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SAUDI CROWN PRINCE CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE GAZA CEASEFIRE

Kuwait advocates for sustainable peace

Crown Prince Diwan photo

Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, addressing the extraordinary Islamic-Arab summit in Riyadh.

Leaders in unison

RIYADH, Nov 11, (Agencies): Indescribable crimes are being committed against our Palestinian brothers in Gaza while we are convening at the moment, said Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday, addressing the extraordinary Islamic-Arab summit in Riyadh.

The Israeli occupation is leading an unjustified collective punishment enveloped by dual standards going counter to all relevant international and humanitarian resolutions, noted His Highness Sheikh Mishal, calling on the international community, specially the UN Security Council to enact its role in immediately halting the bloodshed and provide international protection for the Palestinian people, welcoming at the same time the UN General Assembly's decision to call for a humanitarian truce; reflective of the magnitude of the crisis in Gaza.

The State of Kuwait, His Highness stressed, is all for a sustainable peace in the region, starting with a final and just solution for the Palestinian cause according to the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant international references, reiterating that the cause will always be of Kuwait's top foreign policy priorities.

Meanwhile, Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on Saturday called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, and for putting an end to the Israeli occupation's violations.

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Longer lifespans offset fewer births

World's population tops 8 billion

WASHINGTON, Nov 11, (AP): The human species has topped 8 billion, with longer lifespans offsetting fewer births, but world population growth continues a long-term trend of slowing down, the U.S. Census Bureau said Thursday.

The bureau estimates the global population exceeded the threshold Sept. 26, a precise date the agency said to take with a grain of salt.

The United Nations estimated the number was passed 10 months earlier, having declared November 22, 2022, the "Day of 8 Billion," the Census Bureau pointed out in a statement.

The discrepancy is due to countries counting people differently - or not at all. Many lack systems to record births and deaths. Some of the most populous countries, such as India and Nigeria, haven't conducted censuses in over a decade, according to the bureau.

While world population growth remains brisk, growing from 6 billion to 8 billion since the turn of the millennium, the rate has slowed since doubling between 1960 and 2000.

People living to older ages account for much of the recent increase. The global median age, now 32, has been rising in a trend expected to continue toward 39 in 2060.

Countries such as Canada have been aging with declining older-age mortality, while countries such as Nigeria have seen dramatic declines in deaths of children under 5.

Fertility rates, or the rate of births per woman of childbearing age, are meanwhile declining, falling below replacement level in much of the world and contributing to a more than 50-year trend, on average, of slimmer increases in population growth.

The minimum number of such births necessary to replace both the father and mother for neutral world population is 2.1, demographers say. Almost three-quarters of people now live in countries with fertility rates around or below that level.

Countries with fertility rates around replacement level include India, Tunisia and Argentina.

About 15% of people live in places with fertility rates below replacement level. Countries with low fertility rates include Brazil, Mexico, the U.S. and Sweden, while those with very low fertility rates include China, South Korea and Spain.

10 months sweep nets 4,295 'wanted' persons

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: Statistics issued by the General Directorate of Traffic and Rescue Police Patrols revealed that 4,295 persons wanted by law were arrested during the first ten months of this year.

According to what was published by the Traffic Affairs and Operations Sector in the official account of the General Traffic Department on the "X" platform, the number of people arrested by traffic police reached 2,356 wanted by several parties, and reports were registered against them (arrest, absconding, expiration of residency, and wanted for sentences execution) from Jan1 thru Oct 31, 2023.

As for the number of wanted persons who were arrested during security and traffic campaigns carried out by the General Administration of Rescue Police, during the same period, reached 1,939 people.

Pillar of democracy

Kuwait commemorates 61st anniversary of Constitution

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait marks Saturday the 61st anniversary of its Constitution, which specified the ruling system, and organized relationship between legislative, executive and judicial authorities.

Kuwaiti people are proud of their Constitution which contributed to democracy in the Gulf nation, highlighted civil rights of citizens and their right of speech, as well as guaranteeing justice and equality.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the State of Kuwait's 11th Amir, ratified the constitution on November 11, 1962, a defining moment in the political history of Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti people remember with pride the historic democratic stages that Kuwait went through, beginning with the constitutional document in 1938 until the birth of the constitution in 1962, the "most important document" of Kuwait.

The late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem had expressed desire to build a solid parliamentary system based on democratic principles and see contributions of the public to the constitution.

He signed a law on August 26, 1961 regarding the bylaw of the transitional period and holding elections for the Constituent Assembly with a mandate of wording the Constitution.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem inaugurated the Constituent Assembly in January 1962 and told the members that they have a daunting task of placing foundation of the ruling system of the nation.

Members of the Assembly elected Abdullatif Mohammad Al-Ghanem as Speaker and Dr. Ahmad Al-Khateeb as deputy speaker.

The sixth session saw election of the Constitution Committee, consisting of speaker Al-Ghanem, late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah who was Interior Minister and also served as committee chairman, MP Humoud Al-Zaid Al-Khaled who also Minister of Justice, Yaqoub Yusuf Al-Humaidhi and Saud Abdulaziz Al-Abdulrazzaq.

The committee tabled the final draft of the constitution and was unanimously approved on November 3, 1962.

The Assembly then referred the draft constitution to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem who ratified it on November 11, 1962.

The constitution consists of 183 Articles over five Chapters: the First about the State and System of Government, Second about Fundamental Constituents of Kuwait Society, Third about Public Rights and Duties, Fourth about Authorities and Fifth about General and Transitional Provisions.

The first parliamentary elections were held in January 1963 and were the beginning of the real political practices under the constitution.

The democratic march in Kuwait was marred with some crises. The parliament was suspended twice in 1976 and 1986. However, the constitution was the shield against domestic and external challenges, foremost the Iraqi invasion and occupation in 1990-91.

During the seven-month Iraqi occupation, Kuwaitis united behind their legitimate leadership.

In April 1991, late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah formed a new government with a mandate of reconstruction, and in October 1992, the parliamentary life resumed.

The leaders of the State of Kuwait have always reaffirmed respect to the constitution.

Late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah had always reaffirmed commitment to the constitution, saying at a parliamentary session on October 26, 2010 that the constitution was the haven of democracy.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah reiterated this pledge and said the constitution protected the country from crises.

Newswatch

WASHINGTON: American troops were hit four times by Iranian-backed groups in the **Middle East** after a **U.S.** strike Wednesday on an Iranian facility in **Syria**, according to the Pentagon.

The U.S. has now been attacked 46 times since Oct. 17, including 24 attacks in **Iraq** and 22 in Syria, Pentagon deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh said late Thursday.

"If these attacks continue against our personnel, we won't hesitate at a time and place of our choosing to respond again," Singh told reporters at a briefing. (KUNA)

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MOULAY BRAHIM, Morocco: When a historic earthquake struck Morocco in September, **Ahmed Aazab** tightly hugged his wife and four children as their home's brick walls tumbled around them.

The roof collapsed, shattering clay pots in the kitchen and trapping picture frames and homework assignments beneath rubble. When the ground finally stopped shaking, the construction worker shepherded his five loved ones to a park. Then he rescued his father, mother and aunt, who were trapped in his childhood home nearby. (AP)

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UNITED NATIONS: Almost seven months of war between **Sudan**'s military and a powerful paramilitary group have left a wave of destruction with over half the population in need of humanitarian aid and raised fears of a repeat of the deadly ethnic conflict in **Darfur** 20 years ago.

"What is happening is verging on pure evil," the United Nations humanitarian coordinator in the African nation said Friday. AP)

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KYIV: Russian forces targeted **Ukraine**'s capital, Kyiv, as part of an overnight bombardment felt across the country, local officials said Saturday, while drones that Russian officials blamed on the Ukrainian military targeted areas around **Moscow** and the region of **Smolensk**.

A ballistic missile was shot down as it approached the Ukrainian capital, said **Serhii Popko**, head of the Kyiv City Military Administration. He said that no one was injured. (AP)

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NEW DELH: India and the **US** on Friday pledged to work together and deepen cooperation in political, security and defense sectors to face increasing regional and global challenges.

In their opening remarks at the fifth US-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi, Indian Minister of External Affairs **S Jaishankar**, US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken**, Indian Minister of Defense **Rajnath Singh** and US Secretary of Defense **Lloyd Austin** underscored the importance of deeper India-US cooperation in political, economic, security and defense fields to face the increasing global challenges. (KUNA)

Palestinians flee to the southern Gaza Strip on Salah al-Din Street in Bureij, Gaza Strip, Friday, Nov. 10, 2023. (AP)

Biden administration slams credit rating agency's decision

Moody's lowers US outlook, keeps triple-A rating

WASHINGTON, Nov 11, (AP): The credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service lowered its outlook on the U.S. government's debt on Friday to "negative" from "stable," citing the cost of rising interest rates and political polarization in Congress.

Moody's retained its top triple-A credit rating on U.S. government debt, though it is the last of the three major credit rating agencies to do so. Fitch Ratings lowered its rating to AA+ from AAA in August, and Standard & Poor's downgraded the U.S. in 2011. A reduced outlook, however, raises the risk that Moody's could eventually strip its triple-A rating from the U.S. as well.

A lower rating on U.S. debt could cost taxpayers if it leads borrowers to demand higher interest rates on Treasury bills and notes. The yield on the 10-year Treasury has risen significantly since July, from about 3.9% to 4.6% Friday, an unusually sharp rise.

Some market analysts have said the August Fitch downgrade may have contributed to that increase, though most point to other factors as bigger drivers, such as the Federal Reserve's commitment to keeping its benchmark rate at a 22-year high to battle inflation.

"In the context of higher interest rates, without effective fiscal policy measures to reduce government spending or increase revenues, Moody's expects that the U.S.'s fiscal deficits will remain very large, significantly weakening debt affordability," the agency said in a statement.

The Biden administration criticized Moody's decision.

"While the statement by Moody's maintains the United States' Aaa rating, we disagree with the shift to a negative outlook," Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo said. "The American economy remains strong, and Treasury securities are the world's preeminent safe and liquid asset."

The federal government's budget deficit jumped to $1.7 trillion in the budget year that ended Sept. 30, up from $1.38 trillion the previous year. Analysts have warned that with interest rates heading higher, interest costs on the national debt will eat up a rising share of tax revenue.

Separately, congressional lawmakers left Washington for the weekend without a plan to avoid a potential government shutdown that could occur by Nov. 17. Moody's cited congressional dysfunction as one reason it lowered its outlook on U.S. debt.

"Recently, multiple events have illustrated the depth of political divisions in the U.S.: Renewed debt limit brinkmanship, the first ouster of a House Speaker in U.S. history, prolonged inability of Congress to select a new House Speaker, and increased threats of another partial government shutdown," Moody's said.

Melting glaciers challenge for humanity

PARIS, Nov 11, (AP): Melting glaciers are an "unprecedented challenge for humanity," French President Emmanuel Macron said on Friday, as he launched a call for nations to work together on slashing planet-warming emissions, protecting the environment and collaborating on scientific research into the Earth's icy ecosystems.

Such a united effort is desperately needed, even though the war in Ukraine and the latest Israel-Hamas war are taking away much of the international focus and hamper global unity and cooperation, Macron said.

The French leader spoke at the Paris Peace Forum, an annual event involving governments, nongovernmental groups and others seeking dialogue around global problems such as climate change, children's exposure to online violence, and threats to human rights.

The world, Macron said, is witnessing "the collapse of the cryosphere under the impact of climate change," referring to parts of the Earth where water is in solid form, including glaciers.

