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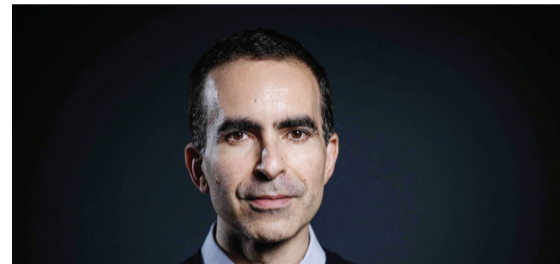
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## PM-designate named Deputy Amir

Sheikh Ahmad takes oath • Amir receives chief justice, defence minister



By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah on Sunday took the constitutional oath before HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to become the Deputy Amir. HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal earlier signed a decree appointing Sheikh Ahmad as Deputy Amir while he is abroad.

The Amiri decree states that this designation would remain valid until the naming of a Crown Prince, and that the prime minister should comply with this decree and inform the National Assembly. The Amiri order takes effect

once published in the official gazette. Caretaker Prime Minister HH Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, who declined to form the new Cabinet, was also appointed Deputy Amir soon after his appointment as prime minister three months ago.

HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal also received at Bayan Palace on Sunday the president of the Supreme Judicial Council and the court of cassation Dr Adel Majed Bouresli. HH the Amir also hosted at Bayan Palace Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah to take the oath as the Deputy Amir on April 21, 2024. — KUNA photos

### MoI receiving iqama violators twice daily

KUWAIT: The interior ministry on Sunday began receiving expats violating residency rules in morning and evening sessions to facilitate their departure or adjust their status. The morning session is allocated to violators who intend to correct their residency status by paying a fine and obtaining a new residency. Such violators can visit all the six residency departments during regular morning working hours.

The second session from 3-8 pm is allocated for violators who want to leave the country but have a new passport, which should be registered in the computer system. Such cases should visit the Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer residency departments.

Kuwait granted amnesty to expats living illegally in Kuwait between March 17 and June 17. Those who want to get legal residency should pay a fine while those who want to leave the country can do so without paying a fine or visiting the residency department unless they have a new passport.

### 40 lawmakers attend ceremonial opening of Assembly session

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Forty lawmakers attended on Sunday a ceremonial opening session of the new National Assembly "in a bid to ward off any constitutional suspicions", according to MP Saleh Ashour, who chaired the session as one of the oldest MPs. Ashour adjourned the session immediately after he opened it because the government was not present, a precondition for the session to be legal. The government has not yet been formed following the snap polls on April 4.

Under Kuwaiti law, the new National Assembly must hold its inaugural session within two weeks of elections. But HH the Amir used his constitutional powers under article 106 of the constitution to delay Assembly sessions for a month. The new session's date was set for May 14.

Continued on Page 6



KUWAIT: MPs attend a National Assembly session on April 21, 2024. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

### NEOM wooing Chinese funds

HONG KONG: Bigwigs behind a Saudi megacity have wrapped up a tour courting Chinese investors, detailing plans for a futuristic ski resort and 170-km-long skyscrapers. The roadshow for NEOM, brainchild of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, traveled from Beijing to Shanghai to Hong Kong, where for two days would-be business partners flocked to a chic museum to peruse eye-popping renderings in various stages of development.

No major deals were announced, but top project officials offered a glimpse into how NEOM has evolved since Prince Mohammed first announced it in 2017. NEOM's executive director Tarek Qaddumi walked journalists through an exhibition at Hong Kong's M+ museum on Friday, talking up NEOM's goal of balancing "nature conservation, human livability and economic prosperity".

"NEOM is a very vast vision... It is an initiative that is probably the most exciting and the most forward-looking in the 21st century," he said. The exhibition helped make NEOM "less mysterious", said Leonard Chan, chair of

Continued on Page 6



(Left) Palestinian health workers stand next to unearthened bodies buried by Zionist forces in the Nasser Hospital compound in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on April 21, 2024. (Right) A Palestinian woman mourns over the bodies of her two sons killed in a Zionist raid in the Nur Shams camp for Palestinian refugees in the occupied West Bank during their funeral on April 21, 2024. — AFP photos

### 50 bodies found at Gaza hospital amid West Bank carnage

GAZA: Gaza's civil defence said Sunday dozens of bodies had been found buried at a Gaza hospital complex previously raided by the Zionist entity, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to ramp up military pressure on Hamas. Netanyahu, who threatened action "in the coming days" but did not specify, has repeatedly said the Zionist army will launch a ground assault on Rafah despite international concern for civilians who have taken refuge in the southern city.

The premier's latest remarks came a day after US lawmakers approved \$13 billion in new military aid to close ally the Zionist entity, even as global criticism mounts over the dire humanitarian crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip. The Palestinian group Hamas said the US aid was a "green light" for the Zionist entity to "continue the brutal aggression against our people".

Gaza's civil defence agency said its teams had discovered 50 bodies since Saturday buried in the courtyard of the Nasser Medical Complex in Gaza's main southern city of Khan Yunis. "We are continuing the search operation today and are waiting for all graves to be exhumed in order to give a final number of martyrs," Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for the civil defence agency, told AFP. "There were no clothes on some bodies, which

certainly indicates (the victims) faced torture and abuse," Bassal said.

Hamas in a statement said the 50 bodies were exhumed from what it called a "mass grave of those executed in cold blood and buried with military bulldozers in the hospital's courtyard". The Zionist entity pulled its ground forces from Khan Yunis on April 7 after carrying out what it called a "precise and limited operation" at the hospital, one of Gaza's biggest. Hospitals in Gaza have faced the brunt of the Zionist assault. On Sunday, an AFP photographer saw civil defence crews exhuming human remains from the courtyard, while grieving relatives collected bodies wrapped in white.

Earlier this week, the G7 group of developed economies said that it opposed a "full-scale

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# CODED Academy empowering next generation of innovators

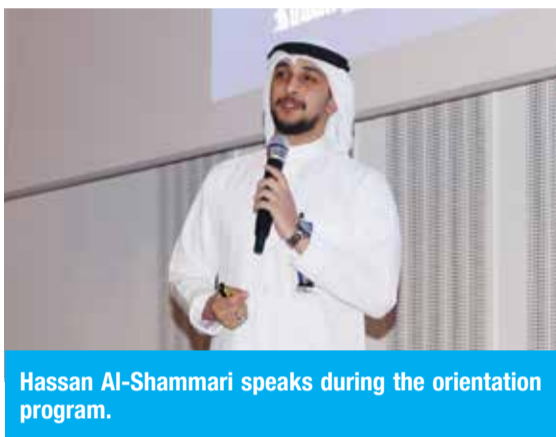
4th edition of 'Kuwait Codes', launched by CODED Academy, holds orientation program



Hassan Al-Shammari explains basics of AI and cybersecurity. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat.



Students heading to Kuwait University's theater to attend the orientation.



Hassan Al-Shammari speaks during the orientation program.



Rahaf Alenezi, Initiatives Lead at CODED

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The fourth edition of "Kuwait Codes," launched by CODED Academy, held students' orientation program on Saturday, marking the commencement of its first semester. The initiative aims to educate 1,000 students this year in various technical fields to empower the next generation of innovators in Kuwait. Speaking to the Kuwait Times, Rahaf Alenezi, Initiatives Lead at CODED, said that the significant event is aimed at fostering tech literacy among high school and ninth-grade students, adding that this season's focus revolves around artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, reflecting the increasing relevance of these fields in today's world.

She added, "The meeting with students will be followed up with free programming classes, aiming

to equip students with essential skills and enhance their future academic pursuits and career prospects," noting that the enlightening meeting of Kuwait Codes features four comprehensive workshops.

"These workshops, each lasting three hours (twice a week), provide students with ample opportunities to delve into project-based learning. Cybersecurity workshops emphasize the core concepts and strategies for safeguarding against cyber threats, while artificial intelligence sessions cover diverse topics such as image analysis, AI theories, and the latest AI technologies," she continued.

Alenezi indicated that the goal of the initiative is to instill foundational knowledge in artificial intelligence while nurturing students' project development skills, pointing out that the students are encouraged to explore innovative projects within the realm of AI.



Students attend the orientation program.

She noted that one of the students invented a device that is capable of assessing asphalt quantities needed for street potholes.

Meanwhile, Alenezi revealed that "Kuwait Codes" plans to expand its offerings during the summer semester, focusing on application programming, web development, game design, mobile development, and

Python programming. The initiative was sponsored by a strategic partnership with Alghanim Industries, Kuwait Finance House, Zain, Agility, and Kuwait University, with the exclusive digital sponsorship of M2r, along with media sponsorship from Kuwait Times and Kuwait News, collectively contributing to the success and sustainability of Kuwait Codes.



AU marketing students gather for a group photo with Kuwait Times team. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat.



AU students visit Kuwait Times' warehouse.

## AU marketing students visit Kuwait Times, Kuwait News

By Ghadeer Ghloum

**KUWAIT:** A group of marketing students from the Australian University (AU) explored Kuwait Times and Kuwait News' different departments and met the staff working behind the scenes. Public Relations and CSR manager at Kuwait Times and Kuwait News, Jana Alnaqeb took the students to each department, where they were introduced to the working team and the type of work that goes on. Starting from the studio, they moved to the editorial department, the archives room, the press

printers, and finally to Kuwait Times' warehouse, where they saw Kuwait Times art space.

AU students finalized their journey of exploring Kuwait Times in the studio, where Dhoha Al-Issa, video reporter and content creator, filmed a fun game, testing students' knowledge of local brands' logos. AU marketing students' visit highlighted their dedication to learning practical experience in marketing through their discussion with Alnaqeb on how marketing is implemented within a newspaper beyond theoretical teaching methods. This provides a foundational stage for professionalism in their field of study.



AU students discuss with Kuwait Times reporter Ghadeer Ghloum at the editorial department.



AU students check advertisements on Kuwait Times newspaper.



Kuwait Times Reporter and Content Creator, Dhoha Al-Issa addresses AU students at Kuwait Times Studio.



Jana Alnaqeb welcomes the students.



Students enjoying their time at Kuwait Times' warehouse.



Students play at Kuwait Times' basketball space.



AU students check the copies of Kuwait Times' inaugural 63-year-old edition.

## Local

# Zain showcases efforts to foster thriving local entrepreneurship ecosystem

## Company supports Australian University's Innovation & Entrepreneurship Forum



Waleed Al Khashti with Zain and AU officials during the forum's opening ceremony.

**KUWAIT:** Zain announced its support to the Australian University's Innovation & Entrepreneurship Forum, entitled "Lead Your Future". The event offered a unique space for the university's students to present their creative ideas and innovative business projects, empowering them to enter the local entrepreneurship ecosystem. Zain joined the forum's opening ceremony, attended by President of the Australian University Professor Isam Zabalawi, Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti, Manager of the Australian University's Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center Dr. Bashayer Al Khalifah, along with university officials and Zain Kuwait's Innovation & Entrepreneurship team.

Zain's support to this forum springs from its strong belief in the crucial role such platforms play in empowering young aspiring minds, guiding them towards shaping their own future. By encouraging young people to pursue their business aspirations, they become confident to enter the thriving local entrepreneurship ecosystem and bring their ideas to life, eventually leading to profitable, sustainable startups.

During the forum, Zain showcased its journey to support entrepreneurship, which began 14 years ago with its award-winning Zain Great Idea startup accelerator program. Since then, the program helped accelerate hundreds of startups, many of them now own thriving businesses, not just in the Kuwaiti market, but across the region.



Al Khashti showcases Zain's contributions to support innovation and entrepreneurship.

In the past 24 months alone, startups that joined ZGI raised over \$17.6 million of investments.

Last year, ZGI was recognized with the E-Business Award from the prestigious Entrepreneur Middle East magazine. Zain's program was awarded 'Ecosystem Enabler of the Year' to acknowledge the company's ever-growing endeavors in accelerating the regional tech startups ecosystem and empowering entrepreneurs in Kuwait and the region.

Zain also strongly believes that innovation is at the heart of any startup's success, and with-

out nurturing it, businesses cannot truly grow. For this, the company launched its Innovation Nation initiative, which encompasses all of Zain's innovation and entrepreneurship programs, with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) areas.

The initiative targets young people and entrepreneurs and aims to foster a digitally capable generation with the skillsets required by modern markets. Through Zain's many fruitful collaborations with local, regional, and international partners, Innovation Nation presented tens of programs to upskill youth and prepare them for STEM careers and entrepreneurship paths. So far, almost 6,000 young people benefited from this initiative. Under this initiative, Zain signed partnerships with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) – a KFAS center, to elevate the digital literacy of the youth, empower creativity and innovation, and enhance the local startup ecosystem.

The partnerships also aim to accelerate capacity building, upskill national talents in the private sector, grow research and development in innovation, enable social enterprises, and empower local entrepreneurs. In addition, Zain and SACGC became the official Kuwait Country Partners of *Beban*, the regional entrepreneur reality TV show, joining forces to include and enable Kuwaiti entrepreneurs' participation in the third season of the show, which aired in January 2024.



Ambassadors, diplomats and dignitaries applaud the performances showcased at the event.

footprint of Africa is particularly witnessed in Kuwait, where it hosts embassies of eight southern African regions and represents 33 African countries, giving us the highest number of embassies from one continent based in Kuwait.

He expressed hope that the cultural exchange between the countries would continue to inspire and enrich each other. Nkuleko Horace Dlamini, the Ambassador of Eswatini to Kuwait, viewed this event as a valuable opportunity to spotlight the solidarity among the nations of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). While the mission of this inter-governmental organization is to promote

socio-economic cooperation, integration, as well as political and security cooperation among 15 Southern African states, he highlighted its potential to strengthen development, trade, investment opportunities, and cultural exchanges within the region.

Alison Edson Liwanda, Malawi's envoy, emphasized the significant role of events like these in educating people about the authentic essence of Africa. He underscored the shared characteristics between African and Kuwaiti people, such as being family-oriented, generous, welcoming, and community-focused, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and connection between the two cultures.

and comes in the context of their bilateral partnership that was agreed in 2022, Ambassador Nawaf Al-Enezi, who is also chief of Kuwait's diplomatic missions at the EU and NATO, told KUNA.

The gathering is also deemed a significant indication of mutual willingness to promote the strategic partnership between both sides, implement their political dialogue, and upgrade the level of coordination about issues of mutual interest, favorably reflecting on regional and global security and stability, he added. The EU-Gulf High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation comes amid swift regional and world developments, offering an opportunity for both sides to share views on regional happenings and de-escalation efforts. — KUNA

## IWG organizes cultural day, celebrates Africa's diversity and unity

By Passant Hisham

**KUWAIT:** Building upon Africa's commitment to enhancing people-to-people diplomacy and economic ties with Kuwait, the International Women's Group (IWG) organized a cultural day that brought together the diverse nations of Africa and the people of Kuwait in one place. In a warm and colorful celebration of unity and togetherness, the event marked the beginning of a three-part cultural journey through exploring the beauty of Africa, affectionately known as the "mother of mankind." The journey commenced with the participation of embassies representing the Union of Comoros, the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Republic of South Africa, and the Republic of Malawi.

In an interview with Kuwait Times, Dr. Manelisi Genge, Ambassador of South Africa to Kuwait, spoke proudly of the profound impact that African culture has left across the globe. He stated, "There is no part of the world that hasn't been touched by African culture." According to Dr. Genge, this strong



Dr. Manelisi Genge

## EU-Gulf Security Forum aims to enhance ties

**RIYADH:** The European Union (EU) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) high-level forum on regional security and cooperation taking place Monday in Luxembourg is an opportunity to underscore bilateral relations, announced GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Sunday. In a press statement, Al-Budaiwi said the forum is chaired by Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, the chair of the current session of the GCC Ministerial Council, with High Representative Josep Borrell. Heads of states as well as Foreign Ministers from the GCC and EU will attend the forum. Al-Budaiwi stressed the forum's role in strengthening and developing bilateral relations between the EU and the GCC to further reinforce and unify viewpoints.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah will chair a delegation attending the EU-Gulf High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation due in Luxembourg on Monday, said the Kuwaiti ambassador to Belgium. The forum is an unprecedented event between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and EU member countries

In my view

## Educating for tomorrow: Addressing AI challenges



By Azzah Al-Ghamdi

The rapid and widespread development of technology has led to the emergence of a generation that struggles to keep pace with the latest advancements in science. In the past, illiteracy and ignorance were primarily defined by the inability to read and write, but today, being illiterate extends to those who lack proficiency in using artificial intelligence devices and modern technology.

This situation is alarming, especially considering that this generation comprises individuals who are not necessarily old; some are actively working but find themselves unable to adapt to the advancements in knowledge, particularly as institutions, both governmental and private, increasingly incorporate artificial intelligence and technology into their operations. Unfortunately, only a few have the capability to adapt to this new knowledge, especially those lacking proficiency in English and computer literacy, hindering their ability to absorb and utilize it effectively.

Efforts are being made to address this issue, such as providing employees with training courses to keep up with technological developments in the labor market. However, there remains a significant gap, particularly for those who lack language and computer skills necessary to grasp these advancements. New universities, like Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Salem University in Kuwait, are introducing specializations in technology to produce graduates equipped to deal with the demands of the modern workforce, reflecting a global trend where the need for tech-savvy professionals is increasingly urgent.

To truly address this issue, it's essential to transition from merely being users of technology to becoming innovators and developers. This requires a fundamental shift in education, starting from an early age, where children are exposed to subjects like artificial intelligence throughout their schooling years. By nurturing a generation of innovators, education can move beyond simply using technology to creating a technological revolution.

Coordination with organizations like UNESCO is crucial to disseminating this educational model globally, ensuring that artificial intelligence becomes a standard part of curricula worldwide. By identifying and nurturing talent on a global scale, we can advance innovation that benefits humanity as a whole.

In Kuwait, the ministry of education is actively developing curricula to meet the needs of the modern era, including teaching science and mathematics in English at the secondary level to better prepare students for university and mitigate past academic failures resulting from language barriers.

However, despite strides in incorporating artificial intelligence into various fields, challenges persist, particularly in detecting and preventing forgery and counterfeiting using AI. To effectively tackle these challenges, each country must invest in educating and training its experts to harness the benefits of AI while mitigating its risks.

