



Opinion

'If it lasted for others, it would not have reached you'

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THERE is a phrase engraved on the facade of Al-Seif Palace, which is a piece of wisdom if one carefully ponders over it. It is - "If it had lasted for others, it would not have reached you."

This phrase goes back to the era of one of the Abbasid Dynasty's rulers. Due to its great significance, Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah chose for it to be engraved on the facade of the palace in 1917.

What made us remember this phrase now is the rumors that Kuwait has been witnessing in recent days regarding the arrangement of the ruling house, and how some are drawing up several scenarios even though this is not within their jurisdiction!

There is a clear law on this matter that cannot be deviated from. There are rational people in Kuwait who know when to act. The rule is, the life of a state is meant to be continuous and does not stop with a single person. This is how the world is, and no one is immortal.

I remember in the year 2005 when the late King Fahad suffered a health setback, he gathered his brothers on that day and asked to step down, but they refused. His powers were entrusted to the heir apparent at the time - Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz - and he remained king until he passed away on the first of August that year.

Also, when Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan suffered a health setback, his powers were assigned to his Crown Prince Sheikh Khalifa. The same happened with him when he suffered a health problem, and his powers were assigned to his Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed.

Also in the United Kingdom, the same path was taken when Prince Charles assumed the powers of the kingdom.

In all monarchs, there is an agreed-upon formula that organizes the ruling house, on the basis of "the king is dead, the king lives". Its reason is that there is no vacuum at the top of the pyramid of power.

Sometimes intrigues and rumors overpower the truth, as this is an occasion for the demons of interest to infiltrate into the details of the discourse. This is what countries have witnessed.

In the Umayyad Dynasty, unrest prevailed as a result of the entry of stakeholders into the ruling line through lies. The same thing happened with the Abbasid Dynasty, and also the Ottoman Empire, where conspiracies to gain power are the best evidence of what led to their collapse.

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MP seeks to nullify 'Conscription Law'

Legal quandary for Kuwaiti youth

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: MP Badr Al-Mullah has submitted a bill on nullifying Conscription Law No. 20/2015.

Al-Mullah pointed out that this law is supposed to address loopholes in the previous Law No. 102/1980, but it created new problems instead.

He said he forwarded queries to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd about the issue and he was informed that 6,368 Kuwaiti youths were referred to the Criminal Investigations General Department for violating the abovementioned law; in addition to 6,923 who have yet to register for conscription. He stated this means that almost 13,000 individuals are subject to legal procedures for crimes

they have nothing to do with. He clarified that the Kuwaiti youths want to register for conscription, but the Ministry of Defense cannot accommodate all of them.

He cited Article Three of the law, stipulating the completion of conscription, postponement or exemption as one of the conditions for employment in the public and private sectors; thereby, delaying the employment of the youths.

He added Article 33 of the law states that the employers in the public or private sectors are required to pay the salary of the employees during the conscription period. He pointed out that such a requirement has prompted the private sector to refrain from hiring Kuwaitis.

He also highlighted the tough penalties stated in the law like three years imprisonment, which could be imposed on thousands of innocent Kuwaiti young men. He stressed the need to nullify the law; and then the Ministry of Defense, in coordination with the Supreme Defense Council,

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Amir's health remains stable

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): The health condition of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah remains stable, said the Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Monday.

Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah expressed wishes of good health and rapid recovery for His Highness the Amir.

Diabetes drugs misuse for weight loss poses hazards

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Kuwait weighs options amid visa transfer ban

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The concerned agencies in the Ministry of Interior are examining the repercussions of stopping the transfer of residency of foreign workers in the government sector (Article 17) to the private sector (Article 18), which

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The guided-missile destroyer USS Carney in Souda Bay, Greece. The American warship and multiple commercial ships came under attack Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023 in the Red Sea, the Pentagon said, potentially marking a major escalation in a series of maritime attacks in the Mideast linked to the Israel-Hamas war. (AP)

Gaza death toll surpasses 15,500

Palestinians running out of places to go

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, Dec 4, (AP): Israel's military renewed calls Monday for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombarded targets across the Gaza Strip.

The expanded operations, following the expiration of a weeklong cease-fire, are aimed at eliminating Gaza's Hamas rulers, whose Oct. 7 attack into Israel triggered the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades. The war has already killed thousands of Palestinians and displaced over three-fourths of the territory's population of 2.3 million people, who are running out of safe places to go.

Already under mounting pressure from its top ally, the United States, Israel appears to be racing to strike a death blow against Hamas - if that's possible, given the group's deep roots in Palestinian society - before any new cease-fire. But the mounting toll of the fighting, which Palestinian health officials say has killed several hundred civilians since the truce ended on Friday, is likely to further increase international pressure to return to the negotiating table. It could also render even larger parts of the isolated territory uninhabitable.

Airstrikes and the ground offensive have transformed much of the north, including large areas in Gaza City, into a rubble-filled wasteland. Around 2 million people are now crowded into the 230 square kilometers (90 square miles) that make up Gaza's south, where Israel's focus is starting to shift.

As Israel calls for more areas to be evacuated, it's not clear where people can go. Already shelters are overwhelmed, and both Israel and neighboring Egypt have refused to accept any refugees.

Residents said Monday they heard airstrikes and explosions in and around Khan Younis overnight after the military dropped leaflets warning people to relocate farther south toward the border with Egypt. The military has ordered the evacuation of nearly two dozen neighborhoods in and around the town.

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Kuwait targets modified vehicles with 'penalties'

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Reliable security sources say young people who intend to change the external appearance of their vehicles to look like new models -- for example changing the exterior of a 2010 model to look like 2023 model may find themselves violating the General Traffic Department rules and may face punishment.

While fans of the latest trends of models 'queued in front of shops and garages to change the year of manufacture and the exterior appearance of the vehicle in Shuwaikh Industrial City and elsewhere to give it a new look may be unaware of what is to come.

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Palestinians mourn over the bodies of their relatives who were killed in Israeli bombardments, at the Nasser hospital in Khan Younis refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip, Dec. 4, 2023. (AP)

US warship downs 3 drones

Houthi missiles hit 3 commercial ships

DUBAI, Dec 4, (AP): Ballistic missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck three commercial ships Sunday in the Red Sea, while a U.S. warship shot down three drones in self-defense during the hourslong assault, the U.S. military said. The Iranian-backed Houthis claimed two of the attacks.

The strikes marked an escalation in a series of maritime attacks in the Mideast linked to the Israel-Hamas war, as multiple vessels found themselves in the crosshairs of a single Houthi assault for the first time in the conflict. The U.S. vowed to "consider all appropriate responses" in the wake of the attack, specifically calling out Iran, after tensions have been high for years now over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program.

"These attacks represent a direct threat to international commerce and maritime security," the U.S. military's Central Command said in a statement. "They have jeopardized the lives of international crews representing multiple countries around the world."

It added: "We also have every reason to believe that these attacks, while launched by the Houthis in Yemen, are fully enabled by Iran."

The attack began around 9:15 a.m. local time (0615 GMT) in Houthi-controlled Sanaa, Yemen's capital, Central Command said.

The USS Carney, a Navy destroyer, detected a ballistic missile fired from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen at the Bahamas-flagged bulk carrier Unity Explorer. The missile hit near the ship, the U.S. said. Shortly afterward, the Carney shot down a drone headed its way, although it's not clear if the destroyer was the target, Central Command said.

About 30 minutes later, the Unity Explorer was hit by a missile. While responding to its distress call, the Carney shot down another incoming drone. Central Command said the Unity Explorer sustained minor damage from the missile.

Two other commercial ships, the Panamanian-flagged bulk carriers Number 9 and Sophie II, were both struck by missiles.

KFH achieves unprecedented HR 'success' in 2023: Al-Omar

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NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: A limited fire broke out at Mina Abdullah on Monday injuring two workers, Kuwait National Petroleum Company declared.

The KNPC said in a statement the small fire that happened at a back-up power station, affiliated to the environmentally friendly fuel project, was brought under control. (KUNA)

MANAMA: Bahrain Minister of Interior General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, Sunday, held a discussion with the British Minister of Transport Mark Harper focusing on the exchange of expertise in airport and aviation security.

During the meeting, Sheikh Rashid Al-Khalifa hailed the historical ties between the two friendly countries, praising the two countries dedication to enhancing their security cooperation according to Bahrain News Agency (BNA). (KUNA)

ANKARA: A moderately strong earthquake struck northwest Turkey on Monday, sending people out into the streets in fear. There was no immediate report of injuries or damage.

The magnitude 5.1 earthquake was centered in the Sea of Marmara, off the town of Gemlik in Bursa province, according to the disaster management agency, AFAD. It struck at 10:42 a.m. local time (07:42 GMT), at a depth of some 9 kilometers (5.6 miles). (AP)

PADANG, Indonesia: Indonesian authorities halted Monday the search for 12 climbers after Mount Marapi volcano erupted again, unleashing a new burst of hot ash as high as 800 meters (2,620 feet) into the air, officials said.

The bodies of 11 climbers were recovered earlier in the day - while searching for those missing - but attempts to relocate them were hindered by the renewed activity. West Sumatra's Search and Rescue Agency head Abdul Malik said. The search operation would resume once conditions improved, he added. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:03 Asr 14:30
 Sunrise .. 06:27 Maghrib .. 16:49
 Zohr 11:38 Isha 18:11

Local

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06-28 km/h and some high clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speed of 08-26 km/h and some high clouds will appear.	Kuwait Airport	24	08
	Abdaly	25	08
	Jahra	26	12
	Salmiyah	23	16
	Nuwaisib	24	13
	Wafra	25	11

Over 28,000 Kuwaitis are unemployed

Fines eyed for those who fail to collect Civil ID cards: Al-Shammari

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Director of the Office of the Director General of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) and the official spokesman of PACI Khaled Al-Shammari revealed that more than 28,000 Kuwaiti citizens are unemployed.

In an interview with Al-Seyassah daily, he explained that there are about 190,000 civil IDs completed and ready for delivery in the machines designated for this purpose, and about 15,000 cards are issued daily. This reflects the great effort exerted by the PACI employees.



Al-Shammari

Imposing fines on those who fail to receive their civil ID cards from the PACI agencies is an issue currently under consideration and being studied. This is aimed to encourage their owners to receive them, and to reduce the phenomenon of their accumulation in the devices, a phenomenon that may lead to slow issuance of new cards due to the lack of space for them in devices, which are crowded with ready-to-collect cards.

Meanwhile, Al-Shammari said the total population of Kuwait is 4.823 million of which 1.531 million are citizens and 3.292 million are non-Kuwaitis, according to PACI's latest statistics issued on June 30, 2023.

He explained that the total number of employees in government agencies as of June 30, 2023 is 388,731 Kuwaitis and 112,406 non-Kuwaitis. About 37,077 citizens work in non-governmental agencies, while the number of non-Kuwaitis working in those agencies is 1,547,153.

The number of unemployed people in Kuwait includes 28,190 Kuwaitis and 3,641 non-Kuwaitis. The number of Kuwaiti students is 290,883, and non-Kuwaiti students are 197,361.

Al-Shammari highlighted that PACI is the first to explore and use the latest technical innovations to implement them.

He stressed the constant keenness of PACI for continuous development in the field of information technology, as it is one of the important government service bodies. It is also keen to move forward towards complete digital transformation, the percentage of which has reached 70 percent so far, in implementation of the directives of the Council of Ministers, and in implementation of the government work program, as per which digital transformation in government agencies is one of its

basic pillars aimed at achieving the desired development.

Al-Shammari highlighted that there is a close follow-up by the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communication Affairs Fahad Al-Shuaila of the steps that PACI is taking for developing and modernizing its work mechanisms.

He said, "The Director General of PACI Mansour Al-Mudhni spares no effort to promote and support the national cadres working in PACI to achieve the goals and vision of PACI that everyone seeks to achieve.

Among those goals is to make the authority at the forefront of government agencies, keeping pace with all the changes of the modern era in a way that serves the purposes of sustainable development, by removing all challenges that may face the work process within PACI.

Al-Shammari confirmed that there are no problems with regard to restoring the civil card receipt service for a specific fee, as the procedures for contracting to implement the service are currently being finalized. This comes in an effort by PACI to facilitate card holders who wish to receive them where they are without bearing the hassle of visiting PACI or its affiliated branches in the governorates, as it is an optional service and not mandatory as is known.

He stressed that there is no delay in issuing civil ID cards for those whose residence was issued, as the issuance procedure takes from three to five days maximum, starting from May 29. This is due to the great efforts exerted by the PACI employees and the diligent follow-up by PACI.

Al-Shammari highlighted the smooth procedures within PACI, and the disappearance of waiting lines, whether it concerns issuing or receiving civil ID cards, or any other procedure at the main headquarters of PACI in South Surra.

He said, "This did not come from nowhere. In fact, it is the result of plans and programs being implemented, including the distribution of ready-to-collect cards to non-Kuwaiti residents of Ahmadi Governorate at the PACI building located in South Sabahiya, distribution of all civil ID cards for the first time/replacement for lost ones" on QR CODE devices, in addition to adding a unified serial number feature to the new cards for first time through the "My Identity" app.

Al-Shammari stressed that there is a development of many artificial intelligence models to update the map data produced and provided by PACI through the spatial information portal or the Kuwait-Finder application.

He stated that the authority uses satellite image data and ocean imaging data, adding that it photographed all the streets of the State of Kuwait during the year 2022 to update the data it made available on its various applications, and provide it to many government agencies, with the aim of managing expenses and supporting integration between government agencies.



The Cabinet meeting in progress.

PM Diwan photo

'World must take action now to end Israeli atrocities'

Cabinet discusses Amir's health, latest in Gaza

1,867 mosques in Kuwait

'All copies of Qur'an are audited'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): The cabinet held its weekly meeting on Monday discussing a multitude of issues including the health condition of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the recent alarming developments concerning the Israeli brutal aggression against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and occupied territories.

After the meeting — chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Essa Al-Kandari said that the attendees were informed about the stable health condition of His Highness the Amir.

The cabinet also expressed wishes of good health and rapid recovery towards His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, said Al-Kandari. On the issue of the Gaza Strip, Al-Kandari indicated that the cabinet had reflected the State of Kuwait's utter condemnation to the resumption of the Israeli occupation forces' brutal assault on the Gaza Strip.

He indicated that the meeting called on the international community to impose its will against the Israeli aggressors in accordance with international laws and norms.

The world also should hold the Israeli aggressors responsible for their heinous acts, indicated the minister, adding that the cabinet had called for resolving the Middle East issue through the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and east Jerusalem as capital.

Meanwhile, the cabinet also touched on the recent grilling motion against His Highness the Prime Minister submitted by MP Mhahel Khaled Al-Mudhaf, indicated Al-Kandari.

He indicated that the grilling, which ended without any proposals, was lauded by His Highness the Prime Minister, saying that the motion was in line with true values of Kuwaiti democracy.

Minister Al-Kandari revealed that the cabinet meeting also touched on Saudi Arabia's winning the hosting honor of the Expo 2030 during a vote occurring in Paris last week, saying that the Saudi leadership and people were worthy of such honor, which reflected the vision and progress of the fellow Arab country.

The win also came in line with Saudi Arabia's own Vision 2030, he added.

The cabinet meeting also extended congratulations of the State of Kuwait towards the UAE, which is celebrating its 52nd National Day, said Al-Kandari, adding the meeting expressed wishes of progress and development towards the Emirati people and leadership.

3 activists of Bedoun cause get 1, 2 yrs jail

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdict, sentenced three activists of the Bedoun cause to imprisonment for periods ranging between one and two years with a suspended sentence, and imposing a fine of KD 500 on the remaining defendants. They were accused of gathering in Taima and broadcasting false news.

The Court of Appeals overturned the verdict issued by the Criminal Court, which acquitted three activists of the Bedoun cause, and ruled that they be imprisoned for one and two years, and suspended for a period of three years. A number of defendants were imposed fines of KD 100 and KD 500.

The Public Prosecution had referred the defendants to trial after charging each of them with gathering without a permit and broadcasting false news about the country's internal situation.

Drug addict nabbed: Rescue patrols referred a person in an abnormal condition to the Drugs Control General Department (DCGD) after he was caught in Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area in possession of a weapon, narcotic pills and some hashish, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source disclosed that while roaming around the area, the rescue patrols saw an illegal vehicle, so they stopped it for inspection. This led to the discovery of a weapon. Upon inquiring about the person, it became clear that he is a citizen who was in an abnormal condition. When he was asked to board the patrol vehicle, the above-mentioned quantity of narcotic substances were found in his possession.



KUNA photo

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the meeting in Doha.

FM partakes in Doha meeting

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the accompanying delegation took part, Sunday, in the 158th meeting of the GCC meeting held in Doha, Qatar.

This preparatory meeting is held ahead of the 44th GCC summit in the

Qatari capital next Tuesday.

The summit, featuring the participation of Gulf leaders, will be focusing on joint GCC cooperation in addition to important regional development namely the alarming situation in the Gaza Strip and the violations against Palestinian lands and sacred places. (KUNA)

Medical expenses incurred in US

'Pay Kuwaiti woman KD 78,000'

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Court of Cassation ruled to oblige the Ministry of Health, the undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, and the director of the Department of Overseas Treatment in their capacity to pay KD 78,000 to a Kuwaiti woman, thereby cancelling the appealed ruling.

According to the case file, Lawyer Nour Bin Haider explained that her client, while undergoing treatment in America, was surprised to realize she was suffering from a lung clot. Shortly after, she fell into a coma, and her medical benefits were suspended, even though her treatment had not completed.

In view of the seriousness of her medical condition, the treating physician recommended that she could not return to Kuwait. Following the failure of all attempts made by her with the health office in Washington, she was forced to bear the expenses of her treatment and the expenses of those accompanying her until her return to Kuwait, which was one year after the decision to

suspend her medical benefits.

The Supreme Medical Committee for Overseas Treatment agreed to disburse only USD 70,000 for the treatment bills, and refused to compensate the plaintiff for the other expenses she incurred for herself and her companions.

Lawyer Nour Bin Haider presented to the court a portfolio of documents that included doctor's reports and correspondence regarding her client's health condition, which was not presented to the concerned medical committee to determine whether to extend the period of her treatment or not.

The court had ruled that the plaintiff was entitled to an amount of KD 78,000.

The Court of Appeals had overturned the ruling. During the court session at the Court of Cassation, Lawyer Nour Bin Haider adhered to the experts' report that her client was entitled to an amount of KD 78,000, including KD 200 per day for a period of 13 months based on the recommendation of the treating doctor, which is what the Court of Cassation used to conclude that the plaintiff was entitled to the aforementioned amount.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: According to a source, citizens employed in government agencies, ministries, and institutions have the option to engage in private sector work after official working hours, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

However, this arrangement does not involve receiving financial benefits from the government, such as labor support.

Most importantly, obtaining approval from the Civil Service Commission is not a prerequisite for pursuing such opportunities.

The source emphasized the existence of specific guidelines governing employees' activities after official working hours.

These guidelines necessitate adherence to regulations outlined in their roles within the government sector. Employees are expected to maintain information confidentiality, avoid actions conflicting with the interests of the government sector, and fulfill certain conditions before venturing into the private sector, aligning with laws preventing conflicts of interest.

The source highlighted that the Civil Service Commission strictly prohibits employees from engaging in work for others, whether compensated or not, even outside official working hours.

An exception is granted only with written permission from the Minister, and failure to secure this permission is considered a disciplinary violation, subjecting the employee to accountability.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has outlined seven conditions for both male and female teachers seeking employment in adult education and literacy centers during the evening shift, reports Al-Rai daily.

Key among these conditions is prioritizing teachers within the same educational district and teaching stage, with an additional requirement of obtaining an excellent rating in the last two years.

According to a bulletin addressed to educational districts and schools, once the assignment decision is issued, teachers may not leave or be exempted from work without the written approval of the Superintendent of Adult Education and Illiteracy Eradication.

Exceptions are considered for circumstances determined by the superintendent and in alignment with work interests. Teachers are also obligated to participate in scheduled examinations throughout the school year, and apologizing for this commitment is not permissible.

The bulletin underscores the importance of adhering to the allocated time for working in adult education centers during the evening period, with violations potentially leading to legal accountability. It is expressly prohibited for a male or female teacher to be assigned to work in more than one place simultaneously.

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Indian expat dies in car accident

By Munaif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: A 47-year-old Indian expatriate died when his vehicle collided with a tanker truck on South Artaal Road. His body has been referred to the Forensic Department.

According to a security source, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about a col-

lision between a car and a tanker truck on the South Artaal Road, security officers, paramedics, and firefighters from the Ar-Rifjan Fire Station rushed immediately to the site.

It was discovered that the accident led to the driver of the car being trapped, and when he was pulled from the wreck it was discovered that he had died.

Investigations are underway to determine the cause of the accident.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Invasion was wake-up call, altered Kuwaiti diplomacy'

"ON October 30, 2023, Kuwaiti newspapers published headlines that emerged from the press meeting arranged by His Excellency Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber with journalists about the developments of the situation in Gaza and the complexities of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian Strip, whose administration is controlled by the Hamas organization, which masterminded the raid on the Israeli neighborhood adjacent to the Gaza area, and because of it, Israel launched revenge attacks, and as the Kuwaiti minister said: The current events in Gaza are operations in retaliation for that enthusiastic raid," columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"In that meeting, the Minister spoke at length about Kuwait's conviction in the approach it has embraced since independence, the bottom line of which is no recognition, no reconciliation, and no relationship with Israel, as long as the conditions for establishing a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza and its borders as of June 5, 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital, with a strong insistence on adhering to this without being affected by the changes that may occur in the Palestinian issue.



Abdullah Bishara

"In fact, the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, in his press conference, highlighted Kuwait's old approach that has accompanied it since independence, with the solidity of Kuwaiti diplomacy that stands apart from any changes affecting Arab positions, and fortifies itself with this intensity to ensure Kuwait's continued resistance to the storms of change.

"The Minister's words came to confirm Kuwait's inherited diplomacy in its struggle with the issues of Palestine, stressing the depth of commitment to the lines that make up the Kuwaiti conviction, which are the same components that have been rooted in the diplomacy since Kuwait joined the Arab League in July 1961. Here I must point out the conditions that accompanied accepting Kuwait as a member of the League, which means withdrawing British forces from Kuwait and replacing them with Arab forces, constituting a political and moral deterrent to secure Kuwait's independence, preserve its security and sovereignty, confirm its right to choose to join any Arab party, and support it to join the United Nations.

"These rules came as an Arab position against the Iraqi government's claims of ownership of Kuwait. These rules define the diplomatic space in which the State of Kuwait moves. They are the Arabization of Kuwait's defense mechanisms, the confirmation of its distance from the major powers, and the confinement of its security to the Arab framework. Kuwaiti officials must respect them and adhere to them without leaving their circle.

"Kuwait adopted these trends with the satisfaction of a firm Arab position that did not take into account future changes that might affect bilateral relations with Iraq.

"In 1963, the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad assumed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in January 1964, I was director of the minister's office, carrying out his instructions, accompanying him on his travels, recording his meetings, and witnessing the intensity of his loyalty to the meanings of the Arab mechanisms that the Arab League decided to defend Kuwait, with extreme caution against the major powers, especially Britain and the United States, turned Kuwaiti diplomacy towards strengthening Arab deterrence, and keenness to confirm Arab solidarity with the flexibility to move to overcome the gap between the Arabs, in an Arab time characterized by political and military conflicts and clashes between the conservatives and the military revolutionaries, who controlled Cairo, Baghdad, and then Libya, Yemen, Sudan and Syria.

"The Kuwaiti efforts continued without stopping, and were distinguished by the delicate vocabulary and gentleness of the style that distinguished Sheikh Sabah, especially in his dealings with representatives of the countries that were controlled by the Arab armies, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya, while protecting the Kuwaiti position without being affected by the possibilities and surprises of the future.

"Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad also volunteered to confront crises among the Arabs out of his belief that the safety of Kuwait lies in the unity of the Arabs, and that its security is interconnected with the strength of Arab solidarity. He also volunteered to lead the committees formed by the League to solve problems between the Arab countries, and to lead Arab delegations that explain Arab positions to major capitals, the last of which was his presidency of the Seven-Year Arab Committee to explain Iraq's positions during the Iraq-Iran war.

"I was with the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad in his car on the day of the invasion, heading to the Saudi border. He was silent and saddened by the betrayals he did not expect and the helpless Arab negativities that demolished the pillars of the Arab system, which Sheikh Sabah devoted all his efforts to strengthening, with his strong belief that the safety of Kuwait was a trust in the hands of the Arabs.

"With the invasion and the emergence of the realities of the Arab countries, Kuwait closed the chapter of diligence in collective Arab deterrence, and believed with certainty in the necessity of providing an effective deterrent that guarantees its independence, gives its people reassurance, and frees it from relying on statements issued by Arab meetings that have a comforting tone but do not have an effective will.

"The invasion was a lesson for all of us, and the most important thing we learned was to strive to move away from high-ceiling diplomacy and dry rigidity in positions, and to begin to become familiar with the approach of the possible, characterized by flexibility, and openness to all paths that might lead to success, and most important of all, a strong belief in the necessity of the presence of deterrence mechanisms which guarantees safety, deepens the roots of independence, and preserves sovereignty.

"With this realistic transformation, Kuwait entered the stage of strategic partnership with both Britain and the United States, and entered into a permanent partnership with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council in security, defense, and life.

"It also opened its diplomatic doors to everyone, including those who failed on the day. The invasion, by Arabs and others, and the diplomatic symbol Kuwait became a friend to everyone. The truth is that Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad was the one who rose above the pain and restored contact with the weak leaders in North Africa, Sudan, Jordan and Yemen, and it is noticeable that the leaders who misjudged disappeared completely.

"I would like to point out that the content of current Kuwaiti diplomacy is completely different from the old content, and one of the most prominent signs of the difference is embodied in the strategic partnership with London and Washington, with which our interconnection was not distinguished by the intimacy that we experience now, and we must all adhere to this interdependence that ensures that Kuwait and its people interact with the realities of life and the most important matters. Its lessons are that Kuwait is in dire need of a deterrent capable of participating in securing its independence and sovereignty and reassuring its people that their lives are guaranteed, as Kuwait cannot alone provide the conditions for stability.

"Here are the fundamental changes that the people of Kuwait realized through the tragedy of the invasion:

"The first is: the continuation of ambitions, the absence of reassurance, the continuation of the neighboring regional turmoil, and the proliferation of doubts about intentions. From this atmosphere, anxiety is generated among the people of Kuwait and they lack satisfaction.

"Second: Kuwait's geographical area, limited population, and possession of energy sources and desert lands stimulate the appetite of those dreaming of disruption, pressure, and benefiting from what it possesses, and benefiting from security exposure.

"Third: From these facts, we have all unanimously realized the necessity of providing strategic partners in which interests converge and the necessities of cooperation and interdependence overlap. From this reality, security arrangements with both Britain and the United States of America have emerged.

"Fourth: From this fundamental development, Kuwait abolished the rigidity of its positions and moved to practice flexibility in diplomatic work and in searching for realistic solutions to the outstanding issues, including dealing with Arab, regional and international efforts in their search for realistic solutions to the Palestinian issue.

"The most important developments that have entered Kuwaiti diplomacy is the abandonment of the old insistence that we are more loyal to the truth than others. We bear the thorns and burdens of that insistence with dignity and pride.

"Kuwait endured a lot of trouble from the Iraqi revolutionaries. I was a follower of it, especially in the sixties of the last century. Kuwait today is different from the Kuwait of the past. The invasion brought something new to Kuwaiti diplomacy, strengthened its security sensitivity and entered it into a permanent strategic partnership, based on mutual benefits and the sustainability of trust between the two countries."

Also:

"The government won the bet after the interrogation of MP Muhallal Al-Mudhaf failed, as we expected, and the Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, was able to refute his interlocutor and win the round by a knockout," columnist **Walid Ibrahim Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"For the first time, I see a popular rally around the Nawaf government against the interrogation after the latter showed interest in the people's demands, especially regarding financial increases and retirees!

"The reason for this statement, despite the passage of more than a week since parliamentary accountability, is to point out the general satisfaction with the level of the government's performance since the start of the last National Assembly sessions.

"I do not know why some people want to disturb the relationship between the two authorities whenever harmony and agreement appear?!"

"It is required to stop popular bidding and look at the next stage, which requires a comprehensive cleaning of state agencies, stopping corruption, monitoring privatization tenders and conflicts of interest, and holding opportunists accountable, even if they are sheikhs!"

"On the occasion of the word 'sheikhs,' the country proved that it is bold in its decisions after the Ministers' Court issued its recent rulings on the 'sheikhs' in the Army Fund case!"

"Let us also call on the government to strike with an iron fist those with 'extensive debts' and move towards completing development projects, diversifying sources of income, paying attention to education, health and human development in various fields, and solving the bedouin problem without delay or procrastination!"

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Power shortage seen in 2024, peaks in '26

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: An informed source in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy predicted there will be an electrical power shortage crisis that the ministry will suffer from, starting next year and reaching its peak in 2026, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The source explained, "According to engineering programming tables, the annual increase in the rate of current consumption will reach 4.8 percent annually, and accordingly, the amount of energy shortage expected in the summer of 2024 will be 276 megawatts, as the rate of electrical production is expected to reach 17,477 megawatts, while it is expected that the consumption rate is 17,753 megawatts."

The source added that "the energy shortage crisis will continue in 2025, when the deficit is expected to reach 528 megawatts," as expectations indicate that the production rate will reach 18,077 megawatts, while the consumption rate will reach 18,605 megawatts.

The source went on to say the crisis will reach its peak in 2026, when the deficit is expected to reach 1,141 megawatts, as the production rate will reach 18,357, while the expected consumption rate will reach 19,498 megawatts.

The source stated that the Ministry is working during the current period to find solutions to avoid this crisis, by purchasing or exchanging energy with countries in the Gulf electrical interconnection system or activating the rationalization plan at the level of all sectors, stressing the necessity of accelerating procedures and removing obstacles to projects related to raising production capacity.



KUNA photo

Aid supplies loaded on cargo plane destined for Gaza.

33rd planeload for Gazans

The 33rd plane within the Kuwait Relief Air Bridge took off Monday heading to the Egyptian city of Al-Arish, carrying 10 tons of urgent relief aid for the people in the Gaza Strip.

Chairman of Al-Salam Charity and member of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Charitable Organization, Dr. Nabil A-Aoun, told KUNA that the aid includes blankets, tents, dates, winter clothes, and others to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza.

Al-Aoun added that the coordination had been made with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Egyptian

and the Palestinian Red Crescents to supervise the entry of aid through the Rafah crossing, noting that a relief plane would take off on Wednesday and another next Sunday.

He explained that more than 250 tons of qualitative aid have been prepared and will be launched in the coming days, noting that Al-Salam Charity is distributing hot meals and water daily inside Gaza in cooperation with associations approved by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (KUNA)

20 years jail for money-launderers

'Death, 15 years jail in human trafficking'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Deputy Public Prosecutor Meshari Al-Salem has stressed the need to take all the necessary measures to combat money laundering, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

Al-Salem made the statement when he attended a symposium on the sidelines of the third annual meeting of the Arab Public Representatives Association, which is being held in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh, with the participation of the heads of public prosecutions and public prosecution bodies in the Arab member states and the accompanying delegations, including the State of Kuwait, in addition to the concerned international bodies.

Al-Salem stated in the symposium entitled, "Efforts by Arab Prosecutions in Combating the Crimes of Corruption, Money Laundering, Migrant Smuggling, and Human Trafficking ... Challenges and Impositions," that Kuwait has effective legislation in combating these crimes; which pose a threat to the social and economic security of societies.

Imposed

He explained that the Kuwaiti legislator imposed heavy penalties on the perpetrator of the crimes of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants – up to death for the crime of human trafficking if the crime resulted in the death of the victim, while the penalty for the crime of human smuggling reaches 15 years if it is linked to a set of aggravating circumstances.

He added that with regard to the crime of money laundering, its punishment in Kuwaiti legislation amounts to imprisonment for a period of 20 years if it is linked to certain circumstances, most notably the commission of the crime through an organized group. He also confirmed that the Kuwaiti legislator granted the Public Prosecution certain powers, the most important of which is freezing and seizing funds.

He pointed out that Kuwait has joined many agreements that aim to unify efforts to reduce the abovementioned crimes; especially the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the two protocols associated with it, as well as the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Al-Salem pointed out as well that in recent years, the Public Prosecution investigated dozens of cases suspected



KUNA photo

Drugs, firearms, cash found in possession of criminals.

Drugs, firearms, cash found with culprits

Mol arrests accused in judge car fire

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced a significant development in Kuwait on Monday, in the case of the fire that targeted Chancellor Sultan Bouresli's vehicle. Following the necessary permissions from the competent public prosecution, the Ministry confirmed the successful apprehension of the individuals responsible for the arson attack.

According to a press statement from the General Department of Security Relations and Media at the Ministry of Interior, the investigation received close attention from First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Collaborative ef-

orts involving the Criminal Security Sector, the Capital Governorate Investigation Department, and the Money Crimes Department were instrumental in solving the mystery surrounding the attack on Sultan Bouresli's advisor's vehicle.

The Ministry emphasized its discreet and methodical approach to tracking down the perpetrators, ensuring that their actions did not compromise the ongoing investigation. It highlighted the vigilance of the Interior Ministry's personnel, who remain alert to any threats to the country's security or violations of individuals' rights.

The statement outlined the intensified search and investigation op-

erations, during which evidence was collected, and the movements of the accused were closely monitored. With the assistance of Special Forces, the Ministry successfully arrested the suspects, revealing that they had a criminal record. Furthermore, a significant quantity of narcotic drugs, firearms, and cash were seized from their possession. The Ministry assured that investigations into the incident are nearing completion, and the defendants, along with the confiscated items, will be promptly referred to the appropriate authorities. This development underscores the commitment of the Kuwaiti authorities to maintaining security and safeguarding the well-being of its citizens.

of trafficking in persons, money laundering and human smuggling; and it has issued many decisions and rulings regarding them, stressing in this context the importance of international cooperation in combating these crimes.



New warning on e-fraud: The Public Relations and Security Media General Department at the Ministry of Interior has reiterated its warning against electronic fraud; urging everyone to ignore fake messages or websites of unknown origin, through which people are deceived that fines will be imposed if they do not settle their traffic violations, stressing these messages are from fraudsters, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The department clarified that the

ministry sends notices or messages through the unified government application for electronic services 'Sahl' if traffic violations are registered against individuals and the necessary measures are then taken in this regard.

In addition, a security source informed the daily that the concerned authorities received more than 670 complaints from citizens and expatriates who fell victims to electronic fraud in the first 10 months of 2023. He said most of these complaints are stealing from bank accounts by sending fake links, indicating the minister monitored international gangs specializing in this type of fraudulent operations. He explained that fraudsters obtain the telephone numbers and data of citizens and expatriates, send messages containing links for

payment of fines or bills, and then steal money from the bank accounts.

He affirmed that the ministry has tightened procedures in coordination with the concerned authorities in and outside the country to control international gangs targeting Kuwait in their electronic piracy operations.

Meanwhile, technical and cybersecurity expert Bassam Al-Abdan said: "E-mail fraud gangs seek to exploit government services in their activities, because the victims trust government agencies like the Sahl platform and others. These fraudsters provide false information in a copied form to fool victims into believing that the links sent to them are authentic. In doing so, they exploit the desire of citizens and expatriates to complete government transactions electronically."

20,892 traffic violations

27 bootleggers arrested

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The relentless efforts of the Ministry of Interior resulted in the successful arrest of 27 expats from various nationalities. This operation carried out through continuous security deployments in different regions of the country, led to the confiscation of 1,113 bottles of both local and imported liquor, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The individuals in custody, along with the confiscated items, have been handed over to the relevant authorities for further legal actions and procedures against them. This proactive stance highlights the commitment of the criminal security sector to combat the illicit liquor trade and uphold public safety.



20,892 violations: During a week-long campaign on several of the country's main roads, the officers of the General Traffic Department issued 20,892 violations. This concerted effort aimed at monitoring traffic law offenders and individuals with outstanding warrants, resulting in the enforcement of necessary legal measures, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

As reported on the "X" platform, the administration disclosed that the recorded violations encompassed a diverse range of 20,892 infractions over the seven-day period.

Additionally, 14 juveniles were referred to the prosecution, and enforcement measures led to the seizure of 370 vehicles and bicycles. Furthermore, 32 precautionary violations were impounded, and 26 wanted persons, including those reported absconding, were arrested.



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PAM's acting director general receives Indian ambassador

Al-Otaibi praises India-Kuwait historical, distinguished ties

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Within the framework of joint cooperation between the Public Authority for Manpower and the Embassy of the Republic of India, the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower, Marzouq Al-Otaibi, received the Ambassador of the Republic of India to Kuwait, HE Dr. Adarsh Swaika, and his accompanying delegation.

distinguished relations between the two countries at the highest levels, and stressed his keenness to always maintain this good relationship between the two countries.

During the meeting, both sides discussed mechanisms of cooperation between the two sides in the field of recruiting and employing Indian workers in Kuwait.

Al-Otaibi explained to the Indian side

that the labor market attracts workers with the specializations that serve the labor market needs, and that persistent and continuous efforts are being made to develop the process of recruiting skilled workers in a way that serves the developmental and economic interests of Kuwait saying it is beneficial for workers and the countries sending them.

Some issues related to Indian workers

were also discussed and the problems facing them were sought to be solved in cooperation with all concerned parties.

Al-Otaibi stressed the primary role of the authority in providing legal protection and ensuring the existence of an appropriate work environment that guarantees the rights of all workers, including Indian workers, in various sectors. He also stressed the keenness of both parties for joint cooperation with regard to In-

dian workers.

In turn, the Indian envoy expressed his gratitude and thanks to Kuwait in general and to the Public Authority for Manpower in particular for the efforts it makes regarding issues of the Indian workforce in Kuwait, and expressed their constant endeavor to develop relations between the two countries in a way that serves the interests of all parties.

Applying fingerprint system for teachers a thorny issue for MoE

Devices said installed, fingerprinting registration completed

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The date for implementing the fingerprint attendance system for teachers has yet to be specified despite the installation of fingerprint devices and completion of the fingerprint registration of teachers in a number of schools to enter their data in the computer system, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources.

Sources think this could be one of the thorny files on the table of Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Manea, since several members of the National As-

sembly have voiced objection to the application of the fingerprint attendance system for teachers.



Dr Al-Manea

Sources pointed out this is one of the signs of a looming crisis in the ministry whose features began to appear on the horizon after the emergence of voices rejecting such move. The teachers fingerprint attendance issue dates back several years ago,

during which the file witnessed 'push and pull' that ended with postponement of implementation year after year. However, with the supply and installation of fingerprint devices in schools and the recording of teachers' fingerprints to input them in the devices, it seems the implementation is fast approaching, sources added.

Opposed

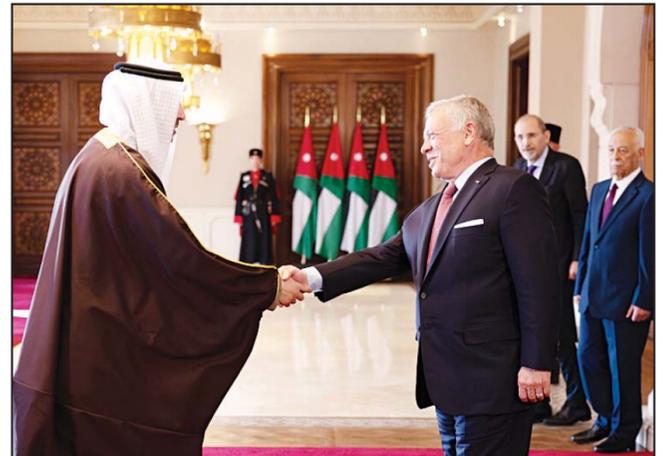
Sources confirmed there are still parliamentary voices opposed to applying the fingerprint attendance system for teachers, considering the exceptional nature of their profession that makes it difficult to implement the system. Sources stated this could delay the implementation for another year, especially in light of a closer scenario of cooperation between the ministry officials and lawmakers in-

terested in educational affairs. This was evident in some files, the most recent of which was the issue of allowing those pursuing medical studies in universities in Egypt and Jordan at their own expense to apply for scholarship, in addition to the refusal of Kuwait Teachers Association to apply the fingerprint attendance system for teachers.

In contrast, the supervisory authorities recommend the fingerprint attendance system for teachers as the State Audit Bureau (SAB) reportedly pointed this out in its reports -- the most recent of which was the 2022/2023 report and the ministry responded that the contract for the implementation of the fingerprint attendance system took effect on April 1, 2023; while the Civil Service Commission (CSC) continues to emphasize the need to implement the system.



Indian Ambassador Dr Swaika with PAM's Acting Director General, Al-Otaibi.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri presents his credentials to King Abdullah II.

Kuwait ambassador presents credentials to Jordanian King

AMMAN, Dec 4, (KUNA): The Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Jordan, Hamad Al-Marri presented his credentials to the Jordanian King Abdullah II, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Sunday.

Ambassador Al-Marri told KUNA, after the ceremony of presenting his credentials to the Royal Hashemite Court, which took place at Basman Palace, that he was honored to convey greetings on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Jordanian King.

The ambassador also expressed wishes on behalf of the political leadership in Kuwait to the Jordanian leadership and people for further progress and prosperity.

He pointed out that King Abdullah II asked him to convey greetings to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing the Kuwaiti leadership continued health and prosperity.

Result of continuous diligent work

CMA takes 1st place in row for independent budgets meeting governance requirements

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Capital Markets Authority has won first place for four years in a row in the ranking of entities with independent budgets in meeting governance requirements, and the highest percentage among all government agencies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This comes as a result of continuous diligent work with dedication, planning, and organization in accordance with the highest international performance standards, and as the CMA aspires to achieve a higher percentage in fulfilling the governance requirements to reach 100%, which was prevented by some legislative standards required by the authority's privacy as a quasi-judicial supervisory body with international ties.

The CMA explained that, accordingly, its Board of Commissioners has been given all powers related to implementing the provisions of the CMA law, including preparing and approving the executive regulations and governing regulations, and empowering the members of the Council to carry out executive work.

Accordingly, the organization of the conditions of the Capital Markets Authority differs from the legal, substantive, and procedural aspects from the rest of the independent bodies.

Moreover, its Board of Commissioners is entrusted with powers that expand to include the powers necessary to conduct daily work, as its role does not stop at planning, supervising and following up on implementation, as is the case in other independent authorities, since all of its commissioners are full-time.

The CMA pointed out that the Chairman of its Board of Commissioners has been assigned the work of the Executive Director and the Board of Commissioners has been entrusted with issuing all decisions to implement the provisions of the CMA law and its executive regulations.

The Chairman of the Board of Commissioners' assumption of the work of

Governors assigned specific duties: Mol

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, has assigned governors specific responsibilities related to service matters. He has directed them to establish teams within each governorate to identify shortcomings in state-provided services across diverse regions. Additionally, governors are mandated to produce weekly visual reports on the performance of state agencies responsible for service delivery, reports Al-Rai daily daily.

In addition to these responsibilities, Al-Khaled has stressed the significance of conducting weekly meetings with various government agencies, including the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Electricity and Water, the Municipality, the General Authority for Agriculture, and other pertinent bodies.

These meetings will involve the presentation and discussion of observations from the reports, and government agencies are expected to address and monitor their performance in response to these insights.

Underlining the urgency of the situation, the minister has urged the prompt submission of semi-monthly reports to his office, emphasizing the importance of swift action.

Moreover, he has emphasized the active role that governors should play in promoting cultural development, aligning with the provisions of Decree 21/1992 regarding the governorate system. Furthermore, he has highlighted the pivotal role of governorates in executing government plans and contributing to the economic and social development of their respective regions, benefiting both male and female citizens.

The Executive Director came in implementation of the law and in compliance with its provisions in accordance with the principle of the rule of law.

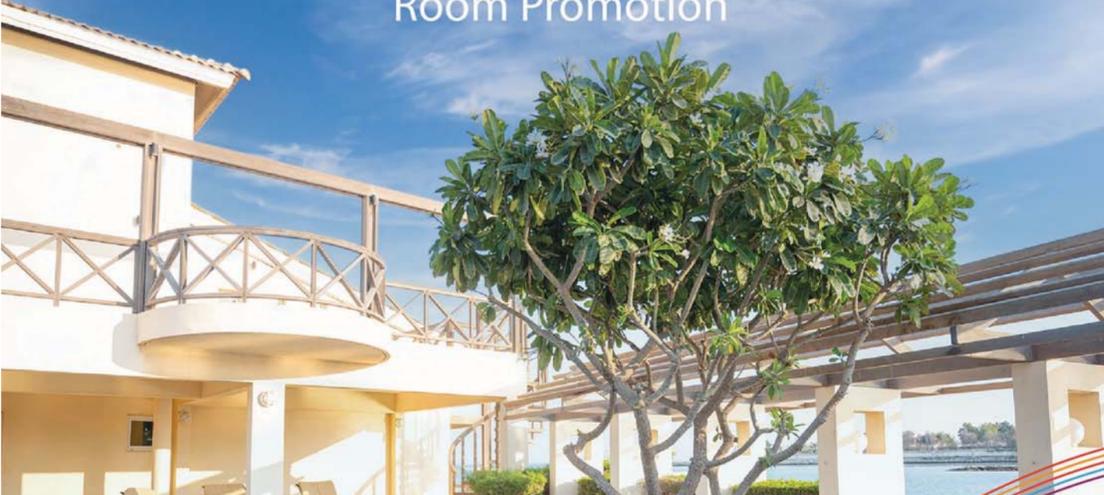


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LOCAL



Speakers at the Tamkeen conference.

KUNA photo

'If it lasted

Continued from Page 1

Why do we go back to these historical events? It is because there are those who use every opportunity to try to make Kuwait an arena for settling their personal scores, even if that is at the expense of the state as a whole.

In this regard, I remember when Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem suffered from a health problem in the National Assembly in the 1960s, and Dr. Ahmed Al-Khatib had treated him. When he woke up from his coma in his home, he found Dr. Al-Khatib by his side.

He said to him, "You are a generous man, not as I was told about you that you are trying to overthrow the government."

At that time, Kuwait was at the beginning of its era of democracy. Many conspiracies were being hatched, but none of them had anything to do with the truth. On that day, Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem assumed some of the powers of the Amir, the rule continued, and the state remained.

The same thing happened when Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad became ill, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah assumed some of his powers. And when the Crown Prince became ill at that time, the powers were delegated to Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, after separating the Crown Prince from the presidency of the Council of Ministers.

In the year 2006 when matters became somewhat complicated, an elite group of Kuwaiti notables met with the head of the Al-Sabah family, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali. Among them were Jassem Al-Saqr, Yousef Ibrahim Alghanim, Abdulaziz AlShaya, Yousef Al-Nisf, and others.

They met in order to solve some formal problems. It was agreed to pledge allegiance to Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, because the late Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah was not in a health condition that allowed him to exercise his role.

Here it is necessary to note something worthy of attention. The emirate's inheritance law is clear and unambiguous, and Kuwaiti traditions are consistent in such matters. The country's notables include people who are most keen about the stability of the state.

So, going back to the saying inscribed on the façade of Seif Palace "If it lasted for others, it would not have reached you", it simply means that people leave but countries remain. When some are aggressive in defending people via social media, these people do not want any good. Rather, they work on the basis of the ruin of the temple, because they have a benefit in that, for they are like crows that only live in ruins.

