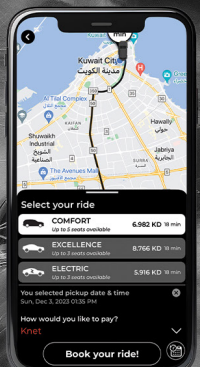



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Boursa Kuwait records 8.63% increase in Q1 2024 net profit



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NBK first bank in Kuwait to join PCAF to cut emissions



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Madonna wows Rio with 'Celebration Tour' finale



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Real Madrid claim 36th Liga title after Girona stun Barca



# Kuwait's support for Palestine hailed

## Kuwaiti medical team offers relief aid to Gaza residents

### Kuwait invited to join GWO



**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Bayan Palace a handwritten letter from Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman inviting Kuwait to join the Global Water Organization (GWO), an initiative aimed at ensuring global water sustainability. The letter was handed by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad. — KUNA

**RAMALLAH/GAZA:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Sunday expressed his appreciation for Kuwait's continued support for Palestinian statehood aspirations, saying the two sides share an array of mutual concerns that call for greatest bilateral cooperation. As he received the new Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan and non-resident envoy in Palestinian territories Hamad Al-Marri, the Palestinian leader told the Kuwaiti diplomat that bilateral cooperation has been on the rise, in addition to "continued coordination" over a number of pressing matters, according to Palestinian Wafa news agency.

After submitting a copy of his credentials to the Palestinian president, the Kuwaiti diplomat said he was honored to have been chosen for the role, saying it was a sign of trust and confidence instilled in him by the Kuwaiti leadership, citing his country's unflinching support for the Palestinians. He added he was hopeful that his appointment as non-resident envoy to the Palestinian territories would help usher in a new era of greater cooperation, describing the "Palestinian cause" as the wider Arab region's chief concern.

The diplomat reiterated Kuwait's support for Palestinian statehood aspirations, saying such assistance will continue until these aspirations inevitably come to fruition, par-



**RAMALLAH:** Kuwaiti Ambassador Hamad Al-Marri submits his credentials to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on May 5, 2024. — KUNA

ticularly at a time of "grave" Zionist "human rights violations". Marri held similar talks with Palestinian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Mustafa, in which the latter voiced equal gratitude for Kuwait's support for Palestinian statehood as the two discussed the latest regional and global developments, his office said in a statement.

Meanwhile, a medical delegation from Kuwait Society for Relief distributed 2,500 food parcels and 330 medical packs to residents of Al-Hasanat refugee camp to the west of Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip on Saturday.

Continued on Page 6

#### NEWS IN BRIEF

##### Passengers detained over assault

**KUWAIT:** The public prosecution ordered the detention of two female citizens after interrogating them on charges of committing acts of violence onboard a Kuwait Airways flight from Thailand to Kuwait. The suspects are accused of assaulting the air marshal after a quarrel broke out between some passengers. The flight was forced to return to Bangkok to ensure the safety of the passengers. Kuwait Airways announced in a press statement on Sunday the pilot decided to return to the airport in compliance with security measures. It added it will take all legal measures against the violators, urging all passengers to commit to all security measures to ensure the safety of passengers and the aircraft.

##### Kuwait workforce reaches 2.9m

**KUWAIT:** Statistics from the Central Statistical Bureau in Kuwait indicate the total number of Kuwaiti workers reached 454,038 by the end of 2023, while the number of non-Kuwaiti workers, excluding domestic workers, reached 1,678,958. The data further reveal that the total workforce in the government sector, comprising both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti workers, amounted to 476,041 individuals, while in the private sector, it reached 1,656,955. Additionally, the workforce in the domestic labor sector and similar positions amounted to 786,231 individuals. — KUNA (See Page 8)

##### Top Afghan diplomat in India quits

**NEW DELHI:** Afghanistan's top diplomat in India resigned days after she was reportedly caught by airport authorities smuggling nearly \$2 million worth of gold into the country. Zakia Wardak, the Afghan Consul-General in India's financial capital Mumbai, posted a statement on social media platform X announcing her resignation. —AFP (See Page 7)

### Al Jazeera slams Zionist decision to close channel

**DOHA:** Qatar-based network Al Jazeera on Sunday condemned as "criminal" a move by the Zionist government to ban the broadcaster from operating over its coverage of the Gaza war. "We condemn and denounce this criminal act by (the Zionist entity) that violates the human right to access information," the channel said in a statement, adding that it would take legal action.

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday his government had decided unanimously to close the channel, and hours later it went off-air. Al Jazeera has been the focus of months of criticism by Netanyahu and his government in the latest round of a long-running feud that began well before the Zionist entity's war with Hamas in Gaza.

The network said it would "pursue all available legal channels through international legal institutions in its quest to protect both its rights and journalists, as well as the public's right to information". "(The Zionist entity's) ongoing suppression of the free press, seen as an effort to conceal its actions in the Gaza Strip, stands in contravention of international and humanitarian law," the broadcaster said.

Continued on Page 6

### Hezb hits Zionist entity after fatal Lebanon strike

**BEIRUT:** Official media in Lebanon said a Zionist strike Sunday on a southern village killed four family members, with Hezbollah announcing retaliatory attacks, in the latest cross-border violence since the Gaza war erupted. The Zionist entity and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group have exchanged regular cross-border fire since Palestinian militant group Hamas' unprecedented Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity.

Fighting has intensified in recent weeks, with Hamas ally Hezbollah stepping up its attacks on the Zionist entity north, and the Zionist military striking deeper into Lebanese territory. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) said Sunday's strike in Mais Al-Jabal killed "four people from a single family", reporting that the raid was carried out by Zionist aircraft. It identified the dead as a man, a woman and their children aged 12 and 21, and said two other people were wounded. A Lebanese security

Continued on Page 6



**JERUSALEM:** A picture taken on May 5, 2024 shows a message broadcast on the Al Jazeera television network which reads "In accordance with the government decision, Al Jazeera channel broadcasts have been suspended in (the Zionist entity)". — AFP



**KIRYAT SHMONA:** People look at a damaged car at a site hit by rockets fired from southern Lebanon near the Lebanese border on May 5, 2024. — AFP



**GAZA:** Palestinians transport an injured man pulled from the rubble of a house destroyed in a Zionist strike in the center of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on May 5, 2024. — AFP

### Hamas, Zionists entrench Gaza truce positions

**GAZA:** A Hamas official said Sunday the group's delegation for Gaza truce talks in Cairo was leaving for Qatar, after public disagreement with the Zionist entity intensified over demands to end their seven-month war. Earlier, at around the same time the Hamas delegation was meeting Qatari and Egyptian mediators according to a Hamas source, Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said "surrendering" to a demand to end the war would amount to defeat.

The Qatar-based political chief of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, countered by accusing Netanyahu of sabotaging the talks. The first Hamas official, who requested anonymity to discuss the negotiations, told AFP that "the meeting with the Egyptian intelligence minister has ended and the Hamas delegation is leaving for Doha for further consultations".

The Hamas delegation has left and will return for more talks on Tuesday, Egyptian state-linked media said on Sunday.

Continued on Page 6



## Local

# Burgan Bank takes part in AUK's Career Growth Fair

## Part of its ongoing efforts to support and invest in Kuwait's aspiring talents

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently participated in the annual Career Growth Fair organized and hosted by the American University in Kuwait (AUK), offering undergraduates and fresh graduates valuable internships and employment opportunities. The Bank's participation in the one-day event comes as part of its dedicated human capital development strategy and its unwavering efforts to invest in the best and most aspiring professional talents in Kuwait's banking and financial market.

Commenting on Burgan's participation in the fair, Abdulwahab Jamal Abdulraheem - Executive Manager - Talent Acquisition at Burgan Bank, said: "We were delighted to be present once again at AUK's Career Fair, where our HR representatives had the opportunity to meet some of the brightest and most eager talents. We understand that the search for the right job can be an overwhelming journey, and that's why our representatives were happy to answer all of the job seekers' questions in detail and even set up one-on-one screening interviews with the potential candidates."

In addition to the professional insights about the Burgan work experience, the Bank's representatives also shared vital banking awareness and financial literacy with the event's crowd as part

of its ongoing support for the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) campaign - which continues to run for its fourth consecutive year under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), with the unanimous support of Kuwaiti banks.

It serves to note that Burgan Bank's dedicated program for attracting and developing Kuwait's outstanding national talents continues throughout the employees' work journey, whereby all staff are offered numerous opportunities for growth and development that are tailored to their professional needs and personal preferences. These efforts span multiple programs including Ro'ya, in addition to other learning opportunities that are offered in partnership with leading institutions such as the Kuwait Institute for Banking Studies' (KIBS) certification programs.



Abdulwahab Jamal Abdulraheem



Maysoon Al-Attar

## Forum discusses youths, sustainable development

KUWAIT: The official speaker of the Public Authority for Youth Affairs, Asrar Al-Ansari, stressed the importance of enhancing the role of youth in achieving sustainable development, which is one of the most prominent issues of current interest to the world in light of the growing threat of climate change and the persistence of unequal social conditions among the world's societies. In a speech at the opening of the Youth Speak Forum organized by AIESEC Kuwait at the American University, Al-Ansari said: "Working hard to achieve sustainability is not just an option for the world's youth but has become a duty towards themselves first and then for future generations."

She explained that the forum discussed ways to promote sustainable development, provide quality education and suitable job opportunities for young people, achieve economic growth, and work to reduce climate change, adding that young people have new ideas and innovative solutions to achieve the necessary progress in these tracks. She said that young people have the potential to change policies, stimulate new technology, and lead societies towards addressing issues, especially with regard to protecting the environment or working for justice, praising the good organization of the forum, seminars, and distinguished lectures.

Al-Ansari pointed to the Authority's keenness to participate in important youth forums held inside and outside the country to enable Kuwaiti youth to learn, develop, and create important spaces for them to gain experiences in light of the great support provided by the state. The Authority participated in the forum by providing support and participating in panel discussions dedicated to discussing the main topic of the forum. Experts and specialists raised awareness and exchanged experiences, opinions, and views in this regard.

For her part, the head of AIESEC Kuwait, Maysoon Al-Attar, said in a similar speech that the agenda of the forum, which is being held for the first time in Kuwait, was developed based on a questionnaire sent to young people to confirm meeting their requirements and needs. "It includes lectures from specialists and panel discussions in sustainability, as well as giving them global volunteer opportunities in this field," she said. — KUNA



Asrar Al-Ansari

## IICO, UNDP ink MoU to enhance cooperation

KUWAIT: The International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) signed on Sunday a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to enhance cooperation and humanitarian response to crises in poor countries. The Chairman of the Kuwait-based IICO, Dr. Abdullah Al-Maatouq, said in a speech during the signing ceremony that the IICO was proud to cooperate with the UNDP, represented by the Regional Office for Arab States, and appreciated its efforts in promoting sustainable development and eradicating poverty.

Al-Maatouq added that the signing of the memorandum was part of the authority's strategic vision for 2022-26, aiming to establish effective strategic partnerships. He highlighted that the IICO and UNDP shared a common will on several issues, including cooperation in areas of mutual interest, leveraging expertise, and sharing resources to address social, economic, and environmental challenges affecting people globally.

Al-Maatouq noted that the memorandum would enhance strategic capabilities and institutional development by working to enhance the skills of humanitarian and charitable sector



workers and adopting comprehensive systems to measure and manage the sustainable social impact of charitable activities. He indicated that among the common ideas is exploring avenues for joint financing of development projects, which the UNDP can implement internationally or regionally.

Furthermore, concepts and initiatives will be developed into jointly funded projects in areas of mutual interest, actively participating in global forums, collaborating on research and studies in the field of sustainable development, and enhancing its practices. UNDP is the United Nations global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build better lives. — KUNA



The International Islamic Charity Organization on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to enhance cooperation and humanitarian response to crises in poor countries.



Participants attend a workshop organized by Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. — KUNA photos



Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Office, Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah

## Foreign Ministry organizes CEDAW workshop

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a workshop on Sunday in technical cooperation to raise the efficiency of the National Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The workshop will last for three days, represented by the



Human Rights Departments and in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

It will be held under the supervision of the Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Office, Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah, according to a press statement by the Ministry. Kuwait is keen to fulfill its promise to deepen cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including the Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program. Kuwait joined CEDAW under Amiri Decree No. 24 of 1994, in accordance with Kuwait's constitutional articles, ensuring that women can enjoy all the rights stipulated in the agreements. — KUNA

## KFAS honors Arab researchers with Kuwait Prize



Nashat Nassar



Mohammad Al-Dowdy



Mohammad Sultan



Dina Al-Qatabi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) announced Sunday the winners of the 42nd edition of the Kuwait Prize, granted annually to Kuwaiti and Arab scientists with notable achievements and contributions. In a press release, KFAS listed the winners and their respective fields, beginning with Dr. Nashat Nassar of Palestine and Morocco's Mohammad Al-Dowdy in the field of chemistry. Dr. Nassar, a professor of chemistry, specializes in nano-particles with a focus on eco-sustainability.

Dr. Al-Dowdy, also a professor of chemistry, specializes in metal organic frameworks and their applications. Egypt's Dr. Mohammad Sultan won the award in the field of applied science. Dr. Sultan's research offered a new understanding of complex hydraulic systems in environments subject to climate change. In the field of emerging science, Dr. Dina Al-Qatabi won the award for her work in artificial intelligence and robotics. The Kuwait Prize was established in 1979 to promote research efforts and encourage Arab scientists. — KUNA



## Local

# GCC seeks Islamic cooperation

## Islamic world faces formidable challenges and unprecedented turmoil



Chief delegates to the 15th Islamic Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation pose for a group photo.— KUNA photos

**JEDDAH:** Representative of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, said the 15th Islamic Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) takes place at a time when the Islamic world is facing formidable challenges and unprecedented turmoil. In his address to the opening session of the two-day event in Banjul, the capital of Gambia, on Saturday, Sheikh Abdullah conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir to the heads of state, government, and chief delegates.

"The Islamic nations are undergoing a complicated stage fraught with trans-border peril, wars, and natural disasters that no country can address alone. On top of these challenges is the occupying power's aggression on the brotherly people of Palestine, which continues amid inaction by the UN Security Council and complete failure by the international community to stand the test of values and principles," he regretted. "Kuwait had warned once and again against the international community's use of double standards in addressing the Palestine question," Sheikh Abdullah said.

Reiterating the call for finding a fair, peaceful, and comprehensive solution and deterring Zionists, the occupying power, from persisting in its criminal acts, he said, "This is the biggest and most serious challenge that requires the Islamic states coordinating their stances and doubling their efforts to put an end to the atrocities, implement the relevant UN resolutions, provide international protection for the civilian population in Palestine, and bring to book the Zionist accomplices in crimes."

"The Palestine question will continue to be the core concern for the Arab and Muslim nations. It is high time for the world to realize that peace, security, and stability in the region are unlikely without a just, durable, and comprehensive settlement to the issue that could meet the aspirations of Palestinians and the entire Muslim nation," Sheikh Abdullah underscored.

Dealing with the phenomenon of Islamophobia, he said the Islamic faith has been subject to a tendentious witch hunt that aims to defame its noble principles such as tolerance, peacefulness, and coexistence. "The responsibility rests with us all to protect the true image of Islam against the hostile defamation campaigns," he urged, voicing hope that the summit would lead to consensus on how to address the current challenges. The 15th Islamic Summit, being held under the theme "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development," gathered 12 heads of state and government, 31 foreign ministers and Cabinet members, and representatives of several regional and international organizations.

## Pharmaceutical exhibition and conference kicks off

**KUWAIT:** The first Kuwait Pharmaceutical Advancement Exhibition and Conference (KPAC), organized by the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association (KUPHA), kicked off on Sunday, focusing on the advanced role of pharmacy practice in Kuwait. KPAC aimed to "ensure representation of all pharmacy sectors in Kuwait, highlight career opportunities for all pharmacists, continue professional development for pharmacists, and improve patient care in all pharmacy sectors."

In a statement to KUNA, Chairman of KPAC Dr. Ahmad Taqi said that this conference is the first of its kind to include all sectors under the umbrella of pharmacy. In turn, Dr. Farah Al-Enezi, co-chairwoman of KPAC, said, "The conference aims to bring all pharmacists together" and is seeking to be recognized and ranked among the leading worldwide scientific conferences to network and share updated information related to pharmacy.

Pharmacists at the Kuwait Minister of Health (MoH) and KPAC organizer Ph. Dana Al-Aynati explained that this conference "is by pharmacists for pharmacists," and "the organizers and photographers are also pharmacists." The topics discussed in the conference centered on innovative developments regarding healthcare in pharmacy practice, ranging from pharmacy education to updated clinical guidelines.

The lectures, by renowned pharmacists and researchers in this field, were carefully selected to highlight the diverse challenges and strategies



(Left) Representative of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya leads Kuwait Delegation at the 15th Islamic Summit of the OIC. (Right) Abdullah Al-Yahya meets with Secretary General of Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) Deemah Al-Yahya on the sidelines of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit currently being held in Gambia's capital.

### Islamic cooperation

Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, said the GCC member states are eager to boost Islamic collaboration. Speaking at the 15th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Al-Budaiwi said, "We are gathering today while the world is facing major accelerating challenges in light of perilous developments." The GCC and OIC have prominent roles, as they are two active organizations to face several crises in the Middle East region and the whole world, he noted. Common challenges facing "us require joint action and cooperation to enhance the values of peace and prosperity, mainly in the Gaza Strip, which has been attacked brutally by occupation, he stated. Al-Budaiwi referred to the key outcomes of the extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic summit hosted by Riyadh last year.

The summit resulted in the formation of a ministerial committee that moved around the world to help and save Palestinian people in Gaza through de-escalation, protecting civilians, and restoring peace efforts, he noted. The Zionists have been attacking Palestinians for over 211 days, killing so far 35,000 people, most of them children and women, he pointed out. Continued attacks by Zionists require "all of us renewing collective action to back Palestinian people and their rights," Al-Budaiwi noted.

He underlined the importance of the OIC ministerial council's call for holding an international conference to enhance international and regional stability and security. He urged shedding light on sustainable development and boosting cooperation in science, technology, and innovation to support sustainable development projects.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hissein Taha called on the international community to live up to its due re-

sponsibility by halting the Zionist aggression. He also called for broadening the world recognition of Palestine for full United Nations (UN) membership, helping the Palestinian people regain their rights, including the return of refugees, self-determination, and an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 border with Jerusalem as its capital, based on relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Taha added that this Islamic summit comes amid serious and unprecedented developments pertinent to the Palestinian cause, chiefly the Zionist aggression on the population of the Gaza Strip and acts that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity as per international humanitarian law and relevant UN resolutions. The OIC chief underlined that dialogue and reconciliation are the only ways to resolve the issues and causes of some OIC member states, including Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and the Sahel region.

However, Taha spoke highly of existing cooperation between the OIC and the UN and its agencies, along with other international and regional partners, reiterating his willingness to promote dialogue and cooperation to serve common interests and contribute to bolstering peace and understanding worldwide. The 15th session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation kicked off its 15th session at the top level in the Gambian capital Banjul earlier on Saturday, with the participation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Representative, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya.

The OIC summit is expected to conclude with a statement expressing its stand on the issues on the agenda, namely the Palestinian cause and the Jerusalem issue. Earlier, the OIC members' foreign ministers held a meeting discussing the session papers and the anticipated final communiqué of the summit. — KUNA



concerning clinical pharmacy, toxicology, drug supervision, and manufacturing. Local and global speakers participated in this conference, sharing their research and data with attendees through workshops, exhibitions, and other educational programs offered at the event. Kuwait University faculty member Dr. Maryam Al-Owayesh's lecture discussed "Cost of Illness Studies" in Kuwait, where the field of pharma-coeconomics focuses on the economic and financial magnitude of an illness or disease.

