

**11** Gulf Bank AGM approves distributing 7% in cash and 5% in bonus shares



# Amir hails KNPC clean fuels project as people's 'wealth'

## Refineries now fully operational after multibillion-dollar revamp



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurates KNPC's full operation of the clean fuel project, flanked by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Oil Minister Mohammad Al-Fares during a ceremony at the Mina Abdullah refinery on March 22, 2022. — KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hailed on Tuesday the completion of state refiner Kuwait National Petroleum Company's multibillion-dollar clean fuels project, saying it is "wealth" bestowed upon the Kuwaiti people. "I congratulate the Kuwaiti people on the completion of this project," HH the Amir said during a KNPC ceremony to inaugurate the now fully-operational facility, where he was joined by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Also present were HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Al-Fares, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Deputy Chairman and CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah and KNPC CEO Waleed Al-Bader.

HH the Amir unveiled a memorial plaque before leaving the venue. Addressing the event, HH the Crown Prince, representing HH the Amir, highly commended the project as reflecting Kuwait's commitment to fulfilling local needs and international demand for clean fuel, in compli-

ance with global endeavors to cut air pollutants.

He underlined Kuwait's ambition for attaining a clear-cut development strategy that would promote the country's status in the global oil refining industry. He also pointed out top priorities for creating new jobs for young Kuwaitis, enabling them to work in their own country's most vital sector. HH the Crown Prince voiced much appreciation to all sincere Kuwaitis for their great efforts and achievements in carrying out the project.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Al-Fares appreciated HH the Amir's patronage and attendance of the KNPC's biofuel project completion ceremony, together with HH the Crown Prince's presence, as reflecting the commitment of the country's wise political leadership to following up on and supporting national development projects in various domains.

The minister said the clean fuel project is one of the major projects in the history of the Kuwaiti oil sector, which included a wide-scale and unprecedented revamp and development of the Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries.

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### News in brief

#### Govt reshuffles Cabinet

KUWAIT: Government Communication Center Chairman and Government Spokesman Tareq Al-Mezrem announced a Cabinet reshuffle on Tuesday. Under the decree, Mohammad Al-Fares has been appointed Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Al-Mousa as Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Mohammad Al-Rajhi as Minister of State for National Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Mezrem said in a tweet. — KUNA



Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, and PM of the Zionist entity Naftali Bennett meet in Sharm el-Sheikh. — AFP

#### Sisi hosts UAE, Zionist leaders

CAIRO: Egypt hosted the Zionist and UAE leaders for unprecedented three-way talks Tuesday as the Ukraine war rocks energy and food markets and major powers inch toward a revived Iran nuclear deal. The summit was held in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh between Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Prime Minister of the Zionist entity Naftali Bennett and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. — AFP (See Page 6)

## Zain Group holds AGM; dividend of 23 fils for H2 2021 approved

KUWAIT: Zain Group Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Tuesday at Zain Group's headquarters in Kuwait, that was livestreamed for shareholders and qualified parties and attended with a shareholder quorum of 75.14 percent. The AGM approved the recommended cash dividend of 23 percent (23 fils per share) for the second half of 2021, payable to the shareholders already registered in the company's record as of April 6, 2022. The cash dividends will be paid to eligible shareholders commencing April 13, 2022.

This cash dividend of 23 fils per share follows the semi-annual dividend of 10 fils distributed in the second half of 2021, thus totaling 33 fils per share dividend for the year. This third consecutive payment of 33 fils per share on an annual basis completes the company's three-year minimum commit-

ment that started in 2019. Zain Group Chairman, Ahmed Al Tahous said: 2021 was a successful year in terms of driving shareholder value given the board and management's focus on operational efficiency, significant investment in network upgrades, while managing the negative effects of the pandemic on our operations.

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi said: The annual dividend payout of 33 fils reflects a 77 percent payout ratio, one of the highest in the region, providing a clear indication of the strength of Zain's financial solvency and solid operational performance. It also reflects the company's ability to execute on its profitable growth plans despite the continuing challenges of the pandemic and impact of unavoidable currency devaluations on the business. (See Page 8)



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

## Khan hosts OIC meeting of FMs

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan trumpeted his Islamic credentials on Tuesday at a meeting of foreign ministers from Muslim nations, even as he battles the most serious domestic challenge to his rule since coming to power. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is meeting in Islamabad with an ambitious agenda that seeks approval for over 100 declarations, including aid for financially strapped Afghanistan and support for the Palestinians and Kashmir.

