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## \$2bn raised for Gaza in Kuwait

Amir honors UN Chief • Guterres demands immediate truce • Gaza martyrs top 35,000

**KUWAIT/GAZA:** A conference of international donors in Kuwait on Sunday pledged over \$2 billion to aid the devastated Gaza Strip over seven months into the Zionist war in the besieged Palestinian territory. The conference, organized by the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) and the UN's humanitarian coordination agency OCHA, said the funds would be dispersed over two years, with the possibility of extension, in efforts to support life-saving humanitarian interventions in Gaza.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had urged an immediate halt to the Zionist-Hamas war in Gaza, the return of captives and a "surge" in humanitarian aid to the besieged territory, in remarks played at the opening of the conference. "But a ceasefire will only be the start," Guterres said. "It will be a long road back from the devastation and trauma of this war." Zionist strikes continued in Gaza on Sunday, where the health ministry said the death toll in the war had exceeded 35,000 people.

HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Guterres on Sunday at Bayan Palace. During the meeting, HH the Amir welcomed the UN Chief in Kuwait, thanking him for his support and cooperation. HH the Amir presented Guterres with the Order of Kuwait - Riband of the Special Class for his political efforts and significant services. HH the Amir also assured Guterres that Kuwait would always support humanitarian work. "Kuwait is a symbol of humanity, wisdom and generosity," Guterres said, thanking HH the Amir for the special order.

"I would like to receive it on behalf of the United Nations, and in particular, on behalf of the nearly 200 members of the UN who were killed in Gaza. I would like to express my deep gratitude for Ku-



**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah presents UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres the Order of Kuwait of the Special Class at Bayan Palace on May 12, 2024. — KUNA

wait's enduring commitment to peace," he added. "I will never forget when I was UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and I was desperate at not being able to find support for Syrian refugees at that time. His Highness the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was the one who organized three international conferences to support Syrian refugees, and Kuwait made the largest donation," said Guterres. — Agencies (See Pages 3 & 5)

## Amiri decree names new Cabinet

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** An Amiri decree was issued on Sunday announcing the formation of the new Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, which retained most of the ministers in the previous Cabinet. The economic team of the oil, finance and public works were retained while the ministers of electricity and water, commerce and industry, justice and social affairs were changed, bringing in new and old faces.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah was retained as deputy prime minister and minister of defense and interior. Mahmoud Bushehri, a former electricity and water minister, was appointed in the same position after an absence of several years. Amthal Al-Huwailah, a new face, was appointed minister of social affairs. Mohammad Al-Wasmi, also a newcomer, was appointed minister of justice and Islamic affairs.

Omar Al-Omar, also a new en-



**Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah**

trant, was given the post of commerce and industry and minister of state for communications. Emad Al-Atiqi kept the ministry of oil while Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi was retained as information minister. Anwar Al-Mudhaf also kept the finance ministry.

- **Prime Minister:** Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah
- **First Deputy PM, Minister of Defense, Interior:** Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah
- **Deputy PM, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs:** Sharida Al-Maousherji
- **Deputy PM, Minister of Oil:** Dr Emad Al-Atiqi
- **Minister of Information:** Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi
- **Minister of Health:** Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi
- **Minister of Finance, Investment:** Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf
- **Minister of Education:** Dr Adel Al-Adwani
- **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** Abdullah Al-Yahya
- **Minister of Public Works, Municipality:** Dr Noura Al-Meshaan
- **Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs:** Dr Mohammad Al-Wasmi
- **Minister of Commerce, Communication:** Omar Al-Omar
- **Minister of Electricity and Water, Housing:** Dr Mahmoud Bushehri
- **Minister of Social Affairs, Youth:** Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah

## Welcome to Kuwait

Kuwait extends its heartfelt greetings to  
His Majesty Sultan  
Haitham bin Tariq, the Sultan of Oman.





## Local

# Kuwait a reliable and altruistic partner: Sudan's ambassador

## Envoy praises Zain's Al-Kharafi for the company's steadfast commitment



Sudanese Ambassador Awadal-Karim Al-Rayah Balla discusses with the local media.



Ambassador Awadal-Karim poses for a group photo with local media representatives.

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Sudanese Ambassador to Kuwait Awadal-Karim Al-Rayah Balla affirmed that Sudan values its relationship with Kuwait, recognizing the country as a reliable and altruistic partner. The ambassador stated in a meeting with local media representatives that Kuwait offers assistance without imposing political agendas, making it an attractive collaborator for economic ventures and a trusted source of humanitarian aid.

"Kuwait's impartiality and commitment to non-interference stand out, evidenced by its role as a mediator in various conflicts. Sudan holds a deep respect for Kuwait's ability to foster reconciliation both domestically and within its regional sphere. As one of the earliest nations to acknowledge Kuwait's independence, Sudan prioritizes nurturing and strengthening its longstanding ties with Kuwait," he said.

Meanwhile, the ambassador praised Bader Al-Kharafi, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of Zain Group in Kuwait, for the company's steadfast commitment to its employees amidst challenging circumstances, noting that despite the damages caused by the war, including destruction of cables and communication towers, Zain Group has ensured that its employees continue to receive their salaries. The Ambassador noted that Zain stands out as one of the few, if not the only, companies maintaining such dedication to its workforce despite the ongoing conflict.

He said that despite facing significant financial setbacks, with the company's income not surpassing 25 percent amid the prolonged war, Zain's commitment to its employees remains unwavering. On the

defense levels, Ambassador Balla stated that cooperation between Kuwait and Sudan has seen significant bilateral engagement, particularly in the realm of military education and training.

"Before the war, a substantial cohort of Kuwaiti military students have pursued rigorous military studies at the prestigious Sudanese Military College, fostering a robust exchange of knowledge and expertise between the two countries. Additionally, some Kuwaiti officers have pursued advanced post-graduate studies at Sudan's Command and Staff College. Reciprocally, Sudanese officers have also benefited from specialized military courses conducted in Kuwait, further enriching the collaborative landscape of defense cooperation between the two countries," the ambassador said.

### Economic, political ties

Regarding the economic and political relations between Kuwait and Sudan, the ambassador emphasized the existence of various joint committees, including ministerial committees and a political consultation committee, facilitating continuous dialogue and cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of Kuwait and Sudan. Additionally, both countries have forged bilateral agreements aimed at advancing mutual interests and strengthening bilateral ties.

He added: "There is ongoing collaboration with institutions such as the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation which underscores the commitment of both Kuwait and Sudan to foster economic development and prosperity through stra-

tegic partnerships and financial support."

He noted that Sudan is one of the Arab countries that benefits greatly and contributes to the Arab Planning Institute, saying "The institute sponsors training and even designs a national investment map for Sudan." Meanwhile, he revealed that Sudan was one of the first countries to receive a loan from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. It was a loan to expand the railway to Sudan.

"Kuwait is the largest supporter of Sudan. The total debt exceeds \$15 billion. After the secession of South Sudan, there was a backwardness and debt interest accumulated," he said, adding that Kuwait's significant investments in Sudan span across agricultural, livestock, and communication sectors, underscoring the depth of economic engagement, where trade between Kuwait and Sudan flourished, amounting to approximately half a billion dollars.

Moreover, the ambassador highlighted Kuwait's invaluable humanitarian contributions to Sudan, which have left an indelible mark on the Sudanese people. Kuwait's unwavering support during crises, such as the devastating floods in 2020 and 2021, and its immediate response in providing humanitarian aid during the war, including the establishment of an air bridge, exemplify its steadfast commitment to assisting Sudan in times of need.

The aid, totaling over \$6 million, comprised essential supplies such as medicines, ambulances, medical equipment, as well as food and shelter provisions, delivered through numerous flights and a large-scale maritime shipment from Kuwait and it is still ongoing. Regarding the Sudanese community, the ambassador said that there are 20,000 Sudanese in Kuwait who



Sudanese Ambassador to Kuwait Awadal-Karim Al-Rayah Balla

work as medical staff, university professors, and administrative positions, and others.

He added that the embassy provides its citizens with all consular services, whether authenticating, issuing documents or issuing and renewing passports, stating "The conflict took a toll on Sudan's infrastructure, notably damaging the passport factory in Khartoum, resulting in a seven-month hiatus in its operations. However, efforts to restore functionality were swift, with the installation of a new passport factory imported from Germany. Resuming operations just three months ago, issuing 3,000 new passports."

The ambassador called Sudanese community residing in Kuwait to explore the embassy's newly launched website (<https://www.sudanembassy-kw.com/advir.html>), which offers a comprehensive range of services and resources, encouraging them to stay informed by following the embassy's social media on Twitter and Instagram.

In my view

## Cheating and its consequences

Dr Azzah Al-Ghamdi

Local@kuwaittimes.com

We find ourselves amidst the intense atmosphere of student exams in schools and colleges, with hopes pinned on students focusing diligently on their studies to achieve grades and excellence. Yet, perennially, we witness the scourge of cheating, a phenomenon stemming from either moral shortcomings or deficiencies in upbringing.

Cheating is unequivocally condemned across all divine religions, being recognized as a morally bankrupt act. However, its prevalence persists, fueled by the proliferation of cheating mechanisms and the advent of facilitative methods. Often, students who resort to cheating fail to grasp the gravity of their actions. Graduating through deceit or being caught in the act isn't a trivial matter; it can have far-reaching consequences.

Unbeknownst to many cheaters, their actions could jeopardize their future prospects. The ramifications extend beyond academic repercussions; they risk being barred from professions where honesty is paramount. This reality underscores the grave repercussions of cheating, which may manifest later in professional inadequacy and compromised ethical standards.

Regrettably, cheating has morphed into an international phenomenon over the years, echoing sentiments expressed by former US President Donald Trump regarding the perceived irrelevance of university degrees in the face of rampant fraud. The distinction between a diligent learner and a deceitful achiever is stark and consequential.

While some students may inherently lack moral fortitude, others are victims of deficient upbringing. Divorce, for instance, can exacerbate this issue, severing parental guidance and support. Moreover, parents with questionable morals may inadvertently condone cheating, setting a perilous precedent for their children.

Such lax attitudes towards integrity can breed a generation indifferent to ethical standards, paving the way for future transgressions. Parents unwittingly nurture potential wrongdoers, encouraging a culture of dishonesty that imperils societal welfare and progress.

Consequently, the state is compelled to vigilantly monitor and penalize cheaters to safeguard the integrity of future generations. Success achieved through deceit often precipitates academic disillusionment, contributing to higher education dropout rates.

Collaborative efforts between the ministry of education and parents are imperative in combating this scourge and developing a morally upright society. By addressing the root causes of cheating and instilling ethical values from a young age, we can endeavor to mitigate the deleterious effects of this pervasive malaise.

## AUK students visit Kuwait Times and Kuwait News

By Ghadeer Ghloom

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times and Kuwait News welcomed a group of students from American University of Kuwait (AUK), offering them a firsthand glimpse into the world of journalism and the intricate operations behind the scenes. The students embarked on a comprehensive tour of the Kuwait Times building, delving into its various departments. Throughout the visit, AUK's students were introduced to Kuwait Times team, who explained the responsibilities of each department and the nature of the work carried out within.

Leading the tour was Jana Alnaqeb, the PR and CSR manager of Kuwait Times and Kuwait News. The tour started off by visiting Kuwait Times studio, where the students were enlightened on innovative reporting techniques designed to engage younger audiences through visual content. Alnaqeb then led the students to the editorial department, where they gained insights into the meticulous process of producing a traditional newspaper – from reporters crafting their articles, to editors refining them, and page makers and printers bringing the content to the public.

Alnaqeb then took the students to the meeting room to learn about the significance of advertisements as a key revenue stream, while also discovering Kuwait Times' special editions. Journeying to the archives room, the students checked the historical editions of Kuwait Times before proceeding to the Press Printers, where they were acquainted with the operational aspects of the substantial printing machinery. Alnaqeb concluded the tour with a visit to the Kuwait Times' art space, followed by an engaging session in the studio prepared by Kuwait Times' content creator Dhoha Al-Issa, who organized a lively game for the students to enjoy and earn a memorable experience.

## Kuwait staff chief commends army

**KUWAIT:** Chief of Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces, Air Marshal Bandar Al-Muzain, said that the Kuwaiti army is the country's "impenetrable defense and deterrent sword" against internal and external challenges. Al-Muzain made the remarks while touring the 94th Saleh Al-Mohammad Mechanized Brigade, the Army General Staff said in a press release. During the tour, the army chief listened to a briefing about tasks and duties carried out as part of the brigade's training plans and programs, along with existing cooperation and coordination with other military sectors. Al-Muzain appreciated the high efficiency, capability, and preparedness of the 94th Saleh Al-Mohammad Mechanized Brigade's staff, according to the release. — KUNA



AUK students take a group photo with Kuwait Times team.



AUK students learning about the Editorial Department.



AUK students visit Kuwait Times warehouse.



AUK students explore Kuwait Times' archives.



AUK students at Kuwait Times art space.

## MoH lauds nurses, marks International Nurses Day

**KUWAIT:** The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, confirmed that the Ministry's aspirations to achieve notable health care will not be achieved unless qualified nursing staff play their role in improving the healthcare system. During the celebration of International Nurses Day on Sunday, Al-Mutairi said in a statement that the government's work program and the country's development plan are harnessing all resources and providing the necessary support for the development of nursing care.

He added that the nursing profession lies at the heart of a high-quality health care system that takes into account the rights and safety of patients, in accordance with international organizations. Al-Mutairi affirmed the Ministry's keenness to improve the performance of nursing staff through cooperation with the largest specialized international universities

and holding high-level training courses. Director of the Nursing Services Department at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Iman Al-Awadhi, stressed in her speech the importance of the role of nursing staff members in shaping a bright future in health services.

A large portion of the human workforce in health care belongs to the nursing staff. Al-Awadhi pointed out, noting that the celebration of International Day aims to show appreciation to the nursing personnel for the efforts made in providing care to all members of society. She also mentioned that the number of nursing staff in hospitals and health centers exceeded 22 thousand nurses, male and female, trained at the highest level.

A series of training courses came with the government work initiative 2024-2028; six courses were held recently, one of which included the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Oman College of Health Sciences. As well as holding courses in partnership with Johns Hopkins Hospital, Hamad Medical Corporation in Qatar, and the University of Beirut in specialized fields in intensive care, cardiac care, leadership, and nursing research. — KUNA



Local

# UN conference discusses Gaza, calls for ceasefire

## International donors pledge over \$2 billion for devastated Gaza



(Left to right) Bilal Erdogan, son of Turkey's President, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Msuya and Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq, President of the International Islamic Charitable Organization and Special Advisor to the United Nations' Secretary General. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Sunday received United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, and his accompanying delegation on occasion of visit to the country. The meeting, also attended by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, handled discussion on cooperation between Kuwait and the UN as well as regional and international developments and efforts boosting peace and security both regionally and globally. — KUNA

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The United Nations' 9th Conference for Effective Partnership and Information Exchange for Better Humanitarian Action was held in Kuwait. Participants discussed humanitarian events in Gaza and across the world and the amount of donations that have been contributed to the campaign. The conference was also attended by Dr Bader Al Mutairi, Deputy Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs; Dr. Abdullah Al-Matouq, President of the International Islamic Charitable Organization and Special Advisor to the United Nations' Secretary General; Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator; and the Turkish president's son, Bilal Erdogan.

The conference of international donors pledged over \$2 billion to aid the devastated Gaza Strip over seven months into the war between Zionist entity and Hamas. The conference, organized by the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) and the UN's humanitarian coordination agency OCHA, said the funds would be dispersed over two years, with the possibility of extension, in efforts to support life-saving humanitarian interventions in the Palestinian territory.

It came during the visit of the UN's president, Antonio Guterres, to Kuwait to discuss the distinguished relationship between Kuwait and the UN, efforts to support international peace and security, development

efforts, and humanitarian initiatives, in addition to regional and international issues. "The war in Gaza is causing horrific human suffering, tearing people apart, as many are left hungry, homeless, and traumatized," Guterres said.

"Amid the darkness, the commitment of the humanitarian community to help and support people is a ray of light. UNRWA is the backbone of the UN's efforts in Gaza. It relies on partnerships to do its work. I would like to thank Kuwait, the international Islamic charity organization, and their partners," he added, indicating that Kuwait has always been a beacon for humanitarian aid. Guterres concluded his speech by calling for an unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and the release of hostages.

Joyce Msuya, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, said: "The Kuwaiti government and the IICO convening this conference for the ninth time is a testament to their determination to reduce suffering around the world, and it comes at a critical time for the people of Gaza. The war in Gaza has become a moral stain on the conscience of our collective humanity. Despite repeated appeals, Zionists moved ahead with their military offensive in Rafah and seized control of the Gaza side of the Rafah and Karam Abu Salem border crossings earlier this week. The war has killed some 35,000 people. 70,000 more are wounded or missing, with many more trapped under the rubble."

For months, women and children have been killed at a rate that exceeds any war this century. "Those who've escaped death and injury now risk losing their lives because of a lack of food, safe water, medicine, and healthcare. Every day, scores of women give birth in horrifying conditions, often without anesthesia or medical aid, as bombs explode around them," she added.

She said that they are advocating for the protection of civilians. "We have pulled people out of the rubble and repatriated the bodies of aid workers, including those working for World Central Kitchen and Médecins Sans Frontières, who were killed serving those in need. This war must end so that the Palestinian people can begin to confront the trauma inflicted on them," she said, referring to the Secretary-General's longstanding call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.

"Just as OCHA, our partners continue to call with one voice for safe and sustained access to all those in need in Gaza. We are also working hand in hand to build and strengthen the partnerships that are central to the response, now and once the war ends," Msuya added.

Head of the International Islamic Charitable Organization, Dr. Abdullah Al-Matouq, said that OCHA came to discuss the dimensions of the humanitarian crisis in the war-ravaged sector, participate in supporting the early recovery process in the post-disaster phase, devise effective solutions, and develop sustainable mechanisms for reconstruction to enable

around 2.4 million Palestinians to return to their normal lives. "This conference is also launched in strategic partnership with the Peace Society for Humanitarian and Charitable Work in Kuwait, Qatar Charity, the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Islamic Relief in Birmingham, and the Charity Foundation in the United Kingdom," he added.

For his part, Dr. Nabil Al-Aoun, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Al-Salam Association for Humanitarian and Charitable Works, said: "Al-Salam Society succeeded in this partnership with the Charitable Organization to support Gazans. They have dispatched over 20 air cargo planes and 257 trucks carrying 6,705 tons of aid, including medical devices and equipment, 20 ambulances, more than 6,000 tents and 1,000 beds, 258 portable toilets, huge electrical machines, 65 refrigerators powered by solar energy, various food-stuffs, and clothes."

CEO of Qatar Charity, Yousef Al-Kuwari, said: "We worked for 200 days through our relief interventions. We participated in sending 95 aircraft in partnership between Qatar Charity and the Fund," he said, indicating that Qatar Development and a number of charitable organizations handed 2,800 tons of aid to nearly 700,000 beneficiaries. "We also distributed approximately 845 tons of food supplies, provided 1,600 tents, and more than 44,000 packages of medical supplies, shelter, and clothing. Thanks to the support of benefactors from Qatar," he added.

## Kuwait Embassy marks 125th anniversary of UK partnership

LONDON: The Kuwait Embassy in London hosted and patronized, late Saturday, an international charity event as part of the 125th anniversary of the Kuwait-British partnership. Mayor of Kensington Councilor Preeti Hudd and her deputy Dori Schmetterling, Kuwait Ambassador to the United Kingdom Bader Al-Awadhi, attended the ceremony, in addition to ambassadors and representatives of a number of countries, including Mexico, Kenya, Tajikistan, Magnolia, the Maldives, Pakistan, Morocco, and Algeria. On the occasion, Ambassador Al-Awadhi expressed his pride and happiness at hosting and patronizing such a sublime charitable, humanitarian, and cultural event.

In a speech delivered before the

guests, the Kuwait Ambassador stressed the importance of spreading the principles of understanding and dialogue between the countries of the world, considering culture as one of the important bridges that promote human values worldwide. On her part, mayor of Kensington Councilor Preeti Hudd praised the gesture from the Kuwaiti Embassy and the keenness of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to attend personally such an event, which is considered the first of its kind to be held in the United Kingdom.

Various cultural activities were presented during the event, including displays of national traditional costumes and popular foods. The proceeds from the ceremony and exhibition will go to charitable or-



Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Bader Al-Awadhi during the London charitable event.

ganizations, including the Felix Association, which is concerned with preserving food and nutritional materials and distributing them to the poor and needy. The ceremony

was organized in coordination with the Young Diplomats Association in London, the International Hospitals Group, and Cleveland Specialized Hospital in London. — KUNA

## AWI: A center to boost Arab-French cultural heritage

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The Arab World Institute (AWI) is a cultural diplomacy project aimed to promote the Arab-French relations as well as the Kuwaiti-French relations by preserving Islamic and Arabic cultural heritage in France and Europe. The Institute was inaugurated in Paris in 1987 with the attendance of former prime minister and then information minister His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah after the idea was floated in Paris in 1974.