Pharma-coeconomics quantifies the expenses of the disease, which will aid in forecasting the needed budget for that specific disease, she explained. In his lecture "A Closer Look at the Current Status of Drug Manufacturing in Kuwait," Dr. Rashed Khazal, chairperson and manager of Kuwait Saudi Pharmaceuticals Industries Company, talked about the ambitious and opportune future of drug manufacturing in Kuwait. Whereas Director of Drug Inspection Administration at Kuwait MoH Dr. Reem Al-Essa's lecture, "Pharmacy

Inspection Process in Kuwait," discussed the meticulous inspection and pharmacovigilance processes in the region.

The workshops offered include Practical Scenarios for Warfarin Dosing and Monitoring by Dr. Asmaa Al-Buloushi, Pharmacy Care Services for Older Adults by Mariam Al-Haddad, An Introduction to Kuwait's Poison Control by Dr. Abdullatif Al-Oumi, and much more. Researchers from Kuwait University, local hospitals, visiting and local pharmacists, members of KUPHA, pharmacy students, and associations participated and attended the two-day workshops and conference. — KUNA



Maryam Al-Owayesh

## Amir's visit to Turkey

By Tuba Nur Sonmez  
Turkish Ambassador

As the Turkish Ambassador in Kuwait, it is with great honor and anticipation that I address the upcoming official visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait to Turkey. This visit is not only a testament to the deep-rooted friendship and cooperation between our nations but also marks His Highness' first official visit outside the Arab world - a clear signal of the closeness and mutual respect that define the Turkey-Kuwait relationship.



This year, we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Kuwait, a journey that has been characterized by mutual understanding, shared interests, and a commitment to regional peace and stability. The Amir's visit is poised to be a crucial milestone, infusing new momentum into our bilateral cooperation across various sectors, including trade, defense, and cultural exchange.

The significance of this visit, however, extends far beyond our bilateral ties. At a time when our region faces unprecedented challenges, the need for consultation and coordination between Turkey and Kuwait becomes paramount. Both nations, as actors who share similar visions for the region, are dedicated to fostering dialogue and collaboration to navigate these turbulent times. The brotherly ties between our leaders have always been the cornerstone of our excellent political relations. The mutual trust and understanding between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and His Highness Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah have paved the way for a partnership that transcends traditional diplomacy.

### A new chapter is set

On the economic front, our bilateral potential is enormous. In the face of ever-changing global dynamics and ongoing geopolitical challenges, both Turkey and Kuwait are keenly aware of the need to look toward future economic directions. In the year 2023, the trade volume between our nations reaching nearly \$700 million is a testament to our strong political relations and a figure that holds the promise of exponential growth.

The shared commitment to enhancing our economic partnership is evident on both sides, and it is this shared vision that fuels our optimism. We firmly believe that His Highness Amir's visit to Turkey will be a catalyst for unlocking new opportunities in trade and investment. Turkey, renowned as an industrial powerhouse with a significant manufacturing capacity across diverse sectors, stands ready to welcome Kuwaiti investments. On the other hand, Kuwait's financial strength, robust fiscal position, and expertise in finance and investment are noteworthy.

This synergy has the potential to forge a partnership that not only benefits our countries but also serves as a beacon for international cooperation. As we anticipate the outcomes of this landmark visit, we are confident that it will pave the way for a flourishing economic relationship. The partnership between Turkey and Kuwait is set to expand, creating a model of economic collaboration that resonates with our shared aspirations for prosperity and development.

In conclusion, the visit of His Highness the Amir to Turkey is more than a diplomatic engagement; it is a bridge to a future where our economic ties are as strong and enduring as the political bonds that unite us. Under the visionary leadership of President Erdogan and His Highness the Amir, we are embarking on a journey that promises to elevate our partnership to unprecedented heights.

In the aftermath of this significant visit, under the visionary leadership of both our leaders, we are confident that the partnership between Turkey and Kuwait will not only strengthen but also expand into new areas of cooperation. This visit will undoubtedly mark the beginning of a new chapter in our shared history, one that promises prosperity and solidarity for our nations and the region at large. As we prepare to welcome His Highness the Amir, we look forward to the opportunities that this historic visit will bring, reaffirming our commitment to a future built on the solid foundation of friendship and strategic partnership between Turkey and Kuwait.

### Gaza - common concern

The upcoming visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait to Turkey is not only a bridge between nations but also a beacon of hope for a region in turmoil. As we stand on the cusp of this visit, our hearts and minds turn to Gaza - the bleeding scar of our region. The crisis in Gaza is an ever-mounting concern that threatens to engulf the entire Middle East, with the ongoing conflict posing a significant risk to global security.

Both Turkey and Kuwait have long stood in solidarity with the Palestinian people, advocating for an end to the barbaric Zionist violence and the cessation of the brutal occupation. Our shared position is clear: we support the establishment of a Palestinian state in accordance with relevant UN resolutions. This common stance underscores the importance of the Amir's visit, as it provides a pivotal platform for our leaders to discuss the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

During the meetings between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the plight of the Gazan people will take center stage. It is a testament to the compassionate leadership of both nations that Turkey and Kuwait rank among the top humanitarian aid providers to Gaza. This commitment to humanitarian assistance reflects our nations' dedication to alleviating suffering and fostering peace.



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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com

Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

## OAPEC to discuss developing and restructuring

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), Jamal Al-Loughani, said the 112th Council meeting would discuss developing and restructuring the organization. The gathering, held at the level of OAPEC representatives, will feature Executive Bureau members represented by ministers of energy and oil, Al-Loughani told KUNA, adding that it will also consider regulations and systems to be compatible with challenges and developments in energy.



Jamal Al-Loughani

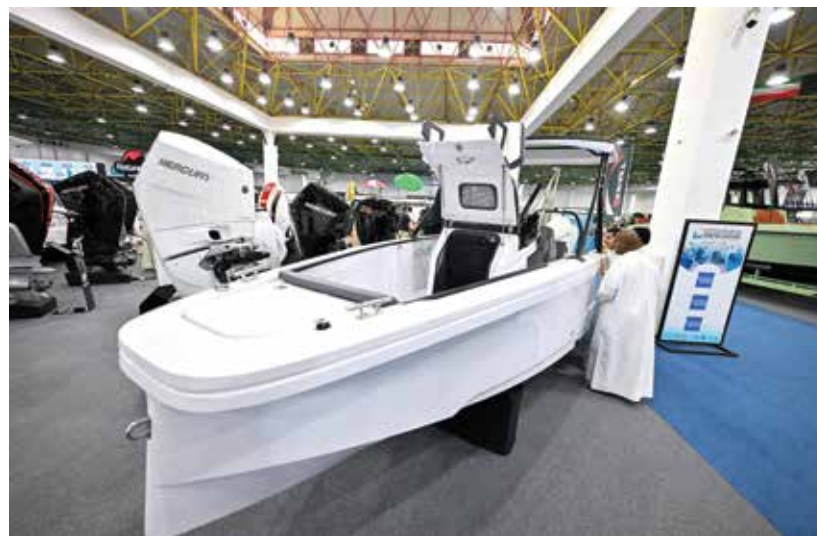
The meeting, to be chaired by Qatar's representative, Sheikh Mishal bin Jabr Al Than, will deal with the 2024 OAPEC scientific research award in addition to following global oil situations and the action of the information bank as well as climate change, he noted. The 112th meeting will be preceded by the 169th Executive Bureau gathering under the chairmanship of Sheikh Mishal, Al-Loughani stated. Al-Loughani thanked Kuwait for hosting OAPEC meetings in a manner that ensures their success, and he also thanked member states for their continued support of the OAPEC Secretariat in order to achieve its goals. — KUNA

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## Ministry launches ration card renewal service via Sahel

KUWAIT: The official spokesman of the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel), Youssef Kazem, announced the launch of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's ration card renewal application service electronically through the Sahel app. Kazem said in a press statement on Sunday that a user who has a ration card and is seeking to renew it can log in to the app, choose the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and then select 'request to renew the ration card'. This service comes within the efforts of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to speed up transactions. — KUNA

### Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Visitors tour the Kuwait international 2024 Expo for water sports, fishing, hunting and outdoor activities at Kuwait International Fairgrounds on May 4, 2024. — Photos by Yasser Al Zayyat

## AAW receives UK, Palestinian envoys

### In support of private Palestinian companies

KUWAIT: Chairman and CEO of Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co (AAW), Faisal Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa, received the British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, and the Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub, on April 28, 2024. The meeting was attended by delegates from the Palestinian and British embassies, as well as the head of "Tasdeer" program Nassim Nour, representative at the British Consulate General in Jerusalem, Michael Sansour, and the Strategic Consultant Shawqi Makhtooob.

The parties discussed collaboration opportunities within the "Tasdeer" program, to support Palestinian private sector companies and bring Palestinian products to the Kuwaiti markets. Tasdeer is a private sector development program, funded by the British government. It works to expedite the movement of Palestinian goods across borders and reduce transaction costs, improve the trade-enabling environment, strengthen the private sector's export competitiveness, and improve customs capacity.

AAW Chairman and CEO Faisal Ali Al Mutawa said: "We were honored today by the visit of the Palestinian and British delegations. We discussed



the importance of supporting the Palestinian private sector and boosting exports of Palestinian products to contribute to their economic development." He added: "We are committed to supporting Palestinian private companies, enhancing their export competitiveness, and easing the burdens imposed by the occupation's blockade."

I thank the Palestinian and British Ambassadors for their visit, and we wish them success in "Tasdeer" program and all their endeavors." The British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis said, "I am grateful for the warm welcome extended by Faisal

Al Mutawa from AAW to our Tasdeer program colleagues who visited from Jerusalem last week.

Increasing exports of Palestinian products to Kuwait will help support the resilience of the Palestinian economy in general and private sector in particular, create more jobs and offer an even greater range of top-quality products for consumers here in Kuwait." AAW is one of the oldest and largest retail and distribution companies in the Middle East, with world-class operations in different sectors. The company is a distributor of over 200 global brands in Kuwait's surging wholesale and retail market.

## Music: Escapism from reality

By Zainab Al-Mashoor

KUWAIT: While music often serves as a refuge from reality, it can also evoke painful memories, acting as an echo of past experiences. For some, music becomes an addiction, captivating them with its melodies, while for others, it becomes a guiding force, influencing their life decisions through its lyrics. The Kuwait Times recently spoke to individuals about the impact of music on their lives.

Music makes Faten's world colorful: it's a helping hand to Khalid, a motivation to Mohammed, an expression to Zena's hidden emotions, a good vibe changer and acknowledgment to Youssef, a tool for skills and cheering up Hassan, a voice of silence to Abdelrahman, a distraction to Shymaa, whereas it's a validity to Hala's feelings.

Faten finds that music transports her to a colorful world, disconnecting her from reality. She shares, "While listening to certain songs, my imagination paints a world full of rainbows, positivity, and happiness. However, some songs trigger memories of loss, such as my grandma's passing. I relate to the denial portrayed in one song about the loss of his wife, as I once experienced a similar phase when I lost my grandma. Another song serves as a reminder of how much I miss her presence."

Khaled shares how music has been a key factor in shaping his life, especially as an only child. The time spent listening and playing music in his growth has built more of a personal bond between himself and the artists. Khalid remarks, "Music not only helps me cope with loneliness and helps with my sleepless nights, but also inspires my approach to various aspects of life. It aids in relaxation and can provide clarity during moments of confusion and different directions to deal with problems. Music isn't merely an escape from reality but an enriching addition, infusing another dimension into our existence."

Mohammed uses music as a source of motivation while engaging in various tasks, such as going to the gym, which boosts his energy and keeps him going, doing household activities to make it smoother for him, or even writing, which helps him think creatively. However, he acknowledges that certain songs can evoke memories, both pleasant and unpleasant. Zena reflects on the emotional spectrum of music, stating, "While some songs boost my mood, others elicit deep sadness, leading to tears. Music has the power to unearth hidden emotions within me. However, it's essential to be cautious with music choices, as some can induce overthinking and even contribute to depression." She advises separating life decisions from the influence of music.

With confusion in Youssef's feelings and emotions, music serves as a helping hand in clearing his feelings, acknowledging his emotions in a physical form, and sometimes compensating for a sad thought or feeling. For him, music is an amazing tool to deviate his mind from reality, making him enjoy moments. He explained how music in the background of a gathering could capitalize on the vibe by adjusting a mood or awkward silence and adding to an enjoyable conversation.

Hassan has a unique approach to his listening habits. He explains, "I often choose music that contrasts with my current emotions, either to uplift my mood or to delve deeper into my thoughts, depending on the genre I'm listening to. This contrast sometimes gives me a sense of power and energy." Additionally, Hassan mentioned using music during routine activities, such as walking his dogs, to make it more enjoyable. Reflecting on nostalgia, Hassan reminisced about the music of the 80s and 90s, which holds a special place in his heart. Certain songs serve as a reminder to his late uncle, as they enjoyed them together.



As a guitarist, Hassan utilizes music not only for enjoyment but also as a tool for learning. He listens to specific pieces to study new scales and melodies. Moreover, he appreciates music's storytelling aspect, finding inspiration in songs that convey real-life narratives. Being a quiet person who doesn't like sharing his emotions, Abdelrahman listens to music whenever he is upset, as it serves as an expression of his feelings. He also listens to it to be able to focus at work and mute the noise of distractions around him.

Shymaa listens to music as a distraction from overthinking and anxiety, and other times she listens to it to hype herself up and finish her chores faster. It also serves as nostalgia for certain memories. As a teenager, Hala feels safe listening to lyrics that validate her feelings, reminding her that it's okay, that it's common to feel in a certain way, and that she isn't suffering alone with those feelings. "Music acts like a bandage to the unexpressed emotions in me."



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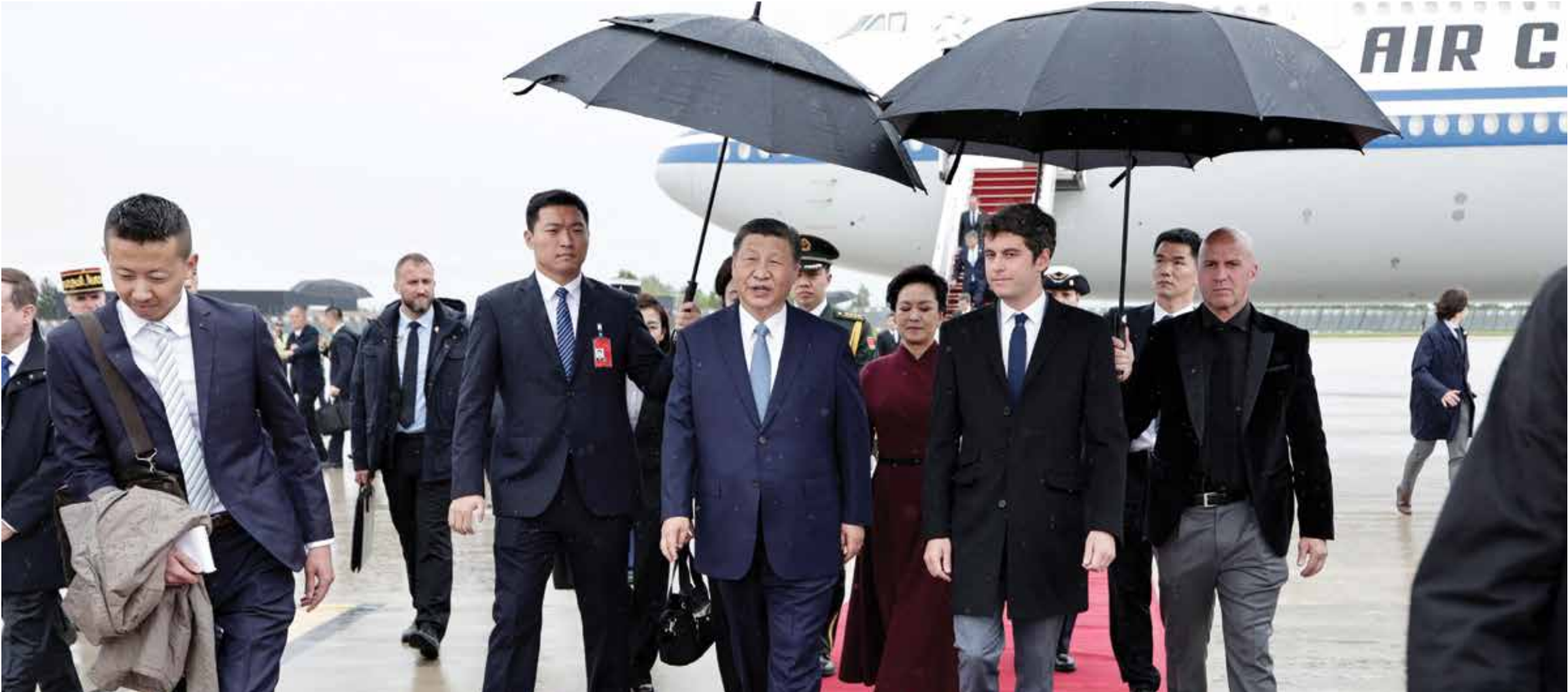
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Tunisian town gripped by youth exodus

Canada has ‘political compulsion’ to blame India for Sikh slaying: FM



ORLY, France: France’s Prime Minister Gabriel Attal (second right), China’s President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan (center) walk along the red carpet upon their arrival for an official two-day state visit, at Orly airport, south of Paris on May 5, 2024. — AFP

# China’s Xi in France for crucial talks

## Macron to push his counterpart on issues ranging from Ukraine to trade

**PARIS:** Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sunday arrived in France on a state visit hosted by Emmanuel Macron where the French leader will seek to push his counterpart on issues ranging from Ukraine to trade. Xi’s arrival for the visit marking 60 years of diplomatic relations between France and China heralded the start of his first trip to Europe since 2019, which will also see him visit Serbia and Hungary.

But Xi’s choice of France as the sole major European power to visit indicates the relative warmth in Sino-French relations since Macron made his own state visit to China in April 2023 and acknowledges the French leader’s stature as an EU powerbroker.

The leader of the one-party Communist state of more than 1.4 billion people, accompanied by his wife Peng Liyuan, was welcomed under umbrellas at a drizzly Paris Orly airport by Prime Minister Gabriel Attal. Xi is to hold a day of talks in Paris on Monday – also including EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen – followed by a state banquet hosted by Macron at the Elysee.

Tuesday will see Macron take Xi to the Pyrenees mountains to an area he used to visit as a boy for a day of less public and more intimate talks. Quoted

on arrival in Paris by the Xinhua state news agency, Xi said the development of China-France relations had “injected stability and positive energy into the turbulent world” and China was ready to “enhance political mutual trust, build strategic consensus and deepen exchanges” during the visit.

A key priority of Macron will be to warn Xi of the danger of backing Russia in its invasion of Ukraine, with Western officials concerned Moscow is already using Chinese machine tools in arms production. Beijing’s ties with Moscow have, if anything, warmed after the invasion and the West wants China above all not to supply weapons to Russia and risk tipping the balance in the conflict.

“It is in our interest to get China to weigh in on the stability of the international order,” said Macron in an interview with the Economist published on Thursday. “We must, therefore, work with China to build peace,” he added. Macron also said in the same Economist interview that Europe must defend its “strategic interests” in its economic relations with China, accusing Beijing of not respecting the rules on international trade.

But he acknowledged in an interview with the La

Tribune Dimanche newspaper that Europeans are “not unanimous” on the strategy to adopt as “certain actors still see China essentially as a market of opportunities” while it “exports massively” to Europe.

The French president had gladdened Chinese state media and troubled some EU allies after his 2023 visit by declaring that Europe should not be drawn into a standoff between China and the United States, particularly over democratic, self-ruled Taiwan. China views the island as part of its territory and has vowed to take it one day, by force if necessary. “The worst thing would be to think that we Europeans must be followers and adapt ourselves to the American rhythm and a Chinese overreaction,” Macron said at the time, warning against a “bloc versus bloc logic”.

Rights groups are urging Macron to bring up human rights in the talks, accusing China of failing to respect the rights of the Uyghur Muslim minority and keeping dozens of journalists behind bars. “President Macron should make it clear to Xi Jinping that Beijing’s crimes against humanity come with consequences for China’s relations with France,” said Maya Wang, acting China director at Human Rights Watch. — AFP



Bernard Hill

## ‘Lord of the Rings’ actor Bernard Hill dies aged 79

**LONDON:** British actor Bernard Hill, best known for his supporting roles in “Titanic” and “The Lord Of The Rings” trilogy, died on Sunday aged 79, his agent announced.

