

**RIDESAFE**  
RIDE SAFE

**BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW**

DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

@ridesafe.app

**Ramadan KAREEM**

Fajr	: 4:44
Shrooq	: 6:02
Dhuhr	: 11:58
Asr	: 15:22
Maghrib	: 17:54
Isha	: 19:11

## Blessed month of Ramadan begins

Amir exchanges Ramadan greetings • Disciplined personnel released



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives US Ambassador Karen Sahasara, who handed her credentials during a ceremony at Bayan Palace. HH the Amir also received the ambassadors of Albania, Italy, Myanmar and Tunisia. — KUNA (See Page 3)

KUWAIT: Kuwait announced that Ramadan will start on Monday in the country as the crescent moon was sighted Sunday night. HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah exchanged congratulatory cables with leaders of Arab and Muslim countries on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. HH the Amir prayed to Almighty Allah to bless the Arab and Muslim nations in this month and bestow health upon them.

HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal received congratulatory cables from Chief of the National Guard HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

They expressed their sincere congratulations, asking Almighty Allah to bless the dear homeland in this holy month and bestow HH the Amir with health and wellbeing. In response, HH the Amir sent cables of thanks, including appreciation for their messag-

es, asking Almighty Allah in this month to bless the homeland, as well as citizens, with safety, security and prosperity.

HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal received on Sunday HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad at Bayan Palace. HH the Amir also received Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah. HH the Amir also received on Sunday the ambassadors of Albania, Italy, Myanmar, Tunisia and the US, who handed their credentials during a ceremony at Bayan Palace. Senior state officials attended the ceremony.

Meanwhile, the interior and defense ministries announced on Sunday the release of all members of the police force and soldiers in disciplinary detention on the occasion of the blessed month of Ramadan. The release orders by Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Chief of the General Staff Lt Gen Bandar Al-Muzain came upon instructions of Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah. — KUNA

### RAMADAN KAREEM

## Purity of the heart

By M'shari Al-Ghazali

Purity of the heart is one of the best deeds and tasks because the center of our deeds, rewards, punishment, acceptance and rejection – among other deeds – is the heart. Almighty Allah says what can be translated as: “The Day when wealth or children will not benefit anyone. Only those who will come to Allah with a sound (and clear) heart (Will be saved).” (Ash-Shura’a – consultation: 26: 88 – 89)

Prophet Ibrahim (Peace Be Upon Him) was a man with a pure and clean heart. Almighty Allah says what can be translated as: “Moreover, among his (Prophet Noah’s) confirmed loyal supporters and adherents, was most surely, Abraham, when he came to his Lord with a pure heart (full of faith).” (As-Saffat – Devotional Ranks 37: 83 – 84)

In the above-quoted verses, we understand that Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham AS) turned to his Lord sincerely and exclusively: “with a sound heart;” a heart that was free from all kinds of moral evils and weaknesses of faith, from every crookedness, confusion and complexity, and free from every evil inclination and desire. His was a heart that neither cherished any malice or jealousy or ill-will against anyone, nor had any evil intentions.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said what can be translated as: “Do not envy one another; do not hate one another; do not inflate prices by overbidding against one another; do not harbor malice against one another, and do not enter into commercial transactions when others have already entered into them, but rather be, you, O servants of Allah, as brothers...” (Saheeh Muslim)

It is essential for Muslims to heed this call and strive to purify their hearts of negative qualities such as sin, malice, envy, greed, and arrogance. A very important characteristic of believers is sensitivity of the heart that enables them to derive pleasure from worshipping Almighty Allah alone, and abiding by the values and morality stipulated in the Noble Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Continued on Page 6

## ‘Expats aren’t the problem in Kuwait’

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti politician chimed in on a rise in rhetoric blaming expatriates for many of the shortcomings witnessed in Kuwait, arguing that such claims are used to cover up for governmental mismanagement. “Framing them as a problem in society is in my opinion a balloon created to cover up for other problems,” Meshari Al-Ibrahim, Assistant Secretary General of the Kuwait Democratic Forum, said in a talk show on Al-Rai TV. “It’s a rightwing rhetoric that we’re used to seeing in Europe and other countries too. [It’s] a xenophobic rhetoric that tries to make people fear that people from abroad are coming to create problems,” he argued.

Kuwait’s expatriate population has seen growth

## KRCS distributes food, conducts surgeries in Gaza

GAZA: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributed on Sunday food packages to hundreds of displaced Palestinians in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on the occasion of the approaching of Ramadan. KRCS started the distribution process in cooperation with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), which helped brief the Kuwaiti institution about 1.5 million displaced Palestinians living in tents and in dire humanitarian conditions due to the continuation of the Zionist occupation aggression for the sixth month in a row.

Head of the KRCS Operations Sector and the Kuwaiti medical team Dr Musaad Al-Enezi told KUNA that this campaign comes upon the directives of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his keenness on humanity and philanthropy. Dr Enezi said the campaign coincides with the approaching holy month of Ra-

## Kuwait improves in antigraft index

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim announced Sunday that Kuwait improved 22 ranks in the latest Corruption Perceptions Index released by Transparency International. Ibrahim, during a meeting of the supreme committee for coordinating Kuwait’s strategy to enhance integrity and combat



Meshari Al-Ibrahim

in recent years, maintaining a level of nearly 70 percent of the state’s total population, even though family and visit visas were suspended. The government’s recent decision to lift some of the restrictions on issuing visit and family dependency visas has led to the reemergence of comments, publicly and on social media, expressing concern that these

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Kuwait Red Crescent Society personnel distribute food packages in Rafah in southern Gaza on March 10, 2024. — KUNA

madan, and the distributed food packages include basic nutritional supplies and flour.

He pointed out the Kuwaiti team is divided into three groups, one team performing medical operations at Gaza’s European Hospital, one at Kuwait Specialized Hospital, and one relief team in the camps. He expressed his hope to increase the amount of aid and relief campaigns in coordination

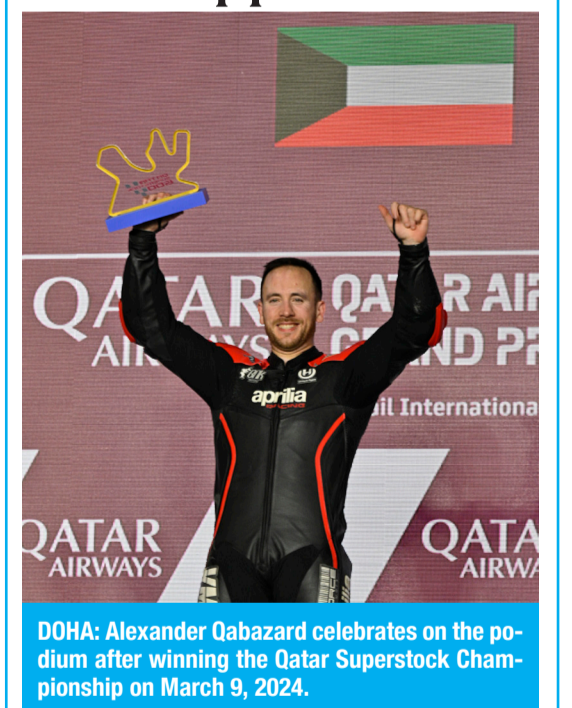
Continued on Page 6

corruption, laid out the latest developments regarding the execution of initiatives and strategic projects that were launched in 2019 until 2024.

In his speech at the meeting, Ibrahim noted the committee’s achievements since its launch, such as the right to access information, the conflict of interest prevention law and its executive regulations. Other legislation included an amendment to some provisions of the penal code to extend the scope of criminal liability to persons charged with corruption crimes.

Ibrahim added that law 120/2023 regarding electing parliament members, better known as the higher commission for elections, has been completed

## Alexander Qabazard wins Qatar MotoGP 2024 support race



DOHA: Alexander Qabazard celebrates on the podium after winning the Qatar Superstock Championship on March 9, 2024.

By Faten Omar

DOHA: Alexander Qabazard won first place in the Qatar Superstock Championship on Saturday, a thrilling support race accompanying the MotoGP season opener. Competing against 21 international riders hailing from diverse corners of the globe, Qabazard’s victory showcased his prowess on the track.

Sponsored by Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, whose support propelled Qabazard to victory in the Kuwait Superbike Championship in 2023, he continues to race under the banner of BNK Motion as an endorsed Aprilia rider. Speaking to Kuwait Times, he said: “I want to thank BNK from the bottom of my heart for believing in me as an upcoming Kuwaiti racer.” (See Page 16)

and assessed, while 83 percent of national strategic initiatives have been completed and assessed. He pointed out other achievements, such as enhancing the fight against corruption at the national, regional and international levels, especially with civil society institutions, associations and regulatory bodies.

Ibrahim added that a visual presentation was held by the planning and follow-up committee in Nazaha about the achievements of the committee. He affirmed the importance of doubling efforts in executing Kuwait’s commitment to the United Nations agreement for combating corruption and improving the country’s position in international indices. — KUNA





## Local

# Electronic waste: A global crisis in need of sustainable solutions

## Most hazardous e-waste contain toxic components

By Passant Hisham

**KUWAIT:** With every passing year, the practice of storing or dumping vast amounts of electronic waste is growing, driven by people's constant urge to upgrade to the latest, lightest or slimmest versions of electronic products just entering the market. This trend has led to a doubling of the annually generated global e-waste volume in just five years, from approximately 20 million tons to 40 million tons, as reported by a survey conducted by the Kuwait Environment Protection Society.

Unfortunately, this e-waste ends up being sent to landfills, resulting in significant adverse effects on the environment and people, as noted by Jenan Behzad, Secretary General of KEPS. She highlighted mobile phones, personal computing devices and televisions as the most hazardous e-waste, containing toxic components such as lead and mercury, which are released into the environment, causing damage to the brain, heart, liver, kidneys and skeletal systems of humans. Additionally, these toxic substances accumulate in the soil, air, water and living organisms.

However, Behzad noted that e-waste encompasses more than just electronic devices; it also includes batteries, chargers, wires and any items whose lifespan has ended. Reacting to the misconception that these products are worthless, Behzad dispelled this



Jenan Behzad

false belief by highlighting that e-waste includes valuable metals such as gold, silver and copper, which can be extracted and reused for manufacturing new products.

Therefore, proper disposal of e-waste will not only protect the health of people and the environment, but will also extend to providing economic benefits, as emphasized by Ghassan Mazloum, a business developer and administration manager at an e-waste recycling company in Kuwait. He pointed out that efficient retrieval of valuable materials from e-waste contributes to fostering a circular economy.

By using recycled materials, manufacturers can lower the costs associated with extracting and processing new raw materials, boost production rates, create more job opportunities and ultimately offer products at lower prices, thereby benefiting the end consumer as well, he noted. Mazloum argued that the lack of awareness regarding the consequences of dumping electronic waste is one



of the primary factors contributing to this escalating phenomenon. Additionally, he noted the lack of trust in electronic waste companies, particularly concerning the handling of sensitive data stored on old electronic devices.

Therefore, the essential role of recycling companies comes into play, as Mazloum explained that legitimate electronic waste companies provide detailed reports as evidence of destruction, dismantling or data erasure. Moreover, he assured they are approved by legal authorities and adhere to regulations and international standards concerning safety, health and material disposal. Mazloum believes that another cause behind the prevalence of dumping



e-waste is the absence of penalties for this action. He suggested Kuwait Municipality should enact strict regulations on this matter, similar to those in other developed countries, and impose fees whenever people dispose of any material in a non-environmentally friendly manner.



**KUWAIT:** Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika called on Deputy PM and Oil Minister of Kuwait Dr Emad Mohammad Abdulaziz Al-Atiqi. The ambassador apprised the minister of strong bilateral cooperation in hydrocarbons and good possibilities of cooperation in upstream and downstream sectors.

## Oil minister calls for addressing environmental issues

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Dr. Emad Al-Atiqi called on Sunday to address issues recently raised about the industry of gas and oil: "fossil resources" are harmful to the environment and should be replaced with other sources of energy. Al-Atiqi, after concluding his visit to the OPEC headquarters and meeting its Chief Jamal Al-Loughani, confirmed the importance of strengthening relations between OPEC and Kuwait.

In a press statement, he praised the various activities done by the organization, saying that "OPEC is one of the most unique and pioneering organizations." He also praised the positive measures within the framework of improving and activating the organization's work, restructuring it, and expanding its activities to include more energy resources and follow up with other issues such as climate change and energy transformations.

He explained that energy policymakers and decision-makers in oil and gas-producing and exporting



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Dr Emad Al-Atiqi poses for group photo after the meeting. — KUNA

countries are facing great challenges to maintain their interests and have to defend them in a way that doesn't negatively affect the environment. During the visit, Minister Al-Atiqi reviewed the activities and tasks of the general secretariat of OPEC, its

periodic reports, forums, conferences, and training sources. He also reviewed the plan to develop the organization's business and restructure it in line with the global developments taking place in the global energy industry. — KUNA

## Self-service kiosks linked to 'Kuwait Mobile ID' App 24/7

**KUWAIT:** The Medical Association announced the provision of "self-service" machines to provide services to its members around the clock. The President of the Association, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Tawalrah, said in a press statement that the "self-service" device that was provided by the

association to the affiliates is "linked" directly with the "Kuwait Mobile ID" application, noting that through this device, the membership card is printed and the "membership" receipt for medical licenses is received.

He pointed out that the device aims to save time and effort, pointing out that it will be provided in the first phase at the headquarters of the Medical Association, provided that its provision will be studied in government hospitals and medical centers during the coming period to facilitate the affiliates. Al-Tawalrah stressed the medical association's keenness to expand the provision of its services electronically in its endeavor to save time and effort

for doctors affiliated with the association.

He stressed the association's efforts to raise the level of the medical profession and human doctors in order to achieve the greatest degree of health care and conduct scientific studies and research in various branches of medicine. This will help keep pace with the medical profession in the country. He pointed out that the association seeks to encourage and support means of cooperation, exchange experiences, conclude agreements between Arab and foreign bodies, and cooperate with similar foreign professional bodies so as to serve the objectives of the association to develop the health system in the country.

## Football museum opens at the Youm Al-Bahar Village

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Heritage Society opened on Saturday the museum of Kuwait football history at Youm Al-Bahar Village under auspices and in presence of Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi. The exhibits include relics, photos and documents belonging to national football stars of the golden age that are strongly reminiscent of their achievements on the local, regional and continental levels. The museum falls in the framework of the Heritage Society's effort, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Sport and the Ministry of Information and Culture, to immortalize the iconic players who formed the history of sports in Kuwait. — KUNA

## Clinics to offer consultation in Ramadan

**KUWAIT:** The Head of Nutrition and Food Department in the Ministry of Health, Dr. Nawal Al-Qaoud, said on Sunday that there are 75 clinics providing nutritional consultations for Ramadan, distributed in many hospitals and general clinics. She pointed out that 51 clinics are in primary health care centers, 24 others in nutrition and food departments, and specialized and general hospitals, noting that these clinics will receive people throughout the holy month of Ramadan to ensure good nutrition to fast during the holy month.

She stressed the necessity of dividing the amount of food into three meals (Futoor (breakfast), Ghabga (dinner), and Suhoor (pre-dawn meal), making sure to eat fresh vegetables and fruits in each meal, drinking a sufficient amount of water after Futoor until Suhoor, focusing on home cooking, and staying away from fast food. Al-Qaoud pointed out that children's meals should be monitored, especially sweets and the high sugar content they may contain during the Gargian season. — KUNA

## Kuwait welcomes Sudan ceasefire in Ramadan

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Foreign Ministry welcomed the UN Security Council's adoption of Resolution 2724 on Saturday, calling for a ceasefire in Sudan during Ramadan. This step, according to the statement, would enable swift and safe delivery of aid to civilians. Reaffirming support for international efforts in this regard, especially the ones by UN Secretary General's Personal Envoy for Sudan, Ramtane Lama-mra, the ministry said a solution to the crisis depends on all parties in Sudan adhering to the aforementioned resolution and committing to the Jeddah Declaration outcomes in a way that preserves Sudan's sovereignty and achieves its people's aspirations of a safe and decent life, concluded the statement.

Also, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi welcomed the UN Security Council resolution 2724 calling for a ceasefire in Sudan during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. In a statement, Al-Budaiwi expressed hope that all Sudan's parties would commit to the resolution in a manner that maintains security, stability, and the safety of Sudanese people. He reiterated the GCC's unwavering positions regarding maintaining Sudan's stability, security, and territorial integrity, as well as supporting Sudan in light of current developments.

The GCC chief underlined the need for

## Judicial body, UN sign MoU

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies (KIJLS) and the United Nations signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Sunday aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two sides. The MoU was signed by Director-General of the KIJLS, Justice Hani Al-Hamdan, and UN Secretary General's Rep-



**PORT SUDAN:** In this file photo, the Egyptian Navy ship ENS 'Abu Simbel 2' docks in Port Sudan after arriving, carrying 190 tons of humanitarian aid provided by Kuwait's Red Crescent Society. — AFP

representative in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher, with the attendance of Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, Hashem Al-Qallaf.

Al-Hamdan said to KUNA that the MoU will help KIJLS achieve several goals, most notably Kuwait Vision 2035 and the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Al-Hamdan added that the MoU aims to exchange experiences and will provide an opportunity to enable Kuwait's expertise to expand from a local to an international level. For her part, Al-Taher stated to KUNA that the partnership between the two sides

will enhance technical cooperation, exchange capabilities in various fields that are related to law and justice in Kuwait, and hold joint programs online or in person in collaboration with UN agencies.

Al-Taher noted that the MoU is a framework for furthering the strategic partnership between the UN and KIJLS to have a highly efficient judicial and legal system in Kuwait. One of the objectives of the KIJLS is to train members of the Public Prosecutor's Office and Legal Advice and Legislation, which helps them practice their work more efficiently. — KUNA



## Amir receives credentials of foreign diplomats



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday the ambassadors of (clockwise) Italy, Tunisia, Myanmar and Albania respectively who handed their credentials during a ceremony at Bayan Palace. Senior state officials attended the ceremony. — KUNA photos

In my view

### Doctor's Brew initiative at Bayt Abdullah honors Dr Ridha Alkhayyat

By Dr Abdulaziz Alkhayyat

What is the worst that can happen—I die? That is a very normal thing! These were the courageous words of my late father, Dr. Ridha Alkhayyat, amidst the most harrowing moments of my life. Diagnosed with late-stage lung cancer at the height of the pandemic, while I was in medical school, frequent hospital visits became our new normal. Yet, in those moments, my father would often remind me of the ordinariness of death.

His perspective on mortality profoundly influenced my understanding of death and underscores the critical role of palliative care. Palliative care is defined as holistic care of people with health-related suffering as a result of severe medical conditions, especially, but not only, those nearing the end of life (Radbruch et al., 2020). Its aim is to improve the quality of life of both patients and their families. Despite its importance, misconceptions and stigma often lead to its underutilization (Cherny, 2009).

To bridge this gap, my team at The Doctor's Brew partnered with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH), organizing the 'TDB Cares: Palliative Care' event in honor of my father Dr Ridha Alkhayyat. This initiative, through expert-led panels and lectures, highlighted palliative care practice in Kuwait, the vital work of KACCH & BACCH, and the role of junior doctors in palliative care.

Through this article, I aim to share the transformative insights from our event, hoping to challenge perceptions and encourage wider embrace of palliative care. In practice, palliative care is underutilized and misunderstood. For example, a study exploring



Abdulaziz Alkhayyat with his father.

## Deputy PM inspects islands, military and security sites

Minister highlights the need to maintaining utmost degrees of vigilance



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah inspects islands, military and security sites in northern Kuwait. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Saturday highlighted the need of maintaining utmost degrees of preparedness and vigilance at all security and military facilities, including border outlets. His remarks, according to a defense ministry statement, came after an inspection tour of military and security sites in the country's northern region, along with the islands of Boubyan, Warba, and Meskan, where he was briefed with latest developments and duties in said sites.