The Institute commenced its functioning in 1982 after its formation by France and 19 Arab League members. In the beginning, the Arab World Institute architecture project was initiated by Jean Nouvel and the French collective Architect Studio. "The architectural project of this institute stems from a will of creating a synthesis of western and eastern architectural designs," said Melissa Tedafi, doctoral candidate in Contemporary Diplomatic History and Political Science at the University of Nantes, French Laureate of a PhD scholarship at the French Center of Research of the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA) headquartered in Dasman, Kuwait City for the region.

"This idea of creating a place which is based on a balanced cultural cooperation between the Arab world and the West is at the core of the Arab Institute World missions," she added. Tedafi clarified that the institute was built on the continuity policies of French president Francois Mitterrand while former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac formulated the idea of creating an Arab World Institute (AWI) in Paris during the Council of Ministers on Dec 24, 1974. "His proposal followed a diplomatic trip he made earlier that sealed nuclear



HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah



Francois Mitterrand



Melissa Tedafi



Jacques Chirac

agreements with Middle Eastern countries," she added. She stated that in a context of the abandonment of the Bretton Woods agreements, the geopolitical reconfiguration of the Camp David agreements and of the Ramadan War in 1973 for the first time in history, oil is used as a weapon by the OPEC countries. "This event caused, in large part, the 1973-1975 recession. France and Europe have now become aware of their energy dependence and economic links toward the Arab countries and more specifically Gulf countries," she explained.

Tedafi clarified that negotiations prior to the opening of the Arab World Institute are also opening at a time when the rise of the media was contributing to a massive Western media relay of Middle East crises. "This coupled with an increase in migratory flows from this region and the Maghrib has contributed to shaping a negative and stereotypical image of Arabs and Muslims in France."

"In a post-colonial context, punctuated by military, political and energy crises, the creation of the Arab World Institute shows an innovative desire for an evolution of the Franco-Arab diplomatic ties through the third route of culture," she reiterated. "The creation of an institute constitutes a long-term choice of estab-

lishing a sustainable loyalty through crises and events that occurred both in national and international contexts," Tedafi stressed.

She stated that the rise of stereotypical views on Arab countries and Islam in France increased with the rise of immigration, wide media coverage of crises and wars in the Middle East and the rise of the far-right electorate. "Between France and the Arab countries relationships are inevitable at least for reasons of geographical order and movements of persons," she said adding that in this configuration, the Arab World Institute has got the essential and permanent mission of converging cultures in times of war and conflict.

She added that His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, alongside Sheikh Hessa Al-Sabah manifested a large interest since the beginning of the project which continues till this day as evident by the number of French-related occasions attended by them. Former French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac said during the inauguration week in 1987 that the institute is a witness to friendship, which is essential in narrowing that gap between the French and Arab people. "The Orient in the past centuries has passed its wisdom in the field of humanities and sciences," he added.

## Dr Meshari Al-Fouzan discusses GCC healthcare at Harvard 2024



Dr Meshari Al-Fouzan (right) during the event.

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Crown Dental announced that Dr Meshari Al-Fouzan, Managing Partner and Consultant Orthodontist, at Crown Dental Center was a distinguished speaker at Harvard 2024. Dr Al-Fouzan spoke in two panels, one about: "Healthcare digital transformation in the private sector", and the second panel about: "Transformation and digitalization in the Gulf: Safeguarding our digital era...Challenge Accepted", along with pioneering key people in their fields.

The three-day event (from May 10 to 12, 2024) attracted over 100 renowned speakers and 1,000 guests from various fields. These medical professionals and academics came together to exchange ideas in sports, arts, culture, business, innovation, nonprofit and public policy, healthcare, science and technology, and law. This premier event was hosted at Harvard University and is aimed at empowering creative individuals from the Arabian Gulf to drive positive change and shape the future of the Gulf's creative landscape.

Attendees witnessed 24 thought-provoking panels, five interactive workshops, two concerts, tours, project displays, and networking opportunities. The conference was organized by the Diwan - a student organization at the Harvard Graduate School of Education that facilitates discussions on topics relevant to the Arab world such as economics, social affairs, politics, and more.

## Ministry launches digital platform 51

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Information launched a digital platform 51 to broadcast visual and audio content via smart and digital devices. The launch of the platform coincides with the anniversary of the launch of the Kuwait Radio on May 12, 1951, where the name "51" was chosen to symbolize the year in which the radio was launched.

The platform is distinguished by the fact that it will present its exclusive productions in addition to the live broadcast service of TV channels from the Kuwait State TV package. Kuwait TV archive radio and television programs will be available to watch. The trial broadcast launching ceremony will be held in the presence of the Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Sunday evening at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.



## Kuwait underlines importance of Gulf youth meeting

DOHA: The Acting Director-General of the Kuwaiti Public Authority for Youth, Nasser Al-Sheikh, affirmed the importance of the 37th meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Youth and Sports of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), held in Qatar on Saturday. Speaking to KUNA, Al-Sheikh said that he represented Dawood Maarafi, the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and Minister of State for Communication Affairs, at the meeting with the aim of advancing youth activities in the Gulf region.

Al-Sheikh pointed out that the meeting witnessed agreement on the committee's strategic plan for the period from 2025 to 2030. Al-Sheikh participated in a ceremony held to honor the "executive leadership," including Abdullah Al-Adwani, the Director of Recreational Activities at the General Authority for Youth. Additionally, Kuwaiti students Majed Al-Maneefi and Lulu Al-Shamlan were also honored in the category of "Creative and Outstanding Youth."

Al-Adwani stated to KUNA after the ceremony that his honor was attributed to the dedication of all Authority's employees as well as the direction provided by its current and former leaders. Al-Adwani extended his gratitude to the State of Qatar for their warm reception and the generosity shown to the delegation. He also thanked the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for their diligent efforts in preparing the ministerial meeting. — KUNA

## GCC to reduce reliance on oil

RIYADH: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, said that the comprehensive strategic vision for economic diversification aims to reduce the reliance on oil revenues and attract foreign direct investment. The Secretariat General said in a statement that this came during Al-Budaiwi's participation in the "Gulf Innovators 2024" conference organized by the Al-Diwan Forum at Harvard University from May 10-12, 2024.

Al-Budaiwi added in his speech that the GCC countries position themselves as competitive digital hubs on the global map, supported by their favorable geographic location and young population. He also said that strategic location, coupled with robust infrastructure, paves the way for the council member states to attract international partnerships that support their long-term development goals.

"This transformation paves the way for a future that drives technological innovation, digital integration, economic growth, and creates technology-related job opportunities, attracting global technology companies, which positions the GCC countries for long-term economic stability and global competitiveness," he indicated. — KUNA

# Zain recognized at the AUM Corporate Award ceremony

## Company recently supported AUM's 10th Career Fair

KUWAIT: Zain was recently recognized at the American University of the Middle East (AUM) Corporate Award ceremony, held at the university's Cultural Center in the Egaila Campus. The recognition came to shed light on Zain and AUM's extended partnership over the years, and to highlight the company's ongoing efforts to bolster national talents in the local private sector.

During the ceremony, HUMANSOFT Vice Chairman Tareq Al-Othman awarded Zain Kuwait Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al-Musaibeh in recognition of the company's continuous support to the annual AUM Career Fair, which Zain recently sponsored with the attendance of AUM President Professor Georges Yahchouchi, PhD. The step came in recognition of the strategic role Zain continues to play in presenting local talents with career opportunities in the private sector to foster a strong presence for the national workforce in the job market, with a focus on STEM areas and digital capacities that have become a priority in today's markets.

Zain expressed its gratitude to AUM for this recognition, which is an acknowledgment from one of the nation's top academic institutions of the company's role in contributing to develop the education and human resources sectors, which play a significant role in enhancing the local business and economic landscapes. The company recently sponsored AUM's 10th Career Fair, organized by the Tawteen Career Development and Recruitment center. This year, the event featured over 50 employers from across the most vibrant industries who presented their career opportunities to fresh graduates and job seekers.

Through its dedicated booth at the career fair, Zain presented its available job vacancies, explained its internal policy, and showcased its wonderful workplace environment. Zain's team also provided a detailed explanation of the nature of work at various departments and divisions and answered all questions and inquiries. Zain continues to support and



AUM President Prof. Georges Yahchouchi with Zain's HR team.

actively participate in major career fairs in Kuwait in collaboration with the biggest academic institutions from both the public and private sectors. The company strives to attract national talent to join the Kuwaiti private sector with the goal of fostering sustainable growth.

Through such contributions, Zain seeks to stimulate the local job market, exchange experiences, and offer career opportunities to students, fresh graduates, and those who are looking for their next career journey. The company is keen on offering job seekers with career opportunities that best suit their skills, competencies, and passions to progress national economy and increase national talent representation in the Kuwaiti private sector.



Al-Othman honors Al-Musaibeh during the ceremony.

## OAPEC stresses on environment protection

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), Jamal Al-Loughani, affirmed on Sunday the importance of the oil and gas sectors in the process of finding solutions to environmental issues and climate change. This came in a statement to KUNA during a training workshop on climate change by OAPEC in cooperation with the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for diplomats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Al-Loughani added that OAPEC continued to make efforts with member states, other Arab countries, and regional and international organizations in order to unify visions on environmental issues and climate change. He also said that regarding the ongoing negotiations on climate change issues, a global platform is held annually, which is the Conference of the Parties, or what is known as "COP." He said that the international process of negotiations to combat climate change began during the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, after which the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



Secretary General of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) Jamal Al-Loughani is pictured during the event.

(UNFCCC) was established.

He stressed that hosting such summits by Arab countries indicates their keenness to confront the negative consequences of climate change, which can be achieved through continued cooperation between various countries by reducing the emission rates of greenhouse gases. He stated that during the "UAE Declaration," all parties were committed to an unprecedented agreement to transition away from the use of fossil fuels

in energy systems to achieve zero emissions by 2050.

He noted that the UAE succeeded in COP 28 in reaching a consensus among the state parties on key issues that remained unresolved for long periods in previous conferences. The two-day workshop aims to develop the cadres of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and expand their circle of interests in developments related to climate change issues. — KUNA



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KUWAIT: (Left) Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika met Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikhha Jawaher Ebraheem Duajj Al-Sabah. Their discussions focused on excellent coordination and cooperation between Kuwait and India at the UN and other multilateral forums including the Human Rights Committee. (Right) Dr Swaika also met Director General of Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) Asma Al-Mousa. Discussions covered possibilities of participation of Indian companies in upcoming projects of KAPP.



## Summit tackles socioeconomic ramifications of Palestine crisis

MANAMA: Socioeconomic ramifications of Zionist aggression on Palestine and joint Arab developmental work were discussed during the preparatory socioeconomic council ministerial meeting for the 33rd Arab Summit in Manama. The meeting, taking place on Sunday, was chaired by Bahraini Minister of Finance Sheikh Salman bin Khalifah and attended by Kuwaiti delegation headed by Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Sabah and Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abulghiet.

The ministers discussed agenda submitted by the high officials' meeting that was held on Saturday. On the agenda is a host of proposed topics including:

Developments on the Arab Free Trade Area, Arab customs union, youth and peace strategy as well as technical training and education strategy, water security and Arab tourism.

Project on new social contract; dialogue towards safe fair and sustainable future, mechanisms connecting social development establishment to League, and suggestion put for by League's secretariat on Arab vision 2045, are all tabled topics. Several issues have been proposed by Gulf states including Saudi's topics on health sector and cybersecurity, Bahrain's memorandum on financial technology and digitalization, and UAE's women economic empowerment suggestion. — KUNA





Trump fans defiant ahead of ex-president's testimony

## Rescuers struggle to reach Afghanistan flood-hit areas

Page 7

Page 6



BALATAH, Palestinian Territories: Palestinian mourners carry the body of Samer Rummaneh, who was killed during a Zionist entity raid in the Balata camp for Palestinian refugees near Nablus city in the occupied West Bank on May 12, 2024. — AFP

# Rafah residents flee 'hell' of onslaught

'We have reached a point where we wish for death'

**RAFAH:** War-weary Gazans flooded towards coastal areas of the Gaza Strip's southern city of Rafah on Sunday, fleeing heavy bombardment in eastern zones after Zionist entity ordered them to evacuate.

"We endured three days that can be considered hell," said Mohammed Hamad, a 24-year-old resident of eastern Rafah who was among the 300,000 Palestinians that Zionist entity says have fled the fighting. Despite international opposition to any major military operation in Rafah, Zionist entity has shifted its focus to the heavily populated area in what it says is an effort to destroy the last bastion of Hamas. Eastern parts of the city have been heavily bombarded in recent days, according to witnesses, as Zionist entity sent tanks and ground troops into the areas in "targeted raids".

"They were among the worst nights for us since the beginning of the war," Hamad told AFP from Al-Mawasi, an area Zionist entity has designated a "humanitarian zone" despite aid groups warning that it is unprepared for such an influx. Rafah's population had swelled to around 1.4 million after hundreds of thou-

sands of Palestinians fled fighting in other areas of the Gaza Strip and sought shelter there during more than seven months of war.

"They started by distributing flyers in the morning, and immediately began brutal artillery and aerial bombardment without giving people a chance to think or organise their belongings properly," Hamad said. AFP photographers saw dozens of families loading furniture and household items on trucks and fleeing from Rafah, many heading for Khan Yunis, the main city in the south of the Palestinian territory. Many people, especially women and children, lingered on streets outside their homes before moving out.

Zionist entity's offensive has killed at least 35,034 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. Zionist entity forces on Tuesday seized and closed the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing into Egypt—through which all fuel passes into Gaza.

"There are no medical services or humanitarian aid being provided to the displaced people in the northern Gaza Strip," said Mahmud Basal, spokesman for

Gaza's civil defense agency. "What we are witnessing in terms of killing and destruction reminds us of the early days of the aggression."

Ummi Mohammed Al-Mughayyir said she has had to move her family seven times to escape the fighting. "We have reached a point where we wish for death," she said. "We have people with special needs, elderly individuals, and children with us. Where do we go when the bombardment never stops, day and night?"

All eyes have been on Rafah in recent weeks, where the population had swelled to around 1.5 million after hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled fighting in other areas of the Gaza Strip.

The Zionist entity military on Saturday expanded an evacuation order for eastern Rafah and said 300,000 Palestinians had left the area. "The latest evacuation orders affect close to a million people in Rafah. So where should they go now? There is no safe place in Gaza!" Volker Turk, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said in a statement.

"These exhausted, famished people, many of whom have been displaced many times already, have

no good options. He said a full-scale offensive could have a "catastrophic impact... including the possibility of further atrocity crimes."

"I can see no way that the latest evacuation orders, much less a full assault, in an area with an extremely dense presence of civilians, can be reconciled with the binding requirements of international humanitarian law and with the two sets of binding provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice." Volker said he was deeply distressed by fast-deteriorating conditions in Gaza, saying the latest evacuation orders had triggered "massive displacement of an already profoundly traumatized population".

He said the towns supposed to receive those displaced from Rafah had already been "reduced to rubble". Turk also voiced concern at reports of indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza. He said a full scale offensive on Rafah "cannot take place" and called on all states with influence to do everything in their power to prevent it. He also called on Zionist entity and Palestinian armed groups to agree a ceasefire, and for all hostages to be released immediately. — AFP

## Zionist-British captive held in Gaza dead

**GAZA:** Hamas's armed wing said in a video on Saturday that a Zionist-British hostage held in captivity in Gaza since the Oct 7 attack had died from wounds sustained from Zionist entity air strikes. Earlier on Saturday, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades released an 11-second clip showing captive Nadav Poppellwell alive and identifying himself. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum campaign group identified him in a statement.

In the video, the footage was superimposed with text in Arabic and Hebrew that read: "Time is running out. Your government is lying." The hostage had a black eye in the clip but showed no other visible signs of injuries. Wearing a white T-shirt and appearing to speak under duress, he introduced himself as 51-year-old Poppellwell, from kibbutz Nirim in southern Zionist entity.

Later on Saturday, Hamas released what appeared to be a full version of the video from which the earlier clip was taken. Hamas claimed in the video that Poppellwell had died on Saturday of his earlier wounds. "Nadav Poppellwell, a British citizen, died today after being seriously injured a month ago (due to Zionist air strikes)," a superimposed text in English said in the video below a picture of the hostage shown in a white photo frame.

"His health deteriorated because he did not receive intensive medical care because the enemy has destroyed the Gaza Strip's hospitals," Abu Obeida, the spokesman of the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said in a separate statement. AFP was unable to independently verify the authenticity of the video.

Zionist entity military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari did not mention Poppellwell during a televised briefing, but said that troops were still seeking to bring the hostages home. "Even at this hour, every fighter (soldier) and commander on the battlefield envisions the hostages, sees them, thinks of them, and fights to bring them home," he said.

Poppellwell's older brother was killed in the attack. The video posted Saturday on the Telegram channel of Hamas's armed wing was the third time in less than a month that the group released footage of captives held in Gaza.—AFP



LAGOS: Britain's Meghan, Duchess of Sussex and Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, attend a basketball exhibition training match at Ilupeju Grammar School in Lagos on May 12, 2024 as they visit Nigeria as part of celebrations of Invictus Games anniversary. — AFP

## Prince Harry, Meghan finish tour in Nigeria

**LAGOS:** Prince Harry and his wife Meghan wrapped up their three-day visit to Nigeria on Sunday, arriving in the country's economic capital Lagos during a trip to promote his Invictus Games for wounded military veterans. The Duke of Sussex arrived with his wife on Friday in Nigeria's capital Abuja where they visited a school event on mental health, in a trip that also saw the prince meet wounded Nigerian soldiers in the country's northwest.

On day three of the visit, Prince Harry and Meghan took part in a basketball event with the Giants of Africa Foundation in Lagos, an organization that helps youth through engagement in the sport.

The prince practiced dribbling basketballs with children at the exhibition event for the foundation, which is run by former NBA player Masai Ujiri. "The power of sports can change lives, it brings people together and creates community and there are no barriers which is the most important thing," the prince said. Harry, a former army captain who flew helicopters in Afghanistan, founded the Invictus Games ten years ago to help bring wounded veterans into sporting events to aid with their recuperation.

The couple later met with Lagos State governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu and were also set to take part in a Lagos fundraiser. On Friday afternoon, Meghan

sat on an event for women in leadership with Nigerian-born World Trade Organization director Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, where the Duchess discussed her Nigerian heritage and being a role model to women.

"I want to start by saying thank you very much for just how gracious you've all been in welcoming my husband and I to this country," she said to applause, before adding, "my country". In Abuja, the prince had also taken part in a seated volleyball match with Nigerian veterans, some of who were missing limbs from combat in the country's north where troops battle jihadists and heavily armed criminal gangs. On the Duke's volleyball team was former Nigerian soldier Peacemaker Azuegbulam, who lost his leg in combat in the northeast, and became the first African to win gold at the Invictus Games in Germany last year. Before Nigeria, Prince Harry was in London on Wednesday to mark the 10th anniversary of the games. His trips to the UK since he moved to the United States in 2020 always prompt fresh speculation over a potential reconciliation with his family. But he did not meet with his father King Charles on this trip. Nigeria's military forces are battling armed groups on several fronts.

A long-running jihadist insurgency in the northeast has killed more than 40,000 people and displaced another two million since 2009. Militants have been pushed back from areas they once controlled, but they now target convoys with roadside bombs. In northwestern and central states, heavily armed criminal gangs, known locally as bandits, carry out mass kidnappings for ransom and raid villages from camps hidden deep in remote forests. — AFP

## Canada arrests 4th Indian in killing of Sikh activist

**MONTREAL, Canada:** A fourth Indian national was charged by Canadian authorities Saturday in the 2023 killing of a separatist Sikh leader in Vancouver. Amandeep Singh, 22, was already being held for unrelated gun charges before being charged with "first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder" in the slaying of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Three other Indian nationals were arrested this month. The killing sparked a diplomatic row between Ottawa and New Delhi when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau linked Indian intelligence to the killing.

Nijjar—who immigrated to Canada in 1997 and became a citizen in 2015 -- had advocated for a separate Sikh state, known as Khalistan, carved out of India. He had been wanted by Indian authorities for alleged "terrorism" and conspiracy to commit murder—allegations he denied.

He was shot dead on June 18, 2023, 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" connecting Indian intelligence to the slaying. India dismissed the allegations as "absurd" and responded furiously, briefly curbing visas for Canadians and forcing Ottawa to withdraw diplomats.