"The most immediate and visible effect is the melting of the ice caps ... it represents an unprecedented challenge for humanity," Macron said.

Melting ice surfaces worldwide have an impact on biodiversity, rising sea levels and coastlines and they contribute to scarcity of drinking water, migration, greater release of CO_2 and the risk of a new pandemic, he added.

"All these threats are real," Macron said and called for urgent cooperation.

"Conflicts are once again on the agenda, in the Middle East and elsewhere and this makes our relations fragile, but we have to do our best to work closely together, in a peaceful way," he added.

KUNA photo

A photograph captures a relief aid-laden truck. Kuwait's humanitarian and relief aid, facilitated through an air bridge, has reached the Gaza Strip, with ninety percent of the assistance entering through Egypt's Rafah Crossing Point, as confirmed by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). — See Page 5

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:47	Asr	14:34
Sunrise	06:08	Maghrib	16:55
Zohr	11:32	Isha	18:15

Local

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Rather hot with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speed of 06-28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Mild to rather cold and humid over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to light southwesterly wind, with speed of 06-26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	29	21
Kuwait Airport	31	16
Abdaly	32	15
Jahra	32	19
Salmiyah	27	23
Nuwaisib	32	19
Wafra	32	16

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

State Audit Bureau report on public sector

Justice Ministry fails to collect over KD 21 million in fines

Delay in addressing violations, imposing fines cost Municipality KD140m

SAB report on Municipality

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The report of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) on Kuwait Municipality revealed that the delay in addressing violations and imposing penalties for several years led to losses estimated at KD140 million.

The bureau said that based on the final account of the Municipality for fiscal 2022/2023, the accumulated debts reached KD68 million on March 31, 2023 -- 0.4 percent higher than the amount recorded on April 1, 2022.

The Municipality recorded a budget surplus of KD21 million, because of low spending on development projects compared to the budget allotted for this purpose. It also failed to collect fees estimated at KD21 million despite the issuance of final court verdicts in this regard.

The violations are as follows:

■ The contract for the construction of a hotel violated ministerial decision number 206/2009 as the Municipality did not impose penalties on the owners who constructed more floors -- a total of 36,000 square meters and the fine should be KD 360 million;

■ Failure to monitor commercial advertisements, collect the specified fees estimated at KD2 million and publication of advertisements for unlicensed businesses;

■ Lack of garbage bins in different areas like Kabad and camel stables in Ahmadi;

■ Technical errors in the sanitation contracts, resulting in environmental damages in Shaddadiya and such errors burdened the public treasury since the victims won in lawsuits demanding for compensation totaling KD3 million;

■ Errors in the disbursement of COVID-19 frontliners incentive considering 1,906 employees received the incentive even if they did not carry out field tasks during the crisis.

SAB report on Moj

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The final report of the State Audit Bureau on the Ministry of Justice for the fiscal year of 2022/2023 revealed the continued non-collection of criminal fines amounting to a total of 21 million and 677 thousand dinars for misdemeanor and felony cases in which final judgments were issued by the Criminal Enforcement Department during the period from 01/04/2000 to 31/03/2023 in violation of Article No. 11 contained in Law No. 17/1973 regarding the collection of judicial fees and the rules for implementing the budget.

The bureau asked the ministry to take necessary measures to collect its dues on a timely basis to reduce their accumulation from year to year in implementation of the financial instructions issued in this regard, and to address the concerned authorities to work on converting 50,663 judgments in absentia into a final judgment in misdemeanor cases at a value of KD 22 million 999 thousand until the end of the fiscal year.

It highlighted that this leads to failure to prove these revenues, their loss to the state, and failure to register or follow them up as revenues in the ministry's records and accounts, in violation of Law No. 17/1960 regarding the issuance of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Trials.

The report stressed that the ministry failed to fill 71 supervisory positions in the organizational structure of the Directorate General of Implementation of its six governorates, which negatively affects the workflow and its productivity, and causes confusion in the administrative and financial work of the department.

SAB report on MSA

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The State Audit Bureau (SAB), in its report concerning the Ministry of Social Affairs, confirmed the low rate of spending on projects included in the approved development plan, amounting to KD 911 thousand in the ministry's budget for the fiscal year of 2022/2023, in violation of the rules of budget implementation.

It called for the necessity of working to prepare all the necessary tools and elements to work on expediting the completion of projects approved by the development plan.

SAB explained that there was no benefit from the allocation included in the ministry's budget for construction projects that include civil and social services facilities, for which an amount of KD 100,000 was allocated.

Also, the ministry did not settle more than KD 210 thousand related to amounts paid as insurance for any damage to property located in wedding halls in previous fiscal years.

The balance collected on individuals' insurance for wedding halls had ballooned for a period exceeding eight years in some cases, reaching KD 179,000. There was no return made to those entitled to those amounts to recover them or transfer them to the registered revenues account.

The report highlighted the weakness of the ministry's internal control systems, which is represented in the unlawful disbursement of salaries totaling KD one million and 282 thousand, and its failure to make the necessary adjustments during the relevant fiscal years.

It stressed that there are exceptions before the grievances committee from 13 cases rejected by the Public Assistance Committee which do not meet the conditions stipulated in the law regarding public aid and its executive regulations, at a total cost of KD 54 thousand.

There are also cases related to inmates of social care homes receiving social assistance in violation of Article 12 of Law No. 80/2015 regarding family custody, which led to the disbursement of assistance amounting to KD 20 thousand that could be estimated.

SAB report on MAIA

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The most prominent among the observations resulting from the State Audit Bureau's audit and review of the final account of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs was the ministry's delay in submitting the final account to the Ministry of Finance, and sending a copy of it to SAB within a period of 18 days, in violation of the provisions of Law No. 31/1978 regarding the rules for preparing budgets and monitoring their implementation.

SAB stressed the need for the ministry to commit to submitting the final account with all its components on the specified date, in compliance with the provisions of the aforementioned articles of the aforementioned decree-law and circular.

The report explained that another important observation was the decrease in the value of the organizational and personal units' pledge of KD 769,602, or 3.5 percent, for the fiscal year of 2021/2022.

The explanatory memorandum attributed the reason for the decrease to what was excluded from the value of the organizational covenant, without indicating the reason for excluding the value of that era.

It also highlighted the continued failure of the ministry to include in its assets' final account the indications of the pricing and evaluation of manuscripts and their accessories (microfilm devices and devices for photocopying manuscripts) related to the management of Islamic manuscripts and libraries, in violation of the circulars and instructions regulating storage processes in government agencies.

SAB highlighted the low rates of spending on projects included in the ministry's plan, amounting to approximately KD 428 thousand, which resulted in not achieving the desired goals of listing these credits and its inclusion in the revenue settlement memorandum on 31/03/2023 amounting to KD 214,893.342, the value of debit notes that appeared in the bank statement and were not mentioned in the records.

It also included an amount of KD 213,347.223, which is the value of credit notes that appeared on the bank statement and were not listed in the records. Details of these two amounts were not mentioned on their respective forms, in violation of Ministry of Finance's circular No. 1/2022 regarding the rules and procedures necessary for closing accounts and preparing the final account.

SAB explained that another important observation was the shortcomings that marred the implementation of the group's 327 major construction and maintenance projects and the lack of spending on some projects. This resulted in not achieving all the desired goals of including these appropriations in the budget in violation of the rules of budget implementation included in the bureau's report for the fiscal year of 2022/2023.

SAB stressed the need for the ministry's commitment to work on implementing the annual plan projects as planned, in compliance with the rules of budget implementation, and to take into account all factors affecting the implementation of projects according to what is planned when preparing budget estimates.

Concluded

'Will file grilling against PM'

MP Al-Mudhaf cites incompetency of gov't

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Parliamentary Coordination Committee has specified the bills that will be discussed in the second round of the 17th legislative term from Nov 14, 2023 to June 25, 2024.

MP Abdullah Fehad revealed that these bills include 16 priorities of the legislature and 14 priorities of the government as follows:

Nov 14, 2023: increasing the minimum amount of pension, daily cost of living allowance, maximum amount of no-interest loans, real estate agencies and fees for occupying public plots;

Nov 28, 2023: amendment of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Disabled Affairs laws, and North Zone Bill;

Dec 12, 2023: real estate financing, rehabilitation of those convicted of offending crimes, cancellation of local agents and establishing companies for advanced oil industries;

Dec 19, 2023: amendment of constituencies and Foreigners Residency Law;

Jan 9, 2024: amendment of Kuwait Airways Corporation and Legal Profession laws, and filling up vacant senior official positions;

Jan 23, 2024: amendment of the National Assembly Law and treaty on Kuwait joining Asian Bank;

Feb 6, 2024: strategic alternative to the salary scale and amendment of the Traffic Law;

Feb 13, 2024: increasing public aid and the national labor allowance for Kuwaitis working in the private sector registered under Chapter Five of the Public Institution for Social Security Law;

March 3, 2024: amendment of the Central Agency for Public Tenders Law and revision of the tenders floated by the Ministry of Health for the supply of medicines;

March 19, 2024: development of health services, and imposing tax on major companies and harmful commodities;

April 2, 2024: compensation for the owners of small and medium enterprises, and amendment of the Procedures Act;

April 16, 2024: establishment of a public authority for managing and investing public real estate properties;

April 30, 2024: developing education;

May 14, 2024: organizing the judiciary;

May 28, 2024: amendment of the Governorates Law;

June 11, 2024: amendment of the Legal Advice and Legislation Department Law, and State lawsuits;

June 25, 2024: amendment of the General Department of Criminal Investigations Law.

Sheikh A.Nawaf

Al-Mudhaf

Meanwhile, the Political Affairs Permanent Committee at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) has unanimously approved the proposal of the Kuwaiti parliamentarian delegation to strengthen commitment to international and bilateral treaties.

The proposal has been included in the agenda of the APA session scheduled for Nov 26 in Antalya, Türkiye.

Member of the Kuwaiti delegation to the committee meetings in Iraq MP Dawoud Maarefi said the proposal is one of the priorities of the delegation, in addition to supporting the Palestinian issue.

He confirmed that the Kuwaiti delegation organized a series of meetings to obtain the support of Asian and Gulf delegations for the proposal, which is aimed at reassuring certain parties about the status of some international and bilateral treaties. He stressed that Kuwait National Assembly rejects any attempt to influence the Kuwaiti sovereignty as per the international treaties. He said Kuwait rejects the inappropriate calls of some Iraqi MPs regarding Abdullah Bay and Durrah offshore oilfield.

On the other hand, MP Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf disclosed that he will file a grilling motion against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The motion shall focus on the following issues:

n Failure to comply with the instructions stated in the speech that HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivered on behalf of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in June 2022 on the need to start a new era

■ General strategy of the government;

■ Vacant senior official positions and ways to fill them up.

Al-Mudhaf revealed that he decided to file the grilling motion due to the way the government reacts to parliamentary queries. He pointed out that he forwarded queries to HH the Prime Minister, but instead of receiving the answers, he got a letter from the Cabinet informing him that the queries are unconstitutional.

He went on to say that the government of HH Prime Minister did not meet the expectations of the citizens in terms of addressing external issues, especially the ruling of the Iraqi Federal Court on the Abdullah Bay case and the illegal demands of Iran about its alleged share in Durah offshore field.

He concluded the government failed to carry out its tasks despite the unlimited support of the political leadership and the legislature.

In addition, HH the Prime Minister said the queries that MPs Marzouq Al-Ghanim, Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf, Jarrah Al-Fawzan, Hassan Jawhar, Osama Al-Zaid and Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi forwarded to him are unconstitutional.