The meeting is also attended by China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, despite Beijing being accused of detaining more than a million Uyghur and other Turkic-speaking Muslims in political re-education camps across Xinjiang. "China and the Islamic world have found a path of friendly coexistence and win-win cooperation between different civilizations."

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan poses with Organization of Islamic Cooperation foreign ministers and representatives on March 22, 2022. — AFP



## International

# Police seek motive in deadly Sweden school attack

## Investigators search suspect's home in the nearby town

**MALMO, Sweden:** Police in Sweden were Tuesday attempting to determine why an 18-year-old student allegedly killed two teachers at a high school a day earlier in an attack that has shaken the country. The two victims, both women in their 50s, were teachers at Malmo Latin, a large high school in Sweden's third-biggest city, police said at a press conference on Tuesday.

Media reports said the suspect, whose name has not been disclosed, was armed with a knife and an axe, though police have not confirmed that information. Police chief Petra Stenkula said police had seized "several weapons that are not firearms" at the scene.

Investigators were now trying to determine whether the suspect specifically targeted his victims or chose them at random, and whether he had planned to attack more people. "We don't know yet if he had any connection to these employees", Stenkula told reporters.

The student "has no criminal record", she said, adding that police were looking into his background and movements prior to the attack. Investigators were on Tuesday searching the suspect's home in the nearby town of Trelleborg, she added.

Police were alerted to the attack at 5:12 pm (1612 GMT) and a first patrol was able to enter the school minutes later. About 50 students and teachers were inside at the time, and news footage

showed heavily equipped and armed police inspecting the interior of the building.

### Recent attacks

The suspect was arrested on the third floor just 10 minutes after the first alert, putting up no resistance, Stenkula said. His two victims were lying on the floor nearby, she added. The teachers were rushed to hospital for treatment but their deaths were announced later in the evening.

According to daily Aftonbladet, the alleged attacker called emergency services to say where he was and that he had laid down his weapons, and confessed to the killings. Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson on Tuesday expressed her "sadness" and "consternation" over the attack.

At the high school, which was closed on Tuesday, a support group has been set up for teachers and students, local authorities said. "Everyone is deeply shocked. Devastated," a teacher at the school who didn't want to be identified told AFP on Tuesday.

"It's an awful crime, it's impossible to take it all in", she said, standing outside the school where a group of about 20 students stood hugging and crying, some with flowers to lay down on the ground. School attacks are relatively rare in Sweden, which has in recent years grown more accustomed to shootings and bombings in underworld settlements of scores that kill dozens of people each year.



**MALMO, Sweden:** Swedish Chief of Malmo Police Petra Stenkula (2nd L) and Director of High School and Adult Education Annelie Schwartz hold a press conference at the Malmo Latin School on March 22, 2022 in Malmo, Sweden, a day after two women were killed. — AFP

But several serious incidents have taken place at schools in southern Sweden in recent months. In January, a 16-year-old was arrested after wounding another student and a teacher with a knife at a school in the small town of Kristianstad. That incident was

linked to a similar knife attack in August 2021 in the town of Eslov, about 50 kilometres (30 miles) away, when a student attacked a 45-year-old school employee. No link has been established between those two events and the Malmo attack. — AFP

## Rights group urges Uganda to shut secret 'torture' sites

**KAMPALA, Uganda:** Uganda's government must stop using illegal detention centres as a weapon against dissidents and close the facilities, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Tuesday in a report documenting the prevalence of torture at the clandestine sites.

The report featured interviews with 51 people, including 34 former detainees and eyewitnesses to abductions, who described a litany of abuse at the hands of police, army officials and Uganda's domestic intelligence agency, the Internal Security Organisation (ISO), between April 2019 and November 2021.

The crackdown reached fever pitch during the two months leading up to and following Uganda's January 2021 general elections, which saw government critics, opposition politicians and protesters unlawfully detained and forcibly disappeared.

In many cases, the whereabouts of those detained remain unknown, HRW said, more than a year after the re-election of President Yoweri Museveni, who has ruled Uganda with an iron fist since 1986. "Human Rights Watch calls on the government of Uganda to immediately close all so-called safehouses and other unauthorised detention centres," the global rights body said.

"The authorities should immediately release all detainees held in such places of detention or bring them promptly before a court to be charged." Victims told HRW about being bundled into vans known as "drones", which are associated with abductions of government opponents in Uganda, before being taken to secret detention sites supervised by the ISO.