He played Captain Edward Smith in the Oscar-winning 1997 epic romance “Titanic”, and earned worldwide recognition playing Theoden, King of Rohan, in two of the three “The Lord Of The Rings” films directed by Peter Jackson. His agent Lou Coulson confirmed his death in the early hours of Sunday to British media outlets.

Early in his career, Hill featured in the BBC’s 1982 acclaimed drama “Boys from the Black-stuff”, which won numerous awards and is still lauded as one of the finest examples of its genre from the era. He is set to return to television screens in series two of a contemporary BBC drama, “The Responder”, starring Martin Freeman, which begins airing in the UK later on Sunday. — AFP

## Brazil mounts frantic rescue effort as flooding kills 66

**PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil:** Authorities in southern Brazil raced against the clock Sunday to rescue people from raging floods and mudslides that have killed at least 66 and forced more than 80,000 to flee their homes. All over the city of Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul state, people stood on rooftops hoping to be rescued as others in canoes or small boats navigated streets that have turned into rivers.

Civil defense officials said at least 101 people were missing in the latest of a string of catastrophic weather events in the South American giant.

Viewed from the air, Porto Alegre was completely flooded, with streets under water and the roofs of some houses barely visible. The Guaiba River, which flows through the city of 1.4 million people, reached a record high level of 5.3 meters (17.4 feet), according to the local municipality, well above the historic peak of 4.76 meters that had stood as a record since devastating 1941 floods.

The water was still advancing into economically important Porto Alegre and hundreds of other localities, with increasingly dramatic consequences. Rain was intermittent Sunday morning but expected to continue for another day or so, as the flood waters kept rising. In addition to the tens of thousands



PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil: Aerial view of flooded streets at the Sarandi neighborhood in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil on May 5, 2024. — AFP

forced from their homes, Brazil’s civil defense agency said more than a million people lacked access to drinking water and it described the damage as incalculable. Some 15,000 people are now living in shelters. Rosana Custodio, a 37-year-old nurse, fled her flooded Porto Alegre home with her husband and three children. “During the night on Thursday the waters began to rise very quickly,” she told AFP via a WhatsApp message.

“In a hurry, we went out to look for a safer place. But we couldn’t walk... My husband put our two little ones in a kayak and rowed with a bamboo. My son

and I swam to the end of the street,” she said. Her family was safe but “we’ve lost everything we had.”

Authorities scrambled to evacuate swamped neighborhoods as rescue workers used four-wheel-drive vehicles – and even jet skis – to maneuver through waist-deep water in search of the stranded. Rio Grande do Sul Governor Eduardo Leite said his state, normally one of Brazil’s most prosperous, would need a “Marshall Plan” of heavy investment to rebuild. Sunday will be a key day for the rescue effort, said Paulo Pimenta, a senior communications official under President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. — AFP

the politician’s own star rises. Magyar has drawn tens of thousands of people to his rallies since shooting to prominence in February on the back of a scandal that hit Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Nagy is set to take to the stage at the latest gathering on Sunday, in Hungary’s third biggest city, Debrecen – a stronghold of Orban’s Fidesz party. Accusing the government of populism, cronyism and corruption, Magyar’s campaign is raising hopes for a “system change”, the actor said. The campaign is growing so fast, he had to lend the politician his pick-up truck to stand on for a speech at one spontaneous rally.

“We didn’t have time to get a stage,” said Nagy, 47. “There’s a revolutionary mood, like in 1956,” he said – a reference to the historic uprising against Hungary’s Soviet-backed communist rulers.

Nagy helped organize Sunday’s rally and plans to appear on stage alongside any other celebrities who are “brave enough” to join. Magyar, 43 and a self-declared conservative, has led a political group since last month which aims to be “neither right nor left” to challenge Orban. He is now touring the central European country ahead of EU elections on June 9.

Magyar seized the initiative in February when an ally of Orban, Katalin Novak, resigned as president after it was revealed she had pardoned a convicted accomplice of a child abuser. It was the biggest scandal to hit Orban in his 14 years as premier and sparked the fiercest protests he has yet faced, according to analysts. In less than three months, Magyar’s TISZA (Respect and Freedom) party has eclipsed the rest of the opposition heading into the European elections. — AFP

## ‘Revolution’ in air as actor stumps for Hungary oppn

**DEBRECEN, Hungary:** Pounding the campaign trail ahead of European elections, the emerging leader of the opposition to Hungary’s nationalist government has managed to grab the support of a well-known screen actor to help draw crowds.

Ervin Nagy, known from Hungarian films such as the historical horse-racing adventure “Bet on Revenge” and Oscar-nominated drama “On Body and Soul”, is lending celebrity power to Peter Magyar as

## Driver dies after ramming car into White House gate

**WASHINGTON:** A driver died after crashing a car into the exterior gate of the White House late Saturday, the US Secret Service said. “Shortly before 10:30pm a vehicle traveling at a high speed collided with an outer perimeter gate on the White House complex,” the service said in a statement on social media platform X, adding there was “no threat” to the White House itself. Officers arriving at the scene “attempted to render aid to the driver who was discovered deceased,” the statement said.

The Secret Service, along with the police and fire departments of the District of Columbia, have launched an investigation into the fatal crash, according to Secret Service spokesman Anthony Guglielmi. He added there was “no threat or public safety implications”. In January, authorities detained another person who crashed a vehicle into the exterior gate of the same complex. The White House has seen a string of high-profile trespassing incidents in recent years, prompting the construction of a higher, tougher metal fence around the iconic mansion’s perimeter in 2020. — AFP



## International

# Tunisian town gripped by youth exodus

## Over 1,300 migrants died or disappeared last year in shipwrecks near Tunisian coast

**EL HENCHA, Tunisia:** When Mohamed Lafi vanished at sea one fateful night, it marked yet another tragedy for a Tunisian town struggling with the exodus of its youth. Mohamed's disappearance adds to the deepening despair in El Hencha, situated just 150 kilometers (90 miles) from the Italian island of Lampedusa. His sister, Ines, stayed behind, confronting the harsh reality that many families face as their loved ones risk everything in search of a better life in Europe.

Mohamed, a 30-year-old taxi driver, left home on the night of January 10 with little more than his mobile phone. "He went without saying anything to my parents, without a change of clothes, or a bag," said Ines, 42. It seemed as though he "was going to meet his friends", she said. Mohamed was one of 40 would-be migrants who had boarded a boat—all Tunisians aged between 17 and 30, including a woman and her four-month-old baby. Despite adverse weather conditions and rough seas, they were determined to set sail, their families said.

More than 1,300 migrants died or disappeared last year in shipwrecks near the Tunisian coast, said the Tunisian Forum for Social and Economic Rights (FTDES) non-governmental organization. In 2023, Tunisians accounted for the second largest number of irregular migrant arrivals in Italy, at 17,304 people, second only to Guineans at 18,204, Italian government official figures show. The European Union signed an agreement last year to provide financial aid to debt-ridden Tunisia in return for its commitment to curb migrant departures.

The sense of hopelessness is palpable in Tunisia, whose economy is stagnant with only 0.4 percent of growth in 2023 and unemployment hovering around 40 percent. The north African country has also been shaken by political tensions, after President Kais Saied orchestrated a sweeping power grab in July 2021. Those missing from El Hencha, mainly from the middle class, shared a grim outlook for the future, said FTDES.

"Irregular migration cannot be explained only by economic and social factors," said Romdhane Ben Amor, spokesman for the rights organization. "The political factor and the feeling of despair of Tunisians who don't believe in the future of the country" also play a significant role, he added. Meflah Jalloul, the father of another young migrant, was aware of his son Mohamed's long-



**HENCHA:** Family members of Tunisian migrants who were lost at sea in January gather with their pictures in Hencha, about 45 kilometers north of Sfax in central Tunisia. — AFP photos

ing to cross the Mediterranean for a brighter future. The 62-year-old fishmonger had pleaded with Mohamed to wait for better weather before embarking on his journey. But the 17-year-old, intent on making the perilous voyage, simply kissed his father on his head and left. "He wanted money to migrate," said Jalloul, taking responsibility for providing the funds.

With daily earnings of 20 dinars (about \$6), Mohamed Lafi was left with little prospects for building a stable future, said his sister Ines. "He was unable to make plans or build a house or get married," she lamented. Yousri Henchi, a 22-year-old migrant, dropped out of high school and earned a meagre income of 10 to 15 dinars a day

working at an internet cafe. His uncle, Mohamed Henchi, attributed the allure of Europe to frustrated youths like Yousri being influenced by successful migrants who shared their experiences on social media. "They see that and want to change their future. They see Europe as a paradise," he said. Jalloul had sought to persuade his son, who also quit high school, to undergo vocational training and migrate legally to Italy, France, or Germany.

"He shouldn't have left without skills or qualifications," he said. "He could have learnt a trade—plumbing, carpentry, or mechanics." Jalloul clings to the hope that the boat Mohamed boarded drifted toward neighboring Libya, although searches there by family con-



**HENCHA:** A family member of one of the Tunisian migrants who were lost at sea in January holds up their pictures in Hencha.

tacts have yielded no leads.

"Four months have passed and I am still crying for my son," he said, overcome with emotion.

Ines Lafi expressed anger toward the person who smuggled her brother's group, a figure well-known in El Hencha for facilitating clandestine crossings to Italy. "He had always come back here, but this time, he disappeared without a trace." The families have urged Tunisian authorities to bolster economic conditions, educational programs and cultural activities in the town of around 6,000 people to encourage youths to stay. "We must enhance the industrial zone and create job opportunities for young people," said Henchi. — AFP

## Kenya floods death toll at 228 as crisis persists

**NAIROBI:** Kenya said Sunday that the death toll from weeks of devastating rains and floods had risen to 228 and warned that there was no sign of a let-up in the crisis.

While Kenya and neighboring Tanzania escaped major damage from a tropical cyclone that weakened after making landfall on Saturday, the government in Nairobi said the country continued to endure torrential downpours and the risk of further floods and landslides. In western Kenya, the River Nyando burst its banks in the early hours of Sunday, engulfing a police station, school, hospital and market in the town of Ahero in Kisumu County, police said.

There were no immediate reports of casualties but local police said water levels were still rising and that the main bridge outside Kisumu on the highway to Nairobi was submerged. Weeks of heavier than usual seasonal rains, compounded by the El Nino weather pattern, have wreaked chaos in many parts of East Africa, a region highly vulnerable to climate change. More than 400 people have been killed and several hundred thousand uprooted from their homes in several countries as floods and mudslides swamp houses, roads and bridges. "It's a serious situation and we should

not take it lightly," Kenyan government spokesman Isaac Mwaura said at a briefing on the crisis on Sunday.

Across the border, the Tanzania Meteorological Authority declared that Tropical Cyclone Hidaya, which had threatened to pile on more misery, had "completely lost its strength" after making landfall on Mafia Island on Saturday. "Therefore, there is no further threat of Tropical Cyclone Hidaya in our country," it said. Tanzania remains one of the countries worst hit by the floods, with 155 people dead since early April. In Kenya, Mwaura said while the cyclone had weakened, it had caused strong winds and waves on the coast and heavy rains were likely to intensify from later Sunday.

One fisherman had perished and another was missing, he added. Across the nation, the disaster has claimed the lives of 228 people since March with 72 still missing, according to government figures. More than 212,000 people have been displaced, with Mwaura saying many were "forcibly or voluntarily" evacuated. The government has ordered anyone living near major rivers or dams to leave the area or face "mandatory evacuation for their safety", with many dams or reservoirs threatening to overflow.



**KITENGELA, Kenya:** A Kenyan firefighter gives directions to commuters as residents inspect a road heavily affected by floods following torrential rains in Kitengela. — AFP

Mwaura also warned of the risk of waterborne diseases, with one case of cholera reported as well as incidents of diarrhea. Jagan Chapagain, head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said on X on Saturday that forecasts of more rains raised "serious concerns about a wider humanitarian crisis".

The Kenyan government has been accused of being unprepared and slow to respond to the crisis despite weather warnings, with the main opposition Azimio party calling for it to be declared a nation-

al disaster. President William Ruto said in an address to the nation on Friday that the weather picture remained "dire", blaming the calamitous cycle of drought and floods on a failure to protect the environment. In the deadliest single incident in Kenya, 58 people perished when a dam burst on Monday near Mai Mahiu in the Rift Valley north of Nairobi, the interior ministry said.

Several dozen remain missing. Rescuers are also hunting for 13 people still missing after a boat capsized in Tana River County, killing seven, the ministry said. — AFP

## Togo ruling party wins vote in boost for Gnassingbe

**LOME, Togo:** President Faure Gnassingbe Togo's ruling party won a crushing majority in legislative elections, authorities said, allowing the longtime leader to extend his rule under a contested constitutional reform. Gnassingbe's Union for the Republic party (UNIR) won 108 of 113 seats in the vote held last Monday, according to provisional results announced by the national electoral commission late Saturday.

Turnout was 61 percent, according to commission figures, but the triumph is total for Gnassingbe, already in power since 2005 after his father Gnassingbe Eyadema ruled the small West African state for nearly four decades. Under the new constitution approved by lawmakers in April, Gnassingbe will be able to take a new post as president of the council of ministers, a role similar to prime minister, that is automatically assumed by the leader of the majority party in parliament.

Opposition parties denounced the constitutional reform as an "institutional coup", creating a role tailor-made for Gnassingbe to evade presidential term limits and extend his family's dynasty. UNIR loyalists say the change to a parliamentary system made Togo's democracy more representative.

Under the previous constitution, Gnassingbe would have been able to run for the presidency just one more time in 2025. Gnassingbe, 57, has already won four elections, though all were denounced as flawed by the opposition. — AFP

## Hamis, Zionists entrench Gaza...

Continued from Page 1

"The Hamas delegation has left Cairo this evening (Sunday) for Doha in order to conduct consultations, and will return Tuesday to conclude the negotiations" towards a truce in the war with the Zionist entity, said Al-Qahera News, a site linked to Egyptian intelligence services, citing an unidentified "informed source".

The Gaza war's impact has been increasingly felt around the world as pro-Palestinian university students follow the example of protest encampments in the United States. The Zionist entity's offensive has killed at least 34,683 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the territory's health ministry. An AFP correspondent and witnesses on Sunday reported shelling and gunfire in the Gaza City area, helicopter fire in central and southern Gaza, and a missile strike on a house in the Rafah area.

"We want a ceasefire and for Gaza to return to how it was, or even better... We want a permanent ceasefire," said displaced woman Umm Jamil Al-Ghussein in the southern city of Rafah, where about 1.2 million Gazans have sought shelter. Arwa Saqr, displaced from Khan Yunis, said it seemed like every round of negotiations follows "the same scenario". "We've become hopeless that the negotiations will succeed."

The Palestinian civilian toll has strained ties between the Zionist entity and its main military supplier and ally the United States. Nonetheless, Washington's Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that "the only thing standing between the people of Gaza and a ceasefire is Hamas". Negotiators met in Cairo Sunday without a Zionist delegation present.

The mediators had proposed a 40-day pause in the fighting and an exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners, according to details released by Britain. Any truce reached would be the first since a week-long November ceasefire saw a hostage-prisoner swap. Qatari, Egyptian and US medi-

ators met the Hamas delegation in Cairo on Saturday before talks resumed Sunday.

After "no developments" in the first round, a senior Hamas official insisted the group would "not agree under any circumstances" to a truce that did not explicitly include a complete end to the war, including the Zionist entity's withdrawal from Gaza. Netanyahu, whose coalition includes ultra-nationalist parties, faces regular protests at home, including thousands in Tel Aviv on Saturday night demanding a deal to bring home hostages still held in Gaza.

According to a statement from Netanyahu's office, he told his cabinet the Zionist entity would not let Hamas "take control of Gaza again, rebuild their military infrastructure and return to threaten the citizens of (the Zionist entity)". "(The Zionist entity) will not agree to Hamas' demands, which mean surrender, and will continue the fighting until all its goals are achieved," he added.

Haniyeh said Netanyahu wanted to "invent constant justifications for the continuation of aggression, expanding the circle of conflict, and sabotaging efforts made through various mediators and parties". He said Hamas "remains eager to reach a comprehensive and interconnected agreement in stages, ending the aggression, ensuring withdrawal, and achieving a serious prisoner exchange deal".

Previous negotiation efforts had stalled in part because of Hamas' demand for a lasting ceasefire and Netanyahu's vows to crush its remaining fighters in Rafah. Netanyahu has vowed to invade Rafah regardless of any truce, and despite concerns from the United States, other countries and aid groups. France's President Emmanuel Macron urged Netanyahu in a phone call Sunday to reach a deal in negotiations with Hamas, the French presidency said.

At the start of the war, Zionist Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said his country would impose a "complete siege" blocking food, water and other supplies. Continuous appeals from aid groups, the United Nations and world leaders for greater access have, according to the UN, led to some improvements. The Zionist entity in December reopened the southern Kerem Shalom border crossing for aid, but on Sunday the army said it had closed after being targeted from the area of the Rafah crossing to Egypt. — AFP

## Kuwait's support for Palestine...

Continued from Page 1

The delegation visited the philanthropic kitchen funded by the society and the x-ray diagnostic center at Kuwait Hospital to inspect the works being implemented by the society, head of the team Omar

## Al Jazeera slams Zionist decision...

Continued from Page 1

"(The Zionist entity's) direct targeting and killing of journalists, arrests, intimidation and threats will not deter Al Jazeera from its commitment to cover," it added. Since the start of the war in Gaza on Oct 7, Al Jazeera has aired continuous on-the-ground reporting on the effects of the Zionist entity's genocidal campaign. The network's office in Gaza has been bombed in the conflict and two of its correspondents have been killed. Al Jazeera said its crew accreditations had been withdrawn and the Zionist entity had banned media service providers from transmitting its broadcasts.

## Hezb hits Zionist entity after fatal...

Continued from Page 1

source, requesting anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media, confirmed the strike killed "four civilians". Mais Al-Jabal municipality chief Abdelmoneim Shukair had earlier told AFP that three people were killed, saying they were a couple and their son. The Zionist military said in a statement later Sunday that "this morning... fighter jets struck a military site in the area of Mais Al-Jabal", without providing further details.

Hezbollah in a statement said it fired "dozens of Katy-

Al-Thoweini said in statements to KUNA.

The team has also paid an inspection tour of various wards of Jaffa Hospital, Al-Barka Bakery and Dar Al-Yateem orphanage to assess the damage inflicted on them by recent Zionist bombardment. The medical team, the second of its kind from Kuwait, entered Gaza from the Rafah border crossing on Tuesday to conduct dozens of surgeries on Palestinian patients and support the health sector in Gaza. The first team paid a two-week visit to Gaza in early April on a similar humanitarian mission. — KUNA

"There will be no freedom of speech for the Hamas trumpets in (the Zionist entity)," Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi said in a separate joint statement with Netanyahu. "Al Jazeera will be closed immediately and the equipment will be confiscated." Karhi issued an order to seize devices "used to deliver the channel's content", including editing and routing equipment, cameras, microphones, servers and laptops, as well as wireless transmission equipment and some cell phones.

Walid Al-Omari, head of Al Jazeera's offices in the Zionist entity and the occupied Palestinian territories, reacted to the decision by saying it followed "a campaign in search of easy victories by ministers on (the Zionist entity's) extreme right". He said the broadcaster had been informed of the "closure of the offices of Al Jazeera Channel operating within the borders of (the Zionist entity)", and the confiscation of its broadcasting devices. — AFP

usha and Falaq rockets" at Kiryat Shmona in the Zionist entity "in response to the horrific crime that the (Zionist) enemy committed in Mais Al-Jabal". It later said it fired dozens more Katyusha rockets across the border "as part of the response" to the Mais Al-Jabal strike, and claimed a string of other attacks on the northern Zionist entity, some in stated retaliation to the raid.