Therefore, it is necessary not to pay attention to these rumors, especially since many of them are published under pseudonyms or from outside Kuwait.

In every era, there are means to confuse and achieve personal goals at the expense of the state, but sagacious officials realize that this will not affect the course of the state, and that it is stable despite the change of fates.

Kuwait weighs

Continued from Page 1

affects a large number of expatriates in various State agencies, reports Al-Anba daily.

It has been reported that a vision was submitted to the ministry earlier, including the regulations and procedures related to this decision, with the possibility of excluding a number of categories from the ban on transferring from Article 17 to Article 18.

Sources confirmed to the daily that the categories excluded from the transfer ban are: foreign wife of a Kuwaiti citizen, foreign husband and children of a Kuwaiti citizen, and foreigners who hold Palestinian documents. Sources indicated that the vision includes the exception of foreigners holding Article 18 visa and their residency will be converted to Article 17 on the condition that they are not more than 55 years old, and that their work in the private sector is compatible with their work in the government sector.

Sources revealed that the proposed exception to the ban on transferring from Article 17 to Article 18 concerns foreigners who held Article 22 visa (dependent) and it was converted to Article 17 (government sector).

Sources explained that research is underway with this vision and the possibility of putting it into practice after it is approved by the senior leadership in the ministry.

Kuwait targets

Continued from Page 1

In this context, security sources confirmed to Al-Seyassah that the General Traffic Department began impounding vehicles whose owners intended to change their external appearance for a period of two months in implementation of Article 207 of

the Traffic Law, warning against taking this step without obtaining prior permission from the General Traffic Department.

The sources pointed out that the Traffic Department stops these vehicles in security campaigns or on the roads, indicating that it has placed a "block" on vehicles whose owners changed their exterior appearance from the 2010 to 2023 models, and that it has closed several stores in expanded campaigns in industrial areas in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce.

The sources stressed that the penalty does not include impounding the vehicle for only two months, but rather placing a "block" and obliging the vehicle owner to return it to its previous condition.

MP seeks

Continued from Page 1

will be authorized to lay down the regulations for the mobilization of citizens during disasters and wars.

MP Dawoud Maarefi submitted a bill on nullifying Clause Two of Article Eight of Government Law No. 81/2014. This clause allows the governors to take some of the gains of cooperative societies in their areas according to the decision issued by the Social Affairs and Labor minister as per the request of the Higher Council for Governorate Affairs.

He argued this clause is illegal since it allows the governorates to take a part of its budget from cooperatives through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor although they are under the Ministry of Interior. He added it is illegal for public institutions to get funds from the private sector, since the cooperatives invest private money belonging to the shareholders.

On the other hand, MP Hamad Al-Obaid asked Minister of Health Ahmed Al-Awadhi if it is true that the Elderly Health Services Department is now under the assistant undersecretary for Healthcare Affairs.

If yes, he wants to know the pros and cons of this step for the elderly; and if the ministry has a plan to ease healthcare procedures for the elderly.

MP Shuaib Shaaban forwarded queries to Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Manea about the rationale behind paying rent for unused flats for 11 months, measures taken to punish the officials responsible for the misappropriation of public funds, if the ministry conducted a study on the actual demand for flats to be rented for female expatriate teachers in order to avoid renting the whole building for a few teachers, if the ministry looked into the distribution of teachers to match the number of rented buildings in every educational district, total amount allocated for renting buildings for the accommodation of teachers in the last 10 years, number of rented buildings at present, steps that the minister has taken since he assumed office to nationalize jobs, number of national employees compared to the expatriates, their job description, types of contracts signed with expatriate employees, plan to fill up vacant senior and supervisory positions especially those currently occupied by acting officials, if the ministry added Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digitalization to the curricula of schools, if necessary equipment are available, plan to establish schools for boys and girls in new residential areas such as Al-Mutlaa and Jaber Al-Ahmad City, establishment schedule, if the needed plots have been allocated for this purpose, if the budget is available, if the Ministry of Higher Education provides subsidy to private universities, total amount of subsidy in the last 10 years if the answer is 'yes', legal basis for granting such subsidy, level of monitoring by the Secretariat General of Private Universities Council (PUC) in terms of the quality of education in private universities, if some departments are not accredited, why the departments with low or zero demand of graduates by the labor market continue to receive new students, number of graduates in such departments in the last three years, and estimated number of graduates in the current academic year.

MP Ahmed Lari forwarded the following queries to Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al-Ostad:

■ Total budget of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) for planting trees along the roads and streets, as well as desertification in the last three years including fiscal 2023/2024.

■ Plan of PAAAFR to combat desertification and plant more trees to minimize the effect of dust storms.

■ List of contracts that PAAAFR signed with agricultural contractors including the value and term of each contract, as well as the name of the contractor and the area covered by the contract.

■ Causes of the damage of large part of trees and plants along the roads and streets and if PAAAFR holds

any other public institution accountable for such damage.

In another development, 45 MPs signed the request that Rapporteur of the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee MP Muhannad Al-Sayer attached to the report of the committee on the proposed nullification of Article 80 of Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) Law No. 61/1976, which is included in the agenda of the session scheduled for Jan 9, 2024. The proposal aims to protect public funds; considering the aforementioned article authorizes the Council of Ministers to grant exceptional salaries and allowances which, according to the MPs who signed the proposal, is one way of squandering public funds. This article stipulates granting exceptional salaries to senior officials, including ministers and deputies – a violation of the principles of justice and equal opportunities.

Meanwhile, the Budgets and Final Accounts Committee on Monday discussed the letter of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) stating that it is not allowed to carry out its monitoring task in Kuwait Industrial Bank (KIB) as per Law No. 30/1964 on the establishment of SAB.

The committee also discussed the report of the Ministry of Finance on the contribution of public institutions and legal personalities in KIB, as well as SAB's report on the cash equivalent of unused leave days in the civilian and military sectors.

Representatives of the Ministry of Finance, SAB, Kuwait Investment Authority and KIB attended the meeting.

Palestinians running

Continued from Page 1

Later in the day, the military warned civilians to avoid the main north-south highway between Khan Younis and the central town of Deir al-Balah, saying the road had become a "battlefield" and was "extremely dangerous."

That indicated Israeli troops were approaching Khan Younis from the northeast, possibly with plans to cut central Gaza off from the south.

Al-Jazeera television aired footage of medics rescuing people wounded by what appeared to have been a strike on a car on that stretch of highway. An Israeli tank could be seen just up the road.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman, said the army is pursuing Hamas with "maximum force" in the north and south, and said it was trying to minimize harm to civilians.

He pointed to a map that divides southern Gaza into dozens of blocks in order to give "precise instructions" to residents on where to evacuate.

Many Palestinians, however, have ignored past evacuation orders, saying they do not feel any safer in the areas where they are told to seek refuge - which have also been repeatedly bombed. The military has meanwhile barred those who fled the north from returning, even during the cease-fire.

"The level of human suffering is intolerable," Mirjana Spoljaric, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said during a rare visit to Gaza. She also called for the immediate release of scores of hostages captured by Palestinian militants during the Oct. 7 attack.

"It is unacceptable that civilians have no safe place to go in Gaza, and with a military siege in place there is also no adequate humanitarian response currently possible."

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory since Oct. 7 has surpassed 15,500, with more than 41,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70% of the dead were women and children.

A Health Ministry spokesman asserted that hundreds had been killed or wounded since the cease-fire ended early Friday. "The majority of victims are still under the rubble," Ashraf al-Qidra said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah received 32 bodies overnight after Israeli strikes across central Gaza, said Omar al-Darawi, an administrative employee. Associated Press footage showed women in tears, kneeling over the bodies of loved ones and kissing them.

The military said aircraft struck some 200 Hamas targets overnight, with ground troops operating "in parallel," without elaborating. It said troops in northern Gaza uncovered a militant hideout in a school after coming under attack. Inside, they found two tunnel shafts, one of which had been booby-trapped, as well as explosives and weapons, the military said.

It is not possible to independently confirm battlefield reports from either side.

Israel says it targets Hamas operatives, not civilians, and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighborhoods.

Kuwait's Tamkeen conference to run until Dec 6**Supporting Palestinian women a 'necessity'**

By Sarah Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): A number of participants in the 45th conference of the International Women's Empowerment and Capacity Building Organization (IWECBO), also known as (Tamkeen), stressed the importance of supporting Palestinian women, saying that it was a "necessity" during the current Israeli military onslaught on Gaza and Palestinians.

The conference began Monday under the auspices of Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Firas Al-Sabah and will last until December sixth.

The event highlights women's key role in different domains such as financing, politics, and media, said Ebtaisam A-Qaoud, head of the IWECBO, during the conference.

She added that the conference was eager to communicate with all organizations on the vitality of supporting women's empowerment through adopting new laws and legislation.

She said that it was important to protect the Palestinian women who were facing all forms of violence and abuse by the Israeli occupation forces.

IWECBO is supporting Palestinian women for their heroic role to defend their homeland, she affirmed.

Meanwhile, Dr. Salwa Al-Jassar -- the organization's board member and head of conference scientific committee -- indicated that the conference's sessions focused on women's economic, social, political empowerment as well as boosting women's leadership roles.

The events include workshops that centered on the empowerment of women, she revealed.

On the current Middle East violence, she mentioned the hardships of what the Palestinian women were going through, and the necessity of supporting them. Al-Jassar took the chance and asked for a moment of silence in solidarity with Palestine.

On her part, the Qatari Shura Council Sheikha Al-Jufairi stated the historical ties between the neighboring and friendly countries was the element that demonstrated joint vision intensifying the bilateral cooperation in areas of common interests.

On Palestine, she touched on the horrific situation of women and children in the Gaza Strip, which required international solidarity to end the massacres, indicating Qatar's leadership and people were supporting Palestine via contributing to the previous humanitarian truce and seeking means to end the violence against Palestinians.

MoC issues decision with conditions to fill top posts

Bid to establish principle of equal opportunities

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications Dr. Ahmad Al-Majren announced that the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shoula issued a ministerial decision regarding the conditions and controls for filling supervisory positions in the Ministry of Communications.

In a press statement issued recently, Dr. Al-Majren said the ministerial decision recently issued by the minister introduces amendments to the previous regulations that were issued in the ministerial decision No. 83/2023.

He affirmed that this step is based on the keenness of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs to establish the principle of equal opportunities to fill vacant supervisory positions by implementing the provisions of Civil Service Council's Resolution No. 25/2006 and its amendments.

Al-Majren stressed that the controls stipulated in the ministerial Resolution No. 184/2023 do not prejudice the candidacy applications of employees applying for the previous announcement in light of ministerial Resolution No. 83/2023, which will be considered.

He called on everyone who sees himself as qualified among the ministry's employees to apply for the supervisory positions announced on the ministry's website, provided they had not applied previously, in accordance with the regulations specified by the ministerial Resolution No. 184/2023.

'Certificate of Opposition ...'**MoJ launches new e-service**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Hashim Al-Qallaf has announced the launching of a new service through 'Sahl' application in order to ease procedures for the public, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Qallaf confirmed that the 'Certificate of Opposition or Appeal' service allows the public to obtain an extract

from a certificate of opposition or appeal, against which an appeal was previously submitted, in order to submit it to the concerned authorities to lift transaction restrictions.

The Attorney General pointed out that according to statistics for the year 2023, the number of requests for certificates reached 530,000 at a rate of 1,600 certificates per day.

Qatar to host Gulf summit today

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Amidst a highly sensitive international and regional context, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries announced yesterday that the leaders' level Gulf summit is scheduled to take place, Tuesday, in Qatar, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, stated in a press release that the 158th ministerial meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council is set to be held today in Doha. This meeting aims to prepare the agenda for the 44th session of the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council.

Al-Budaiwi added the Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman, who heads the current session of the Ministerial Council, will preside over the meeting in the presence of Gulf foreign ministers.

The Ministerial Council is expected to deliberate on various reports, addressing the implementation of decisions made during the 43rd summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Additionally, discussions will encompass the strategic relations between GCC countries and global entities and blocs, along with an examination of the latest regional and international developments.

Al-Majran said they need to apply for candidacy during the supplementary period, starting from December 4, 2023 to December 4, 2024, scheduled to receive applications by attending in person at the Administrative Affairs Department in Shuwaikh - Building No. 2, Floor No. 3, Employment Affairs Department.

Meanwhile, informed sources in the Ministry of Communications reported

that the ministry recently completed archiving all data related to the space occupiers in its affiliated sites.

They explained that this data is with the concerned department in paper and electronic forms. It includes all documents related to rented, and other spaces, and documents indicating the procedures followed by the ministry in accordance with the systems followed in this regard.

KOC elects new directors board

KUNA photo

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): The General Assembly of the Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) picked Sunday a new board of directors for the years 2023-2027 headed by Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In its meeting at the KOC headquarters, the General Assembly also elected Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah as vice president of the KOC and Hussain Al-Musalam as Secretary, as well as six other members to the committee to include Sheikh Jaber Thamer Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ali Al-Marri, Nael Al-Awadhi, Musaed Al-Ajeel, Ghazi Al-Jariwi, and Ali Al-Dabbous.

The General Assembly also decided on appointing Fatma Hayyat, Sheikh Bibi Salem Al-Sabah, and Rabaa Al-Hajri as members of the KOC's Women's Committee.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Sabah hailed His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince's support for the KOC and encouraging a furthering of achievements and triumphs for the national sporting teams and associations.

In his speech at the ceremony, he stated that the KOC had achieved "many sporting victories at all levels" during his first term, which include medals from the Tokyo Olympic Games, Asian Games in China, Arab Games in Algeria, and the Islamic Games in Turkey.

Regulation reforms were ensued, most important was the amendment of the statute to comply with the Olympic Charter, approving the code of ethics, adopting a unified bylaw to organize the work of the affiliated committees, developing the committee's logo and identity, in addition to signing cooperation agreements with many Olympic Committees around the world.

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World News Roundup

Europe

France FM open to resettlement requests: French Foreign Minister **Catherine Colonna** said on Monday she was open to any resettlement request from tiny South Pacific nations threatened by rising sea levels, similar to Australia's agreement with Tuvalu.

Colonna said France had watched with "great interest" last month when Australia offered Tuvalu a lifeline to help residents escape the rising seas and increased storms brought by climate change.

At a meeting of Pacific leaders in the Cook Islands, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced a plan that will initially allow up to 280 Tuvaluans to come to Australia each year. Tuvalu has a population of 11,000, and its low-lying atolls make it particularly vulnerable to global warming.



Colonna

Colonna said she was not sure if the French Pacific territories of French Polynesia and New Caledonia had the capacity to make similar offers.

"I'm open to consider any specific request," Colonna told the National Press Club.

"But ... the size of the Australian continent makes a big difference with the size and beauties of French Polynesia and New Caledonia," she added.

Colonna said the Australian deal initiated by Tuvalu was one way to address some of the challenges posed by climate change.

She said she did not know the details of the Australia-Tuvalu treaty but was confident it respected basic principles of international law.

The treaty commits Australia to assist Tuvalu in response to major natural disasters, health pandemics and military aggression, Albanese said in a statement. (AP)



Heavy snow in northern England causes havoc: Heavy snow in northern England forced motorists to seek shelter or spend the night in their cars and knocked out power to more than 2,500 customers, officials said Sunday.

Trucks jackknifed in the snow, blocking highways, as drivers reported taking hours to complete short trips while others were forced to find a place to stay along their routes or in their vehicles.

"It really feels like you're walking through the Alps or some ski resort at the moment," Harrison Ward said in the Lake District community of Ambleside. "Once a few cars have stopped or crashed or been abandoned, then it all comes to a halt."

Ant Brett said he had been stuck in his car for 19 hours since Saturday afternoon while driving from Essex to Cumbria, a journey that should have taken just over 5 hours.

The Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service said it worked through the night to get drivers out of cars stuck in deep snow. Cumbria Police Superintendent Andy Wilkinson said the storm was more significant than forecast and people were urged Sunday not to travel to the county. (AP)



Former UK minister Kinnock dies: Glenys Kinnock, a former British cabinet minister, member of the European Parliament and wife of former Labour leader Neil Kinnock, has died. She was 79.

Kinnock died Sunday at her London home some six years after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, her family said. Kinnock went from being a schoolteacher to an outspoken politician to cabinet minister under former prime minister Gordon Brown and was known for her work to reduce poverty and starvation in Africa and other parts of the world.

Tony Blair, the former prime minister, said she had been a huge support to her husband but was a leader herself and her passing would be mourned in many places around the globe.

"She was a huge figure in progressive politics for decades: incredibly smart, brave, determined and resolute in standing up for what she believed was right," Blair said. "Whether in fighting the cause of development, and the eradication of global poverty, social justice in Britain, equality for women or making the case for a European Union of weight and influence in the world, Glenys was passionate and persuasive." (AP)



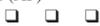
Kyiv investigates allegations: Ukrainian officials on Sunday launched an investigation into allegations that Russian forces killed surrendering Ukrainian soldiers - a war crime if confirmed - after grainy footage on social media appeared to show two uniformed men being shot at close range after emerging from a dugout.

The video shows the servicemen, one of them with his hands up, walking out at gunpoint and lying down on the ground before a group of Russian troops appears to open fire. It was not immediately possible to verify the video's authenticity or the circumstances in which it was filmed, and it was unclear when the incident took place.

The Ukrainian General Prosecutor's office on Sunday launched a criminal investigation, hours after the Ukrainian military's press office said in an online statement that the footage is genuine.

"The video shows a group in Russian uniforms shooting, at point-blank range, two unarmed servicemen in the uniform of the Armed Forces of Ukraine who were surrendering," the prosecutor's office said in a Telegram update on Sunday.

The Russian defense ministry did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. As of Sunday evening, there were no public statements from the Russian government or military on the video. (AP)



Prosecutor opens probe into tourist killing: France's anti-terrorism prosecutor said Sunday he has opened an investigation into the fatal stabbing of a 23-year-old German-Filipino tourist near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, allegedly by a man who had been under surveillance for suspected Islamic radicalization.

Jean-Francois Ricard said in a news conference that suspect Armand Rajabpour-Miyandoab could face a preliminary charge of murder in connection with the terrorist enterprise. He said Rajabpour-Miyandoab is a French national who is being held in police custody.

Rajabpour-Miyandoab recorded a video before the attack in which he swore allegiance to the Islamic State group and expressed support for Islamic extremists operating in various areas, including in Africa, Iraq, Syria, Egypt's Sinai, Yemen, Iran and Pakistan, Ricard said.

It wasn't immediately clear if Rajabpour-Miyandoab had legal representation. A message left Sunday with the prosecutor's office seeking to locate him for comment was not immediately returned.

Ricard said Rajabpour-Miyandoab was born in 1997 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, outside Paris, in a family with no religious affiliation. He converted to Islam at the age of 18 and quickly adhered to Islamic extremist ideology, he said. (AP)



Pope Francis says he's doing better: For a second Sunday, an ailing Pope Francis skipped his popular window appearance to the public in St. Peter's Square, but in televised remarks said he's doing better even though his voice wouldn't let him read all his comments aloud.

As he did a week earlier, Francis delivered very brief remarks from the chapel of the Vatican hotel where he lives and where he is recovering from what he has said is infectious bronchitis. Thousands of people in the square followed his words from giant screens set up outdoors.

Francis, whose 87th birthday is later this month, also said he is following from afar the workings of the UN climate conference in Dubai. The pontiff was due to go to the COP28 conference on Friday to address the gathering.

During his first chapel appearance on Nov 26, he insisted he would make the trip despite his illness. He instead canceled it following his doctors' orders and stayed at the Vatican, where he has received antibiotics intravenously. (AP)



The Louisiana state Capitol stands prominently, April 4, 2023, in Baton Rouge, La. Louisiana lawmakers now have until the end of January 2024 to draw and pass new congressional boundaries to replace a current map that a federal judge said violates the Voting Rights Act by diluting the power of the state's Black voters. Baton Rouge-based US District Judge Shelly Dick issued a two-week extension on Nov 30, giving lawmakers extra time to construct a congressional map. (AP)

Politics

La granted extra time to draw new congressional map

WH warns Congress US out of money

WASHINGTON, Dec 4, (AP) - The Biden administration on Monday sent Congress an urgent warning about the need to approve tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance to Ukraine, saying Kyiv's war effort to defend itself from Russia's invasion may grind to a halt without it.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders and also released publicly, Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young warned the US will run out of funding to send weapons and assistance to Ukraine by the end of the year, saying that would "kneecap" Ukraine on the battlefield.

She added that the US already has run out of money that it has used to prop up Ukraine's economy, and "if Ukraine's economy collapses, they will not be able to keep fighting, full stop."

"We are out of money - and nearly out of time," she wrote.

Biden has sought a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs, but it has faced a difficult reception on Capitol Hill, where there is growing skepticism about the magnitude of assistance for Ukraine and where even Republicans supportive of the funding are insisting on US-Mexico border policy changes to halt the flow of migrants as a condition for the assistance.

Meanwhile, the GOP-controlled House has passed a standalone assistance package for Israel, which is fighting a war with Hamas in Gaza, while the White House has maintained that all of the priorities must be met.

Congress already has allocated \$111 billion to assist Ukraine, including \$67 billion in military procurement funding, \$27 billion for economic and civil assistance and \$10 billion for humanitarian aid. Young wrote that all of it, other than about 3% of the military funding, had been depleted by mid-November.

The Biden administration has said it has slowed the pace of some military assistance to Kyiv in recent weeks to try to stretch supplies until Congress approves more funding.

"We are out of money to support

Ukraine in this fight," Young wrote. "This isn't a next year problem. The time to help a democratic Ukraine fight against Russian aggression is right now. It is time for Congress to act."

The letter followed a classified Capitol Hill briefing on Nov. 29 for the top House and Senate leaders on the need for the assistance. Defense and other national security officials briefed the "big four" congressional leaders as Congress is debating President Joe Biden's nearly \$106 billion funding package, which includes \$61 billion for Ukraine but has become snared by Republican demands for U.S.-Mexico border security changes.

"They were clear that Ukraine needs the aid soon - and so does our military need the aid soon," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told The Associated Press in an interview.

Also:

BATON ROUGE, La: Louisiana lawmakers now have until the end of January to draw and pass new congressional boundaries to replace a current map that a federal judge said violates the Voting Rights Act by diluting the power of the state's Black voters.

However, several questions still linger - including if and when the GOP-dominated Legislature will return to the Capitol and, most of all, if lawmakers will be able to agree on a map.

Baton Rouge-based US District Judge **Shelly Dick** issued a two-week extension Thursday afternoon, giving lawmakers extra time to construct a congressional map, the American Civil Liberties Union confirmed to The Associated Press. The new redistricting deadline is Jan 30.

The ACLU is representing the plaintiffs.

Outgoing Democratic Gov **John Bel Edwards** does not plan on calling lawmakers back to Baton Rouge to draw a new map, spokesperson **Eric Holl** said Sunday. However, the extension will give incoming Gov.-elect **Jeff Landry**, a Republican, the chance to call a special redistricting session after being inaugurated Jan 8 - which he previously vowed to do.

In addition, the outgoing Senate

President and House Speaker have the power to convene a special session with the support of a majority of legislators. However, the chamber leaders have shown little interest, saying it may be better to pass the job to incoming lawmakers, The Advocate reported.

Louisiana is among the list of states still wrangling over congressional districts after the US Supreme Court in June ruled that **Alabama** had violated the Voting Rights Act.

Louisiana's current GOP-drawn map, which was used in the November congressional election, has white majorities in five of six districts - despite Black people accounting for one-third of the state's population.

Democrats argue that the map discriminates against Black voters and that there should be two majority-minority districts. Republicans say the map is fair and argue that Black populations in the state are too dispersed to be united into a second majority Black district.

Currently, five of the six districts are held by Republicans. Another mostly Black district could deliver a second congressional seat to Democrats.