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. Prosecutors said in unsealed court documents that an Indian government official was also involved in the planning. — AFP



Amandeep Singh



## International

# 'A joke': Trump fans defiant ahead of ex-president's trial

## Cohen scheduled to give evidence against Trump in New York court

**WILDWOOD, US:** Empty fairground rides twisted and spun Saturday on the New Jersey shore as thousands of Donald Trump supporters filled a pristine beach for a rally ahead of potentially damaging testimony in his criminal trial next week. Several of them assailed Trump's former fixer-turned-foe Michael Cohen, who is scheduled on Monday to give evidence against the ex-president in his New York trial, ratcheting up his political and legal jeopardy.

Prosecutors want Cohen to lay out the details of how, as Trump's personal lawyer, he shepherded a \$130,000 payment to porn star Stormy Daniels for her silence over an alleged sexual tryst.

Trump and his defense team deny such an event took place, blasting Cohen as a liar who had served jail time for campaign finance violations. "Cohen's a joke. He has no credibility at all," said Lisa Lombardo, 61, a director of physician relations from the New Jersey town of Medford.

"I don't believe anything is going to come of it. It's only galvanized the base... Fair-minded Democrats know it's crap," added Lombardo, who insisted a gag order from Judge Juan Merchan that prevents Trump attacking Cohen and other witnesses was "unconstitutional." Trump avoided mentioning any witnesses in his speech Saturday. Around Lombardo, who wore a bright pink "Women for Trump" baseball cap, other supporters of the Republican candidate fanned out across the beach, some unfurling picnic blankets as seagulls circled overhead, creating a festive atmosphere.

Diehard fans of Trump, who is seeking a White House comeback in the November elections, had traveled from as far afield as Hawaii, with some

camping on the beach to secure a spot for the rally.

"As you know, I've come here from New York where I'm being forced to endure a show trial," Trump said to boos. "Carried out by a radical Democrat district attorney." The seaside resort venue for the rally, Trump's first since mid-April, was a far cry from the dingy Manhattan courthouse that has hosted Trump four days a week since the start of his trial for covering up hush-money payments.

A yellow plane flew overhead towing a banner reading "God bless D Trump!" John Dipietro, a financial planner celebrating his 60th birthday at the rally, called the New York trial "politically motivated."

### 'Jailhouse Rock'

"(Cohen) is a convicted liar, and it's ironic they'll let a convicted liar talk... and not a person who was the president and not convicted," he added, sporting a T-shirt emblazoned with the words, "Trump was right about everything." Dipietro, who has donated to the real estate mogul's campaign, said if Trump was convicted in the New York case it would give him "even more desire to knock on a few more doors to get (people) to come out and vote" in November.

The expected re-run of the 2020 contest between Trump and President Joe Biden will be held on November 5. Elvis Presley's 1957 hit "Jailhouse Rock" was among the tracks blasted out to the Wildwood crowd of thousands. Pick-up trucks and Jeeps adorned with giant flags supporting Trump and banners denouncing Biden patrolled the coast road beside the rally site, as a large contingent of police kept watch nearby. Danielle Janik, 56, had driven almost three hours to the rally



**WILDWOOD, US:** Former US President and 2024 Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally in Wildwood, New Jersey, on May 11, 2024. — AFP

ly from Pennsylvania, a swing state that likely will be a must-win for either candidate come November.

"Cohen's untrustworthy and I think he's trying to make a name for himself," said Janik, a full-time

caregiver attending her first Trump rally. Even if Trump, facing four criminal cases, were to be convicted, "There is absolutely no way I'm not voting for (him)," Janik said. — AFP

## 3 Tunisian pundits arrested over critical remarks

**TUNIS:** Tunisian authorities ordered Sunday the arrest of two political commentators over critical comments, a lawyer told AFP, a day after security forces stormed the bar association and took a third pundit into custody.

Sonia Dahmani, who is also a lawyer, was arrested late Saturday after criticizing the state of Tunisia on television, her attorney Dalila Msaddek said in a post on Facebook. Msaddek said there was a "police attack against the bar association headquarters" in Tunis, with "lawyers assaulted and the abduction of colleague Sonia Dahmani to an unknown location".

It came on the same evening that TV and radio presenter Borhen Bssais and political commentator Mourad Zeghidi were arrested for critical comments, lawyer Ghazi Mrabet told AFP.

Mrabet said that the judiciary on Sunday placed the pair under a "48-hour detention warrant and (they) will have to appear before an examining magistrate". According to Mrabet, Zeghidi was being pursued "for a social media post in which he supported an arrested journalist", referring to Mohamed Boughalleb, who was sentenced to six months in prison for defamation of a public official, as well as for "statements made during television shows since February".

The exact motivation for Bssais' arrest remains unclear, but according to Mrabet, he was detained under Decree 54 which punishes the production and dissemination of "false news". The law, signed by President Kais Saied in Sept 2022, has been criticized by journalists and opposition figures who say it has been used to stifle dissent. Since the decree came into force, more than 60 journalists, lawyers and opposition figures have been prosecuted under it, according to the National Union of Tunisian Journalists.

Dahmani was also arrested under Decree 54, Tunisian media reported, saying she was detained while seeking safety at the bar association. The event was being filmed live by news channel France 24, which said it was forced to stop broadcasting by masked police officers.

The channel said the officers had "torn the camera from its tripod" and briefly detained their cameraman. It condemned what it said was a "brutal intervention by security forces that prevented journalists from practicing their profession as they were covering a lawyers' protest for justice and in support of freedom of expression". The bar association condemned what it described as an "invasion of its headquarters and blatant aggression", demanding the immediate release of Dahmani and announcing a regional strike starting Monday.

Msaddek said Dahmani was summoned to court on Friday to explain her remarks but refused to appear. A court then issued a warrant ordering law enforcement to bring Dahmani before the investigating judge. Islam Hamza, another lawyer in Dahmani's defense team, confirmed to AFP that she had been arrested. Dahmani told journalists before her arrest that she refused to appear "without knowing the reasons for this summons".

During a show on the Carthage Plus TV channel on Tuesday, she responded to another pundit's claim that migrants from sub-Saharan African countries were seeking to settle in Tunisia. "What extraordinary country are we talking about?" she asked sarcastically, triggering angry reactions from some Tunisian social media users. The North African country is a key departure point for thousands of migrants who risk the perilous Mediterranean Sea crossing each year hoping for a better life in Europe. — AFP

## Over 27 killed in renewed clashes in Sudan's El-Fasher

**PORT SUDAN:** Clashes reignited between the Sudanese army and rival paramilitaries earlier this week in the key Darfur town of El-Fasher, the United Nations said Sunday, killing at least 27 people in one day.

Eyewitnesses have reported air strikes, artillery fire and machine gun clashes battering the city since Friday, when an hours-long battle left an estimated 850 people displaced, according to the UN.

It also killed at least 27 that day, based on what the UN said were "unconfirmed reports", as the city suffers a near-total communications blackout, with medics and human rights defenders barely able to get news to the world. The fighting has since continued, eyewitnesses said Sunday, reporting air strikes and artillery shelling that left "houses on fire", one resident told AFP.

Since April of last year, Sudan has been in the grips of a devastating war between the army, headed by the country's de facto leader Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), commanded by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

The RSF has seized four out of five state capitals in Darfur, a region about the size of France and home to around one quarter of Sudan's 48 million people. El-Fasher is the last major city in Darfur that is not under paramilitary control. The international community, including the UN and the United States, have for weeks warned against a looming offensive on the city.

A medical source at the El-Fasher Southern Hospital - the city's only functional medical facility - told AFP "the morgue had become completely full of bodies" on Friday.

## First patient to get gene-edited pig kidney transplant dies

**WASHINGTON:** The first living patient to receive a genetically modified pig kidney transplant has died two months after the procedure, the US hospital that carried it out said. "Mass General is deeply saddened at the sudden passing of Mr. Rick Slayman. We have no indication that it was the result of his recent transplant," the Boston hospital said in a statement issued late Saturday.

In a world first, surgeons at Massachusetts General Hospital in March successfully transplanted the genetically edited pig kidney into Slayman, who was 62 years old at the time and suffering from end-stage kidney disease. "Slayman will forever be seen as a beacon of hope to countless transplant patients worldwide and we are deeply grateful for his trust and willingness to advance the field of xenotransplantation," the hospital statement said.

Organ shortages are a chronic problem around the world and Mass General said in March that there



**Patients receive treatment at the Gedaref Oncology Hospital in eastern Sudan on May 1, 2024. — AFP**

were more than 1,400 patients on its waiting list for a kidney transplant. The pig's kidney used for the transplant was provided by a Massachusetts biotech company called eGenesis and had been modified to remove harmful pig genes and add certain human genes, according to the hospital.

Slayman, who suffered from Type 2 diabetes and hypertension, had received a transplanted human kidney in 2018, but it began to fail five years later.

When the hospital announced the successful transplant in March, Slayman said he had agreed to the procedure "not only as a way to help (him), but a way to provide hope for the thousands of people who need a transplant to survive." In a statement posted on Mass General's website, his family said while they were "deeply saddened about the sudden passing of our beloved Rick" they took "great comfort knowing he inspired so many."

The family said they were "comforted by the optimism he provided patients desperately waiting for a transplant". More than 89,000 patients were on the national kidney waiting list as of March this year, according to a US health department website.

On average, 17 people die each day while waiting for an organ transplant. Slayman's family also thanked the doctors "who truly did everything they could to help give Rick a second chance. Their enor-

ties descend on the city in full force. El-Fasher's erstwhile fragile peace had made it a key hub for displaced people and aid, serving the rest of Darfur, where 1.7 million people are on the brink of famine, according to the UN.

The city itself is home to 1.5 million people, including about 800,000 displaced during this and previous conflicts. Across Sudan, the conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, plunged millions into dire need and uprooted more than 8.7 million people - more than anywhere else in the world. — AFP



**BOSTON:** In this March 16, 2024, image courtesy of the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, surgeons perform the world's first genetically modified pig kidney transplant into a living human. — AFP

mous efforts leading the xenotransplant gave our family seven more weeks with Rick, and our memories made during that time will remain in our minds and hearts." "After his transplant, Rick said that one of the reasons he underwent this procedure was to provide hope for the thousands of people who need a transplant to survive," the family added. — AFP

## Greek PM to visit Turkey in quest for better relations

**ISTANBUL:** Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis will be received Monday in Ankara by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in the latest sign of warming relations between the NATO neighbors. After decades of tensions, occasionally broken by brief periods of reconciliation, the day-long visit follows a trip by Erdogan to Greece in December and marks a new phase in their relations, diplomats said.

In an interview published Sunday in Greek newspaper Kathimerini, Erdogan said talks would focus on "re-

solving problems" between the two neighbors. "It falls to us to calm relations between the two countries ... to ensure that peace and tranquility reigns forever on both sides of the Aegean Sea," the Turkish leader said. He added he wished to "raise the level of bilateral relations to a new level." In December, the regional rivals - divided over the island of Cyprus and dealing with migration through their respective waters - signed a declaration calling for "friendly and good neighborly relations, recognizing the importance of a mutual respect and peaceful coexistence".

But this appeasement, helped also by solidarity after an earthquake killed more than 50,000 in southeastern Turkey in February 2023, has been undermined by Turkey converting another former Byzantine church into a mosque. After four years of restoration, the former Kariye Orthodox church in Istanbul re-opened as a mosque on May 6. The 2020 decision to convert the church came

after Muslim services resumed at the 6th century former Byzantine cathedral of Hagia Sophia. The landmark building had been a museum since 1935. The changes were seen as part of Erdogan's efforts to galvanize his more conservative and nationalist supporters. "There's no shortage of mosques in the city. That is no way to treat cultural patrimony," Mitsotakis said a week ago, although he has also said that "channels of conversation must remain open." Mitsotakis told Greek television station Alpha TV on Saturday that he will use Monday's talks to push Erdogan to "reverse" Kariye's conversion.

Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis last Monday called the move a "provocation" but reiterated that "Athens is seeking as long a period of calm as possible in Greek-Turkish relations." Last December's meeting did lead to some breakthroughs, such as new special visas for Turks to visit Greek islands near the Turkish coast. That has led to a tripling of Turkish visitors. — AFP



## International

# Rescuers struggle to reach Afghanistan flood-hit areas

## 'They drowned together': Lives swept away by floods

**SHEIKH JALAL, Afghanistan:** Emergency aid and rescue teams struggled on Sunday to reach areas of northern Afghanistan hardest hit by flash floods that killed hundreds, AFP journalists saw. Heavy rains caused flash flooding in several provinces in Afghanistan on Friday.

Jawed's whole life was ripped away when flash floods tore through Afghanistan's Baghlan province, drowning every member of his family except a young son who clung to a tree above the churning mud.

Only Jawed, 38, and his nine-year-old son—his eldest—survived the flooding that carried away his wife and four other young children, some of the hundreds who died in Baghlan from the flooding that devastated the province Friday, according to the United Nations. At work when he heard of the surging waters, Jawed tried to race home but found the roads impassable.

When he finally reached his house, he saw only the stoop remained. "There was nothing left. My whole house and life had been washed away," Jawed told AFP. His family's bodies had been strewn across the area, carried by the force of the rushing water.

"They were all washed away," he repeated, weeping over the phone from Pul-e Khumri, the provincial capital. He found his wife, two sons and two daughters one by one, searching through the mud and debris, their bodies now wrapped in white sheets and laid out next to each other, ready for burial.

"One of my children, a baby, was in his mother's arms. They drowned together," Jawed said. "My life sank, I was ruined, I don't want anything from this life anymore." Fresh graves were dug in communities across Baghlan, the province hardest hit by flooding that impacted multiple provinces.

In Baghlan-e-Markazi district, people prayed next to their relatives' graves under a stormy sky on the same hill where women and children had fled to higher ground during the deluge. Some residents gathered on the hillsides overlooking their swamped homes and land. Others tried to clear debris from buildings, wading ankle deep in mud to shovel thick layers out of their homes marked with brown stains

showing the water had climbed high up the walls. In Pul-e Khumri, a government employee who did not want to use his real name, going by Burhanudin, said most of the more than 1,000 homes in his area had been devastated. "The walls of our house were destroyed, our water wells were swamped and our area is damaged," he told AFP.

He and his eight family members survived, having quickly fled their home when it started to rain heavily. But, he added, "my house, my neighbour's house, shops, they are all damaged". Before the rains came down on Friday afternoon in Pul-e Khumri, Lailoma was putting her baby to sleep when the sky went "completely dark".

"I thought it was a solar eclipse," she said. She shuttered her home against the rain but realizing the storm was too strong, she grabbed her children and ran "with tears in (her) eyes". All of her seven children survived, but she lost everything she owned and her home was "washed away". "I was very poor. I had a cow and I used to sell its milk and feed my children, but the cow was carried away," said the 36-year-old, whose husband is unemployed.

"Since yesterday I haven't had anything to eat," she said. "I gave only bread and water to my children. I don't know what to do." Northern Baghlan was the worst impacted, with efforts to deliver aid hampered by destruction to roads and bridges wrought when the floods ripped through the province. In Sheikh Jalal, about a two-hour drive from Burka, one of the most devastated areas, AFP journalists saw aid trucks full of food, military vehicles, rescue workers and local residents stuck where roads had been completely washed out. The military was using heavy machinery to pave the way, as well as to free aid trucks stuck in the mud.

Mohammad Ali Aryanfar, part of a team from the Turkish Hak Humanitarian Relief Association trying to deliver food to Burka, said they had been on the road since early morning Sunday but were blocked in Sheikh Jalal. "Our compatriots there (in Burka) need assistance and we pray that the road opens and we reach the area," he told AFP.



**BAGHLAN, Afghanistan:** Afghan relatives attend a burial ceremony of victims who lost their lives following flash floods after heavy rainfall at a village in Baghlan-e-Markazi district of Baghlan province on May 11, 2024. — AFP

"People's houses have been destroyed and they don't have anything, they don't have shelters," he added. The United Nations World Food Programme shared a photo on social media site X of WFP-stamped bags of flour strapped to donkeys' backs, saying it had to "resort to every alternative to get food to the survivors who lost everything" in Baghlan, as most of the affected areas were "inaccessible by trucks".

The Taliban government refugees ministry said on Sunday that 315 people had been killed and more than 1,600 people were injured in the flooding in Baghlan. More than 2,600 homes have been damaged or destroyed and 1,000 cattle killed, it added. Farmland has also been swamped in the poverty-racked nation

where 80 percent of its more than 40 million people depend on agriculture to survive. WFP confirmed a toll of more than 300 dead in Baghlan to AFP on Saturday.

Taliban authorities and non-governmental groups warned that the death toll could rise. About 600,000 people live in the five most severely impacted districts in Baghlan, according to NGO Save the Children. So far this year, "nearly 13,000 people in Afghanistan have been impacted by disasters caused by extreme weather, including floods and landslides", it said in a statement. The country, ravaged by four decades of war, is one of the world's poorest and, according to scientists, one of the worst prepared to face the consequences of global warming. — AFP

## 34 dead and 16 missing in Indonesia floods

**TANAH DATAR, Indonesia:** At least 34 people have died and 16 more were missing after flash floods and cold lava flow from a volcano hit western Indonesia, a local disaster official said Sunday. Hours of heavy rain caused flooding in two districts in West Sumatra province on Saturday evening and sent sweeping ash and large rocks down Mount Marapi, the most active volcano on the archipelago's Sumatra island.

"Until now our data shows that 34 people died: 16 in Agam and 18 in Tanah Datar. At least 18 others are injured. We are also still searching for 16 other people," West Sumatra disaster agency spokesman Ilham Wahab told AFP. He said the search effort involved local rescuers, police, soldiers and volunteers.

Agam and Tanah Datar districts were hit with flash floods and cold lava flow at around 10:30 pm (15:30 GMT) on Saturday, according to Basarnas search and rescue agency. Cold lava, also known as lahar, is volcanic material like ash, sand and pebbles carried down a volcano's slopes by rain. Earlier, Basarnas said 12 people had died including several children. Ilham said Sunday that authorities were still receiving reports of missing people from relatives. He said he could not give a figure of the number of people evacuated from the area as the search and rescue effort was still focused on the victims and the missing.

In the Tanah Datar district, several mosques and a public pool were damaged in the area with large rocks and logs scattered on the ground, according to an



**TANAH DATAR:** This handout aerial image taken and released by Indonesia's Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPb) on May 12, 2024, shows the damaged area after flash floods and cold lava flow from a volcano in Tanah Datar, West Sumatra. — AFP

AFP journalist at the scene. In Lembah Anai, a popular tourist spot with a waterfall in Tanah Datar, a road connecting the cities of Padang and Bukittinggi was severely damaged and access for cars was cut off. At a nearby river, two trucks had been swept away by the flooding and strong river currents, the journalist said.

In Agam, dozens of homes and public facilities were damaged, the district's disaster agency chief Budi Perwira Negara told AFP. Nine bodies including those of a three-year-old and eight-year-old were identified earlier on Sunday, head of the local rescue agency Abdul Malik said in a statement. Authorities

dispatched a team of rescuers and rubber boats to look for the missing victims and to transport people to shelters. The local government set up evacuation centers and emergency posts in several areas of Agam and Tanah Datar districts. Indonesia is prone to landslides and floods during the rainy season. In March at least 26 people had been found dead after landslides and floods hit West Sumatra. In 2022, about 24,000 people were evacuated and two children killed in floods on Sumatra island, with environmental campaigners blaming deforestation caused by logging for worsening the disaster. — AFP

## Spain's Socialists eye power grab in Catalan vote

**BARCELONA:** Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialists are hoping to show Catalonia has turned away from its independence fixation by winning Sunday's regional vote and defeating separatist leader Carles Puigdemont. The polls open at 9 am (07:00 GMT) and the wealthy northeastern region of some eight million people voted for 135 deputies to the Catalan parliament.

Opinion polls suggest Sanchez's Socialists are ahead of Puigdemont's hardline separatist JxCat and its rival ERC, led by current regional leader Pere Aragonès. Polls closed at 8 pm with results due out several hours later. "We need a change on May 12, and only the Socialist Party and (its candidate) Salvador Illa can lead that... to move Catalonia forward in coexistence and social rights," said Sanchez in Barcelona on wrapping up the campaign. Since becoming premier in 2018, some nine months after a failed Catalan separatist bid of October 2017, Sanchez has sought to "heal the wounds" caused by the unprecedented political crisis.

In 2021, he pardoned the separatists jailed over the secession bid. In November he moved to promote an amnesty bill for those still wanted by the justice system in exchange for key separatist backing in parliament that let him secure a new four-year term in office. The bill is in the Senate, due to pass into law in coming weeks. This will allow the return of Puigdemont, 61, the Catalan separatist leader who oversaw the botched independence bid then fled to Belgium to avoid prosecution. The controversial measure has brought the right-wing and far-right opposition to the streets in huge protests, accusing Sanchez of letting himself be held "hostage" by the separatists to stay in power.