The locations ranged from residential neighbourhoods in the capital Kampala to an island in Lake Victoria, where detainees were allegedly tortured, with their captors pulling out their fingernails, burning their bodies with an iron or sexually assaulting them.

### 'I was crucified'

In some cases, victims were handcuffed, chained and suspended from the ceiling for a dozen hours at a time, in a technique called "Rambo". A pregnant



**ENTEBBE, Uganda:** This handout picture taken on March 17, 2022 and released by Presidential Press Unit Uganda, shows General Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman Al Burhan (L), the Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of the Sudan and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni (R) posing prior to a bilateral talks at the State House. — AFP

detainee told HRW she was raped twice and beaten by an officer while in custody, causing her to miscarry and undergo a hysterectomy. After leaving the hospital, she was tortured once more. "I was tied up-they called it "Rambo"-I was crucified," she said.

Others spoke of being injected with unknown substances or subjected to electric shocks, while some described seeing detainees with bricks hanging from their testicles. Hassan Mutyaba, a businessman who spent eight months in captivity, told a press conference in Kampala most of his fellow detainees were too frightened to speak out publicly. "We are not going to survive. Today (I) am here but I won't be there tomorrow because I have come out," he said at the event organised by HRW.

In February 2020, the parliament's house committee on human rights published a report documenting cases of torture at detention centres operated by the police and ISO and called for further investigations. But no such probes have taken place, HRW said.

"Urgent steps are needed to help victims, to hold abusive security agents to account, and to end this spectre of impunity and injustice," said Oryem Nyeko, Uganda researcher at HRW. In recent years, Uganda has witnessed a series of crackdowns aimed at stamping out dissent, with journalists attacked, lawyers jailed, election monitors prosecuted and opposition leaders violently muzzled. — AFP

## Libya tensions simmer in shadow of Ukraine war

**TRIPOLI, Libya:** With the world focused on Ukraine, UN mediators are trying to avoid a political crisis degenerating into new violence in Libya, where Russia has long been a major player. The war-battered North African country found itself with two governments earlier this month after the eastern-based House of Representatives appointed ex-interior minister Fathi Bashagha in a challenge to the Tripoli-based premier, Abdulhamid Dbeibah.

Bashagha came to power on the back of an alliance with eastern Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar, Moscow's main ally in Libya with backing from the Kremlin-linked Wagner paramilitary group. But Dbeibah, who was installed last year as part of a United Nations-led peace process, has insisted he will only cede power to an elected administration.

Bashagha has ruled out using force to dislodge his rival, but the standoff has sparked fears of a return to violence in a country that has seen a decade of chaos since the 2011 revolt that toppled dictator Muammar Gaddafi. On March 10, pro-Bashagha armed groups deployed on the edges of the capital, raising fears of a confrontation that would end a fragile ceasefire in place since October 2020.

But Khaled al-Montasser, an international relations professor at the University of Tripoli, said Bashagha had placed a losing bet against Dbeibah. "He thought that as long as he had the vote of confidence from parliament, he could easily get rid of the internationally-supported government," said Montasser. "It quickly became clear he was wrong."

### 'Parallel governments'

The UN, keen to avoid the collapse of a hard-won ceasefire in place for the past 17 months, has called for calm and offered to mediate in the standoff. Last week, the permanent members of the UN Security Council avoided taking sides in the dispute-except Russia, which openly backed Bashagha.

Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo warned in a briefing to the Security Council that "the Libyan executive is facing a crisis that could, if left unresolved, lead to instability and parallel govern-



**PARIS:** This combination of pictures created on March 22, 2022 shows Libya's presidential candidate and former interior minister Fathi Bashagha in Benghazi and another one dated June 1, 2021 of Libyan Interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah addressing the media at the Elysee presidential palace in Paris after a meeting with the French president. — AFP

ments in the country".

Stephanie Williams, the world body's top Libya official, has been urging the sides to accept mediation over a new constitutional basis for elections, a key bone of contention. She is set to meet representatives of the Tripoli-based High State Council in the Tunisian capital on Tuesday, but parliament has yet to respond publicly to her mediation offer or appoint its own delegates.

### Oil blockade?

Analyst Faraj al-Dali told AFP that to avoid two rival administrations taking root, foreign actors should push for peaceful solutions and dialogue. That would clearly show that "the international community and the United States don't want to see war return in Libya, especially in the current context of the war between Russia and Ukraine", he said.

