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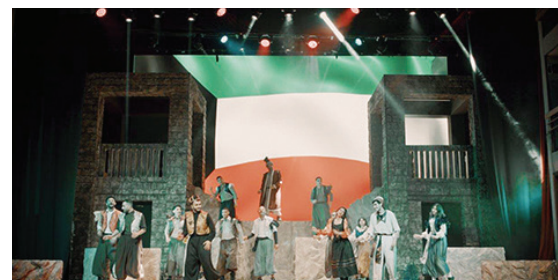
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## Kuwait plans 'amnesty' for illegals from March to May

We want to open Kuwait, Deputy PM reveals

### 'Look at the Times' showcases a vibrant fusion of artistic expression



KUWAIT: Artists pose for a group photo. 'Look at the Times,' a collaborative event orchestrated by Public Frog Productions and 1day Creative Studios, showcases a vibrant fusion of artistic expression. The event features a diverse array of musicians, visual artists, and movement performers, with each artist bringing their unique perspective to the forefront. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 2)

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah revealed on Saturday that the government is considering an 'amnesty' plan to allow residency violators to leave Kuwait starting in March and ending in May, noting that violators could apply for a visa to return to Kuwait via legal and approved channels.

He called upon those who violated residency law to take advantage of the 'amnesty' period or face permanent deportation from Kuwait.

On the latest decisions to allow visit and family visas, the minister said that Kuwait was affected by the absence of a qualified workforce in several sectors, especially in the healthcare sector. The re-introduction of such visas would be done through several criteria, he said and sponsors requesting the visa would be notified of the number of days the visitor should stay within rules and regulations via text and other methods. Sponsors violating the new laws would



Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah

be blocked from completing other government transactions, warned the minister.

On the benefits of introducing visit visas to the population, the minister said that the country expects 100,000 to 200,000 visitors who would be staying for a period of 30 to 60 days, which would be beneficial for the econ-

omy. Activating the economy, added Sheikh Fahad, is also related to building a huge airport. "We want to open Kuwait and show them how beautiful the country and its culture are. The weather is pleasant in 4-5 months, and people are more than welcome to visit Kuwait", he stated.

Countering rumors and fake accounts spreading misinformation and false news in addition to finding solutions for those violating residency are among the top priorities for the state, said the Deputy Prime Minister separately in an interview with KUNA. He affirmed that the ministries of Defense and Interior were following a well-devised and strict vision aimed at justly enforcing the law on all without discrimination or favoritism.

He indicated that combating illicit drugs, developing traffic rules, national military service, and bolstering the country's economy by allowing several entry visas

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#### NEWS IN BRIEF

##### Kuwait official gazette publishes poll decree

KUWAIT: Kuwait's official gazette published Decree No. 29/2024 inviting eligible voters to elect National Assembly (parliament) members on April 4, 2024. Head of the Local Affairs Sector and Government Spokesman Amer Al-Ajmi stated last Tuesday that the Kuwait Cabinet had approved a draft decree inviting voters to elect National Assembly (parliament) members on April 4, 2024, and referred it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

##### US destroys Houthi's surface-to-air missile

WASHINGTON: US forces struck and destroyed a Houthi surface-to-air missile in Yemen after deciding it posed an "imminent threat" to American aircraft, the US Central Command in the Middle East announced. The Iran-backed Houthis, who control much of war-torn Yemen, have been attacking shipping in the Red Sea since November in a campaign they say is in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza amid the Zionist-Hamas war. The United States is spearheading a naval coalition to protect vessels in the vital waterway, and has also conducted air strikes in Houthi territory, both on its own and alongside Britain. On Friday afternoon, US "forces conducted a self-defense strike against one Iranian-backed Houthi surface-to-air missile that was prepared to launch," CENTCOM said in a statement, adding it had "determined (the missile) presented an imminent threat to U.S. aircraft in the region." — AFP

### US drops aid into Gaza as kids die of malnutrition

GAZA: Zionist top ally the United States said it began air-dropping aid into war-ravaged Gaza on Saturday, as the Hamas-ruled territory's health ministry reported more than a dozen child malnutrition deaths. The start of the US relief operation came hours after President Joe Biden, who has pushed Zionists to allow more aid in, announced the move and spoke of the "need to do more" after nearly five months of devastating conflict.

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In this image obtained from the US Department of Defense, US Air Force C-130J Super Hercules loaded with humanitarian aid takes off from an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia bound for an air-drop over Gaza on March 2, 2024. — AFP photos



GAZA: People are pictured amid the rubble of a Mosque and makeshift shelters that were destroyed by Zionist airstrikes in Deir El-Balah in central Gaza on March 2, 2024.

### Asia's wealthiest man takes global rich to the zoo

AHMEDABAD: Top global celebrities donned "jungle fever" outfits in India for a trip to the zoo on Saturday as part of a party thrown by Asia's richest man. Pop star Rihanna, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka are among the rich and famous guests who jetted in for a three-day gala celebration hosted by billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani. This weekend's party is an elaborate pre-wedding ceremony for younger son Anant and fiancée Radhika Merchant, the daughter of wealthy pharmaceutical moguls.

The three-day gala - which saw "Umbrella" singer Rihanna perform on Friday for the first time since last year's Super Bowl - continued on Saturday with a trip to an "animal rescue centre" housing exotic animals. The facility is a pet project of Anant's built in his family's hometown Jamnagar in western Gujarat state, where the weekend party is taking place.



JAMNAGAR: This handout photo, shows chairperson and founder of the Reliance Foundation Nita Ambani (right), wife of billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani speaks to Ivanka Trump, daughter of US' former president Donald Trump during a three-day pre-wedding celebration for their son Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant in Jamnagar. — AFP

Indian media reports said the family hosted a "Walk on the Wildside", an event held outdoors in the Ambani's animal rescue centre. —AFP (See Page 13)

### Over one billion suffer obesity

PARIS: More than one billion people around the world are now suffering from obesity with the number having more than quadrupled since 1990, according to a study released by the Lancet medical journal. The "epidemic" is particularly hitting poorer countries and the rate is growing among children and adolescents faster than adults, according to the study carried out with the World Health Organization.

The study, released ahead of World Obesity Day on March 4, estimated that there were about 226 million obese adults, adolescents and children in the world in 1990. The figure had risen to 1,038 million in 2022. Francesco Branca, director of nutrition for health at the WHO, said the rise past one billion people has come "much earlier than we have anticipated".

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# 'Look at the Times' showcases a vibrant fusion of artistic expression

Event a reminder for people to reconnect with buried artistic side



Musicians perform during the event. – Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



People attend the event at Kuwait Times.

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** "Look at the Times," a collaborative event orchestrated by Public Frog Productions and Iday Creative Studios, showcased a vibrant fusion of artistic expression. Beyond the mesmerizing graffiti displays, the gathering featured a diverse array of musicians, visual artists, and movement performers, with each artist bringing their unique perspective to the forefront.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Areej Saleh, founder of "Art Scene" and creative director, said the event featured a dynamic ensemble of talent. It boasted the participation of 12 graffiti artists, two musicians, a skilled DJ, two visionary visual artists, and a duo of captivating movement artists. She said that the talented young people are local, independent artists who have been vital to the creative community for years, and are coming together to create an all-day art, music and movement jam.

She said the theme of the event was "Where have you been?", shedding light on the idea that we have buried artistic and musical expression into the childhood versions of ourselves and forgotten them as time went on.

"Where have you been, where did the person who loved to paint on walls, dance, skate go? Where have you been?" she said. "The event's goal is to remember! As artists who have been in the community for a long time, arts and expressions are as important as all the other things broader society has told us to worry and focus on.

"That is just as important as our jobs, our families, and our everyday lives, so is creativity, so is connection, and so is the expression of who we are deep inside. It's to showcase to younger folks that they don't necessarily have to choose to bury their artistic leanings but use them to navigate their lives and connect with other people," she added.



Jana Alnaqeeb, Public Relations and CSR Manager takes a photo.

Mohammad Ahmed, Partner & Programs Director at "Art Scene", said the event was an all-day art show, exploring nostalgia and the expression of Kuwait's urban culture. The event started with a graffiti jam from 12-4 pm, where artists finished up their masterpieces that they have been working on this past week.

"After that, a skate session, where the best skateboarders in Kuwait set up a skate line where folks watched, cheered, and tried their hand at kickflips and ollies. Then, 'The Get Down' — a celebration of movement in an old-school dance cipher, where freestylers jammed with the amazing DJ Bonita with old-school hip-hop faves, to show off their moves and compete to be 'Best of the Cypher'. After that, the 'Basement Show' — a performance from two great Kuwaiti acts in a standing-room-only set, where people jammed along to live, original music."

Regarding choosing Kuwait Times as the event's location, he pointed out that Kuwait Times has been a long-standing

supporter of graffiti and the art scene in Kuwait. "Jana Alnaqeeb, Public Relations and CSR Manager at Kuwait Times, happily invited us to create beautiful things in the space, and we have never been more excited. We are so grateful for the opportunity to do this," he said.

From the rhythmic beats of live music to the captivating movements of dancers, the event served as a celebration of the multifaceted nature of contemporary artistry, leaving a lasting impression on all those in attendance.

Public Frog (PF) is an artist and event management company that was born out of the need for support for independent artists in the spaces they are being asked to showcase their work. Whether musicians, visual artists, performers, or literary figures, Public Frog aims to help creatives bring their creative careers to fruition by building bridges between them and their audiences.

PF believes that creatives are the foundation of a harmonious society,



An attendee draws graffiti in the 'Art Therapy room'.

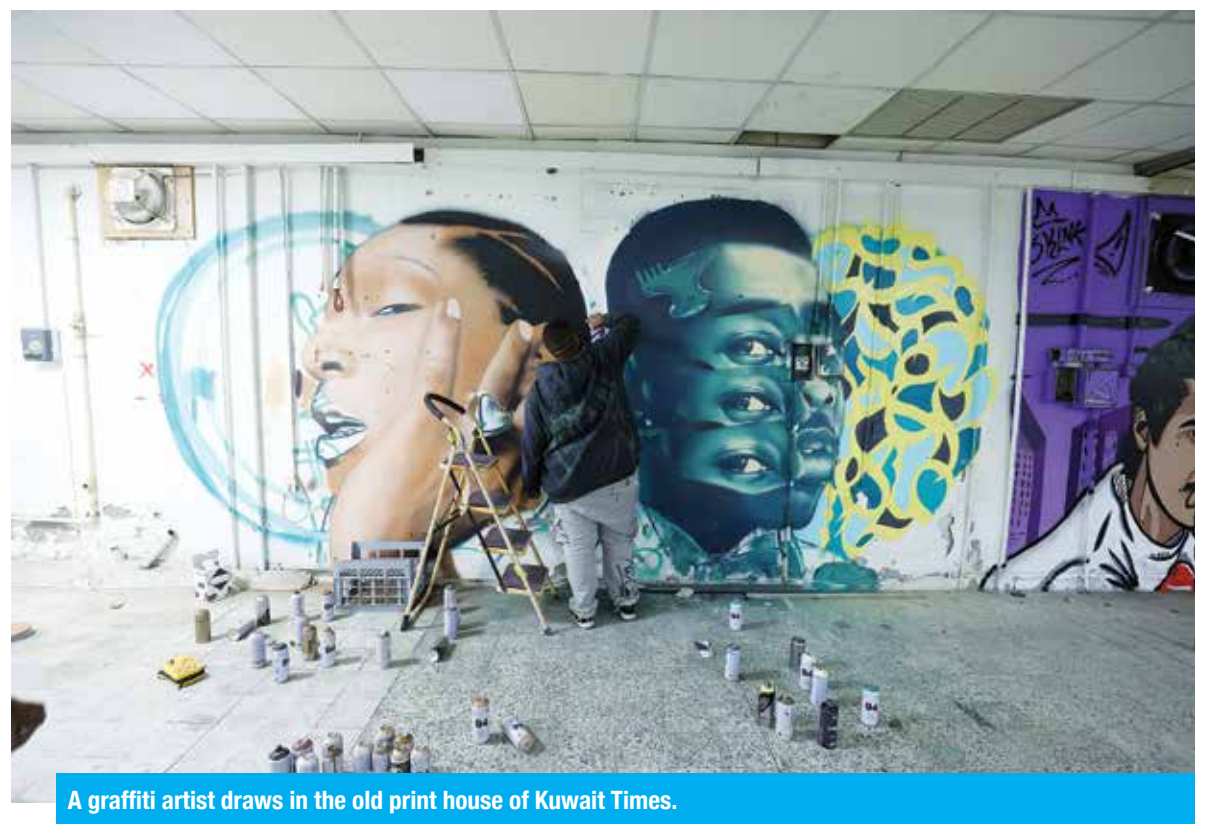


where members have the freedom to express their authentic experiences. Iday is a hybrid creative studio and a talent management company that works with movement, street art, music, creative di-

rection, and concept creation. Iday is the result of two locally bred artists, DOSS and STAN, combining their experiences and longing to raise community and artistic standards of the region.



A skater showcases his talent during the event.



A graffiti artist draws in the old print house of Kuwait Times.



One of the attendees draws graffiti on the wall.



An artist paints in preparation of the art event.



Attendees play with Kuwait Times' cats.



Local

# Amir representative partakes in Antalya Diplomacy Forum

## 'Advancing Diplomacy in Times of Turmoil'

ANTALYA: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, took part in the opening session of the 3rd Antalya Diplomacy Forum, inaugurated by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The two-day forum, titled "Elevating Diplomacy Amidst Crises," featured several heads of state, or their representatives, as well as a number of ministers, diplomats, and dignitaries, as well as representatives from 80 international organizations.

The Turkish city of Antalya hosted the third Antalya Diplomatic Forum, under the auspices of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and welcomed numerous heads of state, ministers, diplomats, and prominent business figures. The delegation representing Kuwait at the forum, which ran until March 2nd, was headed by the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The main topic was "Advancing Diplomacy in Times of Turmoil," with the committee of leaders from the Antalya

Diplomatic Forum discussing the key topic, while discussions at the forum included heads of state and governments, including Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and President of Northern Cyprus Ersin Tatar. A high-level session on 'Women, Peace, and Security' will be held in the presence of Turkey's First Lady Emine Erdogan.

The forum hosted 38 discussion sessions, including "Gaza contact group," "EU's ability to shape global shifts," "Rising racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia," "Keys for Sustainable Peace in the

Middle East," "New Challenges in Counterterrorism," "Artificial Intelligence and Diplomacy," and other sessions covering a variety of topics such as energy security, migration, climate change, space, and mediation in times of turmoil.

The gathering witnessed the participation of nearly 90 heads of state and government and ministers from various countries, including Switzerland, Palestine, the UK, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Egypt, Iraq, Hungary, Somalia, Armenia, Qatar, and the UAE. A large group of participants, includ-

ing businessmen, academics, representatives of think tanks, youth, and media outlets, will attend the forum.

Over 20 heads of state and government attended, along with 90 ministers, including 60 foreign ministers from over 100 countries. Representatives from around 80 international organizations also participated, along with approximately 4,000 guests, in the forum, which hosted over 50 sessions and drew in a media presence comprising 750 journalists, including 250 international journalists. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika and Kuwait's Assistant Under Secretary of Tourism Osama Al-Mekhyal inaugurate the tourism event.



## PM: Creativity Award demonstrates govt's unwavering support

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, said that the Kuwait Creativity Award demonstrates the government's "unwavering commitment to supporting youth and encouraging their outstanding creativity in all fields." In a statement posted by the Center for Government Communication on its "X" account, His Highness the Prime Minister said the award shows that "we believe that Kuwaiti youth, with their creativity, determination, and passion, are the real driving force for a brighter future for our country."

Youth create leadership and are the source of inspiration, he said, adding that with their achievements and commitment, "we can achieve Kuwait's Vision 2035, His Highness the Premier noted. "Our ultimate goal is to support you (the youth) to fulfill the ambitions and dreams that advance our nation and contribute to the renaissance of our dear Kuwait," he said. The award includes eight varied fields important for community development and sustainability: entrepreneurship, environment, science and technology, culture and literature, voluntary work, Sharia sciences, arts, and media. Applying for the award, which targets people aged 18-35, lasts for one month. — KUNA

## Indian Embassy holds two-day tourism event

KUWAIT: Embassy of India in Kuwait organized a two-day tourism promotion event titled 'Explore, Experience and Enjoy Incredible India' at Avenues Mall in Kuwait on Feb 29 – March 1, 2024. Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika and Kuwait's Assistant Under Secretary of Tourism Osama Al-Mekhyal inaugurated the event. Prominent Kuwaiti dignitaries including Sheikh Halah Bader Al-Sabah and media visited the tourism stalls, a press release issued by the Indian embassy said.

The event focused on diverse facets of Indian tourism such as summer tourism, luxury trains of India, wellness & rejuvenation, the Golden Triangle adventure & wildlife and more. Under the theme of 'Summer Tourism', information about places in India like Kashmir to Shimla-Kulu Manali to Mussoorie and Nainital in the north; Darjeeling, Gangtok and Kalimpong in the east and Ooty in the south were provided.

Under the theme of luxury trains, tourism trails



A cultural program held as part of the tourism event at the Avenues.

covered by the well-known Palace on Wheels, Maharajah Express, Golden Chariot and Deccan Odyssey trains were showcased. Wellness tourism in Kerala continued to attract a lot of visitors to the stalls. The themes of wildlife tourism and adventure sports drew a lot of attention from young people. Tourism pamphlets on different touristic sectors of India were distributed, the release said.

The event showcased various Indian art and

dance forms such as Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam in addition to folk dances and popular contemporary Bollywood dance. Activities like henna designs, Zardosi artwork, instant quiz etc were also organized to engage with the visitors. The event was in continuation of ongoing efforts of the Embassy to showcase different aspects of Indian tourism to Kuwaiti friends and other expatriate communities in Kuwait, the release added.

## Medics fix modern heart defibrillation for several patients

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Head of the Heart Department at the Chest Diseases Hospital Dr Abdullah Al-Enezi said the heart physiology team under the supervision of Dr Fawziya Al-Kandari and Dr Abdullah Jamaan succeeded in fixing the most modern heart defibrillation for several patients. He said this

new technology is considered the most modern development in the field of heart pacers as it does not require wires inside the heart or blood vessels.

Chest hospital was chosen to be among the first health centers that adopts this modern technology due to the availability of the experienced in this field. Aurora EV-ICD System Implant Cardio-



verter Defibrillator is the first of its kind extra-vascular defibrillator to treat sudden cardiac arrest

and abnormal heart rhythms with defibrillation and antitachycardia pacing.



KUWAIT: 'Palestine through Kuwaiti Eyes' exhibition educates the present and future generations about the Palestinian cause. — KUNA photos

## Palestine art exhibition reflects Kuwait's support

KUWAIT: Chairwoman of the Voluntary Women's Society for Community Development Sheikhha Fadia Saad Abdullah Al-Sabah emphasized Saturday the significance of the "Palestine through Kuwaiti Eyes" exhibition in educating present and future generations about the Palestinian cause, as participating artworks confirmed ingrained ideas in children's minds, reflecting their genuine understanding of the issue since 1948.

In a statement to reporters after the opening of the art exhibition, Sheikhha Fadia commended the outstanding organization of the "Palestine through

Kuwaiti Eyes" art exhibition at Martyr Asrar Al-Qabandi Bilingual School, which featured 77 artworks from 16 schools and garnered large participation from Kuwaiti schools. She highlighted that the exhibited artworks focused on key aspects of the Palestinian cause, such as the historical importance of the olive tree, symbolizing thousands of years of history, the symbol of return represented by the key, and the various methods Palestinians used to express themselves in the face of Zionist oppression.

Sheikhha Fadia underlined the duty of educating generations to recognize Palestine, condemning the ongoing Zionist brutal practices, stating they affect not only Arabs and Muslims but also all of humanity. She underscored Kuwait's principled stance, asserting its global humanitarian role and its consistent foreign policy focusing on humanitarian action and Arab-Islamic solidarity, with Palestine as a central issue. She described the Zionist entity as a killing machine destined to submit to international order and accept a Palestinian state.



