

**RIDESAFE**  
RIDE SAFE  
@ridesafe.app

**BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW**

DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

**NOTICE**  
Eid Mubarak to all our readers! Kuwait Times will not publish its print edition from June 16-19, 2024. Readers can stay informed with breaking news and information via KuwaitTimes.com and our digital media channels on Instagram, X, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn and Threads.

**4** Sheep prices jump on eve of Eid Al-Adha

**5** Pilgrims swelter as climate change looms over hajj

**16** Dawri Zain celebrates season's top athletes

# Amir orders cash payments for families of Mangaf fire victims

46 Indians, 3 Filipinos among 50 dead • Three detained over deadly blaze



(From left) Deputy Prime Minister and Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan inspect building violations. (Center) Deputy Prime Minister and Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad meets Indian Union Minister of State for External Affairs, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh. (Right) Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi visit an injured person at Adan Hospital. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and KUNA

## Fire caused by short circuit • Landlords warned to remove discarded items

**Kerala in shock as fire stubs out lives and dreams**

**PATHANAMTHITTA, India:** Veena George, Kerala's Minister for Health and Woman and Child Development, consoles the mother of Akash Sasidharan Nair, one of the victims of a fire that broke out in Kuwait, on June 13, 2024. — Reuters

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah ordered cash handouts for the families of the victims of a Mangaf building fire that killed 50 foreign workers and plunged relatives and friends into mourning. Forty-six of those who died in the fire were identified as Indian nationals. Three other deceased are Filipinos and the identity of one of the victims has not been established. "One of the injured died" overnight, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya told reporters, after 49 people were declared dead on Wednesday.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah said the bodies of the victims will be transferred back to their homelands onboard Kuwaiti military airplanes. The prosecution on Thursday ordered the detention of a Kuwaiti citizen and two expats after interrogating them on manslaughter and wrongful injury charges, the prosecution said in an official statement. Prosecution officials late Wednesday visited the injured people at various hospitals, the statement said.

The fire began at 4:00 am resulting in huge clouds

of black smoke that suffocated most of the victims. The investigation team of the fire department announced on Thursday that the fire was caused by an electric short circuit in the room of the building guard and spread to other places. The guard's room is located on the ground floor. According to security sources, there were 179 workers inside the building when the fire broke out, while 17 were outside. Of the 196 residents, 175 are Indians, 11 Filipinos and the rest from Thailand, Pakistan and Egypt.

Indian Union Minister of State for External Affairs, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh arrived in Kuwait on Thursday and met the ministers of interior and foreign affairs. Singh also visited Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Jaber Hospitals and met 13 injured Indians receiving treatment there, according to a statement by the Indian Embassy in Kuwait. He assured them of the government of India's assistance. "Some of the bodies have been charred beyond recognition, so DNA tests (are) underway to identify the victims," he told Indian media.

Sheikh Fahad said the Indian minister is due to repatriate the remains of Indian victims aboard his

**Continued on Page 6**

**Interior Ministry extends amnesty until June 30**

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry announced extending the amnesty for expats in violation of residency laws until June 30, 2024. The decision is based on instructions of Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, who gave orders to extend the deadline given the fact that a large number of people were looking to avail the amnesty ahead of the Eid Al-Adha holiday. The amnesty was originally set to expire on June 17. It allows expats in violation of the residency law to legalize their status in Kuwait or leave the country without paying fines or being blacklisted.

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Lukose, 48, bought a gift for her daughter on her meritorious victory in her 12th grade examination and wanted to present it to her when he would go home next month. But fate decided otherwise and he was one of the 50 victims who lost their lives in the deadly fire that engulfed a building in Mangaf on Tuesday.

Lukose alias Sabu, who hailed from the Kollam district of Kerala state of India and had been working in Kuwait for the last 18 years was the sole breadwinner of his family and the lone supporter of his aged parents. His motionless body was found at the foot of the staircase of the ill-fated building.

Reji Varghese said his close friend Lukose was staying on the sixth floor of the block. His death was reported by another worker who leapt from the second floor, breaking his leg, to escape. "I'm still not able to come to terms with it."

**Continued on Page 6**



## Crown Prince upholds national development: Editors-in-Chief

KUWAIT: HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's appointment as Crown Prince was widely welcomed by citizens who genuinely believe in his leadership, Kuwaiti editors-in-chief said, trusting his ability to push forward national development and renaissance. Speaking to KUNA separately, they said HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's decree appointing HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince was a result of decades of experience

and achievements. The experience and capabilities of HH the Crown Prince would certainly contribute to the advancement of Kuwait, they said. "We have known His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled since the early 1980s after working for years at the Foreign Ministry and after having a noticeable presence at the Kuwait Mission to the UN," Editor-in-Chief of Al-Qabas Waleed Al-Nesf said.

Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abdullah Boftain affirmed that the people of Kuwait received the decree issued by HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal appointing HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince with great joy. He emphasized that the selection of His Highness as Crown Prince constitutes a cornerstone for achieving political stability in Kuwait, particularly in light of his commendable reputation and the accep-

ance he enjoys from various segments of the population, as well as his distinguished culture of embracing diverse opinions.

Editor-in-Chief of Al-Jarida Khaled Al-Mutairi said the selection of HH the Amir of HH Sheikh Sabah as Crown Prince represented the right choice for the new era in Kuwait, the era that began with HH the Amir. Editor-in-Chief of Al-Anbaa Yousef Al-Marzouq affirmed that the confidence of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal in HH the Crown Prince Sheikh is a deep-rooted trust that has been established through years of diligent work and undertaking tasks and responsibilities. Editor-in-Chief of Al-Rai Waleed Al-Jassem said joy spread among the Kuwaiti people in welcoming the decision of HH the Amir to appoint HH Sheikh Sabah as Crown Prince. — KUNA (See Page 2)



# Crown Prince props up national development: Editors-in-Chief

‘New leader represents the right choice for the new era’



Al-Qabas Editor-in-Chief  
Waleed Al-Nesf



Kuwait Times Deputy  
Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain



Al-Jarida Editor-in-Chief  
Khaled Al-Mutairi



Al-Anba Editor-in-Chief  
Yousef Al-Marzouq



Al-Rai Editor-in-Chief  
Walid Al-Jassem

**KUWAIT:** His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's appointment as Crown Prince was widely welcomed by citizens who genuinely believe in his leadership, Kuwaiti editors-in-chief said, trusting his ability to push forward national development and renaissance. Speaking to KUNA separately, they said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's decree appointing His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince was a result of decades of experience and achievements.

The experience and capabilities of His Highness the Crown Prince would certainly contribute to the advancement of Kuwait, they said. "We have known His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled since the early 1980s after working for years at the Foreign Ministry and after having a noticeable presence at the Kuwait Mission to the UN," said Waleed Al-Nesf, Chief Editor of Al-Qabas newspaper. He noted that when serving as Kuwaiti ambassador in Riyadh, His Highness the Crown Prince had active contributions at the bilateral level with Saudi Arabia, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Confronting COVID, he said, His Highness the Crown Prince was named head of the National Security Bureau at the end of the 1990s, then appointed as Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of Information, and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011. Al-Nesf said it was quite natural to see His Highness the Crown Prince being assigned as Prime Minister in 2019, forming four governments. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's government succeeded in confronting the coronavirus, bringing in vaccines against COVID-19, and addressing any shortages in medical supplies, medicine, or food.

Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abdullah Boftain affirmed that the people of Kuwait received the decree issued by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal appointing His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince with great joy. He emphasized that the selection of His Highness as Crown Prince constitutes a cornerstone for achieving political stability in Kuwait, particularly in light of his commendable reputation and the acceptance he enjoys from various segments of the population, as well as his distinguished culture of embracing diverse opinions.

Boftain added the people of Kuwait all witnessed the extraordinary efforts exerted by the government of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled during the COVID-19 pandemic, which swept the world. The government's ability to manage the pandemic's repercussions, including the major evacuation operation to

bring Kuwaitis back to their homeland from various parts of the world, was particularly noteworthy.

"I had the privilege of working closely with His Highness the Crown Prince when he led that government and his ministerial team through the 'exceptional circumstances' program, which was presented by the ministry of information. This initiative reflected His Highness' commitment to ensuring daily communication between the people and the leadership through a program that conveyed news from reliable sources and kept the public continuously informed. His Highness directed everyone's participation in that program to achieve its intended purpose," he said.

Boftain highlighted the pandemic revealed noble aspects of His Highness the Crown Prince's character, noting his keenness to share the joy of graduation with the students under the most challenging circumstances. He personally participated in the virtual graduation ceremony held for the 2020 graduates through a recorded speech that was broadcast during the event.

Boftain also touched on the positive impressions left on the attendees during His Highness' meeting with the editors-in-chief of local newspapers. They observed His Highness' broad-mindedness, attentive listening to comments and responsiveness to queries raised. He concluded his remarks by praying to Almighty Allah to assist the Crown Prince in carrying the great responsibility for the nation, to grant him success in his journey and to bless him with good and righteousness for the benefit of the country and its people.

On his part, the chief editor of Al-Jarida daily newspaper, Khaled Al-Mutairi, stated that the selection by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince represented the right choice for the new era in Kuwait, the era that has begun with His Highness the Amir. He added that His Highness the Amir saw that His Highness the Crown Prince, with his long career in politics and distinguished journey in diplomacy, along with his experience in dealing with various circumstances, was the right person to shoulder the heavy responsibility hand in hand with His Highness the Amir in leading Kuwait amidst the current situation.

He noted that although His Highness the Amir considered all those precise criteria, his primary motivation was not focusing on the past but on the future, believing that His Highness the Crown Prince was fit to complete the vision of His Highness the Amir, which is expected to be full of development and prosperity after His Highness the Amir removed all obstacles to push for more development and prosperity.

## Honorable record

Regarding the Crown Prince's journey, Al-Mutairi mentioned his honorable record in national struggle, after passing through many milestones where he left his mark on achievements, starting from joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1978, then as a member of Kuwait's permanent delegation to the United Nations, then as an ambassador, and then as the head of the National Security Bureau. He then became the Minister of Social Affairs, then the Minister of Information, until he held the foreign affairs portfolio in 2011, and then became Prime Minister from November 2019 to July 2022, after the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah entrusted him with leading the government.

Later, the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah renewed his trust in him as Prime Minister as well. Al-Mutairi pointed out that the history of His Highness the Crown Prince was promising to achieve the vision of His Highness the Amir, especially after his success in steering the executive authority during the pandemic as he led the country out of that stage of fear and uncertainty with minimal losses as Prime Minister. He added that Kuwait received numerous commendations for how it handled these unforeseen emergencies at a time when many countries were still suffering the repercussions of that crisis and its severe impacts.

Al-Mutairi said that choosing His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince completes the vision His Highness the Amir has for Kuwait, reflecting keenness on achieving the best for Kuwait. He added that Kuwaiti citizens should look forward to more development and prosperity in Kuwait in various fields, including investments, education, health, and more. On his part, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Anba newspaper, Yousef Al-Marzouq, affirmed that the confidence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad in His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled is a deep-rooted trust that has been established through years of diligent work and undertaking tasks and responsibilities.

His Highness is a wise politician who has spent more than 45 years in political and diplomatic fields, with a remarkable journey and significant efforts since assuming his first position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1978 until his nomination as Crown Prince, Al-Marzouq added. He highlighted that the spontaneous outpouring of public joy following the announcement of His Highness as Crown Prince reflects the profound admiration for his persona among citizens who sincerely served and protected Kuwait's present and future.

This sentiment was echoed by His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad's declaration of full confidence in him in 2020, as he was described by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad as a "person of integrity" as well as praised by the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad for his course of accomplishment, Al-Marzouq added. Al-Marzouq recalled His Highness' commitment to boost Kuwaiti media, evidenced by his acknowledgment of its role and responsibilities, during a meeting with the newspaper editors-in-chief, as His Highness underscored the significance of those meetings and his trust in Kuwaiti media.

He mentioned that during these meetings, when asked about the government and economic policies, His Highness emphasized the importance of the economy alongside education, security, and leadership selections. These meetings were characterized by a familial atmosphere, setting an example of transparency and dedication to addressing challenges while highlighting achievement.

On his part, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Rai newspaper, Walid Al-Jassem, stated that joy spread among the Kuwaiti people in welcoming the decision of His Highness the Amir to appoint His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince. He added that His Highness the Crown Prince possesses a set of commendable qualities, efficiency, and high capabilities that have been tested in various situations over the years. He has always been known to be a tough man, no matter how heavy the burden on his shoulder was.

## Diplomatic efficiency

Al-Jassem stated that Kuwait, with its geographical location and the wealth it is blessed with, needs high diplomatic efficiency and that no one is more capable than His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, who has represented Kuwait in the best way, utilizing his abilities and relations to serve the interests of Kuwait. He added that regarding the diplomatic aspects of His Highness the Crown Prince, one cannot overlook his great abilities and experiences due to the various positions he held; he became an example of dedication, competence, confidence, and capability.

Al-Jassem added that everyone knew the extent of his integrity and good reputation, which has never been tainted in the various positions he held inside and outside of Kuwait, and it was further enhanced by his noble ethics. He added that while people in many countries were facing multiple difficulties during COVID-19, Kuwait was among the most comfortable countries in the world. Kuwait was also one of the first countries in the region to efficiently handle the lifting of precautionary measures, all thanks to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. — KUNA



Ambassador of Russia to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov poses for a group photo with Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi and officials. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Russia envoy hails Kuwait's balanced stance on Ukraine

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The Ambassador of Russia to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov expressed his country's appreciation for Kuwait's balanced approach to the Ukrainian-Russian crisis. Russian ambassador affirmed his country's keenness to participate in the dialogue in the upcoming consultations involving Ukraine, Russia, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Doha, Qatar, which will address the ongoing conflict and explore diplomatic solutions.

At the ceremony held by the Russian embassy to celebrate its National Day, the Russian ambassador highlighted the strong and multifaceted cooperation between the two countries, noting that they share common interests and collaborate productively in various fields such as trade, economics, energy, and the military-technical sector. He emphasized the significance of their partnership on the humanitarian level, underscoring the breadth and depth of their bilateral relations, saying "Regarding the situation in Gaza, there have been continuous meetings aimed

at addressing the crisis. Last October, Russia, as a member of the Security Council, took the initiative to submit a draft resolution to halt the Zionist military operation.

Kuwait was among the first countries to support and adopt this draft. However, the resolution faced a significant setback due to a veto imposed by the United States." Regarding Kuwaiti investments in Russia, he said that due to the imposed American and European sanctions, most of the investments are currently on hold but will return soon. As for tourism, the Russian ambassador confirmed that the number of Kuwaitis who visit his country annually is approximately 10,000 and tend to visit Moscow not only in the summer but in all seasons, even at the lowest temperatures. "I admire the love Kuwaitis have for Moscow. Many Kuwaitis come to Russia even in the coldest temperatures, and there is a Kuwaiti friend who always goes to Moscow to practice swimming under the ice." In a press statement, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi praised the bilateral relations between the two countries, noting the passage of more than 61 years since their inauguration, with Kuwait being the first Gulf country to establish relations with the Soviet Union. He emphasized Kuwait's commitment to coordinating and cooperating with Russia across various international forums, highlighting the enduring and strategic nature of their partnership.

## Sadu Society holds traditional weaving exhibition at UNESCO

**PARIS:** The Kuwaiti Sadu Society held a live show on Wednesday at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and a "Ragoum" exhibition of the distinctive artworks made by students as part of an innovative educational program. The Head of the Sadu Society, Sheikhha Bibi Duaij Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, told KUNA that this educational initiative led by the Society emphasizes the importance of preserving traditional hand weaving skills along with the values rooted in precision and dedication as essential elements of cultural heritage and identity. She added that this program was designed "specifically for Ministry of Education schools," explaining that it features a curriculum prepared "meticulously" by the Sadu Society team.

She said that the initiative included specialized training workshops for the Department of Art Education, where teachers were trained on skills related to Sadu weaving in its historical and cultural context. In a similar statement to KUNA, the Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to UNESCO, Dr Adam Al-Mulla, expressed his happiness at the participation of the Sadu Society and the Ministry of Education in this event, stressing that such participations reflect the extent of Kuwait's keenness to move forward in enhancing effective cooperation with the sectors of education, culture, social sciences and humanities.

Al-Mulla stressed the importance of encouraging young people to work handcrafts, innovation and perseverance in highlighting the Kuwaiti cultural heritage so that it is known locally, regionally and globally. Along with Sheikhha Bibi Duaij Al-Sabah, many Kuwaiti officials participated, a member of the Kuwaiti Sadu Society, the general coordinator of the (Training the Trainer in Textile Art) program, Hanan Al-Ka-



Head of the Sadu Society, Sheikhha Bibi Duaij Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to UNESCO, Dr Adam Al-Mulla.



Sadu weaving arts by participating students. — KUNA photos

zemi, the technical supervisor for artistic education in the Ministry of Education, Umaima Malallah, and the technical advisor for artistic education in the Ministry of Education, Hamad Al-Hamad. The exhibition includes a live display of the traditional art of weaving, in addition to distinctive artistic works performed by eighth grade students through the joint program that was included in their curriculum. — KUNA

## Local

# Kuwait, India coordinating to facilitate repatriation of bodies of fire victims

## Kuwait FM marks World Refugee Day



The 'World Refugee Day' event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A group photo during the event.

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Fund Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya confirmed that there is active coordination between Kuwait and the Indian government, where he met with Kirti Vardhan Singh, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, to follow up and to facilitate the transfer of the remains of the victims of the massive fire at an apartment housing foreign workers in Mangaf.