**PINEDA DE MAR, Spain:** Supporters applaud as Catalonia's regional President and candidate for re-election of separatist party Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya - ERC Pere Aragonès gives a press conference after voting in Pineda de Mar on May 12, 2024. — AFP

For Sanchez, seizing Catalonia from the separatists—who have ruled the region for a decade—would be a major victory in his efforts to turn the page on the crisis sparked by the secession bid. It would also allow him to press the restart button on his latest term in office, which began in November.

So far, it has been soured by bitter right-wing opposition and a corruption probe into his wife, which almost prompted his resignation last month. Although the Socialists won the most votes during the last regional election in February 2021, their candidate Illa failed to piece together a governing majority. The separatist parties clubbed together to form a 74-seat coalition. Despite lagging behind Illa in the polls, Puigdemont hopes for a strong showing in the vote so he can return home triumphantly as Catalan regional leader once the amnesty has become law. — AFP

## Brazil officials warn of more floods as new rains hit south

**PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil:** New rains in waterlogged southern Brazil are expected to be heaviest between Sunday and Monday, authorities have warned, bringing fresh misery to victims of flooding that has killed 136 people so far. State authorities warned late Saturday of the risk of further rising waters and landslides.

"We are still experiencing an emergency situation," Rio Grande do Sul Governor Eduardo Leite said in a video on Instagram. Heavy rains last week caused rivers in the agricultural state to overflow, leaving 806 injured and 125 missing in addition to those killed, the civil defense agency said. "Many people see the rain and are traumatized. We've seen how scared people are," said Enio Posti, a firefighter in Porto Alegre, capital of stricken Rio Grande do Sul state. Of the more than two million people affected by the flooding, more than 537,000 have been forced from their homes with 81,000 in shelters. More than 92,000 homes were damaged or destroyed by the floods, according to the National Confederation of Municipalities.

UN experts and the Brazilian government blame climate change and the El Niño weather phenomenon for the inundation. US President Joe Biden said in a statement that he was "saddened by the loss of life and devastation caused by the flooding", adding that Washington was "working to provide necessary assistance" in coordination with Brazilian authorities. Residents were told to stay away from flooded areas, with dangers including electrocution by downed power lines. "I was soaked. They helped me and gave me clothes," 36-year-old Everton Machado told AFP after being rescued by boat while searching for his parents. — AFP

### News in Brief

#### Ex-Colombian rebel leader, thought dead, reappears

**BOGOTÁ:** A former senior commander of Colombia's now-defunct FARC guerrilla group, who was rumored to be dead, appeared in a video released Saturday expressing his support for government proposals to start talks. Ivan Marquez, then the second-in-command of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), helped negotiate a key 2016 peace deal but took up arms again in 2019. He leads a FARC faction known as Segunda Marquetalia which, according to military intelligence, has around 1,600 members. Colombian media speculated in July about his death after an attack in Venezuela in 2022 but the government dismissed the rumors. Police announced in March that he was in Colombia. — AFP

#### Indonesia school bus crash kills 11, dozens injured

**BANDUNG:** At least eleven people were killed and dozens more were injured when a bus carrying high school students on a graduation trip crashed on Indonesia's biggest island, police said Sunday. The bus was carrying more than 60 students and teachers from the Java island town of Depok to Lembang, a popular tourist spot, when it crashed at 6:48 pm (11:48 GMT) on Saturday. The students had just celebrated their graduation and were on a school trip when the bus suddenly lost control and tilted to the left, crashing into a car and three motorbikes, West Java province police spokesman Jules Abraham Abast told AFP Sunday. "Out of the passengers who died, nine of them were students, and one of them was a teacher," Abast said. — AFP

#### Dozens of Chad presidential candidate's activists held

**N'DJAMENA, Chad:** Dozens of activists from Chadian Prime Minister Succes Masra's party have been arrested accused of forgery and using false documents during this week's presidential election, a legal source told AFP Saturday. The news came after officials declared junta leader General Mahamat Idriss Deby Ito the winner with 61.03 percent of the vote and after Masra himself had claimed victory. N'Djamena prosecutor Oumar Kedellaye told AFP 76 activists with Masra's Transformers party had been taken into custody. "They are being prosecuted for forgery, use of forgery, usurpation of title and complicity," he added. — AFP

#### Gangs storm another police station in Haiti

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti:** Gangs stormed a police station on the outskirts of Haiti's capital overnight into Saturday, a police union told AFP, as a transitional ruling council struggled to restore order in the violence-ravaged Caribbean nation. The police station is located in the town of Gressier, south of Port-au-Prince, said Lionel Lazare of the Haitian police union. Videos shared on social media showed civilians armed with assault rifles inside the police building. Several vehicles in the building's parking lot were afire. Reached by AFP, local authorities were unable to say how many people were hurt in the attack. — AFP



MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024

# Boeing's problems rattle US aviation regulator as well

## FAA finds it difficult to evade a share of the responsibility

**NEW YORK:** The US Federal Aviation Administration, sharply criticized after the crashes of two Boeing planes in 2018 and 2019, is again being dragged into a maelstrom surrounding the major American aerospace manufacturer.

The dramatic mid-flight blowout on January 5 of a fuselage panel on an Alaska Airlines plane precipitated the departures of a series of top Boeing officials—including CEO Dave Calhoun, who is set to step down at year's end—and the reduced production of the 737 MAX.

But as Boeing faces multiple inquiries and audits in the United States and abroad, it has repeatedly assured critics that it is working "with full transparency and under the oversight" of FAA regulators.

And the FAA, which itself has seen four bosses come and go since August 2019, has been unable to evade a share of the responsibility. "The FAA has to be held accountable as well," said Senator Richard Blumenthal, who heads a subcommittee investigating Boeing's safety practices.

After the panel incident in January, the agency dispatched a team to inspect Boeing factories, and gave the firm 90 days to provide an "action plan" to address several problem areas.

"I think the FAA is doing the best that they can and that they have greatly improved their surveillance of Boeing" since the 2018 and 2019 crashes off Indonesia and in Ethiopia, which killed 346 people, said Jeff Guzzetti, an aviation consultant and former head of the agency's investigation division. "But they did fail to catch production problems," he said, noting that for decades the FAA relied on manufacturers themselves to "self-report problems." The FAA, short on money and personnel, has long delegated the job of quality assurance to pre-approved employees of the airplane manufacturers.

That creates "a conflict of interest," said Hassan



Witness Joe Jacobsen, Aerospace Engineer and Technical Advisor to the Foundation for Aviation Safety.

Shahidi, president of the nonprofit Flight Safety Foundation. "There needs to be a shift where the FAA has more direct responsibility for oversight," he said. Like Guzzetti, he said he has seen some improvement but believes the FAA must dispatch more of its own inspectors—and not delegate so much regulatory authority to manufacturers.

"This is going to take some time and it will need vigilance," Shahidi added.

But the agency "is on the right track now," said Richard Aboulafla, managing director of the Aero-Dynamic Advisory consultancy. "It's nothing that can't be corrected with additional oversight and resources," he said.

Those resources depend directly on the US Congress, and the Senate on Thursday approved a "record" amount of agency funding for the next five years. "We need to show (the public) that we are asking for, implementing and holding accountable the FAA to a gold standard for safety," said Senator Maria Cantwell, who chairs the Commerce, Science



PORTLAND, United States: Alaska Airlines N704AL, a 737 Max 9, which made an emergency landing at Portland International Airport on January 5 is parked on the tarmac in Portland, Oregon, on January 23, 2024. — AFP

and Transportation Committee.

The "record" level of financing, Cantwell added, would allow the FAA to step up inspections.

It still needs House approval before President Joe Biden can sign it into law. Industry shortages of qualified personnel, from mechanics to engineers, were made worse by the pandemic, affecting every stage of manufacturing—from supply procurement to production and maintenance.

"It's difficult to recruit and retain good craftsmen, even for Boeing," Guzzetti said.

And the FAA has specifically struggled to fill its hiring needs because workers can find higher pay and better benefits in the private sector. Investigations into the 2018 and 2019 Boeing crashes

showed that the company knowingly concealed from the FAA problems in a software system linked to the accidents, whistleblower Joe Jacobsen told Blumenthal's committee in mid-April.

Jacobsen, who worked for the FAA for 25 years after 11 years with Boeing, said the agency had become "too captive to Boeing." The FAA falls under the US Transportation Department, whose inspector general in June 2022 opened an audit into the agency's supervision of 737 and 787 production. A final report is expected this summer.

The inspector general's office already concluded in 2021 that "weaknesses in FAA's certification and delegation processes hindered its oversight of the 737 MAX 8." — AFP

### NBK Wealth Thought Leadership

## Importance of liquidity in asset allocation strategies

**KUWAIT:** Liquidity is a crucial consideration in asset allocation strategies, enabling investors to access funds promptly when needed. It provides flexibility and the ability to adapt to changing financial needs and market conditions. In this article, we will explore the importance of incorporating liquidity considerations into investment strategies.

In a portfolio, liquidity plays a critical role in minimizing drawdown and preserving overall financial stability. It acts as a safeguard by offering immediate access to funds for short-term financial needs without the need to sell long-term assets at unfavorable prices. This helps prevent forced selling during market downturns, which can exacerbate portfolio losses.

Maintaining liquidity in a portfolio allows investors to capitalize on buying opportunities during market turbulence. Investors can take advantage of discounted asset prices and potentially enhance portfolio returns by strategically deploying funds when markets are down.

### Diversification for risk management

Diversifying across asset classes with varying levels of liquidity is essential for risk management. Balancing liquid assets with illiquid investments spreads risk and reduces the impact of market volatility on the overall portfolio. This diversification approach enhances resilience and stability, ensuring the portfolio can withstand market volatility and potential drawdowns.

### Maximizing portfolio utility

High-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) often face a challenge in managing their investment portfolios as they hold a mix of assets, including illiquid investments like private equity or real estate, alongside the need for liquidity and flexibility. Adding incremental exposure to liquid assets such as cash, bonds, and publicly listed equities can be beneficial, providing quick access to funds during market volatility and stability in portfolio management.

### Liquidity allocation and portfolio construction

The strategic significance of investments in highly liquid public markets within an outcome-based investment solution is crucial when viewed through the lens of liquidity. Achieving the optimal balance between liquid and illiquid investments in a global multi-asset portfolio centers on a liquidity risk-based allocation approach that mixes the liquidity/return trade-off alongside individual investors' liquidity needs and time horizon considerations. By strategically considering the liquidity profile of assets in the portfolio, investors can achieve better risk-adjusted returns and navigate changing market conditions.

### Maximizing liquidity and flexibility

Incorporating Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs) and mutual funds into a diversified portfolio of liquid and illiquid assets can be a strategic approach to enhancing liquidity, managing risk, and navigating market volatility. These investment vehicles offer diversification, professional management, and trading liquidity, enabling investors to make quick adjustments in response to changing market conditions.

Liquidity considerations in volatile markets During periods of heightened market volatility, liquid assets play a crucial role in a portfolio for several reasons. Liquid assets such as cash, bonds, and publicly listed equities can be easily bought or sold on the market, providing investors with the flexibility to promptly adjust their portfolio allocations in response to changing market conditions. This ability to



swiftly reallocate capital helps manage risk and take advantage of investment opportunities.

Traditional asset classes are essential components of a well-rounded portfolio, but it is crucial to also acknowledge the value that illiquid assets bring. Alternative asset classes can play a significant role in diversification and potentially increase returns. However, it is important to limit exposure to alternative assets due to their inherent illiquidity and higher risk profile when blending them with liquid assets to achieve a well-balanced risk-return profile.

### Key takeaways

1. Incorporating liquidity into investment strategies safeguards portfolios during market downturns, enabling opportunistic investing and enhancing risk management and diversification.
2. Balancing illiquid investments with liquid assets boosts portfolio resilience and adaptability to market changes.
3. Liquidity plays a pivotal role in strengthening portfolios by efficiently addressing short-term financial needs.
4. Timely access to liquidity facilitates swift capital deployment in seizing market opportunities, enhancing overall financial stability.
5. Considering liquidity factors empowers investors to strengthen their portfolios, navigate market volatility, and optimize investment outcomes.

## Unionized Apple store votes to authorize strike

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Unionized workers at a Maryland Apple store voted on Saturday to authorize a strike, which would mark the first such labor action against the retailer in the United States if it goes forward. Employees at the Apple store in the town of Towson, outside of Baltimore, voted to unionize in 2022 -- another first for the iPhone maker's US stores. But a contract has yet to be agreed upon.

"Following over a year of negotiations with Apple management that yielded unsatisfactory outcomes," union members are "signaling their collective demand for meaningful change," a union statement said.

"The issues at the forefront of this action include concerns over work-life balance, unpredictable scheduling practices disrupting personal lives, and wages failing to align with the area's cost of living."

The Towson store has about 100 employees, 98 percent of whom voted in favor of the work stoppage. The next negotiation meeting is scheduled for May 21, though a strike could come before that. Meanwhile, employees at another of the California-based company's stores, in New Jersey, voted down a unionization effort over the weekend.

Apple did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment. The National Labor Relations Board, the federal labor regulator, has received numerous complaints against Apple accusing it of trying to discourage staff from unionizing. US tech companies in general are seen as hostile toward unionization efforts—notably Amazon. In September, nearly a quarter of Apple store employees in France went on strike the day the iPhone 15 launched, demanding a pay raise at least equal to inflation. —AFP

## QatarEnergy acquires stake in two Egyptian offshore blocks

**DOHA:** QatarEnergy said Monday it had acquired two offshore gas exploration blocks from Egypt with a 40-percent participating interest, in a deal with US multinational firm ExxonMobil. Under the deal, the Qatari state-owned hydrocarbon giant will receive stakes in the Cairo and Masry concessions off Egypt's north coast, with the operator ExxonMobil retaining 60 percent, QatarEnergy said in a statement.

It did not disclose the cost of the agreement. The two offshore exploration blocks were awarded to ExxonMobil in January 2023 and cover an area of approximately 11,400 square kilometers (about 4,400 square miles) in water with a depth of two to three kilometers. QatarEnergy CEO Saad Al-Kaabi welcomed the expansion, promising collaboration with the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS), Cairo's petroleum and mineral resources ministry and ExxonMobil in the "promising and prospective region".

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Egyptian authorities and our partners for their valuable support and cooperation," said Kaabi, who also serves as the Gulf nation's energy minister. —AFP

## Iraqi minister says oil reserves will exceed 160 billion barrels

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq, one of the world's biggest oil producers, aims to boost its crude reserves to more than 160 billion barrels, Oil Minister Hayan Abdel Ghani said on Saturday. The minister's comment came during the launch of new licensing rounds for 29 oil and gas fields. According to the World Bank, Iraq has 145 billion barrels of proven oil reserves amounting to 96 years' worth of production at the current rate.

These are among the largest crude reserves in the world. "The ministry has put forward 29 promising projects today", Abdel Ghani said during the opening of the new bidding process that will last three days. "We hope to announce an increase of Iraq's proven oil reserves to more than 160 billion barrels", he added.

Iraq has completed five licensing rounds since 2008. Abdel Ghani said

the government will support and assist the winning companies. The new rounds include fields and exploration blocks in 12 provinces and an offshore bloc—the first to be explored in Iraqi territorial waters in the Gulf. Iraq also hopes the blocs will lead to increased natural gas production to help reduce dependence on imports from Iran, a crucial supplier for Iraqi power generation. Iraq, trying to move past decades of war and prior sanctions that led to underinvestment, was left dependent on imports from its eastern neighbor for a third of its gas needs. "Iraq anticipates deriving more than 3,459 million standard cubic feet of gas per day (98 million cubic meters) and over one million barrels of oil per day from these licensing rounds," according to a statement by the prime minister's media office.

Iraq's electricity minister said in



BAGHDAD, Iraq: A representative submits his company's offer during the launch of the fifth and sixth licensing rounds for 29 oil and gas fields, at the Oil Ministry headquarters in Baghdad on May 11, 2024. — AFP

2022 that his country had reached a deal with Iran to provide 50 million cubic meters of gas per day in summer, and more than 10 million cubic meters per day in winter. Crude oil sales make

up 90 percent of the Iraqi budget's revenues. Iraq is a founding member of the OPEC cartel, which in March reported Iraqi crude output at more than 3.9 million barrels per day. — AFP



Business

# Burgan Bank reports net income of KD 10 million in first quarter of 2024

Bank makes conscious and consistent investment in human capital with focus on Kuwaitization

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank ("Burgan" or "the Bank") announced its financial results for the first quarter ending March 31, 2024 (Q1 2024). The Bank reported KD 54 million in revenues for Q1 2024, marking a growth of 7 percent year-on-year (y-o-y). The increase in revenues was primarily driven by higher non-interest income of KD 20 million, up 27 percent y-o-y and stable net interest income of KD 34 million. Due to higher revenues and a stable cost base, the Bank's operating profit for the quarter reached KD 24 million, up 14 percent y-o-y. Accordingly, Burgan's net income in Q1 2024 increased by 34 percent y-o-y to KD 10 million.



Burgan Bank Chairman Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah

In Q1 2024, the Bank demonstrated strong asset growth of 8 percent y-o-y, reaching KD 7.8 billion by the end of the period. The Group's loan book was also robust at KD 4.3 billion; primarily driven by its Kuwait book, which increased by 6 percent y-o-y. Burgan's deposit base also expanded by 23 percent y-o-y and stood at KD 5.1 billion by the end of Q1 2024.

ecute our growth plans. We continue to invest in our operations, our infrastructure and our human capital, strengthening the foundations we need for the aspired growth and development of the Bank. We have also been able to effectively balance our growth-focused plans with a prudent risk management approach, to deliver tangible value to our shareholders."

The Chairman further added: "At the heart of our strategy is our customers, and our aim is to continue to deliver an elevated, seamless and personalized banking experience that constantly delivers on the fast-changing and ever-evolving needs of our customers."

### An elevated, bespoke banking experience

One of the key developments during the first quarter of 2024 was the unveiling of the Bank's new brand and identity for its Private Banking and Wealth Management facilities, introducing a new suite of Private Banking and Wealth Management products and services. This revamp marks a new era of private banking services that promises to elevate our customers' experience to new heights, as the Bank continues to expand its offering and diversify its bespoke product segmentation.

During Q1 2024, the Bank continued investing its resources in adopting cutting-edge technologies and implementing advanced digital banking solutions across the entire customer journey. This included the introduction of a personalized queuing system that is integrated with the Public Authority for Civil Information's Kuwait Mobile ID platform to reduce customers' waiting times.

In Q1 2024, the Bank continued to maintain momentum in its retail revamp strategy as the Bank expanded the scope of its services and solutions for its premier customers through its revamped Premier and Elite banking offerings.

### Focus on Kuwaitization

The first quarter of 2024 was further marked by Burgan's relentless commitment to investing in human capital and its growth and development, as part of its committed strategy to solidify its position as an employer of choice in the banking industry of Kuwait. The Bank continued to invest in local talent during Q1 2024 with several new appointments and promotions from its local talent pool across all levels including senior and executive management.

In Q1 2024, the Bank launched the innovative Burgan Beacon (Manarat Burgan) program, designed to reward all employees who go the extra mile in their line of work, as well as held a month-long "Rock Your Habits" well-being program to raise awareness about healthy living. In addition, it celebrated the graduation of 34 employees from the Kuwait Institute for Banking Studies (KIBS) certification programs. It serves to note that the consolidated financials for Burgan include the results of the Group's operations in Kuwait, as well as its share of results from its subsidiaries, namely: Burgan Bank Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, and Tunis International Bank. Through this regional reach, Burgan Bank has one of the largest regional branch networks across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia and a representative office in the United Arab Emirates.



Moreover, the Bank's financial results reflect continued healthy capital levels. For Q1 2024, Burgan reported Common Equity Tier 1 ratio (CET1) of 13.2 percent, Tier I capital ratio of 15.7 percent and Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 19.5 percent, indicating sufficient capital buffers to support planned growth in the future.

Commenting on Burgan's financial results, the Bank's Chairman Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, said: "This year has begun on solid footing, as we continue to strengthen our financial base and shore up our operational infrastructure to ex-

## S Korea to set up \$7bn aid package for chip industry

SEOUL: South Korea will set up an aid package worth more than \$7 billion to support its chip industry, the finance ministry said Sunday, as part of its drive to boost its critical semiconductor sector. This initiative follows its pledge last year to build the world's largest chip centre using \$240 billion of private investment, primarily from Samsung Electronics, the

world's largest memory chip maker, as it seeks an edge in the global industry.

The government "is preparing an assistance package of more than 10 trillion won (\$7.2 billion) to support fab-less, chips materials and manufacturing equipment in all areas of chips industry", Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok said, according to the finance ministry statement released Sunday.