In a similar statement, Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub expressed gratitude to Kuwait for its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people, underscoring Kuwait's historical support since 1948 and its recent support during the current crisis. He pointed out that the exhibition is a brilliant initiative reflecting the thoughts of a new generation from bilingual schools, thanking the students for their insightful contributions.

During the opening ceremony, Director of Financial and Administrative Affairs at Martyr Asrar Al-Qabandi Bilingual School Sheikhha Nabila Salman Al-Hamoud Al-Sabah stressed the brilliance of participating students from various schools, whose paintings pulsate with Kuwait's steadfast support for the Palestinian cause, shedding light on Gaza's tragedy through expressive artistic depictions.

Meanwhile, School Director of Martyr Asrar Al-Qabandi Bilingual School Sawsan Al-Kindari underscored the historical intertwining of civilization, art, and architecture and reflected on the recent



Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub

tragic events affecting Arab unity, explaining that the art exhibition was organized based on a strong belief in the importance of expressing solidarity and rejecting anything that undermines Arab causes, while acknowledging Kuwait's longstanding interest in this matter throughout history. — KUNA

tragic events affecting Arab unity, explaining that the art exhibition was organized based on a strong belief in the importance of expressing solidarity and rejecting anything that undermines Arab causes, while acknowledging Kuwait's longstanding interest in this matter throughout history. — KUNA



## News in Brief

Maintaining language  
'part of Arab identity'

CAIRO: Arab Parliament President Adel Al-Asoomi said that maintaining the Arabic language is part of protecting the Arab identity. In a statement on Friday on the occasion of celebrating the Arab World's Arabic language day, Al-Asoomi said that it is necessary to keep teaching Arabic to the younger generations, especially since the use of this language is becoming less and less common these days. He underlined the need to cooperate with joint-Arab work organizations to develop the spread of Arabic, as many people are focusing on foreign languages in studies at all educational levels, pushing younger generations away from their native language. — KUNA

Kuwait Embassy in Paris  
celebrates national days

PARIS: Kuwait Embassy in Paris held a reception to celebrate the 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day. The reception featured senior officials of the French government, and heads of Arab and foreign diplomatic missions, some dignitaries, businessmen, as well Kuwaiti students and permanent delegate to UNESCO, the embassy's staff and others. Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Kuwait's Ambassador to France Mohammad Al-Judai conveyed sincere greetings and congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Kuwait's government and people as well as residents. He highlighted the importance of diplomatic ties between Kuwait and France, lauding their outstanding level in several domains. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UNESCO Adam Al-Mulla extended congratulations to His Highness the Amir, and Kuwait's government and people on the same occasion. — KUNA

Jordan Royal Air Force air-drops  
Kuwait's medical aid into Gaza

## GCC chief deplores Gaza killings



GAZA: This handout picture shows humanitarian aid being loaded into a military aircraft to be dropped over northern Gaza. (Right) Jordanian troops drop humanitarian aid from a military aircraft over northern Gaza. — AFP

AMMAN: The Jordanian Royal Air Force has carried out an airdrop of medical appliances and equipment provided by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) into the Gaza Strip. The move is mainly meant to mitigate the anguish and woes of the people of the Palestinian enclave amid unbearable humanitarian circumstances involving a serious shortage of medical supplies, Chairman of the Jordan Red Crescent Society (JRC) Mohammad Al-Hadeed told KUNA on Saturday.

Kuwait-dispatched medical packages have been air-dropped into a Jordanian field hospital in southern Gaza, he said, adding that Jordan

seeks hard to ensure smooth and easy delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian territory. In this context, the JRC chief voiced sincere thanks and gratitude to Kuwait for its role in alleviating the agony of Gazans. The Jordanian Royal Air Forces have already carried out a series of relief aid airdrops into the Gaza Strip amid the continued Zionist aggression on the territory.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi has strongly condemned the Zionist occupation forces' targeting of innocent Palestinians while they were receiving aid in the Gaza Strip. In a statement, Al-Budaiwi said, "It is a new crime in

a series of crimes committed by the Zionist occupation against Palestinians." He called on the international community to take action against these dangerous crimes and violations committed by the Zionist occupation against the Palestinian people.

The chief reiterated the necessity of reaching an immediate ceasefire and allowing urgently the entry of humanitarian and relief aid into the Strip, according to the statement. Earlier in the day, the Zionist occupation opened fire at crowds of civilians waiting for humanitarian aid in northern Gaza, killing more than 112 Palestinians and wounding hundreds others. — KUNA

CITRA, Huawei MoU 'will boost'  
Kuwait's digital economy

KUWAIT: The Chairperson of Kuwait Communication and Information Technology Regulatory (CITRA) has affirmed the significance of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) CITRA has recently inked with Huawei. Omar Al-Omar, in a statement to KUNA on Saturday, said the MoU is crucial for boosting CITRA's strategic initiatives, digital innovation, and skills, pushing forward the digital economy, and developing the infrastructure of future smart cities.

Al-Omar said the MoU he had signed with Steven Yi, President of Huawei Middle East and Central Asia, recently in Barcelona, Spain, aims at enhancing mutual cooperation and contributing to the development of information and communications in Kuwait. Kuwait is currently "considered the top in

the world with respect to phones' operations," Al-Omar said, noting the widespread usage of state-of-the-art technologies and the reasonable prices in the country.

Huawei provides "adequate solutions" to the operators and meets all their needs, he said, alluding in particular to the G5.5 technology that had been tested in Kuwait. "Soon, we will work out agreements to operate this technology as we had previously with respect to G5 and G4 technologies," he revealed. On security concerns, he indicated that the National Cybersecurity Center was activated a few months ago, affirming CITRA's support for efforts to protect clients' data.

Moreover, he affirmed the necessity of laws and legislation to face such challenges. "Cybercriminals make use of loopholes in so-



KUWAIT: Kuwait Communication and Information Technology Regulatory (CITRA) and Huawei Middle East and Central Asia sign memorandum of understanding. — KUNA

cial media and communications to launch their attacks; thus, new strategies are needed to confront such crimes," he added. Meanwhile, Yi expressed satisfaction with expanding cooperation with CITRA and elevating competition in the sector of information technology and communications in Kuwait, as well as boosting the national digital economy.

Enhancing the digital economy is necessary to create a dynamic and competitive market, Yi said, also noting the need for sponsoring the culture of innovation at this level. Furthermore, he underlined the need for developing the infrastructure of future smart towns as a pivotal issue for attaining the Neo Kuwait Vision 2035. — KUNA



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KUWAIT: Kuwait University organized marathon in Sabah Al-Salem University city on Saturday morning. — KUNA

Kuwait University  
organizes marathon  
to promote sports

KUWAIT: Kuwait University organized the first-of-its-kind marathon in Sabah Al-Salem University city Saturday morning, with widespread participation from inside and outside the university. Speaking to KUNA, Acting Assistant Dean for Student Activities at Kuwait University, Dr. Salem Al-Shammari, emphasized the event's mission: to invigorate athletic involvement within the academic and student populace.

Al-Shammari further added that the Deanship

of Student Affairs is actively enhancing sports and physical activities on campus, acknowledging their positive impact in fostering a healthy environment, as he commended the students' and the public's enthusiastic participation in the marathon. In a parallel statement to KUNA, Nasser Al-Dhubaibi, director of sports activities at Kuwait University's Deanship of Student Affairs, revealed that the marathon marks its first run in Sabah Al-Salem University city, with over 2,000 participants from within and beyond the university.

The primary targets for participation in the five-kilometer marathon within the university city were faculty, staff, students, and then the general public, he mentioned. The event offers participants a chance to explore college buildings and university facilities, many of which have won awards for their architectural and engineering designs in international competitions, he pointed out. — KUNA







Scholz vows probe into leaked Ukraine war talks

## Milei says to govern 'with or without' political support

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MOSCOW: In this video grab, mourners walk in a procession towards the Borisovo cemetery during the funeral of late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. — AFP photos

# Hundreds mourn Navalny at grave

## Russian police arrests at least 128 people attending tributes to Navalny in 19 cities on Friday

MOSCOW: Hundreds of Russians visited the grave of dead Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny on Saturday, risking arrest to pay tribute to the anti-corruption campaigner for a second day running. Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critic for more than a decade, died in an Arctic prison colony last month, where he was serving a 19-year sentence on "extremism" charges largely seen as political retribution for his opposition to the Kremlin.

An AFP journalist saw mourners, some with tears in their eyes, queuing outside the Borisovo cemetery in southern Moscow on Saturday afternoon, as more walked from the nearby metro station carrying flowers and placards in honor of Navalny.

Despite warnings from the Kremlin that they faced arrest, thousands had come out for the official funeral service on Friday. Authorities have erected airport-style security scanners at the entrance to the cemetery, and police on Saturday were filmed frisking and searching those who had come to pay homage to the Kremlin critic. Officers ordered mourners to "keep moving" as they laid stacks of red and white roses and carnations on Navalny's grave. Navalny's mother, Lyudmila Navalnaya, was among those who visited on Saturday, accompanied by Alla Abrosimova, the mother of Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya.

### 'Grief, despair and hope'

The circumstances of Navalny's death remain somewhat unclear. Authorities said he had died of "natural causes" after losing consciousness following a walk in his Arctic prison colony. But Navalny's aides have accused the Russian authorities of ordering him killed, and Western leaders have said Putin carries "responsibility" for his death.



Lyudmila Navalnaya (the woman wearing glasses), Navalny's mother, accompanied by Alla, mother of Navalny's widow Yulia, visits the grave of her son on March 2, 2024, the next day after his funeral.

AFP journalists saw a continued police presence on Saturday at the cemetery, close to the banks of the Moskva river in the south of the capital. Some supporters laid placards with Navalny slogans and others brought mementos — including a yellow rubber duck, a symbol of a major Navalny investigation into alleged corruption of former President and long-time Putin ally Dmitry Medvedev.

Natalia, a 50-year-old artist who declined to give her surname, told AFP she felt "grief, despair and hope", on Saturday "After all, Alexei asked us not to despair,

and fight," she said at the cemetery. Another mourner, Vadim, 52, said he felt "sorrow and bitterness at the loss of a worthy man of our time".

He urged Navalny's supporters to follow the Kremlin critic's example "and continue to live the way Alexei would have wanted — to make people in our country and around the world live more happily". Others found it harder to be optimistic. "It's sad. And it's just clear that everything that was built with him over the years has also been buried here. That's it," said 29-year-old IT worker Roman.

### Threat of arrest

Thousands of Navalny's followers had queued for hours to pay their respects to the 47-year-old on Friday. As they streamed from a nearby church to the cemetery, some chanted "No to war!" and other pro-Navalny slogans, including branding Putin a "murderer" and calling for the release of political prisoners.

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov had on Friday said that anybody who appeared to be taking part in an "unsanctioned" rally would be detained. Rights monitoring group OVD-Info said Russian police had on Friday arrested at least 128 people attending tributes to Navalny in 19 cities.

Police had previously arrested hundreds who came to lay flowers at makeshift tributes that popped up in major cities across Russia after he died. His wife, Yulia Navalnaya, the couple's two children and Navalny's brother all live abroad and did not attend the funeral, where they could have been arrested for their own opposition to Putin.

Most of his closest aides — in jail or in exile — were also unable to attend the service in the Maryino district of Moscow, where Navalny used to live. Yulia Navalnaya has pledged to continue her husband's work and said Putin "murdered" him.

The scenes of thousands marching in support of Navalny, demanding an end to Russia's offensive in Ukraine and blasting the Kremlin, had not been seen in Russia since February 2022, in the first days after Moscow ordered hundreds of thousands of troops across the border into Ukraine. The Kremlin has cracked down hard on dissent and has used strict military censorship laws to prosecute hundreds who have spoken out publicly against the military campaign. — AFP

## Nicaragua accuses Germany of helping 'genocide' in Gaza

THE HAGUE: Nicaragua on Friday accused Germany of facilitating "genocide" in Gaza in a case started in the International Court of Justice, by giving support to the Zionist entity and suspending funding of the UN Palestinian refugee agency. Through those measures, "Germany is facilitating the commission of genocide and, in any case has failed in its obligation to do everything possible to prevent the commission of genocide," Nicaragua argued in a filing published by the Hague-based court. Nicaragua was asking the court to take a swift interim stance against Germany before the case was given in-depth study by judges.

The lodging of the case follows the ICJ saying on January 26 that the Zionist entity must do everything to prevent genocidal acts in Gaza and take "immediate" measures for aid provisions. That interim order was given as the court moves to weigh in full a case lodged in December by South Africa alleging that the Zionist

entity was engaged in genocide in Gaza. The entity has dismissed South Africa's case as a "grossly distorted story". ICJ rulings are legally binding but the court has no enforcement mechanism. Rights groups Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch this week said the entity is disregarding the ICJ's interim order by limiting humanitarian aid to Gaza. Accusations from the Zionist entity that staff from UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, took part in the October 7 Hamas attacks against Zionist communities near the border with Gaza prompted several countries, including Germany, Britain, Japan and the United States, to suspend their funding. On Friday, the European Commission emphasized that it was maintaining its funding of UNRWA while reviewing arrangements in light of the Zionist allegation. The commission said it was releasing 50 million euros (\$54 million) to the UN agency next week with a further 32 million euros to follow later.

Hamas's attack resulted in the deaths of about 1,160 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Zionist figures. Hamas also took about 250 hostages, 130 of whom remain in Gaza, including 31 that the entity says are presumed dead. The Gaza health ministry on Friday gave the death toll in the strip from the unrelenting Zionist retaliation as 30,228, mostly women and children. —AFP



This handout satellite image dated March 1, shows the Belize-flagged cargo ship Rubymar, damaged in a February 19 missile strike claimed by the Houthis, floating in the Red Sea. — AFP

## Ship damaged by Houthi strike sinks: Yemen government

DUBAI: A cargo ship loaded with fertilizer has sunk in the Gulf of Aden less than two weeks after it was damaged by missiles from Yemen's Houthi rebels, Yemen's government said Saturday. The Houthis claimed the February 19 attack against the Rubymar, a cargo ship flying a Belizean flag and operated by a Lebanese firm, which transported combustible fertilizers.

The crew abandoned the ship and evacuated to safety after it was hit by two missiles. The vessel had departed the United Arab Emirates and was bound for the Bulgarian port of Varna. "The MV Rubymar sank last night, coinciding with weather factors and strong winds at sea," said a crisis cell of Yemen's internationally recognized government in charge of the case.

Roy Khoury, chief executive of the ship's operator Blue Fleet, said he was unaware of the sinking. "We have nobody on board to check if it's true or not," he told AFP. Fuel oil appeared to be leaking from the vessel in satellite images shared by Maxar Technologies and published by AFP.

The TankerTrackers website said the sinking would "cause an environmental catastrophe in the (Yemeni) territorial waters and in the Red Sea". "A spill of ammonium nitrate fertilizer in the sea could have several significant impacts on marine ecosystems," said Julien Jreissati, programme director for Greenpeace in the Middle East and North Africa.

The maritime security agency UKMTO, run by the British navy, said the Rubymar had been 35 nautical miles (65 kilometers) from the Yemeni port of Mokha when its crew was forced to abandon it. The Rubymar was identified as British-registered by the US military and security firm Ambrey, but Khoury has denied that information.

Since November, the Houthis have been carrying out attacks on ships linked to the Zionist entity in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, saying they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The Zionist entity has waged a war on Gaza since Hamas attacked the Zionist entity on October 7. In response to the Houthi attacks, the entity's main ally the United States established a multinational force in December to protect maritime traffic in the strategic waterway. Since January the US and its allies have launched numerous strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen, where the Iran-backed rebels have fought forces loyal to the internationally recognized government since 2014. — AFP



RAFAH: A young girl reacts as a child receives medical attention at the Kuwaiti hospital for wounds sustained in a Zionist bombardment that hit a camp sheltering displaced Palestinians on March 2, 2024. — AFP



## International

# Milei says to govern 'with or without' political support

## Argentina's president asks for 'patience' as economic reforms batter country's poor

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentina's libertarian President Javier Milei, in his first policy speech to parliament Friday, said he would push his package of sweeping economic reforms whether or not legislators back it.

"We are going to change the country for good ... with or without the support of political leaders, with all the legal resources of the executive," Milei told lawmakers, who have stalled his project of deregulation and budget cuts. "If you look for conflict, you will have conflict," he told them.

Milei offered a recap of his first 82 days in office, in which he devalued the peso more than 50 percent, slashed state subsidies for fuel and transport, cut tens of thousands of public service jobs, and scrapped hundreds of rules in his bid to deregulate the economy. "I ask for patience and trust," Milei said. "It will be some time before we can perceive the fruit of the economic reorganization and the reforms we are implementing."

Many of his planned reforms face chal-

lenges in court, with more than 60 lawsuits under way by labor unions, business chambers and NGOs, while Argentina has seen massive protests by citizens who fear Milei's plans will leave them poorer.

"We have not yet seen all the effects of the disaster we inherited, but we are convinced that we are on the right path, because for the first time in history we are attacking the problem by its cause: the fiscal deficit, and not by its symptoms," Milei said.

In recent weeks, Milei has reached out to influential provincial governors, party leaders and former presidents to forge a "new social contract" for the country, based on ten principles, including a "non-negotiable" balanced budget, "inviolable" private property, and public spending reduced to the "historic" level of 25 percent of GDP.

### Decades of mismanagement

Faced with parliamentary reticence, Milei scrapped almost half of the initial 664 articles in the sweeping deregulatory

measure issued after he took office, then withdrew it altogether. But the president has vowed to return his bill to parliament. And he has threatened to pass his reforms by presidential decree if lawmakers do not fall in line.

Argentina is grappling with severe economic struggles after decades of mismanagement that has driven poverty levels to nearly 60 percent and pushed inflation to an annual rate over 200 percent. Milei, a 53-year-old political outsider, won a resounding election victory last year on a wave of fury over a financial crisis marked by rampant money printing and fiscal deficit.

The government claims some of Milei's changes are already bearing fruit: In January, Argentina reported its first monthly budget surplus in 12 years while boosting foreign currency reserves from \$21 billion to \$27 billion. But as annual inflation continued to bite, the poor were hit hard as Milei also ripped away generous transport and energy subsidies and froze aid to 38,000



**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentina's President Javier Milei gestures while delivering his first policy speech to parliament on March 1, 2024. — AFP

soup kitchens pending an audit. Milei insists Argentina has to swallow a bitter pill to rescue the economy and has

warned the population to brace themselves for things getting worse before they get better. — AFP

## Mexico's election race heats up with 2 women vying for win

**MEXICO CITY:** Rival candidates launched their campaigns Friday for elections likely to produce Mexico's first woman president — a watershed for a nation with a long tradition of macho culture. Opposition hopeful Xóchitl Galvez took to the streets after the stroke of midnight in one of Mexico's most dangerous states, seeking to tap into voter concerns about the country's rampant violence.

Public opinion polls suggest that she faces a tough battle against ruling party candidate Claudia Sheinbaum, a former Mexico City mayor and close ally of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. Sheinbaum addressed large crowds of supporters in Mexico City's main square, vowing to continue the outgoing left-wing populist's "transformation" of the Latin American nation, including measures to fight corruption and help the poor.

On foreign policy, she said that Mexico would maintain its close cooperation with the United States but would also demand respect for its sovereignty and "never bow our heads." With three months to go before the June 2 vote, Sheinbaum, a 61-year-old scientist by training, enjoys a significant lead with 63 percent support, according to an average of polls compiled by the Oraculus research firm.

Galvez, also 61, has 31 percent support, while Jorge Alvarez, 38, of the Citizens' Movement party is a distant third with just five percent, polls show. At stake is the future of Latin America's second-largest economy, a country of 126 million people that is a key trading partner of the United States and a major tourist destination, but which



**Mexico's opposition presidential candidate Xóchitl Galvez.**

faces huge challenges from illegal migration and drug-related violence. Sheinbaum's "biggest challenge is security because we're experiencing a time of chaos," said David Jimenez, a 49-year-old office worker at the ruling party rally.