The Zionist army said in the statement that "approximately 40 launches were identified crossing from Lebanon... a number of which were intercepted." "No injuries were reported," it said, adding the army "struck the sources of the fire". It also said "fighter jets struck Hezbollah military structures and terrorist infrastructure" in several areas of southern Lebanon. Lebanon's NNA reported Zionist strikes on various locations in the country's south. — AFP



## International

# Canada has ‘political compulsion’ to blame India for Sikh slaying: FM

## Trudeau hails ‘rule of law’ after arrests in Sikh separatist murder

**NEW DELHI:** Canada’s investigation into alleged Indian involvement in the assassination of a Sikh separatist in Vancouver last year is a “political compulsion”, India’s foreign minister said after three Indian citizens were arrested over the killing.

Canadian police on Friday arrested the trio for the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, saying they were investigating their links to the Indian government, “if any”. The killing sent diplomatic relations between Ottawa and New Delhi into a tailspin last autumn after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said there were “credible allegations” linking Indian intelligence to the crime.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Saturday acknowledged fear in Canada’s Sikh community but underscored the “rule of law” after three arrests in connection with last year’s killing of a Sikh separatist in Vancouver. Speaking Saturday at a gala in Toronto to celebrate Sikh heritage and culture, Trudeau acknowledged that many in Canada’s Sikh community are “feeling uneasy, and perhaps even frightened right now,” but urged faith in the justice system. “Let us remain calm and remain steadfast in our commitment to our democratic prin-

ciples and our system of justice,” he said. Trudeau said the arrests were “important because Canada is a rule of law country with a strong and independent justice system, as well as a fundamental commitment to protecting all its citizens.”

India vehemently rejected the allegations as “absurd”, halting the processing of visas for a time and forcing Canada to significantly reduce its diplomatic presence in the country. “It is their political compulsion in Canada to blame India,” the Press Trust of India news agency quoted External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as saying on Saturday. Thousands of people were killed in the 1980s during a separatist insurgency aimed at creating a Sikh homeland known as Khalistan, which was put down by security forces.

The movement has largely petered out within India, but in the Sikh diaspora—whose largest community is in Canada, with around 770,000 people—it retains support among a vocal minority. New Delhi has sought to persuade Ottawa not to grant Sikh separatists visas or political legitimacy, Jaishankar said, since they are “causing problems for them (Canada), for us and also for our relationship”. He added that Canada does not “share

any evidence with us in certain cases, police agencies also do not cooperate with us”.

Nijjar immigrated to Canada in 1997 and acquired citizenship 18 years later. He was wanted by Indian authorities for alleged terrorism and conspiracy to commit murder. On June 18, 2023, he was shot dead by masked assailants in the parking lot of the Sikh temple he led in suburban Vancouver. Trudeau announced several months later that Canada had “credible allegations” linking Indian intelligence to the killing and expelled an Indian official, touching off a diplomatic tit-for-tat with New Delhi. India dismissed the allegations as “absurd” and responded furiously, briefly curbing visas for Canadians and forcing Ottawa to withdraw diplomats.

The three arrested Indian nationals, all in their twenties, were charged with first degree murder and conspiracy. They were accused of being the shooter, driver and lookout in his killing last June. The Canadian police said they were aware that “others may have played a role” in the murder. In November, the US Justice Department charged an Indian citizen living in the Czech Republic with plotting a similar assassination attempt on another Sikh sepa-



**NEW DELHI:** India’s External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday Canada’s investigation into alleged Indian involvement in the assassination of a Sikh separatist in Vancouver last year is a “political compulsion.”

ratist leader on American soil.

A Washington Post investigation reported last week that Indian foreign intelligence officials were involved in the plot, a claim rejected by New

Delhi. In November, the US Justice Department charged an Indian citizen living in the Czech Republic with allegedly plotting a similar assassination attempt on American soil. — AFP

## News in Brief

### Japan urges 400 to evacuate northern city over forest fire

**TOKYO:** More than 400 residents in northern Japan were urged to evacuate on Sunday over fears a forest fire that has been blazing for two days could spread to residential areas. Helicopters poured water for hours on the mountains around Nanyo city in Yamagata prefecture to douse the flames, but the operation was called off after dark with the fire still burning. “We’re urging over 400 residents in the three districts” of the city to evacuate, an official in charge of the disaster response told AFP. “There is a risk the fire will spread” to the residential area, she said, adding firefighting efforts will resume on Monday morning. —AFP

### Teenager turns self in after attack on German politician

**BERLIN:** A 17-year-old has turned himself in to police in Germany after an attack on a lawmaker that the country’s leaders decried as a threat to democracy. The teenager reported to police in the eastern city of Dresden early Sunday morning and said he was “the perpetrator who had knocked down the SPD politician”, police said in a statement. Matthias Ecke, 41, European parliament lawmaker for Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s Social Democrats (SPD), was set upon by four attackers as he put up EU election posters in Dresden on Friday night, according to police. Ecke was “seriously injured” and required an operation after the attack, his party said. — AFP

### Niger receives new Russian advisors and equipment

**NIAMEY, Niger:** New Russian military advisors and military equipment have arrived in Niger, according to state television in the African country that wants US forces to leave. A first set of about 100 Russian advisors had arrived in Niger on April 10 along with air defense systems. Two military transporters arrived Saturday, according to Tele Sahel that said Russia has now sent three cargo planes of military material and instructors in the past month. The Africa Corps, seen as the successors of the Wagner paramilitary group in Africa, confirmed the instructors’ arrival in a posting on the group’s Telegram account. — AFP

### Tanzania says cyclone no longer a threat

**DAR ES SALAAM:** Tanzania said a cyclone that made landfall on Saturday has lost its strength and was no longer a threat to the country. Tropical Cyclone Hidaya had triggered heavy rains and winds as it rolled towards Tanzania and neighboring Kenya, countries already battered by torrential downpours and floods that have left more than 400 people dead across East Africa in recent weeks. In a statement published early Sunday on X, the Tanzania Meteorological Authority said that Hidaya had “completely lost its strength” after making landfall on Mafia Island in the Indian Ocean on Saturday. “Therefore, there is no further threat of Tropical Cyclone ‘Hidaya’ in our country,” it added. — AFP

### Haiti jailbreak leaves four inmates dead, two at large

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti:** A jailbreak at a prison in northern Haiti led to a lockdown on the streets of the coastal city of Port-de-Paix, as authorities tried to recapture escapees with a pair still at large, police said Saturday. Six fugitives had been apprehended since the Friday night escape. Four others were shot dead. Gang violence beginning at the end of February—plunging impoverished and politically unstable Haiti deeper into chaos -- has led to more than 4,600 inmates escaping from prisons, according to the United Nations. — AFP

## Top Afghan diplomat in India quits after \$2m gold smuggling reports

**NEW DELHI:** Afghanistan’s top diplomat in India resigned days after she was reportedly caught by airport authorities smuggling nearly \$2 million worth of gold into the country. Zakia Wardak, the Afghan Consul-General in India’s financial capital Mumbai, posted a statement on social media platform X announcing her resignation.

Afghanistan’s embassy in New Delhi shut down in November, more than two years after the Taliban returned to power in Kabul following the collapse of the Western-backed government, leaving Wardak as the country’s most senior representative in India. “It is with great regret that I announce my decision to step away from my role at the Consulate and Embassy in India, effective May 5, 2024,” Wardak said Saturday.

## Suspected rebels kill Indian air force corporal

**SRINAGAR:** An Indian air force member was killed and four more injured when suspected rebels ambushed a military convoy in Indian-administered

Indian media reports said Wardak was last month stopped by financial intelligence authorities at Mumbai airport on arrival from Dubai—along with her son—carrying 25 kilograms of gold. She was not arrested because of her diplomatic immunity, the reports said, but the gold—worth around \$1.9 million—was confiscated. Wardak’s resignation leaves thousands of Afghan nationals, including students and businessmen, without any consular representation in India. Most foreign nations—including India—do not officially recognize Afghanistan’s Taliban government, but acknowledge them as the de facto ruling authority. In many Afghan missions, diplomats appointed by the former government have refused to cede control of embassy buildings and property to representatives of the Taliban authorities.

Wardak said in the statement that she had “encountered numerous personal attacks and defamation” over the past year. Such incidents “have demonstrated the challenges faced by women in Afghan society”, she added, making no explicit reference to the gold allegations.

The Taliban authorities have full control of around a dozen Afghan embassies abroad—including in Paki-

Kashmir, an official statement said, as campaigning for national elections continues in the disputed territory.

The convoy was attacked by an unknown number of armed militants who sprayed automatic rifle fire towards at least one air force truck in the mountainous Poonch area, 200 kilometers (124 miles) south of the main city of Srinagar, the air force said in a statement. Five air force personnel were hit in the firefight late Saturday and “one Air Warrior succumbed to his injuries later”, it said, identifying the dead man as a corporal.

A neighboring constituency took part in the first

from the attacker’s home, he said.

Officers fired two Tasers at him but “both of them did not have the full desired effect,” he said. “The male continued to advance on the third officer with a firearm who fired a single shot and fatally wounded the male.” The teenager died in hospital later in the night, he said.

The “middle-aged” man who had been stabbed was in a “serious” but stable condition and appeared to be doing well, the police commissioner said. The man had suffered a single, “possibly” two centimeter stab wound that may have punctured a lung, he said. Police believe the teenager sent “relevant messages” to some members of the Muslim community who immediately called police, he said, without giving details of the messages.

The boy had “mental issues but also online radicalization issues”, the police chief said. In the past two years, the attacker had been part of a “countering violence extremism program” for people who show signs of “religious or issues-motivated” concerns, he said. “It is not a criminal based approach but it is a program to help individuals who are expressing ideologies that are of concern in our community. But they may not be committing any crimes.”

Police said they did not know what had triggered the attack. Blanch said it had the “hallmarks” of a terrorist incident but he was not making an offi-



**SYDNEY:** Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (left) and Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner Micaela Cronin attend a national cabinet meeting virtually to discuss the national crisis of gender-based violence at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices in Sydney. — AFP

cial declaration right now as he had no concerns about a wider network being involved. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he had been briefed by police and intelligence services who had advised there was no “ongoing threat”. “We are a peace-loving nation and there is no place for violent extremism in Australia,” he said in a message on social media.

Despite the rarity of such violent crimes in Australia, the Perth attack comes less than a month after a knife-wielding assailant killed six people

in a shopping mall in Sydney. The mentally ill knifeman, 40-year-old Joel Cauchi, was tracked down, shot and killed by a police inspector. 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. Two days after the mall attack an Assyrian Christian bishop was brutally stabbed during a live streamed service in western Sydney. The bishop has since recovered and a 16-year-old suspect has been charged with committing “a terrorist act”. —AFP

an illegal, plot-breeding organization... to stamp out a sovereign state’s right to existence”. The envoy expressed gratitude towards Moscow last month, stating that Pyongyang “highly appreciates the Russian Federation’s veto” that blocked the renewal of the expert sanctions panel, “as an independent exercise of the right to international justice and impartiality”.

But during a visit to Seoul in April, US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield stressed the importance of ensuring enforcement of the sanctions on North Korea. She said Washington was collaborating with Seoul, Tokyo, and others to explore “some creative ways” and “out-of-the-box thinking” to ensure the continuation of monitoring activities. “The point here is that we cannot allow the work that the panel of experts were doing to lapse.” — AFP

## N Korea UN envoy: New sanctions panel will fail

**SEOUL:** North Korea’s ambassador to the United Nations said efforts to set up a new panel to monitor sanctions against his country would end in failure, state media reported on Sunday.

Kim Song’s comments come after Russia’s veto in March which effectively ended official UN monitoring of sanctions imposed on the isolated country for its pursuit of banned nuclear and weapons programs.

Seoul and Washington say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been shipping weapons to Russia, possibly in exchange for Moscow’s technical assistance for Pyongyang’s budding spy satellite program.

Last year, North Korea conducted a record number of missile tests—in defiance of UN sanctions in place since 2006 and despite warnings from Washington and Seoul—having declared itself as an “irreversible” nuclear weapons state in 2022. “The hostile forces may set up the second and third expert panels in the future but they are all bound to meet self-destruction with the passage of time,” envoy Kim Song said in an English statement carried by the official KCNA news agency on Sunday.

The dissolution of the UN panel after Moscow’s veto, he said, was a “judgment made by history on



MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024

# Business

## Boursa Kuwait records 8.63% increase in net profit for first quarter of 2024

Profit buoyed by 68.65% increase in traded volume and 34.21% increase in traded value

**KUWAIT:** In a meeting of its Board of Directors on May 5, 2024, Boursa Kuwait announced its consolidated financial results for the quarter ended March 31, 2024, posting a net profit growth of 8.63 percent to reach KD 4.68 million compared to KD 4.31 million recorded during the corresponding period in 2023. Meanwhile, the company's operating profit increased 9.81 percent from KD 5.08 million in 2023 to KD 5.58 million in 2024.

Additionally, Boursa Kuwait's total operating revenues increased by 9.31 percent to KD 8.37 million in the first quarter of 2024 compared to KD 7.66 million during the corresponding period in 2023, while earnings per share rose from 21.48 fils to 23.33 fils, an increase of 8.63 percent.

Boursa Kuwait's results show that, despite the escalation of geopolitical conflicts and heightened economic uncertainty, the company was able to navigate the challenges that continued through the first quarter of 2024 with remarkable resilience and agility. Boursa Kuwait leveraged its strategic risk management policies, robust financial health and strong governance mechanisms to ensure its ability to adapt while maintaining engagements with its various stakeholders to uphold the highest standards of transparency and trust.

Commenting on the results, Boursa Kuwait's Chairman Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi said: "Amid the turbulence of the global financial scene, Boursa Kuwait demonstrated remarkable resilience, rebounding in the first quarter of 2024 and increasing its net profit by 8.63 percent from KD 4.31 million in the first quarter of 2023 to KD 4.68 million in the corresponding period of 2024. The results underscore the company's ability to weather challenges as well as speak volumes about its adaptive strategies and steadfast commitment to growth and are a testament to the dedication of our team, the trust of our investors, and the resilience of our market. Boursa Kuwait remains steadfast in its pursuit of excellence, driven by a vision of sustained prosperity for all stakeholders."

"The exchange continues to play a key role in the diversification of Kuwait's national economy, acting as a vital cog in Kuwait's national development plan to transform the country into a leading regional financial destination. Thanks to the dedication and focus of my fellow board members, the executive management team, and all the company's hard-working employees, we have demonstrated that Boursa Kuwait is a leading stock exchange in the region and one of the success stories of the Kuwaiti financial scene," Al-Humaidhi added.

Boursa Kuwait delivered a strong performance this quarter, building on the growth in trading volume, which



**Boursa Kuwait Chairman  
Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi**

**Boursa Kuwait remains steadfast in its pursuit of excellence, driven by a vision of sustained prosperity for all stakeholders**



**Boursa Kuwait CEO  
Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi**

**Boursa Kuwait made a strong recovery in its performance, cementing its position as a key financial market in the region that adapts to meet the evolving needs of Kuwaiti capital market participants**



jumped 68.65 percent from 8.52 billion shares to 14.36 billion shares. Additionally, traded value increased by 34.21 percent from KD 2.64 billion to KD 3.54 billion, while average daily traded value (ADTV) increased by the same percentage from KD 43.26 million in 2023 to KD 58.06 million, a demonstration of Boursa Kuwait and the capital market apparatus's continuous efforts to develop the Kuwaiti capital market and promote it to investors from all around the world.

Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi also commented on the company's first-quarter results, saying: "Boursa Kuwait showcased robust performance, cementing its position as a key financial market in the region that continuously adapts to meet the evolving needs of Kuwaiti capital market participants. The exchange is well-positioned to achieve its strategic objectives and further solidify its role as a key regional financial center as it continues to expand its products and services, increase market efficiency and facilitate access to it, as well as improve its transparency, liquidity and the governance of all its participants."

Al-Osaimi added, "Boursa Kuwait constantly works with its partners in the Kuwaiti capital market in preparation for the launch of several products and services, including exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and a platform for fixed-income solutions like bonds and sukuk. During the quarter, Boursa Kuwait and the capital market apparatus continued to run stress tests for the launch of the central clearing counterparty (CCP) system to ensure the preparedness of financial

brokerage firms to meet settlement requirements with the Central Bank of Kuwait and local banks, making sure that the market adheres to the highest, best-in-class standards and practices."

Al-Osaimi also stressed that the company continues to promote the capital market and its standout listed companies through its series of Roadshows and Corporate Days as well as visits to various entities encouraging them to list, all in an effort to reinforce our reputation as a leading stock exchange in the region and a force to be reckoned within the Middle East.

Boursa Kuwait has been a key driver in the development of the Kuwaiti capital market and the diversification of the national economy, in line with the goals of the "New Kuwait" vision. Since its inception, the company has worked diligently to create a thriving capital market that attracts local and foreign investors through a broad spectrum of new products and services, infrastructure upgrades, and market reform initiatives, as part of its multi-phase market development plans.

Boursa Kuwait was fully privatized in 2019, the first government entity in the country to successfully undergo the process, bringing about greater levels of efficiency. It has also been self-listed since September 2020 and has made great strides in sustaining its operations and business continuity in the face of uncertainties and challenges.



## Two-day Arab-DAC Dialogue kicks off in Kuwait Monday

**KUWAIT:** The Arab Coordination Group (ACG), the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) will jointly kick off a two-day 'Arab-DAC Dialogue on Development' on Monday (April 6, 2024) in Kuwait.

The 2024 edition of the Arab-DAC Dialogue, to be held at the Arab Organizations Headquarters, will focus on how to scale up the quantity and the quality of development finance and cooperation and will discuss financing for sustainable development in a changing context and working together for better results and partnerships.

The 2024 Dialogue will be taking place amidst a period of global uncertainty, with multiple conflicts, climate change and scarcity threatening the progress made towards achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Dialogue will gather high-level representatives from both the ACG and DAC officials. Arab providers and DAC members are influential players in international development cooperation. Since 2009, the "Arab-DAC Dialogue on Development" has become an important event for the exchange of knowledge and experiences on sustainable development, and has created a forum for collaboration towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Kuwaiti workforce reached 454,038 in 2023, says CSB

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau data showed that the total number of Kuwaiti workforce reached 454,038 individuals at the end of 2023, while the number of non-Kuwaiti workers, excluding the domestic workers sector, reached 1,678,958.

The bureau said in statistical tables to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the occasion of the issuance of the Labor Market Information System that the number of workers both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti in the government sector reached 476,041, while the number of workers both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaiti in the private sector reached 1,656,955 individuals.

The number of workers in the domestic sector is 786,231. The administration explained that it

## Riyadh hosts 3rd Global Project Mgmt Forum

**RIYADH:** The Global Project Management Forum (GPMF) announced on Sunday, that the 3rd edition of the forum will launch on June 2-3 in Riyadh under the theme "We Achieve the Dream: Leadership, Empowerment, Sustainability". The forum's organizing committee and its president Bader Burshaid told SPA the GPMF will discuss diverse topics related to the project management sector across various sec-



**KUWAIT:** Workers shelter from the sun under a tree in Kuwait City in this illustrative file image. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

tors. It serves as a platform for exchanging ideas, opinions and creative solutions for the successful execution of major projects. Burshaid highlighted the forum's growing reputation as a global platform that attracts global industry experts, project managers and decision-makers. He also emphasized that the event aims to foster collaboration, unify visions and develop innovative solutions to overcome challenges while successfully implementing projects.

GPMF has elevated Saudi Arabia's prominent position and leading role in the realm of futuristic projects since the launch of Vision 2030, Burshaid said. These efforts align with government initiatives to establish Riyadh as a sustainable and economically significant global city. The forum targets audiences from various sectors, including public and

built the country's labor market information system through preparing a more efficient and appropriate policy with the concerned authorities and taking accurate decisions by employers to achieve better outcomes by developing the quality of data and linking it to its sources on the labor market information system on an ongoing basis.