Al-Ghanim asked about the reasons for not filling up vacant senior official positions in every ministry, public institution and their subsidiaries since Aug 1, 2022 until the date of presenting the queries.

Al-Mudhaf inquired about the steps taken to implement the contents of the Amiri Speech in June 2022, Jawar requested for a copy of the government's draft of the strategic alternative to the salary scale, and Al-Fawzan wants to know the categories of beneficiaries of the strategic alternative to the salary scale and their number.

The walkathon kicks off.

Photos by Samer Shaqair

Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh and Jamal Al-Fawzan with one of the winners.

'Rates high in over 50 years men'

CAN holds walkathon to raise awareness on prostate cancer

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Cancer Awareness Nation (CAN) yesterday held a walkathon to raise awareness on prostate cancer.

About 100 competitors participated in the activities and events of the annual Kuwait Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign, which was held under the patronage of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

Chairman of the campaign's Board of Directors Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh revealed that prostate cancer is the top cancer affecting men in the State of Kuwait, and getting cured is almost guaranteed if there is early detection of the disease.

In a speech he delivered during the opening of the walkathon at the Boulevard Mall, Dr. Al-Saleh explained the campaign is being held this year with the cooperation of the Patient Helping Fund Society, the Kuwait Urology Association and the Kuwait Oncology Association, with the aim of educating men over 50 years of age about the importance of early detection of the disease to raise the rates of recovery from the disease.

There are many signs of infection in men within this age group, such as increased urination rates, bone pain, and others. Early detection of the disease is important, and this is available in all clinics.

Dr. Al-Saleh expressed his happiness for the cooperation of the Patient Helping Fund Society in this event, as it is not just sports-related cooperation, but it was preceded a few days ago through the delivery of medical aid and medicines for cancer diseases to the people of Gaza who are being subjected to unjust shelling.

He affirmed that the event is also aimed to support the people of Gaza and raise people's awareness.

Dr. Al-Saleh said the campaign seeks through all its efforts to adopt the principle of awareness in all the initiatives it undertakes, in an effort to achieve the main goal, which is to raise the rate of health awareness in the field of oncology, adding that it aims to reduce cancer rates.

Meanwhile, Director General of Patient Helping Fund Society Jamal Al-Fawzan said the society, since its establishment 44 years ago, has been serving the community, especially in the areas of health and sports awareness.

He explained that the society has developed its strategy that keeps pace with New Kuwait 2035 vision. It is keeping pace with the large and rapid developments witnessed by charitable work around the world, allowing it to take steady and confident steps towards leadership in its development and humanitarian work at the local and international levels.

The society's mission is to serve needy patients by providing the finest service and most appropriate medical relief with the best standards, to advance the individual and the human community, as well as ensure provision of excellent health services locally and globally.

Kuwait's draft resolution backed

APA committee meets in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Nov 11, (KUNA): The meeting of the Standing Committee on Political Affairs of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) kicked off in Iraq on Friday, with the participation of representatives of 15 parliaments, including Kuwait.

The meeting will discuss nine draft resolutions, including one presented by Kuwait regarding enhancing commitment to international agreements and conventions.

Once these resolutions are approved, the committee will enlist them on APA executive council's agenda, as part of its upcoming meeting in Antalya, Turkiye, on November 26.

Speaking on Kuwait's draft resolution, MP Dr Hamad Al-Mutar, who represents Kuwait National Assembly at the event, along with MP Dawoud Maarafi, said that Kuwait's draft resolution involves committing to the articles of the Khor Abdullah agreement with Iraq.

Meanwhile, the third coordinative meeting of the GCC member states held Thursday supported a Kuwaiti resolution on respecting international conventions and treaties ahead of discussing it at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly's (APA) permanent political affairs committee's gathering in Baghdad Friday, said a Kuwaiti lawmaker.

Speaking to KUNA, Dr. MP Hamad Al-Matar, head of Kuwait's delegation to the meeting, said the GCC member states expressed support to the Kuwaiti draft resolution to be presented to the committee's meeting on Friday to approve it and refer it to the APA executive board due on Turkiye on November 26.

The draft resolution calls for respecting international conventions and treaties signed among countries, including the Khor Abdullah agreement inked between Kuwait and Iraq, he elaborated.

He stressed that Kuwait respects all international treaties, urging all parties to do the same.

He indicated that the coordinative meeting touched upon another Kuwaiti draft resolution calling for upgrading the APA charter.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

‘No politics ... govt must address popular and economic demands’

“THE Kuwaiti government, led by His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, is playing politics with a professional degree. The political scene was almost inflamed and heated up until it was extinguished by decisions that confirmed the sincerity of intentions in cooperation with the National Assembly, which is under pressure from voters and some deputies are in a race to submit grilling requests against some ministers and the threat is looming to do so,” columnist **Misfer Al-Naees** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

Misfer Al-Naees

“The Minister of Education took decisive actions by reviewing the decision to cease scholarships for studying in Egypt and Jordan. Simultaneously, the Minister of Justice, in a parallel move, addressed concerns by announcing the provision of financial incentives to enhance the recruitment of qualified legal researchers into prosecutor positions. Not stopping there, the government, under the guidance of Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah, swiftly formulated a draft law aimed at raising minimum pensions for retirees. This initiative, aligned with efforts to improve living standards for both public and private sector workers, was developed in collaboration with the National Assembly, with a commitment to completion before the year’s end.

“These constructive measures prompted a positive response from the nation’s representatives, fostering cooperation and prompting some to reconsider their positions. Such shifts are inherent in parliamentary work, emphasizing collaboration, reconciliation of viewpoints, and adherence to flexible supervisory laws for effective governance, oversight, and the creation of rational legislation in the best interest of the nation and its citizens.

“I believe that anticipation will govern the unfolding scenario, and the government and the Council will be judged primarily on their achievements. Facing a genuine test from both leadership and the Kuwaiti people, who are growing increasingly impatient for impactful decisions, the government must prioritize crucial matters such as expanding retiree benefits, substantially increasing the Qard Al-Hassan, eliminating replacement benefits, and enhancing the overall quality of life for citizens. This moment stands as a testament to the level of cooperation and responsiveness required in this critical juncture.

“Numerous challenging tests lie ahead, and citizens expect the government to not only tackle them but also successfully complete them. These challenges encompass vital economic reforms, with a primary focus on amending the Chamber of Commerce and Industry law, eliminating the local agent system, regularly monitoring prices, and taking decisive action against those seeking to exploit financial gains. Additionally, diversifying income sources and reducing reliance on oil are crucial aspects. Activation of the Central Tenders Law is imperative, ensuring that companies winning government tenders employ citizens as per agreements with the Central Tenders Committee.

“Addressing economic challenges extends to amending the unpopular privatization law and urgently resolving the escalating issue of increasing electricity and water energy, as indicated by last summer’s concerning signs. It is imperative to adopt a swift solution to avert potential disasters in the coming years.

“In summary, the government must earnestly address both popular and economic demands, along with impending challenges, adhering to a practical short-term plan. The government is well aware of issues spanning education, health, housing, demographic adjustments, unemployment, and the inadequacies of the current traffic law. Realizing tangible accomplishments on the ground is the key to garnering complete satisfaction from citizens towards the government, the council, and any other entities involved.”

Also:

“One of the unfortunate consequences of those advocating chaos and corruption is the systematic destruction of the foundational pillars of societal stability wherever they exert influence. This destructive pattern is evident as they ruin one country and then seek refuge in another, perpetuating a cycle. If we were to eliminate from the historical records of nations and societies everything that contributed to family, religion, and homeland stability, their entire heritage would vanish. The progression of civilized society would regress into barbarism, adhering to the law of the jungle,” columnist Dr **Abdul Rahman Al Jeeran** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily

“What’s particularly perplexing is that, in their fervent populist rhetoric, they assert that all virtue lies in upheaval, erasing historical traces, and declaring hostility toward the past in every form. If the progress they champion involve dismantling the foundations laid by civilization, we would need to discard the advancements in industries and the sophisticated machinery in our homes and societies.

“However, those advocating for destruction, chaos, and sabotage lack the courage to openly endorse such political and intellectual folly. The devastation caused by their ideas and methods is palpable and concrete, immune to sophistry or debate. Strangely, they perceive the destruction of family, homeland, and faith as less impactful than the current tangible and felt devastation.

“In reality, the destruction of family, homeland, and religion surpasses the damage inflicted on physical places, buildings, and homes. The family imparts essential values, etiquette, and moral principles, fostering cooperation and solidarity within society. The family provides a foundation for virtues such as mercy, generosity, and pride in lineage uncontaminated by mixtures. No nation can be entirely self-sufficient in terms of food or raw materials for industries, and no government can single-handedly fulfill all national responsibilities, enact laws, and regulate agriculture and manufacturing. Hence, the necessity for collaborative national administration and the independence of each nation in its affairs.

“In an era where nations engage in global affairs, the question arises: Why dismantle nations when we desperately need their cohesion? Human history is not the history of a bank, chamber of commerce, or commercial company that necessitates returning to the distribution of shares, profits, and awarding tenders through quotas at all stages of human development.

“If wealth alone could establish nations and induce people to make sacrifices, there would be no need for Islam, and even the communists would not have to label a global conflict as a national war. The history of homelands is not a matter of commerce or bargaining; it is deeply intertwined with the courage, resilience, and sacrifices of its people during challenging times.

“Nations thrive or face the brink of extinction based on the courage, patience, and willingness to sacrifice exhibited by their citizens, rather than being solely dependent on monetary wealth. Conversely, nations tend to decline or face peril when they succumb to luxury, tyranny, and distractions at the expense of virtue and core values. The inclination towards materialistic pursuits, even in the presence of religious motives, can lead to the disappearance or imminent decline of nations.

“Beyond these considerations, it is alarming when societies, driven by the greed for wealth, turn towards beliefs and religions with the intent of fundamentally and completely eradicating them. Such destructive tendencies manifest in their assault on families, tearing them apart, and on homelands, showing disdain and desecration.

“The history of humanity is, in essence, our collective history, and we have a responsibility to reflect upon it before engaging in its demolition or undermining. However, those who advocate for destruction perceive human history as limited to pre-Islamic times, treating demolition as a fundamental principle while considering forgiveness and tolerance as exceptions. This ease of destruction is facilitated by certain distorted and corrupt natures. It is crucial for the Council of Ministers to be aware of these dynamics and their consequences.”

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“Kuwait is a small and sparsely populated country in a turbulent region surrounded by a dangerous triangle, in which big men compete to acquire and control the region politically and geographically,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Mulaifi** wrote for **Annahar** daily.

“Despite its small size and population, God blessed Kuwait with a distinguished geographical location and oil wealth that attracts the praise of those who are near and far.

“All of these have turned Kuwait into a station of ambition for all parties since its inception. Everyone tried to seize it or at least control its decisions. Perhaps, the cruelest attempt was Saddam’s invasion.

“Kuwait, with the skill of its leaders from Al-Sabah family and the patriotism of its people, thwarted political and military control attempts. It remains stable and steadfast, even though it lives on shifting sands and continues to float in the midst of rough seas and crashing political waves.

“Kuwait’s ability to create balanced Arab-Islamic-international relations has made it a center for relations, a beacon of cultures, and a distinctive political, social and economic location for everyone.

With its distinguished relations since the era of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, it has been able to pass through the enemies and oppressors smoothly and wisely.