### 'People are afraid'

Galvez, an outspoken businesswoman with Indigenous roots, sought to put the focus on the country's insecurity with a night-time rally in the city of Fresnillo in the violence-wracked state of Zacatecas. She led a candle-lit march through the streets before sharing the stage with a relative of one of Mexico's more than 100,000 missing persons, holding a minute's silence for victims of violence.

"Here in Fresnillo, as in all of Mexico, people are afraid," Galvez said, hitting out at Lopez Obrador's "hugs not bullets" strategy to tackle violent crime at its roots by combating poverty and inequality, rather

than using military force. "Hugs for criminals are over," she said. "To have a Mexico without fear, we're going to restrain the most violent and aggressive criminal organizations in our country," she added.

It was the first of several planned stops in cities considered by their residents to be among the most unsafe in Mexico, to highlight what Galvez says is the government's failure to tackle spiraling violence. Nearly 450,000 people have been murdered across Mexico since 2006 when then-president Felipe Calderon launched a controversial anti-drug military campaign, according to official figures.

### 'Formidable party machinery'

Sheinbaum is a staunch supporter and confidant of Lopez Obrador, known by his initials AMLO, who enjoys an approval rating of nearly 70 percent but is required by the constitution to leave office after one six-year term.



**Mexican leftist presidential candidate Claudia Sheinbaum.**

"Sheinbaum is in a very strong position," analyst Michael Shifter of the Inter-American Dialogue think tank in Washington told AFP. "Although nothing is impossible in politics, with just over three months to go before the election, it is highly unlikely that Galvez will be able to gain enough ground to make it a competitive race. AMLO is too popular, and the government and party machinery is too formidable," he added.

Galvez represents an opposition coalition made up of the Institutional Revolutionary Party—which ruled the country for more than 70 years until 2000 — the conservative National Action Party and the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution.

But her background sets her apart from the traditional conservative opposition—she wears Indigenous clothing, uses colloquial language peppered with profanity and is known for travelling around Mexico City by bicycle. — AFP

## Kuwait plans 'amnesty' for...

Continued from Page 1

through strict regulations would be focused upon in the upcoming period. In regards to the priorities of the Ministry of Defense, the minister indicated that they were focusing on maintaining the morale of the army and armed forces as well as developing their capabilities.

Resolving issues related to corruption would also be on the agenda of the Ministry of Defense to continue anti-corruption action initiated by late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, he said, adding that extending cooperation with regional and international military entities was also an important goal. Sheikh Fahad referred to the Public Prosecutor last month a file containing suspicions of crimes related to public funds, money laundering, and financial irregularities.

The Ministry of Defense said the referral was taken as further action against crimes involving public funds and would enhance transparency as well as cement justice and neutrality. Asked about the issue of national military service, the minister said that it was essential to implement the step to fend off threats, citing the resistance of Kuwaitis during the Iraqi invasion in 1990-91. Having skills in combat and military helped Kuwaitis use weapons, rig explosives, and set plans to defeat the invaders, and there are several benefits of the national service, Sheikh Fahad affirmed.

He noted that challenges like COVID-19 pandemic had made it clear that national service in the army was a must, noting that the service taught more than utiliz-

ing weapons: it instilled skills to run the country in case of man-made or natural disasters. On refuting and combating false news and rumors, Sheikh Fahad said that the Interior Ministry was keen on countering such threats, which might lead to instability and fear. Those behind the rumors would surely face justice, he affirmed, adding that whether in Kuwait or abroad, those committing such acts would be held accountable.

"Regarding those using fake names to publish from abroad, we in a short period of time will control this issue and know who is providing owners of those accounts. I promise that we will eliminate many of these accounts in the near future," he said.

In regards to the new traffic law, the minister said that the draft law would be discussed and possibly ratified in the first session of the National Assembly, saying that it was a law for the betterment of Kuwait as a whole. He noted that many of the traffic accidents were due to leniency in the current fines, which might lead to fatalities, stressing that the punishment must equal the size of the crime in the sense that those passing the red light, for example, must pay a hefty price for such a life-threatening act. Parents, he added, share responsibility too. "Most of the time, they are paying fines for crimes committed by their kids."

Speaking of the war against illicit drugs, Sheikh Fahad said that there was continuous cooperation with fellow GCC countries to fight drug trafficking, revealing that there were preemptive operations against drug dealers. Since taking the helm of the Interior Ministry, Sheikh Fahad said, the ministerial teams have managed to bust 30 drug-related smuggling operations and pointed out that the main targets of drug dealers were individuals between the ages of 16 and 25. — KUNA

greater risk of death from heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. Being overweight increased the risk of death during the coronavirus pandemic. Countries in Polynesia and Micronesia, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa have suffered more from the rise. "These countries now have higher obesity rates than many high-income industrialized countries, especially those in Europe," the study said. "In the past we have tended to think of obesity as a problem of the rich, now a problem of the world," said Branca, who highlighted the fast lifestyle changes in low and middle-income countries.

The "very rapid transformation of the food systems is not for the better". Majid Ezzati of Imperial College London, the study's lead author, said there were signs that obesity was leveling out in some southern European countries such as France and Spain, "especially for women". But he said that in most countries there are more people suffering from obesity than being under-weight, which the study said had fallen since 1990. — AFP

## US drops aid into Gaza as kids...

Continued from Page 1

It also comes as negotiations continue for a ceasefire between Zionists and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which has been under siege. "We conducted a combined humanitarian assistance airdrop into Gaza" involving three US Air Force C-130 transport planes to provide "relief to civilians affected by the ongoing conflict," a US military official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

US Central Command, in a post on social media platform X, said the operation was conducted together with Jordan and saw planes drop "over 38,000 meals along the coastline of Gaza allowing for civilian access to the critical aid". The dire humanitarian situation in Gaza has led to the deaths of at least 13 children from "malnutrition and dehydration" in recent days, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

In an incident that has thrown a spotlight on the crisis, dozens of Palestinians were killed before dawn on Thursday in a chaotic rush for aid from a convoy of trucks in Gaza City. The Gaza health ministry said Zionist forces shot them but the army insisted most died in a stampede or crush. A United Nations team that visited the city's Al-Shifa Hospital reported seeing "a large number" of gunshot wounds among Palestinians in the aftermath of the aid truck incident. The health ministry said 116 people were killed and more than 750 wounded in the incident, which drew widespread international condemnation.

### 'Famine almost inevitable'

The European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the shooting "against civilians trying to access foodstuff is unjustifiable". He joined calls for an "impartial international investigation on this tragic event". British foreign minister David Cameron said Zionist entity had "an obligation to ensure that significantly more humanitarian aid reaches" Gazans. On Friday a UN team visited some of the wounded from the aid incident, in Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital, and saw a "large number of gunshot wounds", UN chief Antonio Guterres's spokesman said.

The hospital received 70 of the dead, and around 200 wounded were still there during the team's visit, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. Hossam Abu Safiya, director of Gaza City's Kamal Adwan Hos-

pital, said all the casualties it admitted were hit by "bullets and shrapnel from occupation forces". Gaza has faced dwindling supplies of humanitarian relief across its land borders, which aid groups blame at least in part on Zionists - the recipient of billions of dollars in US military aid.

Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN humanitarian office OCHA, said on Friday that "a famine is almost inevitable" in Gaza unless things change. Laerke cited the near-total closure of commercial food imports, the "trickle of trucks" coming in with food aid, and the "massive access constraints" to moving around inside Gaza. The United Nations has spoken of particular problems accessing northern Gaza, where residents have been reduced to eating animal fodder.

### 'Everyone is suffering'

Jordan first announced an aid airdrop in November and has carried out multiple missions since then, some with the cooperation of European countries, including Britain, France and the Netherlands. Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have also begun working together on airdrops. AFP TV images showed people running and pedalling fast on bicycles past bomb-damaged buildings on a rutted dirt road to reach aid floating down to Gaza City.

Hisham Abu Eid, 28, of Gaza City's Zeitun area, said he got two bags of flour from an aid distribution and gave one to his neighbors. "Everyone is suffering from famine. Aid that is getting into Gaza is rare and not enough for even a small number of people. Famine is killing people," Abu Eid said. The International Rescue Committee said the very fact airdrops were "being considered is testament to the serious access challenges". The group said parachuting aid mostly distracts "time and effort from proven solutions to help at scale".

### Truce talks

The aid convoy deaths pushed the number of Palestinian war dead in Gaza to 30,320, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry. Biden's administration has been working with mediators from Qatar and Egypt to try to secure a truce in the fighting between Zionists and Hamas. A Hamas delegation was expected in Cairo Saturday for talks, a source close to the group told AFP, the latest move in a flurry of diplomacy aiming for a truce before Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month which begins on March 10 or 11. An AFP journalist reported air strikes and tank shelling during the night on the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Yunis. — AFP

## Over one billion suffer obesity...

Continued from Page 1

While doctors knew obesity numbers were rising fast, the symbolic figure had previously been expected in 2030.

Researchers analyzed the weight and height measurements of more than 220 million people in more than 190 countries to reach the estimates, Lancet said. They estimated that 504 million adult women and 374 million men were obese in 2022. The study said the obesity rate had nearly tripled for men (14 percent) since 1990 and more than doubled for women (18.5 percent). Some 159 million children and adolescents were living with obesity in 2022, according to the study, up from about 31 million in 1990.

The chronic and complex illness is accompanied by a



## International

# Scholz vows probe into leaked Ukraine war talks

## Leaked 38-minute audio discussion on use of German missiles lands Berlin in hot waters

**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday promised a full investigation after what appeared to be a recording of confidential army talks on the Ukraine war was posted on Russian social media, in a potentially huge embarrassment for Berlin.

The head of Russia's state-backed RT channel, Margarita Simonyan, on Friday posted the 38-minute audio recording of what she claimed were German army officers on February 19 discussing striking Crimea. "What is being reported is a very serious matter and that is why it is now being investigated very carefully, very intensively and very quickly," Scholz said on a visit to Rome. In the recording, discussions can be heard on the possible use by Ukrainian forces of German-made Taurus missiles and their potential impact. Topics include aiming the missiles at targets such as a key bridge over the Kerch strait linking the Russian mainland to Crimea, which was annexed by Russia in 2014.

The discussions also cover the use of missiles provided to Kyiv by France and Britain. Experts consulted by Der Spiegel magazine said they believed the recording was authentic. A defense ministry spokeswoman told AFP it was investigating "whether communications in the air force sector were intercepted".

### 'Sworn enemies'

Kyiv has long been clamoring for Germany to provide it with Taurus missiles, which can reach targets up to 500 kilometers (about 300 miles) away. Scholz has so far refused to send the missiles, fearing that it would lead to an escalation of the conflict. "If this story turns out to be true, it would be a highly problematic event,"

Green party politician Konstantin von Notz told the RND broadcaster. "The question arises as to whether this is a one-off incident or a structural safety problem," he added.

Speaking at a diplomatic forum in Turkey on Saturday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the recording indicates that Ukraine and its backers "do not want to change their course at all and want to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia on the battlefield".

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova demanded that Germany "promptly" provide explanations for the discussion. "Attempts to avoid answering the questions will be regarded as an admission of guilt," she said. "Our age-old rivals — the Germans — have again turned into our sworn enemies," former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, now deputy head of the Security Council and the foreign ministry, wrote in a Telegram post.

### Taurus missiles

The acquisition of German Taurus missiles would provide a massive boost for Ukraine as Kyiv struggles to fend off Russia's invasion. France and Britain have supplied Kyiv with SCALP or Storm Shadow missiles, both of which have a range of about 250 kilometers.

But Scholz said last week that Germany could not justify matching British and French moves in sending long-range missiles to Ukraine and supporting the weapon system's deployment. "This is a very long-range weapon, and what the British and French are doing in terms of targeting and supporting targeting cannot be done in Germany," Scholz said, without specifying exactly what he meant.



**ODESA:** A local resident watches rescue works at the site of a heavily damaged multi-storey apartment building, following a Russian drone attack, in Odesa, on March 2, 2024. — AFP

Britain denied that it had any direct involvement in operating the missiles. "Ukraine's use of Storm Shadow and its targeting processes are the business of the Armed Forces of Ukraine," a Ministry of Defence (MoD) spokesperson said in a statement to AFP.

Roderich Kiesewetter, from Germany's opposition conservatives, warned that further recordings may also be leaked. "A number of other conversations will cer-

tainly have been intercepted and may be leaked at a later date for Russia's benefit," he told broadcaster ZDF.

It can be assumed "that the conversation was deliberately leaked by Russia at this point in time with a specific intention", namely "to prevent Taurus delivery by Germany", he said. According to Der Spiegel, the videoconference was held not on a secret internal army network but on the WebEx platform. — AFP

## Bangladesh fire toll rises to 46; safety lapses to blame

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh firefighters said Friday that glaring safety lapses were responsible for a Dhaka restaurant blaze that killed 46 people, with more deaths likely among those rushed to hospital in critical condition. Thursday night's fire began at a popular biryani restaurant at the bottom of a seven-floor commercial property in the capital's upscale Bailey Road neighborhood.

The entire building, home to several other eateries, was soon engulfed by flames that took fire crews two hours to bring under control. Fire service operations director Rezaul Karim told AFP the blaze had been made worse by numerous cooking gas cylinders stored haphazardly in stairwells and restaurant kitchens. "People heard the explosions of several gas cylinders during the fire," he said.

Main Uddin, the national fire services chief, said the building lacked safety measures. "It did not have at least two staircases or a fire exit," he told AFP. "Most of the people died from suffocation." Fire officials earlier told reporters they suspected the inferno began when one of the gas cylinders accidentally caught fire.

Police inspector Bacchu Mia told AFP that two more people had succumbed to their wounds on Friday while being treated in hospital. "The death toll is now 46. Two people have died from injuries — one at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and another at the Police Hospital," he told AFP. Around 15 people remained in critical condition, he added.

### 'Turned into charcoal'

At a hospital treating the wounded, 30-year-old Asif Pathan told AFP that his cousin Minhaj Khan had been dining at the restaurant when the fire broke out and was killed. "His friend escaped by jumping through the window, but Minhaj couldn't," Pathan said. "His body has turned into charcoal."



**People gather near a commercial building a day after a fire accident, as firefighters and forensic experts inspect the site on March 1, 2024.**

Pathan said he was waiting for the hospital to conduct DNA tests to confirm the identity of his cousin's body before it was released to his family. Members of the public helped fire crews carry hoses and rescue survivors who clambered down the outside walls to safety as firefighters fought to bring the blaze under control. "We were at the sixth floor when we first saw smoke racing through the staircase. A lot of people rushed upstairs," Sohel, a restaurant manager who gave only his first name, told AFP.

"We used a water pipe to climb down the building. Some of us were injured as they jumped." At one point at least 50 people were on the rooftop waiting to be rescued by fire cranes, Kamruzzaman Majumdar, an environmental science professor who was among the stranded, wrote in a Facebook post.

several times during the day, the official IRNA news agency reported. A record figure of 15,200 hopefuls were competing for seats in the 290-member parliament. Another 144 candidates sought a place in the 88-member Assembly of Experts, which is exclusively made up of male Islamic scholars.

The Assembly selects or, if necessary, dismisses Iran's supreme leader. Many potential candidates for the chamber were disqualified. Local Fars news agency estimated turnout at "more than 40 percent", among 61 million eligible voters.

President Ebrahim Raisi welcomed the voters' "enthusiastic" participation as "another historic failure to (Iran's) enemies," according to IRNA. Iran considers the United States, its Western allies and the Zionist entity enemies of the state and accuses them of seeking to intervene in its internal affairs.

Reformist daily Ham Mihan ran an opinion piece titled "The Silent Majority", which said turnout was "estimated to be lower than" in previous elections. Iran's 2020 parliament was elected during the COVID pandemic with a turnout of 42.57 percent — the lowest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

A state TV poll had found more than half of respondents were indifferent about this year's elections. Candidates for parliament are vetted by a body, the Guardian Council, whose members are determined by the supreme leader.

The present parliament is dominated by conservatives and ultra-conservatives, and analysts expected a similar makeup in the new assembly. Despite Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's appeal for people to cast ballots, many Iranians were split on whether or not to do so.

Former reformist president Mohammad Khatami was among people who avoided the poll, according to a coalition of parties called the Reform Front. In February the conservative Javan daily quoted Khatami as saying Iran is "very far from free and competitive elections." — AFP

Police investigators were seen walking inside the gutted building and documenting the wreckage on Friday morning, hours after the government ordered an investigation into the fire's origins. Hundreds of anxious family members rushed to the nearby Dhaka Medical College Hospital overnight as ambulances brought the dead and injured to the clinic.

Explosions and fires are frequent in buildings and factories across Bangladesh, where safety standards are lax and corruption often allows them to be ignored. Deadly blazes are typically sparked by gas cylinders, faulty air conditioners and bad electrical wiring. Bangladesh's worst fire took place in 2012, when a blaze ripped through a garment factory on Dhaka's outskirts, killing at least 111 people and injuring more than 200 others. — AFP

## Europe battles powder shortage to supply Ukraine

**PARIS:** Hard-to-find gunpowder is hindering Europe's scramble to provide hundreds of thousands of shells for Ukraine's defensive effort against Russian invaders, with solutions only starting to emerge. "We have all become aware of the need to face up to the scarcity of some components, especially gunpowders," French President Emmanuel Macron said Monday after a gathering of Kyiv's allies in Paris. "Powder is really what's lacking today," he added.

Gunpowder goes into propellant charges that hurl artillery shells — such as the NATO-standard 155-millimetre projectiles used in many guns sent to Ukraine — over distances of tens of kilometers. "A simple explosive artillery shell has three parts. It has a steel casing, a high-explosive main charge and a detonator" usually set to trigger the blast on impact, said Johann Hoecherl, a munitions expert at the German armed forces university in Munich.

"Propellant charges are usually separate, because (gunners) will take one or two, up to six or even eight" depending on the desired range, he added. While the propellant is still referred to as gunpowder "it's not powder at all these days, it's made up of rods or pellets", Hoecherl said. In a video on its website, German arms manufacturer Rheinmetall illustrates stackable propellant cylinders filled with explosive pellets slotting in behind a shell in the breach of a cannon.

### 'Innovation at work'

Europe counts a very small number of powder producers, said Jean-Paul Maulny, deputy director of France's Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRIS). They include firms like Eurenco, with operations in France, Belgium and Sweden, and Nitrochemie, majority-owned by Rheinmetall, with sites in Germany and Switzerland.

With many countries pushing to bring production home, France "is in the process of relocating part of Eurenco's production to Bourges" around 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of Paris, Maulny said. "This is one of the bottlenecks for munitions," he added. "The top question is the quantity of production."

EU internal market commissioner Thierry Breton told reporters in Paris Friday that the bloc also faced challenges finding the raw materials for gunpowder. "To make powder, you need a specific kind of cotton, which mostly comes from China," he said. Nitrocellulose, also known as guncotton, is a key ingredient in gunpowder manufacture. "Would you know it, deliveries of this cotton from China stopped as if by chance a few months ago," Breton added. China and Russia have in recent years ramped up economic cooperation and diplomatic contacts, and their strategic partnership has grown closer since the invasion of Ukraine. In Russia this week, China's Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong declared relations "are at their best period in history". Breton said that "Nordic countries have found a substitute for the Chinese cotton ... innovation is at work, precisely to meet the need for powder, because ... we have problems today with powder capacity".

Companies producing the substitute ingredients for powder would be among those selected for grants under the EU's Act In Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) to be announced next week, Breton said.

### 'Much larger scale'

Breton predicted that EU efforts to boost artillery shell output would bring the bloc's annual production capacity to between 1.5 million and 1.7 million by the end of this year. He estimated that the equivalent figure for Russia was "a little below two million".

"Everyone is putting themselves in a position to manufacture on a much larger scale," said IRIS expert Maulny. "For now, the Ukrainians are short of shells... the Russians don't have a shortage since they got stocks from the North Koreans, but it could happen in the coming months," he added. "No-one was ready for a high-intensity conflict where there's enormous consumption of military equipment. We haven't seen a war like this since World War II," Maulny said. — AFP

## Iran counts votes as reports suggest low turnout

**TEHRAN:** Iran began counting ballots on Saturday after a vote for parliament and a key clerical body, with local media estimating a low turnout and conservatives expected to dominate. Friday's elections were the first since widespread protests triggered by the September 2022 death in police custody of Mahsa Amini, 22, an Iranian Kurd. She had been arrested for allegedly violating the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.