During his tour, Sheikh Fahad Al-Sabah conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah to military and security personnel, urging them to continue on preserving safety, stability and sovereignty of the country. — KUNA



### Ineffectiveness of punishing students

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Expelling irresponsible students as a form of punishment does not seem to be effective, according to Hoor Al-Mutairi, a high achieving high school student, who argued in an interview with Kuwait Times against this continuing form of punishment, saying it does not address the root causes of such students' behaviors.

Because educating the youth is fundamental for securing future progress, Kuwait Times listened to high school students to reinforce the importance of their opinions and the problems that hinder their progress. One of the primary challenges that students face during their in-class education experience is the negative learning environment created by their peers, which

never seems to come to an end due to the ineffective forms of punishment that schools apply.

"It is clear that these students may already have a lack of interest in attending school and engaging in learning. For them, being expelled does nothing of the supposed disciplinary cause, but is rather considered a relief from adhering to school rules and focusing on their education. In fact, some of them take pride in it!" explained Mutairi.

This was also highlighted by Al Kawther Ghloom, also a high achieving high school student, who said expelling students may further push them towards disengagement and rebellion. "Rather than punishing students by ineffective forms of punishment such as expelling them for a few days, calling their parents, deducting their marks or trying to embarrass them by keeping them standing outside the classroom, our schools must provide mental and psychological support for all students and teachers," she said.

"Providing a serious and dedicated mental healthcare department in

school can fix many problems in our educational experience, because some students are actually not bad or irresponsible, but they just need help to realize their potential in life. Once they discover it, they will take school more seriously and respect their peers'

rights for proper education during school time," Al Kawther added, emphasizing on the importance of providing mental healthcare at schools to create a profound positive impact while addressing students' misbehavior at school.



deceased patients who had solid cancer tumors found that only 9.6 percent of patients received palliative care (Osagiede et al. 2018). Common myths about palliative care, including that it is "giving up" or that it is solely end-of-life care, hinders its utilization clinically (Cheng et al. 2019; Cherny, 2009).

Contrary to these myths, studies have shown that palliative care actually prolongs life (Temel et al. 2010; Hui and Bruera, 2016; Sullivan et al. 2019; Zhi and Smith, 2015). These issues are particularly pronounced in Kuwait, where not only is palliative care underutilized, but there is also a shortage of providers. This is illustrated by the common question posed to our team at The Doctor's Brew regarding our event at Bayt Abdullah—'who is Abdullah and why are you hosting an event at his house (bayt)? So, what exactly is Bayt Abdullah? It is the Middle East's sole children's hospice, offering holistic palliative care support to children with life threatening illnesses.

These include counseling, clinical services, music therapy and more. Bayt Abdullah can only be described as a colorful oasis tucked away in Shuwaikh boasting a playground, library, and a ferris wheel designed by the same team responsible for the London Eye! Despite providing medical services such as taking blood and administering medication, BACCH does not feel like a hospital. Unlike traditional hospitals, it is adorned with color, the sound of children playing replaces the beeps of machines, and natural sunlight fills every room.

An extension of the KACCH, a non-profit, charitable organization, BACCH and KACCH together provide therapeutic services across nine government hospitals in Kuwait. It is critical for every doctor and healthcare provider to be aware of what KACCH and BACCH offer, ensuring children facing life-limiting illnesses can be referred to this exceptional facility. As victims of imposter syndrome, it is easy for young doctors, such as myself, to feel that our work is futile. However, as part of our training, we naturally have to spend more time on the wards and with patients than senior physicians.

With this much facetime with patients, it is preposterous to believe that we have no impact on their care. Recognizing this, The Doctor's Brew emphasized the vital role of junior doctors in palliative care at our recent event. We highlighted two main strategies: effective communication and active advocacy. Open dialogue helps dismantle stigma. By employing communication models such as the SPIKES framework in delivering bad news and using active listening skills, patients and their families are more likely to be receptive to palliative services.

The goal is not to persuade, rather, it is to foster trust which plants seeds for future consideration of palliative interventions. Outside the hospital, however, there is still plenty to be done. By being an active advocate of palliative care in our personal lives, whether by volunteering at KACCH and BACCH or talking about palliative care values in social settings, we can cause a shift in misconceived societal viewpoints. Being a doctor, for better or for worse, extends beyond the hospital walls and we all have a choice with what to do with that title when we finish our workday.

My suggestion is to use it for the betterment of health, people, and society as a whole in whatever way that brings you joy and self-fulfillment. In closing, I would like to remind those of you reading who feel that palliative care does not apply to your life— think twice. Death is a universal right, fear, and paradox that humanity has confronted since the start of time. We all confront mortality whether it is our own or of those we love. Remember that palliative care is not only about the end of life, it is about the quality of life. Learn about palliative care today so our final chapters on earth can be ones of calm, peace, and love.



## Experts promote physical exercise

**KUWAIT:** The director of the Health Promotion Department at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Abeer Al-Bahwa, said that the percentage of physical inactivity in Kuwait has increased to about 61 percent among adults (18 years of age and older) and 75 percent among females. Al-Bahwa said that the holy month of Ramadan is a good opportunity to exercise, reduce inactivity, and promote health, pointing to the rising and increasing rates of obesity and diabetes in the country.

She explained that the percentage of physical inactivity from the age of 11 to 17 years for males was 79 percent, while for females, it was 90 percent, and the average inactivity rate for that age group was 84 percent. It was reported that the prevalence of physical inactivity among the elderly reached 76 percent among males and 85 percent among females, indicating that changing the level of physical inactivity among people in Kuwait requires a system based on a specific approach and involves a wide range of measures across multiple sectors.

She pointed to the cooperation of various sectors in the Ministry of Health in spreading health awareness and presenting plans and policies that would encourage Kuwaiti society of all age groups to move and avoid physical inactivity, which would cause many chronic diseases and others. The research indicated that diseases known as chronic or lifestyle-related are the leading cause of global mortality, with about 41,000,000 deaths resulting from them. Globally, it accounts for 74 percent of deaths, while up to 79 percent are in Kuwait.

She called for building a comprehensive, integrated, and multi-sectoral national plan to promote physical activity at the national level among leaders, decision-makers, and influencers, preparing a training program to prepare leaders and champions who promote physical activity in relevant sectors, and supporting initiatives that encourage the practice of sports. — KUNA

## Kuwait Heritage



A seller waits for customers at a shop in the dates market in the sixties of the last century. Dates were usually imported from Iraq during that period. — Photo from KOC archive provided by Mahmoud Zakaria, heritage researcher at the ministry of information.



## Bangladesh Embassy organizes Tourism Exhibition-2024

**KUWAIT:** The Embassy of Bangladesh in Kuwait organized a day long "Tourism Exhibition-2024" on Thursday, March 7, 2024 at the Multipurpose Hall of the renowned Al-Shaheed Park (Phase Two), Kuwait City. The Tourism Exhibition was organized as a part of the celebration of fifty years (Golden Jubilee) of Bangladesh-Kuwait diplomatic ties.

Although this was a day-long event, the Embassy welcomed the invited guests at 03:00 pm. Ambassadors and members of diplomatic corps in Kuwait, tour operators both from Bangladesh and Kuwait, members of Traveler Association of Kuwait, members of Bangladesh community in Kuwait and Representatives from the Print and Electronic Media were present at the program. The Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism Sector at the Ministry of Information of Kuwait, Osamah H Almekhyal, was present as the Chief Guest.

The daylong colorful exhibition began with the welcoming remarks of the Ambassador of Bangladesh, Major General (Retd) Md Ashikuzzaman. In his speech, the Ambassador thanked Osamah H



Almekhyal, Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism Sector at the Ministry of Information, for gracing the occasion as the Chief Guest. He also expressed his sincere thanks to all the ambassadors and distinguished guests. In his speech, the Ambassador also focused on the tourism sector of Bangladesh and requested all to visit Bangladesh at their convenience to enjoy the natural beauty and hospitality of Bangladeshi people.

During the exhibition, colorful posters & banners, boards with beautiful photographs, audio-visual presentations were displayed and promotional brochures, books, flyers and hand-crafts etc were distributed to showcase various

touristic attractions of Bangladesh. An attractive raffle draw for the visitors was organized in the exhibition where air tickets and hotel accommodation were given as prizes of the raffle draw.

To note that, fifty years of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Kuwait has been completed very recently and fifty years of the establishment of Bangladesh Mission in Kuwait is forthcoming in April 2024. To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh-Kuwait relations with due fervor and festivity, the Embassy of Bangladesh in Kuwait is planning to undertake various programs and events throughout the year 2024. This Tourism Exhibition is organized as a part of this celebration.



Scan & Subscribe  
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

Kuwait Times  
Established 1961  
The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



## Indian Heritage unlocks retail haven at Avenues

**KUWAIT:** Indian Heritage, renowned for its commitment to preserving India's rich heritage while seamlessly integrating it with Arabian culture, proudly announces the grand opening of its sixth store in the prestigious Avenues Mall, Kuwait. The inauguration, held on March 8, 2024, was graced by the esteemed presence of ambassadors from Bhutan, Nepal, Uzbekistan, the Indian Embassy Counselor (Commerce), the Malaysian Embassy Counselor and the Colonel & United States Air Force of the Embassy of the United States of America.

Alongside them were executives of Indian Heritage, distinguished guests, media personnel, as well as a large gathering of enthusiastic shoppers eager to explore the brand's newest offerings. Indian Heritage has long been synonymous with meticulous attention to detail and a dedication to excellence and exceptional quality. Each piece in their collection, be it ready-to-wear attire, fabrics, jewelry, or handicrafts, reflects this commitment. Established in 2000 as a specialized Indian textile house, Indian Heritage has since evolved into a premier retail destination in Kuwait.

The newest addition to the Indian Heritage family at the Avenues Mall is a testament to the brand's unwavering dedication to providing customers with luxurious, high-quality products crafted from the finest materials.

The store not only offers a diverse selection of designer and heritage products but also



features a patio space where exclusive events can be hosted, further enhancing the customer experience.

With existing stores in Souk Safat, Magic Mall in Abu Halifa, Al Sama Mall in Egaila, and Al-Khiran Mall in Kuwait, as well as a presence in Bahrain, Indian Heritage continues to expand its footprint across the region, bringing its unique blend of Indian tradition and Arabian culture to an ever-growing audience. "We are thrilled to announce the opening of our sixth store at the prestigious Avenues Mall," said a spokesperson for Indian Heritage.

"This new location represents an exciting milestone for us as we continue to share our passion for Indian artistry with the people of Kuwait. We look forward to welcoming our customers to experience the essence of Indian craftsmanship and culture in this magnificent new space." The Indian Heritage store at the Avenues Mall is now open to the public, offering a curated selection of exquisite products that celebrate the beauty and diversity of Indian craftsmanship.





Madrid bombings survivors' pain, fear linger 20 years on

Gang violence torments Haiti

# No respite in Gaza on Ramadan eve

Diplomatic push expected for truce deal within first half of holy month: Source

GAZA: Deadly fighting raged in Gaza on Sunday between Zionist forces and Hamas militants, with no truce in sight as the Muslim holy month of Ramadan neared and a dire humanitarian crisis gripped the besieged Palestinian territory.

A Spanish charity ship with food aid prepared to sail from the Mediterranean island-nation of Cyprus to help alleviate the suffering in the coastal Gaza Strip, now in its sixth month of war. The non-governmental group Open Arms said its boat would pull a barge with 200 tons of food, which its partner the US charity World Central Kitchen would then unload on the shores of Gaza.

Vessel tracking websites showed the Open Arms still in Larnaca on Sunday evening. It was expected to depart "in the coming hours", Cypriot government spokesman Konstantinos Letymbiotis told Cyprus News Agency.

With the UN repeatedly warning of famine, United States, Jordanian and other planes again airdropped food aid, but the United Nations aid coordinator for the area has said more supply by land is the best way to get assistance to territory's 2.4 million people.

The war has killed 31,045 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in Gaza where vast swathes have been reduced to a bombed-out wasteland. Weeks of talks involving United States, Qatari and Egyptian mediators have aimed for a six-week truce and the release of many of the roughly 100 hostages Hamas is still holding in return for Palestinian prisoners released from Zionist jails. There have been no results as of the time this story was published.

The widely shared target had been to halt the fighting by the start of Ramadan, which is expected to begin as early as Monday depending on the first sighting of the crescent moon. Both sides have blamed each other for failing to reach a deal, after the Zionist entity had demanded a full list of surviving hostages, and Hamas had called for the entity to pull out all its troops from Gaza.

Attention during the Muslim fasting month will focus on the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in annexed east Jerusalem, a frequent flashpoint in the past as it is both Islam's third holiest site and sacred to Jews who call it the Temple Mount. A source with knowledge of the truce talks told AFP that "there will be a diplomatic push especially in the next 10 days" with a view to



RAFAH: A young Palestinian boy stands next to a wrecked car in the rubble of a residential building hit in an overnight Zionist air strike in Rafah on March 9, 2024. — AFP

securing a deal within the first half of Ramadan as negotiations between all parties continued.

### 'Enough of this war!'

United States President Joe Biden reiterated on Saturday that the Zionist entity has "a right to continue to pursue Hamas", but also stressed his growing impatience with the entity's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. With the death toll ever-increasing, Biden told broadcaster MSNBC that Netanyahu "must pay more attention to the innocent lives being lost as a consequence of the actions taken".

At this stage, said Biden, Netanyahu's approach to the war was "hurting (the Zionist entity) more than helping (the Zionist entity)". The comments came after Zionist protesters again took to the streets of Tel Aviv for anti-government rallies, joined by some of the desperate families and friends of hostages still held by Hamas. Biden also signaled he would be will-

ing to speak directly to the Zionist people through an address to the Knesset legislature.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the United Nations agency had delivered some medical supplies and fuel to two hospitals in northern Gaza on Saturday. But he added that "we need sustained, safe access to health facilities in order to supply them with urgently needed lifesaving healthcare on a regular basis," and called for a ceasefire.

The UN has reported particular difficulty in accessing northern Gaza. The territory's health ministry said at least 23 children have died from malnutrition and dehydration. In the southern Gaza city of Rafah, resident Mumen Ahmed told AFP a strike hit a packed car on Sunday morning, causing "a martyr and casualties". "We expected with the arrival of Ramadan that the war would end," said Ahmed, displaced from Gaza City. "Enough of this war!" — AFP

## High-ranking Indian election official resigns

NEW DELHI: India's second-highest ranked election commission official has resigned, the justice ministry said, days before the expected announcement of general elections in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will seek a third term.

Arun Goel resigned Saturday, leaving the Election Commission of India with only one of its three top officials to conduct what will be the largest exercise of the democratic franchise in human history.

Nearly a billion people are eligible to cast ballots in the elections, likely to be held in April-May. The Ministry of Law and Justice said Indian President Droupadi Murmu had accepted Goel's resignation, but did not cite a reason for his departure.

The NDTV news network said Goel had resigned due to "personal reasons", citing sources. Another official had retired last year and the position has not yet been filled.

The dates for the election, conducted in several phases, are likely to be announced next week, according to local media reports. K C Venugopal, general secretary of the main opposition Congress party, said Goel's resignation was a concern.

"It is deeply concerning for the health of the world's largest democracy that Election Commissioner Mr Arun Goel has resigned on the cusp of the Lok Sabha (parliamentary) elections," he said in a social media post.

"There is absolutely no transparency in how a constitutional institution like the ECI has been functioning and the manner in which the government pressurizes them."

Several opinion polls have indicated an easy win by Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party in the general election. A Pew survey last year found Modi was viewed favorably by nearly 80 percent of Indians. — AFP

20 years  
of talabat

Ramadan  
Kareem

talabat





## International

## Gang violence torments Haiti

US evacuates personnel, strengthens security at embassy; Haitians 'run away'

**PORT-AU-PRINCE:** With Haiti's capital spiraling deeper into gang violence, the United States said Sunday it has airlifted non-essential American staff from its embassy in Port-au-Prince and brought in additional personnel to boost security at the compound.

Residents of beleaguered neighborhoods were scrambling for safety on Saturday following the latest spasm of unrest, with a United Nations group warning of a "city under siege" after armed attackers targeted the presidential palace and police headquarters.

Criminal groups, which already control much of Port-au-Prince as well as roads leading to the rest of the country, have unleashed havoc in recent days as they try to oust Prime Minister Ariel Henry as leader of the Western hemisphere's poorest country. On Saturday, dozens of residents were seeking safety in public buildings, with some successfully breaking into one facility, according to an AFP correspondent.

The US military said early Sunday it had "conducted an operation to augment the security of the US Embassy at Port-au-Prince, allow our Embassy mission operations to continue, and enable non-essential personnel to depart." "This airlift of personnel into and out of the Embassy is consistent with our standard practice for Embassy security augmentation," the statement from the military's US Southern Command added.

The pre-dawn operation appeared to be conducted by helicopter, apparently in flights to and from the airport, according to an AFP correspondent and nearby residents who heard the distinct sounds of chopper blades overhead. The embassy said on X that it "remains open." "Heightened gang violence in the neighborhood near US embassy compounds and near the airport led to the State Department's decision to arrange for the departure of additional embassy personnel," it added, noting that all operation passengers "work for the US government."

## Vigilantes try to uphold order as war batters Rafah

**RAFAH:** Whether directing traffic or controlling prices, a group of vigilantes is determined to uphold order as five months of war have shattered any semblance of normalcy in Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah. Their faces covered with black balaclavas, the so-called "Popular Committees of Protection" patrol Rafah where vast numbers of displaced people have sought refuge.

"We are hundreds of individuals and volunteers maintaining security and protecting citizens from high prices, organizing public markets and transport," said 28-year-old Abu Mahmud. About 1.5 million of the territory's 2.4 million residents have crammed into Rafah and, even when supplies are available, severe restrictions on deliveries from neighboring Egypt have led to skyrocketing prices.

The economy ministry in Gaza has sought to tackle the problem by setting a daily price list of staples, such as vegetables and crackers, which these committees are seeking to enforce. "We follow the traders who raise prices," said Abu Islam, 29, a member of a seven-strong squad patrolling a market in the central Rafah refugee camp.

One of the shoppers complained to the group about a stall owner selling a kilo of sugar for 80 shekels (\$22), prompting the vigilantes to tell the vendor to price it at 65 shekels in line with the official list. In late February, dozens of Gazans held a rare protest in Rafah to denounce soaring food prices. Protesters burned tires, while some expressed frustration at the territory's Hamas authorities.

## Purity of the...

Continued from Page 1

About the purity of the heart, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said what can be translated as: "Verily, Allah neither looks at your faces nor your wealth, but (rather) He looks at your hearts and your deeds." (Saheeh Muslim). We understand from the above hadith (prophetic narration) that the reward for deeds depends on the sincerity and good intention determined within the heart. Thus, caring about reforming the heart and its attributes, should take precedence over actions of the body; for it is the action of the heart that makes deeds valid.

In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said what can be translated as: "Beware, there is a piece of flesh in the body; if it is healthy, the whole body is healthy, and if it is corrupt, then the whole body gets spoilt; and that is the heart." (Al-Bukhari)

The heart is the place of belief and piety, or alternatively, of disbelief, hypocrisy and polytheism — among others. It should be well understood that purity of the heart is not attained with water and clean clothes like the purity of the body, but rather by eliminating reprehensible characteristics and adopting good character; and this includes getting rid of polytheism and its encumbrances. All the deeds of a pure heart are performed for the sole purpose of seeking Almighty Allah's Pleasure. The person with a pure and clean heart doesn't ask for praise, appreciation, or reverence from anyone.