The political tug-of-war and legal battle over the congressional map has been going on for more than a year and a half - which has included Edwards vetoing the political boundaries and the Legislature overriding his veto - their first override of a governor's veto in nearly three decades.

In June 2022, Dick struck down Louisiana's map for violating the Voting Rights Act. Dick said in her ruling that "evidence of Louisiana's long and ongoing history of voting-related discrimination weighs heavily in favor of Plaintiffs." Dick, a **Barack Obama** appointee, ordered that the map be redrawn to include a second majority-Black district, before it was sent to a federal **New Orleans** appeals court.

Earlier this month, the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth District set the deadline to complete the new map as Jan. 15. In the courts order, they allowed Dick the discretion to grant "limited additional time" if requested.



US Republican presidential candidate and former US president Donald Trump speaks to the crowd during a caucus event on Dec 2 at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Trump attempted to turn the tables on his likely rival in November, US President Joe Biden, arguing that the man whose election victory Trump tried to overturn is 'the destroyer of American democracy.' (AP)



Maddrey



Rocha

America

Former US ambassador arrested: A former American diplomat who served as US ambassador to Bolivia has been arrested in a long-running FBI counterintelligence investigation, accused of secretly serving as an agent of Cuba's government, The Associated Press has learned.

Manuel Rocha, 73, was arrested in Miami on Friday on a criminal complaint and more details about the case are expected to be made public at a court appearance Monday, said two people who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss an ongoing federal investigation.

One of the people said the Justice Department case accuses Rocha of working to promote the Cuban government's interests. Federal law requires people doing the political bidding of a foreign government or entity inside the US to register with the Justice Department, which in recent years has stepped up its criminal enforcement of illicit foreign lobbying.

The Justice Department declined to comment. It was not immediately clear if Rocha had a lawyer and a law firm where he previously worked said it was not representing him. His wife hung up when contacted by the AP. (AP)



Fla GOP chairman won't resign: The chair of Florida's Republican Party says he will not resign over a woman's allegation that he raped her, saying in an email to supporters that he is innocent. He did not address any specifics of the accusation that has roiled the state's conservative politics.

Christian Ziegler sent the statement to state Republicans on Saturday, saying that he and his wife, Bridget Ziegler, are being targeted because they are "such loud political voices." His wife co-founded the conservative group Moms for Liberty.

DeSantis said last week that while Christian Ziegler is innocent until proven guilty, he should resign to avoid becoming a distraction to their party. Ziegler insists he won't quit.

"We have a country to save and I am not going to let false allegations of a crime put that mission on the bench as I wait for this

process to wrap up," wrote Ziegler, 40. A longtime GOP activist, he ascended to the state party's top post in February. (AP)



Shooting at home kills 5: Five people

were killed in a shooting at a Washington state home where police said the deceased included the suspected shooter, according to a news report.

The Clark County Sheriff's Office said officers found the bodies inside a home in

Orchards, Washington, following a call around 1 pm Sunday, KGW8-TV reported.

The sheriff's office said a family member received a text message from a person at the home saying they had harmed people there, KGW8 reported.

Police used a drone to look inside the home and saw people who appeared to be dead, the station reported.

The Southwest Washington Regional SWAT team responded due to the threat of a firearm and entered the home with emergency medical personnel, but all five adults inside were dead, KGW8 reported. (AP)



Man kills 4 in knife rampage: A man killed four relatives, including two children, in a knife attack at their New York City home early Sunday, then set the building on fire and stabbed two police officers before one of them fatally shot him, officials said.

The rampage took place before dawn at a house in Far Rockaway, a seaside section of Queens.

Police were summoned to the home at about 5:10 am when a "young female caller" dialed 911 and said her cousin was killing her family, the NYPD Chief of Department **Jeffrey Maddrey** said at a morning news briefing.

When the officers pulled up to the driveway, they stopped a man leaving the area with luggage and after just a few seconds, he drew a knife and attacked. (AP)



Family photo of the Norwegian royal family on the occasion of Prince Sverre Magnus' day of authority. Back, from left: Crown Princess Haakon, Crown Princess Mette-Marit and Princess Ingrid Alexandra. Front row, from left, Queen Sonja, King Harald and Marit Tjessem. Prince Sverre Magnus sits at the front. (AP)

Africa

SAfrica intercepts bus

Bissau 'shootout' an attempted coup: prez

BISSAU, Guinea-Bissau, Dec 4, (AP) — A shootout in Guinea-Bissau's capital Friday was an attempted coup, President **Umaro Sissoco Embalo** said Sunday after a meeting with security forces, confirming fears over the latest threat to democracy in the increasingly volatile and coup-hit West Africa.

"They attempted a coup and failed to materialize their objective," Embalo said, after members of the National Guard command improperly released two ministers detained over alleged corruption, resulting in a shootout with the Presidential Palace Battalion.

During a visit to the National Guard command in Bissau, Embalo said Victor Tchongo, the head of the National Guard, has been dismissed and "will pay dearly" for the attempt to depose the president.

"You are all betrayed by your commander ... (and) this is why we advise you to distance yourself from politicians and do your service to the nation," he told officers.

The attempted coup is the second in West and Central Africa in a week after last week's failed coup in Sierra Leone. It further raises tensions in the region where coups have surged with eight military takeovers since 2020, including in Niger and Gabon this year.

West Africa's regional economic bloc of ECOWAS - to which Guinea-Bissau belongs - noted the incident with "deep concern" and expressed "full solidarity with the people and constitutional authority of Guinea-Bissau."

After returning from the United Nations' COP28 climate summit on Saturday night, Embalo suggested to reporters that Tchongo of the National Guard was not acting alone.

Removing
"Tchongo was ordered by someone," The Democrat, a local newspaper, quoted him as saying. "Tchongo is not crazy about blowing up the Judiciary Police cells and removing the minister of finance and the secretary of state. This is an attempted coup d'état and there will be serious consequences for everyone involved."

The small nation of Guinea-Bissau has endured multiple coups since gaining independence from Portugal nearly five decades ago.

However, unlike in other coups in West Africa which have been inspired by perceived bad governance, the shootout in Guinea-Bissau started as the members of the Presidential Palace Battalion tried to rearrest two government officials - Economy and Finance Minister Suleimane Seidi and Treasury Secretary António Monteiro.

Both were being questioned over the use of government funds before the members of the National Guard secretly released them, local media reported.

Guinea-Bissau's semi-presidential system limits the president's powers by allowing the majority party in the parliament to appoint the Cabinet. As a result, the National Guard - which is under the Ministry of Interior - is largely controlled by the opposition-dominated parliament.

Tensions have also remained between Embalo and a coalition of opposition groups that won the majority in Guinea-Bissau's parliament in June, more than one year after the president dissolved the parliament.

Also:

DAKAR, Senegal: Reports of gunfire in the capital, followed by a television announcement that the president has been deposed by mutinous soldiers. The increasingly familiar storyline unfolded again this year in Africa - first in Niger and then in Gabon.

The resurgence of military coups renewed concerns about democracy backsliding on the continent and also underscored shifting regional alliances at a time when international peacekeeping efforts waned.

Two thousand twenty-three also brought utter devastation when a rare, powerful earthquake struck Morocco in September, damaging thousands of villages in the mountains south of Marrakech and killing nearly 3,000 people.

The earthquake and several aftershocks left people and animals buried underneath mud and cinderblock for days as crews raced up narrow, windy roads to supply rescue and aid efforts. Morocco ultimately accepted search-and-rescue assistance from only four countries - Spain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and the United Kingdom - and rebuffed other offers, including from France and the United States. The decision brought questions and criticism as villagers awaited help in the immediate hours after the earthquake.

And 2023 also was marked by several high profile visitors to the continent. Pope Francis journeyed to Congo and South Sudan where he focused on victims of war.

In Kenya, King Charles III expressed "greatest sorrow and the deepest regret" for the violence of the colonial era, though he didn't explicitly apologize for Britain's actions in its former colony as many had wanted.

Elections in Africa began with a promising start in February, with little violence surrounding a much anticipated vote in Nigeria. Africa's most populous nation elected Bola Tinubu, though he ultimately won with less than 50% of the vote. Still, observers largely described the election as an improvement from 2019.



JOHANNESBURG: Border officials in South Africa say they have intercepted dozens of buses carrying more than 400 young children from Zimbabwe without parents or legal guardians in an anti-trafficking operation.

The officials say the children were being "trafficked" into South Africa, although an organization representing foreign nationals living in South Africa says it's likely the children were being sent to visit their parents, who are working in South Africa, for the end of year holidays. The buses were sent back to Zimbabwe.

More than 1 million Zimbabweans live in South Africa, many of them illegally, having moved to their southern neighbor over the past 15 years to escape Zimbabwe's economic turmoil.

South African Border Management Agency commissioner Mike Masiapato said Sunday that South African police stopped and searched 42 buses entering from Zimbabwe on Saturday night and found 443 children under the age of 8 traveling unaccompanied. "We denied them entry and activated the Zimbabwean officials to process them back into Zimbabwe," Masiapato said.

The buses were allowed through on the Zimbabwean side of the Beitbridge border post, South African border officials said.



In this handout photo released by Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippines BRP Jose Rizal (FF150), right, and USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10) during a tactical exercise between Philippines and the United States in the West Philippine Sea on Nov 23. The Chinese military said on Dec 4 that American naval ship USS Gabrielle Giffords had 'illegally intruded' on Monday into waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, the site of a hot territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea. (AP)



In this photo provided by South Korea Defense Ministry, the third test flight of solid-fuel space rocket is launched from a barge in waters near Jeju Island, South Korea, on Dec 4. (AP)



Chavez



Barrientos

Lat/Am

Venezuelans OK referendum: Venezuelans on Sunday approved a referendum called by the government of President Nicolás Maduro to claim sovereignty over an oil- and mineral-rich area of neighboring Guyana it argues was stolen when the border was drawn more than a century ago.

It remains unclear how Maduro will enforce the results of the vote. But Guyana considers the referendum a step toward annexation, and the vote has its residents on edge.

The National Electoral Council claimed to have counted more than 10.5 million votes even though few voters could be seen at polling sites throughout the voting period for the five-question referendum. The council, however, did not explain whether the number of votes was equivalent to each voter or if it was the sum of each individual answer.

Venezuelan voters were asked whether they support establishing a state in the disputed territory, known as Essequibo, granting citizenship to current and future area residents and rejecting the jurisdiction of the United Nations' top court in settling the disagreement between the South American countries.

Yet long lines typical of electoral events did not form outside voting centers in Caracas throughout Sunday, even after the country's top electoral authority, Elvis Amoroso, announced the 12-hour voting period would be extended by two hours.

If the participation figure offered by Amoroso refers to voters, it would mean more people voted in the referendum than they did for Hugo Chávez, Maduro's mentor and predecessor, when he was re-elected in the 2012 presidential contest. But if it is equivalent to each individual answer marked by voters, turnout could drop to as low as 2.1 million voters.

"I came to vote because Essequibo is ours, and I hope that whatever they are going to do, they think about it thoroughly and remember to never put peace at risk," merchant Juan Carlos Rodríguez, 37, said after voting at a center in Caracas where only a handful of people were in line. (AP)

US expels ex-Chilean army officer: The US has expelled a former Chilean Army officer accused of torturing and killing folk singer Victor Jara during the country's bloody 1973 coup.

Pedro Barrientos had emigrated to Florida in 1990, the same year the bloody dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet came to an end.

This year, he was stripped of his US citizenship after it was found he concealed information about his Chilean military service during his immigration proceedings. Jara, a popular singer and university professor, was a fervent supporter of socialist President Salvador Allende. He was seized and taken to a Santiago stadium where thousands of prisoners were held only hours after Pinochet assaulted the presidential

Asia

Divers found wreckage, 5 remains from Osprey

'US Navy ship illegally enters SChina Sea'

BEIJING, Dec 4, (AP) — The Chinese military said that an American naval ship had "illegally intruded" on Monday into waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, the site of a hot territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea.

A Chinese naval force was mobilized to track the USS Gabrielle Giffords during the operation, according to a statement from the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater. The US Navy's 7th Fleet said the ship "was conducting routine operations in international waters ... consistent with international law."

Chinese and Philippine naval and coast guard ships have confronted each other repeatedly around the shoal in the Spratly Islands in recent months as China tries to prevent the Philippines from resupplying and repairing a rusting warship that it intentionally ran aground in 1999 to serve as a military outpost.

Disputes

Dwarfed by China's military might, the Philippines has sought America's help in its multiple territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr agreed to an expansion of the US military presence in the country early this year and launched joint sea and air patrols with the United States late last month.

China accuses the US of meddling in waters far from its shores and renewed its charge that America is the one raising regional tensions following the sailing of the USS Giffords near Second Thomas Shoal. The ship is a littoral combat ship designed to operate in coastal areas.

"The US deliberately disrupted the situation in the South China Sea, seriously violated China's sovereignty and security, seriously undermined regional peace and stability, and seriously violated international law and basic norms governing international relations, fully demonstrating that the US is the biggest threat to peace and stability in the South China Sea," the statement from the Chinese military's Southern Theater said.

China has staked claim to virtually all of the reefs and other outcroppings in the South China Sea, building some into islands with runways that could be used by the military. Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei also say they are the rightful owners of territory in the same waters in a complex web of overlapping claims.

The US has long been the major military power patrolling the South China Sea, an important shipping lane and fishing grounds, operating out of bases

North Korea accuses US of double standards over South Korea spy sat

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 4, (AP) — North Korea on Monday accused the United States of double standards, slamming it for letting rival South Korea launch a spy satellite from US territory after condemning the North's earlier satellite launch.

Last Friday, South Korea launched its first domestically built spy satellite into space from California's Vandenberg Space Force Base. That came after North Korea put its own military spy satellite into orbit for the first time on Nov 21.

Unlike the South Korean launch, North Korea's satellite liftoff drew immediate, strong rebukes from Washington, Seoul and their partners because it violated U.N. Security Council resolutions. The world body views any North Korean launch using ballistic technology as a cover for testing its missile technology. North Korea maintains it has the right to launch satellites and test missiles in the face of what it calls U.S.-led military threats.

"It is a space-level tragedy that the US, going frantic with illegal denunciation and sanctions moves over the exercise of (North Korea's) sovereignty, has shown behavior based on double standards by launching a spy satellite of (South Korea) in a shameless man-

ner," an unidentified spokesperson for the North's National Aerospace Technology Administration said in a statement.

The statement said if "the gangster-like logic of the US ... is condoned and tolerated, global peace and stability will be exposed to an irrevocable grave danger."

North Korea has said its spy satellite transmitted imagery with space views of key sites in the US and South Korea, including the White House and the Pentagon. But it hasn't yet released any of those satellite photos. Many outside experts question whether it can send militarily useful high-resolution imagery.

North Korea has said it'll launch additional spy satellites to better monitor its rivals' moves and enhance the precision-guided strike capability of its missiles.

South Korea also plans to launch four more spy satellites by 2025 under a contract with SpaceX. The establishment of its own space-based surveillance network would ease its dependence on U.S. spy satellites to monitor strategic facilities in North Korea. Experts say launching a satellite aboard a SpaceX rocket is more economical and that South Korea also needs more tests to ensure the reliability of a launch rocket.

in the Pacific. China's emergence as a military power and its ambitions to be a regional and global power are challenging American long-standing dominance.

Also:

TOKYO: US and Japanese divers have discovered wreckage and remains of five crew members from a US Air Force Osprey aircraft that crashed last week off southwestern Japan, the Air Force announced Monday.

The CV-22 Osprey carrying eight American personnel crashed last Wednesday off Yakushima island during a training mission. The body of one victim was recovered and identified earlier, while seven others remained missing.

The Air Force Special Operations Command said the remains were being recovered and their identities have yet to be determined.

"The main priority is bringing the Airmen home and taking care of their family members. Support to, and the privacy of, the families and loved ones

impacted by this incident remains AF-SOC's top priority," it said in a statement.

The US military identified the one confirmed victim as Air Force Staff Sgt. **Jacob Galliher of Pittsfield, Massachusetts**, on Saturday.

On Monday, divers from the Japanese navy and US military spotted what appeared to be the front section of the Osprey, along with possibly five of the missing crew members, Japan's NHK public television and other media reported.

Japanese navy officials declined to confirm the reports, saying they could not release details without consent from the US.

The US-made Osprey is a hybrid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter but can rotate its propellers forward and cruise much faster, like an airplane, during flight.

Ospreys have had a number of crashes, including in Japan, where they are used at US and Japanese military bases, and the latest accident rekindled safety concerns.

palace and overthrew Allende on Sept 11, 1973. There, he was beaten and he was shot with at least 44 bullets - one of the first of more than 3,000 Chileans killed for opposing Pinochet's iron-fisted rule.

Barrientos has always denied any involvement in Jara's murder

But in 2016, a federal jury in Florida found him liable for the torture and killing of Jara in a civil lawsuit brought by Jara's widow, the British dancer Joan Turner Jara. Homeland Security Investigations said



Venezuelan lawmaker Diosdado Cabello speaks to pro-government supporters after a referendum regarding Venezuela's claim to the Essequibo, a region administered and controlled by Guyana, in Caracas, Venezuela on Dec 4. Voters answered five questions about the future of the disputed land, including whether they support turning it into a Venezuelan state. (AP)

that Barrientos was removed Thursday on a flight from Miami and taken into custody by Chilean law enforcement officials upon his arrival in the South American country. (AP)

Woman killed in shark attack: A Mexican woman died after she was severely bitten in the leg by a shark in the Pacific Ocean off the beach town of Melaque, authorities said Sunday. Rafael Araiza, the head of the local civil defense office, said the attack occurred Saturday a short distance from the beach in Melaque, just west of the seaport of Manzanillo.

The town is in the western state of Jalisco, and is located next to the better-known beach town of Barra de Navidad.

Araiza said the woman, 26, was swimming with her five-year-old daughter toward a floating play platform about 75 feet (25 meters) from the shore.

The victim was trying to boost her child aboard the floating platform when the shark bit her. The daughter was not harmed.

Araiza said that despite a quick response by rescuers, the woman died of blood loss from the massive bite wound on her leg near the hip. She was a resident of a nearby town.

Authorities closed the beaches in Melaque and Barra de Navidad to swimming as a precaution.

Shark attacks are relatively rare in Mexico. In 2019, a US diver survived a shark bite on the forearm in Magdalena Bay off the Baja California Sur coast. (AP)

Powell's words propel gold to historic heights, crossing \$2,100 per ounce mark

Gold prices soared to new historic highs in early Monday trading, marking the second consecutive day of significant gains as spot prices exceeded \$2,100 per ounce, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The surge was fueled by statements from Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, which strengthened traders' confidence in the likelihood of the US central bank reducing interest rates early next year.

Chairman Powell, while acknowledging the balanced risks of both insufficient and excessive monetary tightening, clarified on Friday that the Federal Reserve currently has no plans to decrease interest rates. Despite this, market expectations, as indicated by CME's FedWatch tool, suggest a 70 percent chance of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve by March 2024.

Powell's comments were interpreted by the markets as leaning toward

monetary easing, resulting in a decline in the dollar index and 10-year Treasury yields. This, in turn, contributed to the upward trajectory of gold prices.

Analysts foresee gold prices continuing to reach new highs next year, potentially remaining above \$2,000 levels. Factors contributing to this positive outlook include geopolitical uncertainty, a potential weakening of the US dollar, and expectations of interest rate cuts. Gold is traditionally viewed as a safe-haven asset during periods of economic and geopolitical uncertainty due to its reliability as a store of value.

Mazen Salhab, Chief Market Strategist at BDSwiss MENA, emphasized in exclusive statements to Sky News Arabia that the recent historic highs in gold are part of a global structural change in the outlook

on gold and the future balance of the global economy. He mentioned that this shift is not solely dependent on the United States but is influenced by changes in the US and its gradual departure from globalization.

Salhab noted that reaching \$2,500 per ounce might occur in the coming years, emphasizing that a decline in gold prices would require global stability in monetary policy and balanced returns on government bonds, conditions not currently met.

China's continued gold purchases, aimed at supporting the yuan and not replacing the declining US dollar as a global reserve currency, are expected to persist over years. Salhab highlighted the crucial role of supply in influencing gold prices, questioning whether there is sufficient mine production to meet demand.

Market Movements

04-12-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
Egypt - EGX 30	+693.43	25,265.41	Saudi - Tadawul	-27.63	11,191.39
Philippines - PSEI	+39.19	6,284.37	UAE - DFM	-4.61	3,987.75
Pakistan - KSE 100	+795.62	62,575.35	Japan - Nikkei	-200.24	33,231.27

Business

Kuwait seeks Arab & global support for aviation sector

Arab Aviation summit tackles key technical issues

RIYADH, Dec 4, (KUNA): Kuwait is seeking more cooperation with Arab countries and international organizations in the fields of civil aviation and air transport sectors, said Acting Director General of

Civil Aviation (DGCA) Imad Al-Jalawi.

This came in a press statement by Al-Jalawi, who headed Kuwait's delegation in the 68th meeting of the Executive Council of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization held in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh.

He stated that Kuwait's participation in this meeting is because it is a member of the Executive Council of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization, adding that the meeting was filled with topics related to civil aviation, especially regarding aviation safety, air transport, aviation security, and the environment.

He praised the hospitality and reception of the Saudi Arabian government, wishing continued progress and success in political, economic, and social aspects.

The meeting discussed topics related to the Arab civil aviation industry at the regional and international levels, to enhance joint Arab work and contribute to the growth of Arab civil aviation.

Additionally, the meeting also included many important technical topics in the fields of air transport, aviation security, navigation, air safety, and environmental protection.



KUNA photo

Acting Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Imad Al-Jalawi



ABK Capital Staff



ABK Capital Logo



Part of the audience

'Reinforce strong long-term relationships with clients'

Kuwait's Al-Zour refinery now fully operational: KIPIC

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced on Sunday the successful and safe completion of the operation of the third and final units of the Al-Zour Petroleum Complex, achieving a historic milestone in its record of accomplishments. KIPIC stated in a press release that this achievement is a key goal of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its 2040 strategic plan to reach the maximum refining capacity of the refinery, which is 615,000 barrels per day. The operation of the Al-Zour refinery is a crucial component of the development program of the State of Kuwait, contributing to enhancing the production capabilities of the oil and gas sector, providing more job opportunities for Kuwaiti citizens, and supporting the national economy.



KUNA photo

Al-Zour refinery

mad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing them health and well-being, and expressing gratitude to the people of Kuwait.

Al-Badr stated that the successful operation of the third refinery is the culmination of years of diligent work by all employees of the company, representing a strategic achievement for Kuwait and the oil sector, given its significant role in shaping the future of Kuwait's oil industry. He emphasized

that the operation was carried out successfully and safely by national hands, in accordance with the established plan, and it will increase the refining capacity of the refinery from 410,000 to 615,000 barrels per day of Kuwaiti oil for export (KEC). The CEO highlighted the company's commitment to preserving Kuwait's environment and reducing sulfur emissions to improve air quality.

S&P GCC composite index gained 5.0% in Nov

GCC markets surge on US Fed's indication of ceasing rate hike cycle – Markaz report

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for the month of November 2023. During the month, Global and GCC equity indices witnessed a rise due to the market participants' belief of no further interest rate hikes by the US Fed and the changing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Tensions

Kuwaiti markets were positive for the month due to the improving sentiment following the de-escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. However, the fall in oil prices coupled with the IMF expectations of declining GDP for Kuwait in 2023 resulted in the under performance against other GCC markets barring Bahrain. Kuwait's All Share Total Return Index posted a monthly gain of 1.9%, driven by positive performances from all sectoral indices except Insurance and Consumer Discretionary. The Basic Materials and Energy sectoral indices were the largest contributors with returns of 6.5% and 4.7% respectively. Banking stocks posted a gain of 1.2%, especially driven by KFH (Kuwait Finance House) with a gain of 2.2%. KFH rallied owing to the belief of revival in credit growth along with the announcement of Tam's launch, a sharia-compliant digital bank targeting the youth. Arzan Financial Group, National Investments Co., and Alimtiq Investment Group pared back their decline in October, increasing by 20.3%, 19.9%, and 10.4% respectively

during the month due to improving investor sentiment. Among Premier Market stocks, HEISCO continued its positive performance with a gain of 10.9% on the back of bagging new contracts consistently.