He said on the sidelines of the celebration of "World Refugee Day" at the headquarters of the Kuwait Fund for Development that there is a collaboration with India on all fronts, in addition to ongoing meetings with the Ministers of Interior and Health. "Coordination is in place to use an Indian plane to transport the remains once the procedures are completed. Also, Kuwait Airlines is ready to help," he added, affirming that the compensation for those affected will be announced soon.

Regarding those injured in the fire, he said that he went with the Minister of Health to check on them most of whom are in stable condition, revealing that only one died in the morning.

Regarding the Gaza crisis, the Minister expressed optimism, stating that it marks the beginning and end of the conflict. He added that the upcoming days will be promising for the Palestinian people, as the latest draft resolution, agreed upon by all parties, has reached its final stage.

Meanwhile, during the "Refugee Day" event, the minister affirmed Kuwait's solidarity with refugees and its commitment to supporting them. He emphasized that the international community is dedicated to ensuring refugees receive protection, safe ha-



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Fund, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya speaks at the event.

vent, and opportunities for a better future, adding "With great pride that my country, represented by the Kuwait Fund, and by many official and civil societies, is active in providing direct humanitarian support millions of those affected by conflicts and natural disasters around the world, in addition, the effort put to improve the provision of decent livelihoods." "During the previous period, Kuwait provided humanitarian support amounting to about one billion and nine hundred million US dollars. Millions of individuals around the world benefited from this support, and the Kuwaiti Fund and UNHCR were able to improve the living conditions and cover the basic needs of more than 200,000 refugees in the north of the Republic of Iraq and develop health services for more than 100,000 refugees in Jordan," he continued. For her part, Nisreen Rubaian, UNHCR Representative in Kuwait, said that the Commission's



Nisreen Rubaian, UNHCR Representative in Kuwait, speaks at 'World Refugee Day' event.

partnership with the Kuwait Fund for Development assisted more than 700,000 refugees and displaced persons in northern Iraq, Yemen, and Jordan, noting that it has resulted in diverse and pioneering humanitarian projects in the field of infrastructure, sustainable projects, shelter, road paving, solar lighting, water, sanitation, and health. "Over the past 12 years, we have seen annual increases in the total number of refugees and there is a danger of the world not being aware of it. Year after year we are reaching numbers. A new record in forced displacement today reached 120 million people and it is time to support them more than ever," she pointed out. Rubaian concluded "More than 30 years after the founding of our office, I repeat and say congratulations to Kuwait and its people. They are an example of humanity. Over the past years, the impact of the State of Kuwait's support has reached millions around the world."

In my view

## A fire that broke all of our hearts

By Nejouad Al-Yagout



Local@kuwaittimes.com

Everyone is talking about the tragic deaths of 50 Mangaf residents whose lives were taken away by a raging fire that blazed through an overcrowded apartment building. There are also almost sixty people who have been injured. Both citizens and expatriates share the pain of this tragedy. And sadly, it takes a tragedy to revive hearts and remind us that we are one community regardless of where we hail from or our financial status.

As per a BBC report, "Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah accused property owners of greed and said violations of building standards had led to the tragedy". Yes, such tragedies can be avoided if owners consider the sacred importance of every tenant, rather than focus on material gain at the expense of the safety of people.

A previous lawmaker also stated that: "If the government does not hold the 'greed mafia' accountable ... and start the strict implementation of the law without any exceptions, and lay down practical solutions to the problems of manpower and the disorder in the population structure, catastrophes and disasters will happen again and only poor people ... will pay the price..."

Unfortunately, landlords turn a blind eye to overcrowding and building owners do not take into consideration safety standards. To be sure, there has been a swift reaction by those in power to arrest both the owner and the landlord of the building; but, sadly, if not as usual, it is a case of a little too late.

Why did we need 50 people to die and 55 injured souls to finally begin to inspect buildings? Why did it take us so long when human rights activists have been raising concerns for years about the condition of migrants in certain parts of our country? Are some lives dispensable? Are some considered less worthy?

This heartbreaking incident will go down in our history as a tragedy and an epic failure on our part. But here we are, holding our breath that it won't happen again and that the lives of every single person in our country is treated as a dignified member of our society. And we can tune into the words of Shakir Reshamwala, who wisely stated in his article titled "We share your grief": "We hope they can find some comfort in knowing that their pain is felt by people across the country, and we stand together in solidarity with them. This heartbreaking event is a stark reminder of how fragile life can be and the significance of showing compassion and providing support".

Yes, life is fragile and what is needed more than ever is compassion for everyone.

## Mudhaf, US official discuss ways to fight money-laundering

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Finance and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf discussed combating illegal financing and money laundering with visiting US congressman French Hill. Financial terrorism, as well as future of virtual currencies and its effect on financial inclusion were also discussed during Al-Mudhaf's meeting with Hill, who is serving as Vice Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee and Chairman of the subcommittee tasked with overseeing all areas related to digital assets and financial technology, relayed a Ministry-issued statement on Thursday.

Minister Al-Mudhaf spoke of the legal grounds, which Kuwaiti financial establishments are built on, the adopted practices and supervision they undergo, high-



Minister of Finance and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf discussed combating illegal financing and money laundering with US congressman French Hill. — KUNA

lighting state efforts on reforming public budget structure and rebuilding the economy.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Thursday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara at his office in the ministry

headquarters. The foreign minister and the US ambassador, in their discussions, dealt with bilateral relations and strategic cooperation between the two countries, as well as latest regional and international developments, particularly current events in Gaza. — KUNA

## Kuwait remains a 'strong supporter of Palestine'

**AMMAN:** Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, affirmed Tuesday that Kuwait will remain a strong supporter of the Palestinian people and is ready to do all in its power to end their suffering. "Kuwait will not hesitate to extend a helping hand to the brotherly Palestinian people and will continue to support them as they face injustice and aggression," Minister Al-Yahya said in Kuwait's speech at the Jordan-hosted international conference for the urgent humanitarian response for Gaza.

The conference was organized in collaboration with Egypt and the United Nations and held at the Dead Sea resort today. Kuwait's Amir's Representative highlighted Kuwait's governmental and popular campaigns to collect and provide aid to Palestinians. He pointed out that Kuwait, since the start of the Zionist offensive on Gaza, has launched an air bridge through which 50 aircraft loaded with thousands of tons of humanitarian and relief aid were dispatched to the Gaza Strip.

Moreover, Kuwait has also organized a 100-land and sea aid convoy loaded with relief supplies and shelter materials for Palestinian people during the same period, the minister said. He added that Kuwait has also sent medical teams to the Gaza Strip to help support the collapsing healthcare sector there. "Kuwait acts out of principled and firm position supporting the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights," the minister said.

He stated that Kuwait will always be among the main defenders of the Palestinian cause and the leading advocates

for a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, foremost of which is the establishment of their independent state on the borders of June 4, 1967. His Highness the Amir's Representative welcomed the growing international recognition of the State of Palestine and support for Palestine's bid for full membership in the United Nations, as well as for the international efforts and initiatives to reach a ceasefire to save the lives of the innocent and defenseless people of Palestine.

Minister Al-Yahya emphasized that the international community needs to realize that stability cannot be reached in the Middle East region without a just, lasting, and final solution to the Palestinian cause. He expressed Kuwait's deep appreciation to the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt, and the United Nations for their important initiative to hold this conference to find ways to enhance the international response to the humanitarian disaster in the Strip and alleviate the human suffering caused by the sinful aggression against Palestinian people. He regretted that the people of Gaza have experienced unbearable suffering and reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of the occupation's insistence on obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid and on imposing a blockade and arbitrary measures at Gaza border crossings, which prevented the flow of sufficient vital supplies to the needy residents of the Gaza Strip and exacerbated the humanitarian crisis there. He stressed the need for international efforts to formulate clear visions for ensuring unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip, to end the Zionist occupation's blatant violations of international laws, and to guarantee the right of peoples to obtain humanitarian aid during conflicts.

### Communications sector

Kuwait affirmed on Tuesday its support for the rights of the Palestinian people to rebuild the communications sector in Gaza after the massive destruction resulting from the barbaric war. This



Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and International Organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen.

came in a speech by the Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and International Organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, before the International Telecommunication Union conference currently being held in Geneva.

Al-Hayen said that the Palestinians' right to access modern communications technology is a basic human right, rooted in the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially in Article 19 of it, which affirms the right of every individual to freedom of opinion and expression and searching for, receiving, and transmitting information through any media, regardless of borders.

He stressed that no party can isolate an entire people and deny the violation of universal human rights principles, and therefore everyone must join hands to ensure that the Palestinian people are able to rebuild what was destroyed by the occupation and to guarantee their right to communicate and engage in the global information society. — KUNA

## Huwailah meets Lebanese minister

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait Minister of Social Affairs, Family, Childhood, and Minister of Youth Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah discussed bilateral relations and issues of common interests with the Lebanese Minister of Social Affairs Hector Hajjar.

The discussion took place during Dr Al-Huwailah's meeting with Minister Hajjar on Wednesday at the permanent Kuwaiti mission to the United Nations. Both parties emphasized the deep and strong bonds between the two countries and the distinctiveness of the relations, especially in fields related to social affairs and issues concerning people with disabilities. The meeting also discussed the ongoing cooperation between the relevant authorities and agencies in both countries, and ways to support and enhance this cooperation further in the future. — KUNA

## Eid Al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) in Islam

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

Celebrations in Islam are a blessing from Almighty Allah in that all of them come after accomplishing an act of worship. There are two main celebrations in Islam viz. Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. When Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) arrived in Madinah, he found its inhabitants celebrating two occasions. Upon asking them, they said, "We used to celebrate these occasions during the Period of Ignorance (Jahiliya). He then informed them that Almighty Allah had substituted those two occasions with two better Islamic ones viz. Eid Al-Fitr (festival of breaking the fast) and Eid Al-Adha (festival of sacrifice). (This hadith was classified as sahih by Imam Ibn Hajar)

Muslims officially celebrate two occasions viz. Eid Al-Fitr (that comes after Ramadan) and Eid Al-Adha (that comes after performing the pilgrimage, or hajj). Once during Eid Al-Adha, or the festival of sacrifice, Abu Baker (RA) visited Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and found two girls singing and playing tambourines. He reprimanded them saying, "Do you play Satan's instruments in the house of the Messenger of Allah?" Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) woke up to Abu Baker's voice and said, translated as: "Leave them alone Abu Baker, indeed every people have their own festival and this is our festival." (Reported by Imam Muslim)

Eid Al-Adha marks the end of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah and after the day of Arafah: About the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah (the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar), Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, narrated by Abu Huraira (RA): "There is no other season whereby acts of worship and devotion are dearer to Allah and more rewarding than these first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah." His companions inquired, "O Allah's Messenger, even jihad?" He replied, "Even jihad, except for one who goes out fighting in jihad then he gets martyred, and in the process, his belongings get used for jihad purposes." (Reported by Iman Al-Bukhari)

And regarding the day of Arafah which falls on the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, translated as: "The day of Arafah is the best day of the year." (This Hadith was rated sound by Imam Ibn Hibban.)

### The story behind Eid Al-Adha

During Eid Al-Adha, Muslims celebrate the time when Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) had a dream that he believed was a message from Almighty Allah. In the dream, the Majestic Allah asked him to sacrifice his son Isma'il (PBUH) as an act of obedience to Him. Although the Devil tempted Ibrahim to disobey Almighty Allah and spare his son, Ibrahim (PBUH) followed Allah's orders. However, as Ibrahim (PBUH) was about to slaughter Isma'il (PBUH), Almighty Allah stopped him and gave him a ram to sacrifice in lieu of his son.

Today, Muslims celebrate the festival by participating in prayers, and slaughtering sacrificial animals in order to share the meat with the poor, the needy, and family members. They also visit family and friends to share the delicacies with loved ones - among many other traditions.

What Muslims do on Eid Al-Adha: In the morning of Eid Al-Adha, Muslims around the globe attend the morning Eid prayer in their local mosque or in a place designated for that. The service includes congregational prayers and a sermon. The sermon teaches the importance of obeying Almighty Allah and the lesson exemplified by Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH). Traditionally, Muslims remember Ibrahim's (PBUH) trials by slaughtering an animal, such as a sheep, a camel or a goat or a cow.

As Eid Al-Adha is a special occasion. People wear new clothes, spend time with family and friends, and sometimes exchange gifts. Women and young girls often decorate their hands with beautiful patterns using henna. Delicious food is eaten and shared with others.

### Optional acts of worship to perform on Eid Al-Adha:

- Take a shower or bath
- Wear our best clothes
- Apply fragrance/perfume
- Start saying the general takbeer (Allahu Akbar, or Allah is the Greatest) after Fajr prayer
- Walk to the mosque or any area designated for the Eid prayer, and use a different route on the way back. Note that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to tread a different path or road when returning from the Eid prayer for many reasons, among them meeting as many people as possible so that he could solve their problems, if they had any, and spreading the message of peace to them.
- Perform Eid prayer in congregation.
- Connect with friends and family members as much as you can.
- Exchange gifts
- Make sure you slaughter a sacrificial animal after the Eid prayer so you don't miss out on abundant rewards.
- Eat breakfast, preferably from the animal you have sacrificed.

Finally, it is worth noting that both Eids (recurrent Islamic festivals) come after performing two of the five acts that characterize a Muslim, famously known as the pillars of Islam. Eid Al-Fitr marks celebrating the completion of the month-long compulsory fast of Ramadan, and Eid Al-Adha comes after performing the pilgrimage, or hajj, which is the fifth pillar of Islam.

— Courtesy of Kuwaiti Society for Cultural Dialogue



KUWAIT: Camels are displayed for sale at a livestock market south of Kuwait on June 13, 2024, as Muslims prepare ahead of the holiday of Eid Al-Adha.

## Sheep prices jump on eve of Eid



A sheep stands in a pen at a market in Kuwait City, waiting to be sold ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, the "Feast of Sacrifice", on June 10, 2024.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: With Eid Al-Adha just around the corner, the livestock market in Al-Rai is witnessing an unreasonable price hike. The demand for sheep has driven the price of Nuaimi sheep up to KD 220, depending on the breed, source, age, and size. Speaking to Kuwait Times, Bu Rashed, one of the sheep vendors at Al-Rai sheep market, noted it is natural for prices to rise due to the lack of supply and the imports.

He added that this year's prices are higher than last year's, explaining that last year, the cost of local Nuaimi sheep ranged between KD 130-150 but now, it is starting at 180 and exceeding KD 200, depending on the weight and type of the sheep.

Bu Rashed explained that most customers prefer the local Nuaimi over the imported ones because of the superior quality of its meat. Additionally, the local sheep are favored as the imported ones often endure stress from the lengthy transportation between countries.

For his part, Budair said that the source of the sheep and its age plays an important role in determining the cost, noting that the prices differ, where local Nuaimi range between KD 190 and 220, while the Jordanian Nuaimi price starts from KD 130 to 150 and the Saudi Nuaimi costs KD 150 to 190. He continued that some types are considered good and at a reasonable price, namely the Syrian imported sheep, whose price ranges between KD 90 and 100, and Shefali sheep which

ranges between KD 60 and 75, while the Somali sheep range between KD 50 to 55.

Meanwhile, Aziz Allah said that most customers now demand to buy 6-month-old sheep due to their tender meat. Regarding how to select a sheep, He called people to be aware, that they should only sacrifice healthy sheep, asking customers to check the teeth and horns "Customers must ensure the sheep has no cuts in its ears or wounds. The sheep must be active, and people must avoid any sheep that are inactive or have their heads down. Importantly, to check that the sheep's teeth, horns, and legs in addition to checking his mouth and eyes to make sure there are no visible secretions to ensure they are in good health," he pointed out.



Kuwaitis inspect sheep at a market in Kuwait ahead of Eid Al-Adha. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

### Ambassadors' Eid greetings

**Eduardo Patricio Pena Haller**  
Mexican Ambassador

Ambassador of Mexico Eduardo Patricio Pena Haller has the honor to extend his sincere congratulations and best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, the Government and people of the State of Kuwait on the occasion of the advent of Eid Al-Adha coupled with our best wishes for continued well-being and success, and the friendly people of Kuwait further prosperity, progress and stability. Ambassador Pena Haller added, "As the Ambassador of Mexico to the State of Kuwait, I am continually inspired by the shared values that define and deepen the relationship between our two countries. Both Mexico and Kuwait uphold the principles of non-intervention, self-determination, the legal equality of states, and the peaceful settlement of international disputes, all of which are anchored in our mutual commitment to international law. We also strive together to promote international cooperation aimed at the development of our peoples. Looking ahead, I am eager to spearhead a range of projects that will not only strengthen these bonds but also expand trade and investment opportunities between our nations. It is through these endeavors that we can transform our shared values into tangible benefits for our citizens, paving the way for a prosperous future marked by mutual respect and collaboration. In light of these shared principles, our upcoming initiatives will specifically focus on exploring collaborative opportunities in cultural exchanges that highlight the rich heritage of both Mexico and Kuwait. These initiatives are not just pathways to economic growth but also bridges that connect our peoples, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of our diverse traditions and histories. As we move forward, I am confident that the steadfast partnership between Kuwait and Mexico will serve as a model of international cooperation and mutual respect, benefiting not only our nations but also contributing positively to global peace and development. Eid Mubarak!  
Wa Kullu Aam Wa Antum Bekhair!!



**Tuba Nur Sonmez**  
Turkish Ambassador

On behalf of my Embassy and the Turkish community in Kuwait, I extend heartfelt greetings to the leadership, government, and the brotherly people of Kuwait on the auspicious occasion of Eid Al-Adha. As pilgrims set out on their sacred journey, I pray to Allah Almighty that He accepts their hajj and grants them strength and guidance. May the spirit of sacrifice and generosity inspire the whole Muslim world in a way that fosters our bonds. May the blessings of this important time serve to further strengthen the robust ties of friendship and cooperation between our nations. I ask my fellow Muslim brothers and sisters to remember Gaza in their prayers during this sacred time of the year. May Allah bring a swift end to their immense suffering and help all Muslims around the world who are subjected to massacres and disenfranchisement.