“The ambitions still exist and Kuwait is still in the midst of economic crises affecting the entire world and the region, especially since it is in a covetous place that others have been salivating over.

“The danger still exists and the reasons are still ongoing. Kuwait’s loss of its distinguished relations deprives it of one of the factors for survival and continuity.

“There have been many attempts to isolate Kuwait from its Gulf, Arab and international surroundings. I do not see them as spontaneous, although they are sometimes adopted by well-intentioned people as a result of emotional reactions. However, I see them as programmed and systematic, especially by some parties and religious forces.

“Isolating Kuwait from its Gulf, Arab and international surroundings makes it lose an advantage that, after God, is a political and military cover for its survival and continuity.

Transforming Kuwait into a racist country that disobeys international agreements and denies global relations deprives it of the sympathy and support, once the need arises.”

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“Today, we are facing a situation that is exceptional in political and security standards. The region is boiling, and we are not immune from any event that might affect the stability and security of the region. All that separates us from the ongoing war in Gaza is a few kilometers, while our distance from all the parties exchanging threatening statements is closer than we could imagine,” columnist **Asrar Jawhar Hayat** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“Despite our sympathy and the steadfastness of our position with Gaza and its people, and our strong desire for the resistance to continue until the people of Palestine regain their rights, we must be aware that war, if it occurs (God forbid), neither compliments nor excludes anyone. Every inch of the region could be at risk, especially in light of the presence of American bases that may be within the target range of some warring parties.

“I am not here to talk about political and military analyses, as much as I am raising questions, for a citizen who fears that her country will be placed in the middle of fire that it does not want and did not choose. These questions could be shared between me and many other citizens.

“Do we have a contingency plan if the situation in the region worsens, God forbid? Do we have an analysis of what might happen in the coming days? Do we have political and military analysts who conducted studies and forecasts of what might happen, and laid down possible scenarios and ways to deal with them?

“Have we developed a strategic plan based on each expected scenario, clarifying Kuwait’s position regarding these scenarios? Have we held consultations with our neighbors or other brotherly and friendly countries to know their possible positions, their expectations of events, and their positions on Kuwait?! Do we have sufficient communication with the most influential parties in the region to know their movements and plans?

“Finally, we thank the government for all its efforts to support our Palestinian people and its firm position on the issue. I hope the government will hold a press conference to clarify its plan to face developments if the situation worsens.”

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Around 81,072 people sought help at addiction center: MoH

‘Drugs overdose killed 268 in 8 years’

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Ministry of Health has raised concerns with alarming statistics, revealing that over the past eight years, around 81,072 individuals sought assistance at the addiction center in Kuwait. In response to a query from Representative Dr. Muhammad Al-Mahan, Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi presented startling figures, disclosing that from 2015 until last September, 81,072 cases sought treatment at the addiction treatment center, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In the first nine months of the current year, 894 new cases were registered, with 2,081 cases receiving in-ward treatment, and 9,537 cases being reviewed at outpatient clinics. The grim reality of addiction is further underscored by the unfortunate toll of 268 deaths over the past eight years.

Dr. Al-Awadi emphasized the Ministry’s comprehensive approach in combating drug proliferation among the youth. Coordination between various state agencies is a cornerstone of this effort. The Supreme National Committee for Combating Drugs has been reconstituted, and Ministerial Resolution No. 1315 from the Council of Ministers has allocated sites for addict treatment and rehabilitation.

Committee

For the year 2022, the committee is led by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. Its membership includes the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development, the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, and the Minister of Information and Culture. A subcommittee, the Committee for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Addicts, has been formed, headed by the Minister of Health and comprising the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, the Chairman of Bashaer Al-Khair Association, the General Director of the Addiction Hospital, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance, and the Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs and Correctional Institutions at the Ministry of Interior.

The Ministry of Health, underlining its commitment, actively addresses the issue of drug addiction among students and adolescents. This involves raising awareness through educational lectures, conducting information campaigns for school and university students, and collaborating with traditional and modern media to disseminate information about the dangers of drug abuse.

In terms of import inspection, Dr. Al-Awadhi explained that the Ministry of Health meticulously monitors and examines all imports. This is carried out through the Department of Registration and Control of Medicinal and Plant Medicines, in coordination between the Ministries of Health and Interior and the General Administration of Customs. Cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the General Administration of Customs has been intensified to provide timely updates on developments related to psychotropic substances.

The Ministry of Health is intensifying measures for the dispensing of medicines on local sales platforms, ensuring minimal impact on patients. This effort involves collaborative initiatives with the private sector, military hospitals and clinics, the National Guard, and the oil company. Additionally, the workforce in healthcare and pharmacists are being trained on the responsible handling of controlled medicines.

The exchange of medical experiences with leading global medical centers and hospitals is actively pursued. Joint visits, consultations, conferences, and research initiatives are organized to enhance knowledge. Moreover, there is a focus on training and engaging recovering individuals, as well as involving religious and cultural societies in the rehabilitation of young addiction patients in Kuwait. This collaboration extends to partnerships with the Ministry of Endowments, charitable societies, and public benefit societies.

To tighten drug control, the Ministry of Health is enhancing its monitoring efforts at Kuwait airport and ports. Dr. Al-Awadhi emphasizes the importance of training doctors in primary and secondary healthcare for early diagnosis and referral to the Kuwait Center for Addiction Treatment.

Bedoun strangled in desert camping

Death upheld for trooper in kill

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Court of Cassation has upheld the verdicts of the Criminal Court and the Court of Appeals and sentenced to death a soldier in the Ministry of Interior who is found guilty of strangling to death a young bedoun man in al-Julai’a desert, and ordered that the civil case be referred to the competent court, reports al-Rai daily.

The defense of the victim’s heirs, lawyer Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, said after the verdict was issued this should serve as a deterrent to others and called for the implementation of the verdict as soon as possible.

The incident, was the first murder case recorded in 2022, by a soldier in the Ministry of Interior. During initial interrogation the suspect had admitted to committing the crime and said he lost his temper during an argument over disagreements between him and the victim, who was found to have been released from the central prison weeks before the incident, after serving 15 years behind bars and was released by pardon after serving 10 years.

On the day of the incident, the operations room of the Ministry of the Interior received a report in the late hours of the night about the presence of a body in the al-Julaiah camp, and when the security forces moved in, they found the corpse.

There were clear signs of strangulation and the suspect turned out to be an employee of the Ministry of Interior with the rank of deputy officer. He was arrested and during interrogation he confessed to committing the crime due to personal differences.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait International Airport officials prevented an expatriate from traveling to his home country, after immigration officials discovered he was wanted by law in a case of attempted murder, reports Al-Anba daily.

The expatriate was referred to the Farwaniya police station because the case was registered at that police station.

A security source said that after the expatriate completed the baggage counter procedures, he proceeded to the immigration check and the airport security told him there was a travel ban against him and he was subsequently detained.

Other Voices

Make hay while sun shines!

By Ahmad alsarraf

A wise old man says: “If you reach over seventy without waking up to pain each morning, it’s a sign you’ve reached your time!”

alsarraf

Undoubtedly, good health is a crown only truly appreciated by those who are unwell, and the value of wealth is immeasurable. However, few truly value this wealth, as the majority adopt the mindset of “seize the moment” without concern for what the future holds.

This perspective holds true for many, and it may be worth considering, provided there is someone to ensure that indulgence in distractions and the pursuit of life’s “pleasures” do not culminate in a bedridden state at life’s end.

Picture oneself lying on a bed, reliant on plastic tubes to regulate the intake of food and manage bodily fluids and waste, unable to move, anticipating a slow and inevitable death. In such a vulnerable state, one may regret not reflecting on the happy memories, the delightful hours of passion, and the pleasures of life to bring solace amid the pain, suffering, and the looming fear of a daunting demise.

The years passed quickly, and I was approaching the last “fifth” of them, after spending in this life nearly 30 thousand days and nights, during which I saw a lot, and every day, for at least thirty years, I discovered the extent of my helplessness and ignorance, my inability and my short-sightedness.

I now have little time to learn more, write more, enjoy my life more, travel more, make those around me happy more, understand more, and succeed in keeping my memory alive and vibrant, for life is memory, and if it fades or dies, it dies. The body after that, even if its owner remains alive for many years!

I lost a lot of family, friends, and relatives, some of whom were like scorpions, and yet each of them had a role in my life, whether negative or positive, and I will definitely join them one day, and perhaps someone will come after that who will write about me and remember me, and in both cases I will not be there to care or to comment on what was said about me.

So we have to enjoy our time, or what is left of it, learning something new, whether a skill, cooking, reading a book, every week, or even learning a new hobby.

Let us smile at the little things in life, which make you hear a beautiful ringing in the heart, and let us continue to enjoy the days we have left in this world, and do what we have always dreamed of doing, for there is no time to postpone the beautiful things.

For those whom we do not continue to ask about or visit, whether family or loved ones, we will be surprised, the next morning, that they have left us or departed from us ... perhaps forever! We will regret that we did not kiss them or bid them farewell, or even end our differences with some of them, or apologize, even to those of them who had wronged us ... some day!

Note:

Thank you to my colleague Adnan Al-Othman. I want to reassure him that my Spanish is improving, and it will not be long before I will be able to use it to order lunch in a beautiful Andolothian village restaurant.

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Bid to escape cops in chase

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: A security source reported to Al-Rai that a person who was being chased by the Criminal Investigation Department in the Al-Mutla’a area threw himself from a car bridge and was taken to the hospital in critical condition, reports Al-Rai daily.

“When a person was chased by criminal investigations on foot in the Al-Mutla’a area, he rushed to the bridge and jumped after being chased, and an ambulance was immediately called and he was taken to hospital.

His condition is very critical and has been placed in intensive care due to a fracture of the skull.

Meanwhile, security sources said the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received a report about a limited fire in the intensive care unit at the Al-Jahra Hospital.

Parliament rejects CSC decision related to 'buying earned leave'

MoH to update leave balance of expat employees

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Civil Service Commission's decision to amend the conditions and controls for "buying earned leave" from state employees was met with parliamentary rejection and a threat that this matter would not pass, and that the decision would mean stopping the work of disbursing vacation allowance unofficially, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Civil Service Commission had amended the terms and controls for "sale of leaves" for state employees, by issuing Resolution 32/2023, amending its previous Resolution 22/2022 regarding the rules, conditions and controls for entitlement and disbursement of cash allowance from the balance of periodic leaves during service.

The decision recently shared on the social networking site "X" by the CSC, details revised regulations endorsed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, and Acting Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Issa Al-Kandari. These regulations pertain to the disbursement of cash allowances for the remaining earned leaves during service. The key amendment involves Article Two of the decision, stipulating that the cash allowance during service will now be allocated exclusively to Kuwaiti nationals and only once every 10 years.

Al-Enezi

As outlined in the decision, certain prerequisites must be met for eligibility. The employee must have received at least three consecutive "very good" competency reports in the three years preceding the issuance of the cash allowance decision. Furthermore, the employee must have served a minimum of three years in the government agency, either after initial appointment or transfer, before the aforementioned decision's issuance. The decision also emphasizes that the employee should not have faced any disciplinary penalties, unless these penalties have been legally expunged within the prescribed period before the dismissal decision.

However, this amendment has been met with disapproval from several parliamentary representatives. Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Kandari argues that the change in rules, requiring the cash allowance to be disbursed once every 10 years, essentially halts this benefit, albeit unofficially, by relying on the passage of time. He urges the CSC to retract this amendment, emphasizing the importance of preserving employees' rights.