Adapting to the rapid advancements in science and technology requires a holistic approach that encompasses education, training and international cooperation. By supporting a generation of innovators and investing in expertise, we can leverage the benefits of artificial intelligence while minimizing its drawbacks for the betterment of society.

## Japan govt woos Kuwait students

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaitis eager to study at Japanese universities as part of the MEXT 2025 government Scholarship Program could apply on May 1, 2024, with the process ending on June 13 at 03:00 pm local-time, Japan's embassy announced on Sunday. In a statement, obtained by KUNA, the embassy indicated that all Kuwaiti citizens who meet the qualifications were eligible to apply, adding that applications must be submitted to the embassy by hand.

The application process consists of document screening, written examination, and personal interview. Undergraduate students must have completed a 12-year school curriculum and have good academic standing, it said in regards to the requirement. The applicant's date of birth must be on or after April 2, 2000, revealed the statement. It added that the program would last for five years from April 2025 to March 2030 with one year dedicated to the study of the Japanese language.

It revealed that the fields of study would be natural sciences as well as social sciences and humanities. As for research students, the embassy said that they must have completed 16 years of school education and are born on or after April 2, 1990, pointing out that the duration of study would be from April or September 2025 to March 2027. Any field of study majored in university, or related to it, affirmed the statement, adding that years of study might extend depending on the major category.

It noted that application forms, detailed information, and other conditions could be downloaded from the Embassy's Website: ([https://www.kw.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop\\_en/index.html](https://www.kw.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_en/index.html)). The Japanese government scholarship program, established in 1954, aimed at increasing mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries as well as to make an international contribution to the intellectual field. — KUNA

Kuwait Times  
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EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24833199 Extn. 359  
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## Arab League signs 'Action Plan' deal with UN Women

CAIRO: The Arab League's Social Affairs Sector, specifically the Women's Department, signed a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Women Regional Office for the implementation of collaboration programs outlined in the Action Plan 2024. The agreement was signed by both the Assistant Secretary General of the League, Head of the Social Affairs Sector, Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, and the Regional Director of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the Arab States, Dr. Susanne Mikhail, the League said in a statement.

Abu Ghazaleh commended the League and UN collaboration, noting its focus on the Action Plan, which originated from a 2016 memorandum of understanding (MoU). The collaboration between both sides encompasses various programs stemming from the inception of cooperation with UN Women, notably the successful Women, Peace, and Security program, which has contributed to formulating strategies for Arab women's security and peace, as well as producing biennial reports on Arab countries' advancements in this domain, she added.

She noted additional areas of cooperation with UN Women, including efforts against gender-based violence and political collaboration, with plans to initiate economic cooperation. She expressed joy at Dr. Sima Bahouth, an Arab woman and former assistant secretary general of the Arab League, leading UN Women. Abu Ghazaleh emphasized the prioritization of Palestinian women by the League across all sectors, including social affairs, mentioning upcoming meetings to address the war on Gaza's impact on Arab women.

She highlighted the League's focus on women's issues in conflict zones, collaborating with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to develop an anti-violence strategy. On her side, Dr. Mikhail expressed reverence for the League collaboration, initiated in 2016 and deepened over the years. She pointed out the suffering of women in conflict zones in the region, especially in Gaza, where 10,000 women, including 6,000 mothers, have been killed.

Dr. Mikhail thanked Abu Ghazaleh for supporting women's issues in the Arab region, citing great achievements in women's affairs between the UN and the League, such as peace mediator networks, emergency committees, and expanding cooperation in women's economic empowerment. — KUNA

# NBK celebrates graduation of the first wave of 'NBK Tech Academy'

## Al-Ablani: Kuwait has a talented and promising generation

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated the Graduation of the first wave of "NBK Tech Academy", the first of its kind Academy in Kuwait focusing on digital and data technologies. The graduation ceremony was attended by Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO of NBK, Mohamed Al-Othman, CEO - Consumer and Digital Banking Group, Mohammad Al-Kharafi, COO - Head of Group Operations and Information Technology, and Emad Al-Ablani, GM - head of Group Human Resources.

The Academy's program lasted for 7 months during which 10 participants received intensive training covering technical skills for advancing their careers including, but not limited to: FinTech, Data Analytics, Ethics in Technology, Cyber Security, Fundamentals of Digital Payments, Digital Innovation, Artificial Intelligence, Scripting and Programming, Fundamentals of Codifications, and Finance for Non-Finance Professionals.

In addition to technical skills, the program also focuses on developing soft skills including, but not limited to: Teamwork and Team Building, Business Planning and Business Analysis, Writing Skills, Delivering Results, Meeting Customer Expectation and Customer Centricity, Presentation Skills, Productivity in the Workplace, Business Ethics, Principles and Values, Learning and Researching, Project and Change Management, and Customer Experience. The participants were split into teams, each assigned an expert coach from NBK, and were challenged to come up with a new idea or enhanced process that would serve the bank, and the winner



Emad Al-Ablani



was selected at the end of the program.

On this occasion, Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "We are glad to graduate the first wave of NBK Tech Academy, which aims to foster digital talent and enhance expertise in technologies, as we realize the importance of developing the digital community within the bank, being instrumental to strengthen active digital capabilities and promote interaction with content and events aiming to drive continuous innovation."

"NBK upholds an unwavering commitment to investing in national talent, as we always focus on providing the Kuwaiti youth with the best-in-class and most advanced training programs as per the highest international standards, with the aim of preparing a generation of highly skilled bankers across all fields, especially digital technologies that have become imperative in view of the advancement in banking using cutting-edge technologies and AI," he added. "NBK Tech Academy embodies NBK's vision and keenness to keep up with the accelerating needs of the digital era, and its understanding of the importance of nurturing and developing high-caliber talent in areas

like MIS, Information Security, Data Science, and Computer Science," he noted.

Al-Ablani continued: "Kuwait has a talented and promising generation who possess professional skills and capabilities in technologies and digitization, and NBK is firmly committed to training and qualifying them for the labor market, in preparation for transformations dominated by AI, robotics and data science." "NBK seeks to be an active contributor to the development journey of this generation of the Kuwaiti youth and to provide optimal guidance for their capabilities," he explained.

NBK continues to solidify its leadership in the private sector in terms of attracting, training, upskilling national talent and qualifying them to join the banking sector. The bank also stands out as the employer of choice for national professionals, with the highest Kuwaitization and employee retention ratios across the private sector. NBK Tech Academy is part of the NBK Academy running for 15 years now, as it was established in 2008, and graduated 28 successful waves who have become active members of the bank's professional team, having been qualified through the Academy to join the banking sector.



KUWAIT: Diplomats, embassies' officials in Kuwait celebrate the traditional New Year Festival of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand.



## ASEAN embassies celebrate traditional New Year Festival

KUWAIT: Embassies in Kuwait jointly organize the celebration of the traditional New Year Festival of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's

Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand, with a view to enhancing cordial cooperation of the ASEAN Committee in Kuwait. Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand share a common religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage. They also share the traditional New Year Festival celebrated in the middle of April as it marks the beginning of a new solar year on our traditional calendars.

This signifies the start of the traditional new year in 4 countries, namely Maha Songkran for Cambodia, Pi Mai for Laos PDR, Thingyan for Myanmar and Songkran for Thailand. This is an occasion for joyous celebration with family, friends and communities, where people from all walks of life come together to enjoy the fun. The New Year festival marks a time of joy and celebration marked by exciting colors, energetic music, beautiful cultural performances, traditional games, delicious food and delightful drinks and water splashing.

This celebration of the traditional new year is the collective efforts of the 4 embassies to share their



excitement, vibrant cultures and express our best wishes for all. This celebration in Kuwait reflects not only harmony, unity and friendship among the 4 countries but also the spirits of ASEAN 10, ASEAN+3 including China, Japan and Korea, and the collaboration with the State of Kuwait as an ASEAN partner.



## Gold prices surge to \$2,390 per ounce amidst tensions

KUWAIT: Gold prices logged new highs at \$2,390 per ounce - stimulated by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. A report issued by Dar Al-Sabaek on Sunday indicated that investors perceive gold as a safe refuge in times of uncertainty, and lack of visibility. Gold futures remained steady at \$2,431 an ounce, a testament to strength of demand as investors and central banks all around the globe look into increasing gold purchases up until next June.

Last week, the US dollar index persisted at 106.1 points, as gold futures reached \$2,433 per ounce. The US economy's positive outcomes should have sent gold prices hurtling, explained the report, but to current geopolitical climate gold prices endured. Indices of retail sales and purchasing managers' performed well, prompting the US Federal Reserve (the central bank) to keep interest rate between 5.25 and 5.5 percent to counter continuous inflation.

Analysts are awaiting personal consumption expenditure data next Friday, which will give insight on inflation rate in upcoming period. The appeal of gold

is as a safe investment is speculated to remain steady during short and medium-length terms in this state of uncertainty. In local markets, 24-karat gold reached KD 23.89 per gram (approx. \$73), 22-karat gold KD 21.09 (approx. \$67), while price of silver closed at KD 355 per kilogram (approx. \$1,008). — KUNA



KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti jeweler displays gold bracelets at his shop in downtown Kuwait City in this file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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Crowds join Bondi Beach memorial for stabbing victims

## Women journalists bear the brunt of cyberbullying

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WASHINGTON: Pro-Palestinian protesters gather near the US Capitol on April 20, 2024. - AFP

# US House approves military aid to Ukraine, Zionist entity, Taiwan

## Bill to ban TikTok in US moves ahead in Congress

WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives on Saturday approved long-delayed military aid to Ukraine in a rare show of bipartisan unity, while also bolstering Zionist entity and Taiwan defenses and threatening to ban Chinese-owned TikTok. The four bills in the \$95 billion package were overwhelmingly approved in quick succession, though they leave the future of Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson in some doubt as he seeks to fend off angry far-right detractors. US President Joe Biden said in a statement the legislation would "deliver critical support to (the Zionist entity) and Ukraine; provide desperately needed humanitarian aid to Gaza, Sudan, Haiti and other locations... and bolster security and stability in the Indo-Pacific". He praised lawmakers who came together across party lines "to answer history's call."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky welcomed the \$61 billion earmarked for his country, saying the military and economic assistance would "save thousands and thousands of lives". Not surprisingly, Russia took the opposite view. "It will further enrich the United States of America and ruin Ukraine even more, by kill-

ing even more Ukrainians because of the Kyiv regime," said presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov, state news agency TASS reported. The US Senate will take the bill up on Tuesday. Senate leader Chuck Schumer indicated his chamber would act quickly, saying in a statement Saturday that "the finish line is now in sight... America will deliver yet again". The bills are the product of months of acrimonious negotiations, pressure from US allies and repeated pleas for assistance from Zelensky.

The United States has been the chief military backer of Ukraine in its war against Russia, but Congress has not approved large-scale funding for its ally for nearly a year and a half, mainly because of cross-aisle bickering. Biden and Democratic lawmakers in Congress have been pushing for a major new weapons package for Ukraine for months.

But Republicans, influenced by the party's presidential candidate Donald Trump, have been reluctant to provide funding to Kyiv for the drawn-out conflict. The financing of the war has become a point of contention ahead of a presidential election in November that is expected to pit Biden against Trump once again. John-

son, after months of hesitation, finally threw his support behind the aid package for Ukraine. "To put it bluntly, I'd rather send bullets to Ukraine than American boys," Johnson said.

Biden spoke with Johnson and his Democratic counterpart Hakeem Jeffries after Saturday's vote to "thank them for their leadership and putting our national security first," the White House said. The handful of far-right Republicans who had threatened to engineer Johnson's ouster if he pressed the Ukraine vote appeared to back away Saturday, at least temporarily. "I'm actually going to let my colleagues go home and hear from their constituents" about their anger over the vote, congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene said on CNN. The Ukraine bill also allows Biden to confiscate and sell Russian assets and provide the money to Ukraine to finance reconstruction, a move that has been embraced by other G7 nations.

### TikTok ban?

At Biden's request, some \$8 billion under one bill would be used to counter China through investment

in submarine infrastructure and boosting competition with Beijing on projects built in developing countries. Several billion dollars would be devoted to weapons for Taiwan, the self-ruled island that is claimed by China. The first of the bills passed Saturday would force social media platform TikTok to divest from its Chinese parent company ByteDance or face a nationwide ban in the United States, where it has around 170 million users.

Western officials have voiced alarm over the popularity of TikTok with young people, alleging that it is subservient to Beijing and a conduit to spread propaganda — claims denied by the company. TikTok sharply denounced the bill, saying it "would trample the free speech rights of 170 million Americans, devastate seven million businesses, and shutter a platform that contributes \$24 billion to the US economy annually," a TikTok spokesman said. A total of \$13 billion in military assistance has been allocated for America's historic ally the Zionist entity in its war against Hamas in Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the "much appreciated aid bill" showed strong support for the Zionist entity and "defends Western civilization". — AFP

## Niger protesters tell US troops to go home

NIAMEY: Hundreds protested on Sunday against the US troop presence in military-ruled Niger where a delegation from Washington is expected within days to arrange an orderly withdrawal. The United States had on Friday agreed to withdraw its more than 1,000 soldiers from the African nation where Washington built a \$100 million base to fly a fleet of drones. The demonstration in the northern desert town of Agadez, home to a US air base, was called by a group of 24 civil society associations that have backed the regime since last year's coup. "This is Agadez, not Washington. US army go home," read a big banner held up by protesters.

Issouf Emou, who fronts the M62 Movement in the town, told AFP: "Our message is clear: American soldiers pack your bags and go home". He had also organized demonstrations demanding the departure of French forces which pulled out last year. Niger has long been a linchpin in the US and French strategy to combat jihadists in West Africa.

The Nigerien military announced last month it was breaking off a defence agreement with the United States, claiming it had been imposed and the US troop presence was illegal. US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell agreed to remove the troops in a meeting in Washington with Niamey's prime minister, Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine, US officials told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The US military deployment in Niger "is of no use for our security", said civil society leader Amobi Arandishu. "The armed groups still rage across the desert," he told AFP. "Russians, Americans, Germans, French, they all come here for their own interests." Following the overthrow of elected president Mohamed Bazoum last July, the junta kicked out troops from former colonial power France before the end of 2023. — AFP



TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei leads prayers with a group of commanders of the Iranian armed forces on April 21, 2024. — AFP

## Khamenei hails 'success' of military after Zionist attack

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised the country's armed forces for their "success" in his first public comments since Tehran launched an unprecedented direct attack on the Zionist entity last week. In a meeting with Iranian military commanders on Sunday, Khamenei praised the armed forces for their "success in recent events", a week after the country's first-ever direct attack on the Zionist entity from its own territory.

"The armed forces showed a good image of their abilities and power and an admirable image of the Iranian nation," Khamenei said. "They also proved the emergence of the power of the Iranian nation's determination at the international level." The remarks from Iran's supreme leader are the first since Iran attacked the Zionist entity and

since a reported Zionist attack on a military airbase in central Isfahan province on Friday.

"The armed forces' recent achievements have created a sense of splendor and magnificence about Islamic Iran in the eyes of the world," Khamenei said in quotes posted on his official X account. The Friday strike, which Khamenei did not mention, was a presumed response to Iran's unprecedented drone and missile attack on the Zionist entity which was itself a retaliation for an airstrike on the Iranian consular building in Damascus.

That attack, widely blamed on the Zionist entity, levelled the consular annex of the Iranian embassy and killed seven members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, including two generals. The Zionist entity said it intercepted 99 percent of the more than 300 drones and missiles fired at it, with the aid of the United States and other allies and that those which got through caused only minor damage. Addressing his country's attack on the Zionist entity, Khamenei said "the issue of the number of missiles fired or the missiles that hit the target" was "secondary". "The main issue is the emergence of the willpower of the Iranian nation and the armed forces in the international arena," he said, according to his official website. — AFP

## 58 die after boat capsizes in C Africa

BANGUI: At least 58 people going to a funeral died after their overloaded river boat capsized in the Central African Republic's capital Bangui, the head of civil protection said on Saturday. "We were able to extract 58 lifeless bodies," Thomas Djimasse told Radio Guira. "We don't know the total number of people who are underwater. According to witnesses and videos on social media, the wooden boat was carrying more than 300 people — some standing and others perched on wooden structures — when it sank on the Mpoko river on Friday. The vessel was heading to the funeral of a village chief in Makolo, some 45 km from Bangui, but got into difficulty shortly after setting off from the pier. Rescue services arrived 40 minutes after the disaster.

The government did not respond on Saturday but in a speech recorded on Friday and broadcast a day later, government spokesman Maxime Balalou had reported a "provisional toll of at least 30 dead". The government sent its condolences to the bereaved families, he said, announcing the opening of an investigation and the setting up of a support system for families of the victims.

Maurice Kapenya, who was following the boat in a canoe because there was no space on board, said his own sister was among the bodies of the victims he had recovered. He was helped by local fisherman and residents. Motorbike taxis meanwhile evacuated some of the injured.

Driver Francis Maka told AFP he had "taken more than 10 people to the community hospital... free of charge, in the face of the tragedy". With civil protection teams no longer on the scene Saturday, desperate families searching for missing loved ones near the river helped canoe operators they had hired, an AFP journalist observed. Several opposition parties expressed solidarity with the families and called for national mourning.

The Central African Republic is ranked by the United Nations as the second least-developed country in the world. A civil war has plagued the former French colony since a Muslim-dominated armed coalition called the Seleka ousted former president Francois Bozize in 2013. The conflict lost intensity from 2018 but the country still suffers bouts of violence by rebel groups or over its resources, which include gold and diamonds. — AFP

## International

## Iran ramps up nationwide crackdown

## Morality police wage 'war against women' as regional tensions rage

**PARIS:** Executions of convicts, arrests of dissidents and a resurgence in patrols enforcing the obligatory wearing of hijabs: Iran is stepping up repression at home as tensions flare with its archfoe the Zionist entity, activists say. Iranians in the Islamic republic have endured increased repression since nationwide protests were sparked from September 2022 by the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was arrested for allegedly flouting the mandatory dress rules for women.