**Claire Le Flécher**  
French Ambassador

Dear friends,  
On the occasion of the celebration of Eid El-Adha, I would like to extend to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, to the Kuwaiti people and Muslims all over the world, my greetings and most sincere wishes of health and prosperity. During Eid Al-Adha, people celebrate values of peace, solidarity and commitment to the welfare of society. This occasion, marked by the spirit of sacrifice, gives the opportunity to show solidarity and compassion to the people who are suffering. On this special day, my heart goes



out to the victims of the continuing conflicts in Gaza and elsewhere, to the refugees and displaced populations. Eid is also a moment in which families and friends gather and share beautiful moments. On this occasion, on behalf of the French embassy in Kuwait and the French people, I wish you this Eid brings you a lot of joy, filled with warmth and the company of your loved ones. Eid Al-Adha Mubarak!

**Sarmen Baghdasarian**  
Armenian Ambassador

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Amir of the State of Kuwait HH Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Government and people of Kuwait on Eid Al-Adha. As we come together to celebrate the spirit of sacrifice, generosity, and unity, we hope that this joyous occasion will bring prosperity, peace, and harmony to all. In these challenging times, let us reaffirm our commitment to fostering mutual understanding, respect, and friendship between our countries. May this Eid Al-Adha reinforce our collective resolve to work hand in hand towards a brighter, more inclusive future for all! Wishing a blessed Eid filled with joy, abundance, and blessings!



**Belinda Lewis**  
British Ambassador

On the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, I would like to extend my gratitude to Kuwait's leadership, government and people for their enduring friendship, which now stretches back more than 125 years, and wish everyone celebrating continued health, happiness and prosperity. Eid Mubarak!





South Korea says 'closely watching' Putin's preparations' to visit North Page 6

## Lebanon's Hezbollah reveals more of its arms in risky escalation

Page 7



MAKKAH: Muslim worshippers pray around the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, at the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia's holy city of Makkah ahead of the annual hajj pilgrimage. — AFP

# As pilgrims swelter, climate change looms over hajj

'It's hot, but somehow, with the spirit of Allah, we don't feel the heat that much'

**MAKKAH:** From misting systems to heat-reflective road coverings, Saudi officials are trying to aid hajj pilgrims in coping with heat, but scientists caution that climate change may outpace these efforts. The annual pilgrimage, one of the world's largest religious gatherings, coincides again this year with the hot Saudi summer, with officials predicting average highs of 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit). Travelling to Makkah from Chicago in the United States, Shariq Memon prepared for the worst, though he told AFP conditions had been manageable so far. "We were told it would be very hot," the 44-year-old said as he left the Grand Mosque this week.

"It's hot, but somehow, with the spirit of Allah, we don't feel the heat that much." Heat mitigation measures implemented at the holy sites in recent years may also have something to do with it. Near the Kaaba, the black cubic structure in the Grand Mosque towards which all Muslims pray, new air-conditioned spaces allow pilgrims to cool off, and a climate-controlled pathway now connects the hills of Safa and Marwa inside the mosque compound.

Since last year, roads used by the faithful have been covered in a white cooling material that Saudi officials say reduces the temperature of the asphalt by 20 percent. On top of that, volunteers distribute water and umbrellas and offer advice to pilgrims on avoiding hyperthermia, while misting systems and air-conditioned shopping malls provide temporary relief between prayers.

### Heat-related illnesses

Yet officials have few options to alleviate certain stages of the hajj, notably Saturday's day-long prayers under the blazing sun on Mount Arafat. As he waited ahead of Friday's formal start of the hajj, Memon said he was not worried. "I am a very easy-going guy, so I didn't take any measures. My wife has done a lot of measures," he said, citing the rehydration solution she packed in his suitcase. "I don't know. I will just follow her." The pilgrimage, which takes most people at least five days to complete, is a "marathon", said Mohammed Al-Abdulali, spokesperson for the Saudi health ministry.

Pilgrims, especially those who are elderly or have health issues, "are exposed to the risk of exhaustion or

heat stroke, which are dangerous", he said. Last year more than 10,000 cases of heat-related illnesses were documented, 10 percent of which were heat stroke, he said.

Saudi Arabia has not provided figures on hajj fatalities last year, though at least 240 people—many from Indonesia—died during the pilgrimage, according to figures announced by various countries which did not specify causes of death. Abdulali said there were at least some deaths connected to heat stress in 2023 "but their number was limited" because of rapid interventions taken by medical teams and their experience "acquired over decades".

The timing of the hajj is determined by the Islamic lunar calendar, and years in which it takes place during summer have long brought high numbers of heat stress cases, according to a study published last month by the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre based in Riyadh. In 1987, for example, about 1,000 pilgrims died from heat-related conditions, the study says. But in the past 40 years, thanks to "mitigation measures", incidents of heat stress have fallen by 74.6 percent and the mortality rate from these cases has fallen by 47.6 percent, it says.

### Water sprays 'not enough'

The same study notes, however, that temperatures in the region are rising by 0.4 degrees Celsius per decade. "Worsening heat may be outpacing the comprehensive mitigation strategies in place," it says. Distributing water and installing misting systems "will not be enough" to adapt, said Fahad Saeed of Climate Analytics, an institute based in Germany. If conditions worsen, he said, there is a risk that "we are going to lose some of the rituals" seen as essential to the pilgrimage. It is a threat that underscores the need for Saudi Arabia to reduce its use of planet-warming fossil fuels, he said, a stated goal of the kingdom's ongoing Vision 2030 economic reform agenda.

"Saudi Arabia is the biggest oil exporter... it is also one of the hottest countries in the world," the climatologist said. The kingdom needs "to make this transformation of their economy towards greener options, towards more renewables, because it is also host of this very important hajj."—AFP

Sumarwan said, sheltered by the overpass from Jakarta's tropical heat and spurts of heavy rain. "One of the requirements for a cow to be sacrificed is that the animal has to be healthy," he added. For a cow that looks unhealthy, Sumarwan applies a balm usually reserved for humans.

### 'Something unique'

The makeshift market is one of many spread around Jakarta selling animals for the Muslim ritual, when livestock are slaughtered and the meat is shared with the poor. Kastono, Sumarwan's boss, has run his animal sacrifice business for 15 years, bringing livestock from Central Java to sell in Jakarta. "This year, we bring 50 cows and 120 goats. We usually start selling 25 days before Eid Al-Adha," said Kastono, who employs 10 workers.

A cow weighing 250 kilograms (551 pounds) can sell between 20 million and 27.5 million rupiah (\$1,225 and \$1,685), according to Kastono's wife Meta. And keeping the animals healthy and happy is important for business. Meta said they began uploading short videos to social media showing the cows being massaged in a small booth with a "Cow Salon" sign in the background as a way to improve sales. "We want to attract customers with something unique, also to show that we treat the animals well," she said. But Kastono said his business was about more than just making money.

"What we do is correlated with the religious ritual, so we don't focus on looking for big profits. We don't want to put more burden on people," he said. "We make a salon for the cows... because we want to make sure they are in good shape."—AFP

## Moo-sage: Indonesia salon gets cows in shape for Eid sacrifice

**JAKARTA:** Under a highway in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, a brown cow stood calmly as masseur Sumarwan got to work, clenching his fist to beat the animal's legs and help it relax ahead of its sacrifice. The two-year-old cow was receiving a unique rub-down to keep it in good condition before its sale for the Islamic feast of Eid al-Adha on June 17. "The cow feels relaxed," the 45-year-old told AFP as he gently kneaded the animal's muscles. Sumarwan, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, made noises at the cow as he massaged—his way of communicating with it at his self-described "cow salon".

"If I beat it using my hands like this, the cow feels relaxed because it knows that I do it with love," he claimed. "If other people do it, it may get angry because it feels like being hurt." Sumarwan says he is one of only two people in this area of North Jakarta able to give cattle massages for the major holiday in the Islamic calendar. His cow salon is tucked inside an underpass that has become a makeshift livestock market, where sellers trade hundreds of cows and goats. As trucks and trailers thunder by on the motorway overhead, the animals look unbothered.

But the market's location is ideal despite the traffic,

red.

50% Off  
cinema tickets

KD5  
Free fuel  
weekly

KD10  
Free salon  
weekly

KD25  
15% Cashback  
monthly

## Congratulations Graduates!

Continue your journey of success by opening an account, transferring your allowance, and instantly accessing exclusive benefits that fit your lifestyle. What's more, check out @redbyGB on Instagram to win a graduation gift!

Learn More

[e-gulfbank.com/red](https://e-gulfbank.com/red) • 1 805 805

## International

# South Korea says 'closely watching Putin's preparations' to visit North

## N Korea would likely push to export more war materials to be used in Ukraine

SEOUL: South Korea said Thursday it was "closely watching" preparations by Russian President Vladimir Putin for an expected visit to its arch-foe North Korea. North Korea and Russia are both under international sanctions, and have deepened ties since the latter invaded Ukraine in 2022. North Korea has been accused of providing arms to Russia for its war in Ukraine, allegations the Kremlin has branded as "absurd". Neither side has confirmed an itinerary for Putin's expected visit. "The government is closely watching President Putin's preparations for his visit to North Korea," South Korea's foreign ministry said.

"Exchange and cooperation between Russia and North Korea should be conducted in a way that contributes to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula while complying with the Security Council resolutions," it added. The Kremlin told Russian state-run media last month that a visit was "being prepared". A Pentagon report last month said Russia is us-

ing North Korean ballistic missiles in Ukraine, citing debris analysis. Experts have said that during Putin's expected visit, North Korea would likely push to export more war materials to be used in Ukraine, in exchange for importing food and energy from Russia.

Earlier Thursday, a senior official in the South Korean president's office said Putin was expected to visit North Korea "in a few days". The official said Putin's visit to the North would take place around the same time as a meeting between South Korean and Chinese officials in Seoul. That meeting is due to take place early next week, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday hailed his country's ties with Russia, according to state media. Ties between North Korea and Russia have "developed into an unbreakable relationship of comrades-in-arms", Kim wrote in a message to Putin carried

in the official Korean Central News Agency Wednesday. Their "meaningful" ties will "further consolidate the eternal milestone" in the new era, Kim added, according to KCNA.

Kim made a rare overseas trip to meet Putin in Russia last year. At the time, he said the North's ties with Moscow were his country's "number one priority". The United States and South Korea have accused North Korea of supplying weapons to Russia for use in Ukraine, in violation of UN sanctions, in return for help with its space program.

Analysts have also warned that ramped-up testing and production of artillery and cruise missiles by the nuclear-armed North could be in preparation for shipments to Russia for use in Ukraine. North Korea is barred by UN sanctions from any tests using ballistic technology, but Moscow used its UN Security Council veto in March to effectively end UN monitoring of violations, for which Pyongyang has specifically thanked Russia. —AFP



Kim Jong Un



Vladimir Putin

## G7 to agree \$50bn Ukraine loan at Italy summit

BARI, Italy: G7 leaders were set to agree on a new \$50-billion loan for Ukraine as they gathered Thursday for a summit in southern Italy, using the profits from frozen Russian assets. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will join US President Joe Biden and leaders from Italy, Britain, France, Germany, Canada and Japan for the talks at the luxury Borgo Egnazia resort in Puglia. Top of the agenda is a plan for an urgent \$50-billion loan to help Kyiv with defense, budgetary support and reconstruction after more than two years of war with Russia.

The loan would be secured against the future profits from interest on 300 billion euros (\$325 billion) of Russian central bank assets frozen by Western allies. "Good news from the G7: another \$50 billion for Ukraine," German Finance Minister Christian Lindner wrote on X. "We are using interest from frozen assets for this—a smart instrument that shows (Russian President Vladimir) Putin our unity, greatly helps Ukraine and relieves the burden on budgets."

"Now we are working on the details." French President Emmanuel Macron's office had on Wednesday said there was a deal on providing the money by the end of this year. "We are on the verge of a good outcome here," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said Thursday, adding that the details still needed to be thrashed out.

### Common vision

Ahead of his arrival later in the day, Zelensky said he was expecting "important decisions" at the summit. He also said he would sign two more security agreements with Japan and the United States in Puglia. The G7 countries have been Ukraine's key military and financial backers since Russia invaded in February 2022.

Zelensky, who was due to hold a joint press conference with Biden later Thursday, has been engaged in a flurry of diplomacy aimed at boosting international support. He spoke earlier this week in Berlin at a reconstruction conference and is set to join more than 90 countries and organizations this weekend for a peace summit in Switzerland.

Sullivan said the G7 leaders were aiming for a

"common vision" on using the frozen assets. "We have the major tentpoles of this decided but some of the specifics will be left to be worked through by experts on a defined timetable," he told reporters. The European Union agreed earlier this year to use the profits from the frozen Russian assets for Ukraine, worth up to three billion euros a year.

But the idea at the G7 is to use this to provide more and faster help through a massive upfront loan. The US this week also announced a raft of new sanctions aimed at constraining Moscow's war machine, while raising the stakes for foreign banks that still deal with Russia.

### Irreplaceable role

The summit comes at a time of extraordinary global turmoil. Apart from the conflict in Ukraine, the Zionist-Islamic conflict is raging and economic tensions are rising between China and Western countries. Many G7 countries are also in political flux. Everyone in Puglia is aware this could be Biden's last G7 summit if he loses to Donald Trump in November US elections.

Britain's Rishi Sunak is tipped to be ousted in July 4 elections, while France's Macron and Germany's Olaf Scholz are both under pressure after gains by the far right in EU elections last weekend. By contrast, meeting host Giorgia Meloni, Italy's prime minister, is riding high after her far-right party topped European Parliament elections last weekend.

Meloni laughed and joked with her G7 counterparts as she welcomed them among the olive trees of the Borgo Egnazia resort on Thursday morning—but had a serious message. "The Group of Seven in recent decades has assumed an irreplaceable role in the management of global crises, especially those that jeopardize our freedom and our democracy," she told an opening session. The talks began with short session on Africa, development and climate change, before turning to the Middle East.

The G7 leaders have already announced their support for a Gaza truce deal outlined by Biden. Another key issue in Puglia, to be discussed Friday, will be concerns about China's so-called "industrial overcapacity", particularly in green energy and technology sectors such as solar panels and electric vehicles.

Around a dozen of non-G7 leaders have also been invited to Puglia for talks on Friday, including Jordan's King Abdullah II, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, UAE president Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and India's Narendra Modi. —AFP

special place in the hearts of the entire Turkish nation," Erdogan said, hailing the Spanish leader for his approach to the ongoing conflict. "In the name of my people, I congratulate" Sanchez for his attitude, he said on an official visit to Madrid two weeks after Spain formally recognized Palestinian statehood alongside Ireland and Norway.

Erdogan once again accused the Zionist entity of committing "genocide" in the tiny territory. "We are faced with a (Zionist) arrogance that responds even to ceasefire calls with bloodshed," he said, Erdogan said the Gaza war played "a central role" in his talks with Sanchez, hailing Spain's decision to recognize Palestinian statehood as "very important". "I hope Spain's attitude will set an example for other countries that have not yet recognized Palestine," he said. — AFP

said that the teams removed several violations and cut power supply to at least one building where the basement was rented to a carpenter in total violation of the law.

Sheikh Fahad said the ministry will establish a hotline for people to report any violations in buildings to authorities, which will allow them to take immediate action. He added that inspections will continue to make sure that all violations are removed and safety rules are applied to prevent such a catastrophe from happening again.

Mashaan warned landlords of buildings to remove used and discarded items from their premises immediately. The law will be directly applied upon the violators, the minister warned. Discarded items must be removed instantly, she stressed, disclosing that power supply had already been cut off from buildings where such dumping was discovered. The ministry of social affairs meanwhile allowed charity societies to collect donations for the victims of the fire.

Kuwait Municipality announced on Thursday its teams had shut down 568 irregular basements of residential and commercial buildings in the past 10 months. Its personnel issued 1,639 citations and "blocked" 596 properties. Moreover, up to 189 basements packed with various unlicensed items had been emptied.

## Rural India runs dry as thirsty megacity Mumbai sucks water

NAVINWADI, India: Far from the gleaming high-rises of India's financial capital Mumbai, impoverished villages in areas supplying the megacity's water are running dry—a crisis repeated across the country that experts say foreshadows terrifying problems. "The people in Mumbai drink our water but no one there, including the government, pays attention to us or our demands," said Sumita Pandurang Satgir, carrying a heavy metal pot on her head filled with foul-smelling water.

Demand is increasing in the world's most populous nation of 1.4 billion people, but supplies are shrinking—with climate change driving erratic rainfall and extreme heat. Large-scale infrastructure for Mumbai includes reservoirs connected by canals and pipelines channeling water from 100 kilometers (60 miles) away. But experts say a failure of basic planning means that the network is often not connected to hundreds of rural villages in the region and several nearby districts.

Instead, they rely on traditional wells. But demand far outstrips meagre resources, and critical groundwater levels are falling. "Our days and our lives just revolve around thinking about collecting water, collecting it once, and collecting it again, and again," Satgir said. "We make four to six rounds for water every day... leaving us time for nothing else".

Climate change is shifting weather patterns, bringing longer-lasting and more intense droughts. Wells rapidly run dry early in the extreme heat. In the peak of summer, 35-year-old Satgir said she can spend up to six hours a day fetching water.

Temperatures this year surged above a brutal 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit). When the well dries, the village then relies on a government tanker with irregular supplies, two or three times a week. It brings untreated water from a river where people wash and animals graze. Satgir's home in the dusty village of Navinwadi, near the farming town of Shahapur, lies some 100 kilometers from the busy streets of Mumbai. The area is also the source of major reservoirs supplying some 60 percent of water to Mumbai, local government authorities say.

