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# Kuwait restates unswerving stance on non-proliferation

## Diplomat calls for a nuke-free Middle East



Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Tareq Al-Banai

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait reiterated its unwavering position on preservation of international security and peace and nuclear non-proliferation only out of its outright commitment to respecting international conventions. This came in a speech delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Tareq Al-Banai during the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

He said the world has agreed that the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the keystone of the non-proliferation system, calling for ensuring the credibility of the NPT, especially amid the ongoing developments. While marking the 50th anniversary of the NPT, it is the responsibility of all parties to work hard to maintain this treaty.

He added that there is an opportunity

for this conference to make genuine headway should the countries, especially nuclear ones, honor their vow to adopt a relevant ambitious plan with specific goals. The Kuwait diplomat pointed out the swift and serious developments experienced by the world over the last period, with some nuclear countries announcing continuation and upgrading of their nuclear arsenals and insistence on the nuclear deterrence policy.

Al-Banai went on saying that these developments necessitate clear-cut and unequivocal mechanisms within the framework of the NPT. However, he voiced hope that Kuwait and Gulf concerns about this agreement would be taken into account, calling for following up on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2231 regarding verification and monitoring in Iran.

Al-Banai called on the parties to the

Iranian nuclear agreement to return to the negotiating table with a view to arriving at an agreement that could ensure that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful. Kuwait's new permanent representative at the UN strongly condemned any nuclear tests that could undermine human safety or any provocation or behavior that might jeopardize international security and peace.

He noted that Kuwait had contributed to Arab efforts to press for freeing the Middle East of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, based on a resolution adopted during the 2010 review conference. He added that the conference had asked the then UN secretary general and the three countries that adopted the resolution to hold a conference on a nuclear-free region.

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## Beyond hummus: Palestinians cook up food trends



JERUSALEM: A cook prepares plates of hummus to be served to clients at a restaurant in the Old City of Jerusalem. — AFP

**JERUSALEM:** From the ancient alleys of Jerusalem's Old City to kitchens around the world, Palestinians are stirring new trends in cooking while abiding by traditions. The trend has whipped up a growing appetite for specialized books and food tours. "It's changing for the better, I think. Many Palestinians are keen on promoting their foods," said Nassar Odeh, as oven aromas wafted over a Jerusalem street.

The Palestinian entrepreneur has spent the past few months watching gourmands drift in and out of his new eatery, Taboon, named after the traditional clay oven. Customers are tucking into dishes such as Armenian lahmajoon, a thin pizza with ground meat and spices which Odeh remembers being sold to hungry crowds in the Old City decades earlier.

"Armenian dishes are part of the Palestinian culture," said Odeh, whose bar also serves drinks from the occupied West Bank. "This is extremely important because this emphasizes the Palestinian presence and the entrepreneurship," he said. "We need to be proud of our products."

Opened last year in what was once the family's souvenir store, Taboon is part of a string of new Palestinian bars, cafes and restaurants. Beyond those within the Old City walls, they have sprung up in other areas of annexed east Jerusalem such as the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, or further afield in Ramallah in the West Bank. — AFP (See Page 11)

## China deploys warships, fires ballistic missiles

**PINGTAN:** China fired ballistic missiles and deployed fighter jets and warships on Thursday as it held its largest-ever military exercises around Taiwan, a show of force sparked by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island. Pelosi was the highest-profile US official to visit Taiwan in years, defying a series of stark threats from Beijing, which views the self-ruled island as its territory.

In retaliation, China launched a

series of exercises in multiple zones around Taiwan, straddling some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world and at some points just 20 kilometers from the island's shore. The drills began around 12 pm, and involved a "conventional missile firepower assault" in waters to the east of Taiwan, the Chinese military said.

The aim was to test the precision of the missiles and their ability to deny an enemy access to or control of an area, Eastern Theater Command spokesman Senior Colonel Shi Yi said in a statement. Taiwan said the Chinese military fired 11 Dongfeng-class ballistic missiles "in several batches" and condemned the exercises as "irrational actions that undermine regional peace".

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## Blue Origin sends six to space

**WASHINGTON:** Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin on Thursday launched six people to space, including the first from Egypt and Portugal, on the company's sixth crewed flight. Mission "N-22" saw the New Shepard suborbital rocket blast off around 8:58 am local time (1358 GMT) from Blue's base in the west Texas desert. The autonomous, reusable vehicle sent its crew capsule soaring above the Karman line, the internationally recognized space

boundary, 62 miles (100 kilometers) above sea level.

"I'm floating!" a crew mate could be heard saying on a livestream, as the capsule coasted to its highest point and the passengers experienced a few minutes of weightlessness. Both the rocket and capsule separately returned to the base - the latter using giant parachutes - completing the mission around 11 minutes after lift-off. The crew included Egyptian engineer Sara Sabry, and Portuguese entrepreneur Mario Ferreira, both the first people of their countries to leave Earth.

It also included Coby Cotton, one of five co-founders of the YouTube sports and comedy channel Dude Perfect, which boasts more than 57 million followers. — AFP

## Taleban: No info about Zawahiri

**KABUL:** The Taleban said Thursday they have no knowledge of Ayman Al-Zawahiri's presence in Afghanistan, days after US President Joe Biden announced the Al-Qaeda chief had been killed by a drone strike in Kabul. A carefully phrased Taleban statement neither confirmed Zawahiri's presence in Afghanistan nor acknowledged his death, but carried the first official mention of his name since Sunday's strike.

Zawahiri's assassination is the biggest blow to Al-Qaeda since US special forces killed Osama bin Laden in 2011, and calls into question the Taleban's promise not to harbor militant groups. The United States led an invasion in 2001 that toppled the first Taleban government, after the hardline Islamist group refused to hand over bin Laden following the 9/11 attacks. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has no information about Ayman Al-Zawahiri's arrival and stay," Thursday's Taleban statement said. "The leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has

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PINGTAN: Chinese military helicopters fly past Pingtan island, one of mainland China's closest point from Taiwan, in Fujian province on August 4, 2022. — AFP



TEXAS: A Blue Origin capsule on display in Van Horn, Texas. — AFP



PANJSHIR: A Taleban fighter carries a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at a road checkpoint near the Bazarak district in Panjshir Province. — AFP