US Ambassador Richard Norland, who met Bashagha in Tunis on Sunday, said "choosing one camp at the expense of the other is not an option". While diplomats are not openly discussing the possibility that Russia would push Haftar to install Bashagha in Tripoli by force, some believe he could use his control over oil export terminals as a weapon by halting shipments-at a sensitive time for European energy markets. — AFP

## Amir hails KNPC clean fuels...

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with a view to producing high-quality oil byproducts that comply with relevant global criteria and requirements. He added that the project mirrors Kuwait's endeavor to become an attractive economic hub, and is part of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's strategic goals of making best use of the country's oil resources, given that it would contribute to boosting national earnings, opening new world markets and promoting Kuwait's lead-

ing status in the global oil industry. Fares said the significance of the project stems from the fact that the oil sector is the key pillar of Kuwait's national economy, and that's why the state, topped by HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince, pays much attention to this natural resource and is keen on developing this vital sector.

He noted that to maintain its competitive edge, the Kuwaiti oil sector has always been eager to keep up with the latest developments of this industry and to fulfill its variable requirements by means of using cutting-edge technology and developing human capabilities and skills. The minister concluded by speaking highly of the oil sector's strategic policies and plans in qualifying and training Kuwaiti young people in efficiently running the country's oil affairs. — KUNA

extremist. "There is a perception that there is different types of Islam," he told the 57-nation IOC gathering. "The moment you say you are a moderate Muslim, you acknowledge extremism," he added, saying this suggested there was division on the issue of blasphemy. Khan long campaigned against growing anti-Muslim sentiment, and takes credit for the UN's move last week to adopt an International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

In a speech that at times seemed aimed more at a domestic audience than a gathering of foreign diplomats, Khan said he was inspired to enter politics by the example of the "perfect" society that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) created in Madinah centuries ago. He also railed against corruption among the elite and what he called permissiveness in Pakistan, a state that has grown increasingly conservative and patriarchal over the past four decades. — AFP

## Egypt's Sisi hosts UAE, Zionist leaders

**CAIRO:** Egypt hosted the Zionist and UAE leaders for unprecedented three-way talks Tuesday as the Ukraine war rocks energy and food markets and major powers inch toward a revived Iran nuclear deal. The summit was held in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh between Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Prime Minister of the Zionist entity Naftali Bennett and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed.

It comes nearly a month after Russia invaded Ukraine in a move that sparked concerns about security and sent prices of oil, wheat and other key commodities soaring. Egypt, the Zionist entity and the United Arab Emirates are allies of the United States but they have so far avoided taking positions against Russia over its war on Ukraine.

"Against the backdrop of the recent developments in the world and the region, the leaders discussed the ties between the three countries and ways to strengthen them on all levels," said a statement from Bennett's office. It was the first summit of its kind, and signaled "a new doctrine" of regional diplomacy championed by the UAE, said Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, a professor of political science at Cairo University.

Bennett and Sheikh Mohammed had arrived in Egypt on Monday. At their meeting on Tuesday, the three leaders discussed "energy, market stability, and food security," Egyptian presidency spokesman Bassam Radi said. Zionist media said the leaders would also discuss reports that Iran and Western



**SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt:** Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, and Prime Minister of the Zionist entity Naftali Bennett pose after a meeting in this Egyptian Red Sea resort. — AFP

powers, including the United States, are close to a deal to revive the 2015 nuclear accord.

Bennett is vehemently opposed to the deal which is designed to prevent the Zionist entity's arch foe Iran from acquiring an atomic bomb - a goal the Islamic republic has always denied. The Zionist leader on Sunday appealed to the United States not to remove Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps from its blacklist of foreign terrorist organizations as part of a renewed deal.

Bennett also travelled to Sharm el-Sheikh in September last year, in what was the first visit in over a decade by a Zionist head of government. Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with the Zionist entity in 1979, after decades of enmity and conflict. — AFP

## Khan hosts OIC meeting of FM's...

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which serves as a model for a new form of diplomatic ties," Wang said. Khan is hosting the conference whilst scrambling to fight a no-confidence vote in the National Assembly as early as next week, with the opposition accusing him of mismanaging the economy and foreign policy.

In an address to dozens of foreign ministers, he partly blamed Muslims for allowing Islamophobia to spread, saying they had not united against actions deemed blasphemous for fear of being labelled