But the crackdown has entered a new phase as fears of a regional conflict surge, with the Zionist entity launching an apparent strike on Iran on Friday. Activists have reported that the dreaded white vans of the "morality police" have returned to city squares across Iran, picking up women deemed to have violated the rule of obligatory hijab in force since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Tehran police chief Abbas Ali Mohammadian openly announced the latest crackdown on April 13, with local media saying it was codenamed "Nour" ("light" in Persian). Multiple videos posted on social media - under the hashtag "jang aliyeh zanan" ("war against women") - have shown women being bundled into vans by male police in body armor accompanied by female police agents dressed in the Islamic chador.

## Streets turned into 'battlefield'

"The Islamic Republic has turned the streets into a battlefield against women and youth," 2023 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and jailed rights activist Narges Mohammadi wrote in a message from Tehran's Evin prison and published by her supporters on social media. In one video filmed close to the Tajrish metro station in northern Tehran, a woman collapses on the

ground after being apprehended by the police, telling bystanders who then seek to revive her that her phone was confiscated.

Another includes what appears to be the sound of police using electric shock against women who had been rounded up and put into a van. "Amid increasing dissent at home and international attention focused on regional tensions, the Islamic republic is grabbing the opportunity to intensify its campaign of repression against dissent," said the director of the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran, Hadi Ghaemi.

"Without a firm international response, the Islamic Republic will be emboldened to intensify its violence against women and its egregious violations of human rights," said Ghaemi. Hundreds were killed, according to rights groups, and thousands arrested, according to the United Nations, in the crackdown on the 2022 protests that represented one of the biggest challenges to the Islamic republic.

## 'Opportunity to tighten grip'

Among those arrested in recent days was Aida Shahkarami, the sister of Nika Shahkarami, 16, who died during the 2022 crackdown, her mother Nasrin wrote on social media. Aida was detained "for not wearing the mandatory hijab," Nasrin Shahkarami wrote on social media. Nika Shahkarami was found dead during the protests, with some family members accusing the security forces of killing her.

Dina Ghalibaf, a journalist and student at Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University, was arrested after accusing security forces on social media of putting her in handcuffs and sexually assaulting her during a previous arrest at a metro station, according to the Norway-based Hengaw rights group. Execu-

tions, which activists say are used by Tehran as a means to instill fear into society, have also continued apace, with at least 110 people executed this year alone according to the Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) group.

Among those executed in recent days were a married couple, Esmail Hassaniani, 29, and his wife Marjan Hajizadeh, 19, who were sentenced to death for drug-related charges in a joint case and hanged

received a flood of hateful messages in 2017 after a column that criticized an online forum. Since then, she has moved house twice and tends to stay away from social media, but says she still gets cyber-bullying messages and "doesn't work the same anymore". However, she thinks there is more awareness of the problem now, saying that she believes the wider industry "talks more about cyberharassment", with more severe legal sentences.

Freelancer Melina Huet covered the war in Ukraine as well as the Zionist-Hamas conflict, and said she regularly gets online threats related to her coverage. "I received threats of beheading and rape on Instagram," she said. "The perpetrators can easily re-create accounts, there is impunity." Some media have put protocols in place to try and tackle cyberbullying. Jessica Ziegerer is an investigative journalist for the daily HD Sydsvenskan, and regularly receives hostile messages. "Before publishing a sensitive article, we have a meeting with security specialists and review all the aspects" both online and offline, she said. — AFP

tim of online abuse, as she explained in the ICFJ-UNESCO report. "I was a CNN war correspondent for two decades, but nothing in the field prepared me for the orchestrated, misogynistic attacks on me and our women-led news outlet, Rappler," she said.

BBC disinformation specialist Marianna Spring received an avalanche of abusive tweets last year, threatening to kidnap her or slit her throat. Much of the abuse followed her investigation into the takeover of social media network X, then known as Twitter. In some cases, online threats can translate into physical violence.

A fifth of women surveyed said they had suffered attacks or insults in real life that were linked to online abuse. The consequences can be far-reaching, with some journalists potentially dissuaded from covering sensitive topics and some choosing to opt out of the industry altogether. Paris-based media rights campaigners Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has warned that this type of harassment forms a new threat to press freedom.

French journalist Nadia Daam told AFP that she

wear small cotton boubous to avoid the heat." From April 1 to April 5, temperatures in Mali exceeded 45 degrees Celsius and peaked at a record 48.5C in the western city of Kayes. A few days later, the thermometer fell back to a more familiar but still difficult 43 degrees at midday in the shade in Bamako. As the sun beats down on the capital's streets, residents suffocate in airborne dust. "It is very difficult in this heat," said a motorbike taxi driver, Ousmane Diarra. "But we have to work like this."

Ranked among the poorest countries in the world, Mali is ill-equipped to cope with heatwaves. April's blast would not have occurred without human-induced climate change, according to a World Weather Attribution (WWA) study. And such episodes are set to intensify because of climate change, caused by

saying the process clearly breached constitutional rules and the session should be held with or without the presence of the government.

Meanwhile, the constitutional court has set April 24 as the date to look into challenges against the April 4 elections after the door for submitting petitions closed on Sunday. In total, the court received 13 petitions challenging the election results and some demanding annulling the elections because the decree inviting voters for polls allegedly violated the constitution.

to the village of Beit Einun near the city of Hebron. Quoting two Palestinian security sources, Wafa reported that the men succumbed to their wounds after they were fired on. Following the incident troops stormed Beit Einun and raided several homes, the agency reported. Much of the new military assistance approved by the US House of Representatives on Saturday was expected to be used to reinforce the Zionist entity's air defences. The Zionist entity welcomed the aid, and Hamas condemned it as "a confirmation of the official American complicity and partnership in the war of extermination". —AFP



**GAZA:** Palestinians mourn over the bodies of relatives killed in Zionist bombardment, at the Al-Najjar hospital in Rafah on April 21, 2024. — AFP



**TEHRAN:** A woman walks past a banner depicting launching missiles bearing the emblem of the Islamic Republic of Iran on April 15, 2024. — AFP

greenhouse gas emissions, the report added.

Mali frequently suffers from electricity cuts due to run-down power stations and the heavy debt the national energy company carries — making it hard to rely on fans or air conditioners. "At night, I sleep on the roof with my family," Pamateck said. "I have even bought (handheld) fans that I give to my family so that they can ventilate themselves frequently. It is necessary."

As well as being difficult to live and work in, heatwaves are amongst the "deadliest natural disasters", according to the WWA. A lack of data in the Sahel region made it impossible to know the exact number of deaths, the WWA said, adding there were likely hundreds, if not thousands, of other heat-related casualties. "This year, especially in recent months, we

have come across many cases of people with high fever and dehydration," Dr Ibrahim Fall, head of a medical unit in Bamako's commune three, told AFP.

"We are therefore obliged to admit them to hospital, but unfortunately there is a very high mortality rate, of up to 50 percent, due to dehydration and fever," he said. Power cuts also complicate the treatment of patients. In early April, Bamako's national blood transfusion center asked medical establishments to "suspend all non-essential transfusions" because of "daily power cuts lasting more than 12 hours" a day. Scientists estimate that a heatwave like the one that hit Mali and Burkina Faso would be 10 times more frequent than in the current climate if global warming reaches two degrees, which could happen between 2040 and 2050. — AFP

HONG KONG: Tarek Qaddumi, executive director of the Saudi mega-project NEOM, gestures at a map showing NEOM sites as he stands beside Nicholas Ho, the top Hong Kong official responsible for implementing China's Belt and Road Initiative, at an exhibition at the M+ museum on April 19, 2024. — AFP



**HONG KONG:** Tarek Qaddumi, executive director of the Saudi mega-project NEOM, gestures at a map showing NEOM sites as he stands beside Nicholas Ho, the top Hong Kong official responsible for implementing China's Belt and Road Initiative, at an exhibition at the M+ museum on April 19, 2024. — AFP

## NEOM wooing Chinese funds...

## Continued from Page 1

The Hong Kong Innovative Technology Development Association. Unveiling NEOM's centerpiece known as The Line — two mirror-encased skyscrapers extending over 170 km across the Saudi desert — in 2022, Prince Mohammed said its population would exceed one million by 2030 before climbing to nine million by 2045. Standing on Friday near a model of The Line — a gleaming blade slicing inland from the Red Sea — Qaddumi said the population target of nine million would be met "over time".

He described features of The Line including a 650-m-long "cantilever" jutting into the Gulf of Aqaba as well as a "hidden marina". He also said construction was underway on tunnels that would allow The Line to pass through desert mountains and an airport expected to welcome 100 million passengers a year and offer a "seamless approach" to the city.

"You'll get off the plane and walk into the city. We will eliminate all the hassle of going through an airport, whether it's immigration or security or even... receiving your baggage at the airport. Your baggage will be sent to your address directly." Apart from The Line, Qaddumi said the luxury yachting island Sindalah was "well under construction" and would "be completed by the end of the year, ready for visitors to spend some time in NEOM". Trojena, the futuristic ski resort boasting a manmade lake and 36 km of slopes, must be finished before 2029, when it is set to host the Asian Winter Games. Other elements of NEOM, including some waterfront residential developments in the Oxagon region, will be built "after 2030", Qaddumi said.

NEOM's investor roadshow has also included stops in Europe and the United States. The megacity is progressing alongside other major development projects launched as part of Vision 2030, Prince Mohammed's bid to position the world's biggest crude exporter for an eventual post-oil future. Last year the Gulf kingdom emerged as the only bidder to host the 2034 World Cup, meaning it now has a decade to build the necessary stadiums and boost its lodging and transport capacity. — AFP

## Women journo bear brunt of cyberbullying

**PERUGIA, Italy:** Women journalists face greater threats online in the course of their work, and the trend is increasing, one expert told an international conference in Italy this weekend. "There is significant potential for online violence to escalate to off-line harm," said Julie Posetti research director of the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ). "Women tend to face greater threats online," she told delegates at the Perugia International Journalism Festival on Saturday. And, she added, "the kind of threats they face are increasing".

"That toxic environment was being 'facilitated by Big Tech companies', she added, accusing them of

## Malians struggle to cope after deadly heatwave

**BAMAKO:** In Mali's capital Bamako, Aboubacar Pamateck runs a scarf under a trickle of water and wraps it around his head to cope with the West African nation's soaring heat. Africa's Sahel region experienced a deadly heatwave in early April, exceptional both in terms of duration and intensity. "I drink a lot of water and wear my turban, which I often get wet," Pamateck said. "I even avoid wearing nylon boubous. I prefer to

## 40 lawmakers attend ceremonial opening...

## Continued from Page 1

Among those who attended were MP Marzouq Al-Ghanem and prominent among those absent were MP Ahmad Al-Saadoun and nine other MPs. MP Obaid Al-Wasmi protested against adjourning the session due to the absence of the government,

## 50 bodies found at Gaza hospital...

## Continued from Page 1

military operation" there, fearing "catastrophic consequences" for civilians. Zionist forces had already been carrying out regular strikes on the city. The civil defence agency said Zionist strikes hit two homes in Rafah overnight, killing at least 16 people, mostly children.

Resident Umm Hassan Kloub, 35, said her children screamed when they "woke up to a nightmare of an explosion". "Every second we live in terror, even the sound of (Zionist) aircraft doesn't stop," she said. The Zionist offensive has killed at least 34,097 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the territory's health ministry.

Violence has also flared in the Zionist-occupied West Bank, where a two-year surge in clashes has further escalated since the Gaza war broke out. The Palestinian Red Crescent said Saturday that at least 14 people were killed during a 40-hour Zionist raid on Nur Shams refugee camp in the northern West Bank. A resident who declined to give his name told AFP that the West Bank had become a "second Gaza".

On Sunday, Zionist forces shot dead two Palestinian teenagers in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said. The Palestinian health ministry in Ramallah said the deaths of the two Palestinians were "caused by occupation (Zionist) bullets". It identified the two as Muhammad Majid Musa Jabareen, 19, and Musa Mahmud Musa Jabareen, 18.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that the latest incident occurred at the entrance

## International

# US ranchers see migrants as threats

'Republicans want cheap labor, Democrats want cheap votes and America wants cheap tomatoes'

**PALOMINAS, Arizona:** John Ladd, who says he could ride a horse before he could walk, is a fourth-generation rancher from a family that arrived in Arizona when the border between Mexico and the United States was just a line on the map. Now he views that frontier — and the thousands of people who spill across it every day — as a threat to his whole way of life. "It rules how we run the ranch now, and that isn't the most effective way," he told AFP.

Ladd's sprawling cattle farm runs right up against the wall that — at least in this stretch — separates Mexico from the United States. When migrants sneak over the frontier, they pass onto his 16,000-acre spread, leaving what he says is a trail of destruction — cut fences, cattle running wild and broken water pipes. "I lose probably 10,000 gallons of water a week because they break a pipeline to get a drink and then just leave it to run," he said. "Half of my time is spent fixing damage from the people that are going through the ranch."

## Murder charge

Border patrol officers pass through his land looking for migrants who have crossed illegally, though most people think the patrols provide little deterrence. One 75-year-old rancher is currently on trial for allegedly taking the matter into his own hands. George Alan Kelly is charged with second-degree murder over the death of Gabriel Cuen-Buitimea.

Kelly says he fired his AK-47 rifle into the air when he saw a group of migrants he felt were a threat to him, his wife and their property. One of the nine rounds hit Cuen-Buitimea in the chest, puncturing a major artery. Prosecutors said Kelly, author of a novella about a border rancher turned vigilante against Mexican traf-

fickers, acted deliberately, and was targeting migrants.

Ladd said he does not know Kelly personally but frets that a conviction would set a dangerous precedent. "He was protecting himself and wife and his property. And one of the main things of America is being able to protect your private property," he said. Ladd added that even small land owners, not just ranchers, have "illegals going across their place." "They're not going to be able to do anything to protect themselves. That's what everybody's worried about."

## 'Threatened'

The huge empty skies and vast plains of Arizona have always held a certain menace for people scraping together an existence far from the towns and cities. When the West was wild and untamed, there were bandits here, taking what they wanted with threats or violence. The 20th century brought a little more order, and a bigger — and better organized — state generally able to protect its taxpayers.

But for some who make a living among the purple-hued mountains, that protection now feels inadequate. "We have felt a little bit threatened," said Kyle Best, owner of the Marley Ranch in Amado, about 160 km west of the Ladd Ranch. "At night... you just go in the house and you don't look out."

Best said the insecurity, and what he feels is a complete lack of control at the border, will be a huge issue in November's election, when President Joe Biden tries to fend off a challenge from former president Donald Trump. "It is a problem for everyone... not only everyone who lives on the border, it's a problem for the whole United States," Best said. "I'm not against immigration. Everybody's families came here from immigration, but it needs to be done in a correct way. It



**PALOMINAS, Arizona:** Cattle rancher John Ladd gestures toward his land separated by the Roosevelt Easement, a road running along the US-Mexico border from New Mexico to California with a thirty-foot tall border wall, in Cochise County on April 17, 2024. - AFP

needs to be dealt with and needs to be stopped."

That's a sentiment that Mike Gannuscio, president of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association, agrees with. "We're a nation of immigration and I respect them coming over here to work and I respect the ones that come over here lawfully," he said. "But you know, the surge is coming on the border. It's not fair."

All the ranchers interviewed by AFP said they would be voting for Trump in November, a man whose previous White House stint they associated with far lower levels of illegal migration. Ladd stressed that it was not a simple issue of supporting one party over

the other; he recognizes that politicians of all stripes have failed on the complex issue of immigration over the last few decades.

"My saying is, Republicans want cheap labor, Democrats want cheap votes and America wants cheap tomatoes," he said. Nor is it a matter of racism or xenophobia, Ladd said, adding that there's a human cost to a migration process dominated by gangs of people smugglers. "The people that are guiding (migrants) to America just leave them to die," he said. "And when you see a dead body on your ranch, that's a game changer." - AFP

## Landslides injure 6 as south China braces for massive floods

**BEIJING:** Landslides in southern China injured at least six people and trapped others, state media reported Sunday, as the region braced for severe floods "seen around once a century". Torrential downpours across swathes of Guangdong province since Thursday have swollen rivers in the Pearl River Delta and triggered deluges in mountainous areas. State broadcaster CCTV said Sunday that rains had sparked landslides affecting six villages in the northern Guangdong town of Jiangwan, "causing people to become trapped".

Photographs published by CCTV showed waterfront homes destroyed by a wall of brown mud, and people in fluorescent-colored ponchos sheltering in a soaked public sports court. No deaths were immediately reported and the total number of trapped people was not specified. But CCTV said six people who were "trapped and injured" in the landslides had been airlifted to the nearby city of Shaoguan.

Emergency workers were racing to restore communications to the stricken area "as soon as possible", CCTV said. It added that more than 80 rescuers were working "through the day and night" to assist people in the disaster zone. The Pearl River Delta is China's manufacturing heartland and one of

the country's most densely populated regions, with Guangdong alone home to around 127 million people.

Aerial footage by CCTV on Sunday showed murky floodwaters lapping close to street level in some towns, leaving riverside promenades and pavilions inundated and a pagoda protruding from the deluge. Authorities have launched a level-two emergency response in the Pearl River Delta, the second-highest in a four-tier system.

## 'Once a century'

The national weather office imposed weather alerts across central Guangdong and warned of major storms in coastal areas through Sunday evening and into Monday. Citing the provincial hydrology bureau, CCTV said three monitored locations in the Bei River basin would "experience flooding seen around once a century... due to the impact of heavy precipitation". Floods of up to 5.8 m above the warning limit would strike the areas starting early Monday morning, according to CCTV.

Several other monitored tributaries in the basin would endure the kind of floods seen once every 50 years, it said. There were no initial reports of mass evacuations. Parts of the neighboring provinces of Jiangxi and Fujian were also forecast to see severe rainstorms on Sunday evening. China is no stranger to extreme weather but recent years have seen the country whiplashed by severe floods, grinding droughts and record heat. Climate change driven by human-emitted greenhouse gases makes extreme weather events more frequent and intense, and China is the world's biggest emitter. - AFP



**QINGYUAN, China:** A cyclist peddles past floodwaters near a river in this city in Guangdong Province on April 21, 2024. - AFP

## UN pushes justice for Sri Lanka's Easter victims

**COLOMBO:** The United Nations on Sunday urged Sri Lanka to bridge its "accountability deficit" and ensure justice as the country commemorated the 279 victims of its worst-ever attack against civilians five years ago. The UN's top envoy to the country, Marc-Andre Franche, told a remembrance service in Colombo that there should be a "thorough and transparent investigation" to uncover those behind the Easter carnage in 2019. Islamist bombers hit three churches and three hotels in the island's deadliest suicide attack aimed at civilians, but grieving families say they are still waiting for justice. Among the dead were 45 foreigners, including tourists visiting the island a decade after the end of a brutal ethnic conflict that had claimed more than 100,000 lives since 1972.

