer to win on the modern US PGA Tour. Up by two strokes with two holes to play, Pavon missed a three-foot par putt at the 17th to see his advantage cut to one.

He was in a fairway bunker off the tee at the par-five 18th, where his second shot left him in the dense left rough. But he muscled a mighty shot to the green and avoided a playoff with a clutch seven and a half foot putt, carding a three-under par 69 for a 13-under par total of 275.

Denmark's Nicolai Hojgaard carded a one-under par 70 to finish second on 276. The victory on the demanding South Course at Torrey Pines — a two-time US Open venue — comes after the 31-year-old Pavon captured his first DP World Tour title — in his 185th start — at the Spanish Open in October.

He earned his US PGA Tour card with a top-10 finish in the DP World Tour standings. "I have no words. It's amazing," Pavon said, his voice shaking in a post-round television interview. "It has been a long journey. I waited seven years on the main tour to win back in Europe and finally got a win in America. It's just tremendous."

Pavon shook off an opening bogey with four front-nine birdies, his two-foot birdie at the ninth pulling him into a tie for the lead with Germany's Stephan Jaeger, also chasing a first PGA Tour win, came into the final round with a one-stroke lead and pushed it to three with birdies at the second and third holes.

But three back-nine bogeys proved too much to overcome and Jaeger finished tied for third on 11-under with Americans Jake Knapp and Nate Lashley. Pavon played the final nine in even par, but it wasn't all smooth sailing.

The Frenchman looked to be in trouble at the 14th, where his second shot went through the green down the steep bank behind the putting surface. Luckily, it stopped before rolling out of bounds and his shot up to the putting surface rolled within a foot of the cup.

He was in a greenside bunker off the tee at the par-three 16th but drilled a 23-foot putt to save par and keep his lead at two strokes.

After the bogey at 17, Pavon watched Hojgaard belt it down the fairway at 18 and thought "it's going to be spicy now." After his second shot left him in dense rough, his caddie advised caution, but Pavon opted to go for the green. — AFP

## Joseph bowls West Indies to stunning win over Australia

**BRISBANE:** Injured pace bowler Shamar Joseph produced a stunning spell of fast bowling to lead his side to one of the greatest upsets in Test history, with the West Indies stunning Australia by eight runs in Brisbane on Sunday. The West Indies, who brought an under-strength side to Australia for the Test series, gave debuts to four players, including Joseph, in the two Tests.

They were beaten inside three days in Adelaide last week and were expected to suffer a similar fate in the day-night Test in Brisbane. But after bowling the hosts out for 207 in the second session Sunday, the West Indies recorded their first win in Australia since they last tasted victory in Perth in 1997.



## Sports

# Xavi to quit Barca after Villarreal defeat, Madrid take Liga lead

## ‘From June 30, I will not continue as Barca coach’

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said he will quit his role at the end of the season after the team's title defence was derailed in a remarkable 5-3 defeat by Villarreal on Saturday in La Liga. After Real Madrid moved two points clear of Girona at the top of the league with a late 2-1 win at Las Palmas, the pressure was firmly on Xavi's defending champions in third.

In a see-saw match Gerard Moreno and Ilias Akhomach put Villarreal two goals ahead before Barcelona battled back. Ilkay Gundogan and Pedri struck before Eric Bailly headed into his own net to give the hosts the lead.

However Goncalo Guedes fired home in the 84th minute before stoppage-time strikes from Alexander Sorloth and Jose Luis Morales left Barcelona 10 points adrift of rivals Madrid. "From June 30 I will not continue as Barca coach ... as a Barca fan, I think the club needs a change of dynamic," Xavi told reporters.

"Thinking as a club man, I think the best thing is for me to go ... I will give my all in the four months that are left, I think we can have a good season and I hope the dynamic changes." Alex Baena and Moreno had goals disallowed for Villarreal before the latter broke the deadlock, finishing well from Sorloth's cut-back.

As the players trudged in for half-time Barcelona were whistled by disgruntled supporters at their temporary home at the Olympic Stadium. Barca conceded a foolish second goal after a bad Cancelo mistake allowed Akhomach to gallop in, round Inaki Pena and fire home. Then the Catalans fought back.

Gundogan finished superbly from the edge of the box after an hour, Pedri drove home eight minutes later to level and Bailly headed Gundogan's free kick into his own net. However Barcelona's defence, a far cry from the watertight backline which led them to the title last season, was pulled apart again.

Sorloth fed winger Guedes, who flashed a strike past Pena and into the far corner. Barcelona were awarded a penalty in the 90th minute when Santi Comesaña blocked Gundogan's cross with his elbow but the referee cancelled it after a VAR review, leaving the hosts furious.