The S&P GCC composite index increased by 5.0% for the month due to decreasing geopolitical risks and expectations of no further rate hikes, serving as a boost especially to the banking stocks. The Qatar and Saudi Arabia equity indices were the largest gainers with 5.4% and 4.6% respectively during the month. Qatar's banking stocks were the main driver of the performance, especially with Masraf Al Rayan, Qatar Islamic Bank, and Qatar National Bank increasing by 18.4%, 9.2%, and 5.4% respectively during the month. Saudi Arabia's performance was primarily driven by two major banking sector stocks, Al Rajhi Bank (13.9%) and Alinma Bank (8.8%). Dubai and Abu Dhabi's indices increased by 3.0% and 2.3% respectively. Dubai's real estate stocks pared back their losses in October, with Emaar Properties and Aldar Properties increasing by 13.5% and 10.0% respectively. Among the blue-chip stocks in the GCC market, Al Rajhi was the strongest performer on the back of stellar results in Q3 2023.

Global and U.S. markets performed strongly during November due to cooling inflation data, belief of no further U.S. Fed interest rate hikes, and diminishing effect of the geopolitical conflict in the Middle East. The MSCI World index and S&P 500 indices increased by 9.2%

and 8.9% respectively in November. Ten of the eleven major S&P 500 sectors recorded a positive performance, led by the stocks in the Information Technology sector. U.S. inflation reduced to 3.2% in October from 3.7% in September. The market is also pricing in potential rate cuts in H2 2024. The MSCI EM index increased by 7.9% for the month despite the under performance of China.

Deficit

During the month, S&P opined that Kuwait's budget deficit is expected to average 14% of GDP between 2023 and 2026, primarily due to high spending. Dubai announced a highly expansionary budget for 2024, with planned spending rising 17.2% from the 2023 budget level. According to OPEC, UAE's non-oil growth is expected to remain robust in 2024 supported by increased business confidence, government reforms, and household spending.

According to Fitch ratings, ESG sukuk are gaining popularity in the UAE, with the COP28 event scheduled from November 30 to December 12. ESG sukuk have increased over the past few years, comprising 12% of the sukuk outstanding in Q3 2023, with expectation of increasing to 17-20% of the total sukuk issuance in the medium term.

The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note declined to 4.3% during the month after the highs close to 5.0% in October. The pause in interest rate hikes by the U.S. Fed and policy minutes generally perceived as dovish, led to the decline in yields.

ABK Capital successfully holds its first Investment Forum '23

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: ABK Capital, the investment arm of Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), successfully held its first investment forum edition, "ABK Capital Investment Forum 2023", in the presence of its distinguished clients, partners, and executives from both ABK and ABK Capital, at the Four Seasons Hotel in Kuwait.

The event discussed the outlook for regional and global markets and provided clients with insights to better shape their investment decisions. Interactive sessions were held by the ABK Capital team and experts from its investment partners, who covered both public and private markets and across different asset classes. The speakers expressed their views on some of the emerging investment opportunities at the moment and the shift in investing patterns since the pandemic.

In particular, the forum provided an in-depth discussion of the impact of interest rate changes on global and regional markets and the possible policy direction of major central banks in the upcoming year.

The speakers also shed light on the GCC equities and fixed income landscape. The discussion touched on the opportunities within the different parts of the regional equities market, especially in comparison

with Emerging Markets, their closest peers. This also extended to an examination of the attractiveness of GCC fixed income instruments against the current backdrop of high interest rates and the outlook for interest rates going forward.

Furthermore, the presentations stressed the risks and rewards of investing in the U.S. real estate market and different sub-sectors within the space, emphasizing the features of real estate investing that encompass a combination of income generation and capital appreciation potential. The discussions extended to current valuations and the recent correction in the U.S. real estate market and outlook for the asset class going forward.

The forum also featured insights into the USD 1.4 trillion private credit market, and the growing importance of direct lending in recent years. The speakers highlighted that private credit as an asset class has become more accessible to a wider array of investors and is expected to grow in prominence in the years ahead. The forum had a detailed assessment of the returns from investing in private credit during times of higher interest rates and widening credit spreads and the role of origination fees in shaping investment returns.

On this occasion, Yasmine Sala-

mah, Chairperson of ABK Capital, said: "ABK Capital continues to play an important role in contributing to the development of Kuwait's investment landscape by keeping the investment community apprised of key market events to help informed investment decisions. The recently concluded investment forum comes as an extension of the commitment made by ABK Capital to help investors identify upcoming opportunities and manage risks."

Dr. Husayn Shahzur, CEO of ABK Capital, said: "We are extremely pleased to witness an overwhelmingly positive response for our 'ABK Capital Investment Forum 2023' and would like to thank the clients, investors, and stakeholders for their immense cooperation in contributing to the success of the event. ABK Capital will continue to strengthen its position as a leading investment company in Kuwait and continue to shape its business model around the investment needs of its clients."

Ali Abdulmohsen Al Fulajji, Deputy CEO of ABK Capital, said "ABK Capital has positioned clients' interests as its highest priority since its inception in 2006. We are dedicated to building and sustaining close long-term relationships with our clients to meet their investment needs."

'2% inflation may not be achieved until next year'

Experts predict US economy expects to 'dodge' recession despite inflation

NEW YORK, Dec 4, (AP): Most business economists think the U.S. economy could avoid a recession next year, even if the job market ends up weakening under the weight of high interest rates, according to a survey released Monday.

Only 24% of economists surveyed by the National Association for Business Economics said they see a recession in 2024 as more likely than not. The 38 surveyed economists come from such organizations as Morgan Stanley, the University of Arkansas and Nationwide.

Such predictions imply the belief that the Federal Reserve can pull off the delicate balancing act of slowing the economy just enough through high interest rates to get inflation under control, without snuffing out its growth completely.

"While most respondents expect an uptick in the unemployment rate going forward, a majority anticipates that the rate will not exceed 5%," Ellen Zentner, president of the association and chief U.S. economist at Morgan Stanley, said in a statement.

The Federal Reserve has raised its main interest rate above 5.25% to the highest level since early in the millennium, up from virtually zero early last year.

High rates work to slow inflation by making borrowing more expensive and hurting prices for stocks and other investments. The combination typically slows spending and starves inflation of its fuel. So far, the job market has remained remarkably solid despite high interest rates, and



A hiring sign is displayed at a grocery store, Oct. 5, 2023, in Deerfield, Ill. Most business economists think the U.S. economy could avoid a recession in 2024, even if the job market ends up weakening under the weight of high interest rates, according to a survey released Monday, Dec. 4. (AP)

the unemployment rate sat at a low 3.9% in October.

Most of the surveyed economists expect inflation to continue to slow in 2024, though many say it may not get all the way down to the Federal Reserve's target of 2% until the following year.

Of course, economists are only expecting price increases to slow, not to reverse, which is what it would take for prices for groceries, haircuts and other things to return to where they were before inflation took off during 2021.

The median forecast of the surveyed economists called for the consumer price index to be 2.4% higher

in the final three months of 2024 from a year earlier. That would be milder than the inflation of more than 9% that U.S. households suffered during the summer of 2022.

Expectations are split among economists on when the Federal Reserve could begin cutting interest rates, something that can relieve pressure on the economy and act like steroids for financial markets. Some economists think the first cut could arrive during the first three months of 2024, while roughly a quarter of the survey's respondents think it won't happen until the last three months of the year.

Kuwaitization ratio reached 100% this year

'KFH's HR achieves unprecedented results locally, globally in 2023'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah Al-Omar, said that in 2023, the Human Resources Department achieved unprecedented results at the banking level locally and globally.

He added that KFH successfully accomplished its strategic goals and initiatives, recording comprehensive, balanced, and supportive achievements that supported KFH's business and drove overall performance. These results led to winning two gold awards and a bronze award from the Brandon Hall Group, making KFH the sole bank in the Middle East to achieve this feat and the leading bank in HR practices at local and regional levels.

Global Awards

Al-Omar explained that KFH's endeavors resulted in securing three esteemed global awards in human resources for the year 2023, bestowed by the reputable Brandon Hall Group, a company specialized in measuring the performance of banks, companies, and institutions based on studies, research, and surveys. KFH was awarded the gold medal in the "Best Advance in Employee Recognition Program" category, a gold medal in the "Best Unique or Innovative Talent Management Program," and a bronze medal in the "Best Advance in Employee Engagement" category.

Employee Welfare

Al-Omar stressed KFH's commitment to the development and welfare of its employees. "The salaries, benefits, and compensations received by KFH employees are the highest compared to local banks, according to a survey conducted by one of the international consultants. In the 2023-2024 plan, KFH is taking measures to improve the health insurance benefits for its employees and their families. This is part of KFH's efforts to provide comprehensive medical coverage. The aim is to create a healthy environment that helps creativity and innovation, supports skills and performance, and maintains KFH as a preferred banking destination for both its employees and job seekers," he added.

100% Rate of Kuwaiti Recruitment

Al-Omar said that KFH has enhanced its policy of training and development and digitization strategy, attracting skilled nationals and empowering women. This is reflected in KFH's impressive employment figures, with Kuwaitis constituting approximately 100% of the total hiring (400 employees) in 2023. Additionally, the women account to around 23% of the total workforce at KFH.

"As part of its efforts to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace, KFH has effectively created various employment opportunities for individuals with special needs and successfully integrated them into the workforce," Al-Omar said. He proudly revealed that KFH hires the highest number of Kuwaiti employees compared to other Kuwaiti banks and private sector institutions.

More than 83,000 training hours

Al-Omar explained that KFH continues to invest heavily in the development of its human capital, indicating that KFH's efforts in developing talents stem from his belief in the importance of human resources as core assets for the success of the institution. Additionally, KFH has succeeded in providing more than 83,000 training hours to 3,116 employees.

Graduation of 50 KFH Group Leaders

KFH launched the "Excellence in leadership" program, consisting of the "Building Leadership Excellence" and "Corporate Leadership" programs. The goal is to enhance the efficiency and performance of KFH's managers and executives, emphasizing the bank's dedication to excellence and innovation, Al-Omar explained.

KFH also honored the "Excellence



KFH leadership and UNDP officials.



Cooperation agreement with the American International University.



Honoring KFH for its active participation in the National Institute for Leaders conference.



Al-Omar



Zeyad Al-Omar with UNDP officials after signing the agreement.



KFH Awards



One of the trainees of the Kuwaiti Society for the Care of the Disabled.



Graduation of the Harvard program within the Kafa'a initiative.



A group photo of some of the honorees.



Signing a memorandum of understanding with the Australian University.



KFH family at the annual meeting.

in Leadership" program graduates of 2023 in partnership with Headspring, which was organized in Kuwait and Madrid in cooperation with IE Business School and the Financial Times Media Foundation, with the participation of 50 leaders of KFH Group and its subsidiaries.

The Certified Real Estate Appraiser program, launched by KFH, is the first of its kind in Kuwait. It is developed using the latest professional techniques in the real estate industry. The program has received accreditation as a professional certification from both local and international authorities. It is also suitable for inclusion as an integrated specialization within university curricula, serving as a significant pillar.

Harvard Business Program

Following their successful completion of the Harvard Business School program "Strategic Leadership in a Changing World" under the "Kafa'a" initiative by the Central Bank of Kuwait, KFH celebrated the graduation of its executive leaders.

Al-Omar commended KFH for implementing the "Project of Excellence

program, which focused on training the employees of Private Banking, Al Ruwad, and Individual Finance. The program aimed to enhance their knowledge and skills in relevant areas. Additionally, KFH successfully conducted a training program for 184 branch managers, equipping them to handle security responsibilities.

Al-Omar also said that KFH launched specialized programs for new recruits, aiming to sharpen their skills, enhance their expertise, expand their banking knowledge, and ensure their adherence to KFH's methods and standards as well as its global leadership.

For the third consecutive year, KFH collaborated with the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped to launch a dedicated training program for individuals with special needs. In this program, participants were provided training in different departments within KFH.

Digital Transformation

Al-Omar said that KFH is actively digitizing crucial work functions and aligning its goals and future strategy to enhance the digital experience for its human resources. Adopting technol-

ogy has enabled KFH to provide employees with a digital experience that simplifies and expands service management.

Al-Omar added that KFH is the first bank in Kuwait to successfully integrate Oracle Fusion HCM Cloud, which plays a vital role in transforming human resources digitally. This accomplishment follows the successful implementation of Oracle Cloud at KFH-Bahrain. KFH is now progressing into the second phase of the system. Furthermore, KFH has obtained approval from the Central Bank of Malaysia to transfer its operations in Malaysia to the Oracle system.

KFH also achieved successful implementation of the Leaders Report utilizing Power BI, a vital component in the process of data-driven decision-making and analysis. Additionally, KFH accomplished full automation of payroll system procedures through the HCM system. This advancement enables team leaders to easily access a comprehensive list of their employees and review their eligibility for future nominations. Furthermore, KFH suc-

cessfully launched security services via the Oracle program and effectively integrated the alarm system with the Ministry of Interior's operations room.

KFH Digital Academy

Al-Omar said that KFH continues to develop the digital capabilities of its human capital and provide specialized programs through KFH Digital Academy in line with KFH's efforts towards digital transformation.

Career fairs

Al-Omar said that KFH participated in many career fairs in various colleges and universities with the aim of attracting national youth talents.

KFH also signed several Memorandums of Understanding with private and public universities and academic institutions to assist and foster the growth of national talents as well as attract them. The aim is to enhance the areas of training and education by facilitating the exchange of information and experiences, as well as promoting scientific research.

Talent Management

Al-Omar emphasized that KFH continues its strategy of focus on at-

tracting and developing talents and equipping leaders with exceptional capabilities to keep pace with the growth and prosperity of KFH Group through integrated training and development programs in cooperation with international universities and educational institutions such as Harvard Business School, INSEAD, IMD, and IE School for business administration.

He highlighted that Talent Development team at KFH is keen on continuing efforts to enhance the development trajectory and updating its strategy with the latest insights and expand knowledge of the bank's staff. KFH is proud to invest in its talents by allocating the largest budget to developing and training employees.

Forssa Program

Al-Omar pointed out that KFH has continued gearing its efforts towards training outstanding and high-achieving Kuwaiti graduates from local and international universities in technological and financial disciplines through "Forssa" program, paving the way for new graduates to pursue a rewarding career path and acquire skills that keep pace with the global changes in the banking arena.

He added that the program has been a success since its first launch in 2009 and has gained recognition inside and outside Kuwait. Today, Forssa program is considered an exemplar in the training field and a valuable opportunity for participants to obtain knowledge and experiences in one of the world's leading Islamic financial institutions, the largest bank in Kuwait and the second largest Islamic bank in the world.

Several Forssa alumni now hold leadership positions within KFH, reflecting the program's success and the caliber of its participants.

Women Empowerment

Al-Omar pointed out that KFH, is the first Islamic bank in Kuwait to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Agreement with the United Nations Development Program, noting that KFH has provided a solid foundation and healthy environment in which female employees built up their leadership personalities. Additionally, KFH has an inclusive corporate culture, and several women hold executive management posts as they have proved their ability to shoulder significant and important roles.

Employee Engagement

Al-Omar stated that enhancing employee engagement at KFH is one of its strategy pillars, as KFH is one of the first local and regional banks to implement the annual employee engagement survey in 2013, through which employees' satisfaction is measured under a transparent, professional, and confidential process, pointing out that the survey contributes to improving the work environment by setting and executing plans according to key survey indicators. He also noted that the survey resulted in an increase in the employee engagement annual index, compared to the years before and to other high-performing regional institutions.

Qadha Program

He added that KFH attaches great importance to employees, saying that KFH launched the (Qadha) program, the first at the level of the banking sector in Kuwait. The program is based on accurate performance evaluation criteria, in addition to attention to all professional aspects, and covers all departments in a balanced manner based on international studies and practices to evaluate employees and appreciate their efforts and excellence. It includes monthly, quarterly, yearly, and even instant assessments.

He revealed that Qadha was awarded by Brandon Hall Group with the gold medal in the world's "Best Advance in Employee Recognition Program" category.

Investing in Sustainability

Al-Omar continued: "KFH organized a workshop on sustainable finance for its senior management as part of the partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to advance the integration of sustainability into its practices and decision-making. The workshop brought together theory and practice by world-leading experts in cooperation with the UNDP."



A group photo of the seminar participants and program participants.



Female employees honored in the Qadha program with the executive management.



Honored employees in the Qadha program with the executive management.



Muhammad Al-Musallam and the participants in the Leadership Excellence Program.

Kuwait's EnerTech Ventures and Rwandan govt ink deal at COP28

EnerTech Holding Company, the Kuwait-based innovator, investor and developer of end-to-end sustainability solutions, have signed an agreement with the government of Rwanda on the sidelines of COP28 to establish a fair and effective carbon framework in Rwanda, and accelerate the deployment of renewable energy.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by Ammar Shihab, CEO of EnerTech Ventures, Her Excellency Dr. Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya, Minister of Environment in Rwanda, His Excellency Vincent Biruta, Rwanda's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; and Teddy Mugabo, CEO of Rwanda's Green

Fund.

Under the agreement, Rwanda will provide Kuwait with two types of carbon credits. The first category comprises nature-based carbon credits, which are proprietary to Rwanda and available for direct sale. The second category includes non-nature-based carbon credits. Although not owned by Rwanda, these credits are backed by the government's commitment to serve as a 'buyer of first resort' in its carbon market.

This deal signifies a major advancement in establishing an efficient carbon pricing structure in Africa, reflecting a collaborative effort towards addressing climate change and promoting renew-

able energy.

About EnerTech

EnerTech Holding Company is a Kuwaiti-sovereign owned investor and developer in the clean energy and sustainable infrastructure sector. Serving as an originator, investor, and developer of sustainable infrastructure projects, EnerTech's primary focus encompasses four domains: energy and water, recycling and waste management, sustainable agriculture and food security, and clean technology investments. With an extensive project portfolio, EnerTech is actively involved in projects across Latin America, Africa, the GCC, and South Asia. www.enertech.com.kw



Kuwait's EnerTech and Rwandan Government signing the deal at COP28.

Billions of dollars at stake

OxyContin maker bankruptcy deal goes before the Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, Dec 4, (AP) - The Supreme Court was hearing arguments over a nationwide settlement with OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma that would shield members of the Sackler family who own the company from civil lawsuits over the toll of opioids.

The agreement hammered out with state and local governments and victims would provide billions of dollars to combat the opioid epidemic. The Sacklers would contribute up to \$6 billion and give up ownership, and the company would emerge from bankruptcy as a different entity, with its profits used for treatment and prevention.

But the justices put the settlement on hold during the summer, in response to objections from the Biden administration. Arguments take place Monday.

The issue for the justices is whether the legal shield that bankruptcy provides can be extended to people such as the Sacklers, who have not declared bankruptcy themselves. Lower courts have issued conflicting decisions over that issue, which also has implications for other major product liability lawsuits settled through the bankruptcy system.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Trustee, an arm of the Justice Department, contends that the bankruptcy law does not permit protecting the Sackler family from being sued by people who are not part of the settlement. During the Trump administration, the government supported the settlement.

Proponents of the plan said third-party releases are sometimes necessary to force an agreement, and federal law imposes no prohibition against them.

Lawyers for more than 60,000 victims who support the settlement called it "a watershed moment in the opioid crisis," while recognizing that "no amount of money could fully compensate" victims for the damage caused by the misleading marketing of OxyContin.

A lawyer for a victim who opposes the settlement calls the provision dealing with the Sacklers "special protection for billionaires."

OxyContin first hit the market in 1996, and Purdue Pharma's aggressive marketing of the powerful prescription painkiller is often cited as a catalyst of the nationwide opioid epidemic, persuading doctors to prescribe painkillers with less regard for addiction dangers.

The drug and the Stamford, Connecticut-based company became synonymous with the crisis, even though the majority of pills being prescribed and used were generic drugs. Opioid-related overdose deaths have continued to climb, hitting 80,000 in recent years. Most of those are from fentanyl and other synthetic drugs.

The Purdue Pharma settlement would be among the largest reached by drug companies, wholesalers and pharmacies to resolve epidemic-related lawsuits filed by state, local and Native American tribal governments and others. Those settlements have totaled more than \$50 billion.

But it would be one of only two so far that include direct payments to victims from a \$750 million pool. Payouts are expected to range from about \$3,500 to \$48,000.

Sackler family members no longer are on the company's board and they have not received payouts from it since before Purdue Pharma entered bankruptcy. In the decade before that, though, they were paid more than \$10 billion, about half of which family members said went to pay taxes.

A decision in *Harrington v. Purdue Pharma*, 22-859, is expected by early summer.

3.6GW of hydropower eyed

Masdar and EDF sign major deal with Govt of the Kyrgyz Republic

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Dec. 4, (PRNewswire) - Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company PJSC - Masdar, the UAE's clean energy powerhouse, and EDF have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Energy of the Kyrgyz Republic to explore the development of hydropower and renewable projects with a combined capacity of up to 3.6 gigawatts (GW).

The agreement was signed during COP28 in Dubai by Kyrgyz Minister of Energy, H.E. Taalaibek Ibraev, Masdar Director, Development and Investment (EMEA), Ahmed Al Awadi and EDF Assets Development Director for Europe and Central Asia, Emmanuelle Chevennement. The signing ceremony was witnessed by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, H.E. Sadyr Japarov, UAE Under-Secretary for Energy and Petroleum Affairs at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, Sharif Al Olama, and EDF Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Luc Remont.

Despite an extensive clean energy portfolio encompassing solar, floating solar, onshore wind, offshore wind, floating wind, geothermal, battery energy storage systems and green hydrogen, today's memorandum of understanding (MoU) represents Masdar's first entry into the hydropower space.

Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, COP28 President and Masdar Chairman, said: "At COP28 it will be incumbent on the world to utilize all clean energy sources at its disposal to keep the ambition of limiting global temperature rises to 1.5C within reach. Hydropower is one of the oldest clean energy sources and has many positive attributes that can help a number of countries around the world achieve their climate goals and meet their net-zero targets."

H.E. Taalaibek Ibraev, Minister of Energy of the Kyrgyz Republic said: "This agreement serves to further strengthen the existing ties between the Kyrgyz Republic, the UAE and France. Hydropower is a very important energy source for the Kyrgyz Republic and this agreement will help our nation to strengthen its existing clean energy supply and to develop projects utilizing other renewable energy sources."

Masdar Chief Executive Officer Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi said: "This agreement represents a new chapter for Masdar in our clean energy journey. With over 17 years of pioneering renewable energy technologies and successfully delivering utility-scale clean energy projects,

we are glad to have the opportunity to bring the energy, passion and focus to hydropower that we have utilized for so many other renewable energy sources as we seek, in partnership with EDF, to build a successful collaboration with the Kyrgyz Republic, deepening the strong relationship between the UAE and the Kyrgyz Republic."

The Kyrgyz Republic has set a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 44 percent by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The country already generates around 90 percent of its electricity from clean energy resources, almost exclusively from hydropower plants.

Central Asia is a significant emerging market for Masdar which has several agreements to develop solar and wind projects in the region. As the UAE's clean energy powerhouse and one of the world's fastest growing renewable companies, Masdar is at the vanguard of advancing the development and deployment of renewable energy and green hydrogen technologies to address global sustainability challenges.