"Sri Lanka suffers from a continuing accountability deficit, be it for alleged war crimes, more recent human rights violations, corruption or abuse of power, which must be addressed if the country is to move forward," Franche said. He noted that victims were still seeking justice despite the country's Supreme Court holding the

then president Maithripala Sirisena and his top officials responsible for failing to prevent the attack.

"Delivering justice for victims of these attacks should be part of addressing the systemic challenge," Franche said. He said the UN Human Rights office has also called on Colombo to publish the complete findings of previous inquiries into the Easter Sunday bombings and to establish an independent investigation.



**NEGOMBO, Sri Lanka:** Moulavi Shajeer Usavi and Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith are pictured before starting a silent march demanding justice for the victims of the 2019 Easter Sunday terror attack on April 21, 2024. - AFP

## 'Other forces'

The leader of Sri Lanka's Catholic church, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, accused President Ranil Wickremesinghe's government of suppressing new evidence and protecting those behind the militants. "It is clear that Islamist extremists carried out the attack, but there were other forces behind them," Ranjith said. "We have to conclude that the current government too is trying to protect them."

He has previously alleged that military intelligence officers engineered the April 21, 2019 attack to help the political ambitions of Gotabaya Rajapaksa, a retired army officer who campaigned on security. Seven months later he won the presidency. Since coming to power, Rajapaksa had systematically protected those behind the bombings, the Cardinal said. Rajapaksa was forced out of office in July 2022 following months of protests over an unprecedented economic crisis that caused shortages of food, fuel and medicines.

Thousands of Sri Lanka's Catholic minority staged a silent protest outside the capital after multi-faith services to bless the victims, who included more than 80 children. Relatives carried photos of the dead and protested in the town of Negombo — known as Sri Lanka's 'Little Rome' because of its heavy concentration of Catholics. Military personnel armed with automatic assault rifles watched as the protesters marched to the nearby St Sebastian's church, where 114 people were killed in the coordinated suicide bombings. - AFP



**SYDNEY:** Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese attends a candlelight vigil for the victims of a stabbing attack at the Bondi Junction Westfield shopping centre on April 21, 2024. - AFP

## Crowds join Bondi Beach memorial for stabbing victims

**SYDNEY:** Crowds gathered at Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach on Sunday for a candlelight memorial to the six people killed by a knife-wielding assailant at a nearby shopping mall. Many hundreds sat on the grass in a beachside park to grieve for the five women and a Pakistani male security guard who died in the April 13 attack at the Westfield Bondi Junction shopping complex. The killings stunned many Australians who are largely unaccustomed to such violent crime.

"When I heard this I cried. Because it is new to us. We don't have this happen often. It's a shock," said 56-year-old local cafe owner Daniela Pontidas. "I know a lot of people that were impacted in some way," she told AFP. "I feel like this has burst Australia's bubble a bit."

Paul Inggall, 50, said he had been at Bondi Junction in the morning hours before the attack. "These things don't happen often in Australia but when they do I think they have a profound impact," he told AFP. "I think it really moves the community, so I want to be a part of it."

The mentally ill knifeman, 40-year-old Joel Cauchi, was tracked down, shot and killed by police inspector Amy Scott, who attended the service. As waves crashed into the beach at dusk, a choir sang the hymn "Keep Your Loving Arms Around Me". An Indigenous didgeridoo was played as people lit candles in the breezy evening. "Bondi is tough and this is a strong community, and we will get through this," said New South Wales Premier Chris Minns.

## 'Snatched away'

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese offered the condolences of the nation for the six lives "snatched away on that hardest of Saturday afternoons". "We mourn for all the joy they should have known," he said. Cauchi's parents say he was diagnosed with schizophrenia at 17 but stopped taking medication, later leaving their Queensland home and dropping out of treatment.

His women victims were a designer, a volunteer surf lifesaver, the daughter of an entrepreneur, a Chinese university student and a new mother. The 38-year-old mother, Ashlee Good, handed over her bleeding nine-month-old girl Harriet to two strangers in desperation before being rushed to hospital where she died. The baby was also taken to hospital and is said to be doing well.

The shopping mall reopened for business on Friday in a sombre mood, with floral tributes to the dead piled up inside and shoppers stopping to sign a book of condolence. Australian leaders have praised the "heroes" of the Bondi attack, including the police and emergency responders. The government has granted permanent citizenship to Frenchman Damien Guerot who fended off the attacker with a bollard; and it is expected to do the same for wounded Pakistani security guard Muhammad Taha.

Despite the rarity of such crimes, two days after the mall attack an Assyrian Christian bishop was brutally stabbed during a livestreamed service in western Sydney. The bishop has said he is recovering in hospital. A 16-year-old suspect has been charged with committing "a terrorist act". - AFP

## Business

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024

# Zionist entity holds Palestinian economy captive, analysts say

## Gaza war tightens Zionist grip, bulk of customs duties withheld

**JERUSALEM:** The Gaza war is speeding up Zionist "annexation" of the Palestinian economy, say analysts, who argue it has been hobbled for decades by agreements that followed the Oslo peace accords. While the Zionist-Hamas war raging since October 7 has devastated swathes of Gaza, it has also hit the public finances and wider economy of the occupied West Bank. Zionist entity is tightening the noose on the Palestinian Authority, which rules parts of the West Bank, by withholding tax revenues it collects on its behalf, economist Adel Samara told AFP.

Palestinian livelihoods have also been hurt by bans on laborers crossing into Zionist entity, and by a sharp downturn in tourism in the violence-plagued territory, including a quiet Christmas season in Bethlehem. Samara said that "technically speaking, there is no Palestinian economy under Zionist occupation - our economy has been effectively annexed by Zionists". The Palestinian economy is largely governed by the 1994 Paris Protocol, which granted sole control over the territories' borders to Zionist entity, and with it the right to collect import duties and value-added tax for the Palestinian Authority.

Zionist entity has repeatedly leveraged this power to deprive the authority of much-needed revenues. But the Gaza war has further tightened Zionist grip, Samara said, with the bulk of customs duties withheld since the war. "Without these funds, the Palestinian Authority struggles to pay the salaries of its civil servants and its running costs," said Taher Al-Labadi, a researcher at the French Institute for the Near East.

In February, Norway reportedly transferred to the Palestinian Authority about \$115 million from Zionist entity following a deal to release some of the frozen taxes. Almost all Palestinian workers have also been forbidden from entering Zionist entity for work,

driving up unemployment across the territories. The Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Mustafa bemoaned an "unprecedented financial crisis" during which his government's deficit had soared to \$7 billion, more than a third of the territories' GDP according to the latest budgetary figures.

### 'Collective punishment'

The Paris Protocol, like the 1993 and 1995 Oslo agreements they were signed under, were meant to be in effect for five years, until the creation of a Palestinian state. But the absence of a long-term peace deal means it is still governing nearly all aspects of the Palestinian economy. Investment is also being stifled by the protocol, said Samara, who explained that Zionists "controls the land, resources and water sources" of the Palestinian territories.

Before any factory or shop requiring access to these resources can be built in the West Bank, Zionists must grant authorization, he said. Zionist stance has become even tougher under far-right Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, he said, both of whom are settlers in the West Bank. Critics accuse them of holding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to ransom by threatening to withdraw the support that gives him a wafer-thin governing majority.

Zionist political analyst Michael Milshtein echoed his take. "By not allowing Palestinian workers into Zionist entity and withholding Palestinian tax revenues, Ben Gvir and Smotrich aim to overthrow the Palestinian Authority because they view it as an enemy," he said. "It's a way to collectively punish Palestinians, whom they also see as enemies." Milshtein said that before October 7, nearly one-third of West Bank income came from the earnings of the 193,000 Palestinians who worked in Zionist entity, according to Zionist figures. Today, the number of Palestinians working in Zionist entity has dropped to between 8,000 and 9,000, he said.



RAMALLAH: Palestinians shop at a market in the occupied West Bank in this March 11, 2024 photo. — AFP

### 'To live in dignity'

But Milshtein also pointed to another strain of Zionist opinion, held by centrist minister Benny Gantz and conservative lawmaker Gideon Saar. They want to allow workers back into Zionist entity to avoid anger sparking an uprising in the West Bank, at a time when Zionist forces are already stretched between Gaza and the Lebanese border, where they are trading fire with Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Milshtein said he believes Netanyahu is

probably closer to the Gantz view. Nasr Abdel Kareem, an economics professor at the Arab American University in the West Bank, argued that the Zionist premier is playing a power game. "Netanyahu is putting pressure on the Palestinians and signaling to the authority that the levers of the Palestinian economy are in (Zionist) hands," he said. "Netanyahu believes that he will weaken the authority and make it accept political concessions" when a peace agreement eventually has to be hammered out, he said.

This strategy may be misguided, said Nasr, because it is based on the premise that letting the Palestinian economy flourish would automatically bring peace to the West Bank. "Historically, previous uprisings broke out" when times were not tough economically, he said, adding that ultimately Palestinians want a state as much as a healthy economy. "Palestinians want to live with dignity, but for them this also implies liberation and the establishment of a Palestinian state." — AFP

## AI tool predicts when recruits will quit jobs

**TOKYO:** Bosses worried about turnover or wondering how long a new hire will stick around can now turn to AI for a heads-up on who might be next out the door. The artificial intelligence tool was developed by Japanese researchers to try and help managers provide targeted support to staff to stop them from quitting. It crunches data on employees at a company, from their attendance record to personal information such as age and gender, and was created by Tokyo City University professor Naruhiko Shiratori with a start-up based in the Japanese capital. The tool also analyses data on employees who left the company, or took a leave of absence, to create a turnover model for each firm.

Then when fed data on new recruits, it predicts who is at risk of quitting "in percentage points", Shiratori, a media education expert, told AFP on Friday. "We are currently testing the AI tool with several companies, creating a model for each one." Bosses could use the results to "suggest to the high-risk employee - without showing a raw figure, which could be shocking to him or her - that the company is ready to offer support, because AI suggested they may be facing difficulties", Shiratori said.

To create the tool, the researchers built on a previous study using AI to predict the characteristics of university students likely to drop out. Now they are planning an upgrade so that the AI tool can suggest suitable assignments for new employees by analyzing information from job interviews, as well as their characteristics and personal histories. Japanese businesses traditionally all hire graduates at the same time each year, but about one in 10 recruits fresh from college quit their jobs within a year, government data shows. Around 30 percent leave their company within three years, according to the labor ministry. — AFP



TOKYO: Visitors look at screens displaying Japanese company Tomorrow Net's navigation-type AI communication tool 'CAT.AI' with a ChatGPT function during the AI Expo, part of NexTech Week, Japan's largest trade show for artificial intelligence technology companies in Tokyo. — AFP

## InstaDeep CEO takes AI from Tunis to London

**PARIS:** Karim Beguir launched the artificial intelligence start-up InstaDeep in Tunisia in 2014 with just two computers and \$2,000. By 2023, it was an international operation bought by German laboratory BioNTech for \$700 million. "For the first time, we saw that a start-up launched in Africa with very limited resources could become a major international player," the French-Tunisian CEO, who co-founded the company with Tunisian self-taught IT enthusiast Zohra Slim, told AFP.

It gives young Africans the "hope of being part of tomorrow's innovation and technology," he said. InstaDeep specializes in decision-making artificial intelligence (AI) that helps businesses develop applications to optimize cost and efficiency. It made a name for itself at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic by creating a

system with BioNTech—which developed one of the earliest COVID vaccines—to identify dangerous variants "on average two months before they are reported", according to data published in scientific journals. InstaDeep put "Tunisia and Africa on the map (in AI). It showed that this kind of story was possible", added Beguir, 47, who is CEO of the company now based in London.

"At the time, when I said we were going to do things at the level of the big boys like Meta, Google, DeepMind and others, everyone laughed in my face," Beguir said of its initial launch. As well as researching personalized cancer vaccines with BioNTech, InstaDeep is working on projects to fully automate routing for Germany's national rails, improve operations management at Frankfurt airport and predict cricket invasions in Africa. The company claims to be "already profitable" with sales of more than 10 million euros (\$11 million), though the company did not want to disclose the precise figure.

### From Tunis to Cape Town

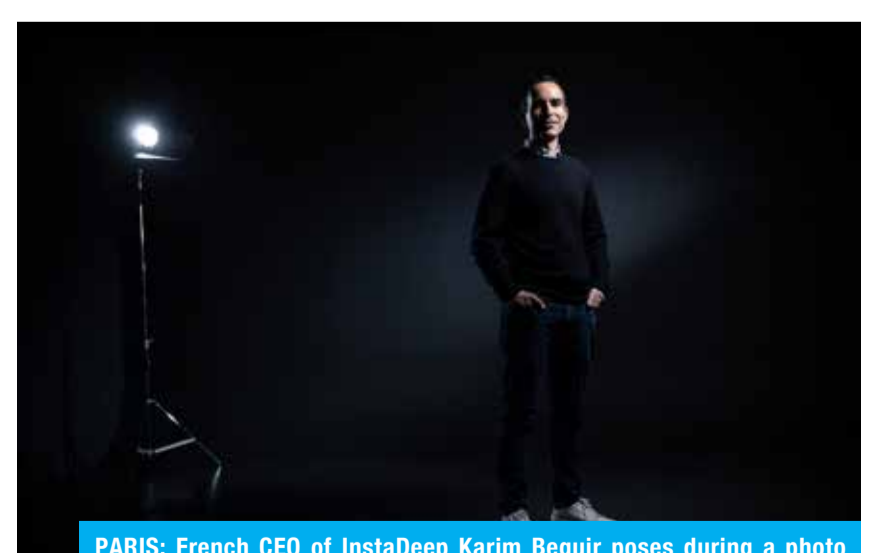
InstaDeep grew from 60 employees in 2018, to 350 employees across Africa, the Middle East, Europe and America. It has offices in Tunis, Lagos, Cape Town and Kigali, along with London, Dubai, Paris, Berlin, Boston

and San Francisco. "Thanks to the movement that we have helped start, young Africans can hope of being part of tomorrow's innovation and technology, and in particular AI, which is the technology of our generation," said Beguir.

He said artificial intelligence presents an opportunity for African economies to go beyond simply exporting fuels and minerals, and make inroads into higher value-added activities. "Selling raw natural resources is not enough. We really need to create things with a much greater added value," he said. Beguir grew up in the southern Tunisian city of Tataouine before studying in France and then the United States. He went on to work in financial engineering for major US players like JPMorgan and the Bank of America, before embarking on entrepreneurship in Africa.

### The future of AI?

Senegalese teacher and AI researcher Seydina Ndiaye, one of 38 experts selected by the UN to form an AI think tank, has said Africa needs to be more involved in AI development because otherwise "the greatest threat is colonization by AI." Experts have regularly pointed out gender and race biases in models designed by major tech companies. "If young Africans develop applications for African communities, you are much less likely to see bias towards



PARIS: French CEO of InstaDeep Karim Beguir poses during a photo session in Paris. — AFP

these populations than if they were developed in Silicon Valley or Asia," said InstaDeep's Beguir.

When can Africa expect to see other AI champions emerge? "If we manage to channel this living force into high-level innovation, I would say we will have 10 InstaDeeps in 10 years," predicted

Beguir, provided we resolve obstacles such as the freedom of movement for researchers across the continent. "As crazy as it may seem, in some cases it is easier for a young African with technology skills to come and work in France than to go to another African country," he warned. — AFP



Business

# Mona Al-Hadad takes home the KD 100,000 prize from Gulf Bank

## Part of the ongoing draws for the Danah millionaire account

KUWAIT: As part of its commitment to rewarding its customers and encouraging them to continue saving, Gulf Bank announced Mona Seid Nour Ali Al-Hadad as the first lucky winner of the quarterly AlDanah Millionaire account prize worth KD 100,000. The draw took place last Thursday, 18 April, 2024, in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young. Anticipation is high among customers for the announcement of the winner of the KD 1 million prize in the forthcoming draw scheduled for July 18, 2024.



The AlDanah Millionaire account is one of the most rewarding and prestigious savings accounts in Kuwait, with periodic draws that have been creating millionaires since its launch in 1998. Gulf Bank is proud to add two new winners to the country's

list of millionaires annually. For the seventeenth consecutive year, AlDanah Millionaire account has been offering monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two

quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million, and a grand draw prize of KD 2 million. One of the many advantages of the AlDanah account, is being the only account in Kuwait that transfers the customers' chances of winning from the previous year to the next, as part of a program that rewards customers for their loyalty to Gulf Bank. In order to increase one's chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum of KD 200 in their accounts, or deposit continuously to increase their chances of winning. AlDanah account holders are eligible to win Gulf Bank's monthly, quarterly, and annual AlDanah draws.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engag-

ing 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.

## Gulf Bank opens registration for 3rd datathon competition

KUWAIT: Building on the tremendous success of its first two editions, Gulf Bank has announced the third annual Datathon competition, scheduled for May 11, 2024. This event will be held at Kuwait University's Cultural Center in Shadadiya, and will offer substantial prizes across various categories such as "Data Modeling," "Data Visualization," and "Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)."

On this occasion, Mai Al-Owaish, Chief Data and Innovation Officer at Gulf Bank, said: "Following the successful launch of Kuwait's first Datathon competition in 2022, and the impressive turnout at the second edition, we are excited to extend opportunities to younger participants in this year's event by reducing the minimum age requirement from 18 to 16. This allows them to compete in all categories, including the newly introduced Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) category."