Xavi yelled into a television camera that the decision to revoke the penalty was "a disgrace". Worse was to come, with Sorloth finishing from close range to put Villarreal ahead and Morales rubbed salt in the wound with a late fifth, with Barcelona in total disarray.

It was Villarreal's first win in five games in all competitions and their coach

Marcelino's first ever against Barcelona in 21 matches. "It's turning out to be a tough season and the fans deserved something like this," said Moreno.

### 'Motivated bench'

Earlier Aurelien Tchouameni's towering header earned Real Madrid a late victory at Las Palmas to send them top. Las Palmas took the lead through Javier Munoz early in the second half but Madrid came back with Vinicius Junior levelling before substitute Tchouameni's winner, on his 24th birthday.

"I look at the bench and I have chances to change the dynamic," the Italian coach told reporters. "It's a tool that we have, with such a motivated bench, they bring a lot when they come on." Madrid were without leading goalscorer Jude Bellingham, suspended.

Promoted Las Palmas, eighth, have exceeded expectations under former Barcelona reserves coach Francisco Garcia Pimienta, and for large periods they gave Madrid as good as they got. It was a tight clash between the division's best two defences but the stalemate was broken early in the second half.

Munoz finished a neat counter-attack before Vinicius levelled after a fine Eduardo Camavinga pass. Real coach Carlo



**BARCELONA:** Barcelona's Spanish coach Xavi greets Villarreal's Spanish coach Marcelino Garcia Toral before the start of the Spanish league football match between FC Barcelona and Villarreal CF at the Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys in Barcelona. — AFP

Ancelotti, chasing a winner, sent on Turkish attacker Arda Guler for his La Liga debut and match-winner Tchouameni.

The French midfielder netted only his second goal for the club with a superb header from Toni Kroos' corner with six minutes remaining. Madrid have

been taking full advantage of dead ball situations, with this just the latest in a string of goals from corners they have scored this season. "At set pieces we're very dangerous because we have very good takers and very good finishers," said Ancelotti. — AFP

## Lookman, Dala star as Nigeria and Angola triumph in AFCON

**BOUAKE:** Ademola Lookman scored twice for Nigeria and Gelson Dala bagged a brace for Angola on Saturday to send their countries into a Africa Cup of Nations quarter-finals showdown. Lookman struck after 36 minutes against Cameroon in Abidjan and clinched a 2-0 last-16 victory for the Super Eagles by finding the net again in the final minute of regular time.

Dala took his goal tally to four -- one less than 34-year-old chart-topper Emilio Nsue of Equatorial Guinea—by scoring twice before half-time in a 3-0 victory over Namibia in Bouake. Nigeria, among the title favourites with a line-up including African player of the year Victor Osimhen, and outsiders Angola clash next Friday for a semi-final place.

In Abidjan, Nigeria thought they had taken an early lead only for a Semi Ajayi goal to be ruled offside after Cameroon failed three times to clear a corner. Although they had less possession, the Super Eagles looked more likely scorers than the Indomitable Lions and did go in front on 36 minutes.

Oumar Gonzalez failed to control a throw-in and lost possession to Osimhen, who charged goalwards and set up Lookman, whose shot was fumbled by Fabrice Ondoa before entering the net. Another incident of careless Cameroon defending, early in the second half, ended with Christopher Wooh conceding possession, then fouling Lookman on the edge of the area.

Lookman unleashed a hard, direct shot from the resulting free-kick, but it was just too high. Nigeria goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali retired injured after 78 minutes to be replaced by Francis Uzoho while fit-



**ABIDJAN:** Nigeria's forward #9 Victor Osimhen (front) fights for the ball with Cameroon's defender #15 Oumar Gonzalez during the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) 2024 round of 16 football match between Nigeria and Cameroon at the Felix Houphouet-Boigny Stadium in Abidjan. — AFP

again star Cameroon forward Vincent Aboubakar came off the bench. After defending in depth to maintain their slender advantage, Nigeria won a free-kick which led to Lookman sealing victory. Calvin Bassey crossed and Lookman got to the ball first in the goalmouth. Ondoa did get his hand to the shot, but could not stop it entering the net.

Angola captain Fredy, who created both Dala goals, dedicated the triumph over Namibia to the people of the southern Africa country: "Economically, times are tough for many Angolans so I hope our victory has lifted spirits back home.

everyone." The 21-year-old New Zealander surged to the front from a 12-man group which had broken away on the final ascent of the steep Challambra Crescent section of the road race.