A sincere Muslim purifies his heart towards his Muslim brothers (and sisters). He doesn't envy them for the blessings that the All-Merciful Allah has bestowed on them, but rather he rejoices because he knows that wishing goodness for a Muslim is what the Majestic Allah has enjoined upon him, and that if he violates that, he violates one of the obligatory tenets of faith. This is in accordance to what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, translated as: "None of you is a (true) believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Sins have an effect on your heart: they can cause your heart to be sealed to the extent that the light of knowledge doesn't reach it anymore. Good character confers a high degree on a true Muslim. Prophet Mu-

## 'Living in fear'

The unrest has seen 362,000 Haitians internally displaced — more than half of them children, the International Organization for Migration said Saturday. "Haitians are unable to lead a decent life. They are living in fear, and every day, every hour this situation carries on, the trauma gets worse," Philippe Branchat, IOM's chief in Haiti, said in a statement.

"People living in the capital are locked in, they have nowhere to go," he said. "The capital is surrounded by armed groups and danger. It is a city under siege." Police late Friday repelled gang attacks, including on the presidential palace, and several "bandits" were killed, Lionel Lazarre of the Haitian police union said.

Gunshots rang out late Friday throughout Port-au-Prince and witnesses recounted clashes "between police officers and bandits" as gangs apparently tried to commandeer police stations. Lazarre on Saturday pleaded for "means and equipment" to protect key facilities. The well-armed gangs have attacked critical infrastructure in recent days, including two prisons, allowing the majority of their 3,800 inmates to escape. Along with some ordinary Haitians, the gangs are seeking the resignation of Prime Minister Henry, who was due to leave office in February but instead agreed to a power-sharing deal with the opposition until new elections are held. Washington has asked Henry to enact urgent political reform. He was in Kenya when the violence erupted and is now reportedly stranded in the US territory of Puerto Rico. The UN Security Council gave its green light in October for a multinational policing mission led by Kenya, but that deployment has been stalled by Kenyan courts.

## 'Running away'

Port-au-Prince and western Haiti are under a month-long state of emergency, and a nighttime



**PORT-AU-PRINCE:** Residents leave their homes as gang violence escalates in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on March 9, 2024. — AFP

curfew was in effect until Monday, though it was unlikely overstretched police could enforce it. In Port-au-Prince, Filienne Setoute told AFP how she had worked for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor for more than 20 years.

That job meant she "was able to build my own house," she said. "But now here I am, homeless. I'm fleeing without knowing where to go, it's an abuse." "We haven't been able to sleep since last night," she added. "We're running away."

Haiti's airport remained closed while the main port — a key point for food imports — reported looting

since suspending services Thursday. "If we cannot access those containers, Haiti will go hungry soon," non-governmental organization Mercy Corps warned.

CARICOM, an alliance of Caribbean nations, has summoned envoys from the United States, France, Canada and the United Nations to a meeting Monday in Jamaica to discuss the violence and ways to provide assistance to Haiti. Meanwhile Pope Francis offered his prayers Sunday, saying he is "following with concern and pain the serious crisis affecting Haiti" and the country's people, "who have suffered so much for years." — AFP



**RAFAH:** Masked members of the so-called "Popular Committees of Protection" patrol the streets of Gaza's southern city of Rafah on March 6, 2024. — AFP

## 'Work for the people'

A kilo of sugar cost just two shekels before October 7. Since then, the Zionist offensive on Gaza has killed at least 30,717 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry. Dozens more have died of malnutrition in recent days, the ministry said, as hunger grips the territory. The Zionist entity says the assault is in response to an attack staged by Hamas which resulted in about 1,160 deaths, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally.

"We work for the people and hope to be as trustworthy as possible," said Abu Islam. "Whoever has a rifle uses it," he added, though all but one of his

squad were armed with only sticks. The vigilante groups have sprung up in recent weeks, following a February 10 strike on a police car which killed multiple officers.

Police patrols have become few and far between since the strike, an AFP correspondent in Rafah said. The volunteer group in the Rafah camp also directs traffic, including an ambulance, a truck loaded with supplies and a United Nations car. "We thank the Popular Committees for their efforts," said Abu Ahmed, a displaced Gazan. The 61-year-old commented in particular their attempts to "maintain reasonable prices." — AFP

## 'Expats aren't the problem in...

Continued from Page 1

measures might lead to an influx of foreign workers overusing the already exhausted public services in Kuwait.

But Ibrahim suggests that growing expat numbers is not the main reason for deteriorating public services, but rather it was the previous governments' failures to fulfill necessary urban development plans to keep up with population growth. "The failures we see in hospitals and schools are not a result of the presence of expats in Kuwait," he said. "It's a result of failure in government planning, and failure to include solutions in the government's program for existing problems."

thanked HH the Amir, the Kuwaiti government and people for their support to Palestinians, hoping for more medical support.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's 48th plane loaded with relief supplies for the Palestinians in Gaza arrived at the Marka International airport in Amman, carrying 40 tons of food sent by Al-Salam Society for Humanitarian and Charitable Works. Ambassador of Kuwait to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri stated to KUNA and Kuwait TV after the plane's arrival that this is a continuation of the directives of the Kuwaiti leadership to support brothers in the Gaza Strip, due to the blatant Zionist occupation's aggression as well as starvation, the effects of which have become evident recently on Palestinian people.

The relief aid is an extended series of Kuwaiti popular and official support, which has stood with the Palestinian cause since its beginnings and struggle of the brotherly Palestinian people

The new Cabinet led by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah has highlighted investment in human capital and improved private sector participation in economic development as the main pillars of its work program. In explaining the recent decisions to open up visas, top state officials said Kuwait aims to attract highly-skilled workers who have been lured by neighboring countries in recent years, emptying the state of manpower it desperately needs.

Ibrahim agrees that high-skilled foreign labor forces are important for the state's development. "In Kuwait, there is a segment of our expat brothers who do jobs that Kuwaitis often don't do, or they have skills that we need," Ibrahim said. "Expats in Kuwait come, carry out a task, and once they are done, they leave. So this is not a problem."

in the face of the Zionist occupation, added Marri. He noted the aid that arrived Sunday will be sent urgently in coordination with the Jordanian air force and the Hashemite Charitable Organization to ensure its arrival in Gaza as soon as possible. The ambassador expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all the efforts exerted by the concerned authorities, in Kuwait and Jordan, to facilitate and operate the Kuwaiti relief bridge.

Director of Al-Salam Society Dhari Al-Buajjan said in a statement that the association is keen to provide the appropriate quality of food to be airdropped on Gaza. Buajjan appreciated the great Kuwaiti efforts made by the ministries of defense, foreign affairs and social affairs in supporting charitable and humanitarian societies towards supporting Palestinians, praising the role of the Jordanian side in facilitating the process of delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza. — KUNA

## KRCS distributes food, conducts...

Continued from Page 1

with the concerned parties to help ease the "difficult situation" of the displaced Palestinians. Hundreds of displaced Palestinians expressed appreciation to Kuwait's leadership, government and people for constantly sending aid and relief since the Oct 7 war on Gaza. On Saturday, a medical team from Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) entered Gaza and performed some critical surgeries on Palestinians injured at a number of hospitals in the Gaza Strip.

Head of the surgery department at Gaza European Hospital Dr Emad Al-Hout said the Kuwaiti team provided psychological support to all doctors working in Gaza, noting that Kuwaiti doctors performed some pancreatic and heart surgeries. He



## International

# Madrid bombings survivors' pain, fear linger 20 years on

'The month of March is horrible, no matter how many years pass'



MADRID: (Left) Bodies of victims are evacuated after a train exploded at the Atocha train station in Madrid, on March 11, 2004, in this file photo. (Right) Francisco Alameda Sanchez, 60, a survivor of the 11-M deadly attacks, poses on March 6, 2024 at Atocha train station. — AFP photos

MADRID: Twenty years after Angeles Pedraza lost her daughter during the carnage of the Madrid train bombings that killed nearly 200 people, she still doesn't understand why. "Although it's painful and sad every day, when a date like this comes around, it's much worse. Because after 20 years, I still wonder why, what have these murderers achieved?" Pedraza, 65, told AFP at her home in Valdemoro.

Her memory isn't what it used to be, but she still remembers "every single minute" of March 11, 2004, when 10 bombs exploded on four commuter trains shortly after 7:30 am, killing 192 people and wounding nearly 2,000. Her 25-year-old daughter Miryam, she said, would normally take the train to work with her younger brother Javier and as far as the family was concerned, the day started just like any other.

Pedraza was driving to work when she heard initial reports on the radio, but didn't worry about her kids as the explosion seemed to be at Atocha station in the city center. But by the time she got to work, there had been more explosions and everyone was in a panic trying to track down their loved ones. She quickly reached her son who — by a miracle — had overslept, and was safe.

But she could not get hold of Miryam despite trying everything to find her. "We drove miles to all the hospitals and emergency rooms because every hour, they would release an updated list of those who'd been admitted," she said. "All we wanted was to hear her name, but we never did." Eventually, they went to an information center for families where they waited. At 3:00 am, they were told she was among the dead.

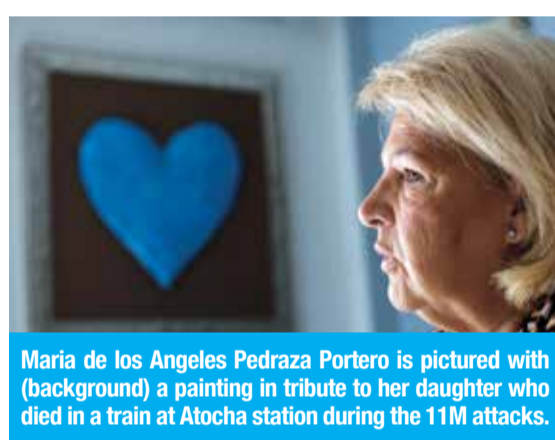


Rut Jezabel Garcia

### 'I'll never forgive them'

"On that day, you die yourself. Because aside from the immense pain, you cannot understand why," she said, 20 years of grief etched on her face. She has since spent years very publicly campaigning for justice as head of the AVT terror victims association. But her son has never once spoken of that day when his sister was killed and he was spared. "I try not to be bitter and I don't live with a sense of hatred, but I'll never forgive those who did this to my daughter."

As Pedraza was frantically contacting the hospitals, Francisco Alameda Sanchez, who was on the same train but escaped largely unharmed, was down on the tracks trying to help the wounded. In the first carriage where one of the bombs



Maria de los Angeles Pedraza Portero is pictured with (background) a painting in tribute to her daughter who died in a train at Atocha station during the 11M attacks.

went off, Sanchez, who was 40 at the time, found himself lying on his back with the train's doors and windows blown out.

"I wasn't physically hurt except I had a lot of pain in my ears, so I stayed to help people who were worse off than me," he told AFP. He likely survived because he was sitting at the furthest point from the blast, he said. He stayed for three more hours, during which time he witnessed horrors that never left his mind: the screaming, burnt bodies, people without legs.

With no way of carrying the injured, several of them used the train doors as stretchers, which were so heavy it took six people to carry them. "The smell of burning, of burnt flesh, has stayed with me. And the deathly silence," he told AFP at Atocha station.

### 'The fear has stayed'

His ears recovered and he went back to work, refusing therapy, thinking he "was strong and could deal with it on my own". But 10 years later, he was struggling so he joined the March 11 Terror Victims Association and found a therapist which transformed his life. Since 2016, he has served as secretary of the group, which has 1,900 members. Even so, he has not shaken off the fear. "The fear has stayed with me, every time I come here my head starts spinning," he said, glancing around the huge station which lies close to Madrid's Prado Museum and Retiro park.

Rut Jezabel Garcia was 24 when the train she was on exploded, sustaining a shoulder injury that needed surgery, and long-term hearing problems as well as years of psychological issues. "Although I was on the train that suffered the least damage, it was just horrible," said Garcia, who works in accounting and has a 10-year-old daughter.

"There are images of injured people you can't get out of your head, even though it's been 20 years ... It was just unreal, like something from a film." Since then, she's never taken the same train and avoids crowds "because I'm afraid the same thing could happen again." She still has shoulder pain, hearing problems and suffers from persistent insomnia.

Despite everything, she's grateful to be alive, although the anniversary will always be difficult. "For me, the month of March is horrible, no matter how many years pass," she said, fighting back the tears. "It's always bad. If I could, I'd erase it from the calendar." — AFP

## First official image published of Princess Kate after surgery

LONDON: Kensington Palace released the first official photo of Princess Kate on social media on Sunday, nearly two months after her abdominal surgery, during which she has stayed out of the public eye.

The 42-year-old princess, whose husband Prince William is heir to the British throne, has been recovering mainly at their home in Windsor, west of London, since leaving hospital on January 29.

The photo shows the Princess of Wales sitting on a garden chair, dressed in jeans, a sweater and a dark jacket, smiling, surrounded by her three laughing children, George, Charlotte and Louis. "Thank you for your kind wishes and continued support over the last two months," read a message accompanying the photo on X. "Wishing everyone a Happy Mother's Day," said the message, which was signed "C" for Catherine.

In a statement the palace clarified that the photo was taken "in Windsor earlier this week" by Kate's husband, Prince William. The family photograph is the first official image of Kate released by the royal family since her hospitalization at the London Clinic on January 16 for an abdominal surgery.

The future queen was last pictured in public during a Christmas Day walk in Sandringham, eastern England. Photos published by TMZ earlier in March showed Kate wearing sunglasses while being driven in a car, with the celebrity news site saying they were taken Monday near Windsor Castle.

UK media outlets including the Daily Mail and The Sun have chosen not to publish the photos. The sighting came after a flurry of conspiracy theories on social media over the famously hard-working and dutiful princess's absence from the spotlight.

The speculation came despite Kensington Palace clearly saying at the time of her surgery that she would be "unlikely to return to public duties until after Easter". It also said the surgery was not related to cancer. Kate's hospitalization came almost simultaneously with the announcement that William's father, King Charles, had been admitted for surgery for a benign prostate condition and subsequently diagnosed with an unrelated cancer.

Charles, 75, visited his daughter-in-law's bedside after being admitted himself on January 26. The king withdrew from public duties during his treatment, though he attended church services and held his weekly audience with the prime minister.



UNITED KINGDOM: A handout photo released by Kensington Palace on March 10, 2024, shows Britain's Catherine, Princess of Wales with her children, Prince Louis of Wales, Prince George of Wales and Princess Charlotte of Wales, taken in Windsor earlier this week by the Prince of Wales. — AFP

### Camilla steps in

Charles's wife Queen Camilla, 76, has been the most visible senior royal, stepping in to cover many of her husband's public duties during his treatment. She is now on a break until March 11, when she is expected to join William and other senior royals at the annual Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey. She is reported to be on holiday this week, effectively meaning all four of the most senior royals are out of action. The princess is one of the most popular members of the royal family.

She and William have taken on more royal duties since his younger brother Prince Harry and his wife Meghan left for the United States in 2020, and the king's brother Prince Andrew stepped back because of his friendship with the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. — AFP

## Exiled Tibetans guard heritage from 'cultural genocide'

DHARAMSALA, India: From teaching centuries-old crafts to cataloguing their language, exiled Tibetans guard the cultural identity of a homeland most have neither seen nor dare visit, and where they say Beijing is eradicating their heritage. Crouched over a minutely detailed devotional "thangka" painting depicting Buddha, artist Lobsang Tenzin teaches students in northern India. "It is important to keep the traditions of our history," said the 49-year-old, dipping a needle-thin brush into rich blue paint made from crushed lapis lazuli as six young Tibetan trainees watch. "These skills were nearly lost, but we pass on the skills by teaching young artists."

Tibetans marked on March 10 the 65th anniversary of the 1959 uprising against Chinese forces that led to their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fleeing into exile, followed by tens of thousands of compatriots. Inside Tibet, the chaos of China's 1966-76 Cultural Revolution left temples razed and monasteries reduced to ruins, destruction that continued in the decades that followed.

Today, activists decry what they say are Beijing's determined efforts to erase what is left of Tibet's cultural and religious identity. Lhadon Tethong, head of the Tibet Action Institute, condemns what she calls "cultural genocide" — including Beijing's sharp restrictions on Tibetan language, with children "indoctrinated" at state-run boarding schools.

Beijing, which maintains "Tibet is part of China", fiercely rejects the accusations. Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning this week said that people in Tibet are "living a happy life", in response to UN rights chief Volker Turk's assertion that China was vio-

lating fundamental rights. Tibet enjoys "social stability, economic growth, solidarity among all ethnic groups and harmony among various religious beliefs", she said.

### 'Former glory'

Tibet scholar Robert Barnett, from SOAS University of London, called Beijing a "foreign ruler deciding what's best for a people whose culture it barely knows". "There is a gradual whittling away of a culture and a history," Barnett said. "It is a process where you gradually eliminate all the elements of a history, a people, culture and of a society that are inconvenient to the new rulers." Tibetan authorities say there are 130,000 Tibetan exiles, many in India and Nepal but also in more than 25 countries worldwide — just a fraction of the seven million living under China's control. As the decades pass, that makes the preservation of cultural identity even more challenging.

Tenzin studied and now teaches at the Norbulingka Institute, a social enterprise center training more than 300 men and women in painting, embroidery, weaving and woodcarving. The complex of red and green Tibetan-style buildings, close to the Dalai Lama's base in India's Himalayan hill town of Dharamsala, was launched in 1995 to employ highly skilled artisans eking out a living with repair jobs.

"After the great masters came to India, they ended up doing odd jobs, trying to build their lives in a new country," said Tsultrim Dorjee, a senior manager at the institute. "The institute helped them use their skills ... the goal was to return Tibetan art to its former glory."

Others take a more modern approach, like 29-year-old artist Tashi Nyima, with his bright cartoon-style canvases that nonetheless still reflect his people's heritage and political battles. Born and brought up in Dharamsala, where red-robed monks and nuns crowd streets alongside Tibetans in baseball caps and jeans, Nyima said younger generations struggle with a "very mixed identity". — AFP



MCLEOD GANJ, India: (Left) A Buddhist monk spins a prayer wheel at Namgyal Monastery in McLeod Ganj. (Right) Tibetan monks living in exile in India hold Tibet's flags during a peace march on March 10, 2024. — AFP photos



## Business

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024

## Zain maintains lead in Service Hero's Customer Satisfaction Index Awards

Company ranked first in 'Best Mobile Operator' and 'Best ISP' categories for 2023

KUWAIT: Zain has maintained its lead in the Service Hero Customer Satisfaction Index Awards after being ranked first in the 'Best Mobile Operator' category for the twelfth time and the 'Best Internet Service Provider' category for the eighth time in Kuwait's ICT sector for the year 2023.

The announcement was made during the special awards ceremony, attended by Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, President of Service Hero Faten Abu-Ghazaleh, and many executives and leaders from the winning companies.

Service Hero celebrated the country's best performing service providers in 2023, marking the fourteenth year of running the region's only consumer powered customer satisfaction index. Yet again, Zain came on top of the companies operating in the local ICT sector, being ranked first in the 'Best Mobile Operator'

and 'Best Internet Service Provider' categories after receiving the highest number of votes from consumers in the Kuwaiti market for the above two categories.

Zain is proud to maintain its annual lead in this prestigious award, reflecting the leadership position it enjoys in the local ICT and digital service markets. The company ranked first for achieving the highest customer satisfaction scores by providing the best quality service standards.

The award came after an in-depth evaluation by Service Hero's independent advisory council, which recognized Zain's leadership in offering the best innovative digital services, as well as its relentless pursuit of excellence and innovation with the aim of achieving superior digital lifestyle transformation for its customer base, the biggest in Kuwait.

Based in Kuwait, Service Hero man-

ages the only consumer powered customer satisfaction index in the Middle East. The company is a member of ES-OMAR and adheres to the global organization's principles and guidelines for self-regulation and ethical practice. Service Hero is overseen by an Independent Advisory Council to assure results that are impartial, objective, and accurately reflect consumers' preference, making the company's findings a credible benchmark that offers transparent and relevant insight for companies.

It consists of academics and business professionals representing leading institutions and corporate establishments in Kuwait and the UAE, including the American University of Kuwait and Australian College of Kuwait. Since 2010, Service Hero has measured 250,000 validated consumer assessments covering more than 500 private sector companies.