Al-Owaish further stated: "The bank offers participation opportunities for university students and recent graduates who are looking for high-level training in data analysis and programming, along with high school students aged 16 and older. Additionally, experienced data analysts and even members of the general public with an interest in data science are welcome

to participate." She continued: "In alignment with Kuwait's 2035 vision to cultivate creative human capital, and following the bank's commitment to positioning itself as a bank of the future, Gulf Bank is dedicated to leveraging all its resources to foster a data-driven culture in society. We aim to encourage young individuals to enhance their data science capabilities, thus meeting Kuwait's future requirements."

Al-Owaish pointed out that Gulf Bank, a leader in data and digital services in Kuwait, is committed to creating ideal opportunities that strengthen the local technology community. This is achieved by organizing high-quality competitions and preceding them with educational workshops led by a distinguished group of data experts.

She emphasized that the educational workshops, beginning three days prior to the competition, cover topics such as "Data Visualization" with Tableau, "Data Modeling" with Python, and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). The goal is to equip content creators with the essential data and analytical skills needed for innovation and success. During these sessions, participants will come together to tackle real-world data challenges using various data science tools and techniques. Those interested in participating can register through the following link: [e-gulf-bank.com/datathon](http://e-gulf-bank.com/datathon)



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.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
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## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 18 APRIL 2024

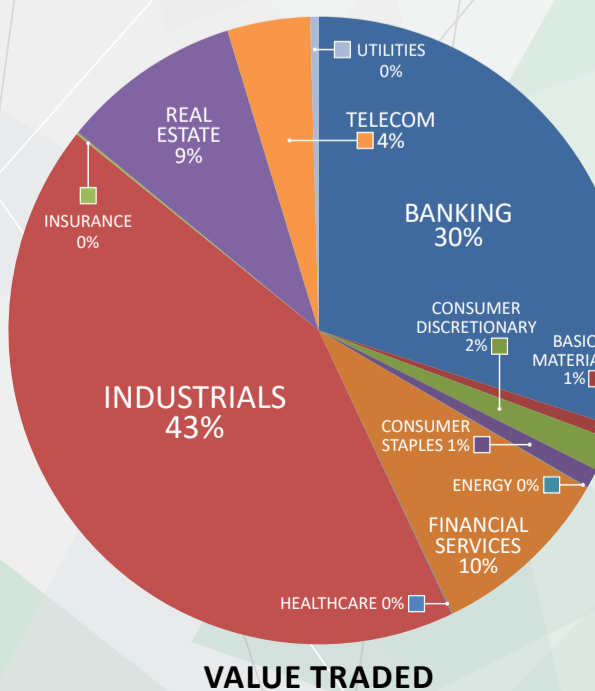
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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,816	7,642.99	-2.8%	-4.9%	2.2%	824,362,533	307,551,944	74,606	16.4	1.3	81.9%
Main Market	7,687	5,835.53	-2.1%	-2.5%	4.8%	322,911,802	37,251,796	19,812	12.1	0.8	18.1%
All Share	42,503	6,997.12	-2.6%	-4.5%	2.6%	1,147,274,335	344,803,740	94,418	13.6	0.9	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	25,841	1,725.05	-1.1%	-2.6%	4.7%	191,554,329	103,148,748	25,288	16.4	1.3	60.80%
Basic Materials	440	780.18	-1.5%	-1.2%	4.6%	4,027,863	2,448,857	1,308	9.6	2.2	1.04%
Consumer Discretionary	1,125	1,637.62	-6.2%	-6.5%	2.1%	12,454,379	5,873,995	3,334	12.1	1.2	2.65%
Consumer Staples	249	818.90	3.2%	6.0%	24.3%	4,990,596	3,417,426	569	105.3	1.4	0.59%
Energy	212	1,012.74	-3.0%	-2.9%	6.7%	1,186,418	119,839	171	9.3	0.7	0.50%
Financial Services	4,681	1,297.29	-1.5%	-4.2%	7.0%	233,324,055	32,934,976	12,834	14.7	0.8	11.01%
Health Care	151	314.87	-33.0%	-8.4%	-34.7%	366,477	142,530.760	280	10.1	1.1	0.36%
Industrials	2,665	785.39	-19.1%	-24.9%	-13.5%	428,437,931	147,614,829	32,667	13.0	0.9	6.27%
Insurance	1,044	2,553.24	-0.2%	-0.6%	11.4%	4,075,307	364,630	620	10.4	1.2	2.46%
Real Estate	2,708	1,272.82	-2.3%	-1.8%	4.9%	226,881,897	32,348,898	11,316	14.6	0.6	6.37%
Technology	26	1,906.05	0.0%	0.0%	229.6%	0	0.00	0	NM	2.2	0.06%
Telecommunications	3,192	1,044.63	-0.1%	-1.9%	-5.5%	29,902,798	14,860,377	5,091	9.8	1.3	7.51%
Utilities	169	405.26	-2.5%	-8.9%	-11.0%	10,072,285	1,528,633	940	13.4	1.4	0.40%

Top Gainers						Top Losers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
AMAR	70	13.27%	12	0.824	3	AGLTY	326	-41.37%	403,051,892	137,028,597	28,505
UNICAP	95.9	11.00%	1,012,888	95,153	185	FTI	119	-35.68%	496,317	62,781	252
ALAQARIA	34	9.68%	79,568	2,354	7	IFAHR	1,010	-18.94%	1,222,994	1,298,418	1,206
ALDEERA	371	7.54%	13,020	4,245	27	IFA	319	-18.21%	7,805,122	2,692,408	1,586
CATTL	107	3.88%	246,461	25,156	66	UPAC	127	-15.33%	865,194	113,312	313

Top Volume						Top Value					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
AGLTY	326	-41.37%	403,051,892	137,028,597	28,505	AGLTY	326	5.38%	403,051,892	137,028,597	28,505
NRE	102	2.00%	136,680,976	13,466,282	3,639	KFH	727	-0.55%	76,932,489	55,394,853	11,735
KFH	727	-0.55%	76,932,489	55,394,853	11,735	NBK	849	-2.64%	31,158,637	26,657,784	4,825
KPROJ	126	3.28%	46,983,614	5,726,450	910	NRE	102	2.00%	136,680,976	13,466,282	3,639
NBK	849	-2.64%	31,158,637	26,657,784	4,825	ZAIN	490	2.30%	27,140,678	13,173,693	3,868



**Market Summary:**

- Premier and Main markets volume and value rose 143%, 84%, 111%, and 82%, respectively. The huge difference is due to the increase in trading days and agility.
- The Premier and Main indexes both showed stability and positivity towards the end of the week.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 6997, with support levels at 6981, 6959, and 6933 and resistance at 7000. The Premier index closed at 7642, with support levels at 7591, 7555, and 7519, and resistance at 7657. The Main index closed at 5835, with support levels at 5813, 5780, and 5750, and resistance at 5845.

## Business

# Oil and gas drilling blocked in Alaska wilds as Biden seeks green credentials

## Over 13 million acres will come under new federal protection

WASHINGTON: The United States has blocked oil, gas and mining operations across tracts of unspoiled wilderness in Alaska, winning praise from environmentalists for safeguarding habitat for polar bears, caribou and other Arctic species. More than 13 million acres (5.2 million hectares) will come under new federal protection, while a permit to build a major road to access mineral deposits was denied in moves that angered industry bodies and some locals.

"Alaska's majestic and rugged lands and waters are among the most remarkable and healthy landscapes in the world," President Joe Biden said. "These natural wonders demand our protection." But the state's lawmakers in Washington slammed the measures, forming a bipartisan front to say they would fight to overturn them. "The Biden administration may be focused on short-term political gains, but at the expense of Alaska's long-term future," Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski said, citing future jobs and national energy security.

Democratic Representative Mary Sattler Peltola said the announcement failed to strike a balance between the need for gas and oil "and legitimate environmental concerns." Ahead of the US presidential election in November, Biden is seeking to shore up his green credentials, which were damaged by a decision last year to green-light a project by US energy giant ConocoPhillips in Alaska. The Willow project, estimated to cost between \$8-10 billion, was authorized under former president Donald Trump

and later backed by Biden, triggering national protests by activists.

### Arctic warming fast

The Interior Department on Friday said the new protections would help tackle the effects of global warming, which is degrading the Alaskan permafrost. "As the climate crisis imperils communities across the country, more must be done," Biden pledged, adding that the new regulations would also support the subsistence economy and customs of Alaska Native people.

Friday's announcement finalizes measures unveiled in September affecting the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A), an ecologically important region for grizzly and polar bears, caribou and hundreds of thousands of migratory birds. The American Petroleum Institute said that the decision was "misguided" and "at a time when the world is looking for American energy leadership, this is yet another step in the wrong direction."

But environmental advocacy groups like Evergreen Action welcomed the announcement. The Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the planet "but that hasn't deterred Big Oil from threatening delicate ecosystems and accelerating the climate crisis further by drilling for oil and gas," said Evergreen's Mattea Mrkusic. "We appreciate the Biden administration's necessary step to strengthen protection."



FAIRBANKS: A part of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System is seen in Fairbanks, Alaska. The 800-mile-long pipeline carries oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. — AFP

The actions announced Friday, ahead of Earth Day on Monday, follow a recent ban on drilling in 2.8 million acres of the Beaufort Sea, ensuring all of US Arctic Ocean waters are now off limits to new oil and gas leasing. Biden and his Republican challenger Trump are in a close race for the White

House, with a victory for Trump likely to see a reversal in environmental policies. As president, one of Trump's first acts was to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Paris climate agreement, and he has vowed, if reelected, to vigorously promote fossil fuel production. — AFP

### NBK Weekly Report

## US Fed's fight against inflation lacks progress

KUWAIT: Retail sales in the United States topped estimates, rising 0.7 percent on the month doubling expectations of a 0.3 percent increase. The greater than expected print suggests resilience within US consumers and upwards pressure on inflation persists. The latest retail sales numbers come amid a time where CPI was up 0.4 percent on the month and 3.5 percent annually, while recent non-farm payrolls show 303,000 jobs added to the economy, indicating that US consumers are willing to spend despite inflation reaccelerating backed by a historically tight labor market that continues to fuel demand in the economy. Following the release of the retail sales data, markets pushed back expectations of a first rate cut from July to September.

### Empire State Manufacturing Index

The Empire State Manufacturing Survey for April 2024 shows continued decline in manufacturing activity in New York. Despite a small increase, the general business conditions index remained negative. New orders, shipments, and employment all contracted. Inventories edged higher for the first time in months, and delivery times shortened. Prices paid for inputs rose slightly, but selling prices held steady. While firms expect some improvement in the next six months, optimism is subdued, with a significant decline in the outlook for employment growth.

### Words from Jerome Powell

Stocks closed mixed, treasury yields rose, while the greenback was slightly up after Fed Chair Jerome Powell lamented about the "lack of further progress" on inflation this year. Commenting on the recent economic data, Powell stated that it "shows solid growth and continued strength in the labor market, but also a lack of further progress so far this year on returning to our 2 percent inflation goal." He added that "The

## S&P lifts Greece outlook on debt reduction

WASHINGTON: S&P Global Ratings revised its Greece outlook from stable to positive, months after returning the country's credit rating to investment grade. "The positive outlook reflects our expectation that the tight fiscal regime will continue to spur a reduction in the government debt ratio," said S&P in a statement. The credit ratings agency added that growth should also "continue to outperform that of Greece's euro-zone peers."

S&P signaled that it could raise Greece's ratings within the next two

years if its net government debt-to-GDP ratio drops further. For now, it affirmed Greece's BBB-/A-3 credit rating. Finance Minister Kostis Hatzi-dakis said the revision is further proof that Greece's efforts are paying off, giving it further incentive to push on with necessary reforms. In October, S&P returned Greece's credit rating to investment grade for the first time since 2010, citing significant progress in tackling economic challenges.

It was the first of the three major US ratings agencies to lift Greece's credit rating from speculative to investment grade. "Despite some recent softening in economic data, economic growth has outperformed the euro-zone average, a trend we expect will continue," S&P said on Friday. In 2023, economic growth was up two percent and the agency projects

### Bank of England governor

The Bank of England Governor, Andrew Bailey, suggested the UK might lower interest rates sooner than the US. He believes inflation in the US is driven by high demand, while the UK is still recovering from supply chain issues and the war. This contrasts with the Federal Reserve Chair who sees US inflation lasting longer. As a result, some speculate the Bank of England or European Central Bank could cut rates before the US Federal Reserve. However, investors are cautious, pushing back expectations for a UK rate cut from August to September and reducing their forecasts for the total number of cuts this year. Despite Bailey's comments, the value of the pound remained relatively unchanged.

### UK CPI

The Consumer Price Index in the UK was unchanged in March 2024 compared to February, while the Consumer Prices index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) increased by 0.6 percent. On an annual basis, CPI decreased to 3.2 percent from 3.4 percent in February, and CPIH remained unchanged at

3.8%. Compared to annual changes, prices increases were larger for both CPI and CPIH in March 2024.

Food prices rose at a lower pace in March 2024 compared to a year ago, while motor fuel prices increased this year but decreased compared to March 2023. Both core CPI and core CPIH decreased slightly on a year-to-year basis. Price increases for core goods slowed down for both CPI and CPIH. Overall, inflation slowed slightly in March 2024 compared to February. However, prices are still higher than they were a year ago.

### Retail sales

Retail Sales in March 2024 showed no change compared to the previous month. This follows a small increase in February that was later revised to flat growth. There were mixed results across sectors, with fuel and non-food stores experiencing a slight rise, while food stores and online retailers saw a decrease in sales volume. However, looking at the bigger picture, retail sales for the past quarter have grown slightly compared to the previous quarter, likely due to the low sales figures during the December holidays.

### Industrial production

China's economy grew faster than expected in the first quarter, at 5.3 percent. However, this growth may not be sustainable. The strong performance was driven by public investment, while private consumption and production remained weak. This uneven growth raises concerns about a potential housing market crisis and excess capacity in some industries. Despite these challenges, economists still believe China's 5 percent growth target for the year is achievable. The question remains whether the government will take further action to boost domestic demand and stabilize the property market.



THESSALONIKI: A woman stops to buy vegetables at a stall as people shop in the local market in the northern city Thessaloniki. — AFP

real GDP will rise on average by 2.4 percent over the 2024-2027 period. This reflects a "tangible pickup in in-

vestment activity" and other factors like improved household and banking system balance sheets. — AFP

## Climate impacts set to cut 2050 global GDP by nearly a 5th

PARIS: Climate change caused by CO2 emissions already in the atmosphere will shrink global GDP in 2050 by about \$38 trillion, or almost a fifth, no matter how aggressively humanity cuts carbon pollution, researchers said. But slashing greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible remains crucial to avoid even more devastating economic impacts after mid-century, they reported in the journal Nature.

Economic fallout from climate change, the study shows, could increase tens of trillions of dollars per

year by 2100 if the planet were to warm significantly beyond two degrees Celsius above mid-19th century levels. Earth's average surface temperature has already climbed 1.2C above that benchmark, enough to amplify heatwaves, droughts, flooding and tropical storms made more destructive by rising seas. Annual investment needed to cap global warming below 2C - the cornerstone goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement - is a small fraction of the damages that would be avoided, the researchers found.

Staying under the 2C threshold "could limit average regional income loss to 20 percent compared to 60 percent" in a high-emissions scenario, lead author Max Kotz, an expert in complexity science at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), told AFP. Economists disagree on how much should be spent to avoid climate damages. Some call for massive investment now, while others argue it

would be more cost-effective to wait until societies are richer and technology more advanced.

### Poor countries hit hardest

The new research sidesteps this debate, but its eye-watering estimate of economic impacts helps make the case for ambitious near-term action, the authors and other experts said. "Our calculations are super relevant" to such cost-benefit analyses, said co-author Leonie Wenz, also a researcher at PIK. They could also inform government strategies for adapting to climate impacts, risk assessments for business, and UN-led negotiations over compensation for developing nations that have barely contributed to global warming, she told AFP. Mostly tropical nations - many with economies already shrinking due to climate damages—will be hit hardest, the study found.



## Deliveroo Restaurant Awards celebrate top restaurants in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Deliveroo Restaurant Awards are back! This year, Deliveroo has introduced the Restaurant Awards with an exciting new twist: a quarterly celebration that recognizes exceptional restaurants and culinary pioneers who are reshaping the dining scene nationwide. The Deliveroo Restaurant Awards will take place every three months, and one winner will be awarded across three categories: - The "Most Loved" category recognizes the most popular restaurant across three cuisines. For the first quarter of 2024, the selected cuisines were: Burger, Healthy Restaurant, and Dessert. - The "Best Service" category will be awarded to the restaurant with the highest rating on Deliveroo, starting next quarter. - The "Top Newcomer" category is reserved for new restaurants that have recently joined the Deliveroo app. Newcomers need to have been active on Deliveroo for at least 4 weeks with an average rating of 4 or higher to be considered for this award.

"Deliveroo is incredibly excited to launch the new edition of the Deliveroo Restaurant Awards. The Quarterly Restaurant Awards aims to continuously spotlight the restaurants that truly shine, distinguishing themselves through exceptional service and delectable cuisine through the Deliveroo platform. We hope that both our customers and restaurant partners will use the Deliveroo Restaurant Awards as an opportunity to honor and celebrate the restaurants that are putting Kuwait on the food map," said Seham Al-Husaini, General Manager of Deliveroo Kuwait & Qatar.

The first round of winners in the Deliveroo Restaurant Awards are: 'Most Loved' Burger Restaurant (Thinnies); 'Most Loved' Healthy Restaurant (Ananas); 'Most Loved' Dessert Restaurant (Overjar); Top Newcomer to Deliveroo (Mr Holmes). To learn more about the Deliveroo Restaurant Awards or to experience everything this quarter's winners have to offer, customers can download the Deliveroo app.

"Countries least responsible for climate change are predicted to suffer income loss that is 60 percent greater than the higher-income countries and 40 percent greater than higher-emission countries," said senior PIK scientist Anders Levermann. "They are also the ones with the least resources to adapt to its impacts." Rich countries will not be spared either: Germany and the United States are forecast to see income shrivel by 11 percent by 2050, and France by 13 percent. Projections are based on four decades of economic and climate data from 1,600 regions rather than country-level statistics, making it possible to include damages earlier studies ignored, such as extreme rainfall. The researchers also looked at temperature fluctuations within each year rather than just averages, as well as the economic impact of extreme weather events beyond the year in which they occurred. — AFP

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024

## Vinyl enthusiasts spin into action on UK's Record Store Day



Vinyls are displayed for sale at indie record store Flashback Records in London. — AFP photos



A customer walks out of indie record store Flashback Records in London.