**TEHRAN:** Iranian women fill out their ballots before casting their vote, during elections to select members of parliament and a key clerical body. — AFP

Iran has also been badly affected by international sanctions that have led to an economic crisis since the last elections in 2020. State TV reported early Saturday the "start of vote counting" after polling stations closed at midnight. Voting hours had been extended



# Business

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024

## Zain, Samsung sign strategic MoU

Agreement at Mobile World Congress 2024 in Barcelona

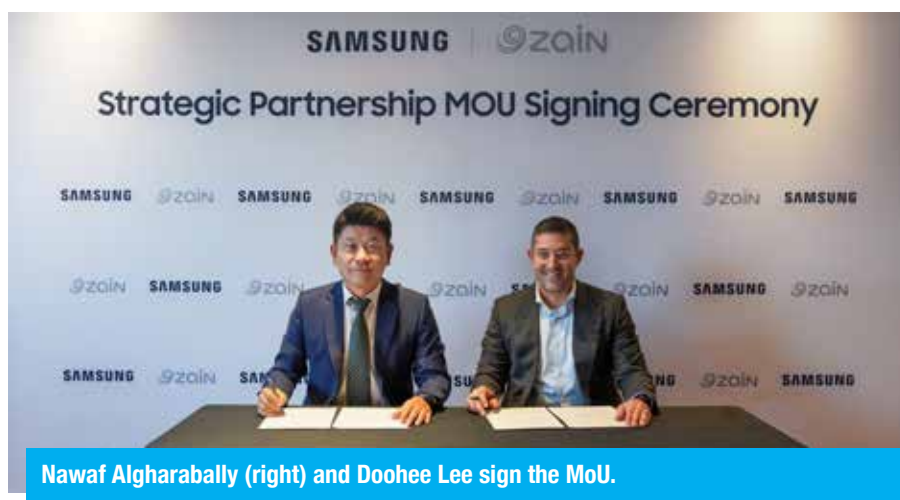


Algharabally and Lee with Zain and Samsung executives.

**KUWAIT/BARCELONA:** Zain announced it has signed a memorandum of understanding with global partner Samsung at the Mobile World Congress (MWC 2024) in Barcelona, Spain. The agreement explores future joint collaboration and new opportunities to expand on Zain and Samsung's long-term partnership to bring the best tech innovations to consumers and businesses in the Kuwaiti market.

The signing ceremony was attended by Zain Kuwait Acting CEO Nawaf Algharabally, Samsung Gulf President Doohee Lee, Zain Group Chief Investment and Digital Transformation Officer Malek Hammoud, Zain Kuwait CCO Meshal Al-Kandari, Zain Kuwait Chief Enterprise & Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, Samsung Gulf Senior Sales Director Fadi Abu Shamat, and executives from the two partners.

The MoU explores future collaboration opportunities between Zain and Samsung to grow their existing, long-



Nawaf Algharabally (right) and Doohee Lee sign the MoU.

term partnership that has seen numerous operational and commercial successes throughout the past years. The agreement also sets pillars for the two companies to join forces and expand their efforts to bring the best services, solutions, and innovations to the local market. This

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### Agreement explores future joint collaboration and new opportunities to bring the best innovations to consumers and businesses in Kuwait

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## Musk sues OpenAI over 'betrayal' of mission



This combination of pictures shows Sam Altman and Elon Musk. — AFP

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Elon Musk has launched a legal case against OpenAI, the AI firm he helped to set up in 2015, accusing its leaders of a "betrayal" of its founding mission. The tycoon, who left OpenAI in 2018, argued in documents filed in a San Francisco court late Thursday that the firm was always intended as a nonprofit entity. But he said recent boardroom changes meant OpenAI was now effectively a subsidiary of software giant Microsoft, arguing that this was breach of contract.

Musk has accused Microsoft of controlling OpenAI several times, with both firms denying the claims. Anti-trust regulators in the United States and Europe are also investigating the ties between the companies. Microsoft, whose embrace of AI has made it the world's biggest company by market capitalization, declined to comment.

OpenAI captured the public imagination in late 2022 with the release of its chatbot ChatGPT, which can generate poems and essays and even succeed in exams. The firm has also developed image and video generating tools seen as the leaders in their field. The success of its products has helped attract huge investment into AI, which boosters say could transform every aspect of human life. Microsoft, a major investor in OpenAI since 2019, poured billions more into the firm last year.

And the software giant stepped in when OpenAI's board fired CEO Sam Altman in November last year, hiring him and offering to house any staff members who were unhappy with his ousting. The OpenAI board later climbed down, Altman was reinstated and Microsoft was given an observer seat on the board after the removal of members who were critical of Altman. — AFP

## WTO talks fail, throwing trade body into 'crisis'

**ABU DHABI:** A high-level WTO conference ended Saturday with a temporary extension of an e-commerce moratorium but no deals on agriculture and fisheries, throwing into doubt the effectiveness of the multilateral trade body.

The outcomes of the World Trade Organization's 13th ministerial conference in Abu Dhabi highlighted the sharp divisions between the body's 164 members amid geopolitical tensions and economic headwinds that are threatening global commerce.

"The WTO needed a good crisis and perhaps this will lead to a realization that we cannot continue like this," said a senior European Union official participating in the talks. Speaking at the closing press conference, the Emirati chair of the so-called MC13 gathering, Thani Al-Zeyoudi, acknowledged the shortcomings.

"Despite our best efforts, we failed to agree on some texts which are of great importance to many of our members," said Al-Zeyoudi, who also serves as the UAE's foreign trade minister.

For her part, WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the talks came up "against an international backdrop marked by greater uncertainty than at any time I can remember." "We have achieved some important things and we have not managed to complete others," she said, while insisting that the "glass was half full". The WTO, the only international body dealing with the rules of trade between nations, requires full consensus from all members to chalk up deals.

It was hoping the MC13 would replicate the landmark

## US manufacturing activity shrinks quickly in February

**WASHINGTON:** US manufacturing activity contracted in February more quickly than markets expected, according to an industry survey published Friday, as demand slowed and output eased. The manufacturing sector has been a casualty of the US Federal Reserve's battle against inflation through interest rate increases. Higher rates act to slow demand by raising the cost of borrowing on



ABU DHABI: Delegates attend the 13th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi. — AFP

success of its 2022 ministerial in Geneva, which yielded a deal on fisheries and saw members agree to restore a now-defunct dispute settlement system by the end of this year. But the latest ministerial fell short of that objective.

"The unexpected weakness of the overall (MC13) package should... serve as a wake-up call," the secretary general of the International Chamber of Commerce, John Denton, said in a statement. After a 2022 deal that banned subsidies contributing to illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing, the WTO was hoping to conclude a second package focusing on subsidies that result in overcapacity and overfishing. Negotiations in recent months at the WTO headquarters in Geneva had enabled a draft text to be brought forward for a second fisheries deal, which provided flexibility and advantages for developing countries. But some—notably India—demanded further concessions, including tran-

everything from consumer mortgages to loans.

The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said its manufacturing index stood at 47.8 percent last month, down from 49.1 percent a month earlier. This was significantly below market expectations, according to Briefing.com, and kept the index below the 50-point marking separating expansion from contraction for the 16th month in a row.

"The US manufacturing sector continued to contract (and at a faster rate compared to January), with demand slowing, output easing and inputs remaining accommodative," ISM survey chief Timothy Fiore said in a statement. This was reflected in the fact that the ISM's New Orders and Production indexes reversed course in February, reentering contraction territory.

"Factory activity remains under pressure but

weakness in the sector has not spread more broadly to the economy," High Frequency Economics chief US economist Rubeela Farooqi wrote in a note to clients. "The outlook is uncertain but there could be support for factory activity as borrowing costs move lower and credit conditions ease," she added.

Despite the gloomy manufacturing picture, the overall economy continued its expansion for a 46th consecutive month, according to ISM. This is likely to be welcome news for President Joe Biden, who is looking to talk up the strength of the American economy ahead of presidential elections in November.

The ongoing manufacturing challenges stand in stark contrast to the services sector, which came in at 53.4 percent in a January ISM survey, marking the 13th straight month of expansion. — AFP





Thousands start the race after the start signal sounds from Souq Sharq.

Minister of Youth Dawood Maarafie poses for a photo with Gulf Bank executive management officials.

# Thousands gather for Gulf Bank's 642 Marathon celebrating active lifestyles

## Event held in presence of Minister of Youth and the bank's executive management

**KUWAIT:** On a day characterized by exceptional athleticism and a festive atmosphere, thousands of athletes, beginners, and individuals from every walk of life came together yesterday morning for the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, one of Kuwait's most significant sports and social events, distinguished by its worldwide acclaim.

With primary sponsorship from Gulf Bank and organization by Suffix Event Management Company, this year's marathon kicked off early morning on Souq Sharq Bridge, amidst an atmosphere buzzing with optimism and anticipation. The excitement was heightened by the opportunity to journey through a spectacular marathon route, encompassing Kuwait's most iconic landmarks such as the Kuwait Towers, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, the Grand Mosque, Souq Al-Mubarakiya, Gulf Bank headquarters, and more.

Al-Qattan expressed his delight at the substantial turnout for this year's Gulf Bank 642 Marathon. He noted the wide range of participants, including athletes, beginners, and families from different age groups and backgrounds. Al-Qattan emphasized that this diverse participation reaffirms Gulf Bank's commitment to promoting social sustainability, offering individuals the chance to participate in enjoyable and wholesome family sports activities.

Al-Qattan highlighted how the Gulf Bank Marathon has evolved into a distinctive symbol of both local and global running events. It embodies not only a sporting endeavor but also a social and health initiative eagerly anticipated annually both within and beyond Kuwait. He emphasized that the marathon serves as an invitation to shift towards a healthier lifestyle, encouraging regular exercise and walking as essential components of daily routines.

to everyone involved in organizing this remarkable sporting and social event. He offered special thanks to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, the Municipality, the Public Authority for Sports, and all volunteers for their invaluable contributions.

### Suffix celebrates Gulf Bank 642 Marathon success

Speaking on behalf of Suffix Sports Management Company, Ahmed Al-Majed, the General Manager, expresses, "We take pride in sustaining our partnership with Gulf Bank to orchestrate this remarkable event. With each passing year, the mara-

running, a 10-kilometer running race, and a half marathon covering 21 kilometers. Eligibility ranged from ages 11 and up for the 5-kilometer race, ages 16 and above for the 10-kilometer race, and ages 18 and older for the half marathon.

The Gulf Bank Marathon stands as the largest sports event held in the heart of Kuwait City, guiding runners through the scenic landmarks of Kuwait. Notably, the Gulf Bank Marathon is the sole marathon in Kuwait accredited by "World Athletics" with the prestigious "Road Race Label" designation and listed among international marathons by the Association of International

transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

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

### Youngsters shine at Gulf Bank Marathon's new children's category

The Gulf Bank Marathon introduced a new category for children aged 3 to 9 years old, with hundreds of young participants joining the event at Al-Shaheed Park on Feb 29, 2024. Each child showcased their spirit and enthusiasm.

### ChatGPT: Gulf Bank Marathon ranks among the best

ChatGPT considers the Gulf Bank Marathon to be among the best in Kuwait, distinguished by its unique route near the beautiful city of Kuwait. Not only is it tailored for experienced runners, but it also includes beginners and families, contributing to raising awareness and promoting sports.

### Gulf Bank booth

As part of Gulf Bank's efforts to engage with the public and customers, the Gulf Bank booth at the marathon featured numerous activities and events that attracted many participants.

### Kuwait University competition: Unveiling local talent

Highlighting local talent, Kuwaiti students were engaged in a competition at Kuwait University.

### Promoting social sustainability

The marathon and its route are tailored to inspire participants to enjoy this delightful family day, regardless of their regular exercise habits. Gulf Bank launches the ninth edition of the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon', reaffirming its dedication to promoting social sustainability across the country.



A group photo of the Gulf Bank team with senior executive management officials.

Furthermore, Al-Qattan stressed Gulf Bank's dedication to fostering community engagement through the initiation of carefully curated programs and the sponsorship of impactful events. He emphasized the Gulf Bank Marathon's positive influence in raising awareness about health and the significance of physical activity, particularly in addressing the increasing rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.

Al-Qattan expressed his appreciation

to everyone involved in organizing this remarkable sporting and social event. He offered special thanks to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, the Municipality, the Public Authority for Sports, and all volunteers for their invaluable contributions.

He continued, "We look forward to consistently raising the bar for sporting events in the region. The outstanding success of the ninth edition of the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon fills us with great satisfaction. We hope that everyone had a day filled with sports and actively participated in community engagement."

### Diverse race categories & global recognition

The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon this year featured categories tailored to suit participants of different athletic abilities. These included a 5-kilometer race for walking or

Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS). Moreover, participants in the marathon have the chance to accumulate points and qualify for the "AbbottWMM Wanda Age Group World Rankings," granting them entry into the world championship for age groups over 40 years old.

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

### Support sporting activities

The Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Dawood Maarafie, praised the great turnout in participating in the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, which provides a good opportunity for amateur and professional runners.

He called on the private sector to follow Gulf Bank's example in organizing sporting events at this distinguished level, with each company adopting its own sport, indicating that the ministry spares no effort in supporting these efforts, which are an important and complementary aspect of the state's efforts to support sporting activities.

### Significant Influence on community health and engagement

During this event, Mohammad Al-Qattan, the General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, expressed his satisfaction with the impressive turnout at this year's Gulf Bank 642 Marathon. He noted the diverse array of participants spanning different age groups and backgrounds, from athletes to beginners, and families of all generations.

During this event, Mohammad Al-Qattan, General Manager of Consumer Bank-



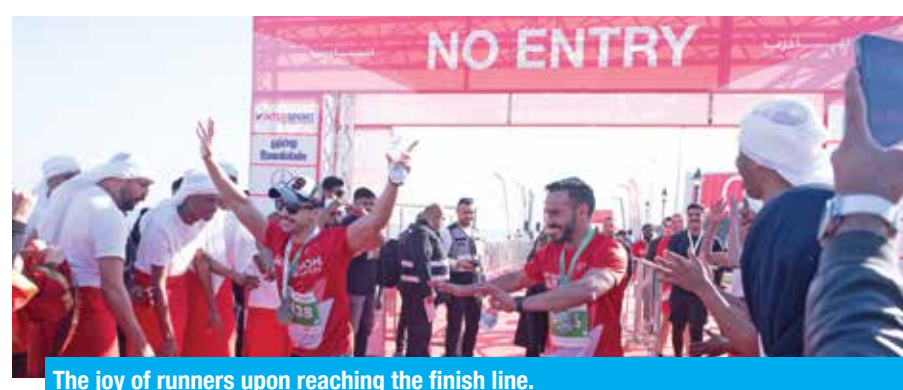
Waleed Khaled Mandani, Mohammed Al-Qattan and Ahmed Al-Majed with some of the winners.



Part of the children's race activities organized in Al-Shaheed Park.



Part of the events next to Gulf Bank's headquarters.



The joy of runners upon reaching the finish line.



Entertainment events.