Waleed Al-Khashti receives Zain's awards from Faten Abu-Ghazaleh.

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Kanz account monthly draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced on Sunday the names of the Kanz account monthly draw winners, who will each take home a KD 2,000 cash-prize. All Kanz customers who maintain a minimum balance of KD 200 for at least one week before the draw date are included in the draw, and their chances of winning increase with higher deposits.

The 20 lucky winners are:

- Abdullah Mohammad Qabazard
- Fadhel Awad Al-Fadhli
- Nourah Al-Sayed Al-Kabsi
- Aliah bint Saleh Shimi
- Tinaz Bomi Patel
- Omar Esmat Quttainah
- Mamdouh Ershaid Al-Enezi
- Shadiya Anwar Andron
- Bibi Mahmoud Al-Saffar
- Abdullateef Abdulaziz Al-Melhem
- Abdullah Jameel Al-Qattan
- Amir Abdulhameed Al-Sayegh

- Sampath Pranavamoorthy
- Hussain Ahmad Mohammad
- Ali Thamer Arfaj
- Mohammad Jumaah Jumaah
- Anoud Abdullah Zubail
- Aiman Nadem Iqbal
- Savio Alexander Alvares
- Muneerah Bandar Al-Salman

In addition to the monthly draw of Kanz account, Burgan Bank also offers a semi-annual KD 500,000 prize and a mega annual prize of KD 1,500,000. Kanz Account is accessible to any individual and can be opened in Kuwaiti dinar or in major currencies (USD, EURO and GDP) with a minimum KD 200 requirement for account opening.

More information on opening a Kanz account, the draws or any of the Bank's products and services, is available at any of Burgan Bank branches, through the Call Center at 1804080 and Burgan Bank website www.burgan.com.

مبروك للرابحين في حساب كَنْز  
Congratulations to the winners of the  
Kanz Account  
March Monthly Draw  
سحب شهر مارس

دك 2,000

ABDULLAH MOHAMMAD QABAZARD  
FADHEL AWAD ALFADHLI  
NOURAH ALSAYED ALKABSI  
ALIAH BINT SALEH SHIMI  
TINAZ BOMI PATEL  
OMAR ESMAT QUTTAINAH  
MAMDOUH ERSHAD ALENEZI  
SHADIYA ANWAR ANDRON  
BIBI MAHMOUD ALSAFFAR  
ABDULLATEEF ABDULAZIZ ALMELHEM

ABDULLAH JAMEEL ALQATTAN  
AMIR ABDULHAMEED ALSAYEGH  
SAMPATH S PRANAVAMOORTHY  
HUSSAIN AHMAD MOHAMMAD  
ALI THAMER ARFAJ  
MOHAMMAD JUMA AH JUMA AH  
ANOUD ABDULLAH ZUBAIL  
AIMAN NADEM IQBAL  
SAVIO ALEXANDER ALVARES  
MUNEERAH BANDAR ALSALMAN

عبد الله محمد قبا زارد  
فاضل عواد الفاضلي  
نوره السيد الكبيسي  
عليه بنت صالح سنجي  
تيناز بومي باتل  
عمر عصمت قطينه  
ممدوح ارشيد العنزي  
شادية انور اندرون  
بيبي محمود السفار  
عبد اللطيف عبد العزيز الملحم

#KanzBurgan | 1804080

## Egypt's inflation jumps 11% in February

CAIRO: The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt said on Sunday that the inflation rate in Egypt rose 11 percent last February on a monthly basis and 36 percent on an annual basis.

The monthly rise in inflation rate was caused by the hike in food and beverage prices by 15.9 percent, clothing and footwear by 4.9 percent, education by 12.3, health care by 11.3 percent, and culture and entertainment by 30.2 percent, the agency said. It added that restaurants and hotels went up by 11.8 percent as well as the multiple services sector by 4.5 percent. The agency noted that the rise in inflation on an annual basis, compared to February 2023, was due to the increase in food and beverage departments by 48.5 percent, clothing and footwear by 26.1 percent, education by 12.3 percent, restaurants and hotels by 41.5 percent, health care by 25.7 percent, multiple services by 27.8 percent, and culture and entertainment by 46.6 percent. — KUNA

## Saudi Aramco reports 24.7% drop in profits

RIYADH: Saudi Aramco on Sunday reported a 24.7 percent decline in profits in 2023 compared to the previous year, the result of lower oil prices and production cuts.

The oil giant said in a filing with the Saudi stock market that net income reached 454.7 billion Saudi riyals (\$121.25 billion) in 2023, compared to 604.01 billion Saudi riyals (\$161.07 billion) in 2022.

"The decrease mainly reflects the impact of lower crude oil prices and lower volumes sold, and weakening refining and chemicals margins," Aramco said. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 prompted oil prices to skyrocket, peaking at more than \$130 per barrel that year.

Aramco reported what it described as record profits for 2022, giving the kingdom its first annual budget surplus in nearly a decade. "In 2023 we achieved our second-highest ever net income. Our resilience and agility contributed to healthy cash flows and high levels of profitability, despite a backdrop of economic headwinds," Aramco CEO Amin H Nasser said in a statement.

"We also delivered for our shareholders with a 30 percent year-on-year increase in total dividends paid in 2023," he added. Last year, oil prices dropped to \$85 per barrel, resulting in year-on-year profit drops of 23

percent in the third quarter, 38 percent in the second quarter and 19.25 percent in the first quarter of last year for Aramco. Prices are expected to rise to around \$88 per barrel this year, partially due to global uncertainty driven by the Zionist entity-Ilamas war, Riyadh-based firm Jadwa Investment said in a report published in October. They could reach \$90 per barrel by the end of 2024, Jadwa Investment said.

The world's biggest crude oil exporter said last Sunday it was extending its oil supply cuts of one million barrels per day through June. Riyadh first announced its voluntary cut after an OPEC+ meeting in June 2023. It followed a decision in April 2023 by several OPEC+ members to slash production voluntarily by more than one million barrels per day (bpd) - a surprise move that briefly buttressed prices but failed to bring about lasting recovery. Energy sector expert Ibrahim Al-Ghitani told AFP that Saudi Arabia "bears the greatest burden of reducing production as it is the largest producer within the (OPEC+) coalition and OPEC".

"If it were not for the OPEC+ policy, oil prices would have been below the level we see today above \$80 per barrel, especially amid signs of turmoil in the global economic environment following the coronavirus pandemic, the Ukrainian war, and then the Gaza war," Ghitani said.

The kingdom's daily production is now approximately nine million bpd, far below its reported daily capacity of 12 million bpd. "Saudi Arabia is trying to hedge against the decline in oil prices in general by diversifying its business portfolio and focusing on gas production, in addition to petrochemicals and foreign expansion," the UAE-based expert added.

The Gulf monarchy's gross domestic product shrank



RIYADH: Saudi Aramco on Sunday reported a 24.7 percent decline in profits in 2023 compared to the previous year, the result of lower oil prices and production cuts. — AFP

by 0.8 percent in 2023 as a result of the drop in oil revenues, according to its statistics authority. Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has sought both to open up and diversify its oil-reliant economy, spending heavily on much-hyped projects like a futuristic megacity known as NEOM. Aramco is the main source of revenue for Prince Mohammed's ambitious economic reform program known as Vision 2030. On Thursday, the kingdom said it transferred an additional eight percent Aramco stake to firms owned by the kingdom's Public Investment Fund.

The transfer brought to 16 percent the cumulative shares transferred to the PIF, one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, and its subsidiaries. The stake was worth roughly \$164 billion at the company's current market capitalization, an Aramco media officer said. — AFP

## Led by Elon Musk, Silicon Valley inches to the right

WASHINGTON: Since his tumultuous takeover of Twitter, Elon Musk has made an unabashed turn to the right politically, defying the orthodoxy that Silicon Valley is a citadel of well-heeled liberals beholden to Democrats. Long considered non-identifiable ideologically, Musk's politics are now hardline right wing as he uses his platform (now called X) to stoke the themes cherished by Fox News, conservative talk radio and far right movements across the West.

In just the latest example, repeating a conspiracy theory of far right chat rooms, Musk last week posted that US President Joe Biden was importing migrants for votes, laying the groundwork for "something far worse



Elon Musk

than 9/11." But beyond the posts, the question on everyone's mind is whether the world's second richest person will put his weight, and wealth, behind the bid of former US president Donald Trump to retake the White House.

The rumor mill went into overdrive when The New York Times reported that the two men met, along with

other Republican donors, in Florida last week. Trump is seriously trailing Biden in raising campaign funds, even if he sailed toward the Republican nomination to be US president, and Musk could single handedly make up the shortfall. Musk turned to X to insist that "to be super clear, I am not donating money to either candidate for US President."

But the funding of US elections is opaque and complicated, and Biden backers worry that Musk could change his mind or fund political committees that themselves finance Trump, or find other ways to help the Republican cause.

Musk is not alone: other Silicon Valley mavens are also defending conservative causes, making noise in what electorally remains a liberal stronghold: in 2020, Trump's vote share in Silicon Valley was less than 25 percent. Some tycoons are seeking to build a political movement that, even if not directly supporting Trump, embraces conservative causes, cryptocurrencies, and goes against the California grain. One of the loudest voices in this shift is Marc Andreessen,

the early internet tycoon who founded Netscape and now co-runs Andreessen Horowitz, a venerable venture capital company.

Once a typically left-of-center tech magnate, who had close ties to former vice president Al Gore, Andreessen now fights vehemently against left-wing priorities, especially so-called "woke" considerations about equality or workplace inclusiveness.

Last year, in a 5,200-word "techno-optimist manifesto," Andreessen laid out a techno-utopian vision for the future that listed co-opted government, regulation and worries about discrimination or equality as enemies. Like many of his fellow right-wing investors, Andreessen's company is heavily invested in cryptocurrencies and last year launched a political war chest to make trouble for lawmakers, Democratic or Republican, who want the nascent industry more heavily controlled.

For tech analyst Carolina Milanese, the newly emerging outspokenness could be less about aping Musk than worry from an old guard that the status quo is vanishing. — AFP



Business

# Gulf Bank sponsors 'The Influencer' program

## Program to help cultivate mass communication skills among youth



Gulf Bank sponsors 'The Influencer' program organized by LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA).

**KUWAIT:** For the second consecutive year, Gulf Bank has announced its sponsorship of 'The Influencer' program organized by LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) – an affiliate of the non-profit organization LOYAC. This sponsorship is geared towards providing outstanding training opportunities to empower teenagers aged 15 to 19 with crucial skills for effective public communication, ultimately preparing them for leadership roles in the future.

This year's edition of 'The Influencer' program features four main categories: "Self-development: How to be an active and influential individual in your life and relationships," "Presentation and public speaking skills," "Oratory, recitation, and audience engagement

**Fatemah Al-Habib: We are eager to support the development of young individuals as part of our commitment to encourage and develop their professional skills.**

skills," and "Digital media content creation skills." Fatemah Al-Habib, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, expressed her excitement about partnering with LOYAC and emphasized Gulf Bank's eagerness to support its commendable societal endeavors, particularly those aimed at youth.

Al-Habib also highlighted Gulf Bank's commitment to nurturing the professional skills and talents of youth, aligning with both Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, which places youth at the forefront, and Kuwait's Vision 2035, which emphasizes the importance of investing in youth.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace

in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

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

## Kuwait's gold prices hit record \$2,179 per ounce

**KUWAIT:** Gold prices in the global market reached a record level of \$2,179 per ounce over the weekend, recording an increase of 4 percent. A specialized report issued by Dar Al-Sabaek said on Sunday that gold approached the level of \$2,200 per ounce in the middle of last week's trading, driven by strong expectations about the imminent reduction in US interest rates and the end of the financial tightening pursued by the US

Federal Reserve for the last two years. The report added that what boosted gold prices was the continuation of tensions in the Middle East region, especially military operations in the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, which threatens global trade, and thus many investors and speculators resort to the yellow metal as a safe haven against risks.

He explained that the prices of gold futures contracts for April delivery rose by 0.95 percent to a new record level of \$2,185 per ounce, and is in conjunction with the stabilization of the US currency's exchange value against other major currencies and the decline in 10-year treasury bond yields to 4 percent. He stated that the Federal Reserve indicated last week that the period of financial tightening would soon end by next June which would increase the attractiveness of investment assets, especially gold.

He stated that analysts will closely monitor the reports that will be issued this week on inflation rates, the performance of the American retail market, the consumer confidence index, and industrial production numbers, all of which are factors that directly affect gold trading in the forthcoming period. Regarding the local market, the Dar Al-Sabaik report stated that the price of a gram of 24 karat gold reached KD 21.350 (about \$65), while the price of a gram of 22 karat gold reached KD 19.590 (about \$60), while silver closed at KD 285 per kg.

It is noteworthy that the ounce is one of the units of mass measurement and is used in a number of different systems of measurement units. It is also called the ounce and is equal to 28.349 grams, while as a unit of measurement for precious metals it is equal to 31.103 grams. — KUNA



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 7 MARCH 2024

(965) 22 675 140  
Al-Safat Tower, Hawalli, Beirut St.  
alsafatinvest.com  
research@alsafatinvest.com  
alsafatinvestment  
al-safat-investment-company

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	36,949	8,110.49	-0.6%	-0.6%	8.5%	485,363,960	161,671,915	31,395	18.2	1.4	81.0%
Main Market	8,642	6,121.73	0.6%	0.6%	9.9%	426,466,983	60,697,039	26,276	13.2	0.9	19.0%
All Share	45,591	7,410.86	-0.4%	-0.4%	8.7%	911,830,943	222,368,954	57,671	14.6	1.0	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	27,604	1,794.70	-0.9%	-0.9%	8.9%	157,679,215	71,252,209	11,905	17.8	1.1	60.55%
Basic Materials	442	782.93	0.4%	0.4%	5.0%	3,248,609	1,972,035	678	10.4	2.3	0.97%
Consumer Discretionary	1,139	1,658.52	-0.5%	-0.5%	3.4%	43,592,169	16,769,702	5,567	13.9	1.3	2.50%
Consumer Staples	219	719.00	0.5%	0.5%	9.2%	8,484,896	2,731,284	756	112.1	1.3	0.48%
Energy	218	1,043.61	0.9%	0.9%	10.0%	3,202,619	337,286	391	10.5	0.8	0.48%
Financial Services	4,752	1,385.93	-0.1%	-0.1%	14.3%	268,435,955	47,112,166	13,833	21.4	0.9	10.42%
Health Care	237	478.71	1.9%	-1.5%	-0.7%	205	93,685	1	12.8	1.6	0.52%
Industrials	3,517	1,016.78	0.2%	0.2%	12.0%	56,991,987	23,031,740	6,230	14.7	1.0	7.71%
Insurance	1,035	2,532.68	0.5%	0.5%	10.5%	24,596,457	3,133,922	1,832	10.4	1.3	2.27%
Real Estate	2,788	1,298.53	1.5%	1.5%	7.1%	326,283,882	46,757,490	13,267	17.0	0.7	6.11%
Technology	27	1,971.52	-2.9%	-2.9%	240.9%	477,419	130,847.89	74	NM	2.3	0.06%
Telecommunications	3,428	1,121.85	0.4%	0.4%	1.5%	15,833,914	8,633,080	2,771	10.2	1.4	7.52%
Utilities	185	442.11	-1.2%	-1.2%	-2.9%	3,003,616	507,099	366	13.0	1.4	0.41%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
TAMINV	580	21.85%	113,717	61,525	25
MADAR	97.9	15.04%	595,548	56,946	98
ALTIJARIA	131	9.17%	111,034,197	14,190,882	1,993
FUTUREKID	140	7.69%	20,915,376	2,837,014	891
IFHR	1,067	5.85%	8,280,656	8,875,382	1,923

Top Losers

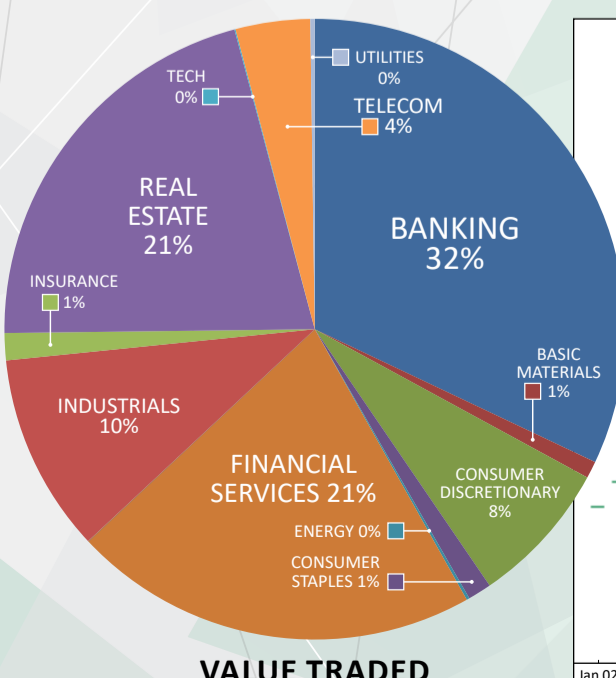
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ENERGYH	138	-23.33%	105,371	15,553	100
ARGAN	89.5	-17.89%	48,657,100	4,658,127	2,403
WETHAQ	47	-11.99%	21,305,295	1,070,917	1,391
EMIRATES	42.3	-11.32%	2,350,839	97,869	146
NOOR	228	-9.88%	22,373,196	5,141,540	1,496

Top Volume

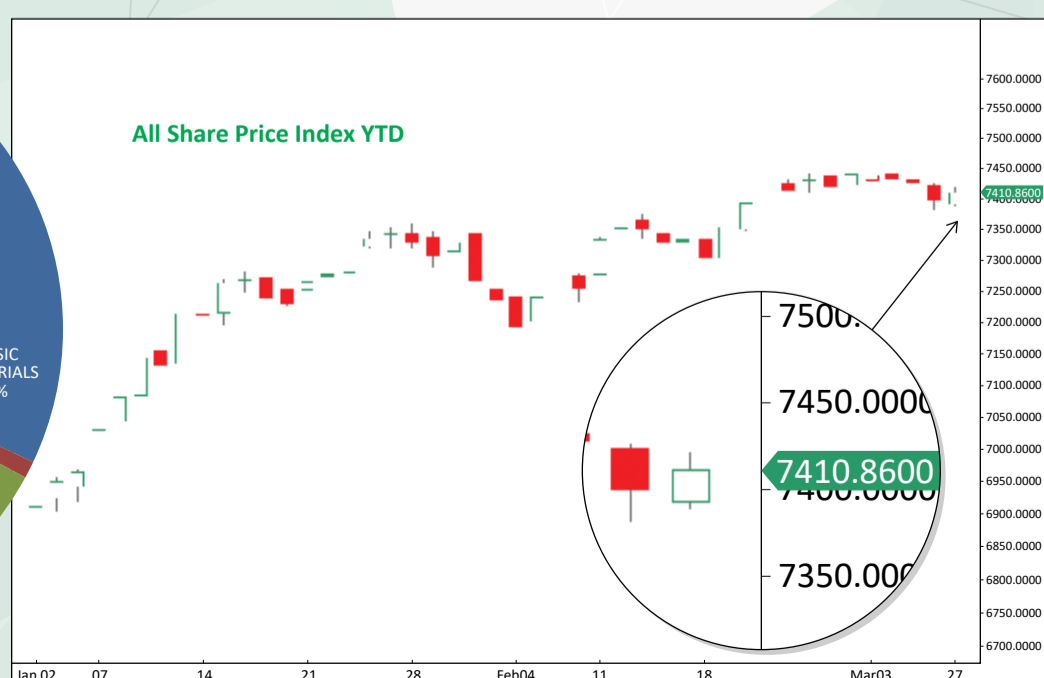
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ALTIJARIA	131	9.17%	111,034,197	14,190,882	1,993
ARGAN	89.5	-17.89%	48,657,100	4,658,127	2,403
KFH	805	-0.62%	43,182,909	34,908,256	4,084
KIB	170	3.03%	41,339,546	6,926,299	1,031
KPROJ	129	2.38%	32,714,660	4,110,196	850

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	805	-0.62%	43,182,909	34,908,256	4,084
ALTIJARIA	131	9.17%	111,034,197	14,190,882	1,993
MABANEE	840	2.69%	14,113,509	11,819,700	1,587
NBK	964	-1.63%	10,610,510	10,321,391	2,172
IFHR	1,067	5.85%	8,280,656	8,875,382	1,923



All Share Price Index YTD



Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value dropped 7% and 17%, respectively. The Main market volume dropped 22% while the value increased 4%.
- The Premier index hit resistance and retreated, while the Main index continued moving in an upward trend, overcoming the resistance level.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7410, with support levels at 7379, 7318, and 7318, and resistance at 7417. The Premier index closed at 8110, with support levels at 8083, 8044, and 7997, and resistance at 8116. The Main index closed at 6121, with support levels at 6112, 6083, and 6058, and resistance at 6153.