Established in 2006, Masdar is active in more than 40 countries and has more than 20GW of renewable energy capacity including operational, under construction or advanced development projects in its worldwide portfolio. Masdar has invested, or committed to invest, in worldwide projects with a combined value of more than US\$30 billion with ambitious growth plans to reach 100GW of renewable energy capacity and 1 million tonnes of annual green hydrogen production by 2030.

About Masdar

Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) is the UAE's clean energy champion and one of the fastest growing companies in the world, advancing the development and deployment of renewable energy and green hydrogen technologies to address global sustainability challenges. Established in 2006, Masdar has developed projects in over 40 countries, helping them to achieve their clean energy objectives and advance sustainable development. Masdar is jointly owned by Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Mubadala Investment Company (Mubadala), and Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), and under this ownership the company is targeting a renewable energy portfolio capacity of at least 100 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 and an annual green hydrogen production capacity of up to 1 million tonnes by the same year.

Spotify axes 17% of workforce in third round of layoffs this yr

LONDON, Dec 4, (AP) - Spotify says it's axing 17% of its global workforce, the music streaming service's third round of layoffs this year as it moves to slash costs while focusing on becoming profitable.

In a message to employees posted on the company's blog Monday, CEO Daniel Ek said the jobs were being cut as part of a "strategic reorientation." The post didn't specify how many employees would lose their jobs, but a spokesperson confirmed that it amounts to about 1,500 people.

Spotify had used cheap financing to expand the business and "invested significantly" in employees, content and marketing in 2020 and 2021, the blog post said. But Ek indicated that the company was caught out as central banks started

hiking interest rates last year.

"We now find ourselves in a very different environment. And despite our efforts to reduce costs this past year, our cost structure for where we need to be is still too big," he said.

Ek said the "leaner structure" of the company will ensure "Spotify's continued profitability."

Stockholm-based Spotify posted a net loss of 462 million euros (about \$500 million) for the nine months to September.

The company announced in January that it was axing 6% of total staff. In June, it cut staff by another 2%, or about 200 workers, mainly in its podcast division.

Tech companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Meta and IBM have announced hundreds of thousands of job cuts this year.

Western arms cos failed to ramp up 'production capacity' in 2022

Watchdog cites Ukraine war for development

STOCKHOLM, Dec 4, (AP) - Many Western arms companies failed to ramp up production in 2022 despite a strong increase in demand for weapons and military equipment, a watchdog group said Monday, adding that labor shortages, soaring costs and supply chain disruptions had been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In its Top 100 of such firms, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said the arms revenue of the world's largest arms-producing and military services companies last year stood at \$597 billion - a 3.5% drop from 2021.

"Many arms companies faced obstacles in adjusting to production for high-intensity warfare," said Lucie Béraud-Sudreau, director of the independent institute's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program.

SIPRI said the revenues of the 42 U.S. companies on the list - accounting for 51% of total arms sales - fell by 7.9% to \$302 billion in 2022. Of those, 32 recorded a fall in year-on-year arms revenue, most of them citing ongoing supply chain issues and labor shortages stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nan Tian, a senior researcher with SIPRI, said that "we are beginning to see an influx of new orders linked to the war in Ukraine."

He cited some major U.S. companies, including Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Technologies, and said that because of "existing order backlogs and difficulties in ramping up production capacity, the revenue from these orders will probably only be reflected in company accounts in two to three years' time."

Companies in Asia and the Middle East saw their arms revenues grow significantly in 2022, the institute said in its assessment, saying it demonstrated "their ability to respond to increased demand within a shorter time frame." SIPRI singled out Israel and South Korea.

"However, despite the year-on-year drop, the total Top 100 arms revenue was still 14% higher in 2022 than in 2015 - the first year for which SIPRI included Chinese companies in its ranking.

SIPRI also said that countries placed new orders late in the year and the time lag between



A Ukrainian serviceman fires an NLAW anti-tank weapon during an exercise in the Joint Forces Operation, in the Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine, Feb. 15, 2022. An independent watchdog says many Western arms companies failed to ramp up production in 2022 despite a strong increase in demand for weapons and military equipment. Labor shortages,

soaring costs and supply chain disruptions were exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI. It said the arms revenue of the world's 100 largest arms-producing and military services companies last year was \$597 billion - a 3.5% drop from 2021. (AP)

Nickel processing plant that will supply Tesla strikes deal to spend \$115m in federal funds

BISMARCK, N.D., Dec 4, (AP) - Developers of a proposed nickel ore processing plant in North Dakota that would supply electric automaker Tesla have reached a deal with the U.S. Department of Energy on how to spend nearly \$115 million the federal agency awarded the project last year.

The recent agreement was the result of over a year of negotiations to determine how the money would be doled out to Talon Metals, the Bismarck Tribune reported Friday.

The Biden administration has backed the North Dakota facility as part of a national effort to bolster domestic production of critical minerals. It would process ore from Talon's proposed underground mine near Tamarack in northeastern Minnesota. That project still requires ap-

proval from Minnesota regulators. It's at the early stages of its environmental review, a process that could take at least a few years.

The federal funding will be made available at various stages, including once the company receives the necessary permits to build and operate the processing plant in Mercer County, Todd Malan, chief external affairs officer and head of climate strategy at Talon, told the Tribune. The company already has been able to access some of the funds for planning, permitting and site work, he said.

Talon plans to site the processing plant in a relatively dry part of North Dakota to reduce land disturbances and possible water pollution near the proposed mine. The decision also simplifies the complicated permitting process in Minnesota.

"We understand that in trying to produce nickel for national security and battery supply chain reasons people don't want to see us hurt the environment either; our big thing is we don't think it's a choice," Malan told the newspaper. "We think we can do both, and create good union jobs in North Dakota and Minnesota, but we certainly have alternative sources of supply if the permitting process in Minnesota takes longer than we anticipate."

The mine has already encountered opposition from environmental groups and tribes worried about impacts on water and other resources such as wild rice. The sulfide-bearing ore can release harmful pollutants including sulfuric acid and heavy metals when exposed to water and air.

orders and production meant that the surge in demand was not reflected in these companies' 2022

revenues.

"However, new contracts were signed, notably for ammunition,

which could be expected to translate into higher revenue in 2023 and beyond," Béraud-Sudreau said.

Hong Kong court puts off Evergrande's hearing to January

HONG KONG, Dec 4, (AP) - A Hong Kong court postponed until Jan. 29 a court hearing scheduled for Monday on troubled Chinese property developer Evergrande's winding-up petition.

Evergrande is trying to win support from its creditors for a plan to restructure more than \$300 billion in debt to stave off liquidation. The company's lawyer told the court it was requesting an adjournment to "refine" its new debt restructuring plan.

The Hong Kong High Court has postponed the hearing over Evergrande's potential liquidation several times. Judge Linda Chan had said in October that Monday's hearing would be the last before a decision is handed down.

Evergrande could be ordered to liq-

uidate if creditors reject its plan.

The company, the world's most indebted property developer, ran into trouble when Chinese regulators cracked down on excessive borrowing in the real estate sector.

Last month, the company said Chinese police were investigating Evergrande's chairman, Hui Ka Yan, for unspecified suspected crimes in the latest obstacle to the company's efforts to resolve its financial woes.

In September, Evergrande abandoned its initial debt restructuring scheme after authorities banned it from issuing new dollar bonds, which was a key part of its plan.

The company first defaulted on its financial obligations in 2021, just over

a year after Beijing clamped down on lending to property developers in an effort to cool a property bubble.

Evergrande is one of the biggest developers to have defaulted on its debts. But others including Country Garden, China's largest real estate developer, have also run into trouble, their predicaments rippling through financial systems in and outside China.

The fallout from the property crisis has also affected China's shadow banking industry - institutions which provide financial services similar to banks but which operate outside of banking regulations.

Police are investigating Zhongzhi Enterprise Group, a major shadow bank in China that has lent billions in

yuan (dollars) to property developers, after it said it was insolvent with up to \$64 billion in liabilities.

Real estate drove China's economic boom, but developers borrowed heavily as they turned cities into forests of apartment and office towers. That has helped to push total corporate, government and household debt to the equivalent of more than 300% of annual economic output, unusually high for a middle-income country.

To prevent troubles spilling into the economy from the property sector, Chinese regulators reportedly have drafted a list of 50 developers eligible for financing support, among other measures meant to prop up the industry.

'Welcome to The O.C.,' a look-back at 20-year-old Fox drama

NEW YORK, Dec 4, (Agencies): "California, here we come." The refrain from the Phantom Planet tune "California" that served as the theme song for "The O.C." welcomed viewers to Fox's short-lived but much-loved prime-time soap that focused on a group of teenagers and parents navigating the emotional ups and downs of life in affluent Newport Beach.

Now, 20 years after the show's debut, Rolling Stone TV critic Alan Sepinwall is taking readers "right back where we started from" in a splendid retrospective that relies on the memories of those who brought the show's 96 episodes to life.

"Welcome to The O.C." — the title references a memorable line from the pilot (minus a not-so-friendly word that punctuates the sentiment) — features recollections from creator Josh Schwartz, executive producer Stephanie Savage, the show's stars, Fox executives and many more.

The oral history serves as a definitive look-back at the four-season series that introduced "Chrismukkah" (a celebration of both Christmas and Hanukkah in the blended Cohen household) and a host of indie-rock bands whose songs played over some of "The O.C."s biggest moments.

None was more monumental than the controversial decision to kill off Mischa Barton's Marissa Cooper, one of the show's central characters, in season three's finale in 2006.

The book devotes a chapter to the behind-the-scenes intrigue that led to Barton's exit as well as the fallout. Spoiler alert: Those close to the

show didn't like it very much, starting with Barton herself, who called it "a little bit of a bummer."

Others used stronger — and strikingly similar — language.

Characters

Kelly Rowan, who played Cooper's neighbor, Kirsten Cohen, said the storyline was "a big mistake," breaking up the characters who came to be known as "The Core Four" — Kirsten Cohen's comic-book- and indie-music-loving son Seth, played by Adam Brody; Ben McKenzie's Ryan Atwood, a troubled outsider who is taken in by the Cohens; Summer Roberts (Rachel Bilson), Seth Cohen's dream girl and classmate; and Cooper, the beautiful girl-next-door who is Ryan's soulmate.

Savage acknowledged it was a "terrible, terrible mistake."

And Schwartz, who at the time was one of the youngest EPs in the television industry, agreed.

"I very quickly realized, 'Oh my God, what have we done? I think we made a terrible mistake,'" he said.

"The O.C." lasted one more season. Schwartz and Savage went on to helm a multitude of other small-screen gems, including "Chuck" and "Gossip Girl." The Core Four had become stars, and the show gave screen time to future headliners such as Chris Pratt, Olivia Wilde and Shailene Woodley.

"Welcome to The O.C." is a must-read for viewers of the show's original run, but it works, too, for those meeting the Cohens and their

fellow Orange County residents for the first time via streaming services.

"There is nothing new under the sun." So goes the adage which conveys the tendency for history to repeat itself.

It's this unstated premise that drives **Kliph Nesteroff's** latest book, "Outrageous: A History of Showbiz and the Culture Wars." In it, Nesteroff artfully seeks to demonstrate how current catchphrases like "cancel culture" and "political correctness" are just variations of the same generational and ideological divides which have undergirded American society throughout Hollywood's history.

Nesteroff turns his attention to comedians in particular, citing the ways in which they have historically been unique targets of the culture wars.

His arguments are cogent and his histories entertaining — how it is possible that "vaguely defined spirit of the times" is not a quote about wokeness, but instead a denunciation of critiques levied on comedians more than half a century ago?

Still, it's worth noting that Nesteroff began his career as a comedian, which perhaps betrays an inherent sympathy for the prophetic martyrs who have frequently been subjected to unjust censorship and criticism throughout the history of showbiz.

Books

Variety



Gene Simmons, (left), Eric Singer, Paul Stanley and Tommy Thayer of KISS take a bow during the final night of the 'Kiss Farewell Tour,' Saturday, Dec. 2, at Madison Square Garden in New York. (AP)

Music

Iconic rock band's avatars promise a new era

The long Kiss goodbye ends at MSG

NEW YORK, Dec 4, (AP): It's the end of the road for Kiss. But it's not the end of Kiss.

The hard-rocking quartet from New York City played final live concerts Friday and Saturday at Madison Square Garden, culminating a half century of rocking and rolling all night and partying every day.

And there was a surprise ending. But it wasn't cameo appearances by former members, as many fans had wanted. Instead, in a venture meant to keep Kiss out there — somewhere — forever, Kiss announced at the end of Saturday's final show that the band will live on indefinitely as digitized avatars — to be deployed in ways yet to be revealed.

One hint, though: In a promotional video released after the show, Gene Simmons said, "It's gonna be the best concert you've ever seen." (Presumably for an added fee.)

Many Kiss fans say they are not interested in paying to see virtual recreations of the band, including syndicated rock host Eddie Trunk. A lifelong Kiss fan from New Jersey, he has criticized the band in the past for what he considers to be missteps.

"I have very little interest in seeing an avatar concert of Kiss, or anyone for that matter," he said. "It's like going to see a movie. It in no way is a replacement for the live concert experience. There's no live music."

On Facebook, negative comments about the avatars were vastly outnumbering positive ones Sunday.

"I couldn't be more disappointed, disgusted, and shocked at the hideous Franken-Kiss they have now created," wrote Gary Stevens, who portrays Paul Stanley in the Kiss tribute bands Strutter and Kiss Revisited. "Now it makes complete sense why they didn't want Peter, Ace, Bruce, etc. there to end the era. They would've all had to be carried out from laughter had they known what was to come."

That was a reference to the absence of former Kiss band members from the final shows, despite Stanley's repeated statements that he'd be open to former members appearing in some capacity. But the same lingering bad blood regarding original members Ace Frehley

and Peter Criss that prevented the band from performing together at their Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame induction kept it from happening again, apparently.

The farewell tour was Kiss's second, following one in 2000 with the original four members.

The show Friday and Saturday was basically the same one Kiss has been putting on since the latest farewell, dubbed the "End Of The Road" tour. Begun in early 2019, it spanned a good deal of the band's 50-year catalog and featured the sort of special effects that set Kiss apart from its peers since the 1970s.

With the possible exception of Alice Cooper's guillotine and snakes, no other band has taken live performances to the extremes Kiss did, particularly in the 1970s. Each band member adopted an onstage persona and developed kabuki-style makeup, studded leather costumes and ridiculously high platform boots, Simmons' taking the form of dragons.

Crowd

He spit blood, breathed fire and flew to the top of the lighting rig. Frehley rigged his Gibson Les Paul guitar to spew smoke and — later — fire rockets at parts of the rigging, one of many things current lead guitarist Tommy Thayer would copy. Stanley rode a circus-style acrobat harness out over the crowd to a satellite stage to sing three songs near the end of the show.

Band members were lifted on hydraulic platforms out over the crowd, and the same risers that elevated original drummer Criss toward the arena roof now did the same for current drummer Eric Singer.

The show began with the classic Kiss opener "Detroit Rock City" as front-man Stanley, bassist Simmons and Thayer were lowered from the rafters on metallic discs. An enormous roar from the crowd greeted the conclusion of the song Saturday. "Shout It Out Loud" got similar love from the fist-pumping crowd.

Stanley, whose voice has been declining over the last decade, nonetheless gave it his all, knowing there was nothing left to hold back for, even though

the strain was evident on some notes, and others were delivered through clenched teeth.

Throughout the last two shows, Stanley took the temperature of the crowd and tried to channel sadness over the impending finale of the flesh-and-blood Kiss's concert career into a celebration of the past half-century.

"So this is the end of the road," he said Saturday, acknowledging a few stray boos. "I know. It seems sad. But tonight is a night for joy. This is a night to celebrate what we did together. We couldn't have done it without you!"

Stanley recalled driving a taxi in New York City in 1972 and dropping people off at Madison Square Garden to see Elvis Presley, telling them that someday, people would be coming there to see him. And he recalled looking out into the crowd at their first Garden show in February 1977 to see his parents, and Simmons' mother.

He asked the crowd if they had gotten what they came for, not just on Friday night but for the past 50 years, and paid homage to the band's humble beginnings in the clubs of Queens, a section of New York City.

"Rock And Roll All Nite" always closes a Kiss concert, and the usual tsunami of confetti and streamers rained down from the ceiling as Stanley smashed his guitar at the show's climax, the fans raining down love on the band one last time.

But then ... fog enshrouded the stage and a video played on a giant screen, revealing the avatars, which looked like something from a video game, promising "a new era begins."

"The end of the road is the beginning of another road!" Stanley said from inside the fog. "We're not going anywhere! You'll see us in all different things, all the time!"

Dee Snider, the former lead singer for Twisted Sister, put it best in a comment to me 10 years ago: "As long as there's one kid left in America with \$100 in his pocket, there will always be a Kiss."

Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023

NEW YORK: Beyoncé ruled the box office this weekend.

Her concert picture, "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," opened in first place with \$21 million in North American ticket sales, according to estimates from AMC Theatres Sunday.

The post-Thanksgiving, early December box office is notoriously slow, but "Renaissance" defied the odds. Not accounting for inflation, it's the first time a film has opened over \$20 million on this weekend in 20 years (since "The Last Samurai").

Beyoncé wrote, directed and produced "Renaissance," which is focused on the tour for her Grammy-winning album. It debuted in 2,539 theaters in the US and Canada, as well as 94 international territories, where it earned \$6.4 million from 2,621 theaters.

"On behalf of AMC Theatres Distribution and the entire theatrical industry, we thank Beyoncé for bringing this incredible film directly to her fans," said **Elizabeth Frank**, AMC Theatres executive vice president of worldwide programming, in a statement. "To see it resonate with fans and with film critics on a weekend that many in the industry typically neglect is a testament to her immense talent, not just as a performer, but as a producer and director."

Despite several other new releases including "Godzilla Minus One," the Hindi-language "Animal," Angel Studios' sci-fi thriller "The Shift," and Lionsgate's **John Woo**-directed revenge pic "Silent Night," it was a slow weekend overall. Films in the top 10 are expected to gross only \$85 million in total.

But it was in this traditional "lull" that AMC Theatres found a good opportunity for "Renaissance" to shine.

"They chose a great weekend," said **Paul Dergarabedian**, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "There was competition but it was from very different kinds of movies."

Though "Renaissance" did not come close to matching the \$92.8 million debut of "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" in October, it's still a very good start for a concert film. No one expected "Renaissance" to match "The Eras Tour," which is wrapping up its theatrical run soon with over \$250 million globally. Prior to Swift, the big-

gest concert film debuts (titles held by **Miley Cyrus** and **Justin Bieber** for their 2008 and 2011 films) had not surpassed the unadjusted sum of \$32 million.

The 39-city, 56-show "Renaissance" tour, which kicked off in **Stockholm, Sweden** in May and ended in **Kansas City, Missouri** in the fall, made over \$500 million



Beyonce

Woo

and attracted over 2.7 million concertgoers. Swift's ongoing "Eras Tour," with 151 dates, is expected to gross some \$1.4 billion.

Both Beyoncé and Swift chose to partner with AMC Theatres to distribute their films, as opposed to a traditional studio. Both superstars have been supportive of one another, making splashy ap-

pearances at the other's premieres. Both had previously released films on Netflix ("Miss Americana" and "Homecoming"). And both are reported to be receiving at least 50% of ticket sales.

Movie tickets to the show were more expensive than average, around \$23.32 versus Swift's \$20.78, according to data firm

EntTelligence.

Critics and audiences gave "Renaissance" glowing reviews — it's sitting at 100% on Rotten Tomatoes and got a coveted A+ CinemaScore from opening weekend audiences who were polled. EntTelligence also estimates that the audience, around 900,000 strong, skewed a little older than Swift's. (AP)

People & Places

Music

'Femmes' rebirth

Kenny G's 'Innocence': lullabies for every soul

LOS ANGELES, Dec 4, (AP): Four decades into his career - which include countless world tours, 20 studio albums, the Guinness World Record for bestselling jazz artist, and a Grammy - saxophonist **Kenny G** is grateful that his music continues to resonate.

"It's not just my hard work, because I work hard. I practice every day for three hours - every single day," he told The Associated Press. "It's not just that. There's more to it. There's the timing of things. Then there's the intangibles of why does a melody sound good to me."

That latter element is crucial. If there is a constant in the career of Kenny G, it's found in his chase and appreciation for melodies. On Dec. 1, that hunt resulted in "Innocence," his latest album and a collection of lullabies - both familiar and new - arranged in an idiosyncratic Kenny G fashion.

"I've already made music that people get engaged to, and then I made music they get married to and then they tell me how they make babies to my music. Well, I said, I've got to complete the circle now. Let me make them a record that you can use to put them to sleep," he jokes.

"I think it was more about making something that people could share in their family and intimate moments," he adds.

The title, "Innocence," reflects the innocence of childhood, sure, but also the innocence of a lullaby - the sweet melodies we all share. Although Kenny G believes this album is "not just for kids."

On "Innocence," next to familiar titles like "Rock-a-Bye Baby" and "Edelweiss" is a lesser-known cut from Polish composer Frédéric Chopin, "Nocturne Op. 9 No. 1." It's the kind of classical lullaby that Kenny G hopes inspires curious listeners to dive deeper - just like his original smooth jazz material has led to dives into improvisational music by his loyal fans.

He's also quick to point out that there are differences in how lullabies are composed and structured across cultures - what he muses he might explore in the future.

But for now, on "Innocence," he sees a common thread across these Western lullabies. "The melodies are very simple and they resolve themselves," he says. "There's always a way of it coming back to something. It's not a melody that just goes."

And returning to the start, no doubt, provides the listener with some comfort.

Asked if these songs will appear on his tour's set list, Kenny G offers another joke: "I'm already accused of putting people to sleep with my music," he says. "So, the last thing I want to do is play lullabies during my concert."

In 1983, Milwaukee trio Violent Femmes released their self-titled debut, an album that would quickly enter the college-rock pantheon for its spirited acoustic punk.

Forty years later, Craft Recordings has released a deluxe edition of the record, in which the cult band turns back the clock to a moment of intense creative output.

"Violent Femmes (Deluxe Edition)," out, is a competent remaster and a brilliantly curated collection of artifacts, with more than a dozen demos, B-sides and live performances. The collection works to capture the band's energy, humor, and in the live recordings, their intense audience connection.

In the '80s, Violent Femmes recorded their debut on the cheap, capturing most of the tracks on the first take. The remaster cleans up their work nicely. Alternate versions of popular favorites such as "Blister in the Sun," "Gone Daddy Gone," and "Add It Up" all sound crisp without sacrificing the band's messy intensity.

The gem of the collection is the live recordings, curated from two 1981 Milwaukee shows and one 1983 New York City performance.

In Violent Femmes' early days, frontman **Gordon Gano** was a teenager, and therefore could not play at his local Milwaukee clubs. So, the band did the next best thing and honed their craft as street buskers with acoustic instrumentation. The live tracks on "Violent Femmes (Deluxe Edition)" hint at how audience reaction informed their unpredictable, organic sound. No wonder they would later influence bands such as Pixies, Pavement and Nirvana.

The performances also highlight Gano's gift as a storyteller. Between songs, he stirs up the crowd and banters like a standup comedian. Their reaction to the murder ballad "Country Death Song" stands out, accepted not so much as a grisly true crime confession (as the lyrics suggest) but as a spooky campfire story. It's met with laughter.

Those who opt for a physical version of "Violent Femmes (Deluxe Edition)" will receive an accompanying book, which features a long essay by Rolling Stone writer **David Fricke**. It includes interviews with the band and a collection of early, joyful photos of the Femmes in action. The print materials help complete the reissue's apt documentation of the album's legacy.