Vinyls are displayed for sale at indie record store Flashback Records in London.



A customer browses for vinyls at indie record store Flashback Records in London.



A customer browses for vinyls at indie record store Flashback Records in London.



A customer listens to a vinyl at indie record store Flashback Records.

It was 8.30 am and the line was growing in front of Flashback Records in the Shoreditch neighbourhood of Britain's capital. Saturday marked the UK's annual Record Store Day, created to support independent outlets, and vinyl enthusiasts were eager to get their hands on special reissues and new releases. The first fans arrived at 4.45 am, although the store did not open until 9 am. The excitement reflects a new golden age for vinyl, with sales thriving despite their predicted demise 20 years ago.

Martin Wolyniec, 45, with a graying beard and blue eyes and accompanied by his niece Amelia, stood in the line outside the store, holding a list of specials released for the day. On it was an album by the English band Groove Armada, the duos Orbital, and Everything but the Girl, and if the pair were "lucky";

sumed digitally, with only eight percent in "physical" formats, vinyl or CD, per the organisation.

Given vinyl's significant resurgence in the UK music scene, the National Office for Statistics has decided to include them in the basket of goods used to calculate inflation.

"Nearly every album released by a major label comes out on vinyl, but it's expensive to produce", especially with the soaring cost of oil in recent years, which partly explains their high price, said Burgess.

### A family experience

In front of Soho's iconic Sister Ray record store in central London, an eclectic crowd of various ages and styles lined up around the block.

Zoe Farace, 25, who works in human resources, said she inherited her pas-

a record by the singer Kate Bush.

Minutes later, after a search inside, Wolyniec emerged victorious, brandishing a square bag filled with coveted album sleeves. Amelia danced ecstatically to celebrate.

### Standing the test of time

Wolyniec and his wife began collecting vinyl six years ago. "Probably because it's something you can still feel, touch, look at -- not just something that fits in our phone," he said. Derek Yeboah, a 32-year-old software designer, started his own collection after inheriting his brother's old garage and trance records. He had his eye on some jazz and blues titles. "Everything is digital now," he said.

"Songs are shortened because of social media, everything has to fit within four minutes" whereas vinyl offers more freedom and space, he said. This annual day "is very important as it gives us a boost at this time of the year which is really needed," said Mark Burgess, the founder and owner of Flashback Records.

### Vinyl resurgence

The number of independent record stores in the UK is at a ten-year high, totalling 461 shops -- 122 more than in 1994 -- largely driven by the vinyl resurgence. This is despite the high cost of new LPs, which range from 20 to 40 pounds (\$25 to \$50), amidst a cost-of-living crisis.

Vinyl album sales rose by nearly 18 percent to £177.3 million last year, while CDs saw a modest rebound for the first time in nearly two decades, according to the ERA trade association. However, the bulk of music is con-



A customer browses for vinyls at indie record store Flashback Records in London.



sion for vinyl as a child from her father, who owns "too many to count". For her, buying and listening to records is a way to spend quality time with her father, who stands by her side, watching her with a smile. "It's sort of a bond-

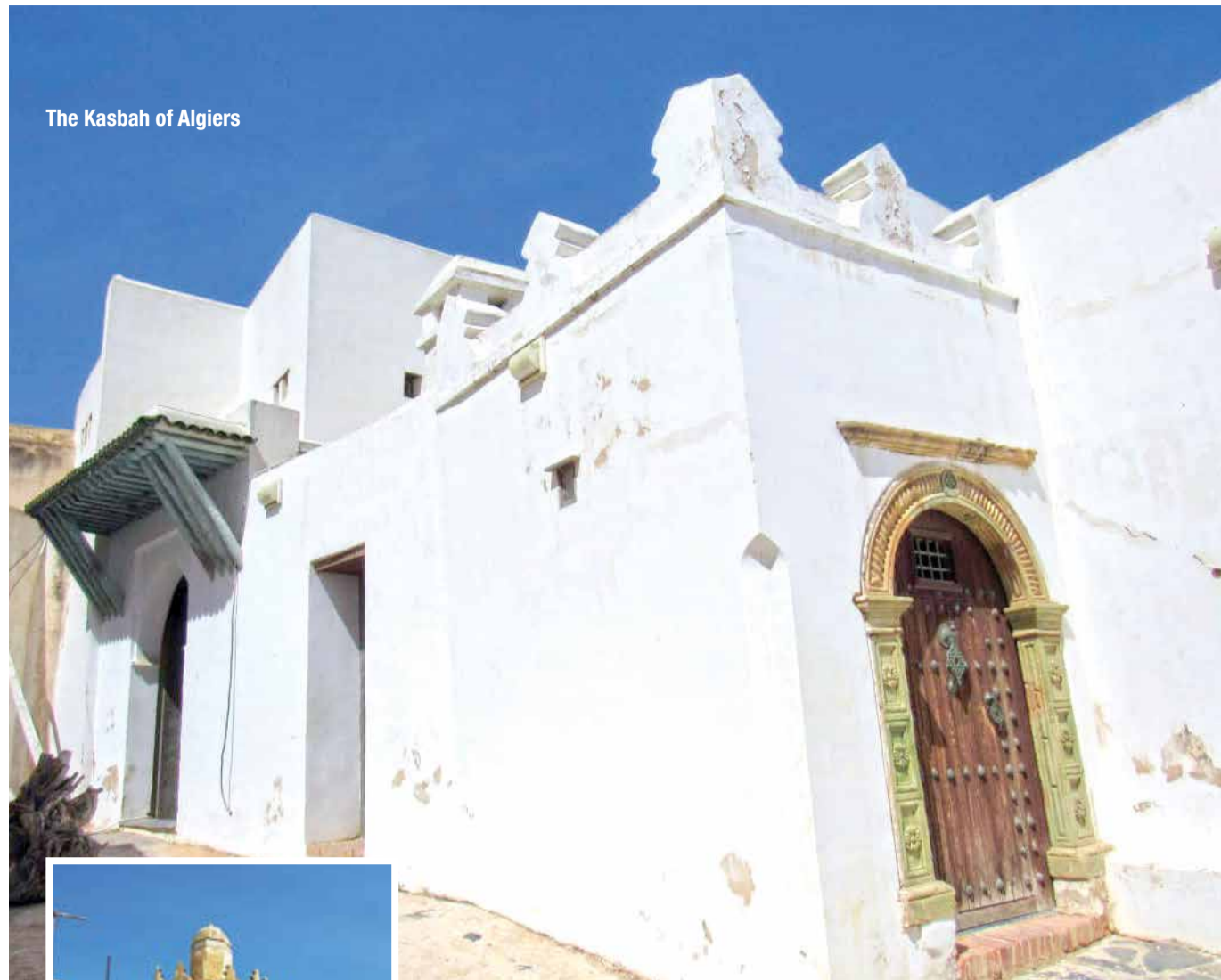
ing thing with my family and my dad," she said "So it's like we can talk about shared things that we enjoy."—AFP



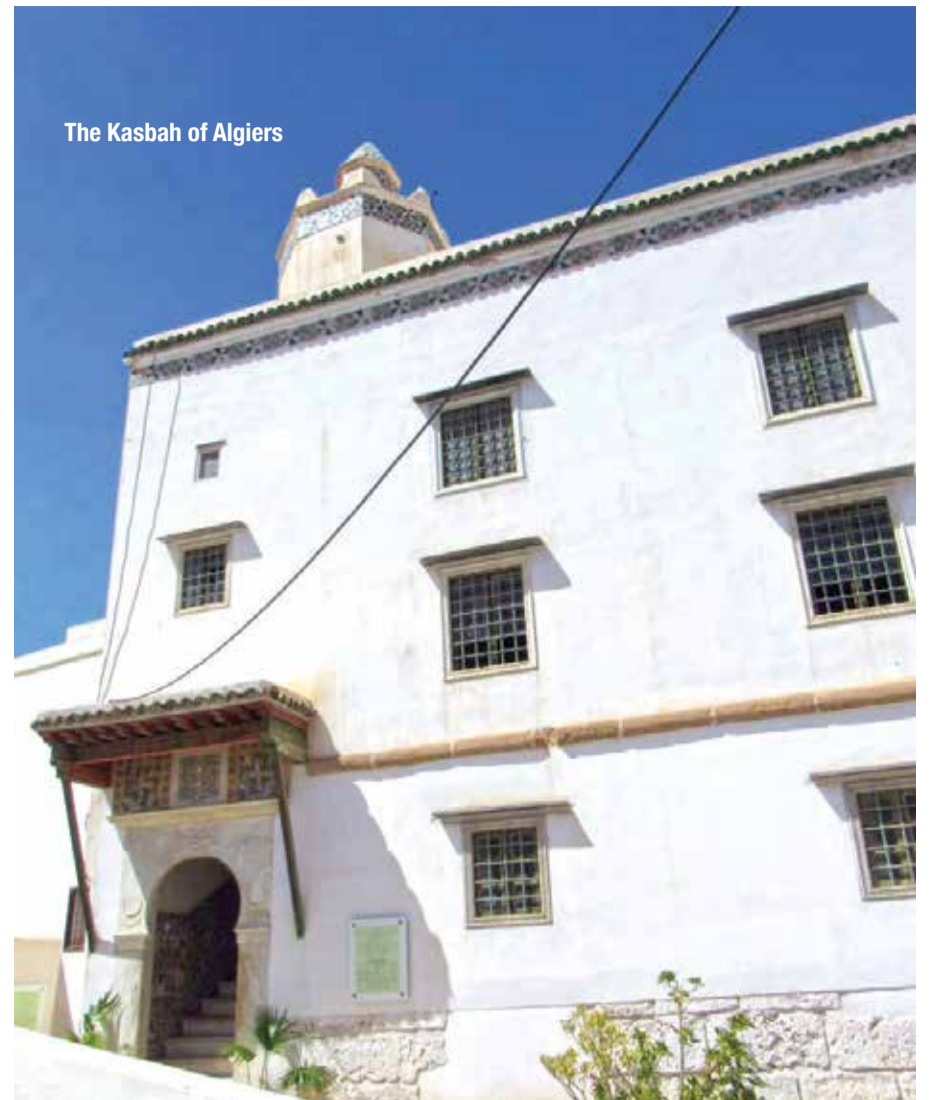
Customers shop at indie record store Flashback Records.



## Lifestyle



The Kasbah of Algiers



The Kasbah of Algiers



Minaret of the mosque being facelifted.

## The Kasbah of Algiers

### A unique archaeological landmark

The Kasbah of Algiers, known as the House of the Sultan, is located in the center of Algiers, where it was built in 1516 by the Turkish leaders and was completed in 1591. It was considered one of the largest palaces built by the Ottomans during their rule

in Algeria, where it was the official place to receive guests of Algerian rulers in that period.

The castle was originally a military fortress until the ruler of Algiers Ali Khoja decided to move his residence and the province headquarters from Janina

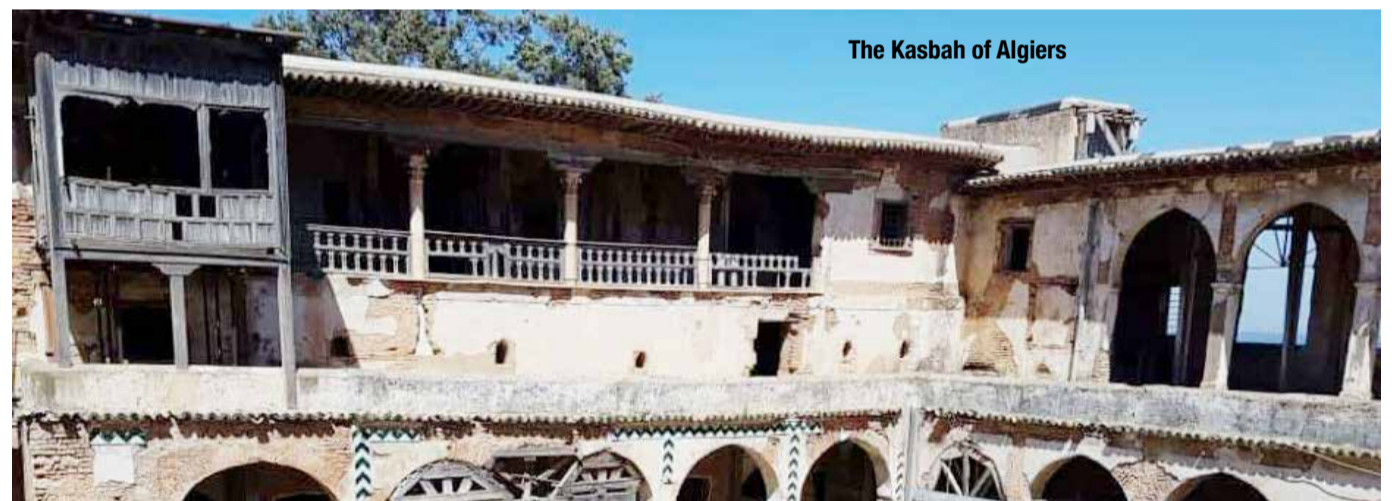
Palace in 1817, due to the violence and disturbance by the Ottoman army.

In 1992, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed Kasbah of Algiers a World Cultural Heritage Site, as there are the remains of the citadel, old

mosques and Ottoman-style palaces, as well as the remains of a traditional urban structure associated with a deep-rooted sense of community. —KUNA



The "day" residence.



The Kasbah of Algiers



The "day" residence.



The "day" residence.



Conference hall at the renovated fortress.

## Mass protests in Canary Islands decry overtourism

Tens of thousands of demonstrators hit the streets of Spain's Canary Islands on Saturday to demand changes to the model of mass tourism they say is overwhelming the Atlantic archipelago. Rallying under the slogan "The Canary Islands have a limit", demonstrators began protesting at midday, with flag-waving crowds packing the streets of the main towns across all of the archipelago's seven islands. An estimated 57,000 people joined the protests, Spanish media reports said, citing the central government's representative in the islands. Chanting and whistling, they waved a sea of placards and banners emblazoned with slogans like "The Canary Islands are not up for sale!" or "A moratorium on tourism" while others simply said: "Respect my home".

The protests were called by some 20 social and environmental groups who say tourist overcrowding perpetuates an economic model that harms local residents and damages the environment. They want the authorities to limit the number of visitors and have proposed introducing an eco-tax to protect the environment, a moratorium on tourism and to clamp down on the sale of properties to non-residents. "We are not against tourism," one woman demonstrator called Rosario Correo told Spain's TVE public television.

"We're asking that they change this model that allows for unlimited growth of tourism." Last year, 16 million people visited the Canary Islands, more than seven times its population of some 2.2 million, which the collective says is unsustainable for the archipelago's limited resources.

land that we can't afford," 59-year-old teacher Nieves Rodrigues Rivera told AFP. And the constant influx of visitors was exacerbating the housing crisis by pushing up rents, said 22-year-old student Antonio Samuel Diaz Garcia.

"We're seeing holiday homes in-

testers also held parallel rallies of support in Madrid and Barcelona, public television said. Anti-tourism protests have multiplied in recent months across Spain, the world's second-most visited country, prompting authorities to try to reconcile the interests of locals and a lucrative

ing millions of visitors every year, with four in 10 residents working in tourism—a sector which accounts for 36 percent of the islands' GDP. Before the pandemic brought the global travel industry to its knees in 2020, overtourism protest movements were already active in Spain,



Thousands of people demonstrate to demand a tourism model respectful for the islands' environment and their residents, on the Canary Island of Tenerife.

'Invaded' "We're tired of the overcrowding, of low salaries, of not having houses to live in and seeing our land bought by foreigners because they have the money to buy our grandparents'

vading our villages which pushes rents up and makes it increasingly difficult for young people like us to leave home," he told AFP. "We're also seeing tourism destroy the biodiversity here." Large crowd of pro-

sector that accounts for 12.8 percent of Spain's economy.

The islands, which lie off the northwestern coast of Africa, are known for their volcanic landscapes and year-round sunshine attract-

notably in Barcelona. After travel restrictions were lifted, tourism surged with Spain welcoming a record 85.1 million visitors last year. —AFP



## Lifestyle

## Chinese factory shreds wedding photos for fuel

At a dusty warehouse in northern China, Liu Wei feeds photos of beaming bridal couples into an industrial shredder - turning stories of heartbreak into a source of electricity. Wedding photos are big business in China, where parks, temples and historic sites often teem with newlyweds posing for elaborate shots capturing their supposedly unbreakable bond.

But in a country where millions of divorces take place each year, many marital snaps end up shoved into the attic or tossed into the trash.

Liu's company offers an alternative: bereft ex-lovers can have their memories destroyed and recycled into fuel. "From our daily business exchanges, we found the destruction of personal belongings is a blank space nationwide," the 42-year-old told AFP at his factory, 120 kilometres (75 miles) from Beijing. "People with less experience in the market probably wouldn't have spotted this opportunity," he added.