The objectives of the labor market information system are to improve administrative records of market data and indicators and support sound decision-making by planners and policy makers, in addition to helping concerned parties prepare more efficient and appropriate labor market policies. It pointed out that the system's objectives also include developing data collection and analysis tools with optimal use of technology and supporting Kuwait Vision 2035 and its strategic goals, in addition to activating the role of the private sector and supporting human development by providing opportunities to work and developing population policies to support development and effective government administration. — KUNA

private, semi-governmental entities, engineering and contracting firms, procurement companies, startups, construction and infrastructure companies, entrepreneurs and more.

GPMF aims to empower women, professionals and ambitious youth by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve project management excellence and by highlighting key areas like the economy, governance, work methods, value chain and other means. Diverse entities from local and international economic sectors will be able to participate through an interactive exhibition, the forum will also organize workshops led by competent specialists and will offer accredited professional development units to further improve participants' skills and expertise. — KUNA



## Business

# NBK first bank in Kuwait to join PCAF for disclosing greenhouse gas emissions

## This milestone aligns with NBK's objectives of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has become the first bank in Kuwait and one of only six banks in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to join the global industry-led partnership, PCAF, for measuring and disclosing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with its lending and investment portfolio.

This turning point in the Bank's sustainability journey reinforces its commitment to responsible banking, aligning with its goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. The Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) initiative aims to assist financial institutions in reducing GHG emissions by offering globally harmonized methodologies to measure and disclose greenhouse gases emissions of all asset classes within their loans and investments portfolios. These asset classes include listed equity and corporate bonds, business loans and unlisted equity, project finance, commercial real estate, mortgages, motor vehicle loans, and sovereign debt. The initiative was globally launched in 2019, with the first bank disclosures on GHG emissions issued in 2018 following its initial launch in Europe in 2015. Currently, the initiative comprises of approximately 480 financial institutions worldwide. These members include com-

mercial banks, development banks, asset owners/managers, insurance companies, and other financial institutions collaborating to mitigate the climate impact associated with their financial activities, thereby accelerating the net zero transition.

Commenting on this milestone, Amir Hanna, Head of Group Investor Relations and Communications at NBK, said: "We are delighted to join PCAF and contribute to the collective efforts of financial institutions around the world to mitigate the impacts of climate change by promoting the adoption of a consistent framework for measuring financed emissions, which is a critical component for accelerating our efforts towards more sustainable practices."

Hanna added that NBK's participation in the PCAF initiative will facilitate the identification, measurement, and disclosure of the emissions associated with its financing activities in a standardized manner, further enhancing comparison with industry peers. This will contribute to informed decision-making based on consistent and comparable data, providing the bank's key stakeholders with transparent and reliable metrics to monitor the bank's progress in implementing its ESG strategy.

Hanna emphasized that this initiative



Amir Hanna

- The global partnership offers FIs methodologies to measure and disclose the GHG emissions associated with their financial activities
- It strengthens our capacity to evaluate and address climate-related risks while facilitating the financial system's transition to a low-carbon economy
- The initiative enhances transparency and solidifies the disclosure of the GHG intensity associated with our portfolio

would assist the bank with measuring and disclosing the emissions intensity of its portfolio companies, thereby strengthening the bank's efforts in supporting clients' endeavors to transition to a low-carbon economy by actively reducing their carbon footprint. Hanna elaborated on the significance of continuously assessing the emissions' intensity of the bank's lending and investment portfolio, highlighting its integral role in enterprise risk management. He underscored that PCAF would further strengthen the bank's capacity to evaluate and address climate-related risks and opportunities, facilitating its transition to a lower carbon economy.

Hanna also highlighted that NBK has developed a bank-wide manual in line with the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), aimed at guiding the bank into addressing the escalating demands for transparency concerning climate-related risks and opportunities. The bank intends to issue its inaugural TCFD report in 2024, reinforcing its commitment to focusing efforts on catalyzing change and implementing lessons learnt from its experience in order to embed net zero and climate risk management across the Group.

He emphasized NBK's pioneering role and significant progress in advancing sustainable finance. The bank has introduced its comprehensive Sustainable Financing Framework in 2022, making sustainability a fundamental pillar of its business mod-

els, operations, and corporate culture. This aligns with the global transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy and consistent with Kuwait's development plans. NBK aims to grow its portfolio of sustainable assets to approximately \$10 billion by 2030. The bank has been proactive in capitalizing on the growing trend towards sustainable finance by offering a range of innovative products and ser-

vices supporting green initiatives across the Group. These include green mortgages, sustainability-linked loans, consumer loans for electric vehicles, and consumer loans for low-emissions housing.

"As the leading financial institution in Kuwait, we aspire to set a benchmark in every endeavor we undertake, particularly in this pivotal domain that will shape the future for generations to come. Our commitment extends to fostering the pillars of sustainable development not only in Kuwait but also across all our markets," Hanna said.

He highlighted NBK Group's ESG strategy which adopts a holistic and interrelated four-pillar approach designed to advance sustainable development and promote sustainable finance in the region. Among these

pillars, 'Responsible Banking' stands out, defining the bank's commitment to achieving net-zero through its engagement with clients, the diverse range of products and services it offers, as well as its financing choices. NBK commits to fully integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards, not only in its financing activities but across its operations. Over the years, NBK has taken significant strides



AL SAFAT

شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 2 MAY 2024

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

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,862	7,651.03	-0.2%	-0.5%	2.3%	582,588,459	190,421,971	42,534	16.8	1.3	81.7%
Main Market	7,804	5,985.54	1.4%	1.1%	7.5%	481,792,086	51,936,029	26,976	12.2	0.8	18.3%
All Share	42,666	7,033.48	0.1%	-0.2%	3.2%	1,064,380,545	242,358,000	69,510	13.7	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	25,794	1,722.31	-0.3%	-0.5%	4.5%	166,188,511	77,839,795	14,394	16.9	1.2	60.46%
Basic Materials	472	837.22	-0.5%	-2.0%	12.2%	6,339,900	4,324,242	588	9.6	2.2	1.11%
Consumer Discretionary	1,154	1,676.44	1.5%	-0.2%	4.5%	81,556,614	13,824,631	5,322	12.9	1.2	2.70%
Consumer Staples	252	830.56	-1.1%	-0.3%	26.1%	3,710,561	2,010,966	333	107.3	1.4	0.59%
Energy	221	1,058.57	2.1%	-0.3%	11.5%	10,944,243	1,063,812	546	9.8	0.8	0.52%
Financial Services	4,768	1,339.78	0.4%	0.5%	10.5%	360,148,939	44,566,806	13,198	14.8	0.9	11.18%
Health Care	234	487.29	3.8%	0.0%	1.1%	88,358	68,963,080	44	13.2	1.6	0.55%
Industrials	2,597	765.93	1.5%	-0.3%	-15.6%	176,626,742	56,681,092	9,193	12.2	0.9	6.09%
Insurance	1,020	2,495.51	-2.4%	0.3%	8.8%	13,822,653	1,657,887	1,868	10.3	1.1	2.39%
Real Estate	2,732	1,284.73	0.3%	-0.1%	5.9%	222,745,892	30,518,291	8,252	14.8	0.7	6.40%
Technology	26	1,906.05	0.0%	0.0%	229.6%	0	0.00	0	NM	2.2	0.06%
Telecommunications	3,218	1,053.06	1.6%	0.9%	-4.7%	17,309,650	9,020,787	3,043	16.7	1.4	7.54%
Utilities	176	421.05	3.2%	-3.6%	-7.5%	4,898,482	780,726	551	14.0	1.5	0.41%

### Top Gainers

Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
UNICAP	139	43.74%	44,011,672	5,813,464,909	1,906
MENA	52	30.00%	26,607,976	1,167,680	1,351
GFC	96.2	18.47%	41,604	3,741	10
FUTUREKID	157	14.60%	35,135,435	5,386,768	2,120
MIDAN	799	12.38%	88,158	68,867	43

### Top Losers

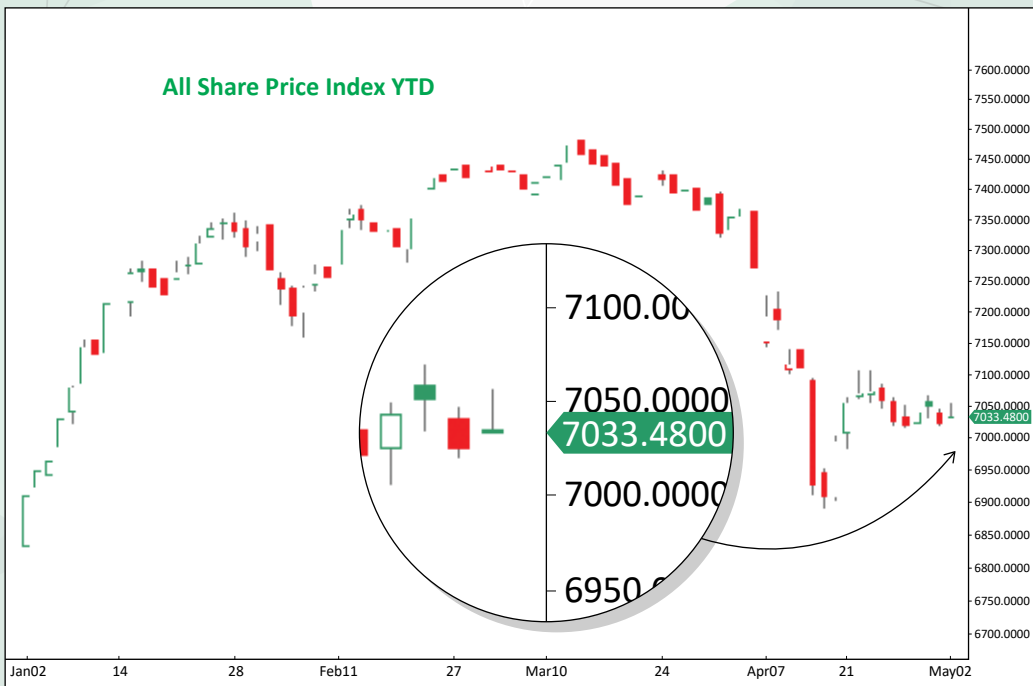
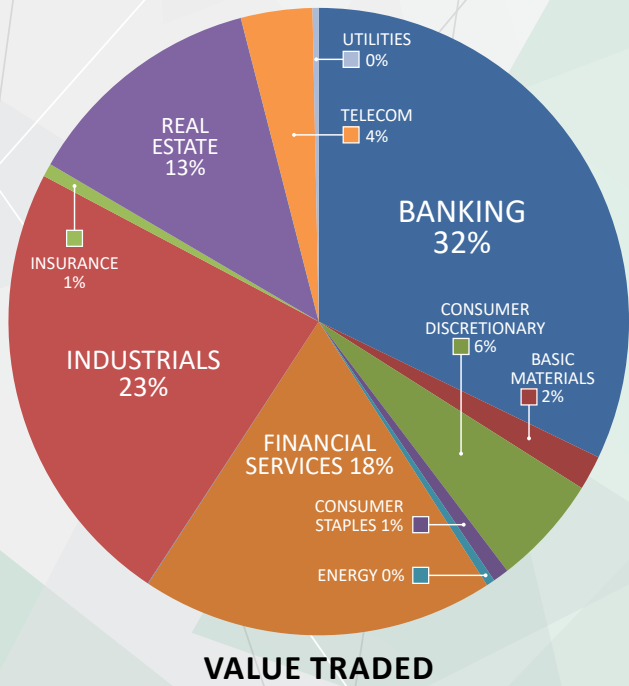
Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
VINSRE	110	-12.34%	814,624	94,372	125
PAPER	159	-10.67%	639,855	106,931	141
EMIRATES	33.9	-9.12%	952,405	33,180	60
MRC	86.7	-7.96%	14,948	1,368	9
FTI	188	-7.84%	6,130,956	1,194,332	1,693

### Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
AGLTY	316	4.29%	143,793,661	45,848,823	7,524
GFH	86.1	3.73%	89,096,666	7,710,627	1,729
NRE	101	4.69%	67,004,659	6,774,703	1,886
KFH	717	-0.83%	51,336,758	36,942,731	7,560
ASIYA	43.2	3.10%	50,169,452	2,167,816	1,433

### Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
AGLTY	316	4.29%	143,793,661	45,848,823	7,524
KFH	717	-0.83%	51,336,758	36,942,731	7,560
NBK	858	-0.58%	23,326,215	20,093,007	2,908
GFH	86.1	3.73%	89,096,666	7,710,627	1,729
ZAIN	488	0.62%	14,041,621	6,873,596	2,277



### Market Summary:

- Premier volume and value dropped 3% and 13%, while the Main Market rose 32% and 26%, respectively.

- The Premier index is moving horizontally, while the Main index showed strength.

- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7033, with support levels at 7000, 6981, and 6959, and resistance at 7041. The Premier index closed at 7651, with support levels at 7649, 7591, and 7555, and resistance at 7657/7685. The Main index closed at 5985, with support levels at 5970, 5959, and 5940, and resistance at 5990.



# Fed maintains rates as labor market shows signs of easing

## Europe’s core inflation above forecasts, Chinese PMI improves

**KUWAIT:** Consumer confidence in the United States fell sharply in April hitting its lowest level since July 2022. The Conference Board's consumer confidence index came in at 97, significantly below forecasts of a 104 print and lower than March's 103.1 figure. According to Dana Peterson, chief economist at the Conference Board, "Consumers became less positive about the current labor market situation, and more concerned about future business conditions, job availability, and income." She added that "According to April's write-in responses, elevated price levels, especially for food and gas, dominated consumer's concerns, with politics and global conflicts as distant runners-up."

Manufacturing activity in the US contracted in April, with the ISM manufacturing index dropping to 49.2 from 50.3 in March, and below expectations of 50.0. The employment index and the prices paid index both showed improvements from the previous month, with the figures at 49.1 and 60.9 respectively, up from 51.4 and 55.8. Meanwhile, economic activity in the services sector contracted for the first time since December 2022, coming in at 49.4 from 51.4 previously. According to the survey, "The decline in the composite index in April is a result of lower business activity, slower new orders growth, faster supplier deliveries and the continued contraction in employment" indicating that higher interest rates that have affected the manufacturing sector is starting to show its consequence on the services side as well.

**Job openings fall to three - year low**  
Job openings in the US fell to the lowest level

in three years, coming in at 8.49 million openings versus expectations of 8.69 million and a previous reading of 8.81 million openings. In terms of sectors, construction openings fell by 182k while finance and insurance fell by 158k. Overall, the fall in job openings suggests a weakening labor market although it remains historically tight.

In the latest FOMC meeting, the Federal Reserve have decided to keep interest rates unchanged at 5.25 percent-5.50 percent, while indicating that the committee will be looking at upcoming data to assess their next moves with regards to interest rate changes, emphasizing that inflation was not showing further progress in recent months. Following the statement, Fed Chair Jerome Powell delivered a speech, where he indicated that a hike in interest rates is highly unlikely, meanwhile Powell was cautious about assessing when it would be appropriate to start cutting interest rates. The dovish tone by the Fed was accompanied by a drop in the US dollar.

### Non-farm employment slows

The latest NFP report shows 175k jobs added last month versus expectations of 240k jobs to be added and February's downward revision of 236k jobs. The unemployment rate ticked up to 3.9 percent while labor force participation rate remained unchanged at 62.7 percent indicating a slowing down of hirings rather than an increase in the amount of people actively seeking employment. Average hourly earnings rose 0.2 percent over the month and 3.9 percent annually, missing expectations of a 0.3 percent and 4 percent increase respectively. The report indicates a

slowdown in what has been a historically stubborn and tight labor market, however not enough yet to suggest a dramatic shift in Fed policy for cuts. Markets are pricing in two rate cuts by year-end, starting in September and another one in December.

Headline inflation in the eurozone remained steady at 2.4 percent while core inflation, which excludes volatile energy and food prices, fell slightly to 2.7 percent, although it came in above the expected 2.6 percent figure. Headline CPI in the bloc's largest economy, Germany, held steady at 2.4 percent for the first time in four months increasing concerns about a potential spark in inflation. Meanwhile, the eurozone economy grew 0.3 percent in the first quarter, exceeding forecasts. However, this might be partly due to data revisions and needs to be confirmed in future reports. There are significant differences in growth rates between countries, with Spain performing the best and Germany and France lagging behind. Positive surprises came from external demand, likely due to weak import demand in some countries. Inventory corrections seem to have continued in some areas, negatively impacting domestic demand. Household consumption showed positive signs in Spain and France. The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0733.

### Asia-Pacific

There are positive signs for Chinese manufacturing with the PMI remaining in expansion territory at 50.5, though down slightly from March. This indicates continuity in recovery for China's economy in Q2 2024. Meanwhile, the demand for new orders and

new export orders remains positive, suggesting that demand increase is likely to hold. Production rose to a 13-month high, and purchasing prices reached a 7-month high, demonstrating strong production activity and rising input costs. As for manufacturing employment, it remains in contraction for the 14th month due to a mismatch between labor demand and supply. The Caixin Manufacturing PMI also increased unexpectedly from 51.1 to 51.4 in April, with new orders expanding at the fastest pace in over a year. The non-manufacturing PMI on the other hand dropped more than expected to 51.2, suggesting issues with the services sector. The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.2418.

### Yen surges

Following last week's Bank of Japan (BoJ) meeting that saw the central bank maintain interest rates at current levels and the Yen slip to a 34 year low, reaching 160.03 at one point, USD/JPY rallied after a suspected intervention by the BoJ. The currency surged more than 2 percent on Wednesday's trading session, with Bank of America research estimating that the cost of a potential first intervention was around \$32.7 billion to \$39.2 billion and the second intervention being smaller. While the central bank did not confirm any intervention, traders noticed that the 160 level was facing stiff resistance. The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week at 153.29.

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar  
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30765.

## Japan seeks Sri Lanka recovery for regional stability

**COLOMBO:** Strategically placed Sri Lanka's economic recovery was essential for stability in the Indo-Pacific region, Japan's foreign minister said Saturday, urging Colombo to swiftly restructure its foreign debt. Yoko Kamikawa said Colombo should secure agreements with bilateral lenders and international sovereign bondholders to unlock suspended foreign funding for the cash-strapped nation.

After talks with her Sri Lankan counterpart Ali Sabry, Kamikawa called on President Ranil Wickremesinghe and discussed the island's reforms to overcome its worst economic crisis, the two sides said. "Deliberation also encompassed discussions on the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) pertaining to debt restructuring in Sri Lanka," Wickremesinghe's office said in a statement.

The Sri Lankan government which defaulted on its \$46 billion external debt in April 2022 had hoped to finalize deals with foreign creditors by April but there have been no final agreements yet. Kamikawa told reporters that she "stressed the importance of reaching a debt restructuring agreement with all the creditors", including China - the largest bilateral lender to the island. "I also conveyed Japan's intention to further support Sri Lanka's development by swiftly resuming existing yen loan projects (after debt restructuring)," she said.

She said Tokyo considered Colombo's economic recovery as crucial for the entire region. The island is located halfway along the main east-west international shipping route. "The restoration of stability and economic development of Sri Lanka, which is at a strategic location in the Indian Ocean, is essential for the stability and prosperity of the entire Indo-Pacific region," she added.

Sri Lanka must secure agreement from all official creditors and a majority of private bondholders to continue with a four-year \$2.9 billion bailout loan begun since March last year.

Japanese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mariko Kaneko said they were keen that Colombo press ahead with IMF-backed governance reforms that include tackling corruption. "Sri Lanka government needs to proceed with anti-corruption measures... make policy-making process more transparent," Kaneko said, adding that they fully supported the reforms envisaged in the IMF bailout program.

Japan, the second largest bilateral lender to the island has expressed concern about China's big infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in the region. Tokyo maintains that the Chinese-funded projects did not meet international finance standards.

Unable to repay a huge loan taken from China in 2017 to build a deep sea port in southern Hambantota, Sri Lanka handed it over to a Chinese firm for \$1.12 billion on a 99-year lease.