Also:

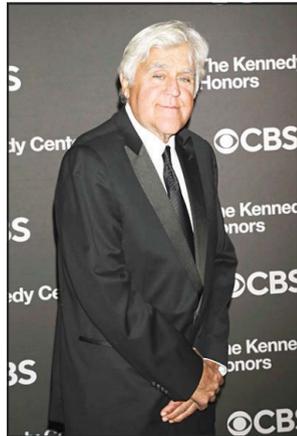
LOS ANGELES: Peter Gabriel's sonic teasing is almost over. After releasing 10 singles during 2023 - coinciding with each month's full moon - the singer-songwriter finally will drop the album they all come from on Friday, "i/o." The album is available in two distinct mixes: The Bright-Side Mix by **Mark "Spike" Stent** and the Dark-Side Mix by **Tchad Blake**. "Tchad is very much a sculptor building a journey with sound and drama, Spike loves sound and assembling these pictures, so he's more of a painter," says Gabriel. "i/o" includes contributions from **Brian Eno**, regular collaborators **Richard Chappell**, **Oli Jacobs**, **Katie May** and **Richard Evans**.



Kenny G



From left: Evan Ryan, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, 2023 Kennedy Center Honoree Renée Fleming, Queen Latifah, Billy Crystal, Barry Gibb, Dionne Warwick, Kennedy Center Chairman David Rubenstein, and Kennedy Center President Deborah Rutter pose for a photo at the State Department following the Kennedy Center Honors gala dinner, Saturday, Dec. 2, in Washington. (AP)



Jay Leno arrives at the Kennedy Center Honors on Sunday, Dec. 3, at The Kennedy Center in Washington. (AP)



Mankiller



Sangiuliano

Variety

MILAN: Italy's culture minister is refusing a request by the German State Antiquities Collection in **Munich** to return an ancient Roman statue that embodied Hitler's Aryan aesthetic, calling it a national treasure.

The Discobolus Palombara is a 2nd-century Roman copy of a long-lost Greek bronze original. Hitler had bought the Roman copy from its private Italian owner in 1938 under pressure from Italian dictator **Benito Mussolini** and against the wishes of the education minister and cultural officials. The statue, unearthed at a Roman villa in 1781, was returned to Italy in 1948 as part of works illegally obtained by the Nazis.

The dispute arose when the director of the National Roman Museum requested the statue's 17th-century marble base be returned from the Antikensammlung state antiquities collection. The German museum instead asked for the return of the Discobolus Palombara, saying it had been illegally transported to **Italy** in 1948, the Corriere della Sera newspaper reported Friday.

Italy's culture minister, **Gennaro Sangiuliano**, expressed doubts that the German culture minister, **Claudia Roth**, was aware of the Bavarian request.

"I made a joke - they'll have to step over my dead body," the minister told Italian Rai state TV on Saturday evening. In his comments, he slammed the German request for its return as "inadmissible."

"This work was obtained fraudulently by the Nazis, and it's part of our national heritage," Sangiuliano told Rai. He expressed hope that the base would be returned. (AP)

OKLAHOMA CITY: An iconic chief of the Cherokee Nation, **Wilma Mankiller**, inspired countless Native American children as a powerful but humble leader who expanded early education and rural healthcare.

Her reach is now broadening with a quintessential American honor: a Barbie doll in the late Mankiller's likeness as part of toymaker Mattel's "Inspiring Women" series.

A public ceremony honoring Mankiller's legacy is set for Tuesday in **Tahlequah** in northeast Oklahoma, where the Cherokee Nation is headquartered.

Mankiller was the nation's first female principal chief, leading the tribe for a dec-

Honors

Lifetime achievements: Crystal, Latifah, and more honored

Kennedy Center fetes new inductees

WASHINGTON, Dec 4, (AP): The newest group of Kennedy Center honorees, including comedian Billy Crystal and actor Queen Latifah, were feted Sunday night at a star-studded event commemorating their lifetime achievement in arts and entertainment.

Opera singer Renée Fleming, music star Barry Gibb and prolific hitmaker Dionne Warwick were also honored at the black-tie gala. Each received personalized tributes including appearances and performances that are typically kept secret from the honorees themselves.

President Joe Biden welcomed the honorees to the White House before the event, saying the performing arts "reflect who we are as Americans and as human beings."

The honorees "have helped shape how we see ourselves, how we see each other and how we see our world," said Biden who then introduced this year's class with a set of glowing superlatives about their work.

Biden and first lady Jill Biden then headed to the Kennedy Center to attend the festivities. The ceremony began with 2017 Kennedy Center honoree Gloria Estefan leading a troupe of dancers down the aisle while performing her megahit "Get On Your Feet."

In announcing the recipients earlier this year, the Kennedy Center's president, Deborah F. Rutter, called them "an extraordinary mix of individuals who have redefined their art forms."

Crystal, 75, came to national prominence in the 1970s playing Jodie Dallas, one of the first openly gay characters on American network television, on the sitcom "Soap." He went on to a brief but memorable one-year stint on "Saturday Night Live" before starring in a string of movies, including hits such as "When Harry Met Sally..." "The Princess Bride" and "City Slickers."

On the red carpet before the show, movie director Rob Reiner - who cast Crystal in multiple iconic roles - poked fun at the honoree. "I hope this doesn't give him a big head, because honestly his head's already big," Reiner said. Reiner later narrated a large portion

of Crystal's tribute, speaking from a stage made up as a replica of the diner from the famous scene in "When Harry Met Sally..." Further testimonials came from his "When Harry" costar Meg Ryan, Whoopi Goldberg, Bob Costas and 2009 Kennedy Center honoree Robert DeNiro. Lin-Manuel Miranda, a 2018 honoree, performed an original song in Crystal's honor.

Crystal, who also received the Kennedy Center's Mark Twain Prize for lifetime achievement in comedy in 2007, joins an elite group of comedians cited for both: David Letterman, Steve Martin, Lorne Michaels, Lily Tomlin, Carol Burnett and Neil Simon. Bill Cosby received both honors, but they were rescinded in 2018 following his sexual assault conviction, which later was overturned.

Warwick, 82, shot to stardom in the 1960s as the muse for the superstar songwriting team of Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Her discography includes a multidecade string of hits, both with and without Bacharach, that includes "I Say a Little Prayer," "I'll Never Love This Way Again" and "That's What Friends Are For."

Tribute

Warwick's tribute kicked off the show with a testimonial by 2021 honoree Debbie Allen, a performance by Cynthia Erivo, and Saturday Night Live cast member Ego Nwodim recounting how scary it was to perform her famous impression of Warwick in front of the diva herself. 2022 Kennedy Center honoree Gladys Knight performed Warwick's signature hit, "I Say a Little Prayer."

Fleming, 64, is one of the leading sopranos of her era, with a string of accolades that includes a National Medal of Arts bestowed by President Barack Obama, a Cross of the Order of Merit from the German government and honorary membership in England's Royal Academy of Music.

Although she had participated in five other tribute performances for previous honorees, Fleming said being the focus of attention was a "wild" experience.

"It's a different kind of whirlwind," she said on the red carpet. "Lots going on, but I don't have to worry about performing tonight."

Fleming received testimonials from actors and friends Christine Baranski and Sigourney Weaver. A quartet of opera singers performed one of her signature tunes: "Song to the Moon" from Antonín Dvořák's opera "Rusalka."

Latifah, 53, has been a star since age 19 when her debut album and hit single "Ladies First" made her the first female crossover rap star. She has gone on to a diverse career that has included seven studio albums, starring roles in multiple television shows and movies and an Oscar nomination for best supporting actress for her role in the movie musical "Chicago."

Latifah, whose real name is Dana Owens, was honored with performances from prominent female rappers of her generation, including Yo-Yo, MC Lyte and Monie Love. Missy Elliott spoke on the cultural importance of her stage name: Latifah is Arabic meaning "gentle" or "kind" while the queen moniker conveyed respect, dignity and a determination to play a leadership role in the culture.

"She was saying, 'You WILL respect me. I won't just set the bar. I AM the bar,'" Elliott said.

Gibb, 76, achieved global fame as part of one of the most successful bands in the history of modern music, the Bee Gees. Along with his late brothers Robin and Maurice, the trio launched a nearly unmatched string of hits that defined a generation of music.

"I'm proud of what my brothers and myself accomplished," Gibb said on the red carpet. "When we were good, and when we were on, it was really special."

His tribute featured performances from country stars Little Big Town, singer Michael Bublé, Broadway star Ben Platt and a show-closing greatest hits medley by Academy Award-winning singer and actor Ariana DeBose.

The 2023 Kennedy Center Honors ceremony will be broadcast on Dec. 27 on CBS.

ade until 1995. She focused on improving social conditions through consensus and on restoring pride in Native heritage. She met with three US presidents and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the

nation's highest civilian award.

She also met snide remarks about her surname - a military title - with humor, often delivering a straight-faced response: "Mankiller is actually a well-earned nick-

name." She died in 2010.

The tribe's current leader, Principal Chief **Chuck Hoskin, Jr.**, applauded Mattel for commemorating Mankiller.

"When Native girls see it, they can achieve it, and Wilma Mankiller has shown countless young women to be fearless and speak up for Indigenous and human rights," Hoskin said in a statement. "Wilma Mankiller is a champion for the Cherokee Nation, for Indian Country, and even my own daughter."

Mankiller, whose likeness is on a US quarter issued in 2021, is the second Native American woman honored with a Barbie doll. Famed aviator **Bessie Coleman**, who was of Black and Cherokee ancestry, was depicted earlier this year.

Other dolls in the series include **Maya Angelou**, **Ida B. Wells**, **Jane Goodall** and **Madam C.J. Walker**.

The rollout of the Barbie doll featuring Mankiller wearing a ribbon skirt, black shoes and carrying a woven basket has been met with conflicting reactions.

Many say the doll is a fitting tribute for a remarkable leader who faced conflict head-on and helped the tribe triple its enrollment, double its employment and build new health centers and children's programs.

Still, some Cherokee women are critical, saying Mattel overlooked problematic details on the doll and the packaging. (AP)



George Clooney and his wife Amal Clooney pose for photographers upon arrival at the screening of the film The Boys In The Boat, Sunday, Dec. 3, in London. (AP)

Unauthorized drug use may cause gastrointestinal bleeding, kidney failure

Experts warn against misuse of new diabetes drug for weight loss

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): Recently it has become widespread that some people are using new medications for type 2 diabetes (injections) to lose weight without medical advice, amid health warnings about serious side effects to the misuse by non-diabetics, despite the effect of this drug on weight loss.

Specialized doctors confirmed to KUNA that misuse and not taking the drug under medical supervision is risky and has side effects that may include gastrointestinal bleeding, kidney failure, pancreatitis, and hypoglycemia.

Endocrinology and Diabetes Consultant and Head of the Kuwait Diabetes Association Dr. Walid Al-Dhahi told KUNA, that there are several medications used for weight loss that have been approved, and most of them are medications to primarily treat type



Endocrinology and Diabetes Consultant and Head of the Kuwait Diabetes Association Dr. Walid Al-Dhahi.

2 diabetes, including these injections.

Insulin

This drug is a weekly injection given to adults with type two diabetes to lower blood sugar by increasing insulin

production and lowering sugar levels made by the liver, which slows the rate of food passing through the body and gives a feeling of fullness for a longer period, he said.

Dr. Al-Dhahi pointed out that because of the injection's effect on satiety centers and reducing stomach movement, it helps in losing weight, as there are studies made on people who take this medication with no diabetes, found that it helps in losing between 15 to 20 percent of the weight.

The Dr. warned against using these injections without consulting a doctor, "as doctors, we see many problems due to the misuse or to those who have a family history of thyroid cancer, previous pancreatic infections, kidney and liver problems, and blood sugar drops."

People should not consider these needles as the only way to lose weight, especially since some take them irreg-

ularly which is extremely dangerous as they will depend on it for life, saying it's better to lose weight through changing their lifestyle and eating healthy food.

Dr. Al-Dhahi stressed even for people with type 2 diabetes using these injections, it must be given following several laboratory tests.

For his part, Consultant, Head of Division, Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital Dr. Thamer Al-Essa said that all medications in general have side effects, but if they are approved the symptoms are well studied and assumed to be few and ineffective.

Dr. Al-Essa said that the injection may cause gastroesophageal reflux and fluctuations in the digestive system that last for weeks, but they disappear with time. Adding the medicine is a safe treatment for patients with type 2

diabetes.

Although the injections are a safe treatment for diabetics, they have other side effects that may harm some cases, Dr. Al-Essa said, causing nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain, and in rare cases, it could lead to kidney failure, pancreatitis, hypoglycemia, and may cause a thyroid tumor for people with family history.

Those who take the medication need close medical supervision, he said, due to the risk of severe lack of appetite will lead to malnutrition and an eating disorder, negatively affecting overall health.

Demand

He warned against using these injections, which are in great demand these days by the majority of overweight people, without consulting a specialist doctor to avoid complications that they

may cause in the future.

He also stressed the necessity of preventing the use of this medicine without consulting a specialist doctor in cases of hypersensitivity to one of the medicine components, previous or current infection with medullary thyroid cancer, type two multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome, and type one diabetes.

Dr. Al-Essa pointed out the necessity of using this medicine with extreme caution and under medical supervision during pregnancy, breastfeeding, liver or kidney disease, pancreatitis, diabetic retinopathy, and severe disorders of the digestive system.

It is strictly forbidden to use this medicine for patients with acute kidney failure, those undergoing dialysis, people with previous pancreatitis, or those with a family history of hereditary thyroid cancer, he stressed.

The Conversation

Research sheds light on practices and pitfalls

Gentle parenting hard on parents

By Annie Pezalla
Macalester College

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.



Are you a gentle parent? If so, chances are good that, just like your children, you may need a nap.

The idea of gentle parenting has been around since the 1930s but received increased attention over the past few years on social media and blogs, as well as in popular books, magazines and newspapers.

Despite its growing popularity, what remains unclear is what, exactly, this parenting style entails. Parenting author and self-described "gentle parenting" founder Sarah Ockwell-Smith has described gentle parenting as "a way of being" and "a mindset," with "an emphasis on your child's feelings." But does it mean no yelling? No punishment? How is it different from other established approaches to parenting? Is it good for kids? Equally important: Is it good for parents?

To explore what this gentle parenting movement is all about, my fellow family studies professor Alice Davidson and I gathered data from over 100 parents across the country with at least one child between the ages of 2 and 7. We asked these parents to tell us how they reared their kids, how they were reared by their own parents and how they respond when their child misbehaves. We also asked if they identified as a "gentle parent." For those who saw themselves as "gentle parents," we asked them: What do you mean?

These preliminary findings, which will be submitted soon for publication, should be interpreted with caution since the diversity of our sample was limited.

About half our sample identified as "gentle parents." Those who identified as gentle parents were almost all white - 84% - and highly educated. The one diverse aspect of their profile was their age. Participants ranged from 32 to 51 years old, including both Gen Xers and millennials.

When asked how they were reared as children, these participants described their parents in simplistic ways, with terms such as "confrontational" and "reactive." In contrast, when asked to describe their own parenting, they used 50% more adjectives, including terms such as "affectionate," "conscious," "accepting" and, of course, "gentle."

There was, overall, a theme within these parents' responses that they would do a better job at parenting than their own parents did with them. In open-ended responses, some participants stated this goal plainly. One father replied: "[My approach to parenting is to] do the opposite of my parents. No spanking or physical punishment." Perhaps gentle parenting is more than just a parenting style - it's also a rejection of the parenting styles of previous generations.

Shifts in generational approaches to parenting are not new, from the behaviorist movement of the 1920s - Don't hug your kid! - to the attachment parenting of the 1990s - Always hug your kid! - to the more contemporary free-range parenting movement of the 21st century - Where is my kid?

Evolution

Each movement is a reaction to the evolution of parenting scholarship. Yet the embrace of gentle parenting advice seems unique in that, despite its popularity on social media, it is not born of scholarship. Child development researchers have not followed these families to determine the extent to which this approach to child rearing is good for either kids or parents.

Attempting to find a common definition, we analyzed these parents' open-ended responses that described what "gentle parenting" means to them. For most, gentle parenting was primarily about staying calm in challenging moments with their kids.

A 42-year-old mother of a 3-year-old only child wrote that gentle parenting meant "having a moderate reaction - never getting too alarmed or being too permissive, always monitoring and adjusting expectations to the needs of the child and environment." A 35-year-old mother of 6-year-old twins wrote that gentle parenting meant "trying not to yell, trying very hard to manage my own feelings so that I don't hurt their feelings." These parents are working hard to keep their cool.

A secondary theme of gentle parenting among the parents we surveyed was about validating their kid's big feelings. Picture a kid having a meltdown at the mall. Sometimes this validation involved parents labeling an emotion: "I see you are very angry right now." Or they might allow their kid to freely emot: "We sit with the feeling." Often it involved giving affection: "I ask them if they want a hug."

These parents were also extraordinarily well versed in parenting literature. Many quoted bestselling author Becky Kennedy's Good Inside parenting manual or referenced philosophies from world-renowned early childhood educator Magda Gerber in their responses. They used nuanced terms such as "hand-in-hand," "gentle rein" and "conscious" to describe their parenting. They had all done their homework on how to be an excellent gentle parent.

Yet we noted two troubling themes in these parents' responses. First, none of them mentioned raising their children with help from their friends, family or community.

Second, many of them acknowledged, without prompting, that they were struggling to feel competent. When asked to describe her parenting approach, a 36-year-old mother of two children under 5 reflected that she often feels like she "has nothing to give" and gets "easily overstimulated and overwhelmed all day every day." She ended her reflections with the simple confession: "I often feel out of control."

She wasn't alone in those sentiments. Here are some others:

■ "I'm hanging on for dear life."

■ "I try to be gentle, but it can be challenging working full time and being stressed and having little support."

■ "I confess I have no idea what I'm doing much of the time."

Over 40% of our "gentle parents" provided these sorts of confessions, illuminating a clear message: They are often not so gentle with themselves. They were frequently exhausted, uncertain, hard on themselves and lonely.

We are currently expanding our sample with the goal of recruiting a much more diverse group of parents - not only in race or ethnicity but also in education level. We want to test whether this gentle parenting phenomenon is primarily limited to highly educated white parents. We also plan to follow these families over time to explore the sustainability of this gentle parenting approach and to see how their kids are doing. We wonder: Will the kids of gentle parents show the same sort of emotional restraint as their parents? Or will these children only build in the emotional control they wield over their parents?

Until we analyze that data, our message to these parents is short and sweet: Go easy on yourselves. Also, go ahead and take that nap. (AP)



Notes from students expressing support and sharing coping strategies paper a wall, as members of the Miami Arts Studio mental health club raise awareness on World Mental Health Day, Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2023, at Miami Arts Studio, a public 6th-12th grade magnet school, in Miami. (AP)

'Teletherapy works for many children'

Online therapy soars in US schools to tackle youth mental health crisis

NEW YORK, Dec 4, (AP): Trouble with playground bullies started for Maria Ishoo's daughter in elementary school. Girls ganged up, calling her "fat" and "ugly." Boys tripped and pushed her. The California mother watched her typically bubbly second-grader retreat into her bedroom and spend afternoons curled up in bed.

For Valerie Aguirre's daughter in Hawaii, a spate of middle school "friend drama" escalated into violence and online bullying that left the 12-year-old feeling disconnected and lonely.

Both children received help through telehealth therapy, a service that schools around the country are offering in response to soaring mental health struggles among American youth.

Now at least 16 of the 20 largest US public school districts are offering online therapy sessions to reach millions of students, according to an analysis by The Associated Press. In those districts alone, schools have signed provider contracts worth more than \$70 million.

The growth reflects a booming new business born from America's youth mental health crisis, which has proven so lucrative that venture capitalists are funding a new crop of school teletherapy companies. Some experts raise concerns about the quality of care offered by fast-growing tech companies.

As schools cope with shortages of in-person practitioners, however, educators say teletherapy works for many kids, and it's meeting a massive need. For rural schools and lower-income students in particular, it has made therapy easier to access. Schools let students connect with online counselors during the school day or after hours from home.

"This is how we can prevent people from falling through

the cracks," said Ishoo, a mother of two in Lancaster, California.

Ishoo recalls standing at her second-grader's bedroom door last year and wishing she could get through to her. "What's wrong?" the mother would ask. The response made her heart heavy: "It's NOTHING, Mom."

Last spring, her school district launched a teletherapy program and she signed up her daughter. During a month of weekly sessions, the girl logged in from her bedroom and opened up to a therapist who gave her coping tools and breathing techniques to reduce anxiety. The therapist told her daughter: You are in charge of your own emotions. Don't give anyone else that control.

Session

"She learned that it's OK to ask for help, and sometimes everyone needs some extra help," Ishoo said.

The 13,000-student school system, like so many others, has counselors and psychologists on staff, but not enough to meet the need, said Trish Wilson, the Lancaster district's coordinator of counselors.

Therapists in the area have full caseloads, making it impossible to refer students for immediate care, she said. But students can schedule a virtual session within days.

"Our preference is to provide our students in-person therapy. Obviously, that's not always possible," said Wilson, whose district has referred more than 325 students to over 800 sessions since launching the online therapy program.

Students and their parents said in interviews they turned to teletherapy after struggling with feelings of sadness, loneliness, academic stress and anxiety.

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Gold Coast withdraw

Australia 'increasingly unlikely' to host 2026 Commonwealth Games

GOLD COAST, Australia, Dec 4, (AP): Australia is unlikely to be able to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games and sports officials have called on the international federation to consider bids from other countries.

Commonwealth Games Australia chief executive Craig Phillips made the comments Monday after Gold Coast confirmed it had scrapped its plans to pick up the games after Victoria state withdrew as host in July.

Phillips said while Australia hasn't entirely given up on hosting, the Commonwealth Games Federation should "seriously consider" other offers.

"We have indicated to (the CGF)... they would have our support in doing that," Phillips told the Australian Associated Press. "It's our preference to host here and we will keep going while we think we have got options to explore."

"But if they have a better option, then they should seriously consider it."

Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate announced Sunday that the city had scrapped its bid to host the Games after failing to secure support from state or federal governments. Gold Coast, which hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games, and Perth had proposed a "streamlined" 2026 event, costing about \$700 million.

"We did our best," Tate said in a statement. "Sadly, at the same time,

our country's reputation as a place that reneges on a global sports contract remains.

"In simple terms, it seems our Games' vision doesn't align with the vision of the state or federal governments."

Gold Coast said the 2026 Games would not have been a burden on rate-payers. Victoria originally was awarded the 2026 Commonwealth Games but withdrew earlier this year citing cost overruns.

Three locations outside Australia reportedly have expressed interest in hosting the Games, which now are likely to be postponed to early 2027.

"The people we spoke to in the Commonwealth Games family, I believe that the sentiment is very much still ... there is a solution here in Australia," Phillips said. "But if that doesn't materialize, then other options are certainly on the table."

"We have made it clear to the CGF that we feel an obligation to host, we would like to host. But if they come up with a better solution for themselves then ultimately so be it."

The Commonwealth Games are a multi-sports event which began in 1930 as the British Empire Games and are contested every four years by athletes from the countries and territories in the Commonwealth.

Scheffler makes it look easy for 3-shot triumph in the Bahamas

Niemann wins Australia Open

NASSAU, Bahamas, Dec 4, (AP): Scottie Scheffler closed with a 4-under 68 for a three-shot victory Sunday in the Hero World Challenge for his fifth victory of the year.

Scheffler, a runner-up in the Bahamas the last two years, played bogey-free at Albany and didn't let anyone get closer than two shots

on the back nine.

The week wasn't a total loss for Tiger Woods, the tournament host playing for the first time since surgery to fuse his right ankle a few weeks after the Masters in April. Woods finished 72 holes for only the third time in the last two years. He has played six tournaments following the recovery from his February 2021 car crash in Los Angeles that badly injured his right leg.

Woods closed with a 72 and ended up 18th at even par. Scheffler finished at 20-under 268.

Sepp Straka had three late birdies for a 64 to finish second. Justin Thomas had a 67 to finish alone in third. It was his third straight finish in the top 5 dating to September.

In Sydney, Joaquin Niemann of Chile beat Japan's Rikuya Hoshino on the second playoff hole to win the Australian Open men's title on a wild final day.