## Business

# NBK Wealth Thought Leadership: Outcome-based investment solutions



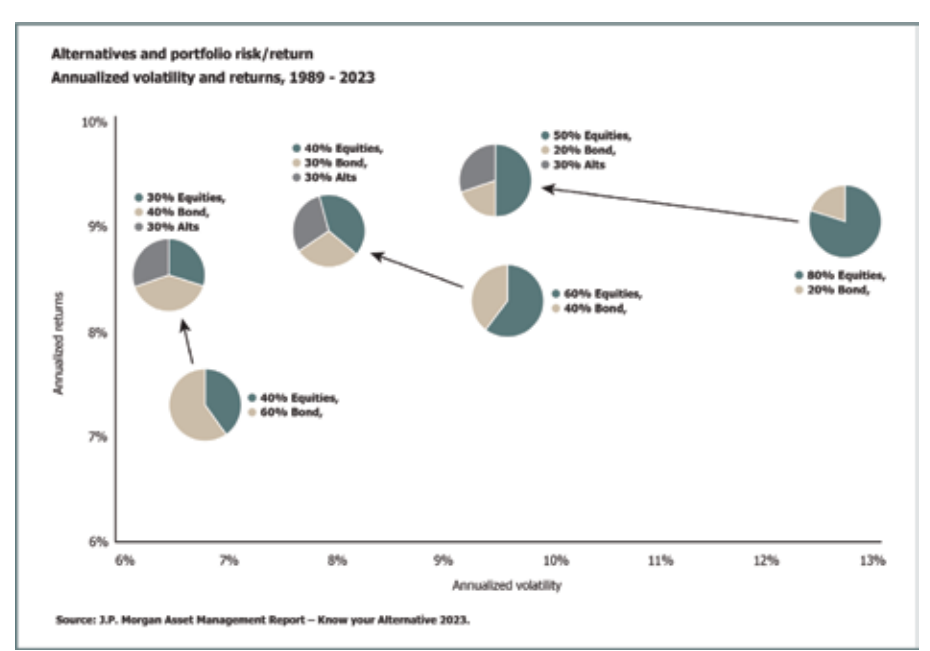
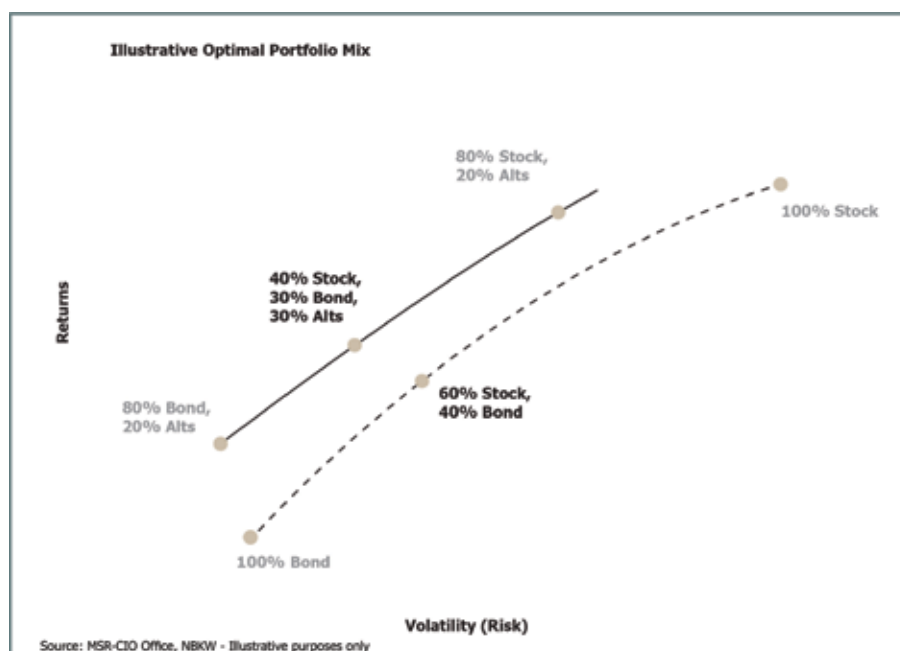
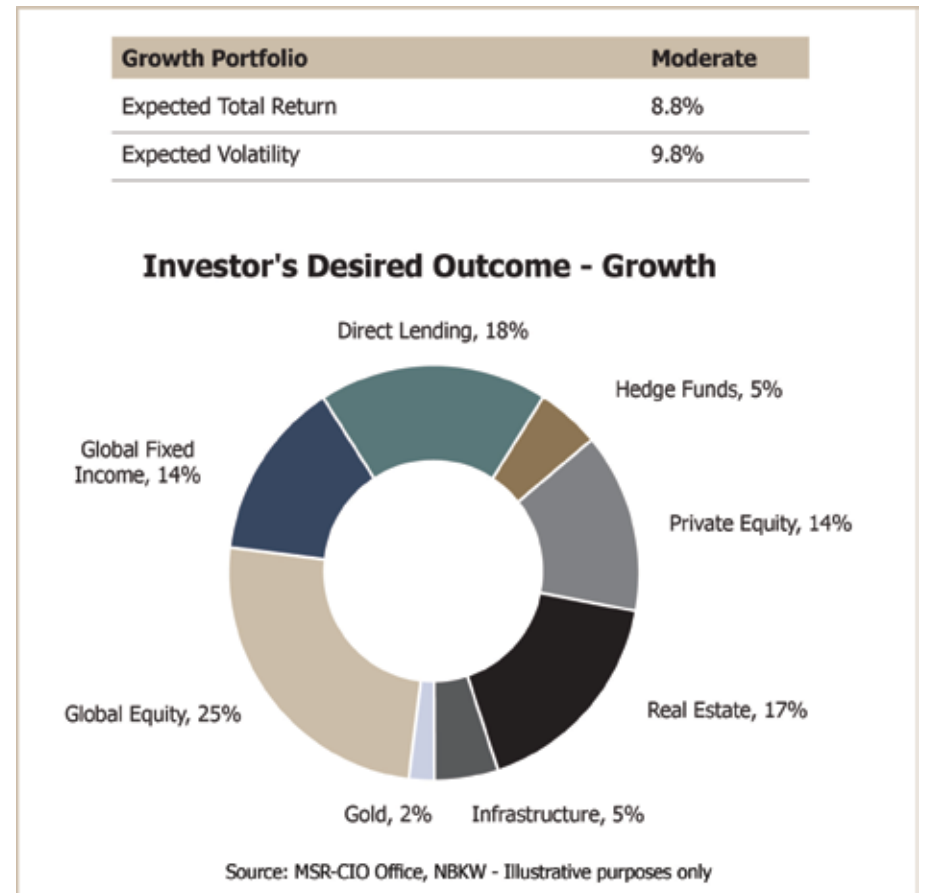
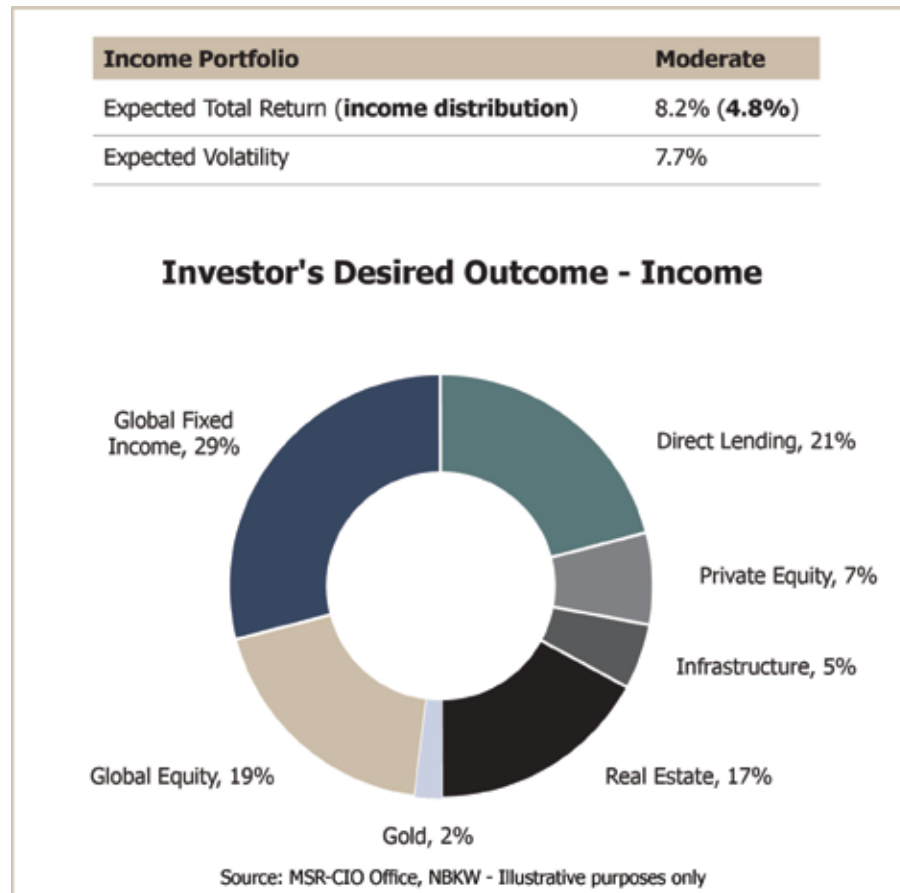
**KUWAIT:** In the ever-changing landscape of investing, outcome-based investment solutions focus on achieving specific, measurable results rather than seeking to outperform a benchmark. It involves aligning investment decisions with desired outcomes, such as capital appreciation (growth), cash flow generation (income), wealth preservation, their individual financial goals, risk tolerance, and time horizons leading to a personalized investment strategy.

This approach requires a shift in mindset, moving away from the traditional emphasis on short-term financial gains and towards long-term sustainable outcomes. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider various constraints that may impact the design and implementation of the investment strategies, due to High Net-Worth (HNW) investors' distinct characteristics, preferences, and complexities that need to be taken into consideration.

When designing an outcome-based solution, factors such as wealth preservation, income and growth, asset and liability structures, social responsibility, family governance and succession planning are all equally relevant. Advisors can develop tailored investment strategies that lay the foundation for achieving sustainable outcomes. These strategies reflect the complexities and long-term aspirations of their clients, while also assessing their financial situation, goals, risk tolerance, time horizon, tax implications, and estate planning.

The two moderate-risk portfolios below embody the principles of an outcome-based approach and are customized based on the client's desired outcome, risk tolerance, and investment horizon through sound levels of diversification. Advisors can develop tailored investment strategies that lay the foundation for achieving sustainable outcomes.

Alternative investments (usually privately held, illiquid, unlisted assets like commodities, real estate, private equity, private credit, as well as hedge funds) can potentially offer increased diversification and higher returns through an illiquidity premium. By incorporating alternative investments into a portfolio, investors can enhance the risk-reward trade off, as Alternatives have the potential to provide returns that are distinct or have lower correlations to stocks and bonds, regardless of market cycles or varying macroeconomic conditions. The impact of allocating different proportions to alternative investments can significantly



influence a portfolio's risk and return, as illustrated in the following charts, demonstrating the importance of considering alternative investments when constructing a well diversified portfolio.

A 60/40 stocks/bonds portfolio yielded an annualized return of 8.5 percent with a volatility of 9.6 percent. On the other hand, a 40/30/30 portfolio, with 30 percent allocated to alternatives, showed an improved annualized return of 9.0 percent and lower

volatility of 7.9 percent. In summary, there is historical evidence and a strong incentive to explore diversification beyond a 60/40 portfolio by incorporating exposure to alternative asset classes.

#### Key takeaway

By starting from the evaluation of what they identify as the desired outcomes from their investments through a balanced and diversified

investment strategy, and guided by their advisor's expertise, HNW investors can achieve their financial goals while minimizing risk as compared to narrowing the investment choices to only one or two asset classes or products. This approach prioritizes personal objectives and leverages investment principles to offer a clear path towards predictable and consistent investment results.

By aligning investment strategies with specific outcomes, this approach empowers clients to navigate uncertainties, mitigate risks, and achieve their desired financial goals, based on their desire to achieve clear outcomes through a comprehensive holistic approach, away from the single-product bias. Overall, as the investment landscape continues to evolve, adopting this approach will be key to success.

## UN: World resource extraction could surge 60% by 2060

**PARIS:** Extraction of Earth's natural resources could surge 60 percent by 2060, imperiling climate goals and economic prosperity, the UN said Friday, calling for dramatic changes in energy, food, transport and housing.

Enormous expansion of infrastructure, energy demand and consumer consumption over the last half century, particularly in wealthier countries, has driven a tripling of the world's use of materials, according to the 2024 Global Resource Outlook by the UN Environment Programme's International Resource Panel. And the hunger for natural resources — everything from food to fossil fuels — keeps growing by an average of more than 2.3 percent per year, it said.

People in wealthy countries drive most of that demand, using six times more materials and responsible for ten times more climate impacts than those in low-income countries, according to the analysis.

Extraction and processing of the huge amount of resources accounts for over 60 percent of planet-warming emissions, the report said, as well as devastating ecosystems and harming human health. Lead author Hans Bruyninckx said the current trajectory would cause the world to far exceed the temperature limits set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement, in which countries agreed to cap global warming "well below" two degrees Celsius and preferably at 1.5C.

"You've got resource use that is increasing, too much impact on Earth systems that is not tenable," he told AFP, adding that unequal access to resources across the world was also "untenable".

But he acknowledged that natural resources will be needed "to turn things around", both to boost development in poorer nations and to provide the minerals and metals needed for the energy transition. The report follows an agreement by countries at UN climate negotiations last year in Dubai, to triple global renewable energy capacity this decade and "transition away" from polluting fossil fuels.

Without sweeping change, the report warned, the exploitation of Earth's resources will continue, with computer modeling suggesting an increase by almost 60 percent by 2060 from 2020 levels, from 100 to 160 billion tons. "The only choice is to stabilize and balance the human relationship with the rest of nature," the report said. — AFP

## Sounding warning, Kerry urges new ways on climate finance

**WASHINGTON:** Veteran envoy John Kerry called Friday for the United States to find major new climate finance methods, warning of "huge disappointment" if historic promises to transition from fossil fuels go unheeded. Kerry, who is stepping down as the US climate envoy, described an agreement in December in Dubai at the last UN summit as historic for its call on the planet to move away from fossil fuels in large part responsible for the planet's rising temperatures.

But he warned that the COP28 agreement must not be "reduced to mere words on a piece of paper."

"If we don't do what we've said we're going to do in these next months, that's exactly what could happen, encouraging cynicism and dropout-ism and huge disappointment around the world," Kerry said at the Council on Foreign Relations. Kerry, an 80-year-old former secretary of state, senator and presidential contender, has said he will focus outside of government on mobilizing private funding to complement government efforts on climate.

Kerry said that the United States should consider a system of financial guarantees for investors, which would cover risks if projects fail. "It's time for creativity. We've come up with new financial instruments when we needed them before, and my judgment is we need them now," he said.

He pointed to his work as envoy with Indonesia

and Vietnam on so-called Just Energy Transition Partnerships, or JETPs — financing deals between a small group of wealthy countries and an emerging economy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels or take other climate action.

Calling such deals "very bespoke," Kerry said, "We don't have time to do that." "We need to help deploy larger sums with greater confidence that the deal is bankable and we de-risked it sufficiently," he said. A recent study by the Climate Policy Initiative pointed to assessments that credit guarantees could mobilize between six and 25 times as much financing as traditional loans, with developing countries in particular looking to reduce uncertainties.

Kerry also repeated his call for the world to phase out subsidies for fossil fuels—often politically sensitive in countries reliant on oil and gas. "Why in God's name we (are) subsidizing the creators of the problem is beyond me," he said. He voiced admiration for the European Union's new "CBAM" carbon tariff, although he acknowledged it was not politically feasible in the United States.

President Joe Biden has overseen the investment of billions of dollars in green technology as part of his signature legislative achievement, the Inflation Reduction Act, in a sharp difference from his predecessor Donald Trump, his likely challenger in November elections.

Trump has cast doubt on the science behind climate change and walked out of the Paris climate accord, which Kerry helped negotiate as top diplomat under president Barack Obama.

Kerry credited the Dubai agreement in part to cooperation between the United States and China,



(FILES) US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry speaks during a press conference at the United Nations climate summit in Dubai on December 6, 2023. — AFP

the world's two largest greenhouse gas emitters and frequent adversaries on the global stage. Kerry developed an unusually warm relationship with his Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua, who even brought his grandson to Dubai to meet the US negotiator. Kerry hinted that he had internal resistance even within the Biden team, saying, "I had to convince some people in the administration that we really needed to work with China at a time where, as you all know, the rhetoric of Washington and most of the currents are kind of moving against that idea."

But he said that Biden agreed that on climate, "This is not and should not be an ideological fight."

"We don't have time to argue about the climate thing," Kerry said. — AFP

## Eurozone inflation dips further

**BRUSSELS:** Eurozone inflation continued to ease in February, data showed Friday, but economists warned it was unlikely to push the European Central Bank to cut interest rates next month. Consumer prices in the 20-nation single currency area rose 2.6 percent in February from a year earlier, down from a 2.8-percent rise in January, the EU's statistics agency said.

Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg and FactSet had predicted that the rate of inflation would fall to 2.5 percent. The eurozone's inflation rate has been slowing steadily since its peak in October 2022, approaching the ECB's two-percent target.

The ECB is under pressure to cut interest rates after keeping them unchanged since October at a two-de-

cade high, but experts warned not to expect a reduction in April. "February's eurozone inflation data look like the final nail in the coffin for an April interest rate cut," said Jack Allen-Reynolds of Capital Economics, an economic research firm.

The Frankfurt-based ECB's hike in rates following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has affected the eurozone economy, with expectations of weaker growth in 2024.

The next rate-setting ECB meeting will be on March 7. "As long as the ECB is not willing to accept that inflation is roughly returning to target but instead pushing for an exact landing point of 2 percent, rate cuts should only be on the agenda at the June meeting," Carsten Brzeski of ING Bank said in a note before the inflation data was published.

Core inflation, which strips out volatile energy, food, alcohol and tobacco prices and a key indicator for the ECB, also slowed in February, to 3.1 percent from 3.3 percent in January.

The February reading of core inflation is the lowest in two years. Yet analysts had forecast a deeper fall, to 2.9 percent, in February.



BRUSSELS: Eurozone inflation continued to ease in February, data showed Friday.

ECB chief Christine Lagarde told the European Parliament this week she expected "inflation to continue slowing down" but wanted to be sure that price rises fall "sustainably" to two percent. The EU last month cuts its eurozone inflation forecast for 2024 to 2.7 percent from 3.2 percent in earlier prediction. — AFP



## Business

# Burgan Bank unveils 'Beladona Helwa' in celebration of Kuwait National Day

## A celebration of Kuwait and the love for the homeland

KUWAIT: In celebration of Kuwait National Day, Burgan Bank announced the release of "Beladona Helwa": a new song and accompanying video paying homage to Kuwait and the deep-rooted love for the homeland. Performed by a group of young and aspiring artists, the song was part of the modern re-imagining and reprisal of "Al-Sindbad Al-Bahri" (Sindbad the Sailor), the much-loved classic children's play and the first play of its kind in Kuwait and the region. In the decades since its first release, "Beladona Helwa" has become an iconic song: a cultural landmark and a symbol of national pride that still lives on today as a reminder of the golden days.

In the first hours of its online release, the video for "Beladona Helwa" generated high traffic, with over 12 million views across various streaming platforms. The song also reached number one in streaming on Anghami in Kuwait. Commenting on this runaway success, Kholoud Redha Al-Feeli, Deputy General Manager - Marketing and Communications at Burgan Bank, said: "There is simply no place like home, and no stronger sense of belonging than that of belonging to the homeland. As part of our National Day celebrations, we are proud to unveil our reimagining of "Beladona Helwa", which we dedicate to everyone and their love for our beloved Kuwait. The song becoming a hit nationwide, including hitting the top spot on



Kholoud Redha Al-Feeli



"Beladona Helwa", a video paying homage to Kuwait and the deep-rooted love for the homeland.



Anghami, is a testament to its emotional value and staying power. We are simply delighted to be able to keep this song alive for future generations."

Adding: "Since its debut in the 70s as part of "Al-Sindbad Al-Bahri", "Beladona Helwa" has become a touch stone in Kuwaiti culture. The play presented so many important values and educational messages, especially about the importance of loving one's homeland. Therefore, as part of our revival of "Al-Sindbad Al-Bahri", we made sure to also introduce "Beladona Helwa" in its new, modern-take performed by an ensemble of young artists, dedicated from Burgan Bank to the Kuwaiti people as a token of appreciation to Kuwaiti art."

Al-Feeli added: "I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this work of art, including our partners, Trend Productions, for their cooperation and commitment, starting with the elaborate details that went into the modernized performances

of "Al-Sindbad Al-Bahri", which was met with a feel of nostalgic warmth and enthusiasm. We also thank them for their efforts in producing the new "Beladona Helwa" TVC, in celebration of Kuwait National Day. We would also like to extend our thanks to the talented director and multi-disciplinary artist, Bader AlShuaibi, as well as the exemplary artists, including Yagoub Abdullah, Talal Sam, Mansour Al-Bloushi, Talal Bassem, Shaikha Al-Aslawi, Al-Ghaliyah, Khaled Al-Kandari, and many more who stood behind the great success of the play and our National Day video."

On his part, actor and lead singer Talal Sam said: "I would like to express my sincere thanks to Burgan Bank for this special experience. It was my pleasure and honor to be selected to play Al-Sindbad Al-Bahri, which is a central and vital role in the play, alongside my peers who represent some of the finest young artists in the scene. I was also

delighted to perform the most iconic song of the play, "Beladona Helwa", which perfectly captures the nostalgia of the past as well as the celebratory vibes of Kuwait National Day – an iconic song that occupies a special place in the hearts of many Kuwaiti generations, myself included."

"Beladona Helwa", written by the esteemed late poet and journalist Abdul Amir Eissa and composed by Ahmed Al-Babtain, was first performed in 1978 during the debut performance of the pioneering children's play "Al-Sindbad Al-Bahri". The original play featured a wide range of megastars, such as Abdulrahman Al-Aqel, Istiqlal Ahmad, Khaled Al-Obaid, Huda Hussein, Raja Mohammed, Mohammed Al-Saree', and Mohammad Al-Mesbah. As part of its expansive social responsibility program, Burgan Bank is set to continue its unwavering efforts to sponsor and produce works of art that reinforce the Kuwaiti audiences' pride and love for our beloved country.

## Stocks end week at fresh records as Nvidia tops \$2tn



TOKYO: Electronic board displays stock prices of companies listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange along a street in Tokyo. — AFP

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks finished the week with a flourish Friday behind continued momentum for equities tied to artificial intelligence, especially Nvidia, which finished with a valuation above \$2 trillion for the first time.

Both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq ended at fresh all-time highs following records in Tokyo and Frankfurt.

"This week saw risk on sentiment take several global stock indices to record highs, the first day of March being no exception," said Axel Rudolph, senior market analyst at online trading platform IG. David Morrison, senior market analyst at Trade Nation, said "market sentiment remains bullish, and there seems little appetite for profit-taking."

Stock markets have been on a march higher since late last year, initially on hopes that central banks will soon be able to begin lowering their high interest rates as inflation began to fall closer to normal levels.

While hotter-than-expected inflation data from recent months has pushed expectations for the first interest rate cut to mid-year, markets have instead been propelled by stellar results from AI firms in recent weeks.

Perhaps no company has benefited as much as Nvidia, which is led by Jensen Huang, who has developed technology perfectly suited for developing the large language models (LLMs) that underpin generative AI interfaces such as ChatGPT.

Nvidia jumped four percent Friday to end the day with a valuation above \$2 trillion, joining an elite club that includes just Apple, Microsoft and Saudi Aramco.

Also Friday, Dell Technologies became the latest big beneficiary of the AI fever, surging more than 31 percent following an earnings report that highlighted its growing AI business.

The tech-rich Nasdaq led the major US indices, rising 1.1 percent.

CFRA Research's Sam Stovall said the gains in New York were also supported by weaker economic data, including the Institute for Supply Management survey of manufacturers and consumer confidence data as "indicating that there could be more reason" for the Fed to cut interest rates in May.

In Europe, Frankfurt's DAX set a new record while the CAC in Paris was also near its record high, with a less-than-expected drop in eurozone inflation failing to derail sentiment. Meanwhile in Asia, Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei index almost touched 40,000 points for the first time. Asian markets mostly rose, with better-than-expected Chinese data helping sentiment.