Sri Lanka ran out of cash to pay for even the most essential imports in 2022, leading to chronic shortages of food, fuel and medicines. Then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who faced allegations of mismanagement and corruption, was forced to flee the country and resign in July 2022 after months of protests. His successor Wickremesinghe has raised taxes, cut subsidies and is enforcing painful economic reforms in line with the IMF bailout. — AFP

## Chad’s cotton farmers burned by climate change, false promises

**KAGTAOU, Chad:** Declador Rimledeoudje waded through his field between thousands of stalks he hopes will become a bumper crop of cotton - knowing that Chad's white gold has a future as unpredictable as the rains.

For decades, cotton has sustained his region of southern Chad. But the prized crop is now under threat. At the entrance to his village of Kagtaou, around 60 kilometers (40 miles) from Moundou, the main city in the south, stands a huge container overflowing with cotton.

CotonTchad, the semi-private company that was supposed to purchase it, still has not honored its pledge and growers fear the unpredictable rains will destroy their harvest before it's sold. "We like cotton but it's too difficult ... the climate isn't stable and that's a real drawback. It effects the tonnage," Rimledeoudje explained, shading his eyes from the scorching sun. The 24-year-old's profits have tumbled to a third of what they were last harvest.

Nearly everyone in Kagtaou makes their living from cotton. But more and more people are becoming discouraged because of the damage wrought by climate change and long-running conflicts between farmers and herders. "Evidence of climate change - irregular rainfall which sometimes causes drought and other times sporadic floods - leads to huge drops in production," explained Laohote Baohoutou, a climatologist at N'Djamena University. It also exacerbates ancestral conflicts, he said.

Nomadic herders from the arid Sahel areas of the north drive their animals through fields belonging to growers in the south, or let the animals graze there. There are disputes about who owns some land. At least 23 people died in a week of fighting in March. Women and children are often the victims of these frequent conflicts. Intense rains are a new threat. The United Nations says floods in 2022 destroyed more than 350,000 hectares (1,350 square miles) of crops and killed

## Stocks gain while dollar retreats as US job market cools

**NEW YORK:** Stock markets rose Friday as cooling US job growth raised hopes of interest-rate cuts, while London hit another record high following speculation of a bidding war for mining giant Anglo American. Investors had been keenly awaiting the data, as the US non-farm payrolls (NFP) figures are key to the Federal Reserve's decision-making on when to lower interest rates.

The Fed kept rates at a 23-year high on Wednesday to fight stubborn inflation. Hiring in the world's biggest economy came in at 175,000 last month, down from a revised March figure of 315,000, while wages rose by 0.2 percent, said the US Department of Labor. Analysts at Forex.com had expected the US economy to add 238,000 jobs last month, and wages to increase by 0.3 percent month on month.

"This is a rare miss for the US jobs market which could potentially spell the end of the 'higher for longer' rhetoric we have become accustomed to," said Mahmoud Alkudsi, senior market analyst at Abu Dhabi-based financial services firm ADSS. A string of data this year showing inflation was holding stubbornly above target, while the economy and labor



KAGTAOU, Chad: A Chadian farmer pours harvested cotton in a makeshift container before it is trodden on in Kagtaou village, some sixty kilometers away from Moundou, on April 26, 2024. — AFP

20,000 livestock in the central African country.

The south was the worst hit. "It's so disheartening," sighed Rimledeoudje. "I get the feeling the south doesn't even figure on the map of Chad any more... We don't get any financial support." Since April, Africa has seen more extreme climate events. The west has sweltered in heatwaves of more than 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit). The east has been battered by torrential rains that have caused fatal floods in Kenya and Tanzania. Once one of Chad's most flourishing agricultural sectors, cotton has plummeted as a share of GDP and exports shrank from 2.15 percent in 2015 to 0.7 percent in 2020, according to World Bank figures.

The prospects for Chad's white gold will weigh on the minds of southern voters when the country of 18 million votes for a new president on Monday. Mahamat Idriss Deby Ito, who was made head of state by the army three years ago after he led a military coup, is competing with the prime minis-

ter he appointed in January as his main opponent. Some believe that Succes Masra, a fierce opponent-turned-ally of Deby, has been put up as a sham candidate to offer a veneer of democracy to an election Deby will easily win.

Others say that Masra, 40, who has attracted large crowds, is a genuine opponent and could push Deby into a second-round run-off. Jean Benaudji, head of the cotton growers' association in Kagtaou, plans to vote for Masra. "He's the only one who can provide support for the cotton growers, who've been abandoned and forgotten by the rest of the country," he said.

Masra, who hails from the south, has made promises of "justice and fairness" that have struck a nerve with many out-of-work cotton growers, who get nothing when their crops are destroyed by livestock or rains. "His slogan is justice, equality and peace. That's what I'm looking for and that's why he'll get my vote," said Rimledeoudje. — AFP



TOKYO: People crossing the street in front of the entrance to the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) headquarters building in the Nihonbashi area of Tokyo. — AFP

war for an FTSE beast like Anglo would be just what investors have been hankering for," Finalto analyst Neil Wilson told AFP.

BHP's colossal bid aims to create the world's biggest-listed producer of copper, which is expected to face a demand boom due to its pivotal use in renewable energy technology like electric vehicles and solar panels. Anglo shares finished the day up 1.2 percent, which those of Glencore shed 1.4 percent.

In Asia, Hong Kong led gains on a surge in tech giants due to forecast-busting results and a huge stock buyback from industry bellwether Apple, while the yen extended gains against the dollar on revived hopes for US interest rate cuts. — AFP





A general view of artefacts returned by the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A).



## Ghana's Asante king displays return of looted treasures

**G**hana's Asante king on Wednesday displayed for the first time dozens of royal artefacts looted during colonial rule, after they were returned by British museums on a long-term loan as part of his silver jubilee celebrations. The British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum earlier this year agreed to give back 32 gold and silver treasures pillaged by British military forces from Asante leader Asantehene's court during the 19th-century Anglo-Asante Wars.

They include the sword of the state known as Mpomponsuo and the gold badges of officials authorized to purify the king's soul. The collection also features a gold lute harp presented by Asantehene Osei Bonsu to British diplomat Thomas Edward Bowdich during an 1817 trade treaty. Speaking at the event dubbed "Homecoming: adversity and commemoration," King Otumfuo Osei Tutu II said the first-ever exhibition of the artefacts at Manhyia Palace reflected the "soul of the Asante people." "(Though) not all have been returned, what we have here still embodies the soul of the Asantes," the king said of the items looted in 1874.

"So, the spirit is back here, and today is a day for Asantes, a day for the black African continent, and the spirits are back with us again today." The Ghanaian king showcased the items in the refurbished Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi, the seat of the Asantehene kingdom. Each item offered visitors a rare glimpse into the splendor of Asante history and culture. The exhibition will be opened to the public this week.

### Cultural restoration

The return of the objects came as pressure grows on European and US museums and institutions to restore African artefacts stolen during the rule of former colonial powers Britain, France, Germany and Belgium. Dr Tristram Hunt, the Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, said the artefacts, symbolizing the rich heritage of the Asante Kingdom, were

returned to address "the very painful history surrounding the acquisition of these objects, a history tainted by the scars of imperial conflict and colonialism." "These treasures have been witnesses to the triumphs and trials of a great kingdom, and their return to Kumasi is a testament to the power of cultural exchange and reconciliation," he said.

Fowler Museum in the United States also returned seven royal artefacts to the Ghanaian Asante king, making the Manhyia Palace Museum now home to 39 artefacts that were lost to colonial powers. King Osei Tutu II appointed two technical advisors - Ghanaian historian, Ivor Agyeman-Duah, and Scottish historian and former vice principal of the Uni-



Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Ghana's Asante king, looks on during the ceremony to exhibit the return of artefacts from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), on a three-year loan at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, Ghana. — AFP photos

A member of the Board of Trustees of the British Museum, Professor Chris Gosden, said the museum is "wholly committed to continuing this relationship, building on this loan in a manner based on friendship, trust, mutual respect, and a willingness to discuss." He said the agreement reflects almost half a century of discussions between Manhyia Palace and especially with the British Museum.

The accord "provides the basis for enhanced cultural cooperation between the Manhyia Palace Museum and the British Museum, and this loan is its first tangible outcome," Gosden said. The

versity of Glasgow, Professor Malcolm McLeod - to facilitate the return.

Nigeria is also negotiating the return of thousands of 16th to 18th-century metal plaques, sculptures, and objects looted from the ancient Kingdom of Benin and currently held in museums and with art collectors across the US and Europe. The neighboring Benin Republic received two dozen treasures and artworks stolen in 1892 by French colonial forces. — AFP

## Japan town begins blocking Mt Fuji view from 'bad-mannered' tourists

**W**ork has begun in a small Japanese town to erect a barrier blocking views of the country's most famous sight, Mount Fuji, after locals complained of bad behavior by photo-hungry tourists. Fujikawaguchiko town began building panels of mesh netting at a spot where unending flows of mostly foreign tourists visit daily to take photos of the majestic mountain sitting behind a Lawson convenience store. Photos taken from a narrow stretch of pavement across a busy road from the Lawson store - which are ubiquitous in Japan - are widely shared online.

Local officials and residents say while the town welcomes visitors, they need to stop tourists from continuously

crossing the street, ignoring red lights, littering, trespassing, illegally parking and smoking outside of designated areas. "It became not uncommon for people to yell at us when we asked them to move their cars, and for them to throw their lit cigarettes (on the ground)," a dentist's office located across the street from the Lawson shop said in a statement. By the middle of this month, the town plans to complete the barrier, which will stand 2.5 meters (8 feet) high and stretch more than 20 meters long to block the view of the mountain, with hopes that it will discourage tourists from loitering there.

The town's move has prompted national and international headlines, as

Japan experiences growing problems of overtourism, particularly at popular sites like the narrow private alleys of Kyoto, and even trails on Mount Fuji itself, where tourists love to photograph themselves and post on social media. The Fujikawaguchiko town hall has been inundated with telephone calls from Japanese people, many of them non-local residents, who have criticized the move to block the view. "It is not that we do not want people to see Mount Fuji. The issue is that there are so many people who are not able to observe basic rules," a town official told AFP.

### 'Basic manners'

Having the net barrier is unfortunate

but perhaps necessary, area residents say. "We welcome foreigners for the revitalization of the community, but there are so many violations of basic manners, like crossing the road, dumping garbage and trespassing into people's properties," a 60-year-old resident told AFP. "After all, they are here for Mount Fuji, so having that barrier is very unfortunate," said the woman, who identified herself as Watanabe. "There might have been other ways to deal with it, but for now I feel it cannot be helped," she said.

Some tourists expressed understanding and voiced hopes that the town would create a designated photo spot. But others speculated that the barrier may only make matters worse. "Stop

people? I don't think so because when there is a will there is a way. People will just be on the left side of it or right side of it," said 29-year-old Australian tourist Trinity Robinson. "There definitely will be a way to still get the shot. It will just be more dangerous, really."

As a possible solution, a 37-year-old local man, who gave his name as Ama, called on visitors to check out other scenic locations in the area. "Mount Fuji from here (near the Lawson shop) is fantastic. But there are so many other places around here where you can visit and see beautiful views," he said. — AFP



A sign of a supermarket is pictured with Mount Fuji in the town of Fujikawaguchiko, Yamanashi prefecture. — AFP photos



Tourists take pictures of Mount Fuji from the opposite street of a convenience store.



Tourists take pictures of Mount Fuji (not pictured) from the opposite street of a convenience store.





Environmental activist Guillermo DChristy jumps across an area of water inside a cenote close to Playa del Carmen, Mexico .--AFP photos



Aerial view of the railway track of the Mayan Train near Puerto Morelos, Mexico.

# Mexico tourist train an environmental ‘nightmare,’ activists say

In a cave in Mexico’s Riviera Maya, where nature has sculpted a subterranean landscape of stunning beauty, thick steel columns supporting a controversial new tourist railway intrude into a delicate ecosystem. The Yucatan Peninsula boasts an estimated 2,400 of these caverns and sinkholes, which are known as cenotes and are a ma-

supporting a railway viaduct. Rojo calculates that the Maya Train, which partially opened in December, will need up to 17,000 columns along its 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) loop around south-eastern Mexico. Work on the project has continued despite a court-ordered suspension pending environmental studies.

impact studies, has razed 8.7 million trees and has irreversibly damaged the underground ecosystem. Lopez Obrador calls the members of Salvame del Tren “pseudo-environmentalists” and accuses them of profiting from the “alleged defense of nature.” The construction work, deemed of “national security” importance, is protected by the

es, concrete has leaked out of the steel columns and contaminated the cenote water, according to environmentalists. Worryingly, the well is a source of water for human consumption and eventually reaches the offshore Mesoamerican Reef—the second largest in the world, Rojo said. “Plants, animals and ourselves depend on this, which is one of the last healthy aquifers we have in Mexico,” he said.

Lopez Obrador said three weeks ago that there has only been one accidental concrete spillage and that it was being remedied. But inside the affected cenote, a clean-up has not yet happened. Other columns show signs of leaks and rust. Drills continue to bore holes into the fragile ground. The newspaper El Universal reported Friday that the environmental protection agency PROFEPA had documented five spillages linked to the railway construction.

### ‘A balance’

The government says that for the five completed sections of the train, nine protected natural areas have been created, totaling 1.34 million hectares (3.3 million acres). Most of it corresponds to the Bajos del Norte National Park, an underwater reserve in the Gulf of Mexico. The government also created a protected area in the southeastern state of Campeche that it says will be the second-largest rainforest reserve in the world, after the Brazilian Amazon. In Playa del Carmen, tourists blissfully unaware of the environmental fears arrived recently at a modern Maya Train station that had been inaugurated two months ago.

About a hundred people were waiting for the train, which has a capacity of 2,210 passengers, according to the defense ministry, which manages the project. Environmental damage is part of the project’s “yin and yang,” said Jaime Vazquez, a tour operator arriving at the station. “On the one hand there is an effect, of course, but on the other hand you benefit humans. So it’s a balance,” the 40-year-old said. —AFP



Environmental activists Guillermo DChristy and Roberto Rojo swim inside a cenote close to Playa del Carmen.

major attraction for tourists who swim and snorkel in the crystal clear waters that fill some of them. Campaigners warn that the unique geological system is under threat from the Maya Train, one of outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador’s flagship infrastructure projects.

“It’s our worst nightmare. We’ve seen a large drill entering and breaking the ceiling of the cave” as well as its ancient stalactites, biologist and speleologist Roberto Rojo told AFP, surveying the damage. In March, Rojo’s group Salvame del Tren (Save Me From the Train) filmed a huge drill piercing a hole into a cavern for one of the pillars

The original plan was to build part of the railway—which the government says will bring prosperity to one of the country’s poorest regions—next to a major highway. But according to environmentalists, the government moved the section into the jungle to avoid a conflict with hoteliers who feared traffic delays during construction. They accuse Lopez Obrador of rushing to finish the railway before he leaves office in October.

### ‘Ecocide’

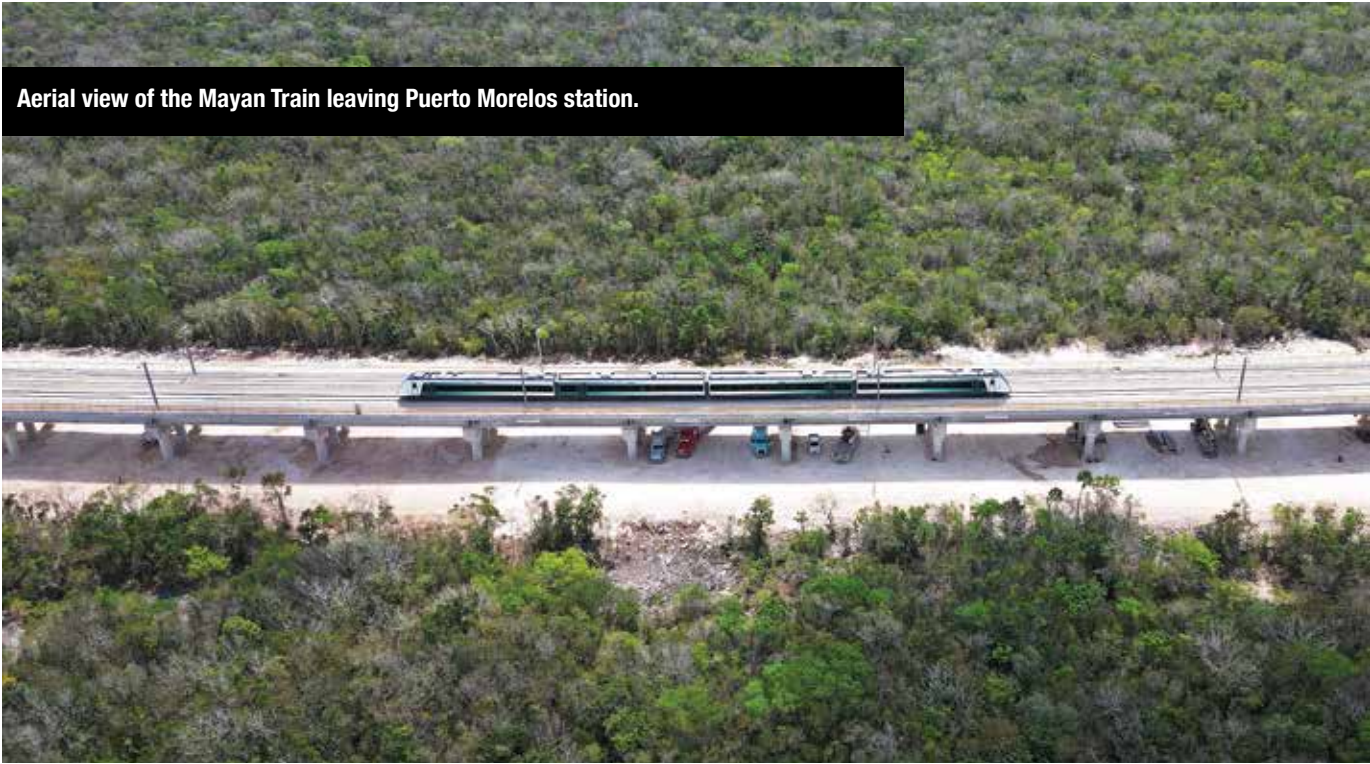
Activists have branded the construction work “ecocide.” They say the project lacks the proper environmental

National Guard.

Reaching one of the affected cenotes is no easy task. It involves driving several kilometers from the resort city of Playa del Carmen, then continuing the journey—almost impossible without a guide -- on foot, using a machete to cut through the undergrowth. Once inside the cave, a helmet with a flashlight is essential. The cavern is adorned by thousands of stalactites and stalagmites, some ancient and several meters high, others newly formed and measuring just a few centimeters.

### Clean-up promised

Despite Lopez Obrador’s assurance,



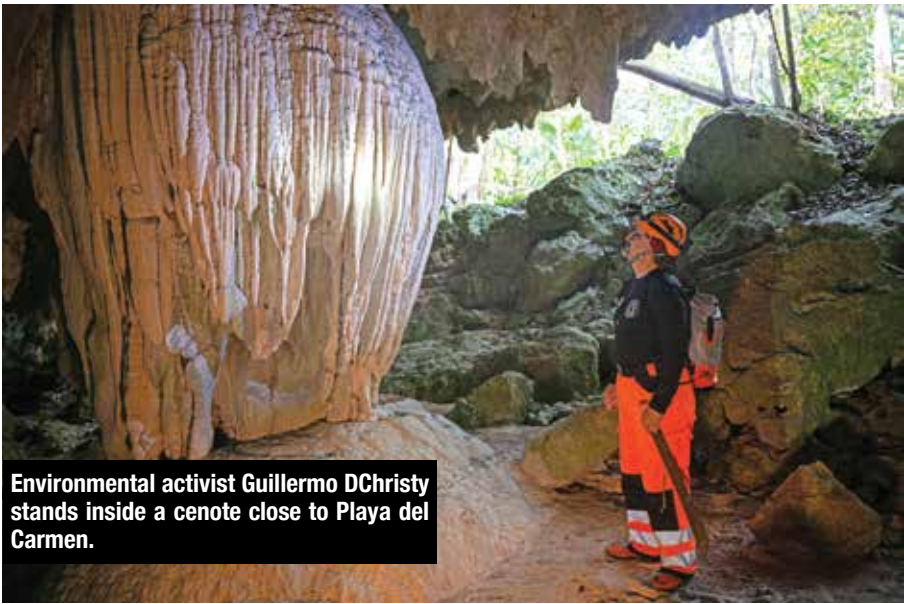
Aerial view of the Mayan Train leaving Puerto Morelos station.