Mumbai is India's second-biggest and rapidly expanding city, with an estimated population of 22 million. "All that water from around us goes to the people in the big city and nothing has changed for us," Satgir said. "Our three generations are linked to that one well," she added. "It is our only source." Deputy village head



INDIA: In this photo villagers carry water pots in Shahapur district of India's Maharashtra state, amid ongoing heatwave. — AFP

Rupali Bhaskar Sadgir, 26, said residents were often sick from the water. But it was their only option.

"We've been requesting governments for years to ensure that the water available at the dams also reaches us," she said. "But it just keeps getting worse." Government authorities both at the state level and in New Delhi say they are committed to tackling the problem and have announced repeated schemes to address the water crisis. But villagers say they have not reached them yet.

India's government-run NITI Aayog public policy center forecasts a "steep fall of around 40 percent in freshwater availability by 2030", in a July 2023 report. It also warned of "increasing water shortages, depleting groundwater tables and deteriorating resource quality". Groundwater resources "are being depleted at unsustainable rates", it added, noting they make up some 40 percent of total water supplies. It is a story repeated across India, said Himanshu Thakkar, from the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, a Delhi-based water rights campaign group.

This is "typical of what keeps happening all over the country", Thakkar said, adding it represents everything "wrong with the political economy of making dams in India". "While projects are planned and justified in the name of drought-prone regions and its people, most end up serving only the distant urban areas and industries," he said. — AFP

## Erdogan thanks Spain over Gaza

MADRID: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday hailed Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez for his stance on the Gaza war which has seen the Spanish leader emerging as an outspoken critic of the Zionist entity. Since the war in Gaza began eight months ago, Spain has emerged as one of Israel's strongest critics within the European Union, while Erdogan has strongly supported the Palestinians and Gaza's Hamas leaders.

"Mr Sanchez has pursued a principled and consistent policy from day one (of the war) and has a

## Amir orders cash payments...

### Continued from Page 1

plane, adding that if it is not enough, HHH the Amir instructed him to repatriate the rest aboard Kuwaiti military planes. On Wednesday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised help for those affected by the "gruesome fire tragedy", announcing 200,000-rupee (\$2,400) payments to next of kin.

In Manila, the Department of Migrant Workers said three Filipinos had died from smoke inhalation, with two more in critical condition while six escaped unharmed. "We are in touch with the families of all the affected (migrants), including the families of those two in critical condition and the families of the three fatalities," Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo J Caedac said in a statement.

Earlier, Sheikh Fahad and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan led inspection teams from various government departments to inspect buildings in several areas to ascertain they comply with safety rules. The minister

## Kerala in shock as fire stubs out...

### Continued from Page 1

"We didn't believe the news when we heard about it," said Varghese. "I spoke to him just last week... This news is a shock."

The entire state of Kerala was in mourning on Wednesday since most of the fire victims were from Kerala. While many families in Kerala prayed that news about their dear ones was not true, official reports on Wednesday said out of 46 Indians who died in the devastating fire — with most of the deaths attributed to smoke inhalation — 20 have been identified so far. Three Filipinos also lost their lives in the tragedy.

According to hospital sources, seven people still remain critical in ICUs. Kerala's Health Minister Vee-na George will reach Kuwait to coordinate the rescue efforts and assist the families of the dead and injured. According to Non-resident Keralites Association (NoRKA-Roots), 24 Malayalis died in the tragedy. NoRKA-Roots CEO Ajith said it has set up a help desk following the tragedy in Kuwait. Meanwhile, the Kerala government has canceled the inaugural events of the Loka Kerala Sabha.

Many of the Indians who lost their lives were from low-income families and arrived in Kuwait with high hopes and big dreams, but the ghastly blaze not only claimed the lives of the breadwinners of their families but stubbed out their dreams. Thomas Oommen, 37, from Mepral, Tiruvalla, who died in the fire had planned to go back to Kerala next month to inaugurate his new house, a long-cherished dream and the result of his four years of hard work as a technician in Kuwait.

Sreehari Pradeep, 27, from Changanachery, Kerala, came to Kuwait only on June 5 with a lot of hopes and aspirations to take up a new job. It was painful for his father to identify his body at the Sabah mortuary. The grief-stricken father managed to identify

his son from the tattoo his son had on his hand. The tragedy struck Kulu Ponnaleri, a native of Thrikaripur, Kerala, who was planning to go back to Kerala soon after wrapping up his 20 years of expat life for a family reunion.

Although, 50 deaths have officially been confirmed, identification of the bodies is still incomplete as many bodies have been charred beyond recognition. Among the other victims was Muralidharan Nair, who had been working in Kuwait for 32 years as a senior supervisor in the company that owned the housing facility where the fire broke out. The family of Saju Varghese, 56, found out about the fire from television and social media, and confirmed his death from friends and relatives in Kuwait. Working in the Gulf nation for the last 21 years, Varghese planned to visit Kerala later this month to arrange his daughter's higher education.

Another victim, Stephin Abraham Sabu, 29, was an engineer in Kuwait since 2019 and called home almost daily. He had visited his hometown Kottayam "two or three times" since he left, and had booked air tickets to return in August for the housewarming of his family's new home and to help them buy a new car, his friends said. Sabu's father has a small shop in Kottayam while his mother is a housewife. His brother, Febin, also works in Kuwait but lived separately.

Shameer Umarudheen's "entire village is in mourning", said Safedu, a relative of the 33-year-old victim from Kollam. "He was a lovely man. Always very friendly to everyone around," Safedu added. "He does not come from a well-off family, so him going to Kuwait was a chance for the family to do better."

Thrikaripur native Nalinakshana had a narrow escape as he managed to jump from the third floor of the building on a water tank below as the fire spread to the upper floors and people started to cry out. He survived with some injuries. According to reports, some of the victims died when they jumped from the building in a desperate bid to escape the fire. — With inputs from Agencies

International

# Lebanon's Hezbollah reveals more of its arms in risky escalation

## Analysts see group seeking to strengthen deterrence

BEIRUT: Hezbollah is drawing on more of its arsenal in its conflict with the Zionist entity even as it declares no interest in a full-scale war, an escalation analysts believe aims to deter the Zionist entity from a wider confrontation but which could also risk igniting one. Sparked by the Gaza war, the conflict across the Lebanese-Zionist border has shifted up several gears in the last month, adding to concern the heavily armed adversaries could escalate towards a war that would be ruinous for both countries. The spectre of such a war is looming over the region as US-led mediation struggles to secure a Gaza ceasefire, with increasingly belligerent rhetoric from both the Zionist entity and the Iran-backed Hezbollah.

conflict to areas at the border or near it since October, keeping Lebanese and Zionist cities out of the firing line. The Zionist entity said on Thursday that it holds Hezbollah and its Iranian sponsors to blame for the increase in violence and repeated vows to restore security to the border.

The Zionist Defense Forces did not immediately reply to a request for comment on new Hezbollah capabilities such as the claim to have targeted a warplane. The source familiar with Hezbollah's arsenal said it is still calibrating its actions with the intention of avoiding all-out war even as it has stepped up its attacks - the approach it has adopted since the con-

question is what kind of air defense does Hezbollah have and what more could it get from the Iranians and the Syrians. I suspect that any serious indication of serious capabilities would lead the Zionists to hit hard," he said.

### More 'surprises'

Hezbollah began trading fire with the Zionist entity on October 8, since the ongoing war on Gaza. Hezbollah says it will cease fire only when the Gaza war stops. Tens of thousands of people have fled both sides of the border. Zionist strikes have killed more than 300 Hezbollah fighters and around 80 civilians in Lebanon, according to Reuters tallies. Attacks from Lebanon have killed 18 Zionist soldiers and 10 civilians. The Zionist entity has pounded areas where Hezbollah operates in south Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. In the Zionist entity, the displacement of so many people has become a big political issue, piling pressure on the government to act. Prior to this conflict, the Zionist entity and Hezbollah had avoided a major clash since a month-long war in 2006, deterred since then by mutual threats of catastrophic destruction.

Hezbollah's arsenal has grown enormously since 2006. Hezbollah has downed five Zionist drones, flown drones at Zionist targets, and used sophisticated guided rockets that capture footage as they approach their targets, images later broadcast on the group's al-Manar TV. Hezbollah fired Iranian-made Falaq 2 artillery rockets for the first time on June 8, able to carry a bigger warhead than the Falaq 1 it has fired in the past. Its rockets have also set off wildfires in northern Zionist entity. Hezbollah deputy head Naim Qassem said on June 4 the group did not seek war, but was ready to fight if one was imposed on it. He has also hinted at the weaponry the group has in reserve. "What the party has used so far in the battle to support Gaza and proactively defend Lebanon is a small part of what it has, and there are matters whose surprises may be greater," he said on June 10.

The United States, which deems Hezbollah a terrorist group, has led diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the conflict. A US official said on Thursday Washington was very concerned about potential escalation. Hezbollah has indicated its openness to diplomatic arrangements if Lebanon is to benefit, but says this can't be discussed until the Zionist entity halts the Gaza offensive. The Zionist entity has also indicated openness to a diplomatic settlement that would restore security in the north, whilst preparing for an offensive. — Reuters



BAGHDAD: Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein (right) and Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri give a joint press conference in Baghdad, on June 13, 2024. — AFP

## Iraq warns of 'danger' in Lebanon conflict expanding

BAGHDAD: Iraq's foreign minister on Thursday, receiving his Iranian counterpart in Baghdad, warned of the dangers of conflict expanding in southern Lebanon and its repercussions across the Middle East. Near-daily cross-border fire between Lebanese-based militants and Zionist forces have occurred since the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip. The exchanges between the Zionist entity Hezbollah group have intensified in recent weeks, sparking fears of wider war.

"If southern Lebanon is attacked, it will affect the entire region," Iraq's top diplomat Fuad Hussein said at a press conference with Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri, who also voiced opposition to a regional escalation. "The expansion of the war is a danger, not only for Lebanon but for the entire region," Hussein said, repeating his call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The Iranian minister similarly called for "putting an end as quickly as possible, and without preconditions," to "war crimes" and "genocide" in the Gaza Strip.

He said the Zionist entity, in response to their "failure" in Gaza, "may seek to commit further wrongs and broaden the scope of their aggression", but Iran would not allow anyone "to harm stability and regional security, even if only a little." — AFP



MARJAYOUN: Lebanese rescuers and firefighters douse a fire in an area targeted by a Zionist strike in the pine tree forest of the southern Lebanese town of Marjayoun. - AFP

Hezbollah has ratcheted up its attacks in several ways of late, sending larger numbers of explosive drones in one go, using a new type of rocket, and declaring that it has targeted Zionist warplanes for the first time - a milestone for the group, according to a source familiar with Hezbollah's arsenal. Retaliating for the killing of a senior commander by the Zionist entity, Hezbollah unleashed two days of its heaviest bombardment of the conflict so far, firing some 250 rockets at the Zionist entity on Wednesday and an even larger attack at nine Zionist military sites with rockets and drones on Thursday.

Many of Wednesday's rockets appeared to have landed in open ground and set off large brush fires. Shrapnel from Thursday's attack left at least two people wounded in the Zionist entity. The escalation has tested unwritten rules that have largely confined the

flict started. The source said Hezbollah had begun escalating with the aim of increasing pressure on the Zionist entity as it launched an offensive in Rafah in the Gaza Strip in early May, and also with the intention of gradually unveiling more of its capabilities. This included the anti-aircraft weapons Hezbollah fired at a Zionist warplane for the first time on June 6, an effort to challenge the air supremacy the Zionist entity has long enjoyed, the source said, declining to identify the type of weapon used.

Hezbollah has announced four attacks targeting Zionist warplanes in the last week, saying it had forced them to leave Lebanese air space. "Hezbollah is showing the kinds of capabilities they have" in an effort to "strengthen deterrence for a conventional war," said Seth G. Jones, senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "The



## 20 Years of Excellence: AUK Graduates Class of 2024

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) held its graduation commencement for the class of 2024 on Wednesday 12th June conferring the degrees on 415 graduates—155 of which were from the College of Arts and Sciences, 128 from the College of Business and Economics, and 132 from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Amongst the 2024 cohort, 11 graduates were awarded highest honors (summa cum laude), 26 awarded high honors (magna cum laude), and 45 awarded honors (cum laude).



AUK Founder and Chair of the Board of Trustees, Sheikh Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah; and Mr. Elie Habib, CEO of OSN+ and Anghami

Held at The Arena Kuwait, the graduation ceremony was attended by Sheikh Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, founder and chair of AUK's Board of Trustees, members of the AUK board of trustees, diplomats, dignitaries, and families of this year's graduates.

Following the national anthem and the Holy Quran recitation, AUK



College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) Diploma Presentations by AUK President & Dean of CEAS

president, Dr. Rawda Awwad, acknowledged AUK's 20-year anniversary by highlighting the University's commitment to fulfilling its mission. "Since its establishment in 2004, AUK has been at the forefront of educational development and innovation. We are proud of our strategic vision, our partnerships with leading institutions like Dartmouth College, and our internationally accredited programs. Our outreach, training, service learning, and volunteer activities have provided spaces for personal growth and development."

President Awwad then extended her well wishes to the graduates, "As you begin your new chapter in your life, please try to appreciate the wealth of knowledge and the values you've gained at AUK. Perseverance, collaboration, empathy, critical thinking, and the spirit of lifelong learning will guide you. Be compassionate and ethical in all that you do."

This year's keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Elie Habib, co-founder of Anghami and CEO of OSN+ and Anghami. He emphasized the importance of having a unique mindset in achieving success, "Discipline isn't just about what you choose to do, but also about what you choose not to do. I've met many successful people, and they all have one thing in common: they think differently than most people. They aren't afraid to reinvent themselves around the goals that matter to them."

Following the keynote address, AUK's vice president for Student Affairs, Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Farhan, announced the class valedictorian, Salah Ali Malek, who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social and Behavioral Sciences with a 3.96 GPA.

During his speech, Salah addressed his peers and acknowledged how AUK's supportive environment contributed to his success,



College of Business & Economics (CBE) Diploma Presentations by AUK President & Dean of CBE

"As self-driven as one can be, it is unfeasible to thrive or prosper unless you are in the right environment, which leads me back to AUK. Through their culturally diverse, immensely friendly, highly professional, and academically validating environment, I was finally achieving results that reflect my value."

The event then proceeded to the part of the ceremony most anticipated by the students—the distribution of their earned degrees. Upon the recommendations of the deans—Dr. Ali Charara, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Ralph Palliam, dean of the College of Business and Economics; and Dr. Mohamed El-Abd, dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, President Awwad conferred upon the graduates their respective degrees. The graduates were then awarded their diplomas by President Awwad and respective college deans.

In keeping with the academic tradition, the graduates were requested to shift their tassels from right to left, thereby marking their official graduation from AUK. As the ceremony drew to its conclusion, the graduating class celebrated the occasion and took photos with their parents.

AUK is a prestigious institution renowned for its commitment to academic excellence. Offering a diverse range of accredited undergraduate programs, the campus fosters collaboration and cultural diversity. AUK's state-of-the-art facilities include modern classrooms equipped with cutting-edge technology and research laboratories, and students also enjoy recreational facilities such as the gymnasium and lounge. AUK is dedicated to empowering students with knowledge, skills, and experiences that transcend the classroom, shaping future leaders and change-makers.

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) currently offers 16-degree programs in various academic disciplines. AUK received its institutional accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC) in Kuwait in 2006. The College of Business & Economics is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB); the College of Arts and Sciences is accredited by the American Academy for Liberal Education (AAL); its Bachelor of Arts in Design (concentration in graphic design) is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD); and the Intensive English Program is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA); the Computer Science program is accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). The Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering programs are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET.

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) is an independent, private, equal opportunity, and coeducational liberal arts institution of higher education. The educational, cultural and administrative structure, methods and standards of AUK are based on the American model of higher learning. The language of instruction is English. More information on the American University of Kuwait can be found at [www.auk.edu.kw](http://www.auk.edu.kw)



Salah Malek, Class Valedictorian Bachelor of Arts in Social and Behavioral Sciences



General Event Photos



College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) Diploma Presentations by AUK President & Dean of CAS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024

# Japanese escargot entrepreneur Takase achieves the 'impossible'

'The only person in the world' breeding specific delicacy



MATSUSAKA, Japan: Photo shows Mie Escargots Development Laboratory president Toshihide Takase serving a dish of Burgundy snails at the canteen area of his farm in Matsusaka, Mie prefecture. (Right) Photo shows Burgundy snails at the Mie Escargots Development Laboratory farm in Matsusaka, Mie prefecture. — AFP photos

## Apple briefly reclaims title of world's most valuable company



CUPERTINO: Tim Cook, Apple chief executive officer, speaks during Apple's annual Worldwide Developers Conference (WDC) in Cupertino, California. — AFP

**NEW YORK:** Apple on Wednesday briefly reclaimed its berth as the world's biggest company when measured by stock price, taking back the top position for a few hours from Microsoft. The iPhone juggernaut is on a Wall Street tear following its announcements of AI features at its annual developers conference on Monday. Apple, which had taken its time to formulate its AI strategy, lost its long-held top spot in January as investors rewarded Microsoft's unabashed rollout of new generative AI products under its CoPilot brand.

For a few hours on Wednesday, Microsoft lost the pole position, but managed to finish the day very narrowly back on top with a valuation of \$3.27 trillion. Apple stood at \$3.26 trillion. On Monday, Apple unveiled a new AI platform called Apple Intelligence that will be gradually added to a new version of the iOS 18 operating system. The technology will only be available on Apple's highest-end hardware, forcing interested customers to pay premium prices to enjoy the AI capabilities.