Although he was boxed in the final scramble, Pithie was able to move away from Strong's wheel, and come around Tesfatsion to claim victory with a throw to the line. "I got stuck about one kilometre from the finish," Pithie said. "I knew I had to be patient. We spoke in the briefing this morning, patience was going to be key. "It was just going at full gas. I was coming back at him (Tsfatsion), I had to close the gap." The Intermarche rider (Zimmermann) on the outside, he was coming quick, but I just managed to hold on in the lunge." American Quinn Simmons (Lidl-Trek) broke away with under three kilometres left before he was reeled in by Tour Down Under winner Stephen Williams.

But the Welshman was soon swamped by Tesfatsion, setting up the fight to the finish with Pithie. The Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race—named after Australia's four-time Olympic cyclist and 2011 Tour de France winner—is the second event on the WorldTour following the six-stage Tour Down Under, won by Williams in Adelaide earlier this month. — AFP



**GEELONG:** Team Groupama-FDJ's Laurence Pithie of New Zealand (R) poses with Cadel Evans and the trophy for winning the 2024 Men's Elite Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race cycling event in Geelong on January 28, 2024. — AFP

## Juve's title bid falters, Milan honor Maignan in Bologna draw

**MILAN:** Juventus' bid for a first Serie A title in four years was hit on Saturday after Empoli snatched a surprise 1-1 draw from their 10-man hosts, as AC Milan paid tribute to Mike Maignan in their dramatic 2-2 draw with Bologna.

Tommaso Baldanzi stunned Turin's Allianz Stadium in the 70th minute of a stodgy encounter with Scudetto pretenders Juve, who missed the chance to move four points clear of Inter Milan. Instead the league lead for Juve stands at two, meaning that Inter, who have two games in hand, will reclaim top spot if they win at fifth-placed Fiorentina on Sunday.

Massimiliano Allegri's side had to play more than three quarters of the match a man down after Arkadiusz Milik was sent off in the 16th minute for a clumsy and dangerous foul on Alberto Cerri. Next weekend Juve, whose winning streak in league and cup ended at seven matches, travel to the San Siro for the so-called "Derby of Italy" with Inter after failing to put a proper cushion between them and their fiercest rivals.

"The 'Derby of Italy' is always a great game, it's a brilliant match to play and the stadium will be full. We'll go there to put in a top performance and try to get a result," Allegri said. "They're the best team in the league and favourites to win the title."

Juve thought they were on course to secure the points when Dusan Vlahovic poked them ahead four minutes after half-time following chaos at a corner. That was the Serbia striker's sixth goal in all competitions for Juve since the turn of the year.

But it wasn't enough for the win as Baldanzi, who is rumoured to be leaving for Roma before the end of this transfer window, rolled home his low leveller through a sea of legs. The draw failed to pull Empoli out of the relegation zone as Davide Nicola's team are in 19th place on 17 points, a point behind Cagliari and Udinese who sit just above the relegation zone.

Udinese stayed within reach of Empoli after being beaten 2-0 at Atalanta, allowing their hosts to move into the Champions League places above Fiorentina.

AC Milan summoned inspiration from American civil rights hero Martin Luther King to show solidarity with goalkeeper Maignan. The fixture, in which Milan fluffed two penalties, was stopped in the 16th minute in honour of Maignan's shirt number while a famous King quote was displayed on the San Siro's big screen.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that," read the message. Fans held up their phone lights while warm applause spread across the stands for Maignan, who was racially abused at Udinese last week, and highlighting Milan's "resolute stand against discrimination".

Riccardo Orsolini snatched a point for Bologna with a stoppage-time spot-kick of his own after failed attempts in each half from Olivier Giroud and Theo Hernandez which left Milan seven points behind Juve. "We regret not winning the game, we missed two penalties and we created chances, even if we conceded a few too," Milan coach Stefano Pioli told Sky. — AFP

# Classifieds

## Clinics & Hospitals

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

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

### Hospitals

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

## Change of Name

**I, LEO SEQUEIRA STEPHEN MELWYN**, holder of passport no. R8112751 do hereby change my name to **STEPHEN MELWYN LEO** (as given name) **SEQUEIRA** (as Surname) for all purposes. I will hence forth be known in the name **STEPHEN MELWYN LEO SEQUEIRA** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

(#4599 26/01/2024)



## Sinner stages epic fightback to win Australian Open

First Italian champion in the tournament's history



MELBOURNE: Italy's Jannik Sinner poses with ball kids after defeating Russia's Daniil Medvedev in the men's singles final match on day 15 of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on January 29, 2024. — AFP

**MELBOURNE:** Jannik Sinner stormed back from two sets down to beat Daniil Medvedev in an energy-sapping five-set Australian Open final on Sunday, claiming his first Grand Slam title. The Italian fourth seed had no answer to the Russian's aggression in the first two sets but dug deep to win 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 in three hours and 44 minutes.