"China's factory growth rising above forecasts even though manufacturing shrank for a fifth straight month did not dent investors' mood with the country's stock indices pursuing their recovery," said IG's Rudolph. — AFP

## US lawmakers approve bill to avert shutdown

WASHINGTON: The US Congress on Thursday approved a stopgap measure to avert a damaging election-year government shutdown, extending funding for several key federal agencies past a weekend deadline. Five months into the fiscal year, Congress still has not approved the 12 annual spending bills that make up the federal budget, which were facing deadlines of midnight on Friday night and March 8 to keep the lights on.

The Republican-led House and Democratic Senate approved a short-term "continuing resolution" extending the deadline for the first six bills until March 8 and making March 22 the cut-off for the remaining six. Money for agriculture, science, veterans' programs, transport and housing had been due to run out first, potentially hitting food safety inspections, air traffic controllers' pay and numerous other important functions.

A full shutdown would have come a week later — a day after President Joe Biden's March 7 State of the Union address — leaving defense, border security,

Congress and many other departments and agencies unable to operate. But the fourth stopgap funding bill approved under this Congress — and the third under House Speaker Mike Johnson's leadership — only gives lawmakers a few extra days to get back on track. Johnson has been struggling to corral a razor-thin majority, walking a tightrope between the demands of his own right flank and more moderate Republicans.

All but two Democrats in the House voted yes to the continuing resolution but 97 Republicans voted against. It passed the upper chamber in a 77-13 evening vote and will now make its way to Biden's desk in time to keep the wheels of government turning. "This is a short-term fix — not a long-term solution," Biden said in a statement, calling on Republicans to pass full-year funding bills as well as new military aid for Ukraine, which has been blocked by conservative hardliners in the House.

While moderates consider shutdowns politically disastrous, and a threat to Republican chances of hanging onto the House and retaking the Senate in November, right-wingers in safe seats are more inclined to spoil for a fight. Conservatives have been pushing to eliminate Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas' salary, block travel costs for armed forces

## China factory output shrinks for fifth month

BEIJING: Factory activity in China contracted for the fifth straight month in February, official figures showed Friday, as sluggish demand in the world's second-largest economy continues to drag on growth. The purchasing managers' index (PMI) — a key measure of factory output — came in at 49.1 percent in February, according to China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). A PMI figure above 50 percent indicates an expansion in activity, while below indicates a contraction.

China's monthly PMI has only registered in positive territory twice throughout the last year, most recently in September. Factory activity has consistently contracted since then, with February marking the fifth consecutive month of decline.

Analysts polled by Bloomberg had expected a PMI figure of 48.8 percent in February. In December 2022, Beijing abruptly lifted draconian COVID-19 control measures that had weighed heavily on the economy for nearly three years, raising expectations for a sustained recovery.

But such hopes have been dampened by a lack of consumer and investor confidence, unprecedented turmoil in the property sector and soaring youth unemployment. A global slowdown, meanwhile, is weakening demand for Chinese products overseas. In recent months, authorities have announced a series of targeted measures as well as a major issuance of sovereign bonds to boost infrastructure spending and revive economic activity. But results have been mixed.

was seen as a major achievement, marking just the second accord concluded by the WTO's full membership since the global trade body was created in 1995, and the first focused on environmental protection. In Abu Dhabi, countries had aimed to finalize a "second wave" of negotiations towards broadening the net to also include a ban on subsidies that contribute to overfishing more broadly. While observers had said an agreement on the second portion of the deal was possible, in the end it proved elusive.

One bone of contention was the text's two-tier approach, entailing greater surveillance, constraints and penalties for the countries that dish out most fishery subsidies. Another sticking point was a demand from India, which single-handedly forced WTO members to water down the initial agreement, for a 25-year transition period — something many countries reject as too long.

### COVID booster?

Despite the very vocal resistance from pharmaceutical companies and their host countries, WTO members in 2022 agreed to a temporary patent waiver for COVID-19 vaccines, aimed at providing more equitable access to jabs.

But they pushed off efforts to extend the waiver to patents for other products needed to fight the



personnel seeking abortions and defund parts of Biden's climate agenda — all red lines for Democrats. Biden cut a deal with Republicans last year mandating tens of billions of dollars in automatic cuts if lawmakers fail to pass full-year spending bills by April.

The hard-right, 40-member House Freedom Caucus, angered by entreaties from the leadership to accept compromise on its priorities, has made no secret of the fact that it would be happy for that ax to fall. "We can't let the swamp dictate the terms," Texas congressman Chip Roy posted on X.

Biden called a rare Oval Office meeting for congressional leaders on Tuesday to jolt them into striking a deal on the budget, and to unblock vital aid for Ukraine that is also stalled by infighting among Republicans. "If our House Republican colleagues of goodwill want to do the right thing, they must accept a fundamental truth about divided government: Republicans cannot pass a bill without Democratic support," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said. "It takes both sides working together — and ignoring the extremes of the hard

## WTO conference: The main issues

GENEVA: Fisheries, agriculture and WTO reform were at the heart of intense negotiations among trade ministers from around the world who gathered in Abu Dhabi over the past five days.

Here are the main issues that were on the table during the ministerial conference known as MC13 that ended Saturday, which saw an extension of an e-commerce moratorium but no deals on agriculture and fisheries.

### Fisheries: The next step

During the World Trade Organization's last ministerial meeting, held at its Geneva headquarters in June 2022, trade chiefs managed to nail down a historic agreement banning harmful fisheries subsidies after more than two decades of negotiations. The agreement banned subsidies that contribute to fishing that is illegal, unreported or unregulated, as well as for fishing of overstretched stocks and in unregulated high seas, with additional flexibility baked in for developing nations.

The agreement, which has yet to take effect,

China's weeklong Lunar New Year period — the longest annual public holiday — occurred in February this year, also partially explaining the slowdown in activity. China's non-manufacturing PMI — which takes into account the services sector — remained in positive territory in February at 51.4 percent, up from 50.7 percent the previous month, the NBS said Friday. The latest figure came in higher than expected for analysts polled by Bloomberg, who had predicted it to stand at 50.2 percent.

China is gearing up to unveil official economic goals for the current year on Tuesday, including the highly anticipated GDP growth target — expected to be among the lowest in three decades. The country notched GDP growth of 5.2 percent last year, according to an official figure that many economists consider to be an overestimate, despite already representing the lowest expansion since the 1990s apart from the pandemic years. — AFP

pandemic, like tests and treatments. The plan had been to decide on that issue by December 2022, but the deadline was repeatedly postponed amid continued disagreement. It now appears that India and South Africa, who championed the waiver, have given up the fight.

### Fallow harvest for agriculture?

Agriculture has always been a highly sensitive issue at the heart of discussions at the WTO, and ministers in Abu Dhabi were unable to agree on a new package of rules. At a ministerial meeting in 2015, WTO members took the historic decision to eliminate export subsidies for agricultural products.

Many now want action on domestic measures that distort trade, and discussions revolved around issues including market access and export competition and restrictions. Food security was also once again on the agenda, with deep disagreement over a demand from India and others for a temporary measure, allowing countries to hold public stockpiles of food, to be made permanent. They also wanted it extended to encompass all developing countries and to include other staples like cotton. Several countries fiercely opposed those moves, warning that such public stocks, if released beyond a country's borders, could disrupt global food markets. — AFP





# Indigenous Colombians fret as sacred mountain glaciers melt

**I**n the shade of a sacred tree, Indigenous wise men chew coca leaves as they mull the threats to their home among the melting, snow-capped peaks of Colombia's Sierra Nevada mountains. As a "consequence of man's actions, it is slowly warming, more every year," one of the men says in the Iku language, according to a translator, at a meeting of dozens of Indigenous people from different communities.

The inhabitants of the Sierra Nevada range in north Colombia believe it is the center of the universe, its rivers, stones and plants part of one living body. They see it as their job to protect its balance. In 2022, UNESCO recognized the ancient knowledge of the area's four Indigenous groups as part of the world's intangible cultural heritage, and essential to caring for "mother nature, humanity and the planet."

But here in Earth's highest coastal mountain system, 5,775 meters (19,000 feet) above sea level, the natural harmony they prize is being disrupted as record heat waves melt the glacial peaks and ruin their crops. In a form of active meditation, the Arhuaco spiritual leaders or "mamos" place a wooden stick in their mouths before removing it and rubbing it around a gourd — transferring their thoughts to the hollowed-out fruit.

"We are here to live in peace, in harmony. Believing otherwise leads to global warming," one Indigenous leader says. "Man is going to end himself because of his own inventions, believing himself to be very intelligent." Of the 14 tropical glaciers that existed in Colombia at the beginning of the 20th century, only six remain, according to official data. The Sierra Nevada's glacial area has shrunk from 82 square kilometers (32 square miles) in the mid-19th century to just 5.3 kilometers in 2022, according to the state meteorological institute.

### Glaciers 'disappearing'

The Arhuaco live in the Sierra Nevada alongside the Kankuamo, Kogui and Wiwa peoples, who are distinct but related communities. They wear white tunics and hand-woven white straw hats. When greeting each other, they exchange handfuls of toasted

coca leaves which they chew with lime to release stimulating alkaloids. Their fears about the changing climate are shared by Leonor Zalabata, the first Indigenous person to represent Colombia at the United Nations.

"All the glaciers that existed in the Sierra Nevada are dis-

appearing," she warns. Seydin Aty Rosado, a leader in Nabusimake, a town of 8,000 people, said it used to be too cold to cultivate the coffee, bananas, and cassava they now plant.

In January, environmental authorities recorded a record temperature of 40 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit) in the seaside city of Santa Marta, at the foot of the Sierra Nevada. A swing between morning frosts and mid-

day surges of heat ruined the residents' maize crops. The Arhuaco hope the weather extremes will moderate by March in time to plant beans, cabbage and corn. "It is a response to what we as human beings have given to Mother Earth," said Rosado, as she handweaves a bag.

something happens to a man, wherever he is, he is connected to everyone. Likewise with women," explains Rosado. "We are not alone, nor separated from other human beings, nor from animals, nor from anything that exists on Earth." Aside from their deep connection with nature,

our insistence that we cannot alter the environment any further."

But climate change is not the only threat to the Arhuaco's environment. Due to its rugged geography and proximity to the coast, the sacred mountain has for decades been a refuge and corridor for drug traffickers.



Arhuaco Indigenous and other indigenous communities from different regions of the country cross a river after attending a meeting at the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia.



Arhuaco Indigenous are seen in Nabusimake.



Arhuaco Indigenous "Mamo," spiritual guides for their community, are seen in Nabusimake.

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In January, environmental authorities recorded a record temperature of 40 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit) in the seaside city of Santa Marta, at the foot of the Sierra Nevada. A swing between morning frosts and mid-

"Here is our past, our present and our future. When I weave, I talk and think about my children. Everything is recorded here, in the bag," she said.

### 'Life is possible'

One of the tenets of the community's worldview — which they believe could help the world tackle climate change — is collective thinking. "There is only one man, only one woman. That's why if

the Arhuaco also highlight the importance of balance. While they maintain their traditional clothing and beliefs, they carry cellphones in their woven bags, and use solar panels to electrify their mud huts.

They learn Spanish from childhood and some families send their children to study at public universities in neighboring cities. "We believe that life is possible, as long as there is a balance," said Zalabata's son, Arukin Torres. "Hence

Torres also warns of a surge in paramilitary activity in the region as peace talks between armed groups and President Gustavo Petro's government hit a logjam. "This crisis (of violence) is coming again. That is why we ask that the government resume its dialogue," he said. — AFP



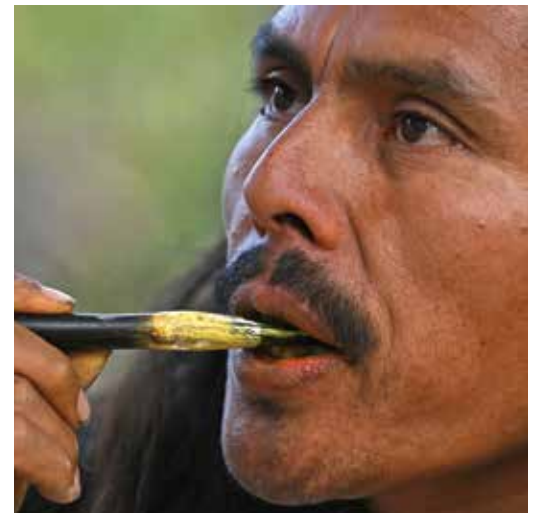
An Arhuaco Indigenous woman weaves in Nabusimake.



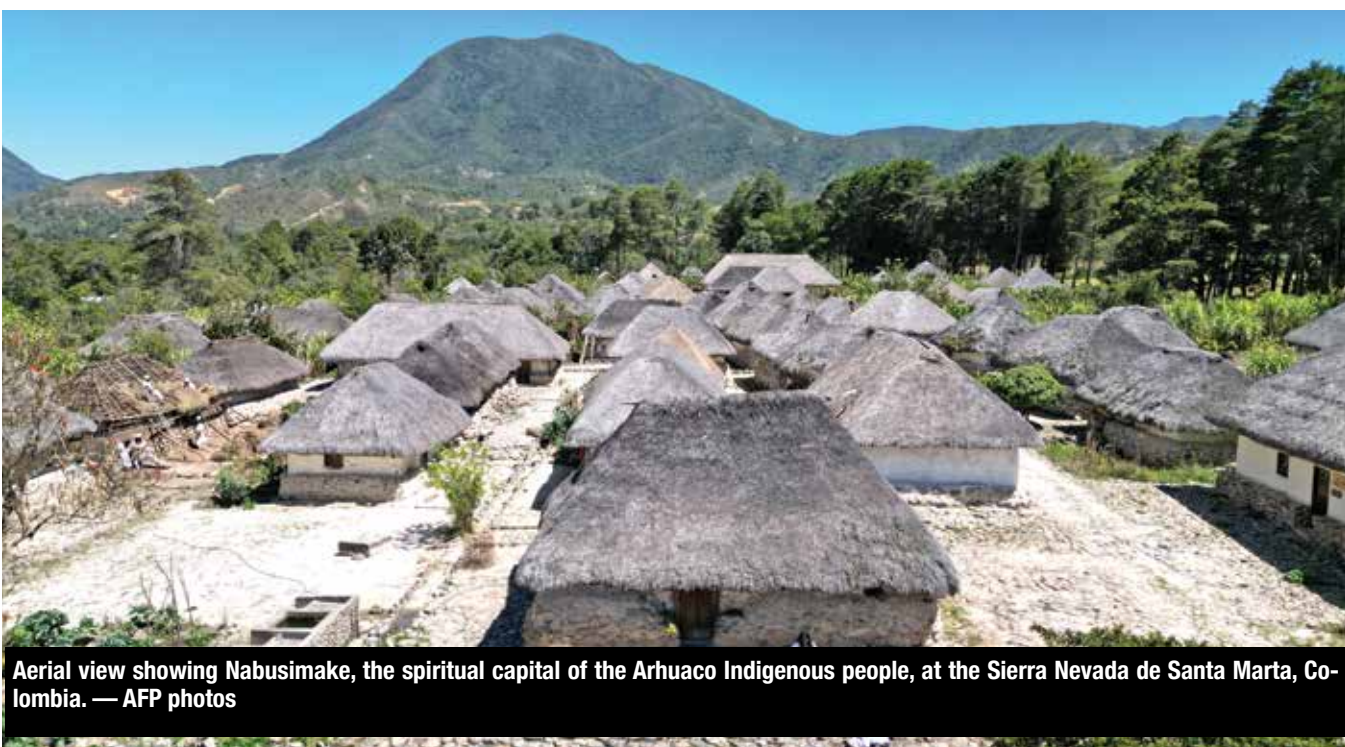
An Arhuaco Indigenous holds their traditional "Poporo," a small dried gourd containing lime made from crushed seashells with which they boost the alkaloids of the coca leaf that they chew continuously, in Nabusimake.



An Arhuaco Indigenous woman weaves while walking with her baby on her back in Nabusimake.



An Arhuaco Indigenous ingests lime made from crushed seashells to boost the alkaloids in the coca leaf he chews in Nabusimake.



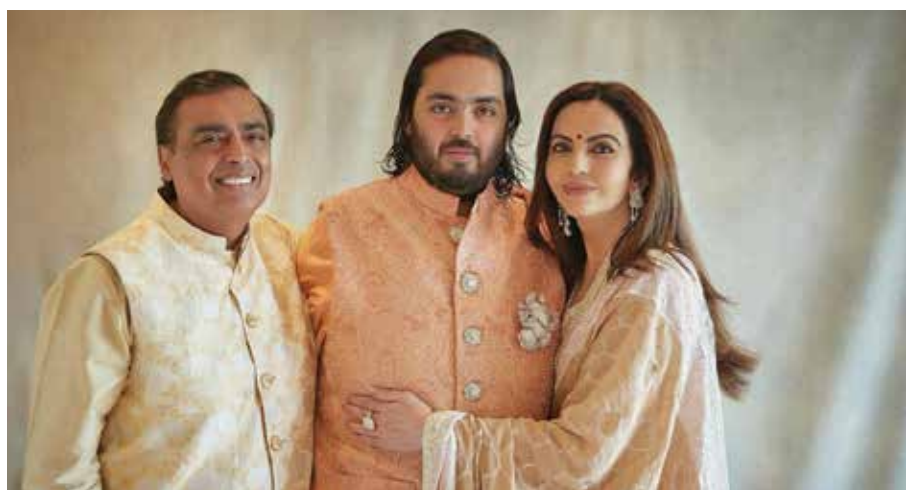
Aerial view showing Nabusimake, the spiritual capital of the Arhuaco Indigenous people, at the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. — AFP photos



Arhuaco Indigenous women cook in Nabusimake.



Lifestyle



This handout photograph shows billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani (left) and his wife Nita Ambani (right), with their son Anant Ambani posing for pictures at a photo shoot during the three-day pre-wedding celebration.



Director at Reliance's new energy business and Reliance Foundation Anant Ambani son of billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani, with his fiancée Radhika Merchant addressing guests during their three-day pre-wedding celebration in Jamnagar.

**Peter Doherty: 'Shooting heroin became a military operation'**

**P**eter Doherty can look back on his junkie days with some objectivity now he's clean and happily married to the woman who spent almost a decade filming his most degraded moments. The British singer and guitarist — now 44 and preferring Peter to Pete — was almost as famous for his heroin addiction as his music with The Libertines in the early 2000s. Now the group is back, with "All Quiet on the Eastern Esplanade" out April 5 - only their third studio album in the 22 years since their debut "Up the Bracket".



Doherty, in typically droll and self-deprecating form, told AFP how the release date had to be shifted twice to make way for releases by Ariana Grande and Elbow. "They're more famous than us now," he said. But he was meeting AFP to discuss the documentary "Stranger In My Own Skin" — a brutally uncompromising look at his years of drug use — ahead of its release in France.

Its 90 minutes were whittled down from more than 200 hours of footage shot by Katia de Vidas, who began as a film student recruited to follow Doherty by French magazine Les Inrocks, and ended up as his wife. Doherty remains philosophical about his addiction: "If I look like I'm suffering and lost, well humanity is suffering and lost — but sometimes you try to distil that and get drunk on it."

He can also be darkly funny about those times, as when he recalled the moment in the film where he struggles to find a vein to shoot heroin. "After seven or eight years of shooting up, it can be very difficult. It wasn't narcotic relief anymore — it was a military operation to find a vein! It was really sad, it was tragic, but it was also celebratory for me when I found (a vein)." He wanted to use footage of a particular goal by his beloved Queens Park Rangers football club to illustrate the feeling. — AFP

**ASIA'S RICHEST MAN TAKES GLOBAL RICH TO THE ZOO**

**T**op global celebrities donned "jungle fever" outfits in India for a trip to the zoo as part of a party thrown by Asia's richest man. Pop icon Rihanna, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka are among the rich and famous guests who jetted in for a three-day gala celebration hosted by billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani.

This weekend's party is an elaborate pre-wedding ceremony for younger son Anant and fiancée Radhika Merchant, the daughter of wealthy pharmaceutical moguls. The three-day gala - which saw "Umbrella" singer Rihanna perform on Friday for the first time since last year's Superbowl - continued with a trip to an "animal rescue centre" housing exotic animals.