MP Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi criticizes the "impossible conditions" imposed by the Civil Service Commission, viewing the recent decision as a deliberate infringement on the rights of Kuwaiti employees. Fahad calls for an immediate halt to the decision, citing the financial challenges faced by citizens and asserting that the Civil Service Commission's move is unjust.

Similarly, Representative Khaled Al-Monis rejects the newly established controls, characterizing the amendments as rendering it impractical for employees to utilize their leave balances. Al-Mounis supports the limitation of this benefit to citizens but rejects the additional conditions introduced by the amendment to Article 41 of the Civil Service Decree.

MP Dr. Mubarak Al-Tasha advocates for the withdrawal of the recent Civil Service Commission decision, urging a reformulation that eases the burden on citizens. Al-Tasha deems the ten-year requirement for selling vacations as invalid, asserting its conflict with the acquired rights of all employees, especially considering the government's commitment to enhancing citizens' quality of life.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health will start updating the leave balance of non-Kuwaiti employees next week to return the days previously allotted for encashment, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the health sector.

Sources explained the ministry took this decision after the Civil Service Commission (CSC) confirmed that only Kuwaiti employees are allowed to convert their unused leave days into cash.

Crown Prince, PM send greetings

Amir congratulates Angola president on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable on Saturday to the President of the Republic of Angola Joao Manuel Lourenco to congratulate him on his country's National Day, wishing him good health and for his people progress and development.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Joao Manuel Lourenco to congratulate him on his country's National Day, wishing him good health and for his people progress and development.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Joao Manuel Lourenco to congratulate him on his country's National Day.

KUNA photo

Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad, with Minister of Electricity Jassim Al-Ostad inspect the utilities of the Ministry of Public Works.

DM, MEW inspect utilities in bid to 'better develop' drainage systems

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11, (KUNA): Upon directives of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Acting Minister of Public Works Jassim Al-Ostad inspected Thursday utilities of the Ministry of Public Works.

In a joint statement, the two ministries said the tour included several sites, with the aim of finding best ways to develop sewage and rain drainage systems.

Jahra Municipality checks safety systems of buildings

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Jahra Municipality put the safety systems in buildings under the microscope, registering 507 alerts about them in the governorate's areas within three weeks, as part of inspection campaigns to verify licenses and advertisement hoardings.

Director of the Safety Department in Jahra Governorate, Hamoud Al-Mutairi, told Kuwait News Agency that the municipality teams are continuing their daily inspection tours in all areas of Kuwait with the aim of implementing the municipal laws and regulations.

Al-Mutairi added that the field team in Jahra Governorate, during its tour of the governorate's areas, focused on educating employees in commercial shops about the importance of adhering to municipal laws by ensuring that their license is valid and that the commercial advertisements are compatible.

He stressed the importance of adhering to the laws and regulations in force in the municipality to avoid violations and a fine that could lead to administrative closure.

He stated that the team continues to punish commercial stores that do not adhere to the controls and requirements of the regulations of stores and advertisements registration.

KIB joins Int'l Fraud Awareness Week with 'robust' online drive

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its participation in the annual International Fraud Awareness Week, running an informational anti-fraud awareness campaign on its social media platforms, as well as TV channels and radio stations. Committed to safeguarding the financial well-being of its customers, the campaign comes as part of KIB's ongoing support to the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, which was launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with local banks.

Al-Suwaidan

International Fraud Week

Commenting on the Bank's initiative, Basil Al-Suwaidan, General Manager of the Information Security, Privacy and Anti-Fraud Department, said: "In a digital age where financial security is paramount, KIB is taking proactive steps to raise awareness about the importance of fraud prevention and empower its customers and the community to protect their financial assets. The campaign aims at advancing financial literacy about the various fraud risks present in today's interconnected world."

Al-Suwaidan added: "KIB recognizes that fraud can take many forms, from phishing scams to identity theft and online payment fraud. By participating in this campaign, the Bank seeks to arm its customers with the knowledge and tools to safeguard their financial assets. KIB will engage its social media community through sharing relevant information and resources, encouraging its customers and the general public to actively participate in the campaign, creating a dynamic and collaborative environment for learning and awareness."

Putting a spotlight on the responsibility of customers in safeguarding their assets and data, he asserted the significance of practicing secure online banking habits to ensure the safety of personal and financial information. Additionally, he recommended that individuals follow the Bank's social media accounts and routinely review website updates to stay informed about the precautionary guidelines shared through these platforms.

KIB constantly strives to educate, inform, and empower its customers in order to prevent any fraud instances. It advises against replying to any suspicious emails or text messages that request sharing any bank details or personal information, including clicking on any embedded links within them. In case of receiving similar emails, KIB suggests that customers should send a screenshot of the e-mails to phishing@kib.com.kw.

'Reports not updated'

Complaints 'filed' against many who claimed disability and received plots

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: Informed sources affirmed that the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) filed judicial complaints against dozens of people who claimed disability and received plots in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak and did not build because they were unable to update their reports, in preparation for withdrawing these plots.

On the other hand, PAHW's Citizen Service Department completed 28,746 transactions in October, including 310 new housing applications, and conducted 706 allocation transactions.

According to the latest statistics of PAHW, the Citizen Service Department conducted 296 documentation transactions in the same month, and opened 215 new files related to rented housing.

It was stated that the reception department conducted 327 rental allowance transactions, and issued 218 "To Whom It May Concern" certificates. The communication department received 2,541 direct phone calls to customer service.

The total number of transactions submitted through the website was 34, and the total number of services performed through the "Sahel" application was 23,554.

In addition, the Residential Affairs Department announced that it will distribute the second batch of government plots in the N4 suburb of South Saad Al-Abdullah City project, which includes 240 plots with an area of 400 square meters to those allocated to them until July 1, 2003.

Kuwait envoy to Spain presents his credentials to Andorran Co-Prince

KUNA photo

Kuwait's Ambassador to Spain Khalifa Al-Kharafi presents his credentials to Co-Prince of Andorra Bishop Sicilia.

'Non-resident ambassador'

MADRID, Nov 11, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Spain Khalifa Al-Kharafi presented his credentials to Co-Prince of Andorra Bishop Joan Enric Vives i Sicilia as a non-resident envoy on Friday.

Al-Kharafi, according to an embassy statement, conveyed to Bishop Sicilia greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as those of Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Both the ambassador and the Bishop went on to review bilateral relations and international developments, including the Palestinian issue.

Investment, economic and touristic cooperation was a key topic discussed as well, especially after the Kuwait Airways recently-launched direct route to Barcelona; neighboring the small principality.

Yesterday, Ambassador Al-Kharafi presented his credentials to Foreign Minister Emma Torre Vos.

Above: Officials during the signing of MoU.

AIU partners with Equate Petrochemical Company

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: Equate Petrochemical Company, a global leader in the petrochemical industry, and American International University (AIU), renowned for its academic excellence, are delighted to announce the signing of a Cooperation Agreement (MoU). This collaborative effort reflects their commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for Equate employees and contributing to their future professional success.

Under this partnership, Equate Petrochemical Company will sponsor a scholarship program aimed at sending their dedicated employees to AIU for advanced education. The initiative seeks to further strengthen the academic foundation of Equate's workforce and open doors to new professional horizons.

Equate Petrochemical Company believes in nurturing the talents of their employees and empowering them with the best education possible. AIU's reputation for academic excellence made them an obvious choice as a partner in this endeavor. Equate trusts AIU's process and the American model of education to provide the highest quality to their employees, enhancing their skills and knowledge.

AIU is equally excited about this partnership. The collaboration aligns with AIU's mission to provide world-class education and support Equate's employees in their educational journey.

The Cooperation Agreement marks the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between Equate Petrochemical Company and American International University, demonstrating their shared dedication to fostering education and professional growth. Both parties are confident that this partnership will contribute to the betterment of Equate employees and further solidify their standing in the industry.

First medical emergencies center opens in Mutlaa City

'Area to include 4 primary health care centers'

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi announced that 80 new ambulances will enter service at the beginning of the year 2024, revealing that these ambulances will be brought from the United States of America to support the health system in Kuwait particularly the Medical Emergency Department.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of the inauguration of the Mutlaa City Ambulance Center on Thursday, Dr. Al-Awadhi expressed appreciation towards the opening of the first center for medical emergencies in the area to serve the people of the area, which includes 28,000 housing units with currently about five thousand families living there.

He indicated that four health care centers will also be opened after receiving them to complete the health system.

Dr. Al-Awadhi stressed that the current ambulance center will operate with a capacity of six ambulances, two cars and six emergency medical technicians, and will operate around the clock and will be supported by the Jahra Health Zone and the new Jahra Hospital.

He affirmed the keenness of the Ministry of Health to support this system with medical and nursing teams in the near future.

Dr. Al-Awadhi indicated that he will make tours of the new clinics being implemented and push for urgently completing and operating them so that they will be the first line of defense, especially after life has begun to flourish in the area, in addition to supporting the air ambulances if needed.

He stressed that the ministry will provide all support and assistance to the Medical Emergency Department, and will strengthen it with male and female technicians.

Dr. Al-Awadhi said the ambulance center serves the Salmi border and the residents of the area, adding that there is a development plan, part of which concerns the Medical Emergency Department, as well as the development of air and sea ambulances.

Completed

He affirmed that the health system is completed with the combined efforts of everyone, adding that the Jahra Health Zone is the first line of defense for the northern part of the country due to which the Ministry was keen to support the Jahra Hospital and the New Jahra Hospital with local medical personnel and high-level international expertise, in addition to completing the system with primary health care.

Meanwhile, Director of the Medical Emergency Department Dr. Ahmad Al-Shatti said in a press statement that about nine ambulance centers were opened within one year, compared to only three centers last year.

He revealed that this center completes a chain of 86 ambulance centers in Kuwait, and that these openings are in line with the development and expansion plan to establish new cities.

Dr. Al-Shatti affirmed that the Mutlaa Residential Area will include four primary health care centers as well as four ambulance centers.

He expressed appreciation for the efforts of the workers in the ambulance centers and their pivotal role in the interest of the citizens.

Dr. Al-Shatti highlighted the keenness of the Ministry of Health to return the favor to the people of Kuwait and send a message to the people of the Mutlaa area that "they are on our minds like any other area".

He said the center will work around the clock in providing its services to the Abdali Road to reduce the burden with a quick response, adding that it includes places for sterilization and storage, and rooms to receive reports.

In addition, Head of the Mutlaa Ambulance Center Abdul Rahman Al-Yousef explained the center's area is one thousand square meters and consists of two floors - ,ground and first.

There will be six technicians in each shift, along with a driver. The head of the center will always be available to serve the people of the Mutlaa area.

There is also a special section for technicians for cases that require a female component.

He indicated that sterilization and cleaning procedures were introduced after the COVID-19 pandemic, due to which sterilization places were prepared to be on standby, in addition to personal protection and preventive measures.

7 Kuwait ambulances reach Gaza

GAZA, Nov 11, (KUNA): Seven more Kuwaiti ambulances have reached the Gaza Strip from Egypt's Rafah Crossing Point as part of Kuwait's relief and humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza, said Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) on Friday.

PRCS' Media Chief said in a press statement that the charity has taken delivery of seven more ambulances from Kuwait as a sign of solidarity with the Palestinian people amid the continued aggression on Gaza.

Thus, the Palestinian charity has received a total of 12 ambulances, he said, speaking highly of the efforts of Kuwaiti people and charities in aiding the health sector.

He added that the State of Kuwait has contributed to answering the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people since the beginning of the Israeli occupation's aggression on the Palestinian enclave.