Passengers wait to board the Mayan Train at the Cancun station.



A cleaning employee works onboard the Mayan Train.



Environmental activist Guillermo DChristy stands inside a cenote close to Playa del Carmen.



A woman takes a selfie next to the Mayan Train at the Cancun station.

## Halle Berry confronts stigma around menopause

Academy Award-winning actress Halle Berry joined a group of US senators to announce new legislation that would provide tens of millions of dollars towards menopause research and education. “The shame has to be taken out of menopause. We have to talk about this very normal part of our life,” said the Hollywood star, who picked up a best actress Oscar for 2001 romantic drama “Monster’s Ball.” The bill, Advancing Menopause Care and Mid-Life Women’s Health Act, is sponsored by senators from both parties and would divert \$275 million to research, raising awareness and training health care professionals to deal with the hormone shift that women go through, mainly in middle age. “Menopause is not a bad word. It’s not something to be ashamed of,” Patty Murray, a Democrat from Washington state, told reporters at the news conference outside the US Capitol.

“And it is not something Congress or the federal government should ignore.” The measure has no clear path yet to Joe Biden’s desk but Murray and her colleagues told reporters the aim was to get as many co-sponsors as possible before asking that it be put to a vote in the Senate. Berry, the first woman of color and still the only black woman to win a best actress Oscar, has been vocal about her own experiences with menopause and said the issue needed to be “destigmatized.” The actress -- whose films include the “X-Men” series, the 2002 James Bond movie “Die Another Day” and the mercilessly mocked “Catwoman” (2004) -- told reporters her doctor refused to use the word “menopause” in front of her. “I finally realized he wasn’t going to say it,” Berry told reporters. “So I thought, ‘Okay, I’m going to have to do what no man can do: I have to say it. I said, ‘I’m in menopause.’” —AFP



Academy Award-winning actress Halle Berry

## Meryl Streep to receive honorary Palme d’Or at Cannes

Meryl Streep will receive an honorary Palme d’Or at the opening ceremony of the Cannes Film Festival on May 14, organizers said. Streep, 74, is one of the most feted actors in Hollywood history, with a record 21 Oscar nominations and three wins. Her career has run the gamut of modern classics, from dramas such as “The Deer Hunter”, “Out of Africa” and “Kramer vs Kramer” to family favorites like “The Devil Wears Prada” and “Mamma Mia!”. Surprisingly, she has been at Cannes only once before -- though she did win best actress that year -- in 1989’s “A Cry in the Dark”.

“I am immeasurably honored to receive the news of this prestigious award. To win a prize at Cannes, for the international community of artists has always represented the highest achievement in the art of filmmaking,” she said in a statement. “To stand in the shadow of those who have previously been honored is humbling and thrilling in equal part.” Streep joins a host of Hollywood veterans appearing at this year’s festival on the French Cote d’Azur, including “Star Wars” creator George Lucas, who is also receiving a lifetime achievement award at the closing ceremony.

“Because she has spanned almost 50 years of cinema and embodied countless masterpieces, Meryl Streep is part of our collective imagination, our shared love of cinema,” the festival organizers said in the statement. Also receiving an honorary Palme d’Or are legendary Japanese animators Studio Ghibli -- the first time it will be awarded to a group rather than an individual. —AFP



Lifestyle

Pop idol Madonna gave it all in Rio de Janeiro as she looked back on her four-decade career in a historic show before throngs of joyful fans jammed onto Brazil's famed Copacabana beach on Saturday night. The 65-year-old singer walked down an elevated bridge from the Copacabana Palace hotel shortly after 10:30 pm to a massive stage for one of the most important shows of her career. Dressed all in black, Madonna broke into her hit "Nothing Really Matters" at the start of a burst of brute energy.

"Rio, here we are in the most beautiful place in the world," she said at the start of a performance that brought the giddy Brazilian audience to its feet. The show marked the final stop on her "Celebration Tour" noting her 40 years atop pop charts, in a free event that was estimated to draw upward of 1.5 million fans from across Brazil. Billed as a "historic" show, it blended music and dance with cabaret.

Madonna showcased her versatility with dozens of set and costume changes, spectacular lights and many giant screens along the beach. She went from being dressed as a schoolgirl in a mini-skirt to an irreverent Christian in a black cape while luminous crosses circled around her during "Like a Prayer," a song that cost her excommunication from the Catholic Church.

'Live To Tell'

Madonna was joined on stage during the performance of her hit "Vogue" by Brazilian singer Anitta, who is known for taking Carioca funk - the soundtrack of Rio's favelas - to the rest of the world. With "Live To Tell", she paid tribute to AIDS victims, including Freddie Mercury and the legendary Brazilian musician Caetano Veloso. US electronic dance music master



MADONNA  
wows Rio with  
'Celebration  
Tour' finale

DJ Diplo opened the show as thousands jostled to get a view of the stage. Boats bobbed in the water offshore, letting those onboard enjoy the show.

"I'm a mess, I haven't slept well, I've been listening to Madonna all week," 29-year-old sociologist Ina Odara told AFP. Tattooed on her shoulder was Madonna's phrase: "All that you ever learned, try to forget." "Madonna helped me leave the Catholic Church, think about many things and change my relationship with my family," said Odara, a transgender woman, standing near the huge stage that was twice the size of any other used on the tour. Police patrolled

almost every corner to minimize the usual mass robberies.

After 80 performances across Europe and North America, the Rio concert provided a crowning touch to a tour that took on sudden urgency when the singer suffered a life-threatening bacterial infection in June last year. Madonna has released an album every two or three years since the 1984 release of "Like a Virgin."

Her shows, with their spectacular productions, set a high bar. But the ever-provocative Madonna has also provided unforgettable moments, such as when she kissed Britney Spears at 2003's MTV Music Video Awards. Her irreverence

led to a tumultuous relationship with the Catholic Church, with Pope John Paul II urging fans to boycott her over her provocative 1989 video "Like a Prayer," which was seen as blasphemous.

'Oi, Rio!'

Madonna's concert should provide an economic boost to Rio, which contributed 20 million reales (\$4 million) toward the \$12 million production cost. Authorities expected it would pump a far larger sum - 293 million reales, or \$57 million - into the local economy. On every corner in the Copacabana neighborhood were billboards, souvenirs or T-shirts bearing

images of Madonna or of the conical corset designed by Jean Paul Gaultier and made famous by the diva.

Hundreds of her fans swarmed outside the Copacabana Palace since her arrival on Monday. The excitement spiked Thursday night when Madonna unexpectedly appeared for a sound check, her face almost completely hidden behind a colorful balaclava. That scene was repeated on Friday. "Oi, Rio!" she called out in Portuguese to fans. The response on Saturday night from more than a million voices: "Oi, Queen Madonna!" — AFP



US pop star Madonna performs onstage during a free concert at Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. - AFP photos



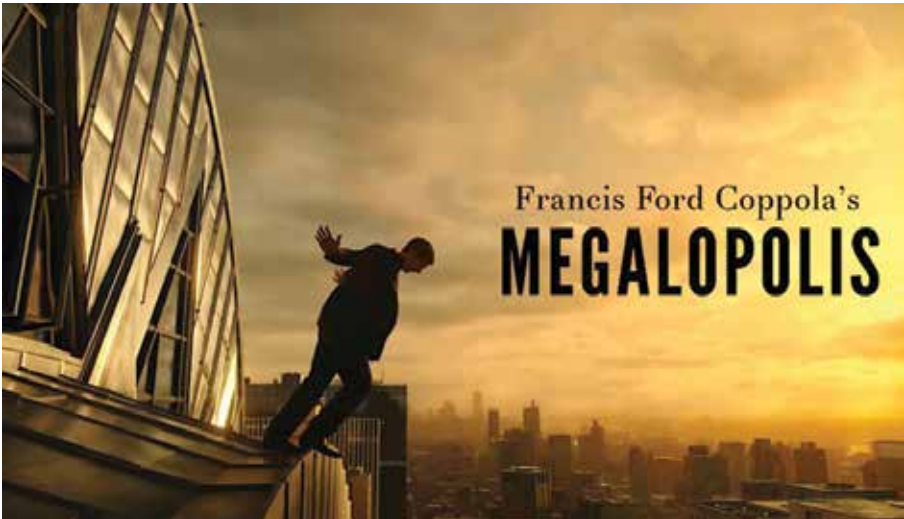
An aerial view shows the crowd waiting for US pop star Madonna to perform before her free mega concert on Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Coppola posts  
first teaser  
from his new film  
'Megalopolis'

Adam Driver standing on the edge of a skyscraper in a city reminiscent of New York, ready to throw himself into the void and seemingly able to control time. Legendary director Francis Ford Coppola on Saturday unveiled the first clip of his long-awaited epic "Megalopolis," in competition at the Cannes Film Festival later this month. Forty-five years after "Apocalypse Now," which earned Coppola a second Palme d'Or award, the American director will be the talk of Cannes

from May 14-25, 13 years after the release of his last feature film, "Twixt."

Coppola, 85, chose to release the teaser on May 4, on what would have been the 88th birthday of his wife, Eleanor Coppola, who died last month. "Megalopolis has always been a film dedicated to my dear wife, Eleanor," the director, 85, wrote on Instagram. "I really had hoped to celebrate her birthday together on this May 4th. But sadly that was not to be, so let me share with everyone a gift on her behalf." The film, which according to American media has a budget of more than \$100 million, is a Roman political drama transplanted to modern-day New York, Coppola has said. Along with Driver, the cast includes Giancarlo Esposito, Dustin Hoffman, Aubrey Plaza, Laurence Fishburne and others. — AFP



Paul Auster's wife  
deplores  
reporting on US  
writer's death

The wife of US writer Paul Auster, who died due to lung cancer complications, said that her family was "robbed" of "dignity" after a friend quickly confirmed his death to media outlets. The New York Times, citing a friend of the couple, published a story of Auster's passing hours after his death on Tuesday, with other outlets following suit with similar reports. "I was naive, but I had imagined that I would be the

person to announce the death of my husband," Siri Hustvedt, an esteemed novelist, wrote on Instagram.

"He died with us, his family, around him on April 30, 2024 at 6:58 PM," Hustvedt said. "Sometime later, I discovered that even before his body had been taken from our house, the news of his death was circulating on media and obituaries had been posted," she added. Hustvedt revealed in March 2023 that Auster, whose works included "The New York Trilogy," had been diagnosed with lung cancer.

The New York Times - the first news outlet to announce Auster's death - cited family friend and American journalist Jacki Lyden as its source, though Hustvedt did not refer to her or the newspaper directly. Hustvedt wrote on Instagram: "Not one of us was able to call

US actor Kevin Spacey denies new  
allegations to air in UK documentary

Hollywood actor Kevin Spacey has denied new allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior against men, ahead of the release next week of a UK television documentary featuring their claims. Two-time Oscar winner Spacey, 64, who has been cleared of sexual assault in trials in the United States and Britain, told UK journalist Dan Wootton in an interview posted on social media that he would "no longer be speechless". A two-part documentary, "Spacey Unmasked", is to be aired in the UK on Monday and Tuesday.

In it, 10 men not involved in the UK court case involving Spacey accuse him of behaving inappropriately towards them. The alleged incidents took place between 1976 and 2013 and "relate to what they describe as unwanted sexual behavior", Spacey revealed in the interview, citing an email he received from the documentary-makers. One of the alleged victims to feature in it, former actor Ruari Cannon, detailed his claims Saturday in Britain's i newspaper, accusing Spacey of touching him inappropriately in 2013 when he was aged 21.

But in his interview, the US actor denied illegal wrongdoing. "I take full responsibility for my past behavior and my actions, but I cannot and will not take responsibility or apologize to anyone who's made up stuff about me or exaggerated stories about me," he told



US actor Kevin Spacey

Wootton. "I've never told someone that if they give me sexual favors, then I will help them out with their career, never." He added: "I've clearly hooked up with some men who thought they might get ahead in their careers by having a relationship with me."

"But there was no conversation with me, it was all part of their plan, a plan that was always destined to fail, because I wasn't in on the deal." Wootton this year quit TV channel GB News, which has drawn comparisons with US network Fox News for its right-wing populist agenda, and now broadcasts online, where he posted the interview.

Spacey's once-stellar career has been halted by the various allegations of sexual offences, which first emerged in 2017 as part of the nascent #MeToo movement and which he has always denied. A UK jury last year acquitted him of nine alleged sex offences, which followed a New York court in 2022 dismissing a \$40 million civil sexual misconduct lawsuit brought against him. Spacey told Wootton he has struggled to get work after the criminal proceedings ended, describing his experience as a "life sentence". — AFP



Spanish Crown Prince Felipe (left) gives a decoration to US writer Paul Auster (second right) next to Spain's Princess Letizia (second left) and Auster's wife Siri Hustvedt (right), hours before handing him the 2006 Prince of Asturias Award for Letters, 20 October 2006 in the northern Spanish city of Oviedo. - AFP



## Sports

# Verstappen takes pole in Miami after sprint race win

## Max wins four out of five Grand Prix races this season

**MIAMI GARDENS:** Red Bull's Max Verstappen continued his domination of Formula One, taking pole position for Sunday's Miami Grand Prix after clinching the sprint race earlier Saturday.

The reigning world champion and championship leader, who has won four out of five Grand Prix races this season, secured his seventh straight pole position with another dominant drive.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, whose fastest lap was 0.141 seconds behind Verstappen, will start second with his teammate Carlos Sainz in third place and Verstappen's Red Bull partner Sergio Perez fourth.

Three-time world champion Verstappen has won both the previous Miami Grand Prix races but never from pole and he said he still found qualifying tricky.

"Every single year that we come here, I find it extremely difficult to be very consistent with the car feeling, the tyre feeling over one lap," he said.

"It's not the single most enjoyable lap of my career just because of how slippery it is. You are not very confident on the lap but we are on pole and of course that is the most important thing."

Leclerc said it had been hard to manage the tyres, with overheating a problem, but said his performance in the sprint race gave him encouragement.

"That's where we lost a little bit of time, however the race is long tomorrow, we showed good pace this morning (in the sprint race) and I hope we can put Max under a bit more pressure," he said. Sainz underscored just how tricky it had been for drivers to deliver their fastest lap on the course around Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins.

"It's really tricky around here with a new soft. Every lap is a bit of adventure," he said. "With the wind you don't know what will happen. Keeping all that in

mind, the laps were not too bad.

"You always finish the lap and think you could have gone so much faster, but it's almost impossible to put a perfect clean lap around here."

Lando Norris will start in P5, just ahead of the Mercedes pair George Russell and Lewis Hamilton.

Earlier, Verstappen cruised to victory in the sprint race, finishing 3.3 seconds ahead of Leclerc. The Dutchman led from pole and was never challenged after a chaotic opening lap. Verstappen's teammate Perez was third as the world champions gave themselves a points boost.

The Red Bull driver held off Leclerc's strong start to secure his place at the front but there was plenty of action and incident in the middle of the pack. Haas's Kevin Magnussen and Mercedes' Hamilton jostled hard but in the end the Dane picked up three penalties, adding 25 seconds to his time, after frequently leaving the track and gaining advantage.

Hamilton also received a penalty, leaving him outside the points positions in 16th after speeding in the pit lane. The safety car was brought out after the first lap, which saw a start line incident involving Hamilton, Fernando Alonso, Lance Stroll and Norris.

But away from those skirmishes, it was business as usual for Verstappen, who added another eight points to his season tally with the victory. "I think my engine wasn't good in the start and so then I had to speed it a bit, luckily everything worked out in turn one," said Verstappen.

### 'Calm things down'

"Then we had the safety car just to calm things down a bit after that. Steadily we could increase the gap a little bit, but it wasn't entirely perfect so we still



**MIAMI GARDENS:** Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen poses with film producer Jerry Bruckheimer after winning the pole position in the qualifying session for the 2024 Miami Formula One Grand Prix at Miami International Autodrome in Miami Gardens, Florida. — AFP

have a bit of work to do."

Australian Daniel Ricciardo, of RB, finished fourth in the sprint after holding off Ferrari's Carlos Sainz but his joy was shortlived—he will start in last place on Sunday after a disappointing qualifying session.

Magnussen accepted his penalties were "well de-

served" and Hamilton said he had enjoyed the duel.

"That's pretty honest of him and I think that's pretty cool," the British driver said. "We had a good race. It was a little bit on the edge in some places, but that's what I love. I love racing hard and, for me, I wasn't really frustrated or anything." — AFP



## Taekwondo championship boosts bilateral cooperation between Korea and Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** The Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait, in partnership with the Kuwait Taekwondo Federation and the Korean Community Association, proudly co-hosted the Ambassador's Cup Taekwondo Championship 2024. The event took place from April 30 to May 2 at the Jaber Al Ahmad facility of the Kuwait Olympic Committee. Over 200 young male and female athletes from Kuwait competed across nine weight categories, demonstrating their skills and dedication to Taekwondo.

The gala on May 2 was a vibrant highlight, attended by VIPs from the sports community and over 700 spectators, underscoring the widespread popularity and support for Taekwondo in Kuwait. Ambassador Chung Byung-ha expressed his gratitude to Hani Al

Mersahad, President of the Kuwait Taekwondo Federation, and Mrs Jung Sunghye, President of the Korean Association in Kuwait, for their collaboration in organizing this significant event. Special thanks were also extended to the Minister of the State for Youth, Dawood Maarafi, and sports club leaders in Kuwait for their continuous support of Taekwondo.

This championship is particularly significant as it commemorates the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations and the 60th anniversary of energy cooperation between Kuwait and Korea, marking a partnership that began with Korea's first importation of crude oil from Kuwait in January 1964.

To celebrate this notable occasion, the Korean folk ballet troupe "The Little Angels" visited Ku-



wait to showcase the essence of traditional Korean performing arts, celebrating the deep cultural ties between the two nations. The event also featured a prestigious awarding ceremony where the Minister of the State for Youth was honored with a Black-belt Certificate from Kukkiwon, the World Taekwondo Headquarters.

In his address, Ambassador Chung Byung-ha emphasized the impact of Taekwondo in fostering values such as courtesy, integrity, perseverance, and self-control among Kuwait's youth. Since its introduction in the 1980s, Taekwondo has attracted over 4,000 practitioners in Kuwait, and through annual Taekwondo events and competitions, it continues to inspire and engage more young people.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea looks forward to further deepening cultural and sports exchanges between Korea and Kuwait, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and cooperation that benefit both nations.

## Edwards hits 43 to spark T-Wolves over Denver in playoffs

**LOS ANGELES:** Anthony Edwards scored a playoff career-high 43 points and the Minnesota Timberwolves dominated defending champion Denver in the final minutes for a 106-99 victory in Saturday's NBA playoff series opener.

Edwards made 17-of-29 shots from the floor, 3-of-7 from 3-point range, and all six free throws for his third career 40-point playoff game. "My teammates trust me in every position in critical moments in the game. I try to come through for them," Edwards said after Minnesota took a 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference second round series, which continues on Monday in Denver.

"It's tough here," Edwards said. "The altitude, their team, the crowd. I'm proud of my teammates. They came out and fought super-hard." None delivered more in the clutch than NBA Sixth Man of the Year Naz Reid, who scored the first 10 Minnesota points in an 18-7 run to break an 84-84 deadlock. Reid scored 14 of his 16 points in the last quarter.

Anthony and his teammates kept the Nuggets at bay to the finish, with "Ant-Man" crediting his time with the 2023 US Basketball World Cup team with improving him this season. "I put in work this summer," said Edwards. "Shout out to USA team. They got me ready for this season. I appreciate that."