# US report boosts bets for Fed's June cut as jobless rate climbs

## ECB signal rate cut as inflation comes down

**KUWAIT:** US nonfarm payrolls advanced 275K in February following a combined 167K downward revision in the prior two months. Economists expected a reading of 198K. The unemployment rate rose and wage gains slowed. Average hourly earnings grew by 0.1 percent m/m, easing from 0.5 percent in January and slower than projections of 0.2 percent. The moderation in pay growth follows an outside jump in the prior month likely due to extreme weather. The unemployment rate climbed to 3.9 percent versus expectation of a match to the previous 3.7 percent figure.

The data highlights a resilient jobs market that is beginning to soften. Fed policymakers will keep a close eye on this trend as they consider bringing down borrowing costs this year from a two-decade high. Recently, officials have been stressing that they are in no rush to roll out rate cuts. Fed chair Jerome Powell painted a patient and cautious outlook on the Fed's fight to bring inflation back down to the target. He noted that the Fed is "not far" from having the confidence it needs that price gains are sustainably moving towards that goal. "When we do get that confidence...it will be appropriate to begin to dial

back the level of restriction so that we don't drive the economy into recession," Powell told lawmakers.

Markets started off the year expecting a reduction by the Fed sometime in the spring, and have since made strong changes to their bets. As of now, the probability for a June rate cut sits at 58 percent. Meanwhile, treasury yields traded sharply lower.

### ECB signals upcoming cuts

The European Central Bank kept borrowing costs at record highs last week, while carefully signaling it will lower rates later this year due to good progress in bringing down inflation. Policymakers indicated they were preparing for a first cut in interest rates, most likely in June, provided incoming data confirms the trend of lower prices. "We did not discuss cuts for this meeting, but we are just beginning to discuss the dialing back of our restrictive stance," ECB President Christine Lagarde told a press conference. She noted that inflation has been dropping towards the 2 percent target and is now expected to come in lower over the next two years than the central bank had anticipated just a few months ago. In its latest quarterly economic

projections, the ECB cut its forecast for price growth this year from 2.7 percent to 2.3 percent and said it now expects inflation to fall to 1.9 percent in summer 2025 and stay there until the end of 2026.

After declining for nearly 18 months, eurozone annual inflation dipped to 2.6 percent in February, mainly because of a steep fall in fuel costs which were previously boosted by Russia's war in Ukraine. The decline is also a major result of the ECB's steepest ever increase in borrowing costs. Nevertheless, underlying inflation excluding volatile food and fuel prices was at 3.1 percent, while an index for the price of services rose by nearly 4 percent. "There is a definite decline (in inflation) which is underway and we are making good progress towards our inflation target," Lagarde said. "We are more confident as a result, but we are not sufficiently confident." Markets are now pricing in three or four cuts this year, taking the ECB's deposit facility rate down to 3.25 percent or 3 percent from its current 4 percent level.

### Canada

The Bank of Canada left its policy rate unchanged

at 5 percent as widely expected, noting more time is needed for higher interest rates to bring inflation back to target. Governor Tiff Macklem declined to lay out a timeline for rate cuts, adding that he realizes monetary policy works slowly and causes pain to the economy. "We expect to see further progress but we think it's going to be slow, it's going to be uneven ... Fundamentally, we need to see more progress," he told Reuters in an interview after the rate announcement. Macklem reiterated that the central bank expected inflation to start dipping in the second half of the year but expressed concern on stubbornly high core inflation. "If core stays where it is, probably ... our forecast that total (CPI) comes down isn't going to materialize. So that's why we're putting a lot of focus on those core measures," he added. Overall inflation currently stands at 2.9 percent - still well above the bank's 2 percent target. The meeting suggests a low chance of a rate cut in April, with markets now pricing in just a 30 percent probability.

### Kuwait

#### Kuwaiti dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30715.

## In climate push, German chem firm swaps oil for sugar



**LEVERKUSEN, Germany:** An employee of chemical company Covestro AG works in a chemical laboratory at the headquarters in Leverkusen, western Germany. — AFP

**LEVERKUSEN, Germany:** At one of Europe's largest chemical complexes, German group Covestro is trialing the manufacture of a key product using sugar as a base material instead of oil, as the industry seeks to reduce its carbon footprint. The pilot project involves producing "aniline", a chemical used in making foams — used widely in mattresses and armchairs, as well as building insulation.

While large-scale, commercial production is probably years away, the experiment marks a small step in the chemical industry's battle to slash carbon emissions as Earth faces a dire climate emergency.

Of the 100 million barrels of oil produced worldwide every day, "a quarter goes directly into the chemical industry," said Walter Leitner, from Aachen University, which has been involved in the aniline project for a decade. "The chemical industry needs to be completely rebuilt."

Plastics manufacturer Covestro — a former division of chemical giant Bayer — started trials at its complex in the western city of Leverkusen at the end of 2023, after laboratory tests.

In a 100-square-metre (1,080-square-foot) room, aniline, a transparent fluid, is extracted from a 600-metre network of intertwined pipes. Using a process developed by University of Stuttgart researchers, fermented sugar is treated with chemicals to make the product.

Aniline is used as the base ingredient for chemical MDI, which is an essential material in manufacturing foams. Traditionally, aniline has been obtained from crude oil derivatives like naphtha and benzene, but producing it emits large quantities of carbon dioxide, a key greenhouse gas.

Around six million tons of aniline are produced globally a year, around one million tons of it by Covestro. So far, the pilot project in Leverkusen produces just a tiny part of this, extracting just half a ton of aniline a day.

Some experts are skeptical about such an approach. The use of plant matter in manufacturing may cut out fossil fuels but whether it can lead to carbon neutrality "is often questionable", Jens Guenther, from Germany's Federal Environment Agency, told AFP.

This is particularly the case when it comes to the use of "so-called cultivated biomass like maize, sugar cane and sugar beet," he said. Janine Korduan, from environmental NGO BUND, pointed out that industrial agriculture generates "CO2 and methane emissions through land conversion and the production of fertilizers and pesticides", and also leads to "major losses of biodiversity and high water consumption". Nevertheless, Guenther said the use of plant matter in production processes would likely produce significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions than using fossil fuels, although opting for waste materials rather than crops produced in large-scale farming would be preferable.

Other German companies are experimenting in the area. Chemical giant BASF is seeking to use organic waste, agricultural products or vegetable oils to produce basic chemicals like aniline. There are many barriers to taking such projects further, however.

These range from the availability of the necessary organic matter, which is in great demand as the green transition gathers pace, to higher costs when compared to producing such chemicals with oil. — AFP

## NBK offers customers peace of mind with Eidiya cash delivery

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seeks to provide customers with an exceptional banking experience including top-notch products and services that cater to their different needs while ensuring utmost convenience. In this context, the bank is providing Eidiya cash delivery service to Private Banking, Privilege,



Mohammed Akram Hashim

Thahabi and Business Banking Plus customers at their doorsteps, anywhere in Kuwait.

This service is exclusively waived off for our Private and Privilege Customers in Kuwait during the holy month of Ramadan. It can be availed 24/7 through Q'go Concierge by calling or sending a WhatsApp message to the designated number 1888125.

Eligible customers can request Eidiya Cash Delivery in different denominations including KD 1, KD 5, KD 10 and KD 20. The registration period

## US embrace of remote work empties offices and weighs on banks

**WASHINGTON:** The popularity of remote work in the United States has emptied office buildings, a cause for worry as their value falls and owners risk losses on property loans — in turn putting pressure on smaller banks. "There will be bank failures, but this is not the big banks," said US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Thursday. In San Francisco, Washington and even New York, offices have been seeing half the number of people as before the pandemic, with white-collar workers reluctant to return to commuting.

Office vacancy rates across the country have risen to 13.5 percent in 2023 from 9.5 percent in 2019, and could hit 16.6 percent at the end of next year, said credit company Fitch Ratings in a December report. "In many cities, the downtown office district is very underpopulated," Powell told a Congressional hearing this week.

With empty buildings in cities of all sizes, retailers servicing employees who used to work there are also under pressure, Powell added.

The shift in work patterns has caused the commercial real estate sector to lose a third of its value, which could have a wider impact. Of \$737 billion in office property mortgages, \$206 billion — around a quarter — are set to mature this year, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. But this comes as interest rates are at their highest in more than 20 years.

This means that when loans come due, they will need to be refinanced where vacancy rates are high in some cities and valuations are lower. In the United States, commercial loans must be renegotiated every three to five years. The risk is a "chain reaction" where banks "risk seeing their borrowers default and as a result, experience stress on their capital," said EY chief economist Gregory Daco.

## India, European EFTA bloc sign \$100bn trade deal

**NEW DELHI:** India and the four-member European trade bloc EFTA, including Norway and Switzerland, signed a \$100-billion free trade agreement on Sunday to promote investment and exports, officials said. The deal will see the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) — made up of non-European Union nations, including Iceland and Liechtenstein — invest \$100 billion

for this offer is valid from March 11 to March 26, 2024, and delivery period will be from March 29 to April 9, 2024.

Speaking on this, Mohammed Akram Hashim, Head of segments, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said, "NBK always stands out by providing customers with utmost convenience for an unmatched banking experience that caters to their needs and even exceeds their expectations."

"As we are approaching the holy month of Ramadan, we are offering our distinguished segments (Private, Privilege, Thahabi or Business Banking Plus Customers) the luxury of getting Eidiya delivered in cash to their doorsteps all over the areas of Kuwait 24/7 through our partner Q'go Concierge," he explained. "All NBK's initiatives during national and religious holidays and occasions are meant to serve customers' needs, which are accurately identified through active communication with them, as NBK always seeks to remain closer to its customers," he noted.

NBK provides Privilege Banking Customers with an array of services, including a dedicated Relationship Manager to take care of customer's banking needs, access to premium lounges, various investment solutions like: SmartWealth and Watani Brokerage, Global Banking & International mortgage, premium teller services giving them priority when making financial transactions and deposits at branches, in addition to card home delivery service. Furthermore, Privilege customers have the priority status when calling the NBK Call Center on 1801801 available 24/7, as well as exclusive Home Banking and Concierge Service. On the other hand, NBK



Business Banking Plus provides services and solutions that help entrepreneurs grow their businesses and achieve their goals. It offers a variety of services including a dedicated experienced Business Banking relationship manager, fee discounts, Premium business concierge, preferential access for teller services, and complimentary Thahabi package to business owners and many other benefits.



**WASHINGTON:** People walk past a former office building being converted into apartments in Washington, DC. — AFP

subject to the same regulatory requirements as banks.

Powell noted that the Fed works with establishments that face risks, saying: "We have identified the banks that have high commercial real estate concentrations, particularly office and retail." "We are in dialogue with them," he added.

"If properties are sold for less than financial institutions anticipate, it could set off a domino effect, causing banks to reassess the potential losses they are exposed to in office and the needed credit loss provisions to cover them," said Ryan Sweet, chief US economist at Oxford Economics. This was one of the weaknesses the embattled New York Community Bancorp faced as its stock tumbled last week. — AFP

While large establishments have the capacity to absorb some losses, these could prove a massive blow to smaller banks, Daco said. Retirement funds or insurance companies, among others, could also be impacted if they have commercial buildings in their portfolios.

These may be even more vulnerable, as they are not

over 15 years in India, the world's fifth largest economy, India's Trade Minister Piyush Goyal said.

"The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) marks a historic milestone in our growing partnership," Goyal said after the signing in New Delhi. The agreement "will pave the path for mutual growth and prosperity" by boosting exports, promoting investment and creating employment, he added.

The deal was signed after several rounds of negotiations spanning 16 years. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the trade agreement "symbolizes our shared commitment to open, fair and equitable trade", according to a statement read out at the signing ceremony. Swiss Economy Minister Guy Parmelin said the deal "will allow us to make better use of our economic

potential and create additional opportunities for both India and the EFTA states".

"EFTA countries gain market access to a major growth market... India, in return, will attract more foreign investment from EFTA, which will ultimately translate into an increase in good jobs", he added, speaking in New Delhi. EFTA was established in 1960 to promote free trade and economic integration between its members. In 2021, it was the 10th largest trader in the world in terms of merchandise, and the eighth largest in services.

In recent years, India has signed trade agreements with Australia and the United Arab Emirates. A long-talked-about trade deal with Britain is also said to be in the final stages. — AFP



## Business

# Economic crisis grips Tunisia, mutes build-up to Ramadan

## Purchasing power sinks due to soaring prices and rising unemployment

**TUNIS:** Tunisians are bracing themselves for more subdued celebrations during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan as an economic crisis grips the North African country. In past years "you wouldn't have been able to set foot in the market because it was so crowded", vegetable merchant Mohamed Doryi told AFP.

"That's not the case today," said the 69-year-old, who no longer displays his prices to avoid scaring away potential customers. Tunisians usually prepare for Ramadan — when daytime fasting is followed by festive but often costly meals with family and friends — by stocking up on large amounts of food. But this year things are different, with purchasing power greatly diminished because of soaring prices, a recession and rising unemployment. "I'm not poor, but I can't do it anymore. My pension doesn't cover my needs," said Fayka, a 65-year-old at Tunis's working-class Bab El Fehla market.

"This is the first time I've bought fruits and vegetables by the piece" instead of in bulk, the retiree added, asking that only her first name be used. Tunisia has also been beset by political tensions since President Kais Saied granted himself full powers in July 2021.

A third of its 12 million people currently live below the poverty line after two years of high inflation — running at 10 percent on average per year — and the price of many foods has tripled.

GDP growth came in at 0.4 percent last year after severe drought damaged agriculture, and the country entered a recession at the end of 2023. Unemployment also rose to 16.4 percent at the end of last year, compared with 15.2 percent at the end of 2022. Economist Ridha Chkoundali says Tunisia is "experiencing a period of stagflation, which means a decline in growth and a rise in inflation". This has been caused by "the deliberate choice of public authorities to prefer to repay debt, especially external debt", he argued.

This came at "the detriment of supplying the market with basic foodstuffs and agricultural inputs" such as fertilizers and fodder. A shortage of money in the public coffers — burdened by the salaries of more than 650,000 civil servants — has meant regular shortages of basic subsidized items including flour, rice, sugar and semolina as the state has difficulties paying for them.

Tunisian banks are being asked by the state to finance the country's debt amounting to 80 percent of GDP, undermining their ability to lend to the private sector and reducing growth even more.

Chkoundali argues that a lack of resources is a result of "the choice to break with the IMF". In October 2022, the International Monetary Fund agreed in principle to lend Tunisia around \$2 billion, but Saied later rejected it on the grounds that the reforms it required in return were not sustainable.



**TUNIS:** People buy vegetables at the central market ahead of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, in Tunis. — AFP

In a Tunis butcher's shop, a 50-year-old woman cautiously ordered 150 grams of veal ahead of Ramadan. Red meat, which now costs more than 40 dinars (around \$13) a kilo, is a luxury in a country where the average salary is 1,000 dinars per month (about \$325). "My husband recently

passed away and I can't afford to buy more," she whispered to the butcher. Mustapha Ben Salmane, 52, told AFP that more and more customers ask for just a handful of minced meat or spicy merguez sausage. "I can't say no to them. People are exhausted," he said. — AFP

## In bitcoin's shadow, Ether stages its own rally

**NEW YORK:** Bitcoin has captured the limelight in recent weeks as it surged to a new record high, yet another major cryptocurrency, Ether, has been enjoying its own meteoric rise. Launched in 2015, Ether, also known as Ethereum, is by far the second-largest digital currency in terms of total value, now estimated at over \$460 billion. Along with other cryptocurrencies including Solana and Dogecoin, it benefited from the regulatory approval in the United States of a new bitcoin investment product, the exchange traded fund — or ETF — in mid-January, said James Butterfill of the investment company CoinShares.

These ETFs allow investors to profit from any change to the price of cryptocurrencies without having to buy them directly, while also letting them sell at any time. The launch of crypto ETFs has led to an influx of new money, sending bitcoin to a fresh record on Friday of \$70,085. Bitcoin's rise has been well-documented, but Ether's has been even more impressive, surging almost 72 percent year to date in comparison to bitcoin's 61 percent rise. This strong performance is largely due to "expectations that an Ethereum ETF could be approved in the United States," according to Dessislava Aubert of research firm Kaiko. Several asset management companies have applied for authorization from the US financial markets regulator, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), to market these Ether investment products.



The SEC must rule on the first such applications, from VanEck and Ark 21Shares, by May 23 at the latest. "Ethereum has started to wake up as investors are anticipating a potential approval," Michael van de Poppe of MN Trading told AFP, adding that "people are rotating from Bitcoin to Ethereum as a potential investment opportunity."

Beyond the ETF effect, the digital currency dreamed up by Russian programmer Vitaly Buterin has several other cards up its sleeve. For Simon Peters of cryptocurrency exchange eToro, Ethereum is also buoyed by the prospect of "Dencun," a major upgrade to the technology underlying this digital currency, scheduled for March 13. This major change will improve transaction processing capacity and cut transaction costs, but also has the potential to unleash the growth of an ecosystem with multiple applications. "Bitcoin's primary use is as store of value, while Ethereum has much more potential use cases," Peters told AFP. For example, it is the destination of choice for non-fungible tokens — or NFTs — the certificates of digital authenticity that caused such a stir three years ago.

The two cryptocurrencies are not in direct competition, according to van de Poppe from MN Trading, because Bitcoin is "hard money," while Ether "is basically an investment for the entire blockchain and smart contract ecosystem." Ethereum has already successfully negotiated two major technical transformations in recent years, including the switch to a less energy-intensive system in September 2022.

James Butterfill said there is "increasing optimism" that a "Dencun" upgrade will "go without a hitch," which would reinforce the currency's credibility. He added that Ether, by the very nature of its operation, offers the "added benefit" of interest generated by its holders. The mechanism for creating this currency involves owners putting up existing Ether coins as collateral in a process known as "Proof of Stake," which differs from bitcoin's energy-intensive method involving highly complex calculations, known as "Proof of Work." Ether investors who agree to put up some or all of their holdings receive a fee of a few percent a year, in addition to any potential capital gain if the currency appreciates in value. — AFP



**Mohammed Haris (right) receives 'Service Hero' Award from Faten Abu-Ghazaleh for LuLu Hypermarket.**

## LuLu Hypermarket wins 'Service Hero' award for third year in a row

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer, has once again earned the prestigious 'Service Hero 2023 Customer Service Assessment' award. This achievement marks the third consecutive year that the brand has been honored as the best supermarket of 2023 for its exceptional customer service, reaffirming its commitment to exceeding customer expectations.

This latest recognition marks the fifth time LuLu Hypermarket has been honored by the annual Service Hero Customer Satisfaction Index Awards program. The hypermarket has previously been recognized for their outstanding service, receiving the 'Service Hero Service Assessment Award' in 2013, 2014, 2021, and in 2022 was acknowledged as the 'Best Specialty Store'.