Israeli occupation forces have destroyed 51 ambulances, killed 195 Palestinian medics, and targeted 130 clinics and health centers.

Meanwhile, the 17th Kuwaiti plane loaded with 40 tons of humanitarian aid allocated for the Gazans landed at Egypt's Al-Arish Airport Thursday.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Mahmoud Al-Misbah, head of relief sector at the Kuwait Society for Relief, said the aid includes three ambulances, and food and medical supplies.

The aid comes upon the political leadership's directives, in cooperation with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Social Affairs as well as some charities, he added.

In the meantime, Deputy Director General of the Kuwait Society for Relief, Omar Al-Thuwaini, said that the Kuwaiti aid is part of a campaign in support of Palestine, in which all Kuwaiti government agencies and charitable societies cooperate to provide humanitarian support to the people of the Gaza Strip.

«Mujezat Al-Shifa»: Bee bread enhances fertility in men

The nutrition consultant at Mujezat Al-Shifa Company said: Bee bread consists of pollen that the bees collect and mix with their digestive enzymes, then transport it to the hive in the form of pellets preserved with a little honey and beeswax. This mixture is subjected to various chemical processes, noting that the high activity of bee bread leads to the growth of beneficial microorganisms, making it a probiotic.

She confirmed that alternative medicine therapists used to prescribe eating bee bread to enhance male fertility. A study was conducted to determine the role that bee bread plays for this purpose, conducted by Professor Fatima Zakaria in Malaysia in 2018. The results showed that bee bread had a positive effect on the number of sperm and the normal shape of sperm, as it increases the number of normal sperm and reduces the percentage of abnormal sperm.

Amir's Representative receives Iraqi president, UAE vice-president

RIYADH, Nov 11, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met with Iraqi President Abdul Jamal Latif Rashid on the sidelines of the joint Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh on Saturday.

During the reception, His Highness conveyed His Highness the Amir's greetings to the Iraqi president.

They discussed firm fraternal relations between both countries and ways of promoting them for the common interest of both nations and their people, along with the latest regional and international developments.

His Highness wished the Iraqi president good health and Iraq's leadership and people further development and prosperity, with the Iraqi leader having invited His Highness to visit Iraq.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Chief Jamal Mohammad Al-Thiab, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs in His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Mazen Issa Al-Issa, Kuwaiti Ambassador in Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Iraqi Prime Minister's Advisor Dr. Hazim Watan and the Iraqi Presidency's Media Chief Abdulamir Hamoud were also present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad met with UAE's Vice-President, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Presidential Court Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the sidelines of the joint Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh on Saturday.

During the meeting, His Highness conveyed the His Highness the Amir's greetings to UAE President Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

UAE's Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President's Diplomatic Advisor Dr. Anwar bin Mohammad Gargash, Minister of State Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan Al Nahyan and UAE's Ambassador in Saudi Arabia Sheikh Nahyan bin Saif Al Nahyan were also present at the reception.

Kuwait advocates

Continued from Page 1

Addressing an extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh, he said today's gathering came amid exceptional and painful circumstances, reiterating rejection of the aggression on the Palestinian people.

The Saudi Crown Prince also restated the kingdom's emphatic opposition to the Israeli occupation's continued airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, and to the targeting of civilians.

Saudi Arabia hosted Muslim and Arab leaders in Riyadh on Saturday with the aim of devising their own cohesive strategy on Gaza. Initially intended to be two separate gatherings, the country decided to merge them into one to expedite the process in response to the escalating violence, according to the Saudi Foreign Ministry.

This summit is held as we witness extraordinary and painful circumstances, said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman on Saturday.

Deputizing for Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman chaired and inaugurated the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit in Riyadh.

In this regard, "we affirm our condemnation and rejection of the ruthless war to which our brothers in Palestine are subjected, in which thousands of unarmed civilians, children, women and the elderly were killed, and in which hospitals, places of worship and infrastructure were destroyed," he addressed the summit.

The Kingdom has exerted unremitting efforts since the beginning of the events to protect civilians in Gaza Strip, and continuously consulted and coordinated with its brothers and effective countries to stop the war, he added," reiterating demands for an immediate halt to military operations, for the provision of humanitarian corridors to aid civilians, and for enabling international humanitarian organizations to perform their role.

"We also stress the call for the release of hostages and detainees, and to spare the lives of innocent people."

On his part, King Abdullah II of Jordan emphasized that the purpose of the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit was to address the plight of Gaza and its people, who have endured killing, destruction, and an appalling war that must be halted immediately. He warned that, if left unresolved, the region could descend into a major conflict with innocent people from both sides paying the price, and such consequences affecting the entire world.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi vehemently underscored that Israeli occupation forces have not only violated human values, but have also launched a brutal assault on Gaza.

He further highlighted that a significant majority of the victims of this occupation are innocent children, women, as well as medical and relief personnel.

During his speech at the Riyadh-hosted extraordinary summit, President Raisi stressed the importance of a ceasefire and the opening of the Rafah crossing without restrictions or conditions, calling for a historic decision towards the current situation in the Palestinian territories.

Similar speeches were made by a potpourri of Arab and Muslim leaders, including Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Al-Thani, Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi, Turkish President Recep Erdogan, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abu al-Gheit and Secretary General of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hussein Taha.

The extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit kick-started in Riyadh earlier today in response to the exceptional circumstances in the Gaza Strip.

It was decided to hold a joint Arab-Islamic summit, instead of two gatherings, following collaboration with the Arab League and the OIC.

Elsewhere, Israel's prime minister pushed back Saturday against calls from Western allies to do more to protect Palestinian civilians, as troops encircled Gaza's largest hospital where doctors said five patients died, including a premature baby, after the last generator ran out of fuel.

Israel has portrayed Shifa Hospital as Hamas' main command post, saying militants were using civilians as human shields there and had set up elaborate bunkers underneath it - claims Hamas and Shifa staff deny. In recent days, fighting near Shifa and other hospitals in the combat zone of northern Gaza has intensified and supplies have run out.

"There is no electricity. Medical devices stopped. Patients, especially those in intensive care, started to die," said Mohammed Abu Selmia, the director of Shifa, speaking by phone over the sound of gunfire and explosions.

Abu Selmia said Israeli troops were "shooting at anyone outside or inside the hospital," and prevented movement between the buildings in the compound.

The claim that Israeli troops were the sole source of fire could not be verified independently.

Asked about reports of troops firing into the Shifa courtyard, the Israeli military would only say that troops are engaged with fighting Hamas in the vicinity and take all feasible measures to prevent harm to civilians. It said soldiers have encountered hundreds of Hamas fighters in underground facilities, schools, mosques and clinics during fighting in Gaza.

At Shifa, five patients died after the generator shut down, including a premature baby, said Medhat Abbas, a spokesman for the Health Ministry.

CONDOLENCES

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It is with profound sadness
that we announce the passing of
Mr. Ali Khaleel Eissa Al Shamali
The loss of Mr. Ali has
deeply affected us, and
we extend our heartfelt
condolences and sympathy
to the entire
Al Shamali family
and the dedicated employees of
ASWC during this challenging period.

Please be advised that the company will observe a period of mourning for the next two days, specifically on Saturday and Sunday. Normal operations will resume on Monday, the 13th of November 2023.

May his soul Rest in Peace

World News Roundup

Europe

Putin visits army HQ

Spain's acting prime minister signs deals

MADRID, Nov 11, (AP): Spain's Socialist party on Friday wrapped up deals with a bunch of small parties to ensure acting Prime Minister **Pedro Sánchez** has enough parliamentary support to be reelected, possibly next week.

The accords follow weeks of intense negotiations and highlighted the Socialists' ability to reach agreements with parties across the country despite having finished second place in July 23 elections with only 121 parliamentary seats in the 350-seat Parliament.

Sánchez and the Socialists on Friday signed agreements with the Basque Nationalist Party and a Canary Island coalition that mean that Sánchez should be able to count on the support of 179 legislators, three more than the 176 majority required in Parliament to be chosen as the next prime minister.

Sánchez

Sánchez has been in office since 2018.

The president of the parliament is expected to set a date for an investiture debate and vote within the next few days.

Probably the biggest and potentially most damaging deal was struck with a fringe Catalan separatist party led by fugitive former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont that is promising the support of its seven parliament members in exchange for an amnesty for potentially thousands of people involved in the region's failed secession bider concessions .

Benefit

Details of an amnesty bill have yet to be released but it stands to benefit Puigdemont and scores of others, from minor government officials to ordinary citizens, who ran into legal trouble for their roles in Catalonia's illegal secession attempt that brought Spain to the brink of rupture six years ago.

Spain's courts are still trying to have Puigdemont extradited from Belgium. Given that he is considered an enemy of the state for many Spaniards, any deal that benefits him is politically toxic.

The amnesty has raised the ire of Spain's two main opposition parties, the right-of-center Popular Party and the extreme right Vox group. It has also roused discontent in the judiciary and police unions.

Tens of thousands of people have rallied in Madrid and Barcelona against the amnesty in recent weeks.

❑ ❑ ❑

Putin visits military headquarters: Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Southern Military District headquarters in Rostov-on-Don as he assessed the state of his country's forces in Ukraine as the war drags on toward winter. It was his second public visit to the headquarters in less than a month.

Video shared by a Russian state news agency showed Putin being greeted late Thursday by Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff shortly after arriving at the southern military headquarters which is less than 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Ukraine's southeastern border.

Almost 21 months of war have significantly eroded both Russia's and Ukraine's military resources. As winter comes, the fighting is likely to further settle into attritional warfare and analysts expect little change to the more than 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line.

Shortly after Putin's visit to the military headquarters, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Russia was pressing ahead with its goals in Ukraine.

❑ ❑ ❑

Poland's election winners sign pact: The leaders of the Polish opposition parties that together won the most votes in last month's election signed a coalition agreement on Friday that vows to restore the nation's legal order and strengthen its international position and security in light of Russian aggression against neighboring Ukraine.

The parties collectively won the Oct. 15 vote, but still will not have an immediate chance to try to form a government.

The current governing Law and Justice party received more votes than any other single party but fell far short of a majority. Still, it will get the first chance to form the next government - something widely viewed as doomed to fail.

The opposition groups called themselves the "democratic opposition" as they ran on separate party lists but vowed to cooperate to restore democracy after eight years of rule by Law and Justice, which has been accused by the EU of eroding the rule of law.

❑ ❑ ❑

Le Pen raises a storm over her plan: French far-right leader Marine Le Pen has set off a cacophony of criticism over her plans to attend a weekend march to protest rising antisemitism in France, with critics saying that her once-pariah party has failed to shake off its antisemitic heritage despite growing political legitimacy.

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, numerous political parties and citizens are to attend the Sunday march. Le Pen has said that she and her National Rally party also will be there, in what some see as an attempt to leverage the Israel-Hamas war to make herself more palatable to mainstream voters.

Party founder Jean-Marie Le Pen, her father, was convicted repeatedly of antisemitic hate speech and played down the scope of the Holocaust. Daughter Marine - runner-up in the last two presidential elections and likely a top contender in 2027 - has worked to scrub the party's image, kicking her father out and changing its name from National Front to National Rally.

But the party's current president, Jordan Bardella, said in an interview on BFM TV this week that he doesn't think Jean-Marie Le Pen is antisemitic, a remark that revived the link between past and present.

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Dignitaries attend funeral of Ahtisaari: Dignitaries bid farewell to the late Martti Ahtisaari at a ceremony Friday in Finland's capital for the former president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate who helped facilitate peace deals in the countries of many of the mourners.