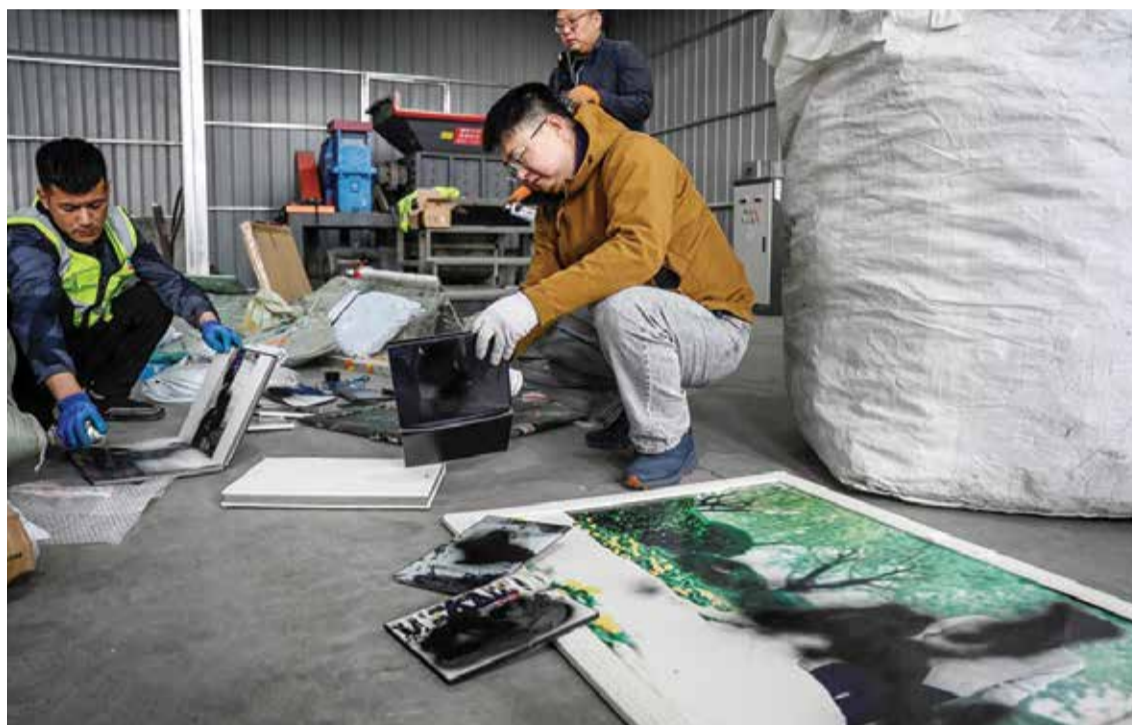
Photo shows pieces of wedding photos leaving a conveyor belt after being put into a shredding machine.



This photo shows unwanted wedding photos being destroyed by a shredding machine at a warehouse in Langfang, in northern China's Hebei province. — AFP photos



Worker Yang Weiguang (right) placing a large wedding photo into a shredding machine as Liu Wei takes videos on the side.



Liu Wei (right) and workers spraying paint on clients' unwanted wedding photos.



Worker Yang Weiguang spraying paint on clients' unwanted wedding photos.



Worker Yang Weiguang placing a large wedding photo into a shredding machine.

Despite cultural taboos around destroying images of living people, Liu's facility receives an average of five to 10 orders per day from across China.

They include large wall photos and smaller decorative shots and albums, mostly cast from plastic, acrylic and glass. Workers heave the images onto a forklift truck and scatter them onto the warehouse floor for sorting. They then obscure every face with dark spray paint to protect client privacy and smash unshredable glasswork with a sledgehammer. "These people are all trying to find closure," said Liu. "They mainly want to unpick the knots in their hearts."

#### Complex motivations

Sullied and broken, the pictures give glimpses of broken families in happier times.

In one, a woman in a white bridal dress reclines on a bed of flowers, while another shows a lovestruck couple gazing into each other's eyes.

A sporty pair in matching kits pose with a football, while nearby, a smitten man presses his face tenderly to his pregnant wife's belly.

Brandishing his phone, Liu films the defaced photos and sends clips to customers for final confirmation. He estimates he has served about 1,100 clients - mostly under the age of 45, and around two-thirds women - since launching the service a year ago.

They typically speak little about their separations, and several declined interview requests from AFP. Liu says the motivations for destroying wedding photos are often complex.

"Few of them do this out of malice," he told AFP. "It might be that this item brings on certain thoughts or feelings... or be a hurdle hard to overcome." Some clients attend the destructions in person to give a sense of ceremony to a closing chapter in their lives, said Liu. Others keep their photos for years and only dispose of them when they remarry or finally come to terms with a former spouse's death.

Given the irreversible nature of the process, Liu says he gives clients a final chance to salvage their items in case they live to regret their decision.

After getting the green light, he films his staff gently pushing the photos into the shredder's gnashing teeth. The debris is taken to a nearby biofuel plant where it is processed with other household waste to generate electricity.

#### 'Respect others' choices'

Divorce rates soared in socially conservative China after marriage laws were relaxed in 2003.

They have fallen dramatically since the government enacted a law in 2021 mandating a month-long "cooling-off" period before couples untie the knot.

China registered 2.9 million divorces in 2022, down from over 4.3 million two years earlier.

The number of marriages rose last year for the first time in nearly a decade, giving Beijing some relief as it seeks to reverse a steep fall in births.

After annihilating the visual evidence of hundreds of unions, Liu says he has become numb to the emotions they stir up.

"The deepest feeling I have in my heart towards my clients... is that you must respect others' choices," he said. "You must never persuade people one way or another," he added. "It does no good." — AFP



Photo shows pieces of wedding photos leaving a conveyor belt after being put into a shredding machine.



Spray paint covering faces on unwanted wedding photos.



Worker Liu Wei spraying paint on clients' unwanted wedding photos.



A worker uses a sledgehammer to smash a wedding photo.

## Sports

# Pakistan trounce depleted NZ in second Twenty20 International

## Afridi and Amir share five wickets to rock New Zealand for a paltry 90

**RAWALPINDI:** Left-armers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Amir shared five wickets to rock New Zealand for a paltry 90 before Mohammad Rizwan anchored the chase to help Pakistan win the second Twenty20 clash Saturday in Rawalpindi.

Shaheen led the attack with 3-13 while Amir, returning to international cricket after nearly four years, finished with 2-13 as the visitors were bowled out in 18.1 overs after being sent in to bat. Rizwan finished with 45 not out off 34 balls with a six and four boundaries to ensure Pakistan chased down a modest target in 12.1 overs for a seven wicket win and take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

The first match, also in Rawalpindi, was washed out after just two deliveries on Thursday. New Zealand did fight back with wickets of Saim Ayub (four), Babar Azam (14) and debutant Usman Khan (seven) but Muhammad Irfan Khan (run-a-ball 18) partnered Rizwan in an unfinished 36-run stand to seal victory.

Ayub hit a boundary off the first ball of the innings before giving a return catch to pacer Ben Lister off the next while Azam was stumped off rival skipper Michael Bracewell and Usman bowled by spinner Ish Sodhi.

Azam credited his bowling for the kickstart. "It's crucial to set the tone in first six overs at this ground," said Azam of the Pindi stadium which saw a packed 16,000 week-end crowd. "The way Naseem, Shaheen and Amir bowled was outstanding and helped us get early wickets."

Bracewell lamented batting failure. "We didn't score quite enough runs," said Bracewell. "We were little bit slow to adapt to the surface and put ourselves under pressure in the end. We got a game tomorrow and we need to learn quickly."

Earlier Amir—returning to international cricket after nearly four years—jolted New Zealand in the opening overs. Amir retired abruptly in 2020 after he was dropped from the team, the second break in his career after he was banned for five years in a spot-fixing scandal in 2010.

Spinners Abrar Ahmed (2-15) and Shadab Khan (2-15) doubled the pressure as New Zealand were dismissed for their second lowest total against Pakistan in the game's shortest format. Mark Chapman (19), Cole McConchie (15), Dean Foxcroft (13) and Tim Seifert (13) were the only batsmen to reach double figures.

Chapman hit three boundaries in his 16-ball knock. New Zealand's lowest T20I total against Pakistan is 80, made at Christchurch in 2010. Fast bowler Naseem Shah, also playing his first match since injuring his shoulder in September last year, took 1-27 in four overs.

Both teams are preparing for the Twenty20 World Cup to be held in June in the United States and the West Indies. New Zealand are missing a host of their top players due to playing in the ongoing Indian Premier League, unavailability and injuries. The remaining matches are in Rawalpindi on Sunday followed by the last two in Lahore on April 25 and 27. — AFP



**RAWALPINDI:** Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan (R) plays a shot during the second Twenty20 International cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi. — AFP

## Rybakina beats Kostyuk to win Stuttgart Open

**STUTTGART:** Kazakh fourth seed Elena Rybakina defeated Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk in straight sets to win the WTA event in Stuttgart on Sunday. 2022 Wimbledon champion Rybakina beats Kostyuk 6-2, 6-2 in one hour nine minutes, ending the 21-year-old Ukrainian's giant-killing run at the tournament.

The world number four broke Kostyuk twice in the first set and twice in the second, fighting off three break points from the world number 27 to lift her eighth career title. Rybakina now holds a 2-1 record against Kostyuk.

"I want to congratulate Marta for a great tournament. You're playing really well and hopefully we

play many more finals," Rybakina said. "The crowd, guys, it was an unbelievable week. It was nice to play every match here and fight. Your energy gives a lot during these tough matches."

The title is her third of 2024, having already won in Brisbane and Abu Dhabi and it is the first time she has won three WTA titles in one year. Sunday's victory was also the 24-year-old's third title win on clay in her career.

Rybakina needed to overcome world number one Iga Swiatek in Saturday's semi-final. Rybakina took three hours to overcome the four-time grand slam winner and shattering her 10-match winning streak at the tournament, which included capturing the last two titles.

Kostyuk also took the hard road to the final, beating top-10 opponents Zheng Qinwen, Coco Gauff and Marketa Vondrousova to reach Sunday's match. "I want to congratulate Elena and her team. She's had an amazing couple of seasons and it's always a pleasure playing against you," Kostyuk said after the match. — AFP



**STUTTGART:** Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina holds her trophy as she jumps in front of her prize, a Porsche Taycan 4S Sport Turismo car, during the victory ceremony after she defeated Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk (not in picture) in the final match at the Women's Tennis Grand Prix WTA tournament in Stuttgart, southwestern Germany. — AFP

## Jokic leads Nuggets past Lakers and Knicks, T'Wolves, Cavs win

**LOS ANGELES:** The defending champion Denver Nuggets, powered by 32 points from Nikola Jokic, shook off a slow start to beat LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers 114-103 in game one of their NBA playoffs first-round series on Saturday.

The Nuggets, who swept the Lakers in four games in the Western Conference finals on the way to their first title last season, continued their dominance of star-studded Los Angeles, who had dropped all three regular-season meetings.

The game was the finale of the first day of the playoffs, which saw the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the Phoenix Suns 120-95, the New York Knicks beat the Philadelphia 76ers 111-104 and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Orlando Magic 97-83.

In Denver, Jokic added 12 rebounds and seven assists, Jamal Murray added 22 points with 10 assists and Michael Porter Jr. scored 19 for the Nuggets, who used a 13-0 scoring run to take charge in the third quarter—in which they limited the Lakers to 18 points.

James scored 32 points and grabbed 14 rebounds and Anthony Davis added 27 for the Lakers, who cut a 15-point deficit early in the fourth quarter to six only for the Nuggets to pull away again. Jokic's only

three-pointer of the game pushed the Nuggets' lead to 103-93. He added a dunk over James, who took a hard fall with a minute remaining but stayed in the game to the bitter end. "Mindset needed to change," Jokic said of the Nuggets' third-quarter resurgence. "I think for the second half defense was amazing." Lakers coach Darvin Ham said the Nuggets' 15-6 superiority in offensive rebounding was key as Denver piled up 18 second-chance points.

"You can't allow them to get multiple possessions," said Ham, who added that he still believed the best-of-seven series, which resumes Monday, will be a "hard fought" affair. In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards scored 23 of his 33 points in the second half as the Minnesota Timberwolves thrashed Kevin Durant and the Phoenix Suns in their Western Conference clash.

Against a team that also had their number in the regular season, Minnesota's Edwards, Karl-Anthony Towns and Rudy Gobert—bolstered by a strong supporting cast—turned the tables. Towns scored 19 points, Gobert added 14 points and 16 rebounds and the Timberwolves reserves—led by 18 points from Nickeil Alexander-Walker—out-scored the Suns bench 41-18. Up by 10 at halftime, the Timberwolves took full control in the third quarter, with Edwards scoring 18 points and taking the opportunity to needle Durant. "I think everybody here knows that's my favorite player of all time," Edwards said of two-time NBA champ Durant. "That was probably one of the best feelings ever in my whole life, for sure."

Durant finished with 31 points and seven rebounds. Devin Booker added 18 and Bradley Beal 15, but the

## Al-Kandary elected member of Arab Triathlon Federation

**KUWAIT:** President of Kuwait Triathlon Club and Federation Rashed Al-Kandary was elected member of the Arab Triathlon Federation (ATF) during the federation's general assembly that was held in Hurghada, Egypt Saturday. He also became member of the executive committee of ATF.

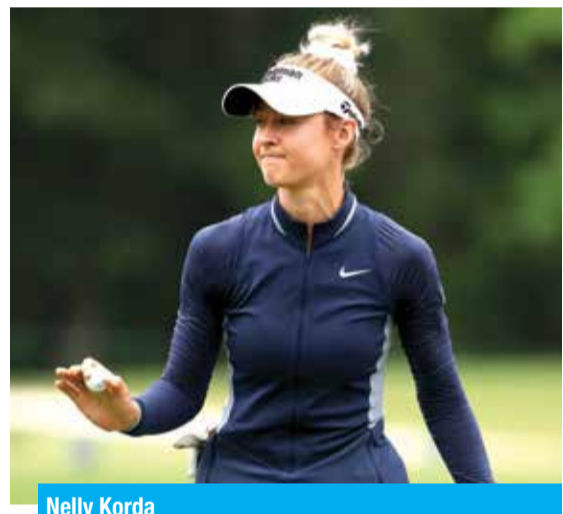
Al-Kandary dedicated this achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the top supporter of Kuwait sport.

He also thanked all those who contributed to Kuwait having a seat at ATF including its president Maj. General Ahmad Nasser and board members as well as Kuwait Olympic Committee members for their continued support.

Egypt's Ahmad Nasser won the ATF presidency, Jordan's Tareq Al-Khayyat vice president, UAE's Abdelmalek Jani second vice president, Bakhtiyar Rasoul from Iraq third VP and Yasser Othman from Sudan fourth VP. Meanwhile the members are Rashed Al-Kandary from Kuwait, Ali Moqbel from Saudi Arabia, Mohammad Abu Tair from Palestine, Ali Mabrouk from Libya, Dana Shubat from Syria and Firyal Shuwaiter from Algeria.



**Rashed Al-Kandary**



**Nelly Korda**

## Atthaya leads Korda by one at Chevron Championship

**LOS ANGELES:** Thailand's Atthaya Thitikul was clinging to a one-stroke lead over history-chasing Nelly Korda when thunderstorms halted play in the LPGA Chevron Championship in Texas on Saturday. Overnight co-leader Atthaya had three birdies in her first 11 holes and had the solo lead at 11-under through 12 when storms halted play. About two and a half hours later, amid continuing dangerous weather conditions, officials suspended play for the day in the first women's major of the year, with players to return to complete the round on Sunday before playing the final round.

World number one Korda, who is seeking to equal the LPGA record of five victories in five consecutive starts, had three birdies in her first eight holes to reach 10-under and will face a four-foot putt for par at the 12th hole when play resumes on Sunday.

She was tied with Canadian Brooke Henderson, who roared up the leaderboard with seven birdies and an eagle in the first 14 holes before a three-putt bogey at 16 dropped her to 10-under for the tournament, where she stood when play was halted. Atthaya, who has two LPGA tour wins and four on the Ladies' European Tour, is launching her 2024 campaign at the first women's major of the year after recovering from a left thumb injury. But the 21-year-old was undaunted at the prospect of a long day on Sunday.

"I think it's not that big deal. I think last year in a Malaysia I played more than this (in one day) with the play-off, 27 holes, which is fine. Still young now—still good," she said. Atthaya said the most important thing would be to "keep the mindset I had today." "The ball-striking was good. The putting was not that bad. Kind of stuck to my process today and then also stayed in my kind of small world, which is nice." Korda said a softer course at Carlton Woods in The Woodlands, near Houston, allowed her to be more aggressive.

Although she the weather was "holding up nicely" when play was halted, she said the eight-iron she hit on 12 was affected by a shift in the wind.

### A lot of opportunities

The American, trying to join Nancy Lopez (1978) and Annika Sorenstam (2005) as the only players to win five consecutive LPGA starts, put a positive spin on the truncated day. "If you think about it positively, then I have a lot of opportunities left in the day that I can go out and maybe capitalize on a couple of them, then that's good," she said. Henderson was one hole shy of completing an impressive round.

She was nine-under for the day and 11-under for the tournament before a three-putt bogey at 16, and has just one hole to complete in the third round. "I've been hitting it really well all week," Henderson said. "I just wasn't really capitalizing on some of the opportunities. I was just playing really steady, really solid."

"Today I was able to make a few putts. Made a clutch par save on six, birdie on seven and then a long one on eight for eagle, so I kind of just really felt a lot of great momentum with my putter and was able to keep it pretty hot throughout the back nine. "A little disappointed I dropped the one shot on 16, but I have (hole) 18 left tomorrow morning early, so hopefully (I'll) go out and post a good score and then go into tomorrow with a lot of confidence and a lot of momentum." — AFP

## Kuwait partakes in Morocco's Arab handball tourney

**CASABLANCA:** The sixth Arab youth handball championships kick started on Sunday, April 21, last until the 30th in Casablanca with the participation of five Arab countries including Kuwait. The tournament witnesses the participation of host Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria. The first matches of the tournament will see Kuwait playing against Morocco and Saudi Arabia against Tunisia. — KUNA

Suns couldn't find a way through the Timberwolves' stifling defense keyed by Gobert.

### Just one game

"It's just one game," Edwards said. "They're going to be ready the next time we play them." In New York, Jalen Brunson and Josh Hart scored 22 points apiece for the Knicks and Miles McBride came up big off the bench with 21 -- 13 of them in the second quarter.