Analysts, while initially lukewarm, have grown to believe that the iPhone's new powers will motivate the company's 1.5 billion-strong user base to update their phones in order to take advantage of the AI features. In an interview, Apple CEO Tim Cook explained the company has carefully embraced generative AI, "which has its downsides," but that the ChatGPT-style technology "was never off the table." "It was always about pursuing it in a thoughtful way," he told the Marques Brownlee podcast on Wednesday. "We've implemented it in ways that are less likely to create issues" on violating data privacy, he said. — AFP

**MATSUSAKA:** Far from Parisian bistros serving up Burgundy snails, one Japanese man has figured out how to farm the slimy species - a feat that has long eluded the French. Toshihide Takase, 76, says he is "the only person in the world" breeding this specific delicacy after four decades of trial and error to find the right conditions. French embassy and industry insiders also believe that Takase, who has invested a small fortune and taught himself everything about the creature, is a unique case.

Stuffed with butter, garlic and parsley then baked, Burgundy snails - or escargots de Bourgogne - have been part of French gastronomy since the 19th century. But they are notoriously difficult to farm because they don't take well to crowded conditions and grow slowly, usually taking two or three years to reach adult size. The mollusc, whose scientific name is *helix pomatia*, has been a protected species in France since 1979 to save it from extinction.

The vast majority of the several thousand tons of snails eaten by the nation each year are foraged from woodlands in central and eastern Europe. Around five percent are homegrown in France, but these are a different species, *helix aspersa*, which are easier to farm and do not have the "Burgundy" name. "My sister gave me tinned escargots as a present after a trip to France" 45 years ago, Takase told AFP. "But they didn't taste good, and smelled bad," said the

retired entrepreneur. Takase became obsessed with producing them himself, even though "at first, everybody acted like I was stupid".

### Perfect conditions

He stubbornly devoured books on the subject and met French *helix aspersa* breeders to learn more. It's a niche interest anywhere, but highly unusual in Japan, where sea snails are part of the rich cuisine but land snails are seen as a pest that can harm crops. After seven years of bureaucratic wrangling, Takase was granted a permit to rear *helix pomatia* and imported 100 specimens from France to start his farm. The indoor facility in Matsusaka, a town between Osaka and Nagoya, is called the Mie Escargots Development Laboratory. Crates of live Burgundy snails are stacked in three layers on custom-built metal racks, with humidity and temperature carefully controlled.

Next door is an active metalwork foundry - the first business set up by Takase, who used to manage several ventures. He says the farm can produce up to 600,000 snails a year, with growth time reduced to just four months. To achieve this, he adds a calcium-rich powder made from oyster shells to the humid soil, which helps the gastropods grow big and strong fast. "They love it," said Takase, who spent 20 years developing his own nutritious snail food from soybeans and corn. Their feeding containers are

washed by hand every three days, because "snails love cleanliness", he added.

### 'At what price?'

Visitors to the "laboratory" get the chance to taste Takase's snails, which cost 9,900 yen (\$60) for a pack of 30. There are different prices for restaurants or bulk sales. For now, business is small-scale and domestic, but he is keen to pass on his know-how to French snail farmers and has launched talks with the embassy in Japan. William Blanche, co-president of France's National Federation of Heliciculture, told AFP the species has a "reputation for being impossible to breed".

It's "ironic" that Burgundy snails eaten in France have been nowhere near the province of the same name, he said, so is intrigued by Takase's project. Even so, Blanche questioned how successful it could be. "Would our consumers, who are used to different snails, be interested - and at what price?" A French snail industry insider, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also raised an all-important point. "They must taste good," he said, sceptical that farmed Burgundy snails would be as delicious as wild ones with their "strong woodland taste". But "I dream of one day seeing escargots de Bourgogne made in France," he added. "The marketing buzz would be huge." — AFP

## Asian stocks build on Wall St records

**HONG KONG:** Asian traders extended a rally across world markets on Thursday as they welcomed figures showing US inflation slowed further last month, tempering concerns about the Federal Reserve's forecast of just one interest rate cut this year. The weaker-than-expected May consumer price index marked a second successive month of slowing - to a more than three-year low - and boosted optimism that the central bank would be able to soften monetary policy after a long-running campaign of tightening.

The figures also calmed investors spooked by Friday's blockbuster non-farm payrolls data that indicated the labor market remained tight and the economy in rude health, making it harder to lower borrowing costs. However, the Fed later in the day released its keenly awaited "dot plot" outlook for interest rates, which showed that decision-makers saw just one cut this year - down from three predicted in its previous guidance in March. They penciled in a median of four cuts next year and four in 2026.

Bank boss Jerome Powell welcomed the inflation data but added that officials needed to see more "good inflation readings" before they would be confident enough to consider reducing. The "dot plot" saw the S&P 500 and Nasdaq come off their intra-day highs, although they still managed to chalk up a third successive record close, with analysts saying the positive run of inflation data could allow the bank to cut more.

"Patience is a virtue, and it is still one that the Fed seems to hold as it outlined confidence in an economy and inflation that are on the right path," said JP Morgan Asset Management's Kerry Craig. "The Fed could still move two times this year if inflation figures continue to soften, and... Powell did not come across as hawkish in the press conference. The markets should take away the impression of a central bank that is still on a policy easing path, even if it is coming later."

And Lon Erickson, at Thornburg Investment Management, added: "Powell specifically commented that the labor market can weaken very quickly and the Fed is not waiting for that. 'I suspect this means the Fed is at or near the point in progress on inflation that it would be willing to move quickly and decisively with rate cuts to arrest significant job losses. 'High inflation is painful for American families as he stated, but no income is much, much worse.'"

Asian markets largely welcomed the news out of Washington, with Hong Kong, Sydney, Seoul, Mumbai, Singapore, Wellington, Taipei and Jakarta all higher, although Tokyo, Shanghai and Manila



ISLAMABAD: A vegetable vendor waits for customers at a market in Islamabad on June 12, 2024. — AFP

dipped. London, Paris and Frankfurt were all lower in the morning session. The slowdown in US inflation and the prospect of Fed rates coming down weighed on the dollar Wednesday, although it edged back against most peers Thursday. Observers said the euro was also supported by French President Emmanuel Macron's commitment not to resign if his party lost snap elections he called at the weekend after a shock defeat by the far right in EU-wide polls.

Macron said he wanted to form an alliance against political extremes in the vote, adding that he aimed to keep the far right from succeeding him when he steps down in 2027. Investors are also keeping an eye on the yen as the Bank of Japan started a two-day policy meeting, with speculation swirling that it is preparing the ground for a further tightening after lifting interest rates in March for the first time in 17 years.

### European stocks falter

Meanwhile, European stock markets faltered Thursday following mixed showings by Asia and on Wall Street, as traders reacted to US Federal Reserve signals that it plans only one interest-rate cut this year. Paris and Frankfurt were the biggest fallers, shedding more than one percent nearing the half-year stage, with investors continuing to track fallout from shock European Union elections at the weekend. Oil prices were down nearly one percent, while the euro and pound steadied versus the dollar.

The European single currency has recovered from sharp losses in recent sessions, after French President Emmanuel Macron said he would not resign should his party lose a snap elections he called after its defeat to the far right in EU-wide polls. In the United States, the Federal Reserve left its key lending rate unchanged on Wednesday and penciled in just one rate cut this year, down from the three expected in March.

Despite US annual inflation dipping to 3.3 percent last month, the fall was below expectations, while the consumer price index remains a fair bit above the Fed's two-percent target. "Fed chair Jerome Powell didn't give a huge amount away, although it felt telling that he was fairly cautious about the cooler-than-expected inflation figures from earlier in the day," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould. "The central bank is clear that it wants further signs inflation is on the path to the magic two-percent level before it is prepared to start cutting rates. One major sticking point being the continued tight labor market conditions."

Investors were also keeping an eye on the yen as the Bank of Japan started a two-day policy meeting, with speculation swirling that it is preparing the ground for a further tightening after lifting interest rates in March for the first time in 17 years. Japan has been an outlier in recent years, deciding against raising interest rates to fight high inflation. And just as major central banks are looking to cut borrowing costs, the BoJ has decided to start hiking. — AFP





## Business

# Why are China electric cars in EU crosshairs?

## China thunders over tariffs, condemns bloc's protectionism

**BEIJING:** The European Union said this week it would slap additional tariffs of up to 38 percent on Chinese electric cars from next month after an anti-subsidy probe. Here's why the Chinese electric vehicle market has raised hackles among European policymakers - and how Beijing might respond:

### How did China's EV sector get so strong?

China has spearheaded a targeted industrial strategy to boost its EV sector, pouring vast state funds into domestic firms as well as research and development. Between 2014 and the end of 2022, the Chinese government said it had spent more than 200 billion yuan (\$28 billion) on subsidies and tax breaks for EV purchases alone.

The approach has given Chinese firms a critical edge in the race to provide cheaper, more efficient EVs over leading US automakers, which have not always enjoyed such state largesse. They have also been boosted by surging domestic demand: Of all new EVs sold globally in December last year, 69 percent were in China, according to the research firm Rystad Energy. Exports are soaring. According to the Atlantic Council, Chinese sales of EVs abroad rose 70 percent

in 2023, reaching \$34.1 billion. Almost 40 percent of those exports went to the European Union, making it the largest recipient of Chinese EVs.

### Who are the key players?

The overwhelming market leader from China is BYD, which this year posted record annual profits for 2023 and has said it aims to be among the top five car companies in Europe. Last year, it became the first manufacturer to pass the five million milestone in terms of hybrids and all-electric vehicles produced, cumulatively - crowning itself as "the world's leading manufacturer of new energy vehicles". Among the other top Chinese EV makers exporting to Europe are SAIC, MG Motor and Polestar - owned by Volvo and its Chinese parent firm Geely - according to state media.

### Why is the EU worried?

The surge in exports has allowed Chinese firms to rapidly increase their share of the EU market for EVs. EU imports of EVs from China mushroomed from around 57,000 in 2020 to around 437,000 in 2023, the US-based Peterson Institute for International

Economics said. That rapid growth has alarmed the bloc, which has argued that Beijing's "unfair subsidization" of the industry "is causing a threat of economic injury" to EU EV makers. On Wednesday, the EU proposed a provisional hike of tariffs on Chinese manufacturers: 17.4 percent for BYD, 20 percent for Geely and 38.1 percent for SAIC. But there is also dissent within the EU - Germany, a major trade partner and whose car market is heavily reliant on China, warned that the tariffs risked a "trade war" and would harm German companies.

### How has Beijing reacted?

China has thundered over the tariffs, condemning the bloc's "protectionism" and warning they would harm Europe's economic interests. Beijing is yet to announce any countermeasures, though it has promised to "take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard its legitimate rights and interests". It said Thursday that it "reserves the right" to file a case with the World Trade Organization over the EU tariffs. Beijing could target EU exports, including pork and dairy products, according to Chinese state media.

In January, China launched an anti-dumping in-

vestigation into brandy imported from the EU, in a move seen as targeting France, which had pushed for the commission's probe. A group representing French cognac producers said it was "deeply concerned" about possible Chinese retaliation. "They will retaliate for sure," Tu Le, founder Sino Auto Insights, told AFP. "I'd also keep a close eye on French and Italian luxury goods and wine," he said. "On the other hand, with the Chinese economy still not well, their response may be more bark than bite."

### What impact will the tariffs have?

Germany's Kiel Institute for the World Economy said a 20 percent tariff would mean 125,000 fewer Chinese electric cars to the EU, worth almost \$4 billion. And Gregor Sebastian, a senior analyst at Rhodium, wrote ahead of the announcement that the tariffs would likely result in "short-term declines" in exports. "Given that 40 percent of China's EV exports went to the EU in 2023/24, re-routing exports will be challenging," he said in a post on LinkedIn. "China is likely to ramp up rhetoric on framing the investigation as politically motivated, especially with Tesla's exclusion from the sample." — AFP

## PMI tops Forbes' 2024 Net Zero Leaders List

**DUBAI:** Philip Morris International Inc. (PMI) (NYSE: PM) has ranked first in Forbes' 2024 Net Zero Leaders ranking, which highlights the 100 US public companies best positioned to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Forbes used data from firms Sustainalytics and Morningstar to rank companies' commitment



Monica Barten

to a net zero future. It also considered each company's management structure to aid in risk assessment, governance, strategy, metrics for achieving decarbonization goals for scopes 1+2+3, as well as financial strength to withstand industry competition and economic turmoil.

"Our approach to sustainability goes beyond minimizing negative externalities and mitigating risks. Deeply connected to our transformation strategy, sustainability has always been intended to embody a profound opportunity for innovation, growth, and long-term value creation," explained Jennifer Motles, Chief Sustainability Officer at PMI.

"Our dedication reflects our response to the concerns of our shareholders and other stakeholders alike, and our climate strategy aims to address pertinent climate change-related risks and build resilience while seizing opportunities presented by a low-carbon future."

"Being recognized as Forbes' top Net Zero Leader for 2024 marks a significant achievement in PMI's sustainability efforts. This accolade reflects PMI's comprehensive approach to integrating sustainability into every facet of its business, aligning with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Reporting standards." Commented Monica Barten, Communications Director, Philip Morris Management Services (Middle East) Ltd.

"Our initiatives here in the Middle East, such as the Consumables Take Back Program in Dubai and Kuwait, along with our World is Not an Ashtray education initiative, demonstrates our proactive stance in reducing the environmental impacts of our products across the region. Moreover, our operational strategies focus on minimizing environmental footprint and fostering a culture of sustainability among employees, emphasizing the importance of understanding, and protecting local biodiversity and managing post-consumer waste. The recognition by Forbes underscores PMI's commitment to driving positive change and leading the way towards a sustainable, smoke-free future."

This distinction complements growing external recognition of PMI's sustainability performance and reporting, including: Inclusion in CDP's Supplier Engagement Leader Board for the seventh year (announced March 2024); Achievement of CDP's Triple A rating for the fourth consecutive year - placing PMI among the world's leading companies in environmental transparency and action (announced February 2024).

- Early Adopter of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) framework (as of January 2024)

- Inclusion in the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI) for the first time and the Dow Jones Sustainability North America Composite Index for the fourth consecutive year (index inclusion effective as of Dec. 18, 2023), in addition to being awarded "Prime" status in the ISS ESG Corporate Rating (ISS ESG Rating as of Nov. 21, 2023)

- Validation from the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) on its Forest, Land, and Agriculture (FLAG) emissions reduction targets, making PMI one of very few companies to achieve this recognition (as of August 2023) Please visit [pmi.com/sustainability](https://www.pmi.com/sustainability) to learn more about sustainability at PMI and for access to additional sustainability resources, including PMI's Integrated Report 2023, TCFD Report, Preserve Nature Report, Reduce Post-Consumer Waste Strategy Report, Sustainability Materiality Report, and Low-Carbon Transition Plan.

## talabat and LOYAC cooperate in 'Farhat Al-Eid' initiative

**KUWAIT:** Reaffirming its role as a leader in corporate citizenship, tech pioneer, talabat, recently partnered with non-profit organization for community empowerment, LOYAC, to support the "Farhat Al-Eid" initiative. This effort, part of talabat's community engagement program, aimed to celebrate Eid Al-Adha with needy families in Kuwait by providing Eid clothes for their children. Volunteers from LOYAC and talabat's employees took 125 children on a fun shopping spree at a major department store in Kuwait, for children to buy new Eid garments of their choice.

talabat and LOYAC's "Farhat Al-Eid" initiative seeks to alleviate the financial burden on needy families by providing new Eid clothes for their children, bringing joy through an exciting shopping tour. Volunteers from talabat and LOYAC guided the children, supervised by their families, in choosing from a wide variety of new clothes. The children selected beautiful dresses for girls and traditional, elegant outfits for boys, along with shoes and accessories.

Commenting on the collaboration, Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Communications, Public Affairs, and Corporate Responsibility at talabat Kuwait, said, "We are proud to join LOYAC in this wonderful initiative, which puts smiles on the faces of children as they choose their Eid clothes. At talabat, we believe in the power of such activities to enhance social solidarity."

He added that this contribution is part of talabat's ongoing social commitment, as it continues to adopt initiatives and partake in community engagements that improve quality of life and promote equality among society. Al-Mansour also highlighted the initiative's impact on



a corporate level, noting how involving talabat employees in volunteer activities fosters team spirit and provides them with opportunities to directly contribute to community service.

Concluding his remarks, Al-Mansour said: "The experience was truly special for our employees who participated and witnessed the children's enthusiasm during the shopping tour, which brought them great happiness from contributing to others' joy, and that is the spirit of talabat." Nadia Al Marzouq, Head of Media and Public Relations at LOYAC, expressed appreciation for talabat's support and active participation in the success of the "Farhat Al-Eid" initiative. She emphasized the importance of such partnerships in achieving a sustainable positive impact on society and enhancing social responsibility in the private sector.

This humanitarian act of kindness from both



talabat and LOYAC's teams also had a significant impact on the children's parents by relieving the financial burden of buying new clothes for their children for Eid Al-Adha, allowing the entire Kuwaiti society to share in the holiday joy. The parents expressed deep gratitude to talabat and LOYAC for this timely and generous initiative, which helped ease their financial challenges.

It is worth mentioning that this initiative is part of a series of social activities and contributions by talabat in charitable and humanitarian work, a key pillar of its comprehensive social responsibility program. The company consistently seeks to support and engage with the community on various occasions, making a positive and sustainable difference in the lives of individuals and families, and setting a role model among private sector institutions for community commitment.

## Weyay Bank wins 'Most Innovative App for Young People' award

**KUWAIT:** Weyay Bank, Kuwait's first digital bank, has been honored with the prestigious "Most Innovative App for Young People" award at Global Finance's annual Innovators Awards for 2024. The accolade recognizes Weyay's relentless commitment to revolutionizing Kuwait's banking landscape by catering to the evolving needs of the digital-native generation through its new innovative banking app designed specifically for 8- to 14-year-olds, Jeel Weyay.