In a media statement issued after receiving the 'Service Hero 2023' award, top LuLu Hypermarket management in Kuwait expressed their gratitude and appreciation to all their valued customers, well-wishers, vendors and other stakeholders for their overwhelming vote of confidence in the brand. The statement also underlined the hypermarket's pride in winning the Arab

## Storm clouds gather over EU's Green Deal

**BRUSSELS:** The EU's Green Deal — once a core Brussels mission — is looking increasingly under threat in the bloc's upcoming elections as resistance grows to its costs and consequences. Farmers' protests, consumer cost-of-living worries and some countries' hesitation are already undercutting the ambitious plan to make the European Union carbon-neutral by 2050.

"The European Green Deal is our new growth strategy," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen announced back at the start of her mandate in 2019, as she unveiled dozens of pieces of legislation to meet climate targets agreed by EU member countries.

Five years on, the tone has changed. Now, industry and farmers denounce the new "burdens" being piled upon them. Member states, including France, are calling for a "pause" in further measures. "This backlash is centered on the agricultural area. It's not been true for energy, industry, transports," argued Pascal Canfin, chair of the European Parliament's environment committee. He blames what he calls a "polarization strategy" by right-wing parties. Many of the Green Deal's laws have been adopted: an end to selling internal-combustion engine cars by 2035; a border carbon tax; rules against importing goods from deforested zones.



world's only customer satisfaction index that is based solely on consumer perceptions.

The 'Service Hero' award is highly regarded among retailers in Kuwait as it provides a benchmark on service excellence based on a customer satisfaction index. Winning this award reflects the deep-rooted loyalty and popularity that LuLu Hypermarket enjoys among shoppers in Kuwait. To secure the 2023 award, LuLu Hypermarket underwent a rigorous and comprehensive assessment process. Evaluators meticulously examined various aspects of the customer experience, including the quality and variety of product offerings, reliability and speed of service delivery, staff attitude and professionalism, and the overall convenience offered by factors like store location, value for money, and hygiene. Additionally, product availability, the functionality and usability of their online presence, were also scrutinized.

Launched in 2010, the 'Service Hero Awards' stand alone as the only national consumer satisfaction index in Kuwait that relies solely on customer feedback. The assessment process is overseen by an independent advisory council, ensuring transparency and credibility. LuLu Hypermarket's consistent recognition by the 'Service Hero' awards program is a testament to their dedication to customer service excellence. The unwavering commitment to exceeding customer expectations cements the brand's leading position within the Kuwaiti retail landscape.

## Nigeria targets cryptocurrency to halt naira freefall

**LAGOS:** The world's biggest cryptocurrency exchange Binance is halting operations in Nigeria's naira currency as the government puts crypto-businesses under increasing scrutiny. The decision came after authorities in Africa's biggest economy imposed restrictions on cryptocurrency exchanges as part of attempts to halt the sliding value of the local currency.

Nigeria's central bank governor, Olayemi Cardoso, said at the end of last month that cryptocurrency exchanges were conduits for money laundering. He singled out Binance as the biggest culprit. "Certain practices go on that indicate illicit flows going through a number of these entities," Cardoso said.

"In the case of Binance, in the last one year alone, \$26 billion has passed through Binance Nigeria from sources and users who we cannot adequately identify."

Changpeng Zhao, who was head of Binance, has pleaded guilty to violating anti-money laundering laws in the United States. With the naira weakening almost daily, crypto exchanges have been seen as one way Nigerians can protect their money against the currency's plummet. Since the government floated the naira in May, the currency has fallen from around 410 to the dollar to around 1,600 naira to the greenback on the official exchange. In late February, a dollar was exchanged for as much as 1,900 naira on the black market.

Officials have accused crypto exchanges of distorting foreign exchange rates, contributing to the naira's weakening. Binance did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment on the allegations. But in an email sent to its Nigerian users, the crypto giant said it was shutting down all its naira-based services on March 8.

"This affects NGN services only, you can continue to make use of services and products for other available cryptocurrencies," the crypto giant said in the email seen by AFP, referring to the naira trading symbol NGN. Local media reported that two officials of the company who flew into Nigeria to negotiate with the government were detained and their passports seized.

Nigerian officials have not confirmed those arrests, but lawmakers are also considering issuing arrest warrants for the company's top executives for "ignoring invitations". — AFP



But momentum stalled last year with legislation to reduce chemical pesticides and to restore wilderness ecosystems — opposed on grounds they could undermine food production in the bloc.

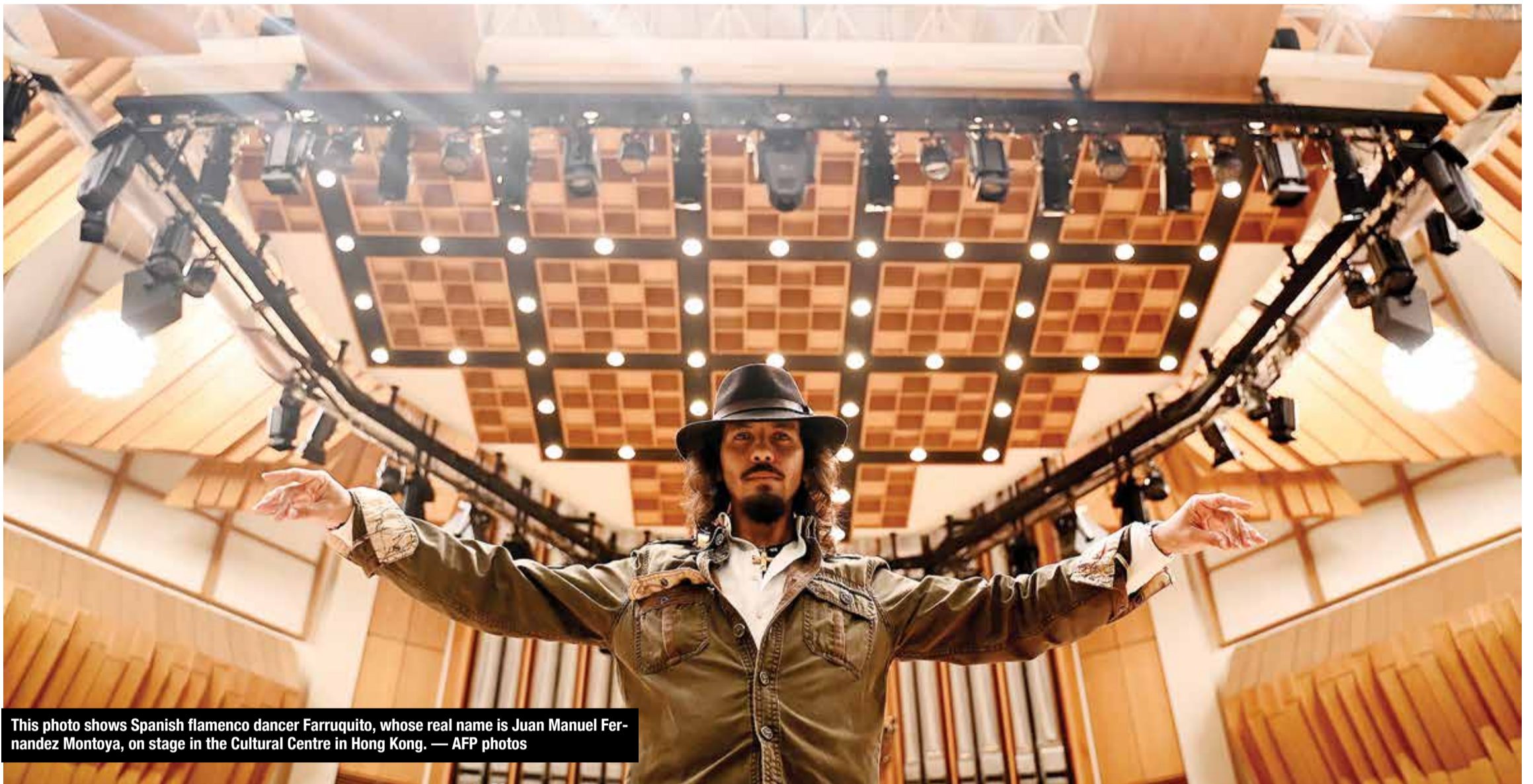
The biggest group in the European Parliament, the conservative European People's Party (EPP), from which von der Leyen hails, has made the shift an electoral gambit. "It's easy to fix a figure. But it's more difficult to really make the transition happen in industry and also with the citizens," said a German EPP lawmaker, Peter Liese. Farmland and forestry "should be protected much more" and farmers should not be seen "as an enemy of climate policy", he said.

The climate crisis is becoming "a real identity politics issue" caught up in the farmers protests, said

Susi Dennison, of the think tank the European Council on Foreign Relations. It is being cast as "an either-or choice — between either you do climate, or you are concerned about the economic picture," she said. "There isn't really a strong enough response to that false dichotomy from progressive groups," Dennison said. On the left in the parliament, Iratxe Garcia, of the Socialists & Democrats, laid the blame at the feet of "the extreme right and the EPP" accusing them of "trying to mix everything and to confuse the debate". "What the conservatives are doing is trying to send the message that we have to choose between the farmers and the Green Deal," Garcia said, calling that "really irresponsible". "The transition — we have to do it. And we are prepared to confront, to speak, to explain," she



# 'Imbued with flamenco': Spain's Farruquito takes Hong Kong stage



This photo shows Spanish flamenco dancer Farruquito, whose real name is Juan Manuel Fernandez Montoya, on stage in the Cultural Centre in Hong Kong. — AFP photos



This photo shows Spanish flamenco dancer Farruquito performing at the Cultural Centre in Hong Kong.



This photo shows Spanish flamenco dancer Farruquito performing at the Cultural Centre in Hong Kong.

As heir to one of Spain's most renowned flamenco dynasties, dancer Farruquito pairs furious footwork with strumming syncopated beats and verve — bringing the art form's "way of life" to global audiences. His real name is Juan Manuel Fernandez Montoya, and at 41, he has followed the steps of his grandfather, legendary dancer El Farruco.

"I was born imbued with flamenco because my family is one of the important houses of flamenco, the Farrucos," Farruquito tells AFP in an interview, beaming with pride. "My grandfather — the maestro — my mother, my aunt, my brothers, my cousins, my father who sang. I was born and the soundtrack of my days was flamenco."

Now he's bringing that soundtrack — and his impassioned stage presence — to Hong Kong, where his show has three performances this weekend as part of an arts festival. Visiting the city for the first time, Farruquito said his performance in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre would hold some traditional elements, "but with a modern update."

An art form that fuses song, dance and emotive showmanship, it was declared by UNESCO an intangible cultural heritage for Andalusia, a region on Spain's southern coast. But the dance waltzes across borders, attracting aspiring foot-tappers to popular classes from Bangkok to Tokyo — and now drawing curious audiences in Hong Kong. "There are a lot of people from Asia who do it very well because they are very disciplined. They have a lot of respect for it." But to truly experience it, one must be "up close to it," he said. "Flamenco is not just a music — it is a culture, it is a way of life."

#### 'Stay on stage forever'

Born to a Romani family full of artists and musicians, Farruquito was declared a child prodigy when he shared the stage with his grandfather on Broadway in New York at the age of five. By 18, he was declared "one of the great flamenco dancers of this new century" by The New York Times — and anointed the presumptive heir to El Farruco's legacy after his grandfather passed away in 1997.

But his meteoric rise came to a sudden halt in 2004 when he fatally ran over a pedestrian in Spain and fled the scene. Sentenced to three years in prison, he was released in 2010 — and fearful for the end of his dancing days.



This photo shows Spanish flamenco dancer Farruquito performing at the Cultural Centre in Hong Kong.



This photo shows Spanish flamenco dancer Farruquito performing at the Cultural Centre in Hong Kong.

"For a long time, they erased me from the map. But it was understandable at that moment," he said. The dancer has since rediscovered his place on stage, though he still feels the responsibility of his grandfather's legacy — and pre-performance

nerves — three decades into his career. "There are times when right before going on stage, I want to go home and go to bed," Farruquito said. "But there are other times when I want to stay on stage forever — I want to die there." — AFP

## Cambodia earns new world record for largest 'bridal carry'



Men carry women during a competition and Guinness World Record attempt in Phnom Penh. — AFP photos

Hundreds of Cambodians braved sticky tropical heat to set an unusual new world record: for the most people performing a "bridal carry" at the same time. Late on Friday, 245 men hoisted their partners — wives,

girlfriends, sisters or mothers — with one arm under the legs and one behind the back and held the position for a minute to set the mark, certified by Guinness World Records representatives.



A man carries a woman during a competition and Guinness World Record attempt in Phnom Penh.

"I am so happy, it is my first time to participate in such an event to break a world record for Cambodia," Sam Khan, 25, told AFP before carrying his wife. The event drew participants young and old.

"I am so excited," 50-year-old mother Heng Pov told AFP while being carried by her son. After setting the record, many of the participants carried on with the hold as part of a competition to win a new car. The "bridal carry" is so named for the way a groom in some cultures carries his bride over the threshold of their new home. — AFP



Men carry women as a test ahead of a competition and Guinness World Record attempt in Phnom Penh.



A man carrying a woman is given a drink during a competition and Guinness World Record attempt in Phnom Penh.



Men carry women during a competition and Guinness World Record attempt in Phnom Penh.



Lifestyle

# From Dubai to Chile, Turkish series expand their empire



Turkish actress Canan Urekil (right), starring in the 'Dengeler' TV series, performs on the set.



Turkish actress Canan Urekil (center), starring in the 'Dengeler' TV series, prepares for a scene on the set at Tophane district in Istanbul. — AFP photos



Turkish actress Canan Urekil (right), starring in the 'Dengeler' TV series, poses with Suleyman Mert Odemir, director of the TV series on the set at Tophane district in Istanbul.

In the skies above Istanbul's Tophane neighborhood, seagulls are sent scattering by a drone that's filming a policeman arresting a young woman on the streets below. But it's for a television series called "Dengeler", one of about 60 filmed annually in Turkey that have made Istanbul and other Turkish cities familiar to viewers in nearly 170 countries around the world. Over the past 15 years, Turkey has established itself as the foremost exporter of series after the United States and Britain.

"Latin Americans find Turkish series very close to their culture," said Erdi Isik, development manager at Ay Yapim—Turkey's leading exporter last year and whose production "Yaragi" ("Family Secrets") last November won an In-

ternational Emmy for best telenovela. "When I show samples to a panel, even if they don't understand a word of Turkish, they catch what it is about because the family culture is very much the same," he said.

Censorship constraints in Turkey also provide more modest material, important for audiences in the Middle East and Spanish-speaking countries who are accustomed to watching soap operas as a family. However, "we think of the Turkish market first," he said, even though "we pick actors that can fit international expectations", citing a list of about 20 actors that appeal to the public outside Turkey.

**Family history, thwarted loves**

"Bitter Lands", another success story, won best telenovela of the year in South America in 2020 with its lead actress likewise crowned. Long popular in the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans, all once ruled by the Ottoman Empire, Turkish series about history, family intrigues and thwarted love stories are now present on every continent, even in the United States where they have captured the Hispanic market.

"They are now broadcast in prime-time in Spain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt," said Xavier Rambert, head of research and marketing at Glance, an audience measurement company in London, who praises the "effectiveness" of Turkish productions. "Their ability to provide



Set workers prepare for a scene of the 'Dengeler' TV series on the set at Tophane district in Istanbul.



Suleyman Mert Odemir (center), director of the 'Dengeler' TV series checks his shooting on a screen on the set.



Suleyman Mert Odemir, director of the 'Dengeler' TV series, works on the set.



Set workers prepare for a scene of the 'Dengeler' TV series on the set.



Turkish actress Canan Urekil (left), starring in the 'Dengeler' TV series, prepares her hair for a scene on the set.

masses of content at very controlled costs makes it possible to fill the programs at reasonable prices," he added. In total, nearly 700 million viewers enjoy "alla turca" telenovelas, according to the Turkish culture ministry.

The success is also due to the quality of the productions, said Ozlem Ozsumbul, sales director at Madd, the company which distributes series produced by Ay Yapim. "We always shoot on location", she said. Each episode is written and shot from one week to the next, based on a general plot which evolves to adjust to the audience. A two-hour episode can be entirely written, shot and produced in six days.

Characters can be ejected, or minimized. Only the biggest stars are guaranteed up to 15 episodes, Ozsumbul said. But while "TV series are produced for TVs in Turkey, they cannot recover their costs from airing in Turkey" alone, said Ozlem Ozdemir, founder of Episode magazine, which covers Turkish TV shows.

**'New generation'**

Productions are therefore adapted to the international market. "Our system is unique as we shoot about two-and-a-half hours every week. And then, we re-edit for the foreign market to adjust the commercials," said Ahmet Ziyalar, co-founder of Inter Medya and CEO of

Inter Yapim. A weekly episode of 90 to 120 minutes in Turkey can be converted into three 45-minute episodes broadcast daily in Latin America.

Meanwhile, Ziyalar has launched a so-called "New Generation" series of eight to 12 episodes intended only for streaming platforms. "They are shorter, faster, bolder, and sexier—less concerned about the censorship. They are also more artistic," he summarized.

This is why the heroine of the series "Dengeler", whose arrest was filmed by drone in the Tophane neighborhood, does not hesitate to hurl pro-Kurdish slogans at the police officer who stopped her. "We can be more political when we produce for a platform," screenwriter Sarp Kalfaoglu said. "Dengeler" will be streamed in Turkey by Gain. "We think these new-generation series can find a place on the international market as well as the mainstream series we will keep producing," insisted Can Okan, CEO of Inter Medya, who will soon present them at international festival Series Mania in Lille, France.

Okan said he recently reached an agreement with Colombian broadcaster Caracol for a series of 120 episodes in Spanish. "We know (President Recep Tayyip) Erdogan is not always happy with our contents, but he doesn't say anything, as we bring in a lot of money," said Erdi Isik.—AFP

## Thieves steal Italian sculptor's gold jewelry exhibit



Thieves have stolen almost 50 pieces of gold jewelry by the Italian sculptor Umberto Mastroianni worth 1.2 million euros in a targeted hit on an exhibition in northern Italy, curators said Saturday. A "highly specialized gang" made off Wednesday night with almost the entire collection of rings, bracelets, pendants and sculptures by Mastroianni, considered one of Italy's greatest contemporary sculptors, on display at the Vittoriale degli Italiani estate on Lake Garda. Only one of the 49 items in the collection, worth a total of 1,207,400 euros (around \$1.3 million), was recovered elsewhere on the estate, the Vittoriale said in a statement after holding a press conference on the theft. "These exceptional artefacts, true 'wearable sculptures', represent the most important testimony of the master's gold production," said Lorenzo Zichichi, president of the Centre for Studies of the Works of

Umberto Mastroianni. If the pieces are not recovered, the theft — almost the entire collection of Mastroianni's gold, which belonged to his relatives — would represent an "inestimable loss", Zichichi said.

The exhibition, entitled "Like a warm and fluid gold. The golds of Umberto Mastroianni", opened in December at the Museo d'Annunzio Segreto and was due to close on Friday. The works were designed and forged by Mastroianni — known also for his huge monuments — from the 1950s until his death in 1998.