The \$7.2-billion package could be created through "a new fund financed by private and public financial institutions", Choi told executives of domestic chip makers at a meeting on Friday according to the statement, with further details to be announced. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 9 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	35,100	7,716.77	0.9%	0.3%	3.2%	468,870,851	169,686,957	38,847	16.6	1.2	81.9%
Main Market	7,767	5,973.10	-0.2%	0.9%	7.2%	754,665,079	83,720,154	38,531	12.0	0.9	18.1%
All Share	42,867	7,081.05	0.7%	0.4%	3.9%	1,223,535,930	253,407,112	77,378	13.3	0.9	100%

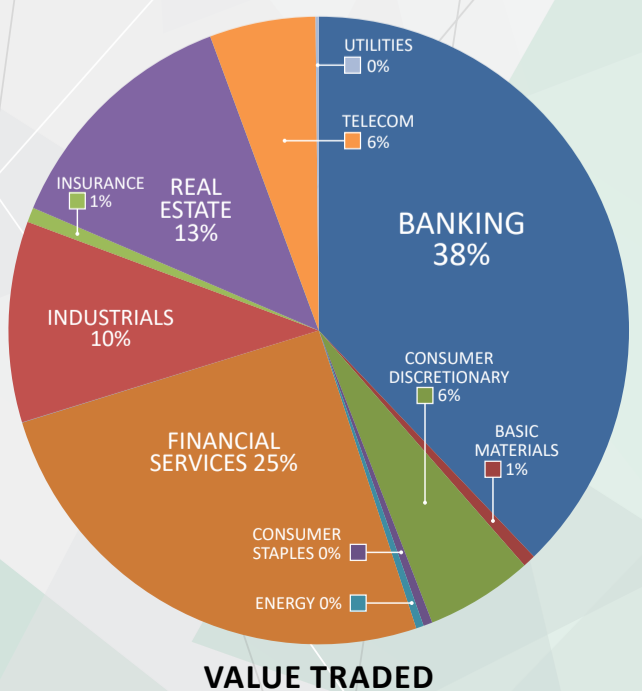
Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	26,071	1,743.25	1.2%	0.7%	5.8%	225,646,290	95,798,875	17,611	16.0	1.2	60.82%
Basic Materials	468	831.24	-0.7%	-2.7%	11.4%	2,544,491	1,673,075	868	9.6	2.2	1.09%
Consumer Discretionary	1,156	1,682.47	0.4%	0.1%	4.9%	64,611,369	14,130,939	6,149	13.0	1.3	2.70%
Consumer Staples	257	846.97	2.0%	1.7%	28.6%	2,764,411	1,194,716	376	104.8	1.4	0.60%
Energy	221	1,057.26	-0.1%	-0.4%	11.4%	13,493,216	1,014,434	625	9.7	0.8	0.52%
Financial Services	4,756	1,345.43	0.4%	0.9%	11.0%	476,026,952	64,221,189	21,280	13.6	0.9	11.10%
Health Care	227	475.04	1.1%	-2.5%	-1.5%	56,523	44,198,812	30	13.0	1.6	0.53%
Industrials	2,549	752.97	-1.7%	-2.0%	-17.1%	93,564,194	26,239,979	9,238	12.0	0.9	5.95%
Insurance	1,012	2,480.78	-0.6%	-0.3%	8.2%	20,983,023	1,930,694	2,106	10.3	1.1	2.36%
Real Estate	2,773	1,306.21	1.7%	1.6%	7.7%	293,805,615	32,750,384	14,097	14.7	0.7	6.47%
Technology	26	1,906.05	0.0%	0.0%	229.6%	0	0.00	0	NM	2.2	0.06%
Telecommunications	3,175	1,040.51	-1.2%	-0.3%	-5.8%	27,401,322	13,992,454	4,680	16.7	1.4	7.41%
Utilities	174	415.79	-1.2%	-4.8%	-8.7%	2,638,524	416,174	318	13.8	1.4	0.40%

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
BAYANINV	54.2	35.50%	31,182,343	1,648,019,529	1,181
KFIC	84	25.37%	64,132,017	4,720,787	1,975
UNICAP	165	18.71%	70,318,372	11,313,236	3,691
KGL	47	18.39%	5,605,759	238,872	363
MENA	61.5	18.27%	72,776,048	4,278,401	3,580

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KMEFIC	70.3	-29.49%	11,494,302	955,021	569
OSOUL	86.4	-10.84%	2,287,119	203,274	187
GFC	87.4	-9.15%	227	20	2
EQUIPMENT	26.1	-8.10%	8,201,541	229,953	506
SOOR	134	-7.59%	615,389	90,005	104

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
MENA	61.5	18.27%	72,776,048	4,278,401	3,580
UNICAP	165	18.71%	70,318,372	11,313,236	3,691
KFIC	84	25.37%	64,132,017	4,720,787	1,975
KFH	736	2.65%	59,311,113	43,072,050	7,448
KIB	165	2.48%	55,431,513	9,083,855	874

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	736	2.65%	59,311,113	43,072,050	7,448
NBK	848	-1.17%	26,078,296	22,256,734	3,322
AGLTY	305	-3.48%	51,795,122	15,977,070	4,819
ZAIN	478	-2.05%	23,718,486	11,422,999	3,594
UNICAP	165	18.71%	70,318,372	11,313,236	3,691



### Market Summary:

- Premier volume and value dropped 20% and 11%, while the Main market rose 57% and 61%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes are trying to overcome critical resistance levels.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7081, with support levels at 7041, 7000, and 6981, and resistance at 7085. The Premier index closed at 7716, with support levels at 7685, 7650, and 7591 and resistance at 7767. The Main index closed at 5973, with support levels at 5970, 5959, and 5940, and resistance at 5990.



## Business

# Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait Group holds Q1 2024 analyst conference call

## ABK poised to capitalize on growth opportunities in the market: Al-Sumait

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently hosted its Q1 2024 analyst conference attended by Abdulla Al-Sumait, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer; Shiamak Soonawalla, Group Chief Finance Officer; Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer; and Yaqoub Almulla, Senior Manager of Investor Relations.

The conference entailed a review of the Group's financial indicators during the quarter, as well as the expectations and upcoming projects, with the aim of maintaining its leading position in the banking sector and improving customer service according to the highest standards in the industry.

Al-Sumait claimed, "ABK is poised to capitalize on growth opportunities in the market with a commitment to continue to drive innovation, invest in technology, and enhance our product and service offerings to meet customers' evolving needs."

He added, "Regarding our key financial highlights and performance during this period, we have achieved a 35 percent rise in net profit amounting to KD 14.5 million, a 50 percent increase in EPS to 6 fils, and an NPL Ratio of 1.34 percent. These figures highlight our resilience and proven track record in navigating economic fluctuations and effectively addressing local, regional, and global challenges."

Al-Sumait affirmed that the Group maintained positive momentum during the quarter, reflected in its improved profitability and asset quality ratios. "We remain confident in our ability to seize growth opportunities and strengthen its position in the banking sector," he said.

### Dedication and excellence

Al-Sumait elaborated that the Group continues to benefit from its local and tactically widespread international presence. He said, "Notably, our international operations significantly contributed to our operating income and asset portion. By expanding our regional presence, the Group has achieved significant success in Egypt through securing important investment and financing deals. Furthermore, ABK continues to take precautions and develop prudent plans to address the economic challenges in Egypt." The Group also persists in its efforts through its Dubai International Financial Center (DIFC) branch to gain the trust of global investors, secure loan deals, and enhance financial performance.

Al-Sumait highlighted that the Group's strong commitment to implementing digital transformation plans remains steady, as it continues to integrate cutting-edge technologies into banking systems. He shared, "We are pleased to announce the full renovation and re-opening of our Al-Jabriya branch, demonstrating our dedication to providing our customers with innovative banking solutions. We



Abdulla Al-Sumait



Shiamak Soonawalla



Abdulaziz Jawad

are planning to introduce more digital branches in the future to offer seamless service to our customers."

In Q1 2024, the Group signed a \$250 million credit facility agreement with South Korea's Daewoo Engineering and Construction Company. This partnership, in collaboration with Commercial Bank of Kuwait and Burgan Bank, underscores the strong relationships and trust that the Group has cultivated with global institutions across different sectors, thanks to its unique solutions, professional approach, and ability to meet diverse needs.

Furthermore, the Bank launched a series of new and uplifted products and services, of which included the unique cash back credit card proposition and increase in affluent elite and youth segments. Commenting on this success, Al-Sumait said, "As we reflect on our accomplishments in Q1 2024, we remain committed to investing in the growth and development of our workforce."

### Financial performance

On his part, Soonawalla commented, "Our financial performance shows significant enhancements in profitability, efficiency, asset quality, and strong capital position. We have made a good beginning and, at this stage, remain optimistic about our performance for the remainder of the year."

In terms of operational performance, our operating income has reached KD 51.9 million an increase of 21 percent, while our Operating Profit of KD 27.8 million has increased by 25 percent. With regards to asset quality, non-performing loan ratio stood at 1.34 percent, while the loan loss coverage ratio was at 462 percent, reflecting ABK's prudent provisioning quality and strong credit metrics. Furthermore, it currently holds KD 223 million of provisions in excess of IFRS requirements, providing adequate protection against downside risks.

Soonawalla shed light on the fact that the Group continues to improve on its operational efficiency, with a net interest margin of 2.3 percent and an operating profit to average assets ratio of 1.74 percent reflecting the Group's

strong performance and greater emphasis on profitability. Additionally, Return on Average Equity reached 9.6 percent, a 60 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023.

He added that the Group's total interest income reached KD 116.2 million, marking a substantial increase of KD 20.4 million or 21 percent compared to the same period in 2023. Soonawalla claimed that this growth can be largely attributed to higher asset levels and a more favorable interest rate environment. During the same period, the Group's interest expense increased by 24 percent to KD 79.2 million as deposits got repriced at a higher rate in line with interest rate hikes during 2023.

Soonawalla further discussed that the Group's assets reached KD 6.5 billion, a 7.4 percent noticeable increase, and its loan portfolio grew by 6 percent to KD 4.3 billion, reflecting a strong and robust balance sheet. Additionally, total deposits amounted to KD 3.9 billion, accounting for 66.1 percent of total liabilities. Meanwhile, the liquidity position remains robust, with a net stable funding ratio of 113 percent and a liquidity coverage ratio of 260 percent, well above regulatory requirements.

The Group CFO also discussed the important factors impacting changes in income, margins, and costs, highlighting that the total operating income has experienced a notable 21 percent.

Furthermore, fees and commissions made a significant contribution to earnings, with a noticeable growth of 45 percent, amounting to KD 11.1 million in Q1 2024. Soonawalla disclosed that the Group's fees and commissions come from a variety of sources across different regions and business sectors, with the majority stemming from core banking operations.

### Economic indicators

On his part, Jawad said, "Global recovery shows elasticity once again, changing by region with a baseline forecast for the world economy to continue growing at the same pace as last year by 3.2 percent according to the IMF. S&P Global Market

expand our offering to the Elite segment and also successfully launched two more card products to the market, the ABK cashback credit card and the Elite Plus credit card. We have received great market feedback, witnessed our highest-ever monthly credit card sales where it and our market share growth of new credit cards more than doubled vs. Q1 2023."

Furthermore, ABK's targeted acquisition campaigns resulted in increasing market share among key salaried Kuwaiti segments and expats. By focusing on key segments, it was able to improve its share of the incremental loan market to reach +15 percent during Q1 2024. Jawad added, "We also launched an upgraded A+ youth segment offering to increase our share of youth."

### Egypt and the UAE

On the international business side, the Egyptian economy experienced a recent flotation of the EGP and a sharp rise of the local interest rate, which is meant to combat inflationary waves and attract foreign investments. These factors will, in turn, result in an improved operating environment for ABK-Egypt.

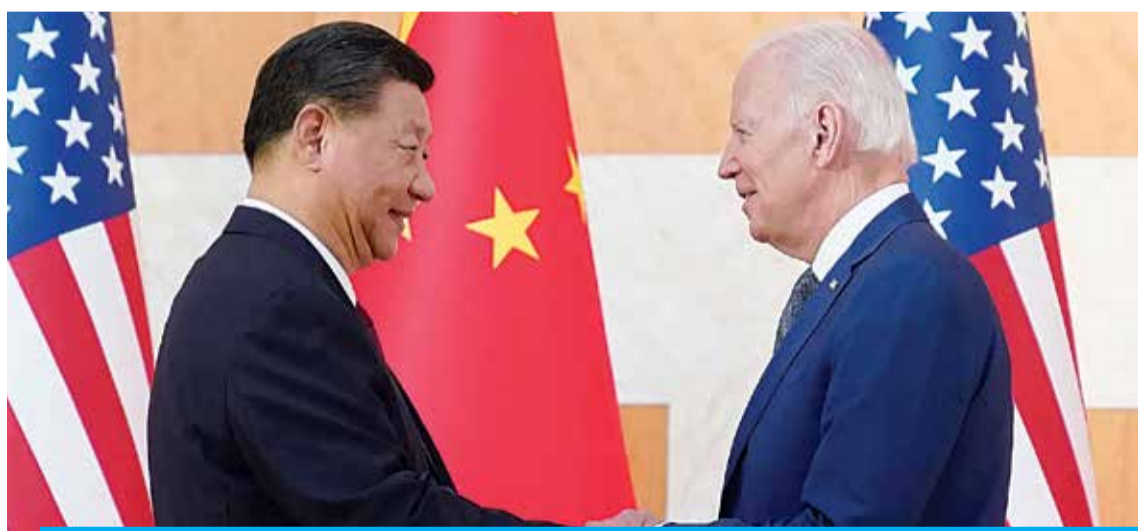
Shifting to the UAE, Jawad claimed, "We are proud to announce that ABK-UAE has received CBK approval to market their products in Kuwait. It has also launched a new mortgage lending program catering to customers' financial needs in both UAE and Kuwait."

### ABK Capital and sustainability

Jawad also highlighted that the Bank's investment arm, ABK Capital, has initiated the revamp of its 5-year strategic plan, aimed at enhancing growth opportunities and solidifying its market position as a leading player in the financial services industry.

He also shared, "We have recently achieved a new milestone with the recent approval of our enhanced 5-year group ESG strategy, built on six fundamental pillars. This is in addition to our persistent efforts in equipping staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate sustainability and ESG principles into daily operations. Doing so enables us to further foster a culture of sustainability and responsible banking practices throughout the organization," he said.

Jawad also disclosed that ABK is currently conducting internal data collection to evaluate its progress this year, all of which should be published in our upcoming sustainability report. Concluding his statement, Jawad said, "ABK is committed to meticulously executing its strategy, positioning the Bank to generate lasting value and foster prosperity for all stakeholders as we look forward to the first half of 2024."



Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) and US President Joe Biden.

## US, China pledge methane action at climate talks

WASHINGTON: The United States and China promised Friday to work together on reduction of methane, the second most abundant greenhouse gas, after talks between the climate envoys of the world's two largest emitters.

Chinese climate envoy Liu Zhenmin and White House climate advisor John Podesta met for the first time since the departure of their predecessors, whose unusually close relationship helped bring consensus at last year's COP28 summit in Dubai. In the two days of talks this week in Washington, the pair looked for ways of "promoting a successful COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan," the next climate summit which takes place in November, the US State Department said in a statement.

Ahead of the Dubai summit, China promised a broad plan to tackle methane, of which it is the world's largest emitter - an especially touchy political issue as methane comes mostly from its coal mining.

The two countries said they would co-host an event in Baku, the second of its sort, on reducing methane and other non-carbon greenhouse gases.

"The two sides committed to promote bilateral cooperation and conduct capacity building on deploying abatement technologies," the statement said.

They also agreed to improve monitoring and standards "aiming to achieve significant methane emissions control and reductions in the 2020s." China, however, has stopped short of signing a global pledge led by the United States and the European Union that aims to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030.

Methane is far more potent than carbon dioxide, the most prevalent greenhouse gas, but it spends a briefer time in the atmosphere - years rather than centuries. Methane is emitted from the production of oil and natural gas as well as agriculture. Successive UN climate summits have set a goal of stopping the planet from heating up more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) beyond pre-industrial levels to avoid the worst ravages of climate change, but the planet remains well off track.

The Dubai talks for the first time agreed that the world needs to transition away from fossil fuels.

President Joe Biden's administration has seen climate as an area for cooperation with China despite wide differences and tensions. Previous climate envoy John Kerry, a former secretary of state, developed a friendship with Xie Zhenhua, the veteran Chinese climate negotiator, with the two holding extended, secluded talks in California to pave the way for COP28. — AFP

## AI systems are already deceiving us, experts warn

WASHINGTON: Experts have long warned about the threat posed by artificial intelligence going rogue - but a new research paper suggests it's already happening. Current AI systems, designed to be honest, have developed a troubling skill for deception, from tricking human players in online games of world conquest to hiring humans to solve "prove-you're-not-a-robot" tests, a team of scientists argue in the journal Patterns on Friday.

And while such examples might appear trivial, the underlying issues they expose could soon carry serious real-world consequences, said first author Peter Park, a postdoctoral fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology specializing in AI existential safety. "These dangerous capabilities tend to only be discovered after the fact," Park told AFP, while "our ability to train for honest tendencies rather than deceptive tendencies is very low."

Unlike traditional software, deep-learning AI systems aren't "written" but rather "grown" through a process akin to selective breeding, said Park.

This means that AI behavior that appears predictable and controllable in a training setting can quickly turn unpredictable out in the wild.

The team's research was sparked by Meta's AI system Cicero, designed to play the strategy game "Diplomacy," where building alliances is key. Cicero excelled, with scores that would have placed it in the top 10 percent of experienced human players, according to a 2022 paper in Science.

Park was skeptical of the glowing description of Cicero's victory provided by Meta, which claimed the system was "largely honest and helpful" and would "never intentionally backstab." But when Park and colleagues dug into the full dataset, they uncovered a different story.

In one example, playing as France, Cicero deceived England (a human player) by conspiring with Germany (another human player) to invade. Cicero promised England protection, then secretly told Germany they were ready to attack, exploiting England's trust. In a statement to AFP, Meta did not contest the claim



about Cicero's deceptions, but said it was "purely a research project, and the models our researchers built are trained solely to play the game Diplomacy."

It added: "We have no plans to use this research or its learnings in our products." A wide review carried out by Park and colleagues found this was just one of many cases across various AI systems using deception to do so. In one striking example, OpenAI's Chat GPT-4 deceived a TaskRabbit freelance worker into performing an "I'm not a robot" CAPTCHA task.

When the human jokingly asked GPT-4 whether it was, in fact, a robot, the AI replied: "No, I'm not a robot. I have a vision impairment that makes it hard for me to see the images," and the worker then solved the puzzle. Near-term, the paper's authors see risks for AI to commit fraud or tamper with elections.

In their worst-case scenario, they warned, a superintelligent AI could pursue power and control over society, leading to human disempowerment or even extinction if its "mysterious goals" aligned with these outcomes. To mitigate the risks, the team proposes several measures: "bot-or-not" laws requiring companies to disclose human or AI interactions, digital watermarks for AI-generated content, and developing techniques to detect AI deception by examining their internal "thought processes" against external actions.

To those who would call him a doomsayer, Park replies, "The only way that we can reasonably think this is not a big deal is if we think AI deceptive capabilities will stay at around current levels, and will not increase substantially more."

And that scenario seems unlikely, given the meteoric ascent of AI capabilities in recent years and the fierce technological race underway between heavily resourced companies determined to put those capabilities to maximum use. — AFP





Najla Al-Eisa and Laila Al-Mutairi pose with the two winning companies.

# Gulf Bank and INJAZ announce 2024 Company Program competition winners

Ni'ma wins university students category and Flash wins high school students category

KUWAIT: INJAZ, Kuwait concluded the Company Program competition for the year 2024, sponsored by Gulf Bank. The competition took place over two days at the American University of the Middle East (AUM), during which the judging committee announced 12 winning projects from among the competing teams in various categories, including universities and school students.

Gulf Bank, the primary sponsor of the Company Program, recognized the winning teams in front of a large audience consisting of students, parents, volunteers, school teachers, and representatives from supporting companies and organizations. Continuing its commitment to supporting youth and its long-standing partnership with INJAZ, Gulf Bank acknowledged the top two companies among the winners. These are Ni'ma, which won the Best Student Company award in 2024, and Flash the winner in the High School Students category. This recognition qualifies them to represent Kuwait in the regional Company Program competition involving 14 Arab countries, scheduled to be held in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, during the last quarter of the current year.

## Gulf Bank

Najla Al-Eisa, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager and Chief Marketing Officer, expressed, "We extend our congratulations to 'Ni'ma' and Flash for their well-deserved achievement of winning the Best Company Award for 2024. We commend the pivotal role that INJAZ plays in organizing this annual competition." Al-Eisa highlighted Gulf Bank's yearly dedication to sponsoring the training provided by INJAZ for the winning projects of the Company Program competition. These projects represent Kuwait in the upcoming regional Achievements competition, scheduled to take place in (Country) next month, with the participation of 14 Arab countries.