The 76ers got a jolt shortly before halftime when NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid came down from a highlight reel dunk and appeared to hurt his surgically repaired left knee. He returned for the third quarter coming up with a steal and feeding Kelly Oubre Jr. for a dunk that gave the Sixers a three-point lead late in the period. The Sixers, led by 33 points from Tyrese Maxey, couldn't stay in front, and with less than two minutes remaining Hart drilled a pair of three-pointers and OG Anunoby made another to help the Knicks seal it. The Knicks host game two on Monday, with the Sixers breathing a sigh of relief that Embiid, who finished with 29 points, eight rebounds and six assists, apparently will be ready as they try to even the series. In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points and Jarrett Allen added 16 points and 18 rebounds to lead the Cavaliers in a wire-to-wire victory that Allen hoped would set the tone for their Eastern Conference series. "We keep saying 'throw the first punch,'" Allen said in an on-court postgame interview. "I think it was the perfect example tonight." Orlando's Paolo Banchero scored 24 points but had nine of the Magic's 12 turnovers. — AFP

Sports

# Silva strikes late as City sink Chelsea to reach FA Cup final

## Manchester City hampered by absence of Erling Haaland

LONDON: Bernardo Silva fired Manchester City back into the FA Cup final as the Portugal midfielder's late strike sealed the holders' 1-0 win against Chelsea at Wembley on Saturday. Pep Guardiola's side were second best for long periods of the semi-final, but Chelsea wasted a string of chances before Silva delivered the knockout blow six minutes from full-time.

Shaken by their Champions League quarter-final loss against Real Madrid on penalties in midweek, City took a while to shake off the gloom from the end of their treble bid. They were hampered by the absence of Norway striker Erling Haaland after he suffered a knock against Real, with Julian Alvarez unable to make an impact as his replacement.

City were bailed out by Chelsea striker Nicolas Jackson's profligacy and Guardiola will hope the hard-fought success provides a timely lift as they chase a Premier League and FA Cup double. City face Manchester United or Coventry, who meet on Sunday, in the final on May 25 and will retain the Premier League title if they win their last six games.

It will be City's 13th final in the competition and potentially a repeat of last year's 2-1 win over United in the Wembley Manchester derby. Beaten by Liverpool in the League Cup final in February, Chelsea's wait to win their first domestic trophy since the 2018 FA Cup goes on for another season.

It was a bitter blow for Blues boss Mauricio Pochettino, who has endured a difficult first season in charge and remains without silverware in England. The semi-final was billed as in-form Chelsea forward Cole Palmer's chance to punish his old club for selling

him to the Blues in September.

Guardiola said Palmer was asking to leave City for two years before he eventually joined Chelsea, where he has scored 23 goals in all competitions this, including 11 in his last six games. Palmer, who scored four times in Monday's 6-0 rout of Everton, was a constant threat for Chelsea, but ultimately it was his team's lack of killer instinct that proved decisive.

### Guardiola relief

Palmer's pin-point pass sent Jackson racing into the City area early on, but his strike lacked the accuracy to beat Stefan Ortega in a miss that foreshadowed Chelsea's fate. Jackson wasted a golden opportunity to give Chelsea the goal their dominance deserved.

Enzo Fernandez's pass split the City defence, but Jackson opted to go around Ortega rather than shoot and the chance was gone as Nathan Ake scurried back to clear. Playing with more purpose and quality than City, Pochettino's team threatened again as Palmer cleverly shimmied past Rodri for a low drive from 12 yards that was well saved by Ortega.

It was the first time lethargic City had failed to muster a first half shot on target since a game against Everton in February. Jackson, in the midst of a terrible debut season, was put clean through on goal by Conor Gallagher immediately after the interval.

But the much-maligned striker's shot was palmed away by Ortega, who clawed away a close-range header from Jackson seconds later. City finally tested Djordje Petrovic through Phil Foden's snap-shot, but the Serbian was equal to his powerful strike.



LONDON: Manchester City's Belgian midfielder #17 Kevin De Bruyne (C) has a shot blocked by Chelsea's English defender #14 Trevoh Chalobah (L) during the English FA Cup semi-final football match between Manchester City and Chelsea at Wembley Stadium in north west London. —AFP

Chelsea appealed in vain for a penalty when Jack Grealish's arm blocked Palmer's free-kick, while Moises Caicedo was fortunate to escape a second booking for a crunching tackle that forced Grealish to limp off. Grealish's replacement Jeremy Doku drew an immediate save from Petrovic with a near-post blast.

Doku's presence lifted City and the Belgian played a part as they stole the victory in the 84th minute. Advancing with intent towards the Chelsea area, Doku slipped a pass to Kevin de Bruyne, whose low cross was pushed out by Petrovic to Silva for a close-range finish that deflected home as Guardiola punched the air in relief. —AFP

## Kuwait draw with Afghanistan in AFC Futsal Cup

BANGKOK: During the second round of the fourth group in the AFC Futsal Cup 2024 held in Huamark Indoor Stadium, Bangkok, the Kuwait national team tied with Afghanistan Saturday, with three goals each.

According to the AFC report, Naser Al-Alban, Omar Al-Mansour, and Saleh Al-Fadhel were the goal scorers for the Kuwait national team. Kuwait finished the first half with a lead, scoring two goals and conceding one to Afghanistan. Afghanistan railed in the second half with two goals and allowing one, securing the draw. Kuwait national team temporarily took the lead in Group Four, accumulating four points from two matches, while Iran secured three points from one match, and Afghanistan earned one point. Meanwhile, Bahrain's score remains empty at this stage. —KUNA



BANGKOK: Kuwait and Afghanistan players fight for the ball in the AFC Futsal Cup 2024. — KUNA

## Arsenal grind out Wolves win to go top

LONDON: Arsenal shrugged off the disappointment of their Champions League exit to move back to the top of the Premier League with a 2-0 win at Wolves on Saturday. Leandro Trossard and Martin Odegaard struck at the end of each half to take the Gunners one point clear of Manchester City, who have a game in hand.

Arsenal's season was in danger of coming completely off the rails after a three-game winless run. Mikel Arteta's men lost in the Premier League for the first time in 2024 last weekend, 2-0 at home to Aston Villa, in between a Champions League quarter-final elimination by Bayern Munich. However, they bounced back to keep the pressure on champions City, who beat Chelsea 1-0 to reach the FA Cup final earlier on Saturday. "Massive win for us," said Arsenal captain Odegaard. "It was a tough week for us, few tough results and emotionally really hard but we had to keep going. Today was all about bouncing back and getting the win."

"Still a long way to go, still tight in the race, so today was all about getting back to business." Arteta made just three changes from the side that lost 1-0 in Munich on Wednesday and it took some time for the sluggish visitors to find their stride.

Wolves boss Gary O'Neil claimed his side have been struck by the worst injury crisis he has encountered in his professional career. Yet, the undermanned hosts were nearly in front when David Raya was forced to turn Joao Gomes' powerful effort onto the crossbar.

Arsenal had only fleetingly threatened before the break despite their dominance of possession. But they got the slice of fortune they needed to kickstart their challenge for a first title in 20 years on 45 minutes when Trossard's mishit shot clipped in off the far post.

There was little in the way of goalmouth action in the second period as fatigue took hold of Arsenal in their fourth game in 11 days. However, shorn of the threat of the injured Matheus Cunha and Pedro Neto, Wolves lacked the attacking inspiration to further dent their title aspirations. Odegaard made the points safe five minutes into stoppage time by catching Jose Sa out at his near post. Third-placed Liverpool can move level on points with Arsenal when they visit Fulham on Sunday.

At the bottom of the table, Luton's hopes of survival were hammered by Brentford's 5-1 rout at Kenilworth Road. Luton's heaviest home league defeat of the season leaves the Hatters still one point adrift of Nottingham Forest, who visit Everton on Sunday in a huge clash at the bottom of the table. —AFP

## Kuwait handball team win opening match

KUWAIT: Kuwait's national handball squad defeated Qatar's 27-20 in the opening match of the First Youth GCC Games, being hosted by the UAE, on Saturday. The win will give strong impetus to the Blue team in the coming game against Bahrain, said head of Kuwait mission Abdullah Al-Thiab. The First Youth GCC Games opened on Tuesday, April 16, and continues until May 2 with 3,500 players from the GCC member states vying in 19 competitions. — KUNA



Kuwait's national handball team

### Today's Matches

SPANISH LEAGUE	
Sevilla FC v Real Mallorca	22:00
beLN Sports HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A	
AS Roma v Bologna FC	19:30
beLN Sports	
AC Milan v Inter Milan	21:45
beLN Sports	

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	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, Samir Mohammad** Ali Shaikh, holder of Indian passport number M6713212 issued at Kuwait having permanent address in Maharashtra, India, Pin:400010 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Samir Mohammad Ali and (surname) Sheikh. **22/04/2024**

**I, Mohammed Irshad Mohammed Ramzan Kureshi** Holder of Indian Passport No. M2286361 & Aadhar No. 9117 0717 4008, having permanent address, Room no 403/C MK NAGAR 48/A-B-C Navpada Bandra East Mumbai -400051 Maharashtra India, residing in Kuwait at hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as : Given name : Irshad Ramzan and Surname : Qureshi. **(#5195) 19/04/2024**

**I, Waseem Shaik**, Holder of Indian Passport No. V7777213 having permanent address 20-1235-3, Municipal Quarters Meeramohiddin Darga Kotam, Potti Srramulu Nellore, Pin: 524001, Andhra Pradesh, India residing In Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as : given name Mohammed Waseem and surname Shaik. **(#5196) 19/04/2024**

**I, Sukhpreet Singh Brar**, holder of Indian Passport No. T4011071 having permanent address Vill Rataul Rohi Po Sodhiwala The Zira, Ferozepur, Pin: 142050, Punjab, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: given name Sukhpreet Singh. **(#5196) 19/04/2024**

## Man Utd edge Coventry on penalties

Ten Hag's men survive astonishing collapse to set up Man City FA Cup final



LONDON: Manchester United's English striker Marcus Rashford fails to convert this chance during the English FA Cup semifinal against Coventry City at Wembley Stadium on April 21, 2024. — AFP

LONDON: Manchester United survived an astonishing collapse to beat Coventry on penalties in an FA Cup classic on Sunday, setting up a second straight final against Manchester City. Erik ten Hag's men won the shootout at Wembley 4-2, with Rasmus Hojlund scoring the decisive spot kick after the teams were level at 3-3 after extra time.

The game perfectly encapsulated a chaotic season for Ten Hag's men, who are well off the pace in the Premier League. There was no hint of what was to come when United coasted into a 3-0 lead against their second-tier opponents in the London sunshine, with goals from Scott McTominay, Harry Maguire and Bruno Fernandes. But they have made a habit of tossing away leads in recent weeks and the match against Coventry proved no different. Second-half strikes from Ellis Simms and Callum O'Hare gave the 1987 FA Cup winners hope and Haji Wright levelled from the penalty spot in the 95th minute, capping a scarcely credible comeback.

Coventry fans taunted Ten Hag with chants of

"you're getting sacked in the morning" as belief infused the massed ranks of supporters clad in blue. A gripping period of extra time followed, with both teams hitting the woodwork, before United held their nerve to win the shootout. "We put ourselves in a difficult position and should have killed it earlier but we didn't," said United captain Fernandes. "We have to do so much better."

### Robins factor

Coventry manager Mark Robins famously played a key part in United's FA Cup final win in 1990, a victory that launched two decades of success under Alex Ferguson. But his team's push to reach the Championship play-offs has faded in recent weeks and they travelled to Wembley as underdogs despite United's stuttering season. United, 12-time winners of the competition, settled early and took the lead in the 23rd minute after a fine move down the right.

Alejandro Garnacho fed the overlapping Diogo Dalot, whose cross went under the hands of the div-

ing Bradley Collins and was tapped in by McTominay from close range. Marcus Rashford forced a fine save from Collins late in the first half but United doubled their lead from the resulting corner, with Maguire heading home from Fernandes' cross.

Coventry, who scored twice in stoppage time to beat Premier League Wolves in the quarter-finals, looked brighter in the early stages of the second half. But the wind was taken out of their sails when Fernandes' shot found its way past Collins in the 58th minute, courtesy of a deflection off defender Bobby Thomas. Coventry pulled a goal back when top-scorer Ellis Simms connected with a cross from substitute Fabio Tavares in the 71st minute.

They made it 3-2 in the 79th minute when O'Hare's shot from just outside the box looped off Aaron Wan-Bissaka's back and over Andre Onana. Coventry's fans were now in full voice as their team mounted waves of attacks. Substitute Victor Torp hit a stinging shot from the edge of the area with five minutes of normal time to go, forcing Onana into a

sharp save. But Coventry still were not finished.

Wan-Bissaka was adjudged to have handled in the penalty area and Wright scored from the spot to take the match into extra time. Coventry looked the more likely winners in 10 long minutes of stoppage time but could not find a winner. Fernandes rattled the crossbar early in the first period extra time when set up by substitute Amad Diallo.

Simms then smashed a shot off the underside of the crossbar as time ran out. Coventry thought they had won it in the dying moments, sending their fans delirious when Torp poked the ball past Onana but a VAR check ruled that Wright was offside by the narrowest of margins. The Championship side drew first blood in the shootout when Casemiro's weak penalty was saved by Collins. But O'Hare and captain Ben Sheaf failed to convert, leaving Hojlund with the job of sending United through and he made no mistake. Manchester City, who beat United in the 2023 FA Cup final, edged Chelsea 1-0 in the other semifinal on Saturday. — AFP



LONDON: Liverpool's Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah vies with Fulham's English-born US defender Antonee Robinson and Italian-born Nigerian defender Calvin Bassey at Craven Cottage on April 21, 2024. — AFP

## Liverpool win at Fulham to reignite title challenge

LONDON: Liverpool got their Premier League title challenge back on track with a 3-1 win at Fulham on Sunday to move level on points with leaders Arsenal. The destiny of the title remains in Manchester City's hands with the defending champions one point behind the top two with a game in hand.

However, Liverpool and Arsenal have put the pressure on Pep Guardiola's men by bouncing back from shock defeats last weekend. Jurgen Klopp said ahead of the game at Craven Cottage that the return of Trent Alexander-Arnold and Diogo Jota from injury was what gave his side "a chance" at clawing their way back into the title race.

Both were on target, either side of Ryan Gravenberch's first Premier League goal. Klopp took the brave decision to rest a series of first-team regulars among five changes to the side that won 1-0, but failed to overturn a 3-0 first leg deficit against Atalanta in the Europa

League quarter-finals on Thursday.

Mohamed Salah, Alexis Mac Allister, Dominik Szoboszlai, Curtis Jones and Ibrahima Konate dropped the bench. Alexander-Arnold was one of the few shining lights in Bergamo and was restored for his first Premier League start in over two months.

The England international showed the quality the Reds have been missing when he curled in a stunning free-kick to open the scoring in 32 minutes. Liverpool failed to hold onto the lead until half-time as the defensive lapses that have cost them in recent weeks re-appeared. Timothy Castagne swept home a loose ball into the far corner after Rodrigo Muniz's header was blocked. Klopp had his stellar cast of substitutes warming up after a sluggish start to the second period.

But one wayward pass from Alex Iwobi cost Fulham. Harvey Elliott intercepted on his return to Craven Cottage and teed up Gravenberch to curl in from the edge of the area. Jota then made the points safe with his 100th goal in English football when his low effort had too much power for Bernd Leno 18 minutes from time. Two more away trips at local rivals Everton and West Ham await Liverpool in the next six days. But with just five more games of the Klopp era to come, they remain at least in the hunt to give the German a glorious goodbye to his transformative time at Anfield. — AFP

## Jepchirchir, Munyao secure Kenyan double in London marathon

LONDON: Olympic champion Peres Jepchirchir won the London marathon in a women's-only world record on Sunday as Alexander Mutiso Munyao's victory in the men's race made it a Kenyan double. The race was preceded by 30 seconds of applause for Kelvin Kiptum, 2023 winner of the men's race, who was killed in a car accident in February.

A poignant day ended with two more Kenyan victories with Jepchirchir in particular putting down a marker ahead of her defence of her title at the Paris Olympics. The field for the women's race was considered one of the best ever assembled with three of the four fastest women in history competing.

The 30-year-old Kenyan came home in front of

world record holder Tigst Assefa and Joyciline Jepkosgei to break the record mark without male pacemakers. Jepchirchir's time of 2 hours 16 minutes 16 seconds smashed the women's-only course record of 2:17:01 set by compatriot Mary Keitany in 2017.

Retired British star Paula Radcliffe ran a time of 2:15:25 in a mixed-sex marathon in London in 2003, using male pacemakers. "I was not expecting to run a world record," said Jepchirchir. "I knew it might be beat but I did not expect it to be me."

"I am so happy to qualify for the Olympics and I feel grateful. I'm happy to be at Paris and my pray(er) is to be there and run well to defend my title. I know it won't be easy but I'll try my best." Munyao got the better of Ethiopian legend Kenenisa Bekele to take the men's race in 2:04:01. A three-time Olympic gold medallist on the track, Bekele was on course for his first win on the streets of London aged 41 but Munyao proved too strong in the closing kilometres to pull clear up London's famous landmark The Mall towards the finish line. — AFP

## Verstappen wins Chinese Grand Prix

SHANGHAI: Max Verstappen rounded off a dominant weekend with victory in the first Chinese Grand Prix for five years on Sunday to extend his world championship lead, a day after romping to sprint victory. The three-time world champion was again in a league of his own as Formula One returned to the Shanghai International Circuit for the first time since 2019. He finished 13.7 seconds ahead of Lando Norris with Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez third, a further six seconds back.

It looked odds-on that Red Bull would repeat their one-two in Japan a fortnight ago until two safety cars in quick succession mid-race. After multiple pit stops Perez emerged behind McLaren's Norris and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Verstappen was only denied a maximum 34 points for the weekend when Fernando Alonso pipped him to the fastest lap after a late tyre change. It was another masterful display from Verstappen, who was winning his fourth grand prix out of five in 2024 and the 58th of his career as he marches towards a fourth consecutive world title. "It felt amazing. The whole weekend we were incredibly quick," said Verstappen. "We survived the restarts well and the car was basically on rails and I could do whatever I wanted with it." He increased his lead over Perez at the top of the world championship to



SHANGHAI: Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen celebrates on the podium after the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix on April 21, 2024. — AFP

25 points, with Red Bull now 44 points clear of Ferrari in the constructors' fight.

"Those kind of weekends are amazing to feel and to achieve what we did this weekend is fantastic," added Verstappen, who won for the first time in China. Norris was delighted to finish second, his best result in 2024, having started from fourth on the grid. "Things came alive today. I don't know why, it was not the race I was expecting, but just got comfortable," said the Englishman. The consistent Perez finished on the podium for the fourth time in five rounds this season but said the safety car denied him a place. — AFP