The facility is a pet project of Anant's built in his family's hometown Jamnagar in western Gujarat state, where the weekend party is taking place. Indian media reports said the family hosted a "Walk on the Wildside", an event held outdoors in the Ambani's animal rescue centre.

"Jungle fever" is the suggested dress code, and guests were advised to wear comfortable shoes and clothing, reports said. In the evening, reports added, guests ditched their safari-themed outfits for more elegant



Ivanka Trump (second right), daughter of US' former president Donald Trump with husband Jared Kushner (left), a White House adviser under Trump.

wear for an evening party celebrating Indian culture.

Mukesh Ambani, 66, is chairman of Reliance Industries - India's biggest company by market capitalization - and the world's 10th-richest person, according to the Forbes billionaires list, worth more than \$116 billion. He inherited a thriving industrial enterprise spanning oil, gas and petrochemicals from his father and grew it into a commercial

behemoth with lucrative interests in retail, telecommunications and an Indian Premier League cricket team.

Reliance's partnerships with storied fashion brands such as Burberry, Armani and Jimmy Choo have helped the conglomerate cater to the growing appetite for luxury goods among India's middle class.

Ambani's family home - a 27-floor skyscraper dubbed Antilia that re-

portedly cost more than \$1 billion to build and has a permanent staff of 600 servants - is one of Mumbai's most prominent landmarks. It was criticized after its 2010 completion by author Arundhati Roy and others for starkly illustrating the wide gulf between India's business elite and its poor multitudes. Ambani held the most expensive wedding in India to date for his daughter in 2018, which reportedly cost \$100 million and saw US pop megastar Beyonce perform.

Younger son Anant, 28 - who also serves as a director on the boards of several Reliance-owned firms - is expected to marry Merchant, 29, later this year. This time around, the guest list includes Disney chief Bob Iger, following a deal agreed Wednesday between Reliance Industries and Walt Disney to merge their Indian media businesses.

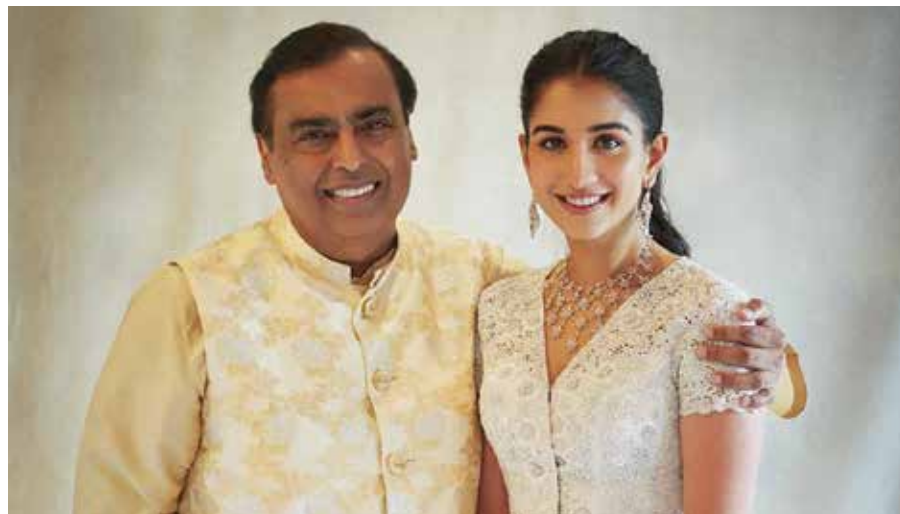
The merger will create an \$8.5 billion entertainment giant in the world's most populous nation and fifth-largest economy. Bollywood stars Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, cricket icons Sachin Tendulkar and M.S. Dhoni, and industry titan Gautam Adani are also invited in a who's-who of India's super-rich. — AFP



Pop icon Rihanna posing for pictures at the Jamnagar airport in Jamnagar.



Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg (left) with his wife Priscilla Chan attending a three-day pre-wedding celebration hosted by billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani.



This handout photograph shows billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani (left) with his to-be daughter-in-law Radhika Merchant, the daughter of wealthy pharmaceutical moguls posing for pictures at a photo shoot during the three-day pre-wedding celebration for his son Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant in Jamnagar. — AFP photos

**Ryan Gosling, Billie Eilish, Osage singers to perform at Oscars**

**R**yan Gosling is definitely Kenough to sing live at the Oscars. Gosling, the Academy Award-nominated star of the hit film "Barbie," will perform the power ballad "I'm Just Ken" at the March 10 gala, one of five songs up for a golden statuette, organizers announced. Also scheduled to take the stage are Billie Eilish and her brother Finneas for another "Barbie" tune, the introspective "What Was I Made For?"



Actor Ryan Gosling attends the New York Premiere of "The United States Of Leland" at the Chelsea in New York City.

Scott George and the Osage Singers will perform "Wahzhazhe (A Song for My People)" from "Killers of the Flower Moon," the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced. Rounding out the list are Jon Batiste singing "It Never Went Away" from "American Symphony," a documentary about the musician and his wife, and Becky G singing "The Fire Inside," written by perennial nominee Diane Warren for "Flamin' Hot."

While Eilish's song won two Grammys and is the clear favorite, "I'm Just Ken" — written by Mark Ronson and Andrew Wyatt — was one of the high-lights of the summer blockbuster, and fans had clamored for Gosling to sing on Oscars night. In the film, the actor — wearing a white fur coat and bandana over his bleached blond hair — leads a horde of Kens in an epic song and dance number. "Doesn't seem to matter what I do / I'm always number two," he croons in the song. "I'm just Ken / Anywhere else, I'd be a 10 / Is it my destiny / To live and die a life of blond fragility?" The song charted on the Billboard Hot 100. — AFP



Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan with his wife and actress Kareena Kapoor Khan.



Billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani (right), with wife Nita Ambani (second right), son Akash Ambani (left) and daughter-in-law Shloka Mehta (second left).



Chief executive officer (CEO) of the Serum Institute of India Adar Poonawalla with his wife and businesswoman Natasha Poonawalla.



India's former cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni with his wife Sakshi Dhoni.



West Indies' former cricket captain Dwayne Bravo (right).



India's spiritual guru and founder of Isha Foundation, Jagadish "Jaggi" Vasudev, popularly known as Sadhguru.



Indian politician Pratul Patel with his wife Varsha Patel.



## Sports

# Australia target New Zealand 'superstar' Ravindra in first Test

## Mitchell fortunate to survive an early stumping chance off Lyon

WELLINGTON: Australian spinner Nathan Lyon described unbeaten New Zealand batsman Rachin Ravindra as a budding "superstar" on Saturday but says the tourists are still well placed to win the first Test in Wellington.

Ravindra struck an eye-catching 56 not out as the home side reached 111-3 at stumps on day three, having stumbled early in their pursuit of a lofty 369 to win the opening match of the two-Test series. Daryl Mitchell was on 12, with the pair having put on 52 in 20.3 overs together to give New Zealand a glimmer of hope in difficult batting conditions.

Lyon took 2-27 - aided by some brilliant catching from Steve Smith - to give him six wickets for the match. Lyon shapes as a key figure in preventing New Zealand from scoring the remaining 258 runs they need on a Basin Reserve pitch taking turn and bounce.

New Zealand part-time spinner Glenn Phillips earlier capitalized on the conditions, snaring career-best figures of 5-45 as Australia were bundled out for 164 in their second innings. Ravindra, who scored 240 in the first Test against South Africa last month, defied Australia late in the day with a series of aggressive strokes in his 94-ball knock.

Lyon said it will be crucial to quickly remove the 24-year-old, who scored three centuries at last year's 50-over World Cup. "Rachin seems like a really good player," Lyon said. "This is the first time I've bowled to him - I watched a lot of him during the World Cup and he's going to be a superstar. Credit where it's due, he's played very well here. "But I

know if we can put pressure on them and challenge their defence for long periods of time, hopefully we can crack them."

### 'Dream come true'

Mitchell was fortunate to survive an early stumping chance off Lyon, when the ball evaded the gloves of wicketkeeper Alex Carey, with the charging batsman well out of his ground. Lyon was introduced in the sixth over of New Zealand's innings and quickly removed opener Tom Latham before claiming the key wicket of Kane Williamson, when Smith pounced a sharp catch at leg slip. Smith's second catch was even better, to remove Will Young for 15 off part-time spinner Travis Head, reacting quickly to a fine edge that went low and to his left.

Earlier, Australia lost their last six wickets in the space of 13 overs, with Phillips producing the best figures by any New Zealand spinner on home soil in 18 years, complementing his 71 with the bat in New Zealand's first innings of 179. Phillips, thanked captain Tim Southee for giving him the opportunity for a rare long spell. "It's absolutely a dream come true. Timmy's an incredible captain. He gave me the confidence to go out there and stick to my plan," Phillips said.

"I never thought it would be in home conditions I could take a five-for. I definitely thought it would be more in the sub-continent." Two wickets fell in the first session, nightwatchman Lyon departing for Australia's top score of 41 and opener Usman Khawaja for 28 after they resumed at 13-2.

First-innings centurion Cameron Green scored 34



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra plays a shot during day three of the 1st International cricket Test match between New Zealand and Australia at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on March 2, 2024. — AFP

and Travis Head 29 but the end of their 46-run partnership for the fifth wicket sparked a collapse. Head miscued Phillips to be caught at long-on, before the

spinner removed Mitchell Marsh and Alex Carey to close catchers and Henry bagged the last two wickets to finish with 3-36. — AFP

## Kuwait set to participate in Special Olympics

KUWAIT: Kuwait will participate in the first regional council for leading families of Special Olympics Players in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to be hosted by Cairo with 10 Arab countries in attendance.

Kuwait is represented by Sadeeqa Al-Ansari who said this participation comes out of the special keenness of Special Olympics to activate the role of the family and brothers to improve players in various sports, social, and cultural fields adding that the regional council of leader families that is being held for the first time aims at training 10 leader families in their role as leaders with the program of their local activities through concentrating on how to get families participate in organizing activities of their interest and provide the basic information to publish their stories, experiences and the challenges they face. That in addition to providing information and necessary sources to establish a family network regionally to exchange the best experiences in subjects related to sports training, education, inclusion, leadership and health in addition to covering families' stories and activities.

Al-Ansari thanked the regional Special Olympics headed by Engineer Ayman Abdulwahab for their interest in the regional councils due to their vital role to improve the players levels in various fields. She also thanked the administration of Tomooh Club and Kuwait Special Olympics for their support.



Sadeeqa Al-Ansari

## Comeback kid Cauley grabs lead at Cognizant Classic

MIAMI: Bud Cauley, back on the PGA Tour after a three year injury absence, produced two late birdies to grab the outright second-round lead at the Cognizant Classic at PGA National Resort on Friday. The Floridian shot a six-under par round of 65 on the Champion course to move to 11-under for the tournament, a stroke ahead of Austin Eckroat and South African Garrick Higgo.

With light fading, Cauley sank a 15-footer on the par-4 16th for birdie and then finished off his round by chipping out of the rough to 11 foot to sink another birdie. "It's felt great. I've been hitting the ball solid. Short game has been sharp around here, which you need. You're not going to hit every green," said Cauley.

"I've been holing a lot of nice putts, which has been a lot of help," he added. Cauley returned to

tour action at Scottsdale last month after his absence from a series of injuries and complications from a car accident in 2018. The crash occurred at the 2018 Memorial Tournament and left him with six broken ribs, a collapsed right lung and fractured left leg. He returned to play later that year but complications emerged in 2020 and he was forced to undergo surgery before a long rehab process.

"There were a lot of times where I thought that my career was over. To be back here playing and playing well, it's nice. It just makes me that much more happy that I kept after it and didn't stop trying," he said.

The 33-year-old, who lives in Jacksonville and was cheered off the 18th by friends, was not totally surprised to find himself in contention so early into his return to competition. "I gave myself enough time to prepare at home before I started playing again. My expectation was to come out and compete, and I felt like my game was in a good spot," he said.

"Saying it is one thing, doing it is another. I'm really happy with how I've played. I feel like my game has been trending in the right way. I've been hitting the ball well and just needed some scoring things to start...it was great to have those juices flowing again," he said.

## Tentoglou retains long jump title, Holloway cruises

GLASGOW: Greece's Miltiadis Tentoglou retained his world indoor long jump title in Glasgow on Saturday as American Grant Holloway moved smoothly into the semi-finals of the 60m hurdles. Tentoglou, the reigning Olympic, world and European champion, leaped a best of 8.22 metres on his first effort.

Italy's Mattia Furlani, 19, claimed silver with the same mark, Jamaican Carey McLeod taking bronze with 8.21m. There was no drama for Holloway, the three-time 110m hurdles world champion and Olympic silver medalist, in the opening round of the hurdles.

The 26-year-old, fresh from eclipsing his own world record in the 60m hurdles last month, is unbeaten in indoor races since March 2014, a remarkable record that spans 73 races. "This race was uneventful for me," said Holloway, who clocked a leading 7.43 seconds in winning his heat. "I was doing really well, I've just been running 7.3s (this year), so that was my first 7.4 of the season. — AFP



SIENA: The pack rides on the Vidritta section during the 18th one-day classic 'Strade Bianche' (White Roads) cycling race between Siena and Siena, Tuscany, on March 2, 2024. — AFP

## Evenepoel, Roglic get Tour de France taste at Paris-Nice

PARIS: Cycling fans can enjoy a tantalizing peek at how the Tour de France may culminate in July when the Paris-Nice stage race sets off on Sunday towards a finale on the Promenade des Anglais on the Mediterranean seafloor.

Due to the Olympic Games being hosted in Paris in July, the conclusion of the Tour de France has been switched away from its traditional Champs Elysees finish line in the French capital. Instead it will conclude with what should be a thrilling individual time-trial along the winding cornice from Monaco to the Riviera city Nice, where Paris-Nice also concludes on March 10.

Neither Jonas Vingegaard nor Tadej Pogacar, winners of the last four Tour de France races, will be present at Paris-Nice. But the other members of the so called 'Fab Four' fighting for the 2024 Tour title — Belgium's Remco Evenepoel and Slovenian veteran Primož Roglic — will be at the start line.

Belgian maverick Evenepoel has not only never raced a Tour de France, he has never even taken part in a stage race in the country. "It's a big race for us," Evenepoel's sports director Klaas Lodewyck said this week. "We're aiming high."

At 34, Roglic is cursed to be forever remembered for surrendering a 90-second Tour de France lead in a gut-wrenching last-gasp meltdown on the Planche des Belle Filles climb back

in 2020. Paris-Nice is the first significant stage race of the season and packs all the difficulties of a Grand Tour into eight stages.

Embarking from the Paris region, the race is affectionately known as the 'Race to the Sun'. The forecast predicts a windy stage in the plains south of Paris where the bigger, more powerful cyclists can prosper.

### Downhill dash

There's a time trial for those who can maintain high performance over 30km, a medium mountain climb for the slender climbers, at least two finishes for the sprinters, and a chance for daredevils to shine in a thrilling finale out of the mountainous back country to the seafloor at Nice.

Sunday's opening run is largely flat but two late climbs may close the door for the outright fast men such as Fabio Jakobsen and Dylan Groenewegen of the Netherlands and Ireland's Sam Bennett. The first two stages will depend on the winds but are likely to offer at least one mass bunch sprint as will stage five. Stage four takes the peloton over seven climbs through the picture-postcard Beaujolais vineyards.

Roglic and Evenepoel will likely come top two in the team time trial where teams set off together but will be timed individually. The idea is that teams will deliver Evenepoel and Roglic before splintering as they send their leading contenders up the road near the finish.

The final weekend is likely to be where the race is decided with Saturday featuring a 7km climb at 7.2 percent incline toward a summit finish that favors Roglic. Sunday's final short but tough 108km rush towards old Nice favors Evenepoel and finishes with a white knuckle 16km downhill dash to the Promenade des Anglais. — AFP

## New season of Kuwait volleyball cup kicks off



KUWAIT: The 57th edition of Kuwait Volleyball Association (KVC) Cup (the general team season of 2023-2024) opened on Friday at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Saleem Al-Sabah Indoor Sports Halls Complex. The opening match saw Al-Sulaibikhat SC beating Al-Yarmouk SC 3-0. — KUNA



## Sports

# Swiss Gut-Behrami closes in on World Cup title with super-G win

## Odermatt seals giant slalom crown with Aspen win

**KVITFJELL:** Swiss skier Lara Gut-Behrami on Saturday won the first of two women's super-G races of the weekend in Kvitfjell to extend her lead in the overall World Cup standings on injured US star Mikaela Shiffrin. The Olympic super-G champion's risk-taking in foggy conditions paid off as she finished ahead of two Austrians with Cornelia Huetter at 0.12sec and Mirjam Puchner 0.13 off the pace. With Shiffrin still recovering from a knee injury, Gut-Behrami now leads her rival by 305 points in the overall standings to close in on the World Cup title she previously won in 2016.

"I never expected to be still racing at 32 and to be so consistent," said Gut-Behrami, who picked up speed on the lower half of the Olympiabakken to finish in a time of one minute 33.52 seconds. "There's no strategy, it's just I am trying to enjoy more what I am doing," said Gut-Behrami after her 45th career World Cup win.

"I know I am not going to race another 1000 races more. So, I am trying to enjoy the way I am skiing, the good feeling I have and to have fun while I am skiing. I'm looking forward to the next races and keep on skiing well." Shiffrin should return to competition next weekend in the Swedish resort of Are, where a giant and a slalom are planned, before the finals in Saalbach, Austria, from March 16 to 23. Gut-Behrami will not take part in the slaloms, which leaves hope for Shiffrin, who has the opportunity to take 200 points from her in this event before the end of the season. Gut-Behrami claimed her eighth success this season, the best record of her career, and a 45th victory in the World Cup.

She has the second-best record of active skiers behind record 95-winner Shiffrin, men and women combined. "I'm trying to enjoy the good feeling I have," said the Swiss skier. "I know I don't have many years left on

the circuit." On Saturday, a downhill race had initially been scheduled but due to adverse weather conditions, training sessions planned for Thursday and Friday could not take place and the event was transformed into a super-G. A second super-G is scheduled for Sunday in the Norwegian resort.

To conquer a fifth small globe in the super-G with two races left, Gut-Behrami is still battling with Huetter and Italian Federica Brignone, who was sixth on Saturday. "With Lara at the moment, second is good," said Huetter, whose own strong performance keeps her just 25 points behind Gut-Behrami in the race to top the season-long super-G standings. "We have a tough fight. Not only for us but also for everyone watching it's really nice to see," Huetter said. "And we will have a nice showdown in Saalbach, at home."

Meanwhile, newly crowned Alpine Skiing World Cup overall champion Marco Odermatt won his 11th straight giant slalom race on Friday to clinch this season's discipline title. The 26-year-old Swiss ace took the giant slalom crown after clocking a combined time of 2min 7.87sec to pip compatriot Loic Meillard by 0.14sec in Aspen, Colorado.

Norway's Atle Lie McGrath finished third, 0.81 behind Odermatt, who clinched his third overall crown last weekend with victory in the giant slalom at Palisades Tahoe in California. Odermatt, who won the last three giant slaloms of the 2022-2023 season, is a perfect 8-0 in the event this year. Friday's win left him with 800 points, an unassailable 470 points clear of Croatia's Filip Zubcic.

"I think it was the most difficult victory of the season," the Swiss world number one said after Friday's win, revealing that he "didn't feel very good" at the



**KVITFJELL:** Winner Switzerland's Lara Gut-Behrami (C) celebrates on the podium with second placed Austria's Cornelia Huetter (L) and third placed Austria's Mirjam Puchner after the women's Super G event of the FIS Alpine World Cup in Kvitfjell, Norway on March 2, 2024. — AFP

start of the race. With the overall and giant slalom crowns now secured, Odermatt remains on course to win two more titles.

The Swiss leads the standings in the downhill and super G categories. He is also on track to complete a clean sweep in the giant slalom if he wins the three remaining giant slaloms left on the calendar — a feat not achieved since Swedish legend Ingemar Stenmark in the 1978-1979 season.