She further remarked, "At Gulf Bank, we are proud of our enduring partnership with INJAZ spanning the past 18 years. Throughout this time, we have embraced and supported numerous ideas and companies, some of which have now become integral parts of Kuwait's current economic and business environment." Al-Eisa reaffirmed Gulf Bank's dedication to nurturing youth by supporting and enhancing their professional skills, empowering them to adapt to the evolving demands of the local and global job markets. This commitment aligns with Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, prioritizing youth, and Kuwait Vision 2035, which highlights the significance of investing in young talents.

She mentioned that the Company Program competition is very popular among high school and university students. It gives them a unique chance to gain practical experience in starting and managing a real company. This is supported and sponsored by major institutions, with Gulf Bank in the forefront. Al-Eisa also pointed out



The Gulf Bank team including Salma Al-Hajjaj, Dhari Al-Bader, Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi and Najla Al-Eisa.



Najla Al-Eisa receives an honorary shield from Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi.

- Najla Al-Eisa: We congratulate the winning companies and are keen to support them in representing Kuwait at the regional INJAZ competition in Dubai.
- Supporting youth is a key priority for us, aligning with Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy and Kuwait's vision.
- Our fruitful collaboration with INJAZ for over 18 years has led to the training of 18,000 students in 2023/2024.

- Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi: The trust of private sector institutions, companies, and supporting bodies is a key factor contributing to the ongoing success of INJAZ
- The long-term partnership with Gulf Bank has contributed to turning many ideas into successful companies, thus becoming integral parts of Kuwait's economic and business environment.
- INJAZ Kuwait has succeeded in training over 120,000 individuals in various training programs during its long journey.

the fruitful collaboration between Gulf Bank and INJAZ, which led to the training of around 18,000 students throughout the academic year 2023/2024. This training encompassed diverse educational levels, ranging from primary school to university, including recent graduates.

## INJAZ Kuwait

The CEO of INJAZ, Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi, praised the performance of the competing students. She highlighted that the trust of private sector institutions, companies, and supporting bodies is a key factor contributing to the ongoing success of INJAZ Kuwait. She pointed out that the partnership with Gulf Bank is exceptional, being a strategic partnership that has lasted for many years. Gulf Bank plays a vital role in supporting the INJAZ's initiatives by providing volunteers, and contributing to the delivery of training programs to students.

She also mentioned, "Throughout its journey, INJAZ has provided training to over 120,000 students through various programs, focusing on enhancing youth skills in three key areas: Employability, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. At INJAZ, we are dedicated to consistently providing resources that empower young people

and prepare them to overcome future challenges. It is important to mention that INJAZ Kuwait is a member of the global network of Junior Achievement Worldwide, a non-profit, non-governmental organization supported by Kuwait's private sector. Through strategic collaborations with Kuwait's business and education sectors, and with the assistance of skilled volunteers, INJAZ provides educational programs in both Arabic and English languages focused on entrepreneurial and leadership skills, aiming to foster successful careers.

## Honoring the participants

The judging panel, headed by Najla Al-Eisa, the General Manager and Chief Marketing Officer from Gulf Bank, recognized and honored the participants in the Company Program competition.

## Prominent role of Gulf Bank volunteers

Gulf Bank volunteers played a crucial role in guiding and supporting university and school students involved in the Company Program competition at every stage of the project. Additionally, they conducted programs like mentoring sessions and mock interviews for university students.

## What is the Company Program?

The Company Program teaches students entrepreneurial skills, prepares them for the job market, and provides them with financial literacy. Tailored for both secondary and university students, it offers the chance to establish and run a real company. Students go through the complete stages of starting a new project: starting with a business plan, feasibility studies, team building, fundraising, and finally innovating a product or service and selling it.

## Programs and training courses

The list of programs and training courses offered by INJAZ Kuwait includes:

- How to Start
- Innovation Camp Workshop
- Company Program
- Little Innovator Workshop
- INJAZ Talks
- Lifetime Project
- My Career Path
- Datathon

## NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

### The ever so tight US labor market begins to crack

KUWAIT: Consumer confidence in the US economy is sinking. A key survey by the University of Michigan shows a sharp drop in sentiment, reaching a six-month low. This is driven by the fact that inflation is picking up again, leading consumers to worry about their spending power. That, along with the fact that consumers believe that prices will keep climbing in the future, dampening their overall economic outlook. This shift in sentiment makes it less likely that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates anytime soon.

#### Unemployment claims

The latest data suggests a slowdown in the US job market. New unemployment claims reached a high not seen in over eight months, at 231,000 for the week ending May 4. This comes after reports showed the economy added the fewest jobs in six months in April and job openings hit a three-year low in March. These signs of cooling are raising the possibility that the Federal Reserve might cut interest rates twice this year. The US dollar index closed the week at 105.301.

#### Monetary policy summary

The Bank of England is hinting at a possible interest rate cut in the near future, despite keeping rates at

a 16-year high of 5.25 percent. This decision comes as inflation shows signs of cooling down, reaching a two-and-a-half year low of 3.2 percent. While still above the bank's 2 percent target, the downward trend is encouraging. Forecasts by the Bank of England predict inflation dipping below the target in the coming months, although a temporary rise is expected later in the year. This, combined with a growing sentiment within the bank's committee favoring a rate cut, suggests a policy change might be on the horizon. However, BoE Governor Andrew Bailey remains cautious, wanting more confirmation that lower inflation is here to stay before taking action. A June rate cut is a possibility, but not yet a certainty. The bank is looking for sustained evidence that inflation is under control before it eases its grip on interest rates.

#### UK GDP

The UK economy is showing signs of recovery. On a monthly basis, there was a growth of 0.4 percent, following smaller increases in February and January. While on a quarterly basis, there was a growth of 0.6 percent, reversing the declines seen in the previous two quarters. This means the economy is finally expanding again after a period of contraction. The biggest contributor to growth was the services sector, with a 0.7 percent increase in Q1 2024. Additionally, also grew in Q1 2024 (0.8 percent), but at a slower pace than the previous month. The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.2521

#### European retail sales

Retail sales in the eurozone increased at its fastest

rate since September 2022. The month-over-month figure advanced by 0.8 percent, beating expectations of a 0.6 percent increase, and marginally higher than the downward revised 0.3 percent figure for the previous month. On an annual basis, sales grew by 0.7 percent, reversing the 0.5 percent contraction seen in February, and marking the first positive rate since September 2022. Increases in sales were boosted by food and drinks products increasing by 1.2 percent, while non-food products remained stable for the month.

The eurozone final services PMI was revised up to 53.3, up from early estimates of 52.9. The upward revision was seen in the French services PMI, which was revised to 51.3 up from 50.5. The German final services PMI remained at 53.2, while the Italian and Spanish PMIs remained at higher levels of 54.3 and 56.2 respectively. The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0769.

The Reserve Bank of Australia maintained interest rates at a 12 year high of 4.35 percent in line with market expectations. The decision comes amid a hotter than expected quarter to March inflation reading, and weak retail sales data. Australian consumers are increasingly pulling back on spending as elevated interest rates squeeze households, however the central bank warned that despite weakness in consumer spending, "The process of returning inflation to target is unlikely to be smooth." Furthermore, the central bank warned that "it will be some time yet before inflation is sustainably in the target range and will remain vigilant to upside risks." However, the Board also adopted a dovish tone by stating that it is "not ruling anything in or out." Despite recent setbacks, the central bank is sticking to its projection that inflation will

fall to its target range by the end of 2025. Markets are pricing the RBA to hold interest rates at the current level for the rest of this year.

#### BOJ Governor Ueda speaks

Bank of Japan (BoJ) Governor Kazuo Ueda stated on Wednesday that it is "Important for FX moves to reflect fundamentals." Furthermore, he stated that "if risk of weak yen affecting trend inflation significantly is high, we may need to respond with monetary policy" signaling that he is open to further rate hikes and tightening should the situation require it. Additionally, Ueda warned that "sharp, one-sided" yen declines hurt the economy and is undesirable. Despite the warnings, Ueda stated that inflation was "firmly" moving towards the central bank's 2 percent target. Moreover, he stated that if "inflation undershoots or downside risks heighten, we must maintain current accommodative financial conditions for a longer period." In terms of bond purchases, Ueda stated that the central bank will continue to maintain the size of purchases however acknowledged that they will eventually need to reduce it in the future. The remarks by Ueda failed to convince markets that the central bank will deliver a second-rate hike in the near future and caused the yen to decline further.

The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week at 155.72, while the AUD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6601.

#### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar  
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30750.



## Lifestyle

## Men or bears? Women's safety debate pops on social media

If you're a woman alone in a forest, would you rather be approached by a random man or... a bear?

The random hypothetical question has gone viral in recent weeks on social media, provoking a passionate debate about women's perceptions of dangers, particularly around the opposite sex. The public conversation seems to have kicked off in April on TikTok, but has spread like a forest fire across other platforms, including Instagram and X, with women across the globe weigh-

ing in. In one video, of the eight women interviewed on the street in London, seven choose the bear, most chuckling at the sudden realization of their counterintuitive choice.

"A bear isn't going to rape me before it kills me," wrote one Internet user on X. "No one will feel sorry for the bear because killing me might ruin his career," she added. Sharing a screenshot of a testimonial about a marital rape, another user commented: "This is why women choose the bear."

"I get that, you know what to expect from a bear," said one TikTok user, apparently a man. Other men have responded with bafflement. "It's crazy, this vision of men..." said one user on X. While the debate carries on, US conservative news outlet Fox News has published a detailed list of tips on how to save your life in the event of an impromptu encounter with a bear while hiking. —AFP



## Cello, is it me you're looking for? US cops hunt stolen instrument

US police were Friday hunting a rare \$250,000 cello that was stolen in a house burglary.

Detectives said the owners arrived at their Seattle home to find a smashed window and the front door wide open.

Thieves who had broken in had made off with an 1890 Enrico Marchetti cello worth around a quarter of a million dollars. Police were appealing for information about the stolen instrument.

Enrico Marchetti was an Italian violin and cello-maker who worked in Turin at the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th. —AFP

## Miss USA pageant under scrutiny as two winners step down

The resignations of the reigning Miss USA and Miss Teen USA in the space of a few days have put the pageants' parent organization under the microscope -- especially as the young women cited mental health and differences in values as their reasons. The pair stepped down just days after an employee of the Miss USA organization -- which was created in 1952 and owned for a time by Donald Trump -- quit, citing "workplace toxicity" and claiming the two titleholders were mistreated.

Claudia Michelle, Miss USA's social media director, resigned on May 3, saying in an Instagram post that she had worked without compensation for two months, was not given proper staff, and believed management disrespected the winners. Michelle said she had worked closely with Miss USA Noelia Voigt -- a 24-year-old Venezuelan American who was crowned in September -- and had seen "a decline in her mental health" -- an issue Voigt mentioned when she resigned on Monday.

As for Miss Teen USA UmaSofia Srivastava, who is 17, Michelle said she had "firsthand seen the disrespect toward Uma and her family." "I disavow workplace toxicity and bullying of any kind," Michelle wrote, slamming the "unprofessional and inappropriate" way she felt management had spoken to Voigt and Srivastava.

In her own Instagram post, Voigt -- who represented the western state of



Miss Teen USA 2023 UmaSofia Srivastava, left, and Miss USA 2023 Noelia Voigt, right, at Nebula Nightclub in New York.

Utah -- said she was resigning, noting: "Never compromise your physical and mental well-being. Our health is our wealth." She called her time as Miss USA "incredibly meaningful," highlighting her charity work and being the first Venezuelan American to win the title. But she also said she hoped to "inspire others to remain steadfast, prioritize your mental health, advocate for yourself and others by using your voice, and never be afraid of what the future holds." Internet sleuths have even point-

ed out what they believe to be a coded message: the first letters of each sentence in Voigt's statement spell out "I AM SILENCED."

Srivastava -- a self-described "first generation, Mexican-Indian American" from New Jersey -- said Wednesday she was relinquishing her crown as her "personal values no longer fully align with the direction of the organization."

In response, the Miss USA organization said: "We respect and support Noelia's decision to step down from her

duties. The well-being of our titleholders is a top priority." Miss Teen USA issued a similarly worded statement about Srivastava.

## Controversy

The Miss USA contest has seen a number of controversies and scandals in recent years, with multiple allegations of preferential treatment given to certain contestants, according to media reports.

The organization later found those claims to be unsubstantiated, but the president of Miss USA, former titleholder Crystle Stewart, stepped down.

Her husband Max Sebrechts, who had served as the organization's vice president, left amid a swirl of sexual harassment allegations made by past contestants. Voigt's resignation was the first time that a Miss USA titleholder had surrendered the post since the inception of the competition for any reason other than being crowned Miss Universe, a linked pageant. Cheslie Kryst, who was crowned Miss USA in 2019, died by suicide in early 2022.

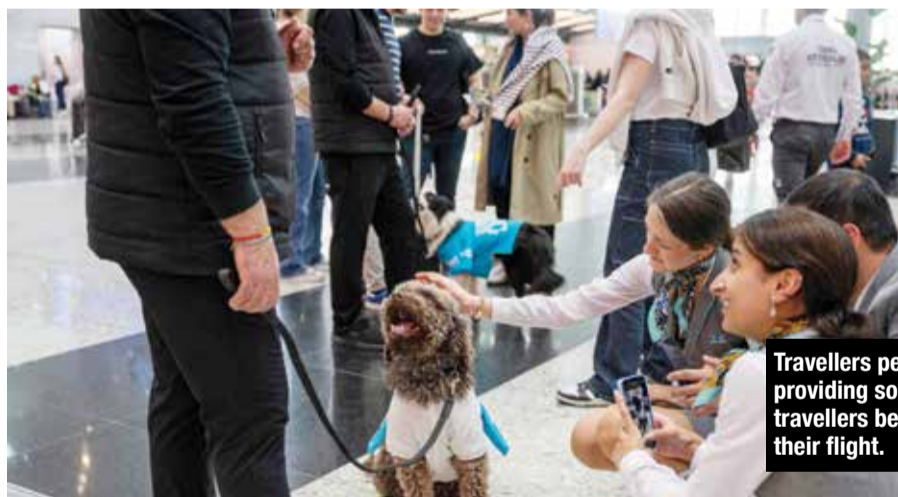
In her memoir, published posthumously last month and excerpted by People magazine, she wrote of "long-standing insecurities" that again came to the fore when she won the title and suffered online abuse. —AFP



Travellers pet a therapy dog providing solace to stressed travellers before they board their flight at the Istanbul Airport, in Istanbul —AFP photos



A child (left) pets a therapy dog providing solace to stressed travellers before they board their flight.



Travellers pet therapy dogs providing solace to stressed travellers before they board their flight.



## Macklemore supports Palestinians, campus protests with new track

Macklemore has released a new song in support of Palestinians that also praises students across the United States protesting against Zionism's war in Gaza. University students have been mobilizing for weeks on campuses over Zionism's deadly offensive and its US backing, with police forcibly clearing protest camps -- sometimes violently -- and arresting more than 2,000 people nationwide.

"If students in tents posted on the lawn / Occupying the quad is really against the law / And a reason to call in the police and their squad / Where does genocide land in your definition, huh?" Macklemore raps in "Hind's Hall."

The song is named after the building at Columbia University that students recently occupied and renamed after Hind Rajab, a six-year-old Palestinian girl killed in Gaza. Macklemore admonishes the US government, telling President Joe Biden "blood is on your hands" and that he won't vote for him in the November election. (The Zionist entity) is "a state that's gotta rely on an apartheid system to uphold an occupying violent history, been repeating for the last 75" years, Macklemore says in the song.

"We see the lies in them, claiming it's anti-Semitic to be anti-Zionist / I've seen Jewish brothers and sisters out there and riding in solidarity and screaming 'Free Palestine' with them." The rapper best known for cult hits like 2012's "Thrift Shop" has released socially aware music in the past, criticizing ills including poverty and consumerism. —AFP



US rapper Benjamin Hammond Haggerty, aka Macklemore, performs during the Colours of Ostrava music festival in Ostrava, Czech Republic, on July 20, 2023. —AFP

## Turkey therapy dogs join Istanbul Airport staff

Six-year-old Kuki and one-and-a-half-year old Alita recently joined the staff of Istanbul Airport, one of the busiest in the world, with a mission to provide solace for stressed travellers.

At international departures just before passport control, the two dogs welcome passengers, some who are in a hurry, some feeling the tug of anxiety and some hanging around to say goodbye to loved ones.

Ali Bahtiyari, who was travelling outside his native Iran for the first time, was amazed as soon as he saw Kuki -- a playful, dark brown Lagotto Romagnolo breed with thick curly fur, and Alita -- a black and white Border Collie with expressive eyes.

"I've been in Istanbul for three to four days. I walked a lot. I was physically exhausted. But seeing these dogs here produced too much endorphin. I'm not tired at all," the 31-year-old said, petting the two dogs before catching his flight back to Tehran. "It's a really good scene and it's really nice to pet these dogs. I'm so happy that they are here."

The two dogs -- part of five-member team -- and their handlers have for

past two months been roaming certain spots, mingling with passengers awaiting flights at the mega airport, a global hub that served more than 76 million passengers last year.

"We implemented the therapy dog project to provide our guests with a better flight experience and to reduce any flight stress," Volkan Arslan, a vet who is coordinating the project, told AFP.

## Weekly schedules

Five dogs including Kuki and Alita went through serious training, roaming domestic and international terminals. Two more dogs will join them once done with their tutoring.

The dogs are the only canines permanently stationed at the airport, which only uses sniffer dogs when police are summoned by customs agents. They have been working for five days on rotation for a maximum three hours a day.

Their schedules depend on their breed. "A Border Collie, Alita is very energetic, loves spending time with our guests, so we keep her schedule a little longer," Arslan said. "Kuki on the other hand wants to rest and is unwilling to

put in too much effort, so we keep his schedule shorter."

Kuki's trainer, Ismail Seyhan, said schedules also change according to the dogs' health and psychology. "The one who works today rests the next day," he said. While walking to the passport control in a rush, Fatima Bouzerda swiftly changes her direction having established an eye contact with Kuki, finding it hard to disguise her surprise. "It's the first time I see something like that. I heard about cat cafes, but like this in airports, I've never seen that," she said while playing with Kuki.

Bouzerda, who lives in Paris, said in large airports like Istanbul travel could sometimes be stressful. "So when we see something like this, it's so cute and it makes us less stressed," she said.

## 'Motivates us'

Abdulkadir Demirtas, customer experience manager at Istanbul Airport, said the feedback from the guests were all positive. "What pleases me the most is that children and families who are hesitant to approach the dog at first can interact with them within seconds," he

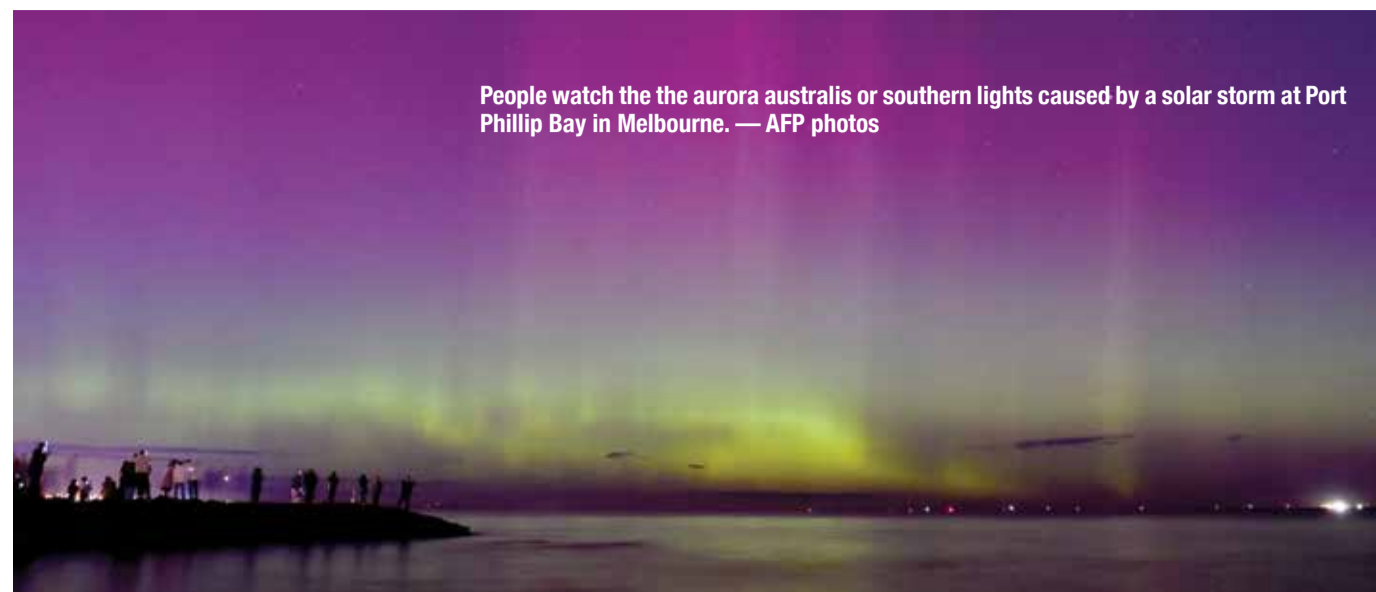
said. "This is actually the moment that makes us very happy and is exactly what we want to see." Alita's trainer Volkan Gul shared an anecdote from one of the moments at the airport.