Ahtisaari died Oct. 16 at the age of 86.

More than 800 dignitaries and guests, including Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani, Namibian President Hage Geingob, former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, and the former leaders of Indonesia and its Free Aceh rebel movement, attended the ceremony at the Helsinki Cathedral. Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson also were among the guests.

"He was a great Finn, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. He put his own stamp on both Finnish history and international history," current Finnish President Sauli Niinistö said in his eulogy.

The Louisiana state Capitol stands prominently on April 4 in Baton Rouge, La. The Louisiana Legislature has until Jan 15, 2024 to enact a new congressional map after a lower court ruled that the current political boundaries dilute the power of the state's Black voters, based on an order issued by a federal New Orleans appeals court on Nov 10. However, whether current Democratic Gov John Bel Edwards will call a special session to redraw the political boundaries and if Republican Gov-elect Jeff Landry, who will be inaugurated Jan 8, will have enough time to call a special redistricting session and meet the court's deadline has yet to be determined. (AP)

Britain's Queen Camilla looks on, during a visit to the Field of Remembrance, in its 95th year, at Westminster Abbey, ahead of Armistice Day, in London, on Nov 9. (AP)

Adams

McSally

America

Adams phones, iPad seized: FBI agents quietly seized phones and an iPad from New York City Mayor **Eric Adams** early this week as part of an investigation into political fundraising during his 2021 campaign, his attorney disclosed Friday.

The seizures happened as Adams was leaving a public event in Manhattan, according to a statement from the mayor's attorney, Boyd Johnson.

"On Monday night, the FBI approached the mayor after an event. The Mayor immediately complied with the FBI's request and provided them with electronic devices," Johnson said. "The mayor has not been accused of any wrongdoing and continues to cooperate with the investigation."

The seizure of the devices, first reported by The New York Times, came four days after federal agents searched the Brooklyn home of Adams' top campaign fundraiser, Brianna Suggs. That search prompted the mayor to cancel a planned trip to meet with White House officials in Washington and instead return to New York. (AP)

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4 wounded in shootout: A confrontation over an allegedly stolen car in Birmingham, Alabama, ended Friday in a shootout on a busy interstate that wounded four people, including two who had life-threatening injuries, police said.

The shooting took place shortly after 4:30 p.m. on southbound Interstate 59 near the 20th Street Ensley exit, police said.

"We believe that a group of individuals saw their stolen vehicle, or alleged stolen vehicle, and they began following that vehicle," Officer Truman Fitzgerald said at a news conference.

"This party sees their possible stolen vehicle and they took it upon themselves to confront this group. A shootout ensued between both groups," Fitzgerald said.

Two men who were inside the allegedly stolen car were taken to the hospital for treatment of life-threatening injuries while two other men had non-life-threatening injuries and went to the hospital on their own, Fitzgerald said. Nobody else was injured, he said.

All four men are considered suspects in the shootout, he said. (AP)

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Man held in McSally 'assault': A man was arrested early Friday in the alleged assault of former US Sen **Martha McSally** of Arizona, who says she was molested as she jogged along the Missouri River in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Council Bluffs police said in a statement that the 25-year-old suspect from Papillion, Nebraska, was spotted by officers in Omaha, Nebraska, at 3:23 a.m. and arrested. Police said the man will be extradited back to Council Bluffs.

"You picked the wrong target," McSally wrote of the attacker in a Facebook post. She earlier described the Wednesday morning attack in a video she posted online.

"A man came up behind me and he engulfed me in a bear hug and he molested and fondled me until I fought him off," she said. "I then chased him down. I said a lot of swear words in this moment. I was in a fight, flight or freeze. And I chose to fight.". (AP)

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Fugitive suspect surrenders: A suspect in the Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol surrendered to police in New Jersey on Friday, two days after fleeing when FBI agents came to his house to arrest him.

Gregory Yetman, 47, surrendered in Monroe Township on Friday morning without incident, said Amy Thoreson, a spokesperson for the Newark FBI office.

Monroe is near Yetman's home in Helmetta, a small town in central New Jersey about 43 miles (69 kilometers) south of New York City.

The details of his surrender were not immediately available, including whether an attorney accompanied him or whether he has retained one. A telephone message left on an answering machine at Yetman's home seeking comment was not immediately returned. (AP)

The coffin of former President of the Republic Martti Ahtisaari pictured during the state funeral at the Helsinki Cathedral in Helsinki, Finland on Nov 10. Foreign dignitaries gathered in Finland's capital on Friday to bid farewell to former President Martti Ahtisaari, including leaders of countries where he helped reach peace accords. Ahtisaari, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008, died Oct 16 at the age of 86. (AP)

Politics

Govt shutdown rapidly approaching

Johnson grasps for funding plan

WASHINGTON, Nov 11, (AP): With just a week left to avert a government shutdown, new House Speaker Mike Johnson is facing his first big test as he tries to win House Republican support for a short-term funding plan - a task that looks increasingly difficult amid stubborn divisions in the party over federal spending.

Federal agencies are making plans for a shutdown that would shutter government services and halt paychecks for millions of federal workers and military troops.

It's a disruption that Johnson - just two weeks into his job running the House - has said he wants to avoid. Yet House lawmakers left Washington for the weekend without a plan in hand after several setbacks. Johnson is still sounding out support among Republicans about what to do and is expected to unveil funding legislation over the weekend, according to Republicans granted anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Leadership

The shrinking calendar gives Johnson, a Louisiana Republican who has vaulted from the lower ranks of Republican leadership to the speaker's office, a narrow window to corral an unpredictable GOP conference.

"We're running up against the clock on Nov. 17, and we're obviously aware of that," Johnson said this week, referring to the date that government funding expires. "But we are going to get the job done."

Hardline conservatives, usually loathe to support temporary spending measures of any sort, had indicated they would give Johnson some leeway to pass legislation, known as a continuing resolution, to give Congress more time to negotiate a long-term agreement. Congress passed a 47-day continuing resolution in October, but the fallout was severe. Kevin McCarthy was booted from the speakership days later, and the House was effectively paralyzed for most of the month while Republicans tried to elect a replacement.

Republicans eventually were unanimous in electing Johnson speaker, but his elevation has hardly eased the dynamic that led to McCarthy's removal - a conference torn on policy as well as how much to spend on federal programs. This week, Republicans had to pull two spending bills from the floor - one to fund transportation and housing programs and the other to fund the Treasury Department, Small Business Administration and other agencies - because they didn't have the votes in their own party to push them through the House.

"I thought we were going to show the speaker a little bit of grace," said a frustrated Rep. Troy Nehls, R-Texas, as he exited the Capitol Thursday after the last votes of the week. "I think it's looking like we're still confused and we are not united."

Johnson has turned to House Republicans for ideas on how to win support for a continuing resolution. He has floated the obscure idea of a "laddered" approach that would fund some parts of the government until early December and other federal departments until mid-January. He has also raised the idea of a funding package that would last into January.

Meanwhile, lawmakers are still looking for a way to negotiate final passage of aid for Israel in its war with Hamas, and Johnson has also proposed the formation of a new federal commission focused on slowing increases in the national debt that threaten the government's ability in future years to finance the military and major entitlement programs relied on by seniors and the disabled.

GOP's Ramaswamy approach in politics and business same

ATLANTA, Nov 11, (AP): A political novice and one of the world's wealthiest millennials, Vivek Ramaswamy has waged a whirlwind presidential campaign mirroring his meteoric rise as a biotech entrepreneur. On everything from deporting people born in the United States to ending aid to Israel and Ukraine, he consistently displays the bravado of a populist, self-declared outsider.

"I stand on the side of revolution," he declares. "That's what I'm going to lead in a way that no establishment politician can."

In business and politics, though, Ramaswamy has run into skeptics and sometimes hard facts that threatened to derail his ambitions. In the 2024 campaign, the Israel-Hamas war has refocused the Republican primary on foreign policy and exposed just how much Ramaswamy's self-declared revolutionary approach puts him at odds with the party's most powerful figures and many of its voters.

At Wednesday's primary debate, Ramaswamy joined the rest of the field in supporting Israel's offensive but returned to his practice of not just critiquing his opponents but mocking them. Ramaswamy skewered Nikki Haley, the former UN ambassador, and Florida Gov Ron DeSantis, who some online sleuths suggest wears lifts in his boots, by asking, "Do you want Dick Cheney in three-inch heels?"

The performance drew eye rolls and derision on stage. When Ramaswamy implied Haley was being hypocritical in criticizing the social media platform TikTok because her daughter has previously used it, the 51-year-old mother of two called him "scum."

Ramaswamy, an Ohio native who also lives there, has wowed many audiences with his rapid-fire, wide-ranging discourse. Yet even some Republican voters who come away impressed are not backing him.

A Philippine Coast Guard member holds on a rubber fender as a Chinese coast guard vessel and suspected Chinese militia ship chases the Philippine coast guard vessel BRP Cabra while approaching Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin Shoal, during a resupply mission at the disputed South China Sea on Nov 10. (AP)

Lat/Am

Restrictions imposed

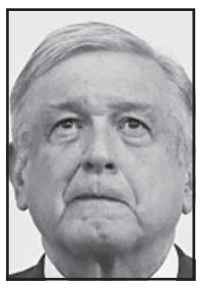
Mexico's governing party facing big test

MEXICO CITY, Nov 11, (AP): Mexico's immensely powerful governing party may face its biggest test yet as it announces its candidates for the 2024 gubernatorial elections.

The challenge isn't coming from flagging opposition parties. Rather, the party of President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** has to prove it can hold together and prevent the desertion of candidates who aren't picked.

There are questions whether with the end of term for its charismatic founder, the ideologically diverse party may start falling apart.

Since López Obrador founded the Morena party in 2014, it has largely served to promote him, with little ideological consistency and a leading elite made up of disparate elements, in many cases recruited from other parties or resuscitated despite past scandals. But López Obrador, who can't run for re-election, leaves office in 10 months.



Obrador

Morena was expected to reveal its gubernatorial candidates Friday evening.

It already announced its nominee for the presidential race, former Mexico City mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, who is seen as an unquestioningly faithful follower of the president. But the other frontrunner in the primary race, former Foreign Relations Secretary Marcelo Ebrard, still hasn't indicated whether he will stick with the party.

"I think this is going to be the acid test for Morena," said sociologist Bernardo Barranco. "There is a lot of tension between politicians' personal ambitions and the political project of the transformation," a term López Obrador uses to describe his movement.

Effective

The other unknown is former Mexico City police chief Omar García Harfuch, who gained famed as tough and effective cop after he survived a 2020 ambush attack by the Jalisco drug cartel on a street in the capital. The brazen attack left him with three bullet wounds, while his two bodyguards and a bystander were killed.

García Harfuch is competing for the Morena party's nomination for the mayoralty of Mexico City. Because the capital is so large - at over 9 million inhabitants - the post is considered a governorship, and has been a historic launching pad for the presidency.

But the nomination may go to Clara Brugada, the borough president of a rough stretch of low-income neighborhoods on the city's east side. Brugada is preferred by the leftist wing of Morena because she built "utopias" - sports and cultural complexes - in neighborhoods where past administrations focused on the bare-bones issues of drainage, policing and chaotic transportation networks.

It is unclear whether García Harfuch might walk away from Morena. He would be an attractive candidate for any of the weak, disorganized opposition parties, which have been pushed into the background by López Obrador's charisma and hand-out policies like youth scholarships, cash food allowances for the elderly and raises to the minimum wage.