"Of course I'm thinking about it, it would be great," Odermatt admitted on Friday before cautioning: "But even for tomorrow, I don't know what the level of my batteries will be. It takes so much energy for me to be focused every race." With 12 wins in all disciplines this season, Odermatt could also eclipse his record-equaling tally of 13 set last year which he shares with Stenmark (1979) and Austrian duo Hermann Maier (2001) and Marcel Hirscher (2018). — AFP



**MONACO:** Paris Saint-Germain's French forward #07 Kylian Mbappe (C) fights for the ball with Monaco's Chilean defender #03 Guillermo Maripan (L) and Monaco's Polish goalkeeper #01 Radoslaw Majecki (R) during the French L1 football match between AS Monaco and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at the Louis II Stadium (Stade Louis II) in the Principality of Monaco. — AFP

## Mbappe taken off at half-time as PSG draw at Monaco

**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique said he took Kylian Mbappe off "for the good of the team" as the France captain was substituted at half-time in Paris Saint-Germain's 0-0 draw away to Monaco on Friday. Mbappe was not injured and emerged from the PSG dressing room at the start of the second half in a tracksuit, smiling and talking on the phone before taking a seat in the stand to watch the remainder of the game.

Without him, PSG were perhaps fortunate to leave the principality with a draw which nevertheless allows them to stretch their lead at the top of the French table to 12 points from Brest, who are in action on Sunday.

They edge a step closer to retaining the French title, but the focus for Luis Enrique's side is principally on Tuesday's Champions League last-16 second leg away to Real Sociedad, into which they take a 2-0 lead from the first meeting last month.

It remains to be seen what role Mbappe will play in that game, given that he has now either started on the bench or been replaced in each of his club's three matches since he told the Qatar-owned club he would leave at the end of this season.

"It was 100 percent the coach's decision, because sooner or later we will have to get used to playing without Kylian Mbappe," Luis Enrique said. "I took this decision for the good of the team." Mbappe informed PSG in mid-February that he intended to depart when his contract expires in June, after seven years at the Parc des Princes, with Real Madrid his likely next destination.

Luis Enrique responded to that by leaving the 25-year-old on the bench for their next game at Nantes, although Mbappe came on to score a penalty in a 2-0 win. He then started last week's home meeting with Rennes and wore the captain's armband in the absence of usual skipper Marquinhos, but was substituted on 65 minutes with PSG trailing at the time in a game they ended up drawing 1-1.

On Friday he was replaced by Randal Kolo Muani at the break at the Stade Louis II without any obvious sign of an injury, although he did go down under a challenge from Monaco defender Guillermo Maripan during the first half.

"I am not going to play this game. For me there is no problem, this is just how I want to handle things," added PSG's coach, the former Barcelona and Spain boss. PSG were grateful for more than one occasion to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma for keeping them on level terms, while Wissam Ben Yedder hit the woodwork for Monaco in the second half. The result leaves the principality team in third place, although their Cote d'Azur rivals Nice can climb above them with a win at Toulouse on Sunday. — AFP

## Okafor fires Milan to win at livid eight-man Lazio

**MILAN:** Noah Okafor struck late to fire AC Milan to a 1-0 win at Lazio on Friday in a fiery Serie A match in Rome which finished with the outraged hosts down to eight men. Switzerland forward Okafor forced home his fifth league goal of the season with two minutes remaining, pushing Milan up to 56 points in third place and further strengthening his team's position in Italy's Champions League spots.

Stefano Pioli's Milan are still 13 points behind league leaders Inter Milan, who host Genoa on Monday, but are just one behind second-placed Juventus. Juve are at Napoli in Sunday night's big game and have Milan breathing down their necks after a poor recent run of form. Okafor's strike was the most exciting moment of football in a niggly game in which Lazio had two players sent off in stoppage time, with a cascade of boos from dumbfounded home fans greeting the final whistle.

"It was a game with a lot of fouls, we didn't have much rhythm," said Pioli to DAZN. Friday's win also moved Milan 10 points ahead from fifth-placed Atlanta who on Sunday host Bologna, this year's surprise package in fourth. It will make relations with Milan's American ownership slightly easier for Pioli as rumors continue to swirl about him being replaced in the summer after owner Gerry Cardinale said he was "not satisfied" on Thursday. "It's a big win looking at the matches being played this weekend... we're trying to make this season a positive one as we still have big goals to reach," added Pioli. Lazio drop down to ninth, level on 40 points with Napoli, after a defeat which was dreadful preparation for Tuesday's return leg with Bayern Munich in the Champions League last 16.

### Lazio fury

Maurizio Sarri's side lead Bayern by a single goal after winning the first leg in the Italian capital 1-0 last month and his players will need to pick themselves as they are eight points from the top four. Lazio's task against Milan was made harder when Luca Pellegrini

## Verstappen's Bahrain pole delivers relief to Red Bull and Horner

**SAKHIR:** Max Verstappen delivered some much-needed relief for his Red Bull team on Friday when he resisted Ferrari's Charles Leclerc to claim pole position for Saturday's season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix. The defending three-time world champion picked up where he left off last year by topping the times in a closely-contested qualifying session at the Bahrain International Circuit at Sakhir. His success, which he admitted was "a little bit unexpected" arrived after another day of speculation and pressure for team boss Christian Horner, following the anonymous leaking of a cache of alleged private messages and photographs between him and a female member of the team.

This came 24 hours after an internal investigation led by an independent London lawyer had resulted in Horner being cleared of all claims of inappropriate behaviour. Verstappen clocked a fastest lap of one minute and 29.179 seconds to beat Leclerc by 0.228 seconds in the final seconds of the session, securing his third Bahrain pole and the 33rd of his career.

"It was a lot of fun," said Verstappen. "The track had a lot of grip, but with the wind over the last few days, it's been quite tricky to get a whole lap together and it was the same in qualifying. 'In Q1 and Q2 you go a bit faster, with the track ramping up, but to really get everything out of it in Q3 was a little bit difficult. So I'm very happy to be on pole."

He added: "To be honest, it was a little bit unexpected, but I think the car came to us and I felt hap-

py was dismissed for a second bookable offence in the 57th minute after yanking back Christian Pulisic, sparking a pushing match between both sets of players.

Defender Pellegrini thought that play had been stopped after Valentin Castellanos had been cluttered by Ismael Bennacer and was furious at being sent off. And Adam Marusic was given a straight red card for dissent in the fourth minute of added time before Matteo Guendouzi was also sent off for reacting to being fouled.



**ROME:** Lazio's Italian goalkeeper #94 Ivan Provedel makes a save during the Italian Serie A football match between Lazio and AC Milan at the Olympic stadium in Rome. — AFP

Lazio owner Claudio Lotito was so angered by referee Marco Di Bello's performance that he said the club would take action against the decisions made against his team.

"When the system isn't reliable we should ask ourselves some questions," said Lotito. "A referee should be able to understand where breaking point is... the league needs to have an independent control body which is outside of the current system."

However despite having to play for half an hour a man down Lazio almost took the lead through substitute Ciro Immobile in the 75th minute, when the Italy striker turned wide a glorious chance from close range.

Immobile also dragged wide another presentable opportunity shortly before Marusic was sent off and the match descended into chaos. — AFP

pier with the whole car." He forecast a close race on Saturday. "We look good for the race and that's the most important, but we will see tomorrow. I'm confident we can have a strong race."

Ferrari's Leclerc missed pole by only two-tenths of a second as he finished second ahead of Mercedes' George Russell, Carlos Sainz of Ferrari and Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull. "I'm a bit disappointed," admitted Leclerc. "But we had a good qualifying and this offers us a good start to the year."

Two-time champion Fernando Alonso qualified sixth for Aston Martin, ahead of the McLarens of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri with seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton ninth for Mercedes and Nico Hulkenberg 10th for Haas.

Hamilton reflected: "It's a lot of work to do to get past a lot of quick cars that are starting ahead of me, but I'm sure it'll be fun. "George's position and the pace he showed today really highlights, and is a real testament, to the team. "It shows just how hard everyone has worked over the winter. It's amazing for us to have a car that we can fight with. It reignites the fire and the flame." Qualifying got under way with Horner, who has always categorically denied any wrongdoing, under renewed pressure despite being cleared in Red Bull's investigation led by a London lawyer. Horner, who turned up at the track on Thursday to oversee the start of the new season, said: "I won't comment on anonymous speculation, but to reiterate, I have always denied the allegations."

Verstappen ensured events on the track went more smoothly and he will be favourite to emulate last year's result when he won the first of 19 races as he swept to his third title. The session began in cool conditions as temperatures fell under the floodlights at Sakhir's International Circuit where Bahrain's maiden race took place 20 years ago. — AFP

### Today's Matches

#### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

**Burnley v Bournemouth** 16:00  
beIN Sports HD 1

**Man City v Man United** 18:30  
beIN Sports HD 1

#### SPANISH LEAGUE

**Villarreal v Granada** 16:00  
beIN Sports HD 3  
beIN Sports Fr 4 HD

**Atletico de Madrid v Real Betis** 18:15  
beIN Sports HD 3  
beIN Sports 1 FR

**Real Mallorca v Girona** 20:30  
beIN Sports HD 3  
beIN Sports 2 FR

**Athletic de Bilbao v Barcelona** 23:00  
beIN Sports HD 1  
beIN 4K HDR  
beIN Sports HD 1 English  
beIN Sports 1 FR

#### ITALIAN LEAGUE SERIE A

**Hellas Verona v US Sassuolo** 14:30  
beIN Sports 2 FR  
AD SPORTS Premium 1

**Frosinone v Lecce** 17:00  
beIN Sports Fr 7 HD max  
AD SPORTS Premium 1

**Empoli v Cagliari Calcio** 17:00  
beIN Sports Fr 5 HD max

**Atalanta v Bologna** 20:00  
AD SPORTS Premium 1

**Napoli v Juventus** 22:45  
AD SPORTS Premium 1

#### GERMAN BUNDESLIGA 1<sup>ST</sup> DIV

**FC Koln v Bayer 04 Leverkusen** 17:30  
beIN Sports HD 5

**Hoffenheim v Werder Bremen** 19:30  
beIN Sports HD 2

#### FRENCH LEAGUE

**Toulouse v Nice** 15:00  
beIN Sports HD 4  
beIN Sports HD 4

**Montpellier v Strasbourg** 17:00  
beIN Sports Max 2 HD

**Nantes v Metz** 17:00  
beIN Sports HD 8

**Stade brestois v Le Havre** 17:00  
beIN Sports HD 2  
beIN Sports Max 1 HD

**Stade Rennais v Lorient** 19:05  
beIN Sports HD 4  
beIN Sports Max 1 HD

**Olympique Lyonnais v Lens** 22:45  
beIN Sports HD 4  
beIN Sports HD 4 TR





GLASGOW: (From L) Sweden's Henrik Larsson, Kenya's Ferdinand Omanyala, Jamaica's Ackeem Blake, USA's Noah Lyles and USA's Christian Coleman compete in the Men's 60m final during the Indoor World Athletics Championships in Glasgow, Scotland. — AFP

## Coleman outsprints Lyles for second world indoor 60m gold

### I had a lot of confidence in myself coming in: Coleman

GLASGOW: Christian Coleman outsprinted much-hyped American rival Noah Lyles to claim his second world indoor 60m title in Glasgow on Friday. Coleman, who previously won gold in Birmingham, England, in 2018, timed 6.41 seconds, with Lyles taking silver in 6.44sec.

Jamaica's Ackeem Blake claimed bronze in 6.46sec. "It's amazing, I never take these opportunities for granted," said Coleman, who was also a silver medallist in Belgrade two years ago behind Italy's Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs, absent from Glasgow. "I wanted to come out and put on a

show. It's going to give me tremendous momentum" going into the Paris Olympics, he added. Coleman, who won the world outdoor 100m title in Doha in 2019 but missed the Tokyo Olympics after being hit by a doping ban, was drawn in lane four, with Lyles in five and Blake in six.

The 27-year-old is well known for his quick start and made no mistake at a packed Emirates Arena. He screamed off to the front of the eight-strong field and never looked for one moment in danger of ceding that lead.

"I had a lot of confidence in myself com-

ing in," said Coleman. "You have to feel confident in yourself. I set my mind on letting my body do what I have been doing in practice and I came out with a win. "I can look forward to the rest of the summer. I've got so many things to work on and I am just looking forward to these opportunities. When you get these opportunities, you have got to take them."

#### 'A great race'

Lyles is a six-time world outdoor champion, last year becoming the first sprinter to win the world 100-200m double since

Usain Bolt in 2015. He had announced that competing indoors in this Olympic year was the perfect chance to hone his start—which he considers the weak link in his skillset—in time for the Paris Games.

Lyles also said he had targeted four golds, starting with this race and culminating in a treble sprint haul in the French capital. "To be honest, it's a great race," said Lyles. "Every time I've come down the 60m this year, it's a blessing."

When asked whether he thought he had achieved what he'd set out to accomplish, Lyles replied: "Beside getting

gold, yes! "It feels like one of my best performances - 6.44. I'm never going to be dissatisfied with that. Last year I was running 6.51 and this year I've put down multiple 6.4s, and these are not small 6.4s either, I'm deep into 6.4 territory and talking about 6.3 at some point.

"The 60m is not my favourite race but now you can't say I'm not one of the greats in it," Lyles added: "This is all with training that hasn't really changed. It's so exciting because now I finally get to do an outdoor season. "I'm very excited for Paris because it has all my favourite events." — AFP

## Liverpool beat Forest, Spurs fight back to close on top four

MANCHESTER: Darwin Nunez headed in a 99th-minute winner as injury-hit Liverpool moved four points clear at the top of the Premier League with a 1-0 win at Nottingham Forest, while Tottenham came from behind late on to beat Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Liverpool's resources have been stretched to the limit by a series of injuries in recent weeks as they attempt to win a quadruple in Jurgen Klopp's final season. The Reds were again without a host of star names including Mohamed Salah, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Alisson Becker and Diogo Jota.

But there was some light at the end of the tunnel with Nunez and Dominik Szoboszlai making their return as second-half substitutes. The Uruguayan made the telling impact with virtually the last touch of the game as Nunez rose highest to flick home Alexis Mac Allister's cross.

Victory pulls Klopp's men clear of Manchester City, who face Manchester United on Sunday, and five points clear of Arsenal before they travel to Sheffield United on Monday. Defeat leaves Forest still just four points above the relegation zone and with the threat of a points deduction for breaches of financial rules still hanging over the club.

#### Son strikes for Spurs

Tottenham have made a habit of late fightbacks at home under Ange Postecoglou and needed another one to inflict Oliver Glasner's first defeat as Palace boss with a 3-1 win. Eberechi Eze's stunning free-kick gave the Eagles a shock lead on the hour mark.

Timo Werner's first Spurs goal set up the grandstand finish when he tapped home Brennan Johnson's low cross. Cristian Romero then headed Tottenham in front before Son Heung-min sprinted clear to seal the three points.

Victory takes Spurs to within two points of fourth-placed Aston Villa, who are in action later away to Luton. Brentford came from behind to pile more pressure on under-fire Chelsea boss



LONDON: Chelsea's English midfielder #70 Raheem Sterling attempts a shot on goal during the English Premier League football match between Brentford and Chelsea at the Gtech Community Stadium in London. — AFP

Mauricio Pochettino in a 2-2 draw.

Nicolas Jackson's towering header powered the Blues into an early lead. But Brentford are now five games unbeaten against their wealthier west London rivals. Mads Roerslev levelled early in the second half before Yoane Wissa's stunning overhead kick put the Bees in front.

A header from Axel Disasi saved Chelsea's blushes to salvage a point but they remain in the bottom half of the table. Newcastle kept their quest for Europe alive with their first home win for nearly three months to climb up to eighth.

The Magpies beat Wolves 3-0 to leapfrog their opponents in the table thanks to goals from Alexander Isak, Anthony Gordon and Tino Livramento. Brighton are falling further away from the fight for Europe next season after the Seagulls were soundly beaten 3-0 at Fulham. Harry Wilson, Rodrigo Muniz and Adama Traore struck for the Cottagers to extend Brighton's barren run to three wins in 12 league games.

Everton remain in a relegation dogfight despite having a 10-point deduction reduced to six this week. Beto missed a first-half penalty before putting the Toffees in front against West Ham. But the Hammers came back to win 3-1 thanks to goals from Kurt Zouma, Tomas Soucek and Edson Alvarez. David Moyes' men move up to seventh and within just two points of the top six. — AFP

## Saudi formally launches bid for 2034 WCup

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia formally launched its bid to host the 2034 World Cup on Friday, nearly four months after football's world governing body FIFA announced the kingdom was the only candidate. The bid comes two years after neighbouring Qatar hosted the first World Cup in the Middle East.

The campaign is under the slogan "Growing Together", the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) revealed its bid logo, website, as well as a short bid film that celebrates "the passion, spirit and diversity of football in Saudi Arabia". "This campaign is powered by the hopes and dreams of 32 million people in Saudi Arabia," the head of the SAFF bid unit, Hammad Albalawi, said in a statement. "Our responsibility is to submit the best possible bid to FIFA, make our country proud and fulfil the trust placed upon us by more than 130 Member Associations across the world who supported our bid."

Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 reform agenda, which aims to position Saudi Arabia as a tourism, business and sports hub, the kingdom has invested heavily in sport. On Wednesday,

## Bayern held in Freiburg to boost Leverkusen title hopes

FREIBURG IM BREISGAU: Bayern Munich were held to a 2-2 draw at Freiburg on Friday, an 87th-minute equaliser from Lucas Hoeler giving leaders Bayer Leverkusen a chance to go 10 points clear. Mathys Tel's 35th-minute stunner had cancelled out an impressive opener from Freiburg captain Christian Guenter, before Jamal Musiala's spectacular solo effort looked to have snared the three points for Bayern.

Hoeler however had other ideas, chipping a volley through a crowded Bayern penalty area and past a helpless Manuel Neuer. Bayern manager Thomas Tuchel criticised his players' "body language and lack of bite" in the first

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) announced a "multi-year strategic partnership" with the ATP, the governing body of men's tennis.

Since 2021, PIF has invested heavily in a number of major sports, including setting up the LIV golf tour, a rival to the PGA, and purchasing English Premier League club Newcastle United. It also owns four clubs in the Saudi Pro League and has lured global stars including Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar with huge salaries.

The investment has led to accusations the kingdom is "sportswashing" international criticism of its human rights record. Saudi Arabia was initially interested in bidding for the 2030 World Cup alongside Egypt and Greece but that idea was abandoned in June, leaving the path open for a tri-continental bid of Spain, Portugal and Morocco, with three matches in South America.

Saudi Arabia announced its intention to bid for the 2034 event on October 4, as soon as the procedure had been launched. As a result of the continental rotation, FIFA had only "invited" member countries of the Asian and Oceanian confederations to apply—thus ruling out the traditional footballing heartlands.

At one stage, Indonesia had considered a joint bid with Australia, or even other countries such as New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, but on October 19 it agreed to support Saudi Arabia's bid. Australia was also a contender but withdrew its interest on Monday following the Asian Football Confederation's decision to back the Saudi bid. — AFP

half an hour, telling DAZN "we played completely without structure and had no discipline and weren't in our positions." Calling his side "panicky", Tuchel said: "We did things that we've never trained, that we've never spoken about. "We played like it was the 85th minute and we were a goal down."

Musiala told DAZN he felt "frustrated". "Since I've been at Bayern it's been in my head that we must win and we hate to lose. We want to win the Bundesliga, we want to win titles," he said. Bayern have now failed to win away from home in four matches dating back to January in both the Bundesliga and Champions League. Tuchel's side face Lazio at home in the last 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday, staring down an early exit with a 1-0 deficit from the first leg in Rome.

Xabi Alonso's unbeaten Bayer Leverkusen can go 10 points clear of the Bavarians with a win against lowly Cologne in their derby clash on Sunday as they chase a first-ever Bundesliga title. "We played a good game" Freiburg's Vincenzo Grifo told DAZN. "It's clear that you have to suffer against Bayern." — AFP