Since its inception in 2021, Weyay Bank has been at the forefront of digital banking innovation, redefining traditional banking norms to provide a has-

le-free, 24/7, and paper-free banking experience tailored specifically for the youth demographic. By seamlessly integrating cutting-edge technology with customer-centric solutions, Weyay but has earned unparalleled recognition for its advanced contributions to the banking industry.

Weyay's disruptive approach to banking is evident in its Jeel Weyay app, designed to empower young users with financial independence and literacy from a young age. The Jeel feature, a card and app for children as young as 8 years old, simplifies banking language and adopts a friendly, jargon-free approach, making it accessible and engaging for young customers. With its unique blend of user-friendly design and comprehensive parental controls, Jeel Weyay represents the next generation of kid-friendly banking, setting a new standard for innovation in the industry.

Weyay Bank's win at The Innovators 2024 reaffirms its position as a trailblazer in digital banking



innovation, cementing its legacy as a pioneer in Kuwait's banking landscape. As the financial industry continues to evolve, Weyay remains steadfast in its mission to redefine banking for the digital age and empower young people to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

## US Fed holds interest rates, now sees just one cut this year

**WASHINGTON:** The US Federal Reserve left its key lending rate unchanged on Wednesday and penciled in just one rate cut this year, down from the three expected in March after inflation stalled in the first quarter. The Fed voted unanimously to keep its benchmark interest rate between 5.25 and 5.50 percent, and said that "modest" progress had been made toward its long-term inflation target of two percent.

The announcement suggests that central bank officials remain wary about cutting rates too soon, despite consumer inflation data published earlier Wednesday, which pointed to a slowdown in the rate of price increases in May. The annual consumer price index (CPI) came in at 3.3 percent last month, down 0.1 percentage point from April and unchanged on a monthly basis, the Labor Department said. This was slightly below expectations.

Fed chair Jerome Powell welcomed the inflation data during a press conference on Wednesday, but added that the US central bank needs to see more

"good inflation readings" before it gains sufficient confidence to consider cutting interest rates. He added that if the US economy remains strong and inflation persists, the Fed would be "prepared to maintain the current target range for the federal funds rate as long as appropriate."

### Just one rate cut

The surprise of the day came in the Fed's updated economic forecasts from the 19 members of its rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC). Policymakers lowered their individual forecasts for the number of rate cuts they expect this year, reducing the median projection for the end of 2024 to the midpoint between 5.00 and 5.25 percent. This means that FOMC participants only expect one 0.25 percentage point cut before year-end, two fewer than in the last update in March. The announcement caught some analysts by surprise, while others suggested the Fed would have to backtrack in the months ahead.

"The dropping of two of the easings previously expected this year is unnecessarily aggressive," Pantheon Macroeconomics chief economist Ian Shepherdson wrote in a note to clients. He added that the Fed would likely need to backtrack to a softening of the labor market of the summer and better progress on inflation. "It will be a close call between one or



NEW YORK: A 'Now Hiring' sign is seen at a FedEx location on Broadway in New York City. — AFP

two 25 bps (basis point) rate cuts this year," Wells Fargo economists wrote in an investor note, adding that their forecast remained for two cuts this year.

FOMC participants penciled in a median of four quarter percentage-point cuts for next year, and an additional four in 2026. In their economic forecasts, Fed officials also raised the forecast for headline inflation this year to 2.6 percent, up 0.2 percentage points, and kept their growth outlook unchanged at 2.1 percent. Policymakers then expect both growth and inflation to moderate further in 2025. — AFP

# Weekender

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2024

## Dates The precious fruit



A date palm with burlap placed around clusters of dates. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



African Barhi



Unripe Khalal



Majdool and Saggae dates stuffed with nuts.



Date balls mixed with sesame seeds and coconut flakes.

**D**ates are a cherished fruit in Gulf countries due to their cultural, economic, and religious significance. The region is renowned for producing the finest quality dates globally, thanks to its ideal climate for date palm cultivation. Dates are often consumed during special occasions like Ramadan, to break the fast, and Eid, as they are considered an elegant fruit to serve to visitors and enjoy with coffee.

The unique flavors and varieties of dates make them highly sought after. As the season for harvesting Khalal (green dates) and Rutab (ripened Khalal) begins with the arrival of summer, Kuwait Times visited multiple locations to explore the various types of dates and the new stuffing trends, such as nuts and tahini.

Mustafa Muhammad, a vendor at a date shop, shared with Kuwait Times the variety of fillings commonly found inside dates, including pistachios, almonds, cashews, sesame tahini (harda) and occasionally dried fruits like figs and apricots. In addition to fillings, dates can be adorned with toppings such as sesame seeds, fennel seeds, edible flowers and more.

Popular date varieties that are often stuffed include Majdool, Saggae, Ikhlas and Rutab. Prices vary depending on the serving size, with larger plates priced between KD 4 and 5 and smaller plates ranging from KD 2 to 3. Mustafa also highlighted distinctions between dry dates, such as Khudri, Ali's Plant,

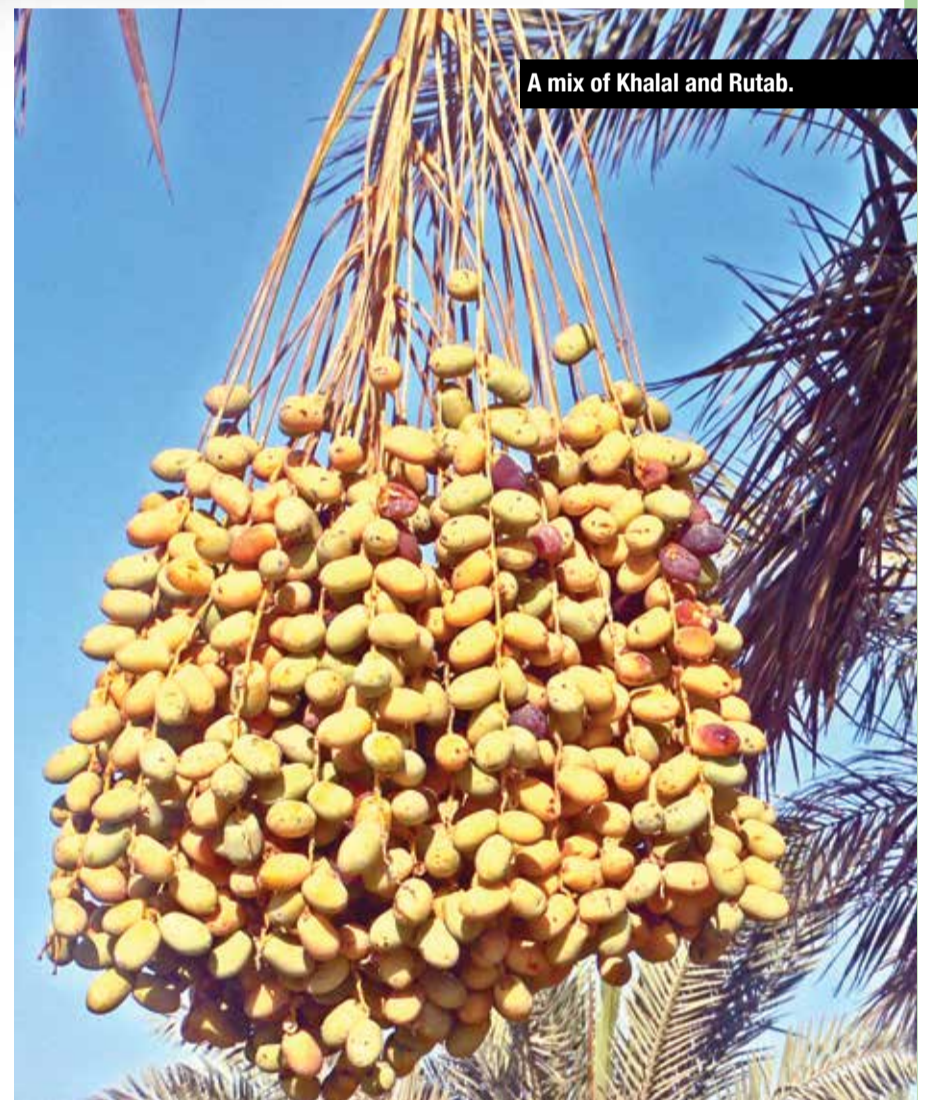


By Ghadeer Ghloom

Manifi, Ajwa and Safawi, and moist dates like Saggae, Majdool and Rutab. Each type commands a different price, with sales typically surging during the holy month of Ramadan.

Ayman Mahmoud, another vendor at a date shop, told Kuwait Times about a product known as "tamriya", which is date paste. "Tamriya is usually made from a type of date called Ikhlas or Khalas. The kernel is removed from the dates, and they are then mashed and mixed with toppings that add flavor, such as harda (sesame paste), pistachios or walnuts, based on one's preference," he said.

Depending on the added ingredients, it can be called "harda tamriya," "walnut tamriya" or "pistachio tamriya". The price is around KD 5 per kilogram. Mahmoud also noted that tamriya was not widely known in the past, but has become popular in recent years, especially with the addition of nuts. Previously, tamriya was either plain or mixed with ghee or dried yogurt, but it has since evolved.



A mix of Khalal and Rutab.



Ikhlas or Khalas dates topped with harda and crushed nuts.



Dates sandwiched between two layers of delicate biscuit, flavored with saffron and topped with sesame seeds.



Ikhlas dates topped with sesame and fennel seeds.



Dates topped with coconut flakes and edible flowers.



A vendor shows Majdool dates.



Harda (sesame tahini) used as dip or as a topping for dates.



Different types of dates including Palestinian Majdool, Jordanian Majdool, Saudi Ajwa and Saudi Saggae.



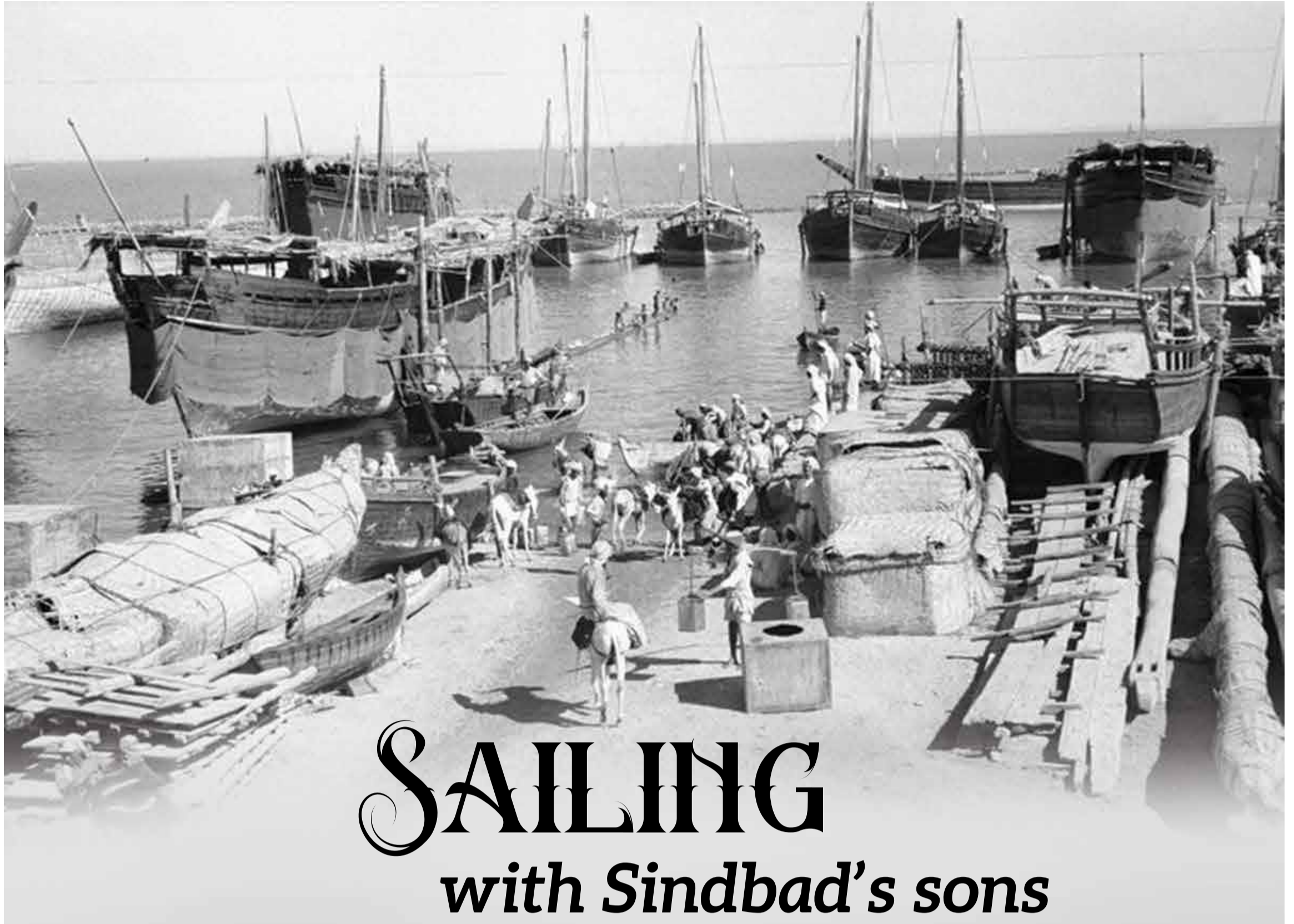
Date syrup



Date paste, known as tamriya, comes plain, with harda (sesame tahini), yoghurt (dried laban) or nuts.



Dates with biscuit, chocolate and cappuccino flavoring. A type of ma'amoul.

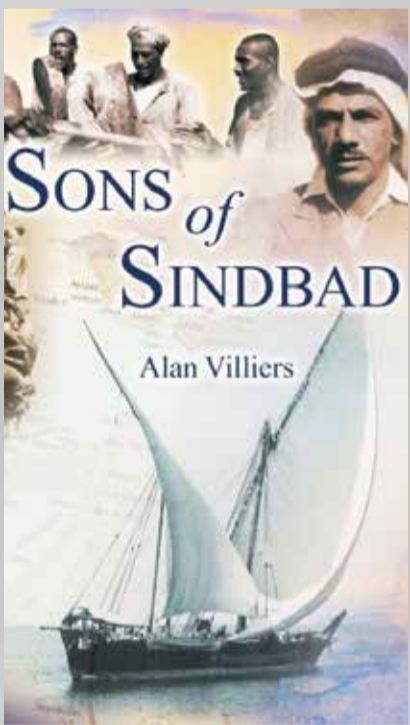


# SAILING

## with Sindbad's sons

Epic voyage of Kuwaiti mariners documented by Australian adventurer Alan Villiers

By Mahmoud Zakaria



If you are looking for excitement and adventure, the story of the "Sons of Sindbad" will thrill you to the core. The Sons of Sindbad were Kuwaiti sailors skilled in the arts of sea navigation, as described by Alan Villiers. Villiers (1903-1982) was an Australian marine scientist and the author of the book "The Sons of Sindbad". He undertook a long voyage with Kuwaiti sailors that lasted approximately nine months, from the port of Aden in Yemen to Kuwait between 1938 and 1939.

Villiers boarded a Kuwaiti dhow called Bayan, captained by al-noukhada Ali Al-Najdi. Villiers admired the Kuwaiti sailors and was eager to learn the arts of sea navigation from Captain Najdi. He spent the entire voyage learning from him, writing and recording the events of the journey on a daily basis throughout the nine months as the boat moved from one port to another. Sometimes the dhow carried passengers; other times, it traded various goods.

After the end of the trip and the boat's return to Kuwait, Villiers stayed

in Kuwait for another four months before leaving for London. The following year, in 1940, Villiers published the events of the trip in a book called "The Sons of Sindbad". The ministry of information translated this valuable book in 1981. The book is considered to be of great historical value because it documents the maritime, social and even political history of Kuwait.

Villiers writes in the book: "The boat pushed from Bahrain across the coral reefs to Kuwait, in the most exciting and dramatic part of the journey. When daylight came on the second day, there was not a single boat in sight. In a shallow sea, and among a number of small divers' boats filled with sailors sitting on the decks of their boats, shucking oysters, Najdi was saying, 'Those boats used to be the fleet of Qatif and Dareen, and their number has diminished due to the recession.'

"The sailors exchanged greetings with these divers: 'We asked them about their condition and their catch, but they only answered with the usual phrase (God is generous).' When Najdi asked them whether they had seen any



Australian adventurer Alan Villiers

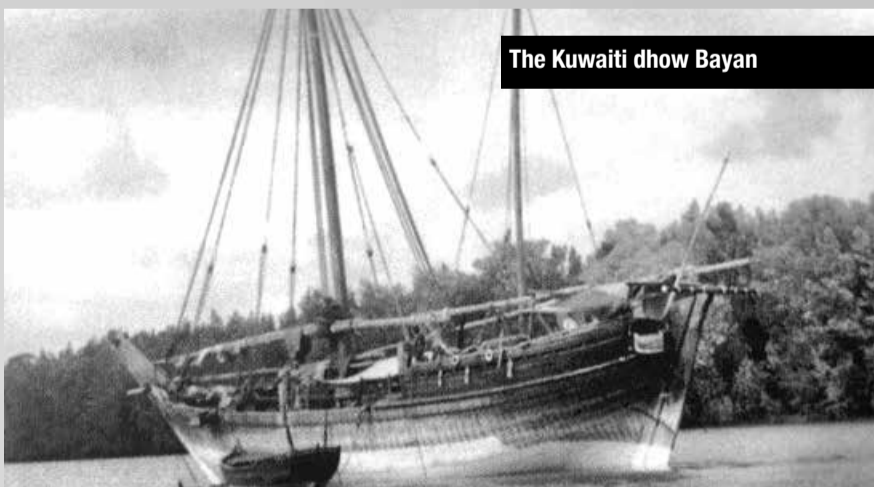


Famous Kuwaiti sailor Ali Al-Najdi

other large boats, they answered in the negative and added that three or four boats had passed by them a few days before we did, but Najdi was adamant that none of them could have dared to sail past those barrier reefs."