He collapsed to the floor before returning to his feet to savour his moment on Rod Laver Arena, climbing into his box to hug coaches Simone Vagnozzi and Darren Cahill. Sinner thundered 14 aces, hit 50 winners and broke Medvedev's serve four times to become the first Italian champion in the tournament's history.

The 22-year-old is the first Italian man to win a Slam since Adriano Panatta in 1976 and the youngest man to win the Australian

Open since Novak Djokovic in 2008. Sinner's semi-final victory over 10-time winner Djokovic had guaranteed there would be a new name on the trophy.

But the result is a bitter blow for the third-ranked Russian, who also blew a two-set lead against Rafael Nadal in the 2022 final. "I'm feeling great. I just have to process it all," said Sinner. "It was a great match and a great opportunity and I took it in the right way."

"I'm happy. I think the best moment was when I went into the locker room to hug my people. They have made me feel so, so special and they also know the process behind it all. It's a great, great moment for me. "It's been a hell of a journey till now, even if I am still only 22."

Sinner admitted he had been forced to scramble for answers because Med-

vedev was "crushing" it in the first two sets. "The match was going so fast and I had zero chances in the first two sets, but I was looking for any small chance and I managed to break him in the third set and that's it," he said.

Former US Open champion Medvedev, who has now lost five of his six finals in the majors, said Sinner deserved to win. "You fought to the end and you managed to raise your level," said the 27-year-old. "You and your team are doing an amazing job. "I hope I can try to get the next one if we play in a final."

### Medvedev's fast start

The Russian, in his previous six matches, had spent nearly six hours longer on court than Sinner, who had only lost one set. But, looking fresh, he was quickly into his stride,

unsettling the usually calm Italian, who was unable to find any sort of rhythm.

Sinner, playing in his first Grand Slam final, had been broken just twice in the tournament before the final but Medvedev doubled that tally in the first set. Sinner was again in deep trouble at the start of the second set, fending off multiple break points and pleading for backing from the crowd.

He survived that onslaught but was broken for a third time in the fourth game when a poor drop shot allowed the Russian to set up a winner. Medvedev raced through his service game to love, giving Sinner no time to gather his thoughts.

He hit a fierce forehand to set up two more break points in the sixth game and Sinner went wide with a forehand to slip 5-1 down. The Italian broke back immediately but Medvedev snuffed out the mini-revival

to surge into a two-set lead.

The third set was tighter until the decisive 10th game when Sinner, who did not face a break point in the set, pounced to break and close the gap. The momentum was now all with the Italian and the tiring Medvedev, who required strapping for his foot, had to fight hard to hold early in the fourth set.

Sinner fired three aces to edge 4-3 ahead and broke in the 10th game when Medvedev fired long to take the match into a fifth set. With the tension mounting, both players stayed solid on serve until the sixth game of the final set, when Medvedev dumped a backhand into the net to give Sinner three break points.

A forehand crosscourt winner gave the Italian the crucial break and he closed out on serve to earn the biggest win of his life. — AFP

## LeBron and Lakers beat Curry's Warriors in double OT classic

**LOS ANGELES:** LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers overcame Steph Curry and the Golden State Warriors 145-144 in a NBA double overtime classic on Saturday. James, defied his status as the oldest player in the league at 39, scoring 36 points with 20 rebounds and 12 assists in his 48 minutes on court.

Curry, the 35-year-old two-time MVP, finished on the losing side despite an outstanding performance scoring 46 points with seven assists. Four-time MVP James settled the game by sinking his two free throws with just a second remaining on the clock.

The Warriors grabbed the one point lead thanks to a superb 28-foot, three-point jumper from Curry with 5.2 seconds left. Klay Thompson took the game into the second period of overtime after his 25-foot three pointer with seven seconds remaining.

All that came after Curry levelled the enthralling game with 5.2 seconds left in regulation. James said the duel with Curry was one he would look back on when his Hall of Fame career is finally over. "It's something that you will truly take all in when you are done playing and are able to watch with your grandkids and say that I played against one of the best ever to play this game," he said.

"Steph came to me after the game and said 'how does it keep getting better?'" Nikola Jokic and the defending champions Denver Nuggets held off a Philadelphia 76ers team without star center Joel Embiid, win-

ning 111-105 on Saturday.