"Of the 49 works subject to the theft... only one, entitled "Man/Woman", was later found inside the complex", the Vittoriale said, without providing further details. The head of the Vittoriale, Giordano Bruno Guerri, said he could not go into details of the robbery, which was under investigation by police and art specialists. — AFP

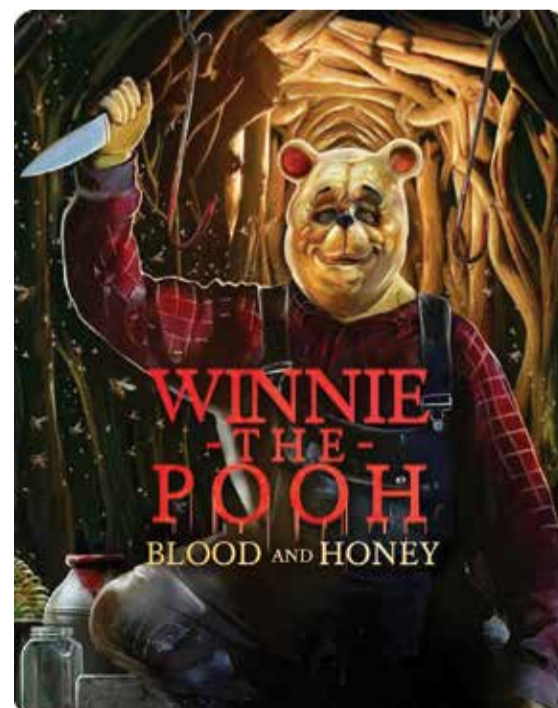
## Winnie the Pooh slasher film 'wins' Razzies

An ultra-low-budget horror film in which Winnie the Pooh and Piglet go on a brutal killing spree has been named the year's worst movie by the Razzie Awards. Slasher movie "Winnie-the-Pooh: Blood and Honey", made for less than \$250,000, garnered global headlines and even provoked death threats from enraged fans in February 2023. The live-action British film took advantage of the expiration of copyrights on A.A. Milne's beloved books, meaning neither the author's estate nor movie rights owner Disney could sue.

Though it appears to have safely evaded legal action, "Blood and Honey" now suffers the ignominy of topping the Razzies. At the parody prizes, which recognize the year's most dire films and performances, it "won" worst picture, director and screenplay. Pooh and Piglet were named worst screen couple, and the movie also earned a Razzie for worst remake, rip-off or sequel.

Though embarrassing, the Razzie Awards are unlikely to bother director Rhys Frake-Waterfield. His movie grossed nearly \$5 million after being given a global theatrical release thanks to the controversy it generated. A sequel is scheduled for release later this month.

He told AFP last year he was also developing horror movies based on "Bambi" and "Peter Pan" books. The Razzies are announced the day before the Oscars, serving to mock the following night's self-congratulatory Tinseltown back-slapping.



Former Oscar winner Jon Voight was named worst actor for critically panned thriller "Mercy," and Megan Fox took worst actress for horror-heist movie "Johnny & Clyde." Fox, a frequent Razzies punching bag, also took worst supporting actress for action sequel "Expendables," which earned worst supporting actor for Sylvester Stallone. The Razzies were first awarded in 1981 in a Los Angeles living room, the brainchild of UCLA film graduates and industry veterans, who chose the raspberry as a symbol of derision.—AFP



## Sports

# Mexico's Ancer clings on to win LIV Hong Kong in dramatic playoff

## Superb Tardy sweeps to maiden victory at Blue Bay LPGA

**HONG KONG:** Abraham Ancer won the inaugural LIV Golf Hong Kong on Sunday, blowing a five-stroke lead before beating Cam Smith and Paul Casey with a brilliant birdie on the first playoff hole. "Man, I made that so hard on myself," a relieved Ancer said after holding a four-foot putt to win the \$4 million first prize in the Saudi-backed breakaway circuit event.

Ancer had started the day five clear of the pack on 15-under after bogey-free rounds of 63 on Friday and 62 on Saturday at the Hong Kong Golf Club. But the Mexican saw his ultra-smooth swing of the first two days desert him in chilly and wet conditions on Sunday, as he returned a two-over 72 in front of big crowds, who turned out in force despite the deteriorating weather.

"The ball-striking wasn't there, but mentally I was really strong, so I felt really good," he said straight after the playoff, where he set up only his second birdie of the day with a superb approach. "I just kept myself in it and hit the right shot at the right time there in the playoff." Englishman Casey holed a spectacular bunker shot for a birdie at his final hole, the 16th, to complete a six-under round of 64 and draw level with Ancer and Australia's Smith (66) on 13-under par. But he found a fairway bunker off the tee in the playoff to end his hopes.

"I played some great golf," said Casey, whose 'Crushers' won the team competition and a \$3 million first prize to go with his \$1,875,000 for a share of second place. "I'm not going to measure it on the playoff

hole, on one tee shot, something like that. It was a really good week."

For Smith, the 2022 British Open champion, it was the second agonising disappointment on Hong Kong's final green in four months. In November, he saw New Zealand's Ben Campbell hole a birdie on 18 to pip him to the Hong Kong Open title.

Earlier, Ancer stumbled to his first bogey of the week at the par-three fifth after finding sand off the tee. Another bogey at the short eighth reduced his lead to two strokes, though he repaired some of the damage with his first birdie of the round on the par-four 10th. A disastrous drive into a stream on the 15th dropped him back to 13-under and Smith swept home a 20-foot birdie putt to draw level.

### Double hole-in-one

US Masters champion Jon Rahm was LIV's biggest coup when he defected from the PGA Tour in December. Rahm briefly got into contention at 12-under before two bogeys at the 14th and 16th ended his challenge as he finished 10-under par after a frustrating 71.

Chile's Joaquin Niemann won two of the previous LIV events this season, including last week in Saudi Arabia. He sunk the week's first hole-in-one, at the 188-yard eighth, in a brilliant round of 63 to finish tied for fourth with another Mexican, Carlos Ortiz (66).

Finland's Kalle Samooja thenaced the 149-yard second hole for the sixth LIV hole-in-one since the breakaway tour began in 2022. Three-time PGA Tour

winner Anthony Kim shot a final-round 65, his best round since making his first professional appearance since 2012 at last week's LIV Golf event in Jeddah.

Bailey Tardy shot a superb seven-under-par 65 to sweep to her maiden tour victory at the Blue Bay LPGA in China by four strokes on Sunday. Tardy was in a three-way tie for the lead after Saturday's third round at 12-under par with Lydia Ko of New Zealand and fellow American Sarah Schmelzel. An eagle-three at the eighth ignited her round and six further birdies against a lone bogey saw her stretch away from an elite field in the \$2.2 million event. Tardy was in tears after finishing at 19-under par for the week.

"Yeah, I mean, a lot of emotions right now," said the 27-year-old. "A lot of hard work and just a lot of doubt that was in my head that I could be at this level and win. Tardy, who was a rookie last year, became the third player to earn their first LPGA Tour victory at Blue Bay on Hainan Island, joining Lee-Anne Pace (2014) and Gaby Lopez (2018).

Ko had three bogeys on her front nine and finished with a 71 for a share of fourth place. Tardy admitted she had been nervous playing with one of women's golf's most famous figures. "You know I played with her yesterday and I was very intimidated playing with her," said Tardy of the former world number one and double major winner Ko. "I think I handled myself really well, and, yeah, it was like playing with a friend today almost. "She made me feel really comfortable and confident out there." —AFP



**HONG KONG:** Winner of the LIV Golf individual competition, Fireballs GC player Abraham Ancer (R) celebrates on the podium with his caddy on day three of the LIV Golf tournament at Fanling golf club in Hong Kong on March 10, 2024. — AFP

## Australia have 'backs to the wall' as NZ clean out top four

**CHRISTCHURCH:** New Zealand cleaned out the top four Australian batsmen on Sunday to leave the tourists on 77-4 and facing an uphill task in their chase of 279 to win the second Test in Christchurch. "Our backs are against the wall. New Zealand are on a roll," Australian spinner Nathan Lyon said. The hosts set a demanding target for an Australian side struggling for runs on a ground where the highest successful fourth innings is 285-8, set by New Zealand against Sri Lanka last year.

The home camp was elated. "It's been a great day for us," declared opener Tom Latham, who contributed 73 in New Zealand's second innings of 372. "After the first two innings we were behind the game a little bit and to bring it back to parity and then to maybe get our noses in front has been pretty pleasing."

Australian batsmen Steve Smith, Marnus Labuschagne, Usman Khawaja and Cameron Green were all swiftly sent back to the Hagley Oval pavilion by New Zealand's seamers. Matt Henry, rated by Lyon as the bowler of the series, had figures of 2-37 with debutant Ben Sears on 2-22. Australia still need 202 runs.

At the close of play on day three, Mitchell Marsh was not-out 27 with Travis Head unbeaten on 17. With two days remaining and no rain forecast, a draw is out of the equation as New Zealand battle for their first win over Australia since 2011.



**CHRISTCHURCH:** New Zealand's Mitchell Santner attempts to field the ball on day three of the second Test cricket match between New Zealand and Australia at Hagley Oval in Christchurch on March 10, 2024. — AFP

The tourists are looking to sweep the series after dominating the first Test. With the pitch flattening out and not providing as much movement as it did over the first two days, New Zealand were well placed when they went to tea at 345-6 and were eyeing an imposing 300-plus target.

But momentum swung back Australia's way as the New Zealand tail added just 27 and the last three wickets contributed only one run. At the top of the order, there were half-centuries from Tom Latham, Kane Williamson, Rachin Ravindra and Daryl Mitchell, but no one was able to push on to three figures.

New Zealand resumed the day at 134-2 and quickly lost Latham, who added eight to his overnight 65 before he was caught behind off Pat Cummins. Ravindra and Mitchell calmly put on 123 for the fourth wicket, forcing Cummins to use seven bowlers before Josh Hazlewood made the breakthrough, snagging Mitchell caught behind for 58.

Three overs later Ravindra on 82 feathered a Cummins delivery to give wicketkeeper Alex Carey his ninth catch in the Test. The ball was moving away and it was an out-of-character shot from Ravindra, who had displayed considerable patience until then in his 153-ball innings.

Glenn Phillips and Henry added 16 apiece before Nathan Lyon removed Scott Kuggeleijn for 44 to end the innings. Cummins was the most successful bowler with 4-62 while Lyon took 3-49.

Any momentum Australia gained quickly evaporated in the face of a torrid onslaught from the New Zealand attack in a spirited 24 overs before stumps. Smith again went cheaply, trapped in front by Henry for nine, with the quick bowler also getting Khawaja out, caught one-handed by Tim Southee at third slip for 11.—AFP



HH the Prime Minister with Mariam Theyab

## Tomoooh Sports Club partakes in Kuwait Sports Day

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Tomoooh Sports Club for mental disabilities participated in Kuwait Sports Day with a large number of players, board members, technical and administrative departments. The club participated in the 5km walking and 15km biking. The club received distinguished appreciation, as HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received player Mariam Theyab and lauded her participation in the marathon, he also commended her achievements in the sport of the mentally challenged.

## Al-Hunaidi wins showjumping championship

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Riding Club rider Yara Al-Hunaidi won the "Key Tower" showjumping Championship. The championship was held with the support of Kuwait Equestrian Federation, and patronage of Zain Communications.

Yara won first place in the 8th heat at the height of 140 cm in 51.21 seconds without a fault, she was followed by Ali Al-Kharafi in the second and third place while rider Fawaz Al-Subaie was fourth ahead of Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Hamad Al-Hajiri, Ghazi Al-Huraiwi and Fawaz Rashid. Zain's Hamad Al-Musaibeeh handed the winners their awards.

## England edge Ireland in Six Nations thriller

**TWICKENHAM:** England captain Jamie George admitted he felt "emotional" as he watched his side end Ireland's bid for successive Grand Slams with a dramatic 23-22 Six Nations win at Twickenham on Saturday.

Saracens hooker George, replaced in the 54th minute by Theo Dan, was reduced to the role of a spectator as a thrilling match ended with England substitute fly-half Marcus Smith kicking a clinching drop-goal with more than 80 minutes on the clock.

England, recovering in fine style from a 30-21 defeat by Scotland, scored three tries—through Ollie Lawrence, George Furbank and Ben Earl—to two from Ireland wing James Lowe. Yet, having fought back from 17-8 behind early in the second half, it still seemed as if England would suffer a fifth straight defeat by Ireland, for all the visitors had captain Peter O'Mahony sin-

State Minister for National Assembly Affairs, State Minister for Youth Affairs, State Minister for Communications Affairs Dawood Maaraf received all Tomoooh players at the end of the marathon.

Tomoooh Club Treasurer Hanaa Al-Zawawi thanked HH the Prime Minister and Youth Minister for their kind gestures that reflect the interest of state officials in the mentally challenged headed by HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

She said will continue providing the positive environment to fulfill the aspect of integration and social empowering and form the integrated personality of the mentally challenged through competitive sport, and make sports achievements locally, regionally and internationally, that in addition to the social, cultural, health, religious and entertainment activities, and participating in Kuwait Sports Day is one of them. She also thanked the Public Authority for Sport for organizing the sports day.



binned in the 58th minute, before Smith had the final say. For George, whose mother died before the Scotland game, a win that meant England had posted three victories in a Championship season for the first time since 2020 capped a tough few weeks on and off the pitch. "We didn't panic at any stage and I have to admit it was a bit emotional at the end because of everything that's gone on," George told reporters.

### 'Didn't listen to the noise'

"I am so proud. It is probably one of the most emotional and proud days of my career. The reason for that is there were doubters after that Scotland performance and probably rightly so but at the same time, internally we didn't listen to the noise outside.

"For us to get out there and do that to a team like Ireland, who for me are the best team in the world at the minute, is a really special day." Before the match, George had insisted England could upset the odds, the 33-year-old saying: "This is England. This is Twickenham. This is home. And we're going to defend our home, like every Englishman would." The victory in front of a crowd of over 81,000 gave England a chance to win the title, should they beat France in Lyon and Ireland

## India become number one Test side overtaking Aussies

**NEW DELHI:** India have climbed to the number one spot in Test cricket rankings following an emphatic 4-1 series victory against England. The Indian team moved past Australia who are now second in the table, according to the rankings released by the International Cricket Council late Saturday. India lost the opening Test against England before bouncing back to win the remaining four matches, including the final game which ended in Dharamsala on Saturday. In January, India had slipped to second place in Test rankings after a drawn 1-1 series against South Africa.



International  
Cricket Council

Australia overtook India at the top after sweeping the three-Test series at home against Pakistan. Currently Australia lead the two-Test series against New Zealand 1-0 following their 172-run victory in Wellington. India will remain at the top regardless of the outcome of the second New Zealand-Australia Test in Christchurch. India are already the number one team in one-day and T20 internationals. They are also at the top of the ICC World Test Championship Standings table. —AFP

lose at home to Scotland in next Saturday's final round of matches. "Jamie has said he wants the supporters to enjoy it and bring them on the journey with us and I thought Twickenham was magnificent and the supporters left with a smile on their face," said England coach Steve Borthwick. Borthwick appeared to exchange angry words with Ireland coach and former England team-mate Andy Farrell at half-time.

"I know people want to read things into that but Andy and I have a good relationship, we were co-captains together at Saracens as players...I have incredible respect for what he has done with that (Ireland) team," he said. Although England finished third at last year's World Cup, this was arguably their best performance since Borthwick took charge in December 2022. "What pleased me the most was that the players stayed true to the path that we're trying to follow and tried to take the next step," said Borthwick. Farrell, meanwhile, had no doubt Ireland could bounce back against Scotland in Dublin. "There's not a problem at all about getting the lads back on track for next week," he said. "Six Nations (titles) are unbelievably difficult to come by. To win them you tend to have a lot of ups and downs." —AFP



Sports

# Kane equals 60-year-old record as eight-goal Bayern keep hopes alive

## Kane draws nearer to the season record of 41 goals set by Lewandowski

MUNICH: Harry Kane scored a hat-trick as Bayern Munich thumped Mainz 8-1 on Saturday, equalling a 60-year-old record and keeping alive his team's hopes of catching leaders Bayer Leverkusen. Kane, who also laid on two assists, now has 30 goals in his first season in Munich colours, matched the record for a maiden campaign set by German legend Uwe Seeler for Hamburg in 1963-64.

With nine games remaining, the England captain has also drawn nearer to the season record of 41 goals set by Bayern's Robert Lewandowski in 2020-21. The win was Bayern's second biggest this season, just behind their 8-0 demolition of Darmstadt in October.

Midfielder Leon Goretzka, who scored a double, said: "It was a convincing win—the kind we've missed this season." Bayern are now seven points behind Xabi Alonso's unbeaten Leverkusen, who host lowly Wolfsburg on Sunday.

"It's our duty to keep giving it everything we've got," Goretzka said. "If Leverkusen get shaky, we've got to be there." Having sealed their progression to the Champions League quarter-finals on Tuesday with a 3-0 home win over Lazio, Bayern were direct and decisive against Mainz.

Outgoing manager Thomas Tuchel said midweek Bayern needed to "win, win, win"

to have any chance of catching Alonso's side and Kane obliged early, tapping in a Jamal Musiala pass after 13 minutes. Kane had a header saved seven minutes later, but Leon Goretzka was on hand to knock in the rebound.

Nadiem Amiri wove an incredible free kick through Bayern's defence shortly after but England striker Kane restored Bayern's two-goal lead in first-half stoppage time, collecting a lofted Goretzka pass on the turn and blasting home.

Thomas Mueller added a fourth early in the second-half to break Mainz's resistance, allowing Bayern to run riot, with further goals to Musiala, Serge Gnabry, Kane and Goretzka to bring the tally to eight. The loss leaves Mainz in second last, nine points from safety. Sporting director Martin Schmidt lamented his side's openness, saying "we wanted to be courageous, but we were too courageous".

### Sancho on target

Ten-man Borussia Dortmund regained fourth spot with a 2-1 win at Werder Bremen, headlined by Jadon Sancho's first goal since returning to Germany, with his side having fallen to fifth earlier in the day when RB Leipzig beat Darmstadt 2-0 at home.

An acrobatic strike from Donyell Malen and a trademark solo effort from Sancho,

the Manchester United loanee's first in Dortmund colours since May 2021, had the visitors cruising. Dortmund were however reduced to 10 men just before half-time when Marcel Sabitzer saw red for sinking his studs into Mitchell Weiser's calf.

Dortmund manager Edin Terzic pulled Malen, who has five goals in his past four games, in favour of Mats Hummels at the break, but the veteran defender was at fault when Bremen's Justin Njinmah scored with 20 minutes remaining.

Despite some nervy final moments, Dortmund held on to stay one point clear of Leipzig in fourth, the final guaranteed Champions League spot for next season. "We played almost as well as you can at the start. The lads did an incredible job" said Dortmund striker Niclas Fuellkrug, who left Bremen in the summer having come through the club's junior system.

Earlier on Saturday, Leipzig beat Darmstadt to rebound from a frustrating Champions League last 16 exit to Real Madrid on Wednesday. Leipzig forced struggling Darmstadt into an own goal from Thomas Isherwood after three minutes.

Marco Rose's men added another through Christoph Baumgartner early in the second-half to seal the win as they continue their push for a top-four spot. "We're looking only at ourselves," said sporting di-



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's English forward #09 Harry Kane (C) and Mainz's French midfielder #23 Josuha Guilavogui vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match FC Bayern Munich v 1 FSV Mainz 05 in Munich, southern Germany. — AFP

rector Rouven Schroeder of their top-four bid. "When we win our games, we'll qualify for the Champions League."

Third-last Cologne drew 3-3 at derby rivals Borussia Moenchengladbach, having led twice in a feisty encounter. Cologne led for over an hour but were forced to come

from behind late in the game when Robin Hack scored two goals in three minutes to give the home side the lead.

Damion Downs levelled the scores with 11 minutes remaining but Cologne will finish the round in 16th, the relegation play-off spot, seven points from safety. — AFP

## Arsenal go top in dramatic style

LONDON: Arsenal moved to the top of the Premier League in dramatic fashion as Kai Havertz spared Aaron Ramsdale's blushes with a crucial late strike in Saturday's 2-1 win against Brentford. Mikel Arteta's side were just minutes away from a damaging draw after Gunners keeper Ramsdale gifted an equaliser to Yoane Wissa.

Declan Rice put Arsenal ahead early in the first half, but Ramsdale waited too long to clear just before the interval and Wissa took advantage to block the ball into the net. Havertz ensured Arsenal would not miss their chance to climb into first place with a bullet header four minutes from the final whistle at a jubilant Emirates Stadium.