Villiers visited Kuwait again in 1967 in response to an invitation from

the ministry of information. He met his friends, sailors Najdi and Hamad bin Salem, and gifted them a collection of new photos from the trip.



The Kuwaiti dhow Bayan



Villiers poses for a photo with locals in traditional Kuwaiti dress.



Najdi with friends in Zanzibar in 1939.





# Mango mania!

## BEAT THE HEAT WITH THE KING OF FRUITS



Shakir Reshamwala

**M**angoes, the "king of fruits", pack a punch with their vibrant flavor and irresistible aroma. Cultivated in sunny realms around the world, these juicy gems come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and colors, from green and yellow

to red and orange, adding a splash of sunshine to any fruit bowl. Bursting with vitamins A and C, fiber and antioxidants, mangoes are like nature's candy with a health boost - perfect for keeping you feeling your best. Among these tropical treasures, the

Alphonso mango stands out as the superstar, and it's my favorite too. Its rich, creamy sweetness and tantalizing aroma can make any mango lover swoon. Whether you're enjoying mangoes fresh, munching on them dried or tossing them into smoothies, salads and

desserts, these fruits turn every dish into a veritable fiesta that can make your tastebuds dance with joy!

The following recipes showcase the versatility and deliciousness of mangoes, perfect for adding a tropical twist to your meals!



### Aamras

**A**amras is a popular Indian dessert made from ripe mango pulp, often enjoyed during the summer months. It is simple to prepare and can be served with puris (fried Indian bread) or as a standalone dessert. Aamras perfectly captures the essence of ripe mangoes, offering a burst of tropical flavor in every spoonful.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3-4 ripe Alphonso mangoes (or any sweet, juicy mango variety)
- 2-3 tablespoons sugar (adjust according to the sweetness of the mangoes)
- ¼ teaspoon cardamom powder
- A pinch of saffron strands (optional)
- ¼ cup milk or water (optional, for adjusting consistency)

- Chopped nuts for garnish (optional)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Peel the mangoes and chop the flesh into small pieces, discarding the seed.
2. In a blender, add the chopped mangoes, sugar and cardamom powder. Blend until smooth. If the mixture is too thick, you can add a little milk or water to achieve the desired consistency.
3. If using saffron, soak the strands in a tablespoon of warm milk for a few minutes, then add this to the blended mango pulp. Mix well.
4. Pour the aamras into serving bowls. Garnish with chopped nuts if desired. Serve chilled, either as a dessert or with hot puris.

### No-Bake Mango Cheesecake

**I**ndulge in the tropical flavors of this no-bake mango cheesecake, a refreshing and creamy dessert that's perfect for any occasion. With a buttery graham cracker crust, a luscious mango-infused cream cheese filling and a sweet mango topping, this cheesecake is easy to make and doesn't require an oven. Enjoy the perfect blend of sweet and tangy flavors in every bite!

#### INGREDIENTS

- Crust**
- 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup melted butter
- Filling**
- 700 gm cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup mango puree
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Topping**
- 1 cup mango puree
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice



- 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons water

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare the crust by mixing graham cracker crumbs, sugar and melted butter. Press into a 9-inch springform pan. Chill.
2. Make the filling by beating cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Mix in vanilla and mango puree. Whip heavy cream to stiff peaks, then fold into cream cheese mixture. Pour over the crust. Chill for 4 hours.
3. Prepare the topping by heating mango puree, sugar and lemon juice until boiling. Stir in the cornstarch mixture until thickened. Cool.
4. Assemble by spreading the cooled topping over the chilled cheesecake. Chill for 1 hour. Remove from pan, slice and enjoy!



### Mango Lassi

**M**ango lassi is a popular Indian yogurt-based drink that is both refreshing and nutritious. Blending ripe mangoes with yogurt, milk, sugar or honey, and a hint of cardamom, this creamy beverage is a delightful way to cool down. The lassi can be adjusted in sweetness and thickness to suit your preference and is best enjoyed chilled. Often garnished with a sprinkle of cardamom or saffron, it's a perfect drink for any time of the day.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 ripe mango, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- ½ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons sugar or honey
- A pinch of ground cardamom
- A few ice cubes

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth and creamy.
3. Pour into glasses and sprinkle with a little more cardamom if desired.
4. Serve chilled.

### Mango Salsa

**M**ango salsa is a vibrant and zesty topping that pairs beautifully with a variety of dishes. It combines the sweetness of ripe mangoes with the crunch of red bell pepper, the sharpness of red onion, and the heat of jalapeno. Fresh lime juice and cilantro add a burst of freshness, while a touch of salt balances the flavors. This colorful salsa is perfect as a dip with tortilla chips or as a topping for grilled fish or chicken, adding a tropical twist to your meal.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 ripe mangoes, peeled and diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and minced
- Juice of 2 limes
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- Salt to taste

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a bowl, mix the mango, bell pepper, red onion and jalapeno.
2. Add the lime juice and cilantro.
3. Season with salt and mix well.
4. Serve with tortilla chips or as a topping for grilled fish or chicken.



### Mango Sticky Rice

**M**ango sticky rice is a classic Thai dessert that marries the creamy richness of coconut milk with the sweetness of ripe mangoes. Glutinous rice is cooked until tender and then soaked in a sweetened coconut milk mixture, making it delightfully sticky and fragrant. Served with slices of fresh mango and a drizzle of additional coconut sauce, this dessert is a perfect balance of textures and flavors, offering a taste of tropical paradise.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup glutinous (sticky) rice
- 1 ½ cups coconut milk
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 ripe mangoes, peeled and sliced

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rinse the rice until the water runs clear.
2. Cook the rice according to package instructions.
3. In a saucepan, heat the coconut milk, sugar and salt until the sugar dissolves.
4. Pour half of the coconut milk mixture over the cooked rice and let it sit for 10 minutes.
5. Serve the rice with the remaining coconut milk sauce and sliced mangoes.



**Event: Yemeni Music Vibes**  
Location: Fallaka Island Heritage Village  
Date: June 17, 2024

**Event: Movie night and discussion**  
Location: National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters  
Date: June 19, 2024

**Event: Gymnastics for kids**  
Location: Trampo Extreme Subhan  
Date: June 14, 2024

**Event: "Al3ab" expo for toys**  
Location: Kuwait International Fairground  
Date: June 16, 2024

**Event: Kuwait folklore puppet show**  
Location: HOMZ mall  
Date: June 17-19, 2024

**Event: Blippi the wonderful world tour for kids**  
Location: Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre  
Date: June 17-21, 2024

**Event: Kuwait Entertainment Village**  
Location: Kuwait International Fairground  
Date: June 16, 2024

**Event: Paw Patrol festival for kids**  
Location: Teatro Entertainment Center  
Date: June 15, 2024

**Event: Not a Magician**  
Location: Qadsiya Football Club theater  
Date: June 16-19, 2024

## Sports

# Yadav, Arshdeep star as India beat US to reach T20 WCup second round

## Despite defeat, US are still well-placed to join India in the Super Eights

**NEW YORK:** Suryakumar Yadav hit an unbeaten half-century and left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh claimed a career-best 4-9 as India defeated the United States by seven wickets to reach the T20 World Cup second round on Wednesday. Chasing 111 to win the Group A clash, India were rattled at 15-2 and then 44-3 before Yadav (50) and Shivam Dube (31) put on an undefeated fourth-wicket stand of 67 to secure a third win in three games for Rohit Sharma's team with 10 balls to spare.

"We knew this was going to be a tough task. We lost some wickets up front but we showed some maturity to take the game to the end," said Rohit. Despite the defeat, the United States are still well-placed to join India in the Super Eights as they have four points while Pakistan and Canada are on two with a game each to play.

India were stunned by Mumbai-born fast bowler Saurabh Netravalkar who played for India at the Under-19 World Cup in 2010. He had superstar batsman Virat Kohli caught behind for nought off the first ball he faced.

Rohit was then caught by Harmeet Singh at mid-off, again off the bowling of the 32-year-old Netravalkar in the third over. Rishabh Pant's 18-run cameo was ended when his stumps were uprooted by Ali Khan in the eighth over.

However, Yadav went to his 18th international T20 half-century from 49 balls with two fours and a pair of sixes. Left-hander Dube's 31 came off 35 deliveries and featured a boundary and a

six on the same tricky and slow Nassau County International Cricket Stadium pitch where India had made just 119 in a six-run win over Pakistan at the weekend.

"I would say we were 10-15 runs short on that pitch. We knew that 125-130 would have been a tough total to chase but it goes that way sometimes," said USA skipper Aaron Jones. Earlier, Arshdeep removed recalled opener Shayan Jahangir lbw off the first ball and had Andries Gous (two) caught in the deep five balls later as the USA found themselves 3-2 after the opening over.

Big-hitting Jones, who clubbed an undefeated 94 in the hosts' opening win over Canada in Dallas, made just 11 before he fell to Hardik Pandya. That left the US on 25-3 before opener Steven Taylor (24) and top-scorer Nitish Kumar (27) put on 31 for the fourth wicket.

Nitish became Arshdeep's third victim, smartly caught on the boundary by Mohammed Siraj. Former New Zealand star Corey Anderson (15) was the sixth man out with the score on 96 thanks to a running catch by wicket-keeper Pant off Pandya who completed a wicket-maiden.

With the Americans looking to push the total into three figures, Arshdeep had Harmeet Singh caught behind for 10. Shadley van Schalkwyk (11) and Jasdeep Singh (two) ensured the United States posted what they hoped would have been a defensible total.



**NEW YORK:** India's Arshdeep Singh celebrates a successful lbw with teammate India's Suryakumar Yadav (R) during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2024 group A cricket match between the USA and India at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in East Meadow. — AFP

Both teams went into the game with a perfect four points from two wins with the USA having stunned Pakistan in a famous Super Over

triumph last time out. India join Australia and South Africa as the three teams to have so far booked their places in the next stage. — AFP

## News in Brief

### Messi to miss Olympics

**MIAMI:** Eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi has confirmed in an interview with US broadcaster ESPN that he will not attempt to win a second gold medal with Argentina at the Paris Olympics this summer. "I spoke with Argentinian Olympic coach Javier Mascherano, and we immediately agreed on the situation," Inter Miami forward Messi said in the interview broadcast on Wednesday. "It's a difficult moment, because there's the Copa America, and that would mean two or three consecutive months away from my club. At my age, I don't want to play everything and I need to make the right choices," added the former Barcelona star who was a member of Argentina's 2008 Olympic gold medal winning team. Messi, who turns 37 on June 24, will be with defending champions Argentina at the Copa America from June 20 to July 14 in the United States, just a few weeks before the Olympics start on July 26. — AFP

### Fonseca named AC Milan coach

**ROME:** Former Roma coach Paulo Fonseca is to return to Italy as the new boss of AC Milan, the Serie A runners-up announced on Thursday. "Milan's new coach will be Paulo Fonseca," said former Milan forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic, representing the owner, at a press conference. Fonseca, 51, who has signed a three-year contract, has been with French club Lille since 2022. He succeeds Stefano Pioli, who was sacked at the end of the 2023-24 season after five seasons in charge. "We studied very carefully what he did, how he prepared his matches," said Ibrahimovic, who had two spells as a player with the club, ending his on-field career with Milan in 2023. "We want him to bring his identity of game, his offensive style to our team, to our players. After five years we wanted something new, with all respect to Stefano Pioli." — AFP

### Osaka to play at Olympics

**TOKYO:** Former world number one Naomi Osaka has been given the green light to compete for Japan at next month's Paris Olympics, the country's tennis association said Thursday. Former US Open finalist Kei Nishikori has also been cleared to play, the Japan Tennis Association said. Four-time Grand Slam winner Osaka lit the cauldron at the opening ceremony of the COVID-delayed Tokyo Games in 2021, where she went on to make the third round. She has since become a mother and returned to tennis late last year after a 15-month maternity break. The 26-year-old is currently ranked 125th in the world. The singles event at the Olympics is limited to 64 players with a maximum of four from each nation. The International Tennis Federation cleared her to compete in Paris by awarding her a special ranking for players who have been away from the tour, the JTA said. — AFP

### Kerr signs deal with Chelsea

**LONDON:** Chelsea forward Sam Kerr has signed a new two-year contract keeping her at the club until 2026, the Women's Super League champions announced on Thursday. The 30-year-old Australia captain, whose previous deal was about to expire, has scored 99 goals in 128 matches since arriving at the London club from Chicago Red Stars in 2019. "It's really exciting and a very proud moment for me," Kerr told chelseafc.com. "Having the opportunity to stay at a club like Chelsea means a lot to me. I'm really excited to continue to push and to try to win trophies." Kerr, Australia's record goalscorer, has won five WSL titles, three FA Cups and two League Cups at Chelsea. She is currently sidelined after suffering an anterior cruciate ligament injury in January, which has also ruled her out of the Olympics in Paris, which start next month. — AFP

## Celtics on brink of NBA title after win over Mavericks

**LOS ANGELES:** The Boston Celtics, fueled by their star duo of Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown, held off a furious Dallas rally to beat the Mavericks 106-99 on Wednesday and take a 3-0 stranglehold on the NBA finals. Tatum broke out of his scoring doldrums to score 31 points. Brown scored 15 of his 30 in a scorching third quarter and the Celtics held on to move within one victory of a record-setting 18th NBA crown.

Boston, who currently share the record of 17 titles with the Los Angeles Lakers, can close out the series in game four in Dallas on Friday. "We are not relaxing or anything like that," Tatum said, "not even focusing on winning on Friday or whatever."

"However long it takes, that's our motto. However long it takes, that's what it's going to take, and nobody is not trying to relax at all." However, the Mavericks go into Friday knowing full well that no team has rallied from 3-0 down to win an NBA playoff series.

With their backs against the wall, the Mavericks sliced a 21-point fourth-quarter deficit to one on Kyrie Irving's jump shot with 3:37 remaining. By that point, Mavs star Luka Doncic could only watch in frustration. He fouled out with 4:12 remaining, earning his fifth and sixth fouls in less than a minute. Mavericks coach Jason Kidd challenged both and lost, Doncic departing with the Mavs down by three after he was whistled for a blocking foul on Jrue Holiday. Dallas kept pressing, but the Celtics had the answers. Irving found Dereck Lively for a cutting dunk that pulled the Mavs within 100-98 with 1:20 remaining.

But Brown drilled a jump shot and after Irving missed a tough three-pointer Derrick White and Tatum each made a pair of free throws and the Celtics notched their 10th straight playoff victory, remaining unbeaten on the road this post-season.

"That was a big-time win for us, and I'm proud of how we played today, Brown said. "They had some momentum, but we kept our poise. We made timely baskets. We got some good shots going in, and we found a way to win." Irving shook off sub-par shooting performances in the first two games to lead the Mav-

## Tiger, Morikawa early starters as US Open begins

**PINEHURST:** Tiger Woods, Collin Morikawa, Brooks Koepka and Sweden's sixth-ranked Ludvig Aberg were among those set for a morning charge as the 124th US Open began Thursday at treacherous Pinehurst.

The 7,543-yard sandhills layout with its domed greens, sandy waste areas, native bushes and wiregrass was set to offer a formidable challenge to a field of 156 golfers. American Michael McGowan and Filipino Rico Hoey hit opening shots off the first and 10th tees, respectively, to begin the 1,000th championship event in US Golf Association history, dating to the first US Open in 1895.

World number one Scottie Scheffler, second-ranked Xander Schauffele and third-ranked Rory McIlroy tee off together in the afternoon feature group. Scheffler is considered the man to beat with five US PGA Tour victories this year, the most by any player at this stage since Tom Watson in 1980.

Two-time Masters champion Scheffler has 12 top-10 showings in 13 starts this year and could match 15-time major winner Woods as the only players to win a US Open while atop the world rankings. Schauffele won last month's PGA Championship for his first major title, snapping a two-year win drought. McIlroy, who has called off his divorce plans,



**DALLAS:** Maxi Kleber #42 of the Dallas Mavericks attempts a shot while being guarded by Xavier Tillman #26 and Sam Hauser #30 of the Boston Celtics in the third quarter in Game Three of the 2024 NBA Finals at American Airlines Center on June 12, 2024 in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

ericks with 35 points. Doncic finished with 27 points six rebounds and six assists before fouling out for just the third time in his career.

Doncic was clearly frustrated with the officiating. "We couldn't play physical," he said. "I don't want to say nothing ... you know, six fouls in the NBA Finals—c'mon man. (Do) better than that." Even though 156 teams before them have tried and failed to rally from 3-0 down to win an NBA playoff series, Doncic wasn't ready to wave the white flag. "It's not over till it's over," he insisted. "We've got to stay together."

### Porzingis sidelined

After a somber pre-game tribute to NBA icon Jerry West, who died Wednesday at the age of 86, Dallas pounced on the opportunity opened up by the absence of Boston big man Kristaps Porzingis, dominating in the paint in the first quarter.

With Doncic and Irving leading the way Dallas led

has five consecutive top-10 finishes at the US Open, improving every year in the run to finish second in 2023. Woods, battling back from severe leg injuries in a 2021 car crash, was set to start in the fifth group off the 10th tee alongside England's Matt Fitzpatrick, the 2022 US Open winner, and American Will Zalatoris.