Embiid, the league's reigning MVP, was a late scratch for the visiting 76ers, sitting out with left knee soreness after his pre-game workout. It is the fourth straight season that Embiid has missed a chance to go face-to-face with two-time MVP Jokic in Denver.

Philadelphia, who beat Denver at home this month, were also without injured pair Tyrese Maxey and Tobias Harris, but pushed the Nuggets all the way in a close affair. Jokic put up 26 points and 16 rebounds while Jamal Murray scored 23 points while Michael Porter Jr scored 20 for Denver, who led 64-62 at the half.

Paul Reed made an alley-oop layup to make it a four point game with 24 seconds remaining but after Kentavious Caldwell-Pope drained two free throws, Murray blocked Marcus Morris's three-point attempt. Reed led the Sixers with 30 points and added 13 rebounds while Kelly Oubre scored 25.

### Heat lose to Knicks

The Miami Heat suffered a sixth straight loss with 125-109 defeat to the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden with Jalen Brunson scoring 31 points and eight assists. It is the first time Miami have lost six in a row since March 2021, but also highlighted the Knicks' improvement since trading for OG Anunoby in December.

New York are 12-2 since adding Anunoby from Toronto and he played a



SAN FRANCISCO: Klay Thompson #11 passes the ball to Trayce Jackson-Davis #32 of the Golden State Warriors in between Rui Hachimura #28 and LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers in the second half at Chase Center in San Francisco, California. — AFP

key role in the win with 19 points, nine rebounds and three assists. Miami, beaten finalists last year, are seventh in the East with a 24-22 record.

Media reports said the Knicks two-time All-Star Julius Randle, who went out injured in the fourth quarter, dislocated a right shoulder. Randle, who has played in all 46 games for the Knicks this season and had 19 points against Miami, is scheduled to undergo an MRI on Sunday. The forward suffered a hard fall as he attempted a layup and head coach Tom Thibodeau said he was very concerned about the injury. "He's a guy that plays through things and that's what you love about him," said the coach. "He's a warrior (but) anytime someone walks back (to the locker room), you know it's something," he said.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points and 12 rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks, second in the East, crushed New Orleans 141-117 ahead of Doc Rivers' debut on their bench on Monday. Luka Doncic ended up on the losing side, after his franchise-record 73 point showing in Friday's win over Atlanta, as the Dallas Mavericks fell to 120-115 loss to Sacramento.

Doncic made 28 points and 17 assists in the loss with De'Aaron Fox scoring 34 points for the Kings. In the battle of two Frenchmen, Victor Wembanyama's San Antonio Spurs upset Rudy Gobert's Minnesota Timberwolves 113-112.

Number one draft pick Wembanyama had 23 points, 10 rebounds and six assists as the Spurs, bottom of the West beat the second placed team in their conference. — AFP

## Liverpool harness Klopp emotion to keep quadruple dream alive

**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool remain in the hunt to send Jurgen Klopp off with a quadruple after beating Norwich 5-2 to progress to the FA Cup fifth round on Sunday. Klopp was greeted by an emotional rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone" before kick-off and banners of thanks in the first match since the German announced his decision to leave at the end of the season.

The 56-year-old said on Friday when he made the shock announcement on his impending departure that he hoped the "best memories were still to come" despite having won the Premier League and Champions League during his time in charge. Should Liverpool progress to the FA Cup final, Klopp's final game will be at Wembley and they will be strong favourites to progress to the quarter-finals after being paired at home to Watford or Southampton in the last 16.

Klopp's opposite number, Norwich boss David Wagner, was the best man at his wedding after the two played together at Mainz. The pair enjoyed a warm embrace in the tunnel before kick-off, but Liverpool showed no mercy on Wagner's men despite Klopp giving the chance to some of his youngsters to shine.

James McConnell was handed his full debut in midfield and the 19-year-old set up the opening goal as his teasing delivery was headed in by Curtis Jones at the back post. Norwich hit back almost immediately as Ben Gibson powered past Alisson Becker from Gabriel Sara's corner.

Liverpool should still have been out of sight by half-time as Darwin Nunez slotted home his 11th goal of the season after great work down the right by Conor Bradley. Bradley, who has impressed in recent weeks deputizing for Trent Alexander-Arnold, should have had another assist moments later when Cody Gakpo sliced a glorious chance wide.

Ryan Gravenberch then had an effort cleared off the line as Norwich struggled to beat Liverpool's press as they played out from the back. The Reds have so far not missed a beat in the absence of Mohamed Salah at the Africa Cup of Nations to move five points clear at the top of the Premier League and in the hunt for three more trophies in the League Cup, FA Cup and Europa League. — AFP