In the Women's Australian Open held currently, Ashleigh Buhai held off a fast-finishing Minjee Lee to become the first woman to win back-to-back titles since Yani Tseng in 2011.

Niemann made an eagle at the second extra hole after a number of contenders slipped away on the back nine due to gusting winds at The Australian.

Starting the day four shots behind, Niemann - one of the big-name signings of the breakaway LIV Golf league - produced a 5-under-par 66 to finish at 14-under 271 as he surged up the leaderboard and took the clubhouse lead.

GOLF



Scottie Scheffler, of the United States, poses with the winner's trophy after his victory in the Hero World Challenge PGA Tour at the Albany Golf Club in New Providence, Bahamas, Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023. Inset: Chile's Joaquin Niemann kisses the trophy after winning the Australian Open Golf Championship at the Australian Golf Club in Sydney, Australia, Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023. (AP)

Gonzaga hands Stanford's worst loss

No. 1 South Carolina women topple Duke behind Cardoso's strong game

DURHAM, N.C., Dec 4, (AP): Kamila Cardoso had 15 points and 14 rebounds to help No. 1 South Carolina beat Duke 77-61 on Sunday.

Cardoso, who had her fifth double-double of the season, was one of five players to score in double figures for the Gamecocks (7-0). Chloe Kitts added 14 points and eight rebounds, Te-Hina Paopao scored 12 points, Bree Hall had 13, and Raven Johnson chipped in 11.

Reigan Richardson led Duke (5-3) with 17 points while knocking down a career-best five 3-pointers. Delaney Thomas scored 11 of her 13 points in the first half for the Blue Devils. Drama ensued before the halftime buzzer sounded.

Gonzaga 96, Stanford 78

In Spokane, Washington, Brynna Maxwell scored a season-high 27 points, Yvonne Ejim added 25 points and 12 rebounds, and Gonzaga handed No. 3 Stanford its worst loss in nearly four years beating the Cardinal 96-78.

The Bulldogs (8-2) won their 24th straight home game and beat the Cardinal for only the third time in 16 games. Gonzaga last beat Stanford in 2018 in what's become an almost yearly matchup between the private West Coast schools.

Baylor 71, Oregon 51

In Waco, Texas, Darianna Littlepage-Buggs scored 18 points, Aijha Blackwell had a double-double and No. 13 Baylor defeat Oregon 71-51.

Dre'una Edwards added 14 points for the Bears (7-0), who were held under 80 points for the first time this season. Blackwell had 10 points, 12 rebounds and five steals. Sarah Andrews had nine points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Littlepage-Buggs is the first Baylor player to lead the team in scoring in more than one game this season.

Florida St 79, Kent St 49

In Tallahassee, Florida, Ta'Niya Latson scored 15 points, Sara Bejedi and Makayla Timpson added 14 each and No. 15 Florida State pulled away from Kent State 76-49.

BASKETBALL

The Golden Flashes ended the first quarter on a 10-0 run for a 14-11 lead. They trailed 31-24 at the half after shooting 4 of 18 in the second quarter.

Ohio St 78, Tennessee 58

In Knoxville, Tenn., Cotie McMahon scored 19 points, Rebeka Mikulasikova added 18, and No. 16 Ohio State blasted No. 20 Tennessee 78-58 in the Jimmy V Women's Classic.

Taylor scored 15 points and Jacy Sheldon contributed 13 points, seven rebounds, six assists and four steals.

Indiana 72, Stetson 34

In Bloomington, Ind., Mackenzie Holmes had 17 points and Yarden Garzon scored 14 to spark No. 17 Indiana to a 72-34 win over Stetson.

The Hoosiers held the Hatters to just 12-of-62 shooting (19.4%) from the field, including just 3 of 24 from beyond the 3-point arc. They held a decisive 46-36 advantage on the boards.

Creighton rolls past Nebraska 89-60

Southern stuns No. 21 Mississippi State

STARKVILLE, Miss., Dec 4, (AP): Tai'Reon Joseph scored 27 points and blocked Mississippi State's final shot as Southern closed on a 12-0 run to stun the No. 21 Bulldogs 60-59 on Sunday.

Down 59-48 with 4:28 remaining, the Jaguars (2-6) took the lead with 23 seconds left on Brandon Davis' layup. With three seconds left, Joseph blocked Josh Hubbard's shot to hand Mississippi State (6-2) its second straight loss. Joseph was 11 of 21 from the field. Davis had 12 points - five during the 12-0 run.

BASKETBALL

The Jaguars have faced a tough non-conference schedule to help finance the athletic department, also playing at No. 2 Arizona, No. 3 Marquette and No. 24 Illinois. Their other victory of the season was at UNLV.

Hubbard led Mississippi State with 14 points, and Cameron Matthews had 12. The Bulldogs also lost at Georgia Tech on Tuesday night in the ACC/SEC Challenge.

Creighton 89, Nebraska 60

In Lincoln, Nebraska, Baylor Scheierman scored 20 of his 24 points in the first half to help Creighton build



Mississippi State forward Jimmy Bell Jr., center, is trapped between two Southern University defenders during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023, in Starkville, Miss. (AP)

James Madison 130, KC 59

In Harrisonburg, Va., Michael Green III had 21 points and four assists and James Madison routed Division III Keystone College.

TJ Bickerstaff had 12 points, 13 rebounds, five assists and three steals in 16 minutes for the Dukes (8-0).

DaShaun Johnson led Keystone (1-7) with 12 points.

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Company sponsors Special Run marathon for people with intellectual disabilities

Zain empowers and supports disability inclusion efforts



Group photo from the event.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: In a move to champion disability inclusion in the community, Zain sponsored the Special Run marathon for people with intellectual disabilities. The event, organized by the Special Olympics Kuwait and Al Tomooh Sports Club, took place at the Boulevard Mall's outdoor area in Salmiya and featured both a 2K walkathon and a marathon.

The event was attended by the Honorary President of the Kuwait Disabled Sport Club Sheikhha Sheikhha Al Abdullah Al Khalifa Al Sabah, National Manager of the Special Olympics Kuwait and member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Rehab Borelli, and Chairman of Al Tomooh Sports Club Jasim Al Nouri. Also in attendance were Zain officials and many activists, volunteers, and community members.

The Special Run coincided with the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, observed around the world on 3 December of every year. The special day brings an opportunity for nations and communities to join forces and exert more efforts towards achieving inclusivity for people with disabilities, empowering them to realize their ambitions and reach their full potential. Zain supported this event to reflect the key role of the private sector in shouldering civil society organizations and volunteer groups to create a positive social impact in the community.

Amidst wonderful wintery conditions, the Special Run walkathon and marathon covered 2 kilometers at the outdoor area of Boulevard Mall, Salmiya, with over 300 persons with intellectual disabilities of 15-25 years joining the fun. The initiative contributed to boosting their health and encouraging them to exercise while bringing them closer to their peers.

The Special Olympics Kuwait group aims to empower persons with



Sheikhha Sheikhha Al Sabah, Rehab Borelli, and Jasim Al Nouri recognize Zain for supporting the event.



The run coincided with the International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

intellectual disabilities, helping them reach their full potential and grow their skills by organizing various sports activities throughout the year. Such contributions help improve their health and fitness and raise their spirits. Similarly, Al Tomooh Sports Club works to create a more inclusive community by supporting people with intellectual disabilities through social, cultural,

and sports activities.

Zain continues to work towards fostering a spirit of giving, sharing, bonding, and community by directly supporting programs and initiatives that serve humanitarian needs. The company puts its social responsibility as a top priority, embodying and reflecting the values of its brand: Zain, A Wonderful World.

Airkon United register first victory of the season

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Having lost the toss, Airkon United was asked to chase down the target of 217 runs. Airkon chased down the target in 18.4 overs on DCC ground 3 at Sulaibiya.

Batting first the opposition team Friends XI lost their opener Raja Ali for 6 runs only but Khalid Rashed (56 Runs)

CRICKET

& Muqaddas (85 Runs) scored 135 runs for the 2nd wicket. The other 2 batsman from the Friends team Zafar and Abdulsattar also scored quick-fire 50 runs towards the inning end

giving Airkon a decent target of 217 (for 2 wickets) to chase in 20 overs. Jamshed was the most economical bowler from Airkon. Both Khurram and Parvez got one wicket each.

Chasing the target Airkon opening batsman Anjum Dar (99 Runs) & Khurram Akhtar (44 Runs) scored 133 runs in just 10 overs. Anjum Dar smashed Friends blowers all over the ground hitting 5 sixes & 15 Fours. Anjum was unlucky to get out on 99 runs. Ashfaq Ahmed coming at one down scored a fast 52 to chase down the target in 18.4 overs along with Shams.

Finally, Dar was declared Man of the Match for his brilliant innings of 99 runs.



Airkon United pose for a group photo.

Kazma look to 'bounce' back

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Kazma will face Shabab Al-Ahly from the Emirates at 8:00 pm in a highly anticipated match at the Al-Ittihad Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex. This encounter marks the second round of the West Asia Super Championship for the Gulf Basketball Region in the second group.

Currently, Al-Manama and Shabab Al-Ahly both hold two points, while Kazma and Al-Shamal have accumulated one point each in the early stages of the competition.

BASKETBALL

In this tournament, the top two teams from each group in the Gulf region will secure a spot in the semi-finals, engaging in a three-game playoff system. The winners of these playoffs will advance to the final round of the Gulf region, employing the same format. The ultimate finalists from the Gulf region will then qualify for the tournament finals. The overall finals will involve a pool system, with the champions from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and India joining the two West Asian finalists to determine the ultimate champions, who will earn a spot in the World Continental Championship finals.

The impending clash between Kazma and Shabab Al-Ahly promises to be challenging, given the closely matched skill levels of both teams. Kazma aim to recover from their previous loss against Manama of Bahrain, while Shabab Al-Ahly are eager to assert their dominance and secure the top spot in the group.

Bojan Lasic, the Slovenian coach of Kazma Basketball, relies on the contributions of key players such as Ahmed Al-Balushi and Youssef Bourahma. Additionally, the team looks to capitalize on the skills of the American player Leslie and the strategic presence of compatriot Chapman under the basket.

Al-Qadsia eye league 'lead'



A file photo of Al-Qadsia players celebrating.

Khaitan play Al-Jahra

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Zain Premier League is set to resume with two matches in the ninth and final round of the first section. In the first match, Khaitan and Al-Jahra will face off at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium at 8:25 pm, while the second match will see Al-Qadsia as guests of Al-Shabab at 8:10 pm.

The league competition took a ten-day hiatus due to the preliminary round of the Crown Prince Cup competition.

Kuwait lead the standings with 17 points, holding a goal difference advantage over Al-Arabi, who won their postponed fixture 3-0 on Sunday. Al-Qadsia followed closely in third place with 16 points, and three clubs - Al-Nasr, Al-Salmiya, and Kazma - share the fourth spot with 13 points. Al-Shabab sit in seventh place with 11 points, while Al-Fahaheel and Khaitan have 5 points each. Al-Jahra occupy the tenth and last place with one point.

Al-Qadsia, on the other hand, faced

a tough challenge against Al-Fahaheel in the Crown Prince Cup's preliminary round, resulting in a draw. The team ultimately secured victory through penalty kicks.

Coach Muhammad Ibrahim acknowledges that another loss of points is something the team cannot afford, given their four draws in the past eight rounds. A victory is crucial to maintaining their title aspirations.

Meanwhile, Al-Shabab are in a period of recovery, achieving success in both the Crown Prince Cup and the league. The team advanced to the quarter-finals of the Crown Prince Cup by defeating Yarmouk 4-1 in the preliminary round, mirroring the result against Khaitan in the last round of the league.

SOCCER

In the other matchup between Khaitan and Al-Jahra, new leadership is introduced with Romanian Florin Matroac leading Khaitan and Abdullah Al-Shalabi taking charge of Al-Jahra. The encounter holds significance for both teams, as a victory for Khaitan means moving away from ninth place, while a win for Al-Jahra signifies a revival of hope and their first victory, marking the beginning of a journey to distance themselves from the relegation zone.

Al-Arabi claim 4th spot as Al-Yarmouk earn first win

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: In a thrilling basketball league encounter, Al-Arabi secured a compelling victory against Al-Nasr with a final score of 90-81.

BASKETBALL

The match, which marked the opening of the seventh round, showcased intense competition on the court. Simultaneously, Al-Yarmouk celebrated their inaugural victory in the tournament, defeating Al-Tadamon with a

scoreline of 72-63.

Following this triumph, Al-Arabi elevated its point tally to 10, claiming the fourth position in the league standings. Al-Nasr, despite the loss, holds strong in fifth place with 9 points. Meanwhile, Yarmouk's victory propelled them to 8 points, securing the seventh position. In contrast, Al-Tadamon maintained their position in ninth place with a total of 7 points. The results set the stage for further excitement in the ongoing basketball league competition.



Barcelona's Joao Felix (right), shoots on target as Atletico Madrid's Cesar Azpilicueta challenges during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Atletico Madrid at the Olympic Lluís Companys Stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Sports

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Barcelona edge closer to La Liga summit

Atletico drop to fourth; Sevilla's struggles continue



Indian players celebrate as they pose for photograph with trophy after winning the fifth T20 match and series against Australia in Bengaluru, India. India beat Australia by 6 runs in fifth Twenty20 cricket match to win the series 4-1. (AP)

MADRID, Dec 4, (AP): João Félix scored against his former club to give Barcelona a 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid and move the Catalan club closer to the top of the Spanish league standings.

Félix, playing on loan from Atletico after falling out with the club last season, scored with a neat shot over goalkeeper Jan Oblak in the 28th minute to give Barcelona the home victory.

The result put Barcelona back within four points of leaders Girona and Real Madrid, who won their matches earlier.

Atletico dropped to fourth place, three points behind Barcelona in third but with a game in hand.

Félix received a standing ovation when he was substituted by Ferran Torres in the 77th at the Olympic Lluís Companys Stadium.

The Portugal forward got the winner by flicking the ball over Oblak from a tight angle after a pass by Raphinha.

Barcelona goalkeeper Iñaki Peña, replacing the injured Marc-André ter Stegen, made a few good saves toward the end to secure Barcelona's third win in four league matches.

Barcelona were coming off a 1-1 draw at Rayo Vallecano before beating Porto 2-1 to secure their return to the knockout stage of the Champions League for the first time after two consecutive group-stage eliminations.

SOCCER

Félix, a former Benfica player, also scored against Porto on Tuesday.

Diego Simeone's Atletico had won four in a row in all competitions, with two losses - including at Las Palmas - and eight wins in their last 10 league matches.

Sevilla's winless streak in the Spanish league reached eight matches after a 1-1 home draw with Villarreal.

The latest setback came four days after Sevilla were eliminated in the group stage of the Champions League following a 3-2 loss to PSV Eindhoven in a match they led 2-0 in the second half.

The hosts escaped another defeat after Villarreal's potential winner was disallowed deep into stoppage time. Ben Brereton scored in the seventh minute of added time but the goal was called back after video review because of a foul by Brereton on Kike Salas.

Salas had put Sevilla ahead in the 75th minute, with José Luis Morales equalizing in the 77th for 12th-place Villarreal.

Sevilla, which haven't won in the league since a 5-1 rout of last-place Almeria in September, sit in 15th place.

Almeria remained the only team without a league win this season after a 0-0 home draw against Real Betis, which played with 10 men after Héctor Bellerín was sent off with a straight red card in the 27th.

Manuel Pellegrini's Betis, sitting in seventh place, are unbeaten in 10 straight league matches, with four wins and six draws.

Javier Aguirre's Mallorca, in 16th place, drew 0-0 with 13th-place Alaves to remain winless at home this season, with six draws and one loss.

Alaves are winless in eight road games, with three draws and five losses.

Cordoba defender Dragisa Gudelj was in good condition after collapsing in the first half of a third-division game against Melilla on Sunday, eight months after suffering a cardiac arrest during another match.

Cordoba said the 26-year-old Gudelj was doing well and undergoing tests in a hospital in Melilla.

In March, a game between Cordoba and Racing Ferrol was abandoned early in the first half after Gudelj collapsed and had to be rushed to the hospital in an ambulance.

Is Man City feeling post-treble blues?

3 straight draws leave Citizens in sticky spot before Villa game

LONDON, Dec 4, (AP): Erling Haaland raged in the face of the referee. Ruben Dias threw his hands out in frustration. Jeers from Manchester City fans swirled around the ground.

The Etihad Stadium was a scene of outright anger in the final moments of a wild 3-3 draw against Tottenham after a refereeing mistake denied City a potential stoppage-time winner for Jack Grealish.

The pent-up ire that manifested itself Sunday has been building, though. City might finally be experiencing some post-treble blues.

There was always going to be some sort of comedown after being in soccer dreamland by becoming only the second team - after Manchester United in 1999 - to win the Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League in the same season.

Pep Guardiola predicted it would happen. Former United players warned it would happen. It's taken a few months but maybe now it has happened.

It might only be a small drop-off but three straight draws in the Premier League represents the first time since Guardiola's first year in charge that City has gone through such a run of games in the competition without winning.

SOCCER

First there was a 4-4 draw at Chelsea, then a 1-1 draw with Liverpool and now the draw at home to an injury-hit Tottenham. Next there's a trip on Wednesday to Aston Villa, which has a flawless home record in the league, and City will be without its irreplaceable center midfielder, Rodri, because of suspension along with Jack Grealish (also suspension) and most likely Jeremy Doku, who came off injured against Spurs.

Arsenal, meanwhile, might be six points clear by the time of the Villa-City kickoff because the team at the top of the table plays Luton on Tuesday.

On the face of it, there might not be too many concerns. After all, City didn't lose any of those recent games, the gap to Arsenal is only three points at this early stage of the season and the team has already qualified for the round of 16 of the Champions League with a game to spare.

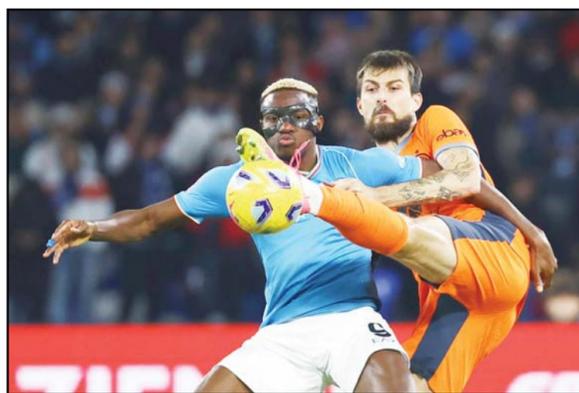
Indeed, it needed a stoppage-time penalty by Chelsea's Cole Palmer and a 90th-minute goal by Tottenham's Dejan Kulusevski to stop City winning those games.

Most teams would love to be in City's position right now.

There are some emerging issues, however, and the key area is in midfield.

City has been unable to exert control in the final sections of games, especially in midfield where Rodri has been overrun at times with Chelsea, Liverpool and Spurs able to pour through with little resistance.

The absence of John Stones - who excels in the hybrid defender-midfielder role - because of injury has had a destabilizing effect. The decision to replace the departed Ilkay Gundogan



Napoli's Victor Osimhen (left), attempts to block Inter's Francesco Acerbi as Acerbi kicks the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Inter at Stadio Diego Armando Maradona stadium, Naples, Italy. (AP)

with ball-carrying midfielders in Mateo Kovacic and Matheus Nunes, who haven't established themselves as regulars, has also robbed City of control.

Then there's that intangible: desire. Have City's treble-winning players got the desire to put in the extra effort to see out these close games? Focus seems to be an issue - take, for example, Dias' lazy challenge that gave away the late penalty at Chelsea.

Guardiola will have been prepared for all this. And he seems to be taking it somewhat in his stride, brushing off the late controversy in Sunday's game by saying he'd learned from mentor Johan Cruyff that "bad luck in football doesn't exist."

"Good teams are not defined by good moments," Guardiola said. "It's not the first time we have faced this

situation where we are playing good but results don't come.

"Always we find a solution, but lately the results don't come and we are struggling."

Indeed, it was as late as February last season that many were saying City's trophy chances were dwindling. Guardiola wasn't trusting key players. Gundogan was complaining a spark had been lost.

A few months later, they won the treble.

Few would be surprised if City went on to retain the league title, but it will need the team to get back to being harder to play through and sturdier at the back.

Villa - with six wins from six at home this season and 23 goals scored in those games - will sense this is the perfect time to host the champions.

Roma stage comeback win over Sassuolo

Inter send ominous warning to rivals with rout of Napoli

MILAN, Dec 4, (AP): Inter moved back into first place and made a statement about its title intentions with the 3-0 win at Napoli.

Hakan Calhanoglu scored with a powerful long-range shot at the end of the first half. Nicolò Barella slalomed through the defense midway through the second half for a score that could vie for goal of the season honors. And Marcus Thuram tapped in to seal it.

Also, Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer made a series of spectacular saves.

Inter moved two points ahead of Juventus, which beat Monza 2-1.

Napoli winger Matteo Politano hit the crossbar in the first half.

Barella's goal started with a cross from Lautaro Martinez. Then the midfielder went past Napoli center backs Leo Ostigard and Natan before shifting his weight again to prod the ball past onrushing goalkeeper Alex Meret.

It was Napoli's fourth home loss this season after losing only twice at the Stadio Diego Maradona during its title run.

Jose Mourinho's pre-match accusations aimed at the referee and Sassuolo's standout winger Domenico Berardi created plenty of controversy - and will likely result in another suspension for the veteran Portuguese coach.

There was no questioning Mourinho's choices off the bench, though, as Roma earned their sixth win in their last eight Serie A matches.

Substitute Rasmus Kristensen earned a penalty that Paulo Dybala

converted and then the Denmark right back scored to give Roma a 2-1 comeback win at 10-man Sassuolo.

Mourinho had labeled referee Matteo Marcenaro unstable.

"We had him three times as a fourth official and I don't think he has the emotional stability for games of this level," Mourinho said, prompting the Italian soccer federation to open a disciplinary case against the coach.

And Mourinho wasn't done. He then said Berardi "exaggerates fouls to draw yellow cards," adding that "if he was my player I wouldn't like that at all."

So perhaps it was no coincidence that Berardi set up the first goal, threading a pass through the area that Matheus Henrique tapped in at the far post.

Mourinho brought on Kristensen for Rick Karsdorp after halftime and the match changed when Daniel Boloca was sent off for a foul on Roma midfielder Leandro Paredes - after Marcenaro consulted the VAR.

SOCCER

Kristensen was then taken down between two defenders and Dybala's penalty was accurate enough even though goalkeeper Andrea Consigli leaped in the correct direction.

Six minutes later, Kristensen produced a shot that took a big deflection off a defender and looped into the goal.

Roma moved up to fourth, level on points but ahead of fifth-place Napoli.

Afterward, Mourinho made a statement in Portuguese and said that his Italian wasn't proficient enough to explain certain concepts in terms of his comments about the referee.

Mourinho was suspended for two matches at the start of this season for comments about a referee at the end of last season. He was also banned for four matches by UEFA in June for verbally abusing the Europa League final referee in a stadium garage after Roma lost to Sevilla.

Fiorentina are sixth with a 3-0 win over last-place Salernitana.

Lucas Beltran converted a penalty kick for his first Serie A goal after his own backheel pass set up a foul on Arthur Melo. Riccardo Sottil scored with a long-range shot that bounced in off both the crossbar and the post. After the break, Giacomo Raspadori finished off a full team move.

With 102 goals in 2023, Fiorentina set a team record for a year in which they reached the Conference League and Italian Cup finals. The Tuscan club beat Genoa on Thursday to advance in this season's Conference League.

Bologna are seventh following a 1-1 draw at Lecce. Rocks were thrown at a bus carrying Bologna supporters to the match.



Tottenham's Bryan Gil tries to tackle Manchester City's Bernardo Silva, (right), during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur at Etihad stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)