Seventh-ranked Morikawa, a two-time major winner, is in the sixth group off the first tee alongside fellow Americans Koepka, a five-time major winner, and Justin Thomas. Morikawa shared third at the Masters in April and fourth at last month's PGA Championship. He was runner-up to Scheffler at last week's Memorial tournament.

With Monday's qualifying deadline looming, Morikawa is clinging to the fourth and final US berth for the Paris Olympics behind Scheffler, Schauffele and defending US Open champion Wyndham Clark. Six Americans can overtake him, but five of them need a victory to do it.

Aberg, runner-up in this year's Masters in his major debut, starts off the 10th tee alongside Americans Tony Finau and Dustin Johnson. Johnson is among 12 LIV Golf players in the field after Spain's eighth-ranked Jon Rahm, a two-time major champion, withdrew due to a left foot injury.

Among 468 players in three prior US Opens at Pinehurst, only four broke par for 72 holes and just one, 2014 champion Martin Kaymer of Germany, finished better than one-under, winning by eight strokes on nine-under.

"It's a brutally hard golf course," said 2012 US Open winner Webb Simpson, another early starter. "It's very long and there's no letup. You have to be incredibly disciplined." — AFP



**KUWAIT:** Serbia's Prime Minister Milos Vucevic receives President of International Aquatics Federation Hussein Al-Musallam in Belgrade.

## Aquatics chief Al-Musallam in Belgrade

**KUWAIT:** As part of the International Aquatics Federation efforts to organize championships of all stages in various countries, Serbia's Prime Minister Milos Vucevic received President of International Aquatics Federation Hussein Al-Musallam in the Serbian capital, Belgrade.

Both sides discussed cooperation in order to develop aquatics games around the world, and the possibility of benefiting from Serbia's sports in this regard. Captain Hussein Al-Musallam thanked Serbia for its interest in organizing World Aquatics Championships in the future.

## Sports

# Germany braced for Euro 2024 kick-off with France, England the favourites

## Euro 2020 was delayed by a year because of the pandemic

MUNICH: Euro 2024 kicks off on Friday in Germany as the continent's footballing heavyweights prepare to fight it out over the next month with the aim of taking the crown away from reigning champions Italy. Germany play Scotland in the opening game in Munich and the host nation are hoping their journey will continue all the way to the final in Berlin on July 14.

It is the first time the country has hosted a major men's international tournament since the 2006 World Cup, and it is a mouth-watering setting after the underwhelming nature of the last European Championship.

Euro 2020 was delayed by a year because of the pandemic, finally taking place in 2021 in front of limited crowds. It was also staged in cities all across the continent, from Seville to Baku, and those factors stripped away much of what makes these tournaments so special.

This time all supporters will descend on Germany, where matches will be played in 10 stadiums, from Hamburg in the north to Munich in the south. Germans are hoping for a repeat of 2006, when many fell in love with their national team again after a period in the doldrums similar to what they have experienced in the years leading up to this competition.

### United Germany?

Philipp Lahm, the captain of Germany's 2014 World Cup-winning team and now Euro 2024 tournament director, also hopes the competition will bring people together at a time of division and disunity across the continent.

The tournament begins less than a week after far-right parties made

significant gains in EU parliament elections, while Europe is still dealing with the crisis of the war in Ukraine. "I hope at the very least the Euro will lead to a more united Germany again," said Lahm.

A good performance by Germany on the field would help, and the outlook is more positive for Julian Nagelsmann's team now than a few months ago. A group also containing Hungary and Switzerland should be straightforward enough given the quality in Germany's ranks, from veteran playmaker Toni Kroos to younger stars Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala.

"We have gone through difficult phases as a national team, but something big can happen here," Musiala, of Bayern Munich, told Sportbild.

### Mbappe mission

However, there are good reasons why France and England are so strongly fancied to raise aloft the Henri Delaunay trophy on July 14. France are Europe's top-ranked nation and have been in the last two World Cup finals. Fresh from sealing his move to Real Madrid, Kylian Mbappe is eager to make up for a disappointing showing at the last Euros, when his penalty miss sealed a shoot-out defeat to Switzerland in the last 16.

"Kylian is our captain and a great leader. We will need him to be at his best," admitted France coach Didier Deschamps. England have never been European champions, although they came mightily close in 2021 when they lost the final on penalties to Italy.

Optimism about their prospects this time is fueled by the fact that star players Harry Kane, of Bayern,



GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN: Scotland players attend their MD-1 training session at the team's base camp in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on June 13, 2024, ahead of the UEFA Euro 2024 Football Championship. — AFP

and Jude Bellingham, formerly of Borussia Dortmund, should feel so at home on German soil. "We want to make history," said England midfielder Declan Rice this week.

"We say it all the time, but genuinely we have a group, a manager, that really believes. We have a confidence that we can go there and do something really special." England begin their tournament against Serbia on Sunday in Gelsenkirchen, home of fallen German giants Schalke 04. The French and English will be on course to meet in the

semi-finals if they both top their groups.

The prospect of Italy—who are in the same group as Spain—successfully defending their title seems slightly remote, but it would be foolish to rule them out. "This Italy team is underrated and very competitive," insisted legendary former Azzurri goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon.

Portugal, champions in 2016, are genuine contenders even if they are still led by Cristiano Ronaldo, now aged 39 and playing club football in Saudi Arabia. This Euros

is the third since the competition was expanded to feature 24 teams, a move that has afforded a chance to some smaller nations, including Georgia, debutants this time.

However, injuries at the end of a long season are taking their toll on some leading players. Frenkie de Jong, the Barcelona and Netherlands playmaker, has been ruled out with an ankle injury, while his club colleague Robert Lewandowski will not play in Poland's opening match due to a thigh problem. — AFP

## Footballers' unions take FIFA to court over Club WCup

LAUSANNE: The professional footballers' unions of England (PFA) and France (UNFP) took FIFA to court in Brussels on Thursday to challenge the timetable "unilaterally set" by the world body, in particular its new Club World Cup in 2025.

Players' unions have complained that the expanded Club World Cup, due to take place in the United States in June and July next year, is an unacceptable additional burden on players. The organisations "believe that these decisions violate the rights of players and their unions under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights while also potentially violating EU competition law", the global professional footballers union FIFPRO said in a statement.

With the support of FIFPRO, UNFP and PFA have asked the Brussels Commercial Court to refer the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union by putting forward "four questions for a preliminary ruling".

"Players and their unions have consistently highlighted the current football calendar as overloaded and unworkable", the unions said in their statement. In early May, FIFPRO and the World Association of Football Leagues had already threatened FIFA with legal action.

The players' representatives accuse FIFA of having "continued a programme of competition expansion despite the opposition of player unions", in particular by expanding the Club World Cup from seven to 32 teams.

"The most in-demand players are now part of an endless schedule of games and competitions for club and country, with their limits constantly being pushed through expansion and the creation of new competitions," said PFA general manager Maheta Molango.

The two unions point to a possible violation by FIFA of the right of European workers to "collectively bargain over their terms and conditions of employment" and their right to "healthy friendly working conditions", as provided for in European law.

They also cite the ECJ's ruling in the Super League case last December as evidence that FIFA is restricting competition law in a "unilateral and discretionary" manner. FIFA has not commented, but sources close to the governing body point out that the international match calendar was signed off by its ruling Council which features representation from all continental confederations, including UEFA.

They also insist that calendar was the result of extensive consultation, and reject any suggestion that it was imposed on the football community. — AFP

## McKeown swims second-fastest 200m in history

BRISBANE: Kaylee McKeown swam the second-fastest 200m backstroke of all-time Thursday while Ariarne Titmus laid down an Olympic marker in the 800m freestyle a day after smashing the 200m world record. Rio Olympic champion and Tokyo silver medallist Kyle Chalmers was also firing on day four of the Australian trials in Brisbane, ensuring he will again contest the 100m freestyle in Paris this summer.

The 22-year-old McKeown, the reigning Olympic champion and world record holder, surged to the wall in 2mins 03.30secs to reinforce her status as the overwhelming favourite at the July-August Games. Her time was just a fingertip outside the world leading 2:03.14 she set last year.

"The first half of this meet I've been quite nervous, so I really just wanted to enjoy tonight," said McKeown, adding that she was not aware of the crowd roaring her on. "I was in my own little world, but I've got a ticket to Paris."

Such was her dominance that she finished four

seconds clear of second-placed Jaelyn Barclay—just 17 -- who also qualified. Veteran Emily Seebohm, swimming just months after having a baby, failed in her attempt to make a fifth Olympics, finishing fifth.

McKeown has now booked three individual events in Paris. She swam the second-fastest 100m back of all-time on Tuesday, with her 57.41 just shy of her own world-record 57.33. That came a day after she posted the quickest 200m medley since the 2016 Olympics, another event where she will be a serious medal contender.

Titmus is also in sparkling form. She produced a sensational 200m freestyle on Wednesday to smash Mollie O'Callaghan's world record, days after recording the second-fastest 400m ever. Titmus is the Olympic champion in both those events, but only managed silver behind American legend Katie Ledecky in Tokyo over 800m and going one better is on her radar.

She comfortably qualified in 8:14.06, with only Ledecky faster in 2024. Lani Pallister also made the grade, with her 8:18.46. "I just tried to forget about it (200m world record) as much as I could because I had a job to do here tonight," said Titmus.

"To be completely honest, I'm disappointed with the swim, but have another chance in Paris to do better." Chalmers came through a stacked field to stop the clock at 47.75 and make a third Olympics, touching ahead of William Yang, Flynn Southam

and Jack Cartwright who did not qualify but will join him on the relay team. "Very special, very, very happy with that," said Chalmers. He will have his work cut out in France, with Chinese world record holder Pan Zhanle, ex-world record holder David Popovici and reigning Olympic champion Caeleb Dressel all set to be in the mix.

Commonwealth champion Elizabeth Dekkers (2:06.01) and Abbey Connor (2:06.82) both made the grade for the women's 200m butterfly. But no one met the stringent Australian qualifying time—which is stricter than the Olympic standard—in the men's 200m medley. — AFP



Kaylee McKeown

## Shevchenko: Euro 2024 will remind world of Ukraine's pain

PARIS: Ukrainian football great Andriy Shevchenko has told AFP his country's presence at Euro 2024 that kicks off on Friday has been a triumph over adversity and will "remind the world of what we are going through".

Ukraine qualified through the play-offs and start their campaign against Romania in Munich on Monday. The Ukrainians entertain hopes of reaching the knockout stages having been drawn in a group which also comprises Slovakia and Belgium. As head coach, Shevchenko guided Ukraine to the last eight in the COVID-delayed Euro 2020 but his former Dynamo Kyiv strike partner Serhiy Rebrov has worked wonders to even get them to Germany.

The 50-year-old has had to contend with the immense disruption, not to say heightened anxiety of the players, due to the war in his country sparked by Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to invade in February 2022.

Shevchenko, who is now president of the Ukrainian

Football Association, and Rebrov are once again looked to by an expectant Ukrainian public to deliver—they were part of the squad that reached the 2006 World Cup quarter-finals, which were also played in Germany.

### Every victory crucial

Shevchenko, the son of a soldier, is justifiably proud of the resilience and spirit the team has shown in reaching the finals. "There are two components here," he told AFP in an interview by email. "On the one hand we showed we are competitive and continue to excel in football even during the war."

"On the other, and more importantly, we proudly represent Ukraine and remind the world about what we are going through." Shevchenko says that just as Oleksandr Usyk's victory over Tyson Fury to become unified heavyweight boxing world champion last month lifted morale, so a win in any of their matches at the Euros could work similar magic. "Every victory for our country, both on and off the pitch, is crucial for every Ukrainian and especially for those who defend it right now." When players talk of pressure it is usually about performing well in front of their fanatical fans but for some of the Ukrainian players it has been a far more serious issue of training under the daily threat of air raids.

Shevchenko is appreciative that other countries have welcomed the national side in playing their 'home' match-

Hans-Joachim Watzke thanking the coach for his "outstanding work", saying "we all owe him a debt of gratitude."

"Edin and I will always be friends." Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl said the club's "successes of the past few years will be linked to (Terzic)", saying the coach "will follow his own path." German media reported on Thursday that former Dortmund player and current assistant coach Nuri Sahin will take over as manager ahead of the coming season. Sahin, who was brought in as one of two assistant coaches to Terzic in January having previously managed Antalyaspor in the Turkish Super Lig, came through Dortmund's junior system and played 274 times for the club. The 35-year-old Sahin won one Bundesliga title and a German Cup at Dortmund, having also played for Real Madrid and Liverpool.

### Shock exit

Terzic's exit comes as a shock as he was widely expected to lead the club again next year after a run to the Cham-



Dortmund's German head coach Edin Terzic

pions League final. He had previously served as an assistant for West Ham and Besiktas but his next step is unclear.

Born on the outskirts of Dortmund, the childhood BVB fan had joined the club as a junior coach and then a scout after a playing career in the lower divisions. As interim manager, Terzic took Dortmund to a German Cup win in 2021 just a few months after taking over. — AFP

## Dawri Zain celebrated season's top athletes

Company held Excellence Awards ceremony in partnership with KFA



Waleed Al-Khashti and Haief Al-Mutairi with the Excellence Awards winners.



Bader Al-Mutawa and Mohammed Daham winners of the Season's Top Scorer Award.



Saud Al-Houshan winner of the Best Goalkeeper Award.



Mohammed Daham winner of the Best Player in the Season Award.

**KUWAIT:** For the second year running, Zain held its prestigious Excellence Awards ceremony to recognize the top athletes of the recently concluded 2023-2024 football season of the Zain Premier League (Dawri Zain). During the event, the very best players were recognized on stage for their top performance, after having won the affection of thousands of fans throughout the season.

The special event was held at the Regency Hotel, attended by Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, Waleed Al-Khashti, Kuwait Football Association Vice Chairman, Haief Al-Mutairi, KFA Board Member, Fatima Hayat, KFA Secretary-General, Salah Al-Qenaie, Deputy General Manager of the Public Sports Authority – Sports for All Division, Hamed Al-Hazem, Al-Qabas and SHASHA Managing Director, Nasser Al-Momen, Zain and KFA officials, along with members of the local sports community and local and regional sports media. The event was presented by popular sports influencer Musaad Al-Fouzan.

During the ceremony, Zain and the KFA took to the stage to celebrate and award the top performers of the 2023-2024 season with the cash prizes announced at the season's kick-off last year. The recognition came after the technical committee officially announced the winners on-stage, after which they were presented with the following cash prizes:

Winner	Club	Award
Mohammed Daham	Kuwait SC	Season's Best Player (KD 10,000)
Bader Al Mutawa	Qadisia SC	Season's Top Scorer - Locals (KD 2500)
Youssef Nasser	Kuwait SC	Season's Top Scorer - Locals (KD 2500)
Mohammed Daham	Kuwait SC	Season's Top Scorer - Locals (KD 2500)
Hamza Khaba	Arabi SC	Season's Top Scorer - Pros (KD 5000)
Saud Al Houshan	Kuwait SC	Season's Best Goalkeeper (KD 5000)
Nabeel Maloul	Kuwait SC	Season's Best Coach (KD 3000)
Muath Al Ozaimeh	Salmiya SC	Season's Best Rising Star (KD 2000)

In addition to the above, Zain also presented a weekly Player of the Round Award – Premier League (KD 500) and a weekly Player of the Round Award – First Division League (KD 200). Winners in these two categories were previously announced by Zain. The company also presented a Best Photo of the Season Award (KD 1,000), dedicated to photographers, which was won by Faisal Al-Loughani.

Zain remains a main supporter of local athletes and believes that such encouragement contributes to elevating the league's performance and bringing even more excitement to all fans. For this reason, the company has pledged



Waleed Al-Khashti speaking at the ceremony.



Haief Al-Mutairi speaking at the event.

**Zain awarded winners in 10 categories, total prizes for athletes and fans exceeded KD 60k**  
**Prestigious ceremony was attended by local sports community**  
**132 matches played and 400 goals scored in Dawri Zain's second season**



Zain's team at the event.

not only to continue this support but has also added new prize categories to reflect its interest in shouldering the local sports sector.

Prior to the season's kickoff, the Kuwait Football Association formed a special committee to outline the standards and criteria on which the prize winners were selected. The committee is membered by former international players and experts Abdulaziz Hamadah (committee head), Hamad Al-Enzi, Ahmad Mousa, Hussain Hakem, and Hussain Al-Mutairi. Zain extends its thanks to the committee for their efforts in selecting the winners throughout the season.

The event also witnessed awarding the top three winners of the Zain Fantasy League for the 2023-2024 season. The new season of the online competition was kicked-off by Zain last year to bring local sports to the digital scene. Over 6,000 players signed up to play, and the three top winners were awarded as follows: First place winner Mutlaq Salman (KD 5,000), second place winner Ahmad Sanasiri (KD 3,500), and joint third place winners Shadi Makki and Aysha Al-Hamad (KD 750 each).

With this prestigious awards ceremony, Zain has successfully concluded the second season of its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Football Association, which continues throughout the 2022-2026 seasons. This season, the competitions included the Kuwait Premier League (Dawri Zain), won by Kuwait SC, H.H. the Amir's Cup, won by Qadisiya SC, and the Zain First Division League, won by Yarmouk SC.

Under this partnership, Zain's role centered around three main areas: supporting athletes with cash prizes, launching social events and interacting with fans at stadiums, and the first-ever Fantasy Football League in Kuwaiti football's history. These contributions and more went in line with the KFA's vision to bolster the local football scene.

Zain also extended its appreciation to SHASHA, the leading local streaming platform, for the distinguished experience of broadcasting Dawri Zain's matches this season. The latest streaming technologies were used to air matches and analysis studies with the best sports pundits to fans through SHASHA's digital platforms.

Zain firmly believe that the private sector has a vital and active role in developing the local sports and youth sectors, and it makes this belief a reality by sponsoring and supporting some of the biggest sports programs in the nation.