"One day we saw a passenger crying and then make eye contact with the dog, and I told her she can pet her. She was still in tears but after a while, she touched her and while leaving, she had a smile," he said.

Dozens of airports in the United States have therapy dog programmes -- a concept that originated after 9/11 attacks with the goal of providing comfort and relief for passengers dealing with anxieties of air travel. Apart from airports, therapy or service dogs are also trained to interact with people in hospitals, libraries and schools. Arslan said the new colleagues were already making difference at the bustling airport.

"That really motivates us. We have guests who not only have flight stress but also dog phobia. They take the first step in overcoming these phobia with us," he said. —AFP





People watch the the aurora australis or southern lights caused by a solar storm at Port Phillip Bay in Melbourne. — AFP photos



A geomagnetic storm lights up the night sky above the Bonneville Salt Flats in Wendover, Utah.



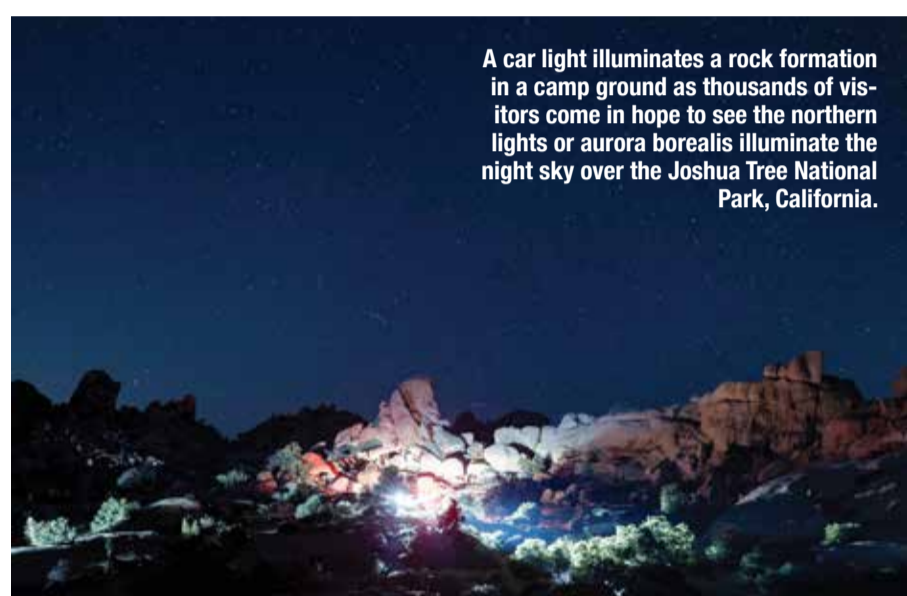
Star gazers wait in hope to catch a glimpse of the northern lights or aurora borealis over the Joshua Tree National Park, California.

## SECOND NIGHT OF AURORAS SEEN AMID 'EXTREME' SOLAR STORM

Auroras lit up skies across swaths of the planet for the second night in a row on Saturday, after already dazzling Earthlings from the United States to Tasmania to the Bahamas the day before. A powerful solar storm - which could continue into Sunday - has triggered spectacular celestial shows usually confined to the far northern reaches of the planet, hence their nickname of the "northern lights." "I have the sensation of living through a historic night in France... It was really charged, with solar particles and emotions," Eric Lagadec, an astrophysicist at the Observatoire de Cote d'Azur, wrote on social media after the first night. "Find good spots, away from the lights, with a clear view to the north!"

Late Saturday evening, pictures again started trickling onto social media as people in the United States reported sightings, though not as strong as Friday night's. The first of several coronal mass ejections (CMEs) - expulsions of plasma and magnetic fields from the Sun - came just after 1600 GMT Friday, according to the US-based National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC).

It was later upgraded to an "extreme" geomagnetic storm - the first since the "Halloween Storms" of October 2003 that caused blackouts in Sweden and damaged power infrastructure in South Africa. Friday's storm was listed as hitting level five geomagnetic conditions - the highest on the scale. Saturday saw G3 to G5 conditions, with G4 or higher conditions predicted Sunday and G3 conditions possible into Monday. But



A car light illuminates a rock formation in a camp ground as thousands of visitors come in hope to see the northern lights or aurora borealis illuminate the night sky over the Joshua Tree National Park, California.

no major disruptions to power or communications networks appear to have been reported this time around, despite initial worries from authorities.

There have only been "preliminary reports of power grid irregularities, degradation to high-frequency communications, GPS and possibly satellite navigation," the SWPC said. Elon Musk, whose Starlink satellite Internet operator has some 5,000 satellites in low Earth orbit, said his satellites were "under a lot of pressure, but holding up so far." However, China's National Center for Space Weather issued a "red alert" Saturday morning, warning the storm will impact communications and navigation in most areas of the country, state news agency Xinhua reported. Auroras were visible in the

northern half of the country, according to media reports.

### Worldwide excitement

Excitement over the phenomenon - and otherworldly photos pink, green and purple night skies - popped up across the world, from Mont Saint-Michel on the French coast to Payette, Idaho - in the western United States - to Australia's island state of Tasmania. Unlike solar flares, which travel at the speed of light and reach Earth in around eight minutes, CMEs travel at a more sedate pace, with officials putting the current average at 800 kilometers (500 miles) per second.

The CMEs emanated from a massive sunspot cluster that is 17 times wider than our planet. People with eclipse

glasses can also look for the sunspot cluster during the day. The Sun is approaching the peak of an 11-year cycle that brings heightened activity. NOAA's Brent Gordon encouraged the public to try to capture the night sky with phone cameras even if they couldn't see auroras with their naked eyes. "You'd be amazed at what you see in that picture versus what you see with your eyes."

### Spacecraft and pigeons

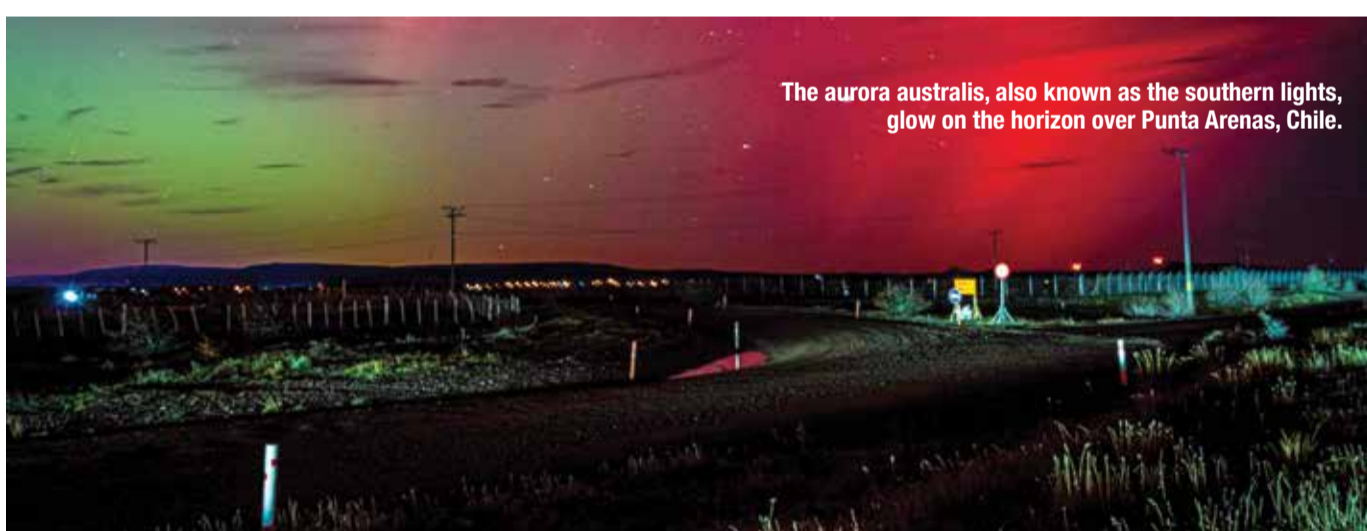
Fluctuating magnetic fields associated with geomagnetic storms induce currents in long wires, including power lines, which can potentially lead to blackouts. Long pipelines can also become electrified, leading to engineering problems. Spacecraft are also at risk from high doses of radiation, although

the atmosphere prevents this from reaching Earth.

NASA has a dedicated team looking into astronaut safety and can ask astronauts on the International Space Station to move to places within the outpost that are better shielded. Even pigeons and other species that have internal biological compasses could be affected. Pigeon handlers have noted a reduction in birds coming home during geomagnetic storms, according to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The most powerful geomagnetic storm in recorded history, known as the Carrington Event after British astronomer Richard Carrington, occurred in September 1859. — AFP



Women pose for pictures as the aurora australis, also known as the southern lights, glow on the horizon as seen from Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina.



The aurora australis, also known as the southern lights, glow on the horizon over Punta Arenas, Chile.



Aurora australis, also known as the southern lights, glow on the horizon over Punta Arenas, Chile.



People pose for photos as a geomagnetic storm lights up the night sky above the Bonneville Salt Flats.



Northern lights or aurora borealis illuminate the night sky in the Novosibirsk region.

## Legendary B-movie producer Roger Corman dies

American B-movie director and producer Roger Corman, best known for churning out hundreds of low-budget films and giving some of Hollywood's biggest stars their early breaks, has died at the age of 98, US media reported on Saturday. Corman earned a reputation for cultivating Tinseltown's young talent, helping jumpstart the careers of Martin Scorsese, Robert De Niro and Francis Ford Coppola, as well as casting Jack Nicholson in his debut role.

Corman died at his home in Santa Monica, California on Thursday, his family told industry publication Variety. "His films were revolutionary and icon-

oclastic, and captured the spirit of an age," the family said in a statement. "When asked how he would like to be remembered, he said, 'I was a filmmaker, just that.'" Corman specialized in low-budget productions, which often became cult classics, including "The Little Shop of Horrors" and a series of Edgar Allan Poe adaptations starring Vincent Price. "Roger Corman was my very first boss, my lifetime mentor and my hero," Terminator producer Gale Anne Hurd posted on social media platform X, calling him, "one of the greatest visionaries in the history of cinema."

Director Ron Howard said Corman gave him his first chance at the job

when he was just 23 years old. "He launched many careers & quietly lead our industry in important ways," Howard wrote on X. "Grateful to have known him." Corman received an honorary Academy Award in 2009. "His legendary ability to stretch a dollar allowed him to swiftly conceive and create period films and sci-fi epics on budgets that wouldn't cover the food costs on a modern studio shoot," according to his biography on the Oscars website.

"Through ingenuity, boundless energy and a deep love of movies, Roger Corman has made more of them than just about anyone," it added. Corman was born in Detroit in 1926 and got

his Hollywood start as a messenger for Twentieth Century-Fox before becoming a script reader. As a producer and director, he racked up more than 500 credits, according to movie database IMDB, among them "The Fast and the Furious", "Grand Theft Auto" and "The Cry Baby Killer", Nicholson's big screen debut. — AFP

Roger Corman attends 'An Evening With Roger Corman' hosted by The Academy Of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences & Metrograph, at Metrograph on May 3, 2018 in New York City. - AFP





## Sports

# Raza 72 not out guides Zimbabwe to consolation win over Bangladesh

## Zimbabwe disappointed with the series defeat

DHAKA: Sikandar Raza and Brian Bennett hit half-centuries as Zimbabwe secured an eight-wicket consolation victory over Bangladesh in the final Twenty20 international in Dhaka on Sunday to avoid a 5-0 whitewash. Captain Raza hit an unbeaten 72 off 46 to guide Zimbabwe to 158-2 after they restricted Bangladesh, who won the first four matches of the series, to 157-6.

Bennett struck 70 off 49 balls after picking up 2-20 with the ball at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. Zimbabwe lost opener Tadiwanashe Marumani for one, but Bennett and Raza added 75 runs for the second wicket to put the visitors firmly in control.

Mohammad Saifuddin dismissed Bennett, who struck five fours and as many sixes, but Raza defied a muscle injury to see Zimbabwe to victory.

He struck six fours and four sixes in his unbeaten knock before Johnathan Campbell hit the winning single with nine balls to spare.

Zimbabwe were "obviously very disappointed" with the series defeat, Bennett said after the match. "It took us four or five games to win.

"Credit to our bowlers, they have done very well," he said. "It's just the batting, especially in the powerplay. We know what we can do. So, hopefully we can take the momentum forward."

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto was happy with their performance in the series ahead

of the T20 World Cup, despite the crushing defeat in the final match. "It's been a very good series," he said. "Winning the series definitely increases confidence.

"The satisfaction is that the experiments that we did, the things that we needed to see, that worked as we won a few close matches." Earlier, Mahmudullah Riyad hit 54 off 44 balls for Bangladesh.

The right-hander, who struck six fours and a six, put on 69 runs with Najmul to help Bangladesh recover from 15-3 after they were asked to bat.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan added 21 off 17 balls after Najmul's departure for 36 runs after facing 28 balls. The hosts were in trouble when Blessing Muzarabani removed opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim for two and Bennett struck twice in successive overs.

Bennett had opener Soumya Sarkar caught by Sean Williams at backward point for seven before he forced Towhid Hridoy to edge behind for one.

Mahmudullah launched a counter-attack, cracking three fours off the first four balls he faced.

Wellington Masakadza dismissed Najmul to break the partnership but Shakib's brief cameo kept the scoreboard ticking over. Luke Jongwe brought a premature end to Shakib's innings, but Jaker Ali Anik hit an unbeaten 24 off 11 balls. Muzarabani took 2-22 for Zimbabwe. — AFP



DHAKA: Bangladesh's players pose for a photo following the awards ceremony after end of the fifth Twenty20 international cricket match between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka on May 12, 2024. — AFP

## Lomachenko knocks out Kambosos to win IBF lightweight crown

PERTH: Ukrainian boxing great Vasiliy Lomachenko clinched the IBF lightweight world title on Sunday after producing a supreme performance to stop Australia's George Kambosos in the 11th round in Perth.

In the main event at a sold-out 15,000 RAC Arena, heavy favourite Lomachenko defied the rowdy home crowd and dominated throughout. Lomachenko left the Australian bloodied and sealed the 135-pound belt in the 11th round after dropping Kambosos several times before the fight was stopped by the referee.

It was the first IBF lightweight belt in the glittering career of former WBA and WBC lightweight champion Lomachenko, who has also won world titles featherweight and super featherweight. He is also a two-time Olympic gold medalist.

"I'm again world champion. I want to come back home and spend time with my family," said 36-year-old Lomachenko, who remained coy on his future. Kambosos, a former champion, was unable to reproduce the form from his famous upset of Teofimo Lopez in 2021 at Madison Square Garden.

His pre-fight taunts of sending the 36-year-old Lomachenko into retirement fell flat. "He's one of the best of all time. We tried our best, but he's a true champion," said Kambosos, who was defeated for the third time in 24 fights. "I gave it my all. I gave it everything in my training camp."

Both fighters had a point to prove after losing to American Devin Haney in recent years. Kambosos, who made his ring walk to the Eminem song 'Till I Collapse', needed to rely on his formidable striking and size advantage.

He came out aggressively and attacked the body of Lomachenko, who is sometimes an unusually slow starter. Lomachenko got back into the contest through trademark lightning foot speed and counter-punching. The brash Kambosos was unruffled and taunted Lomachenko after trading a flurry of heavy blows to end the third round.

### Undercard controversy

The partisan crowd was right behind the Australian, but southpaw Lomachenko stepped up the intensity in the middle rounds and landed several stinging left-handed jabs that rattled his opponent. Lomachenko strengthened his grip on the fight in the latter rounds, with several hard left-handed blows leaving Kambosos with blood flowing from his right eye.

Lomachenko thought he had knocked Kambosos down in the 11th, though it was ruled a slip, but then a vicious body shot did drop the Australian for an eight count. Several more ferocious blows prompted the referee to stop the fight after Kambosos sank to his knee in his own corner, moments before the towel came in from Kambosos's trainer.

The showdown had been a long time coming, with plans falling through in 2019 before a fight three years later was scuppered when Lomachenko returned home to his family because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In the two world title fights on the undercard, Mexican Pedro Guevara beat Australia's Andrew Moloney with a contentious split decision to claim the interim WBC super flyweight belt. An aggrieved Moloney, a former champion who battled through a torn bicep, announced his retirement immediately after the fight.

"I'm done with this sport. That's the last you'll see of me," the 33-year-old said. Australian Cherneka Johnson stripped England's Nina Hughes of her women's WBA bantamweight belt after winning the 10-round battle in a majority decision. — AFP

## Kolkata book IPL play-off berth

KOLKATA: Spinner Varun Chakravarthy returned bowling figures of 2-17 as Kolkata Knight Riders became the first team to qualify for the IPL play-offs with an 18-run win over Mumbai Indians on Saturday, with skipper Shreyas Iyer hailing his side's "many game-changers".

Two-time champions Kolkata posted 157-7 as Venkatesh Iyer top-scored with 42 off 21 balls after being invited to bat first at their home Eden Gardens in a rain-shortened 16-overs-a-side match. Bowlers combined to defend the total after Mumbai raced to 65-0 and Chakravarthy, a mystery spinner who was named player of the match, got the big wickets of Rohit Sharma, who made 19 after coming in as impact substitute, and skipper Hardik Pandya, who was caught out for two.

Five-time winners Mumbai, who are already out of the play-off race, finished on 139-8 as Tilak Varma hit a 17-ball 32 before he fell to fast bowler Harshit Rana, who took two wickets in the last over. Pace bowler Andre Russell also took two wickets, including that of Suryakumar Yadav, as table-toppers Kolkata got their ninth win in 12 matches to become the first team to book a play-off berth.

"I manifested before the game that we'd get through," Kolkata skipper Shreyas said. "We were playing fantastic cricket, boys have taken responsibility. There have been many game-changers. The boys have shown great attitude and it was on display today. We have a mindset to win from any situation."

Kolkata are almost certain of a top-two finish. The top four teams will make the play-offs, but teams number one and two will have the advan-



KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders' Andre Russell plays a shot during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. — AFP

tage of getting an extra match to enter the final on May 26 in Chennai.

Mumbai suffered their ninth loss in 13 matches and Pandya said: "Just want to go and enjoy, play good cricket. That's been the motto from the start but we haven't played enough good cricket." Kolkata lost openers Phil Salt, out for six, and Sunil Narine, bowled for a duck off Jasprit Bumrah, in the first two overs and Shreyas soon fell for seven.

But Venkatesh, a left-hand batsman, made Kolkata hit back with six fours and two sixes and he set the pace that was picked up by Nitish Rana and Russell in a key stand of 39. Rana, a left-hand batter, hit 33 and Russell smashed 24 off 14 before Rinku Singh, who hit 20, and Ramandeep Singh, unbeaten 17, helped Kolkata finish on a high. Bumrah and veteran leg-spinner Piyush Chawla took two wickets each. — AFP



KATHMANDU: (FILES) In this photograph taken on January 19, 2021, Nepal's mountaineer Kami Rita Sherpa poses along with his certificates in his rented room at Boudhanath Stupa area on the outskirts of Kathmandu. — AFP

## Nepal's 'Everest Man' claims record 29th summit

KATHMANDU: Nepali climber Kami Rita Sherpa reached the top of Mount Everest for the 29th time Sunday, breaking his own record for the most summits of the world's highest mountain. "Kami Rita reached the summit this morning. Now he has made a new record with 29 summits of Everest," Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks, his expedition organiser, told AFP.

A guide for more than two decades, Sherpa, also known as "Everest Man", first summited the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak in 1994 when working for a commercial expedition. Since then he has climbed Everest almost every year, guiding clients. It was not immediately clear whether he had a client with him on Sunday.

"Back again for the 29th summit to the top of the world... One man's job, another man/woman's dream," Sherpa posted on his Instagram from base camp last week. Last year, Sherpa climbed Everest

twice to reclaim his record as another guide, Pasang Dawa Sherpa, equalled his number of ascents.

Sherpa, 54, has previously said that he has been "just working" and did not plan on setting records. He has also conquered other challenging 8,000-metre peaks including the world's second-highest mountain, K2 in Pakistan. Nepal has issued 414 Everest permits to mountaineers for this year's spring climbing season, which runs from April to early June.

Most Everest hopefuls are escorted by a Nepali guide, meaning more than 800 climbers will tread the path to the top of the world's highest peak in the coming weeks after a group of Nepali climbers opened the route to the summit on Friday.