Karl-Anthony Towns, whose foul trouble late led to Reid entering the game, scored 20 points while Mike Conley added 14 points, all in the second half, plus 10 assists and Rudy Gobert grabbed 13 rebounds. "He has done a good job of finding us late in games and giving us confidence," Conley said of Edwards. The Nuggets, who hadn't trailed in a playoff series in two years, were led by 32 points, nine assists and eight rebounds from two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic.

But the Serbian center was pressured into a game-high seven turnovers and rushed into shots by an aggressive T-Wolves defensive effort. "There's a lot we can clean up and get better at and we're going to have to," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "Played no defense in the third and you can't just trade baskets with that team. There's a lot that we'll look at in the film and try and clean up."

Michael Porter Jr. added 20 points for Denver while Jamal Murray had 17, all in the second half after his first scoreless playoff half in 59 post-season contests. "I think we'll be all right," said Porter.

Edwards scored 25 of Minnesota's 40 first-half points on 10-of-17 shooting, keeping the T-Wolves within 44-40 at halftime. Edwards netted 16 first-quarter points, 11 of them in a 14-2 Minnesota run to start the contest. "I just felt good," Edwards said. "My teammates found me on some easy layups. I've never gotten that many easy buckets so that was pretty fun."

But the Nuggets answered with a 21-3 spurt that put them ahead 25-23 after the first quarter, in which Jokic and Porter each scored nine points. Timberwolves coach Chris Finch, who underwent surgery Wednesday to repair a ruptured patellar tendon in his right knee, was seated a row behind the players in order to guide his club, even though assistant Micah Nori passed along most of his instructions.

"It went well in a not-ideal situation," Nori said. "It went as smooth as it possibly could have. Even though he's up a lot during games, he's not calling a lot of plays. He was great. We don't want to make it clunky, was the term he used, and we did a good job of that." — AFP

## England to face SA in Women's T20 WCup opener

**DHAKA:** England will face South Africa in the opening match of the ICC Women's Twenty20 World Cup to be held in Bangladesh later this year, the International Cricket Council announced on Sunday. The event will run from October 3 to 20 in the capital Dhaka and the northeastern city of Sylhet, with warm-up matches starting on September 27.

Hosts Bangladesh and the top six teams from the previous edition in South Africa—Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa and the West Indies—qualified automatically for the tournament, with Pakistan joining them as the next best ranked team.

Ireland, the UAE, Sri Lanka and Scotland are in contention for the remaining two places, with the semi-finals of the qualifying tournament being held in the UAE. Six-times winners and current world number one Australia will play in Group A alongside India, New Zealand, Pakistan and a Qualifier 1.

Neighbours and rivals India and Pakistan will face off on October 6. Group B will feature South Africa, Bangladesh, England, West Indies, and Qualifier 2. "Over the last six to seven years we have seen women's cricket grow exponentially," ICC chief executive officer Geoff Allardice said at the announcement of the fixture list and trophy unveiling in Dhaka.

"This is going to be a very special tournament," he added. It will be the ninth edition of the tournament, with Bangladesh previously hosting in 2014. — AFP



**BENGALURU:** Gujarat Titans' David Miller (L) dives to reach the crease during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. — AFP

## Du Plessis, Kohli help Bengaluru stay in IPL play-off race

**BENGALURU:** Skipper Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli helped Royal Challengers Bengaluru hammer Gujarat Titans by four wickets for their third successive IPL win on Saturday. Chasing a modest 148 for victory, Du Plessis, who hit 64, and Kohli, who made 42, laid the foundations with a stand of 92 in 35 balls as the target was achieved with 6.2 overs to spare at Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Du Plessis' departure triggered a collapse as Gujarat hit back with wickets from Joshua Little and Noor Ahmad to have the opposition in trouble at 117-6 when Kohli was dismissed. Wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik, who hit 21, and Swapnil Singh, who made 15, made sure there was no more drama as they steered the team home in an unbeaten stand of 35.

"It was important we didn't look at the scoreboard when we went out to bat and try and play

the way we play," said Du Plessis. "It was a bit nerve-wracking, another wicket, another wicket. Probably not the best but you're trying to be positive, get your net run-rate up."

Bowlers set up victory after pace spearhead Mohammed Siraj removed the openers including skipper Shubman Gill early and Gujarat lost regular wickets to be bowled out for 147 in 19.3 overs. Siraj returned figures of 2-29 to be named man of the match but the pace bowler said he nearly missed the game after being "sick since last night".

It was Bengaluru's fourth win and third on the bounce in 11 matches as they jumped from the bottom of the table to seventh and keep their slim play-off hopes alive. Gujarat's hopes are also hanging by a thread as they slumped to their seventh loss in 11 matches.

"Very important to start from zero in our next match and move on from this game," Gill said. "Learn from mistakes and not repeat them. All about winning from here on." Kohli, who reclaimed the top batting spot with 542 runs, came out roaring as he hit Mohit Sharma for two sixes in the opening over of the chase and Du Plessis soon joined in and moved ahead to raise his fifty in 18 balls. — AFP



## Sports

# Zain continues unwavering support to local showjumping athletes

## Company awards champions of Third KEF Showjumping Tour



Minister Dawood Maarafi and Nawaf Algharabally with the champions and top officials.



Zain strives to encourage local athletes to pursue excellence.

**KUWAIT:** After a thrilling season, Zain has awarded the champions of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation's (KEF) Third Showjumping Tour (2023-2024 season). The champions were recognized during the final tour and awarding ceremony held at the Kuwait Riding Center in Sabhan, joined by crowds of equestrian fans and top executives from the private and public sectors.

The event was joined by Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and Minister of State for Communications Dawood Maarafi, Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Algharabally, Kuwait Equestrian Federation Chairman Masoud Johar Hayat, Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, Deputy Director of the Competitive Sports Sector at the Public Authority for Sports Bashar Abdullah Al-Salem, Zain Kuwait Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al-Musaibeeh, along with KEF board members and local executives.

The top 10 champions of the Zain Grand Prix Ranking were awarded during the ceremony: 1st place winner Ali Al-Kharafi, 2nd place winner Fawaz Al-Subaie, 3rd place winner Ghazi Al-Jerawi, 4th place winner Yara Al-Hunaidi, 5th place winner Abdullah Al-Awadhi, 6th place winner Madhi



The KEF Tour was joined by tens of athletes representing local clubs.

Al-Khamees, 7th place winner Abrar Al-Musallam, 8th place winner Abdulrahman Al-Fuzae, 9th place winner Hamad Al-Hajri, and 10th place winners An-naz Alannaz and Abdullah Al-Roudhan.

Zain's participation came as part of its ongoing support to the KEF Showjumping Tour, which the company has sponsored for the third year running. Zain strives to support local showjumping athletes

and remains a key supporter of this exciting competition to reflect its commitment to supporting equestrian sports and encouraging local athletes to pursue excellence.

The company is proud to continue supporting this exciting local sport event since its inception. The competition was organized by the Kuwait Equestrian Federation (KEF) in collaboration with the Kuwait Olympic Committee and Public Authority for Sports. Every year, it is joined by tens of showjumping athletes representing local clubs, along with crowds of equestrian enthusiasts.

Zain's presence in this event also stems from its strategic goals to support, grow, and develop the local sports and youth sectors. The company is a fervent believer in the exceptional talents of Kuwait's young athletes, many of whom are passionate about equestrian sports that are deep rooted in the Kuwaiti, Arab, and Islamic identities.

The KEF Third Showjumping Tour, which kicked-off late last year, featured eight rounds, with each round's activities being held over a period of two days. The tour also featured several 2-star and 3-star international competitions. Hundreds of showjumpers from Kuwait's public and private equestrian clubs competed in the thrilling competitions.

## Haaland hits 4 as Man City keep title pressure on Arsenal

**LONDON:** Erling Haaland scored four times as Manchester City thrashed Wolves 5-1 to move within one point of Arsenal after the Premier League leaders beat Bournemouth 3-0 on Saturday. City responded to Arsenal's victory just hours earlier with a goal blitz at the Etihad Stadium.

Pep Guardiola's side took the lead in the 12th minute when Rayan Ait-Nouri clattered into Josko Gvardiol, conceding a penalty that Haaland stroked past Jose Sa. Haaland bagged City's second in the 35th minute as he rose highest at the far post to meet Rodri's cross with a majestic header that looped over Sa.

Deep into first half stoppage-time, Nelson Seme-do tripped Haaland to give City another penalty that

was drilled home by the Norway striker. Hwang Hee-chan got one back for Wolves in the 53rd minute after a mistake by City keeper Ederson.

But Haaland, who was visibly unhappy to be substituted in the closing stages, made it 36 goals in all competitions this term less as he curled a fine finish into the far corner in the 54th minute. Julian Alvarez's 85th minute finish capped City's sixth consecutive league win, extending their unbeaten run in the competition to 20 games.

The reigning champions, who have a game in hand on Arsenal, will clinch an unprecedented fourth successive English title if they win their last three matches. They head to Fulham next Saturday before visiting Tottenham on May 14 and hosting West Ham five days later. "It's three games, hopefully we win the first and the second and arrive to the third with our destiny in our own hands," Guardiola said. Asked about Haaland's reaction to his substitution, Guardiola added: "He was frustrated with the referee. With the long balls sometimes they push him and he is pulled. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Norwegian striker #09 Erling Haaland fails to connect with the ball during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Wolverhampton Wanderers at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester. — AFP

## Hat-trick for Suarez as Inter Miami hit six

**FORT LAUDERDALE:** Luis Suarez scored a hat-trick and Lionel Messi had an incredible five assists and a goal in the second half as a rampant Inter Miami crushed the New York Red Bulls 6-2 in Major League Soccer on Saturday.

Two-goal substitute Matias Rojas sparked the second half rout from Eastern Conference leaders Inter after New York had led 1-0 at the break. Without Messi, Miami had fallen to a 4-0 defeat to the Red Bulls in New York in March, but they more than avenged that loss with a merciless second-half demolition job.

Messi's five assists, which all came in the second half, are a new record for an MLS game and he now has 10 goals and 12 assists in eight league appearances so far this season. Operating behind Suarez, Messi's passing through the slightest of gaps, taking advantage of his former Barcelona teammate's telepathic understanding of his intentions, was simply too much for the Red Bulls, who came into the game third in the East.

"Obviously what we have seen today surprises people, because you don't see that in football," said Suarez of Messi's five assists. "But as a teammate and someone who knows him, nothing surprises me about him," added the Uruguayan.

The 37-year-old Suarez's triples takes his own tally to 10 in 11 league games for Miami and despite no longer being blessed with pace, his deadly finishing clearly remains intact. While it was the kind of attacking display that Miami owners Jorge Mas and David Beckham surely dreamed of when they brought in the star pairing, there was no sign of the explosiveness in the opening half.

Dante Vanzeir had put the Red Bulls ahead in the 30th minute, slotting home after Wikelman Carmona's shot came out off the post, following a superb through pass from Swedish playmaker Emil Forsberg.

Gerardo Martino's Inter lacked intensity and ideas in the opening 45 minutes but the coach's half-time change transformed the game. Paraguayan Rojas was introduced for the second half and took just three minutes to make an impact, collecting a pass from Messi and evading two defenders before unleashing an unstoppable drive from 25 yards out.

Messi then put Miami in front when Rojas robbed Carmona and found Suarez, who slipped the ball to the Argentine, who made no mistake. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner then turned provider again as he split the New York defense with a brilliant through ball to Rojas, who deftly chipped over the advancing Carlos Coronel.

Suarez's hat trick then came in the space of 12 minutes - he first found the target when Messi chipped in a ball from the right and the Uruguayan hooked home a volley. It was playground stuff minutes later when Suarez played a one-two with Messi and then poked home to make it 5-1.

Messi was yet again the creator for Miami's sixth, which Suarez turned in from close range from the tightest of angles. "The partnership of him (Messi) and Luis (Suarez) in the second half worked very well, like in old times (...). They were very influential in the game," said Martino. — AFP

### Today's matches

#### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Crystal Palace v Manchester United 22:00  
beIN Sports HD 1

#### ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A

Salernitana v Atalanta BC 19:00  
beIN Sports  
Udinese Calcio v SSC Napoli 21:45  
beIN Sports

#### FRENCH LEAGUE

LOSC Lille v Olympique Lyonnais 22:00  
beIN Sports HD 2

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	22414507
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, Raja Daruru**, holder of Indian Passport No. M5451053 having permanent address Venkatanarayanapalli, Chakrampeta, Penagalur, Annamayya, Andhra Pradesh, 516127, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name Adi Narayana and surname Dharuru.  
(#5603 - 05/05/2024)





LONDON: Chelsea's Ukrainian midfielder #10 Mykhailo Mudryk (2L) vies with West Ham United's Brazilian midfielder #10 Lucas Paqueta (L) and West Ham United's English striker #20 Jarrod Bowen during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and West Ham United at Stamford Bridge in London on May 5, 2024. — AFP

## Chelsea rout West Ham 5-0

### Villa's top four bid rocked at Brighton

LONDON: Aston Villa's bid to finish in the Premier League's top four was rocked by a 1-0 defeat at Brighton, while Chelsea thrashed West Ham 5-0 to keep alive their hopes of European qualification on Sunday. A Villa win combined with a Tottenham loss at Liverpool in Sunday's late game would have sealed a Champions League place for Unai Emery's side.

But Villa were unable to fulfil their part of that equation as Joao Pedro's 87th minute goal condemned them to a second painful defeat in four days. Ending Brighton's six-match winless run, Pedro headed in the rebound after Robin Olsen saved his penalty, which had been awarded for Ezri Konsa's foul on Simon Adingra.

Surprisingly beaten 4-2 by Olympiakos in the Europa Conference League semi-final first leg on Thursday, Villa were well below their best once

again. Villa remain in fourth place, seven points clear of fifth placed Tottenham, who have two games in hand.

Emery's men host Liverpool and travel to Crystal Palace in their last two games as they fight to return to the Champions League for the first time since 1982-83. At Stamford Bridge, Chelsea crushed London rivals West Ham to move above Manchester United into seventh place.

Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino is fighting to convince the club's co-owner Todd Boehly to give him a second season in charge after his troubled debut campaign. Pochettino admits it is "not his decision" if he stays, but securing a place in Europe could be enough to avoid the sack.

Cole Palmer put Chelsea ahead in the 15th minute with his 21st league goal of the season, the forward firing home after West Ham failed

to clear. Conor Gallagher doubled Chelsea's advantage after 30 minutes with a blistering volley after West Ham's Kurt Zouma deflected the ball towards the midfielder.

Noni Madueke bagged Chelsea's third six minutes later as the winger turned in Thiago Silva's header from close-range. Nicolas Jackson piled on the misery for woeful West Ham in the 48th minute with a tap-in from Madueke's cross.

The Senegal striker was on target again with 10 minutes left. The lopsided nature of defeat did little to quell speculation over the future of West Ham boss David Moyes, who has come under fire from fans for his perceived negative game-plans.

Ninth placed West Ham have reportedly held talks with former Wolves boss Julen Lopetegui and could opt to move on from Moyes, whose contract expires at the end of the season. — AFP

### Real Madrid claim 36th Spanish title

MADRID: Real Madrid earned what coach Carlo Ancelotti said was a "deserved" La Liga title on Saturday after beating Cadiz 3-0 and Girona sealed it with a stunning 4-2 victory over Barcelona. Ancelotti's side did their homework by beating Cadiz and after last season's champions stumbled against Girona, Los Blancos were crowned champions for a record-extending 36th time. Girona's dramatic victory saw the Catalan minnows qualify for the Champions League for the first time in their history, in only their fourth season in Spain's top flight.

Ancelotti rotated heavily ahead of the Champions League semi-final second leg clash with Bayern Munich next week, but his players still got the job done. Brahim Diaz netted in the 51st minute to put Madrid ahead and then set up Jude Bellingham, with Joselu tapping home a third. "We've had a spectacular Liga campaign," Ancelotti told reporters. "We've made few errors and the advantage is deserved."

Madrid's comfortable win over Cadiz sent them 14 points clear of last season's champions Barcelona, in third, with only 12 left to play for.

Girona, second after their second 4-2 win over Barcelona this season, trail Madrid by 13 points.

"We leave our skins out there on the

pitch to live moments like today's," Madrid striker Joselu told Real Madrid TV. "There are young players who are very hungry for titles, veterans who are delighted to be here... and these are special moments."

With the Bayern second leg in mind, Ancelotti only selected captain Nacho Fernandez from the starting line-up that earned a 2-2 draw in Bavaria this week. Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois started for the first time after a nine-month lay off after a knee injury and kept a clean sheet.

Madrid midfielder Luka Modric became the oldest player to appear for the club in La Liga, at 38 years and 238 days, breaking late Hungarian great Ferenc Puskas' record from 1965 by five days. The visitors, 18th and still battling to stay up, shaded the first half but Madrid's goals came in the second.

Courtois made a superb save to deny Chris Ramos early in the second half and Madrid took the lead immediately afterwards. Diaz received from the evergreen Modric on the edge of the area, turned slickly and curled an effort into the top corner. Bellingham, on as a substitute for Turkish teenager Arda Guler, added the second soon after entering the fray at the end of a fine team move.

It was the England international's 18th league goal of the season, keeping him in contention to finish as the top scorer. Madrid put the cherry on their cake after a superb run by Nacho.

Poised to depart at the end of the season, the Spaniard was hailed by the Bernabeu after setting up Joselu for a simple finish in stoppage time.



MADRID: Real Madrid's Spanish forward #21 Brahim Diaz (L) and Cadiz's Spanish defender #05 Victor Chust vie for the ball during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Cadiz CF at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. — AFP

#### 'Impossible to compete'

Los Blancos were able to celebrate after Girona came from behind twice to defeat Barcelona in a wild clash, moving second. Barca took the lead through Andreas Christensen's fine volley after three minutes but La Liga's top scorer Artem Dovbyk levelled with his 20th goal of the campaign just a minute later. Robert Lewandowski sent Barcelona ahead with a penalty after Lamine Yamal was felled, but substitute Portu made a huge impact in the second half for Girona.

Michel Sanchez's side netted two goals in two minutes to turn the game on its head. Portu netted the equalis-

er moments after coming on and then set up Miguel Gutierrez to put Girona ahead. Portu sensationally volleyed home the fourth to ignite Girona's tiny Montilivi stadium and get the party started. "The players have entered Girona's history books, what we've done this year is incredible," said Sanchez.

Girona played Champions League music over the stadium sound system to give their fans a taste of things to come. "I want to play against Liverpool, I want a historic giant here, there are many, Bayern Munich, AC Milan, Inter." For Barcelona, third, the summer will be for self-reflection rather than dreams. — AFP



MADRID: Poland's Iga Swiatek (R) holds her winner's trophy beside runner-up Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka during the 2024 WTA Tour Madrid Open tournament final tennis match at Caja Magica in Madrid. — AFP

### Swiatek finds Nadal inspiration to win Madrid Open title

MADRID: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek came through "the most intense and crazy final" she has ever contested to avenge her loss to Aryna Sabalenka in last year's Madrid final with a grueling three-hour 11-minute victory in the Spanish capital on Saturday.

Coming back from 1-3 down in the decider and saving three match points in total, Swiatek claimed a 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (9/7) victory to secure the Madrid Open trophy for the first time. "Well, who is going to say now that women's tennis is boring, right?" said Swiatek.

Swiatek, who picked up the 20th title of her career, and ninth at the WTA 1000 level, has now won her last eight consecutive finals and joins Elena Rybakina with a tour-leading 30 victories this season. The 22-year-old Pole confessed she felt tight in the first two hours of the contest but drew inspiration from Rafael Nadal, and his ability to step up mentally when it mattered the most.

"I was surprised that in the third set I felt the best mentally," said Swiatek, who improved to 7-3 lifetime against two-time Madrid champion Sabalenka. "One thing that came through my mind was that I think Rafa had a couple of matches like that. "I remember exactly when he was playing (Daniil) Medvedev in Australia (Open final in 2022) and it clicked for him. He also struggled for a bit of time, he was tense and I think stressed. That kind of gave me hope that maybe it will click, even after two hours." — AFP