The north Londoners' eighth successive league victory lifted them one point clear of previous leaders Liverpool. Arsenal will stay top on goal difference if second-placed Liverpool and third-placed Manchester City draw in their blockbuster clash at Anfield on Sunday.

"Tomorrow will be a great day to watch a fantastic game of football. It is not in my hands," Arteta said. "It's a joy to be part of this league and a joy to be part of something special that we are trying to achieve."

The much-maligned Havertz's ninth goal since his move from Chelsea underlined Arsenal's hunger to make amends for blowing an eight-point lead in the title race last season. "We showed courage and we were rewarded," Arteta said. "That is the beautiful thing about this stadium. They support (after) mistakes."

On Tuesday, Arsenal will try to turn around a 1-0 deficit against Porto in the Champions League last 16 second leg, while their next Premier League game is at Manchester City on March 31. Revitalised by a Jan-



LONDON: Arsenal's German midfielder #29 Kai Havertz scores the team's second goal during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Brentford at the Emirates Stadium in London. — AFP

uary training camp in Dubai, the Gunners have scored 33 goals and conceded just four during their blistering winning streak.

A 6-0 rout of Sheffield United on Monday maintained Arsenal's powerful surge and they were quickly on the attack against Brentford. Monopolising possession in metronomic fashion, Arsenal squeezed Brentford deeper and deeper before taking the lead in the 19th minute.

Ben White whipped over a perfectly weighted cross from the right and Rice rose highest to thump a header past Brentford keeper Mark Flekken from 10

yards. It was the former West Ham midfielder's sixth goal of his impressive first season with the Gunners.

Leandro Trossard's long-range blast was well held by Flekken, but Arsenal were so dominant it seemed only a matter of time until they scored again. Instead, Ramsdale's blunder stunned the Emirates into silence in first-half stoppage-time.

Gabriel's back-pass should have been dealt with by the Arsenal keeper, but he took too long to clear inside his six-yard box, allowing Wissa to close him down and make a sliding block that deflected the ball into the net. — AFP

## Former world champion hails Ferrari teen Bearman

JEDDAH: Ferrari's teenage rookie Oliver Bearman finished an impressive seventh on his Formula One debut at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix on Saturday with former world champion Damon Hill proclaiming: "A star is born". The 18-year-old Briton was only told he was replacing appendicitis victim Carlos Sainz on Friday morning but drove with the cool aplomb of a seasoned campaigner to score points in his first outing—and after only one practice session. "Star is born now," 1996 world champion Hill wrote on X. "To jump in at such

short notice, on a track as intimidating as Jeddah, in a Ferrari of all things, and hold up under immense pressure and keep it together... Wow." Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, who finished ninth for Mercedes in a race won easily by three-time champion Max Verstappen ahead of his Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez, applauded his young compatriot from his cockpit on his slow-down lap.

Team bosses and rival drivers followed with warm words for Bearman who was not only the youngest driver in Ferrari's F1 history, but the youngest Briton to race in the sport. He was also the third youngest of all time behind Lance Stroll and Verstappen.

"I'm a little tired," said Bearman. "As you can see, I don't look my best! It was a fantastic race, pushing all the way. I was shocked at how fast we were pushing, getting quicker every lap." "That was incredible, especially at the end when I had the two guys (Hamilton and Lando Norris of McLaren) bearing down on me. I

couldn't relax. I was always in my mirrors pushing flat out but it was a really exciting and fun race."

He added: "The countdown seemed like it was going slower than normal. I think we managed it really well. They weren't really catching behind and I felt like I had a bit in hand in case I needed it. I did my fastest lap on the last one." Hamilton and his Mercedes team-mate George Russell went across to congratulate Bearman at the end of the race, both hugging him as he climbed out of his car. Bearman was only 18 months old when Hamilton made his F1 debut in 2007, aged 22, and when he was told he was behind him on a "push lap" he said "I was like 'wow, I will get out of the way!'"

But he remained ahead at the end of the race. "He completely deserves it," said Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc who was third. "He has done an incredible job. Even in practice, he was straight on the ace and in qualifying, he missed Q3 (the final shootout) by so little! — AFP

## Kuwait to host IIHF World Championship Division 4 in April

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Winter Games Club announced on Sunday that it was ready to host the 2024 International Ice Hockey Federation World Championship (IIHF) Division 4 next April. The tournament includes the participation of Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Kuwait.



Vice President of Kuwait Winter Games Club Khaled Al-Mutairi

In a statement to KUNA, Vice President of the Kuwait Winter Games Club Khaled Al-Mutairi said that the club is conducting a full maintenance for the Ice rink, changing rooms and medical clinic in line with the requirements of the IIHF.

"These maintenance works aim to display the tournament in the best image possible that suits the ice hockey sport in Kuwait," said Al-Mutairi. He pointed out that the Kuwait team is enthused and serious about the tournament, and set to camp for training as part of their preparation for the championship. — KUNA

### Today's matches

#### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Chelsea v Newcastle United 23:00  
beIN Sports HD 1

#### SPANISH LEAGUE

UD Almeria v Sevilla FC 23:00  
beIN Sports HD 3  
Premier Sports 1 HD

#### ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A

SS Lazio v Udinese Calcio 22:45  
beIN Sports

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

#### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752

Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

#### Hospitals

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

### Change of Name

I, **Jaseena** Niranganpara Moideen, holder of Indian Passport No. V7431461 do hereby change my children name from their birth certificate, Mohammed Ayaan Nellyparambil Tayathedil to Ayaan Mohammed passport No U0461164 (Ayaan as given name and Mohammed as surname) and from Mohammed Amaan Nellyparambil Tayathedil to Amaan Mohammed Passport No V1967065 (Amaan as given name and Mohammed as sur-

name). I undertake to carry out this name change in their birth certificates. (#5179) 11/3/2024

I, **Ali**, holder of Indian Passport No. W4667476 issued at Kuwait on 03/11/2022 permanent address house No.8, street No.1, Basti Ram Ki Badi, Udaipur, Pin - 313001, Rajasthan, India. Presently residing in Kuwait do hereby declare that my name will be read as Ali

(as given name) Mashraqi (as surname) with immediate effect. (#5178) 9/3/2024

I, **Shubam Chigari** holder of Indian Passport No. M7464652 having permanent address H.No. 10 B Dando, Sanguem, Goa, South Goa. 403704 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Shubam Oliveira. (#5177) 8/3/2024

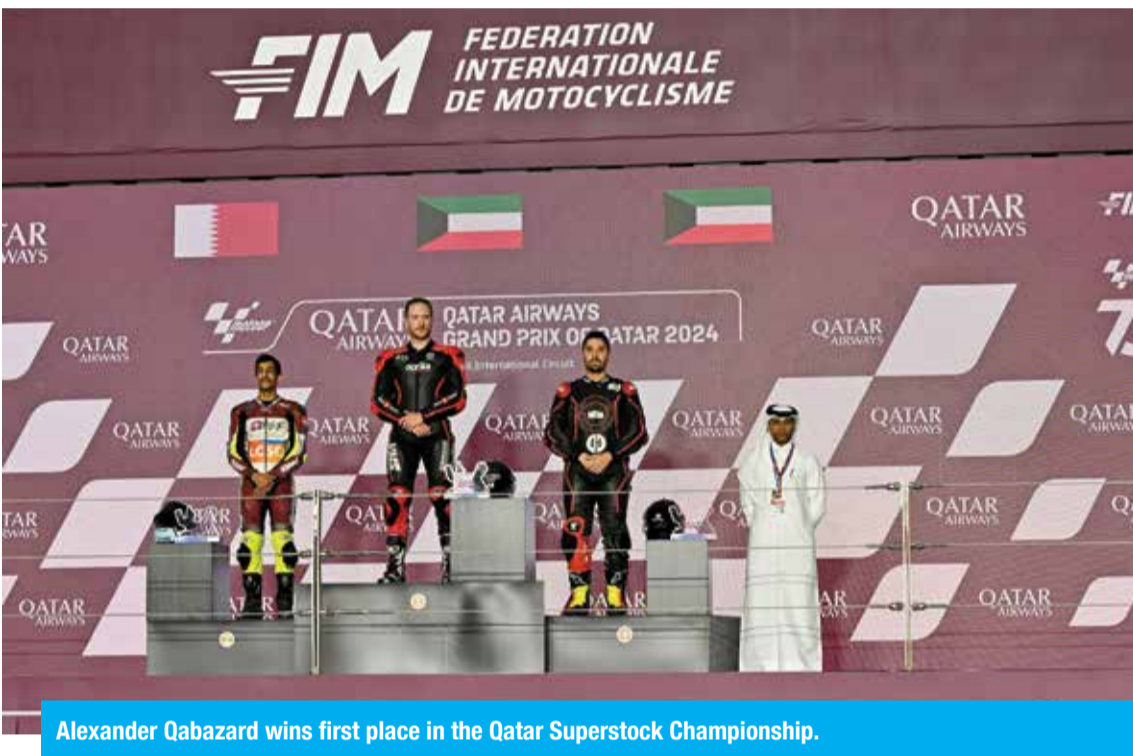
Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

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



## BNK Motion rider Alexander Qabazard wins Qatar MotoGP 2024 support race

Qabazard recognizes BNK Motion as a beacon of support for emerging talents



Alexander Qabazard wins first place in the Qatar Superstock Championship.



Alexander Qabazard



Alexander Qabazard with his bike at the Qatar Superstock Championship.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Alexander Qabazard won first place in the Qatar Superstock Championship on Saturday, a thrilling support race accompanying the MotoGP season opener. Competing against 21 international riders hailing from diverse corners of the globe, Qabazard's victory showcased his prowess on the track. Sponsored by Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, whose support propelled Qabazard to victory in the Kuwait Superbike Championship in 2023, he continues to race under the banner of BNK Motion as an endorsed Aprilia rider.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, he said: "I want to thank BNK from the bottom of my heart for believing in me as an upcoming Kuwaiti racer." Reflecting on his journey, Qabazard expressed profound gratitude towards his mentor and coach, Khaled Al-Mudhaf, whose unwavering support propelled him to his current standing as a racer. Despite encountering limited support from government entities and racing clubs, he found solace in the steadfast encouragement of Mudhaf.

The pivotal moment came when resources seemed scarce, yet the belief and investment from BNK Motion proved transformative. With a bike provided by BNK and the collaborative efforts of his team, in-

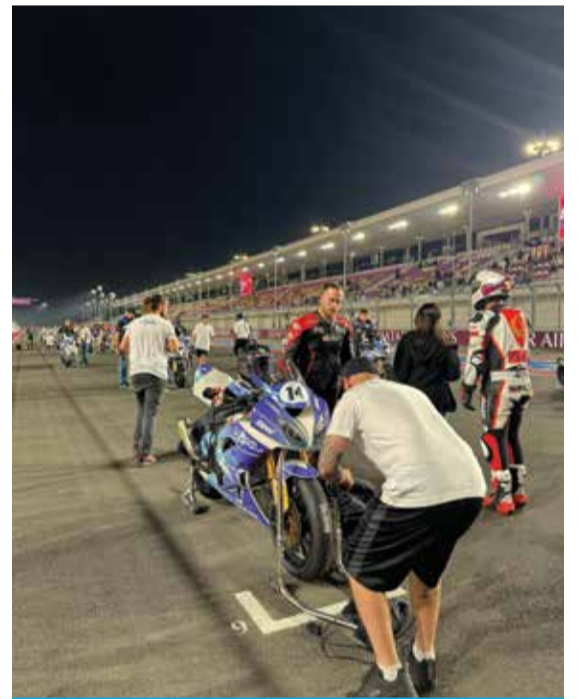
### Classification by Class

No	Rider	Nat	Team	Bike	Time	Lap Total	Gap	Kph
<b>TROPHY</b>								
1	14 Alexander QABAZARD	KWT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:11.738	7	7	149.0
2	71 Hamad AL SAHOUTI	QAT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:12.275	6	7	+0.537 +0.538 148.4
3	88 Alexian MACARY	FRA		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:12.813	7	7	+1.075 +0.538 147.8
4	34 Manuel FARRA	ITA		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:14.412	7	7	+2.674 +1.599 146.0
5	21 Ali ABDULRAHMAN	KWT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:15.001	6	7	+3.263 +0.589 145.4
6	5 Nicolas TECHOUEYRES	FRA		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:16.194	7	7	+4.456 +1.193 144.1
7	17 Emmanuel GEOFFREY	IND		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:16.975	6	7	+5.237 +0.781 143.3
8	69 Hassan MANSOORI	QAT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:17.177	4	6	+5.437 +0.202 143.1
9	15 Mustafa HUSAIN	KWT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:18.859	3	7	+7.121 +1.682 141.3
10	9 Simone MUSCOLINO	ITA		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:19.066	7	7	+7.328 +0.207 141.1
11	16 Mohammed NADEEM	KWT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:19.856	4	7	+8.118 +0.790 140.3
12	81 Gary LITTLE	GBR		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:20.271	3	6	+8.533 +0.415 139.9
13	82 Stephen TURNBULL	CAN		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:20.543	4	7	+8.805 +0.272 139.6
14	13 Anas AL MUTAWA	ARE		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:20.558	7	7	+8.820 +0.015 139.6
15	3 Nawaf AL SHAIKH	KWT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:21.941	5	6	+10.203 +1.383 138.3
16	93 Khalid AL YAGOURI	KWT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:22.151	6	6	+10.413 +0.210 138.0
17	89 Sason AKBARI KHABAZI	THE-IRN		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:26.077	4	6	+14.339 +3.926 134.3
18	86 Eisa AL SAAD	KWT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:29.702	6	6	+17.964 +3.625 131.1
19	8 Bader AL MADANI	QAT		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:30.547	6	6	+18.809 +0.845 130.3
20	42 Maimon KHETAN	IRN		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:31.140	5	6	+19.402 +0.593 129.8
21	26 Saïd BAQIYANDEH ATAAADI	IRN		KAWASAKI ZX-6	2:32.485	6	6	+20.747 +1.345 128.7

cluding Humoud Al-Sabah, Manal and coach Mudhaf, Qabazard clinched victory in the Kuwait Superbike Championship, etching his name in the record books with the fastest lap at Kuwait Motor Town.

With his triumph on the international stage in Qatar, Qabazard humbly dedicated his victory to BNK Motion and all those who unwaveringly supported him. Proudly representing Kuwait amidst

a global field, he recognized BNK Motion as a beacon of support for emerging talents. Embracing his role as an ambassador for BNK, Qabazard expressed his aspirations to continue elevating his performance on a global scale. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve as BNK Motion's ambassador rider for the second year running and many more to come," he said.



Alexander Qabazard prepares for the race.

## Spurs 'not dead yet' after crushing Villa

BIRMINGHAM: Tottenham landed a crucial blow in the fight to finish in the Premier League's top four with a 4-0 demolition of Aston Villa on Sunday. Ange Postecoglou's side arrived at Villa Park knowing defeat to their fourth placed rivals would have been potentially fatal to their hopes of qualifying for next season's Champions League.

But the north Londoners rose to the challenge with a second half goal spree in the rain-soaked west Midlands. James Maddison put Tottenham ahead and Brennan Johnson doubled their lead before Villa captain John McGinn was sent off for chopping down Destiny Udogie.

Son Heung-min and Timo Werner struck in stoppage-time to leave fifth placed Tottenham just two points behind Villa with a game in hand. "We made it tough for Villa. They worked hard just to contain us. We got our



BIRMINGHAM: Tottenham Hotspur's Ivorian-born Malian midfielder #08 Yves Bissouma (C) vies with Aston Villa's Italian midfielder #22 Nicolo Zaniolo during the English Premier League football match between Aston Villa and Tottenham Hotspur at Villa Park in Birmingham, central England on March 10, 2024. — AFP

rewards in the second half," Postecoglou said. "Everyone was billing this as a do-or-die for us.

I assume we're not dead yet. It means we're one game closer, just 11 games to go." Restoring Tottenham to Europe's elite club competition in

his first season in charge would be a significant achievement for Postecoglou and the target is now firmly in his control.

The Australian this week said reaching the Champions League would not be "a Willy Wonka golden ticket" for

his club. But the defeat left Villa feeling as sick as Augustus Gloop, the gluttonous boy who gets in trouble while visiting Wonka's chocolate factory in Roald Dahl's book.

Villa are hoping to reach the Champions League for the first time since 1983, but this was a major setback to their unexpected bid for a top four finish. "We weren't clinical because they were defending very well and we didn't control the game," Villa boss Unai Emery said.

"We have to control our emotions. The first two goals were crazy. We have to move on." Emery's team claimed an early penalty when Ollie Watkins was sent flying by Micky van de Ven's crunching challenge, but VAR rejected their appeals.

In a game played at a frantic pace, Villa were left frustrated when Matty Cash poked into the side-netting from Leon Bailey's cross. Lucas Digne nearly broke the deadlock just before half-time with a glancing header that looped wide from McGinn's cross. Tottenham lost Van de Ven to an injury immediately after the interval, but the visitors were unfazed as they snatched the lead in the 50th minute. — AFP

## Djokovic claws out win in return to Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS: Novak Djokovic struggled to a winning comeback at the ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters five years after his last appearance, defeating Aleksandar Vukic 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 on Saturday. World number one Djokovic, who had not played since losing an Australian Open semi-final to eventual champion Jannik Sinner in January, is chasing a sixth title at the desert venue in the season's first Masters event.

The 36-year-old Serb captured the 400th Masters-level victory of his career, joining Rafael Nadal as the only men to reach the 400 milestone at the elite

level. The 24-time Grand Slam champion has won his last 11 Masters matches, collecting titles last season in Cincinnati and Paris Bercy.

Djokovic wasn't the only top player to be tested. Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka saved four match points on the way to her 6-7 (2/7), 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) second-round victory over 64th-ranked Peyton Stearns, and US Open champion Coco Gauff rallied in the final set to beat France's Clara Burel 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4). Djokovic admitted to some nerves in his first match since Melbourne. He claimed the opening set in 35 minutes with two service breaks but had to come from a break down in the third against his 69th-ranked Australian opponent.

Vukic held for 6-5 in the second set and landed a reflex service return winner on the line to square the match at a set each. In the third, top seed Djokovic broke for a 3-2 edge and closed out victory with a second break after just over two hours, notching his

51st win at the tournament where he first competed in 2006. "I was a bit nervous at the beginning, you know, whether I'm going to start off well," Djokovic said. "I had not played a match in more than five weeks. "He made me produce some really important points in games in order to prevail. "I'm glad that I was pushed, which is important."

Women's world number two Sabalenka had an even tougher time against Stearns. After saving four match points she needed four of her own and rolled an ankle along the way. "This match definitely goes into the book of craziest and the best matches of my career," she said. "She played incredible tennis. I kept telling myself, 'Stay there, fight for every point. You never know what's going to happen.'" This is the match for crazy comebacks - and I did it," added Sabalenka, who next faces Emma Raducanu who advanced when Dayana Yastremska retired while trailing 4-0 because of illness. — AFP

## UIM honors Kuwait world champions

PARIS: The Union Internationale Motonautique (UIM) hosted a ceremony at its seat in Monaco on Saturday to honor the world champions of the 2023 season, including the two Kuwaiti racers Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq and Fares Ramadhan. Al-Abdulrazzaq ranked first in the general rankings of the latest world aqua-bike championship in Indonesia while Ramadhan ranked first in the moto-surfing championship.

Al-Abdulrazzaq set a world record in terms of the times of winning the title of aqua-bike championship division GP1. In statements to KUNA, he voiced joy for the invitation to the UIM ceremony, promising to raise Kuwait's flag at the coming podium ceremonies. Ramadhan thanked, in similar statements to KUNA, the UIM for the honoring, noting that he is the first Kuwaiti moto-surfer to win the world title. He dedicated the achievement to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, promising to add more achievements in the future. — KUNA



Kuwaiti racers Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq and Fares Ramadhan.