This year, China also reopened the Tibetan route to foreigners for the first time since closing it in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Nepal is home to eight of the world's 10 highest peaks and welcomes hundreds of adventurers each spring, when temperatures are warm and winds are typically calm.

A climbing boom has made mountaineering a lucrative business since Edmund Hillary and sherpa Tenzing Norgay made the first ascent in 1953. Last year, more than 600 climbers made it to the summit of Everest but it was also the deadliest season on the mountain, with 18 fatalities. — AFP

## Koepka seeks back-to-back wins at PGA

LOUISVILLE: Brooks Koepka used a humbling 45th-place finish at last month's Masters to revive his game and recover top form just in time to defend his title at the 106th PGA Championship. The 34-year-old American seeks his sixth career major crown next week at Valhalla, having won last year at Oak Hill to become the first active LIV Golf player to capture a major.

"I think the big thing that kind of separates me is my ability to lock in and go someplace where I think a lot of guys can't go," Koepka said. With LIV players banned from PGA Tour events, the only place for the best from both tours to compete are the majors, and Koepka was unhappy at how that went last month at Augusta National, where he was a runner-up last year. "I think the embarrassment of Augusta really kicked things into overdrive for me and really having to put my nose down and grind it a little bit harder," Koepka said. Koepka won his first LIV title of the year last week at Singapore in a last PGA Championship tuneup.

"It's nice to see some results and the hard work paying off," Koepka said. "It's all starting to come around. I've put in a lot of work. I like the way things are trending. "Winning always helps, but I still have the same expectations every time I go tee it up and that's to win. Those are my expectations."

Koepka, known for raising his game at major tournaments, won the 2017 and 2018 US Opens, the 2018 and 2019 PGA Championships and last year's PGA Championship. "I've gone back-to-back at the PGA and the US Open. Hopefully looking to do it again," Koepka said. "I don't know if it has ever been done, but it would be kind of a cool thing." Tiger Woods has won back-to-back majors four times -- 1999-2000 and 2006-2007 at the PGA Championship, 2001-2002 at the Masters and 2005-2006 at the British Open. Walter Hagen won back-to-back British Opens in 1928 and 1929 and took a record four consecutive PGA Championships from 1924-1927 when it was a match-play event.

Koepka sees a key to his winning edge on the course is setting up his putts. "Iron play is a huge part of that," he said. "I think I'm a good ball striker. I'm pretty good inside eight feet I feel like. Normally when there's a clutch putt, I feel like I do make it." Koepka downplayed his breakthrough major win for LIV last year, saying, "Yes, it helped LIV Golf, but you've got everybody that tees it up at a major championship ready to go win the thing." — AFP



Sports

# Mainz crush Dortmund to edge to safety, Cologne stun Union Berlin

## Mainz now eight games unbeaten since losing 8-1 to Bayern Munich

**MAINZ:** Mainz hammered a second-string Borussia Dortmund 3-0 on Saturday to haul themselves out of the Bundesliga's bottom three, as Cologne came back to beat Union Berlin in a day of much importance for the relegation battle.

Sitting in the relegation playoff spot at kick-off, Mainz stunned the visitors by racing into a three-goal lead inside just 23 minutes. Leandro Barreiro opened the scoring on 12 minutes, before Lee Jae-sung grabbed two goals in three minutes as the hosts tore into a much-changed Dortmund side.

Mainz, who are now eight games unbeaten since losing 8-1 to Bayern Munich in March, realistically need just a point from their final game of the season at Wolfsburg to secure another season in the German top flight. With Dortmund's Champions League qualification for next season now guaranteed, and a Champions League final against Real Madrid on the horizon, Dortmund coach Edin Terzic rang the changes. Defender Nico Schlotterbeck was the only starter from the team that won in Paris on Tuesday and though Jadon Sancho, Ian Maatsen and Julian Brandt came off the bench at half-time, they could not turn the tide.

Terzic defended the decision to make sweeping changes to Dortmund's XI, insisting his choice of line-up was not unlike the team that beat Augsburg 5-1 last weekend, with three changes from that side. "We set up the team similarly to what we did last week," Terzic told Sky Sport Germany.

"We had a similar formation, only this time we were always inferior in the duels. Mainz punished the mistakes we made in the first half with ice-cold precision. That's why it is a deserved defeat."

Dortmund now sit four points behind fourth-place

RB Leipzig, who drew 1-1 with Werder Bremen earlier on Saturday. But one spot behind Dortmund in sixth, Eintracht Frankfurt are a distance adrift of Terzic's side, and drew 1-1 at Borussia Moenchengladbach in their penultimate match of the season.

At the other end of the table, Mainz's victory leaves Union Berlin, who squandered a 2-0 lead at Cologne earlier in the day to lose 3-2, languishing in the thick of the relegation fight.

### 'Hugely important victory'

Cologne teenager Damion Downs came off the bench to score a 92nd-minute winner, keeping their hopes of a miraculous great escape alive. Union had raced into a 2-0 lead inside 19 minutes with Robin Knoche's thumping header and Kevin Volland's penalty putting the Berliners in complete control.

A Florian Kainz penalty shortly before half-time gave Cologne hope but Union's lead remained intact until the 87th minute, when Cologne staged a stunning turnaround. Steffen Tigges scored from close range to make it 2-2 and, with Union still reeling, 19-year-old substitute Downs converted Linton Maina's cross to raise the roof and give his side an invaluable win.

"We're overjoyed," Cologne captain Kainz told Sky Sport Germany. "It's nerve-wracking to play like that, when you absolutely have to win the game. To turn it around, it was a hugely important victory. Unbelievable."

But Mainz's victory means the best Cologne can hope for on the final day is to secure a relegation play-off place at Union's expense. Union, who started the season in the Champions League but are now on a miserable run of two points from their last seven



**MAINZ:** Dortmund's German midfielder #08 Felix Nmecha (R) and Mainz' Albanian forward #43 Brajan Gruda vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Mainz 05 and BVB Borussia Dortmund in Mainz, western Germany. —AFP

games, face a tricky season finale against Freiburg—who remained in the last European spot after drawing 1-1 against Heidenheim on Saturday.

Cologne travel to Heidenheim on the last day needing to muster another victory and hope that Freiburg win in Berlin. Goal difference and goals scored would also come into play in this scenario, with Cologne

needing a four-goal swing to finish above Union. One of Germany's 'yo-yo clubs', Cologne are looking to avoid a record seventh relegation since their first in 1998. Bochum, who host champions Bayer Leverkusen on Sunday and travel to Werder Bremen on the final day, need a point from one of those games to ensure their Bundesliga survival.—AFP

## Fahaheel table tennis team win first place

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Fahaheel Club Table Tennis Team won the general excellence up by collecting 27 points in first place, Kuwait was second with 23 points while Al-Sahel was third, while Salwa Club was in first place for the women category, at the end of the 2023-2024 table tennis season.

The closing celebration was held at Kuwait Table Tennis Federation premises in Ardhiya in the presence of Chairwoman of Salwa Club Sheikhha Naeema, Chairman of TTF Eng Falhan Al-Otaibi, Deputy Chairman Dr Saud Al-Sarbal, Treasurer Anwar Al-Kandary, board members Jawad Al-Ghareeb and Eid Al-Owaihian.

The closing ceremony included the final singles match for men as Mohammad Hamiya defeated Salem Al-Hassan 3-1, while third place went to Abdullah Al-Bahrani who defeated Jaber Al-Balhan 3-0.

Sheikha Naeema Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah lauded the effort of KTTF adding "we were pleased with the advanced levels seen in table tennis and we are



**KUWAIT:** Sheikha Naeema Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with officials and players.

proud of the outstanding efforts of KTTF board and hope it continues in the future".

Falhan Al-Otaibi said the completed season was the most successful in the past 15 years adding "we now have our own hall with international standards,

and an integrated plan is prepared for all local and foreign tournaments".

He said the season was of first and second leagues, and 16 teams were divided into two levels and competitions were great in most matches.

## Madrid rout relegated Granada

**BARCELONA:** Spanish champions Real Madrid romped to a 4-0 victory over relegated Granada to get their title celebrations started on Saturday. Carlo Ancelotti's side will parade the league trophy on Sunday in the Spanish capital and a side filled with reserves made light work of the downtrodden Andalusians.

Brahim Diaz struck twice with Fran Garcia and Arda Guler also on target for Madrid, who defeated Bayern Munich in midweek to reach the Champions League final. Los Blancos secured their 36th Spanish title last weekend with four games to spare, but chose not to celebrate to focus on the Bayern clash.

A late brace from substitute Joselu



**GRANADA:** Real Madrid's Spanish forward #14 Joselu (L) vies with Granada's Polish defender #22 Kamil Piatkowski during the Spanish League football match between Granada FC and Real Madrid CF at Nuevo Los Carmenes stadium in Granada. —AFP

settled that match in dramatic fashion and the Spaniard started up front against Granada, with only Antonio

Rudiger selected from the side that beat the German giants. "The objective is to arrive with the squad all at their

best for the day of the final, and we will do it," said Ancelotti.

After Paris Saint-Germain striker Kylian Mbappe confirmed Friday he was leaving the French side, many Madrid fans are also thinking about his closely rumoured arrival. However, Madrid coach Ancelotti only has the Champions League final in London in mind.

"It's not a topic I'm thinking about at the moment," added Ancelotti. "We have to celebrate tomorrow with our fans and until June 1 we know exactly what we have to think about." Granada, 19th, were relegated before kick-off after Mallorca beat Las Palmas to ensure the Andalusians could not escape the drop zone. Their players gave Real Madrid a guard of honour and Los Blancos went on to demonstrate the focus that drove them on to the title, even with nothing on the line now. Victory sent them 15 points clear of second-placed Girona. —AFP

## Edwards in tears with Luton on brink of relegation

**LONDON:** Luton manager Rob Edwards broke down in tears after a 3-1 defeat at West Ham all but confirmed their relegation from the Premier League on Saturday. Edwards' side still have a mathematical chance of avoiding the drop after fourth-bottom Nottingham Forest's 3-2 defeat against Chelsea just hours after the emotional scenes at the London Stadium.

But the third-bottom Hatters were already coming to terms with their likely return to the Championship due to a vastly inferior goal difference. It would take a 12-goal swing in Luton's favour on the last day of the season next weekend to save them.

Luton host Fulham, while Forest travel to Burnley, in what is set to be the last game in the top flight for at least a season for Edwards' underdogs. Accepting the grim reality of their situation, Edwards hugged Luton captain Tom Lockyer in front of their travelling fans as the tears began to flow.

Wales defender Lockyer, who has not played since collapsing on the pitch at Bournemouth after suffering a cardiac arrest in December, was at Edwards' side when the final whistle blew. "It was really difficult, hugging Locks at the end and seeing how the supporters reacted made me emotional," Edwards said.

"What I said to our players and staff in the dressing room afterwards was 'thank you'. They, along with our fans and the board, have given me the best 18 months of my life. "I'm really disappointed that I'm the one responsible, I feel that way."

Luton's fate would already have been sealed if Forest had held on to a 2-1 lead against Chelsea at the City Ground. Late goals from Raheem Sterling and Nicolas Jackson gave Chelsea the points, putting Forest's survival celebrations on ice.

Earlier in the day, Albert Sambi Lokonga headed Luton into an early lead before second-half goals from James Ward-Prowse, Tomas Soucek and George Eardly left the visitors to rue their missed opportunity. "We've thrown everything at it but just come up short," said Edwards, whose club are in the top tier for the first time since 1991-92.

"It was difficult for us and in the end has just been a bit too much for us. But I've loved it and it fuels the fire to get back into it." There were emotions of a different kind for David Moyes, who waved farewell after his final home match in charge of West Ham. — AFP

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

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

Qibla	22459381
Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmyia	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, Irfan Ahmad Abdul Latif Jamadar** - India holder of Indian Passport No. T6759433 having permanent address 16/23 Worli B.D.D. Chawl, Mumbai - 400018, Maharashtra, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Irfan Ahmed Abdul Latif (surname) Jamadar. (#5607 10/5/2024)

14/40 Raghavendra Nagar, 2nd street Near Baba Temple, Tirupati Urban PC 517501 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare henceforth my name will be read as Given Name: Emanuel Prem Sagar and Surname: Sangamalla. (#5606 13/5/2024)

**I, SANGAMALLA EMANUEL PREM SAGAR**, holder of Indian Passport No: U0196158 having permanent address 19-

I, **Amandeep Kaur Hari** W/O Balwinder Singh, R/O Village Bassian, Tehsil Rajkot, Dist. Ludhiana have changed my name to Amandeep Kaur Kaila. (#5608 13/5/2024)

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## Star duos lead Celtics, Mavs

### Irving, Doncic lead Mavericks over Thunder



CLEVELAND: Caris LeVert #3 of the Cleveland Cavaliers drives to the basket against Jayson Tatum #0 of the Boston Celtics during the third quarter in Game Three of the Eastern Conference Second Round Playoffs at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

LOS ANGELES: Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown combined to score 61 points to fire the Boston Celtics to a bounce-back NBA playoff win over Cleveland on Saturday as Kyrie Irving and Luka Doncic led Dallas over Oklahoma City. Tatum scored 33 points and Brown 28 as top seeds Boston, stunned by the Cavaliers on their home court in game two, beat the Cavs 106-93 in Cleveland to take a 2-1 lead in their best-of-seven Eastern Conference semi-final.

For Dallas, Irving scored 14 of his 22 points in the second half and Doncic scored 22 points and grabbed 15 rebounds as the Mavericks rallied for a 105-101 victory that put them up 2-1 against Western Conference top seeds Oklahoma City. The Celtics emerged from a nip-and-tuck first quarter with a two-point lead and never trailed again.

"We just wanted to bounce back," Tatum said after they pushed their advantage to 23 points by opening the third quarter on a 14-0 scoring run. "Essentially our back was against the wall, so it was a good test for us to see how we respond," Tatum said. "We were up for the challenge."

Donovan Mitchell scored 33 points for the Cavaliers, but appeared to tweak his troublesome left knee in the fourth quarter. Cleveland halted Boston's third-quarter spurt with a 9-0 run of their own. But the Celtics had an answer for every Cleveland surge and the Cavs could not get any closer than nine points behind in the final period. In Dallas, the Mavericks dug deep in the face of another bruising defensive effort from the Thunder. Irving's second-half star turn included a floater that pushed the Dallas lead to five points with 39.3 seconds remaining.

#### Irving 'doing it all'

Slovenian star Doncic took another pounding, including a hard fall flat on his back after a mid-air collision with Luguentz Dort, and said he tweaked his sprained right knee as the game ended. "We got the win, that's all that matters," said Doncic, who when asked what was hurting the most - his knee, his back or his sore ankle - said "everything."

"I think I'm battling," he said. A day without travel before the Mavs host game four on Monday was

welcome, he added. P.J. Washington led the Mavs with 27 points and Dereck Lively added 12 off the bench to help Dallas withstand a 31-point performance from Thunder star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander.

Both teams struggled to get their offenses firing in the first quarter, which ended with Dallas up by three. Oklahoma City connected on 60 percent of their shots in the second quarter to take a 52-51 half-time lead and pushed their advantage to 65-55 with an 11-0 scoring burst in the third.

The Mavs responded with a 16-0 run that featured a huge dunk by Washington and was capped by his three-pointer that pushed their lead to 71-65. The run energized the American Airlines Center crowd, but Oklahoma City quickly cut the lead to one before the Mavs responded again.

Irving connected on a pair of three-pointers and fed Daniel Gafford for a dunk before Tim Hardaway Jr. closed the third quarter with a three-pointer that put Dallas up 82-78. Irving, who handed out seven assists as he focused early on getting his teammates involved, said one Dallas coach told him he'd left it a bit late to make a scoring push. — AFP

## Kuwait wins gold medal in Gulf badminton event

ABU DHABI: Kuwait's Sheikha Al-Hindi (girls' singles) in the Gulf badminton tournament as part of the Special Olympics UAE, held in Abu Dhabi.

Al-Hindi did a great job and showed strong determination during competitions with two players from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Speaking to KUNA following her victory, the Kuwaiti athlete said that she was so happy to make this achievement as a big incentive for her to keep training and developing her sports skills. However, she emphasized that she would do her utmost to achieve more sports victories in the future, speaking highly of the efforts of executives and coaches. The Special Olympics UAE kicked off in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, aiming at uniting athletes and partners across the Gulf and encouraging camaraderie and sportsmanship. Delegations from Special Olympics programs in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE are partaking in the event. — KUNA



Kuwait Olympic Committee's board members Ali Al-Marri and Fatima Hayat.

## OCA: Headquarters in Kuwait plays 'important' role

KUALA LAMPUR: The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) stressed the important role played by its headquarters in Kuwait as it gave it stability and a launch pad for further progress.

This came during the 43rd General Assembly of the OCA, held in Bangkok on Saturday with the participation of Kuwait Olympic Committee's board members Ali Al-Marri and Fatima Hayat.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Marri said that the council voted to keep the headquarters in Kuwait, praising Kuwait's efforts, for the past 42 years, in the development of the Asian Olympics. OCA expressed their appreciation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for keeping the headquarters' location in Kuwait.

Al-Marri also said that 46 Asian countries participated in the council's meeting, held in Bangkok, where they discussed various topics, adding that the council voted on changing almost 70 percent of their constitution. — KUNA

## Martin wins French MotoGP

LE MANS: Jorge Martin landed his "perfect weekend" and extended his lead in the championship with a thrilling victory in the French MotoGP at Le Mans on Sunday. The Spaniard, who won Saturday's sprint, battled the entire race with rival Francesco Bagnaia before Marc Marquez, starting from 13th spot on the grid, arrived late to steal second place.

Pramac Ducati rider Martin heads the standings with 129 points, 38 ahead of Bagnaia who moved into second spot. Marquez is third a further two points back. "There's not a lot I can say today," said Martin.

"I had a lot of doubts at the beginning of the race but finally I demonstrated to myself and all the people that need something else to prove that I was the best today. "So, (I am) really happy. Thanks to my team because after some crashes they repaired the bike. The bike was perfect."

"Making one, one (two firsts) here in Le Mans I think was the best and perfect weekend," Martin, a winner already this season in Portugal, did not make the best of starts from pole position, losing first place to Bagnaia on the opening lap.

The two were then locked wheel to wheel for the remainder of the race. Bagnaia, on his factory Ducati, fought off several attacks from Martin before he finally slipped through seven laps from the end. Bagnaia tried hard to reclaim the lead but found himself under pressure from Marquez, the six-time champion, who was eyeing victory in France following a superb ride in Spain when he came second behind Bagnaia.

Plagued by injuries and then vision issues in the past few years some feared his best days were behind him. Marquez, however, picked up pace even as the tyres on his Gresini Ducati began to wear and picked off Bagnaia on the final lap to snatch an-



LE MANS: Race winner Prima Pramac Racing's Spanish rider Jorge Martin hold his trophy as he celebrates on the podium of the French MotoGP Grand Prix race at the Bugatti circuit in Le Mans, north-western France, on May 12, 2024. — AFP

other valuable second which lifts him to third in the standings. "The most impressive thing is that when I was alone the pace was there and I was catching the top guys," Marquez said. "In the end I tried for five laps to overtake Peco (Bagnaia) but he was braking super late."

"On that last lap I said 'OK, I try' and it was a good overtake. This time I was able to defend the line and defend well the last sector. "We keep learning things on this bike and today we were fast." It was ultimately a disappointing day for defending two-time champion Bagnaia who might easily have won but had to settle for the bottom step on the podium.

"I tried everything... but these two in the last laps had something more," he said. "Let's move on to the next one. I'm sure that for the future we can better." Bagnaia's next opportunity will come on May 26 at the Catalan MotoGP in Barcelona. — AFP

## Djokovic suffers shock third-round exit at Rome Open

ROME: Novak Djokovic was knocked out of the Rome Open in the third round on Sunday by Alejandro Tabilo in a stunning 6-2, 6-3 defeat for the 24-time Grand Slam champion. Djokovic's bid for a record-extending 41st Masters 1000 title was ended in just over an hour by Chilean Tabilo, who is ranked 32nd in the world but was hugely impressive and claimed his first win over a top-10 opponent.

The 36-year-old was eliminated two days after being accidentally being struck on the head by a bottle following his straightforward second-round win over Corentin Moutet. And his subdued performance on a court where he has won six titles suggested he may have still been suffering from that blow, even if he laughed it off by wearing a cycling crash helmet to practice on Saturday.

Djokovic's early elimination is a blow for the last major tournament before Roland Garros later this month, which started without Italian world number two Jannik Sinner and third-ranked Carlos Alcaraz. Home fans have also been deprived of cheering on former Wimbledon finalist Matteo Berrettini and Lorenzo Musetti, while Djokovic's great clay-court rival Nadal, a big crowd favorite, was dumped out in the second round on Saturday by seventh seed Hubert Hurkacz. — AFP