So far, one primary candidate who failed to secure her party's nomination has already left Morena. Sen. Lucía Meza announced this week that she will run on the opposition ticket for the governorship of Morelos state, south of Mexico City.

Investigated

Her departure illustrates the problem Morena faces in uniting its disparate forces: Meza claims current Gov, Cuauhtémoc Blanco, a former soccer star and personal ally of López Obrador who was recruited from another party, sabotaged her candidacy. Blanco also has been investigated for ties to criminal gangs.

"Our state doesn't matter to Morena, they don't care if we are governed by a criminal," Meza wrote in her resignation letter Wednesday.

The issue of what Morena is ideologically, and who is really a "true blue" party member, has up to now largely revolved around who most faithfully obeyed López Obrador, who has long been depicted as a leftist but who is in fact more of a nationalist and populist.

With its ideology muddled, hard-core Morena supporters have fallen back on purity tests. They prefer Brugada because she has been a left activist since the dark days of the 1980s, and dislike García Harfuch because his grandfather was an allegedly repressive general and his father was a shady police chief under past governments.

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Mexican officials imposed severe, monthslong cuts to Mexico City's water supply at midnight Friday, acting just a month after initial restrictions were ordered as drought dries the capital's reservoirs.

The Mexican National Water Commission and mayor announced the moves at a news conference, but officials did not report the cuts on social media until just four hours before they took effect.

Abnormally low rain has dropped the Cutzamala system - a network of three reservoirs serving over 20 million residents in the Valley of Mexico - to historic seasonal lows. The system is 44% lower than it should be at this time of the year.

Officials began restricting water from Cutzamala by roughly 8% on Oct. 17. Friday's cuts are much more drastic, representing a further 25% of the system's total flow. Twelve boroughs, mostly in the west of the city, can expect lower water pressure until the restrictions lift, officials said.

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SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic: The Dominican Republic on Thursday accused Haiti of multiple border violations in the latest dispute involving their shared frontier on the island of Hispaniola.

Foreign Minister Roberto Álvarez held a news conference on the issue just days after an armed confrontation between Dominican soldiers and members of a Haitian environmental government brigade.

The brief standoff stemmed from apparent confusion over border limits. It occurred Tuesday on the northern tip of the shared island near one of more than 300 concrete barriers that delineate the border.

"What happened is a flagrant violation of Dominican territory," Álvarez said. "We make a strong call to the Haitian authorities to assume control of order in their territory and avoid situations that continue to aggravate the already delicate situation."

A spokesman for the office of Haiti's prime minister declined comment on Thursday and referred to a statement the government issued on Wednesday in which it accused Dominican soldiers of violating Haitian territory.

This handout photo obtained from the Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishanker's page on X, formerly Twitter, shows US Secretary of State Antony Blinken with Jaishankar in New Delhi, India on Nov 10. The top diplomats and defense chiefs of India and the United States met in New Delhi focusing on security issues in the Indo-Pacific, China and the Israel-Hamas war. (AP)

Tinubu

Mackenzie

Africa

Kenya cult leader found guilty: **Paul Mackenzie**, the Kenyan preacher at the center of a doomsday cult in the country that led to the deaths of more than 400 people, was on Friday found guilty of operating a studio and distributing films without a license.

The senior resident magistrate in the town of Malindi, Olga Onalo, found Mackenzie guilty of exhibition of films through his Times Television without approval of the Kenya Film Classification Board.

The preacher has been in police custody for more than six months now since he was arrested in April, following the discovery of hundreds of bodies in mass graves in a forested area across his 800-acre property in the coastal county of Kilifi. Prosecutors say Mackenzie ordered his congregants to starve to death in order to meet Jesus.

However, he has not been formally charged over the deaths, despite being arraigned in court on numerous occasions since his arrest. On Friday he was acquitted of additional charges of influencing children to not attend school and using radical preaching to incite Christians against Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. (AP)

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Journalist remains behind bars: An Algerian journalist who was expected to be released this week after serving a six-month sentence was kept behind bars in a move that surprised his attorneys and colleagues and underscored ongoing concerns about press freedom in the North African country.

Mustapha Bendjama, the editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper Le Provençal, has faced a raft of charges since authorities accused him of helping political activist Amira Bouraoui leave Algeria in the face of criminal charges in February.

Authorities' February raid on Bendjama's office and subsequent charges against him related to Bouraoui's escape followed years of problems with the Algerian government, which accused him of writing favorably about pro-democracy street protests that led to the resignation of former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2019.

"Mustapha absolutely must be freed, because he has served his six-month sentence in the so-called 'Amira Bouraoui affair,'" his lawyer, Abdellah Haboul, told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Bendjama's continued detention after an appeal from the local prosecutor shocked his family, lawyers and colleagues at his newspaper. They expected him to be released on Tuesday even though he faces other charges, including a 20-month sentence issued in October for allegedly disclosing classified documents and using foreign funds to disrupt public order.

The foreign funding charge is similar to the one under which another Algerian journalist - Ihsan El Kadi - is currently serving a seven-year sentence.

Habboul said it was out of the ordinary to remain behind bars while facing two sets of charges because in Algeria, defendants typically serve one sentence and then are freed while appealing their second. (AP)

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Bill sparks criticism: Nigerian President **Bola Tinubu**'s approval of a supplementary budget earmarking millions of dollars for a presidential yacht and sport utility vehicles for his wife and top government officials has again stoked anger among ordinary Nigerians over what they see as a growing economic disparity.

Tinubu signed into law the budget that allocates $38 million for the presidential air fleet and other renovations. Some $6.1 million budgeted earlier for the the yacht was assigned by lawmakers to "student loans" - with the senate's approval.

The country's navy said it had taken delivery of the yacht, but "it has not been paid for."

Presidential spokesperson Anjuri Ngelale defended the supplemental budget as serving to "strengthen Nigeria's security architecture and address Nigeria's critical infrastructure deficit, amongst other considerations."

The spokesperson said about 30% of the money would be spent on security, and another 35% on "provision of critical infrastructure."

Recently, the country's 460-member national assembly confirmed that all lawmakers will get each a new SUV reportedly at a cost of more than $150,000 each. The lawmakers said the vehicles would help them do their work better. (AP)

Diplomacy

Brown hopeful about resuming army communication

US and India reaffirm security ties

NEW DELHI, Nov 11, (AP): India and the US underlined their commitment to boosting security ties Friday as their top diplomats and defense chiefs met to discuss regional security, China and the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin met with their Indian counterparts in New Delhi as part of an Asian trip aimed at showing unity over Russia's war in Ukraine and preventing differences on the Israel-Hamas war from deepening.

Blinken said the US and India were continuing to "deepen our collaboration on everything from emerging technologies to defense to people-to-people ties" and align diplomacy for "an Indo-Pacific region that's free, that's open, that's prosperous, that's resilient."

He said the two sides discussed the crisis in the Middle East and "we appreciate the fact that from day one India has strongly condemned the attacks of Oct 7. And as our joint statement makes clear, India and the United States stand with Israel against terrorists."

Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said the situation in the Middle East was a big concern. While India has condemned the Hamas attack on Israel, it balances its position by calling for talks on "a sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side-by-side at peace with Israel."

Vision

Blinken met with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "reaffirmed their shared vision for close partnership in the Indo-Pacific," said US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller.

"They emphasized working together to address ongoing crises such as Russia's war against Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East," Miller said.

Vinay Mohan Kwatra, India's top bureaucrat in the foreign ministry, said India's tense ties with China also were discussed at the official-level talks, but declined to give details.

India's relationship with China has deteriorated since 2020, when Indian and Chinese troops clashed along their disputed border in the Himalayan Ladakh region, leaving 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead. A standoff involving thousands of soldiers in the eastern Ladakh region continues, despite several rounds of military and diplomatic talks.

Blinken said he also discussed with the Indian side a diplomatic dispute that erupted when Canada alleged that India was involved in the assassination of a Sikh separatist in Canada.

Also:

TOKYO: The top **US** military officer said Friday he has conveyed to **China** his hopes to resume the stalled communication between the world's two biggest militaries.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen **CQ Brown Jr**, told a selected group of journalists Friday in Tokyo that it is "hugely important" to "ensure there is no miscalculation" between the sides. He said he conveyed his desire to restart the dialogue in a letter to his Chinese counterpart.

"I'm hopeful," Brown added.

China froze military exchanges in August 2022 when then-Speaker of the House of Representatives **Nancy Pelosi** visited self-governing Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory. The two sides have shown indications in recent weeks that they are close to resuming the exchanges.

Brown made his comment during the Tokyo leg of a trip to Asia ahead of next week's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, to be hosted by President **Joe Biden** in **San Francisco**. Biden will meet with Chinese President **Xi Jinping** on the sidelines of the meeting, the Biden administration announced later Friday.

Manila & Beijing report maritime confrontation in South China Sea

MANILA, Nov 11, (AP): Chinese and Philippine vessels engaged in a new confrontation in the South China Sea on Friday, with Manila charging that a Chinese coast guard ship and accompanying vessels conducted dangerous maneuvers and blasted a Philippine supply ship with a water cannon in disputed waters.

China responded that it acted appropriately under maritime law to defend what it says is its territory.

The incident was the latest in a series of maritime confrontations between the two nations over territorial disputes that risk turning into more serious armed engagements.

Tensions have risen recently as China has blockaded an isolated Philippine marine outpost on Second Thomas Shoal, also known as Ayungin Shoal. The marines are based on a rusted old warship that the Philippine navy grounded deliberately in 1999 to bolster its territorial claim.

Last month, a Chinese coast guard ship and an accompanying vessel rammed a Philippine coast guard ship and a military-run supply boat near the contested shoal, according to Philippine officials. China accused the Philippine vessels of trespassing in what it said were Chinese waters "without authorization" despite repeated radio warnings.

A Philippine government task force dealing with the South China Sea said Friday that vessels belonging to China's coast guard and its paramilitary Maritime Militia "recklessly harassed, blocked and executed dangerous maneuvers in another attempt to illegally impede or obstruct a routine resupply and rotation mission."

It said a Chinese coast guard ship used a water cannon to blast the Philippine supply vessel M/L Kalayaan, which was en route to deliver supplies to the outpost.

The resupply mission was carried out successfully despite the harassment, it said in a statement.

"We firmly insist that Chinese vessels responsible for these illegal activities leave the vicinity of Ayungin Shoal immediately," it said, adding that the Philippine Embassy in Beijing delivered a protest to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. China's Foreign Ministry later said it made its own protest to the embassy.

The Chinese coast guard said two small cargo vessels and three Philippine coast guard ships "arbitrarily trespassed into the waters near China's Ren'ai Reef," the name China uses for the shoal.

China's coast guard "followed the Philippines ships in accordance with the law, taking necessary control measures, and made temporary special arrangements for the Philippines side to transport food and other daily necessities," coast guard spokesperson Gan Yu said in a statement.

Supporters of presidential candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, of the Morena party, wait for his arrival at Mexico City's Zocalo plaza, July 1, 2018. Mexico's ruling party announces its candidates for the 2024 gubernatorial elections on Nov 10. (AP)

oil price up

The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel rose by 21 cents to reach USD 84.56 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared with USD 84.35 pb on Thursday, reported Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

In international markets, Brent crude oil went up by USD 1.42 to USD 81.43 pb, while West Texas Intermediate rose USD 1.43 to stand at USD 77.17 pb. (KUNA)

Gulf Bank rewards rose gold cardholders with 25% cashback

Gulf Bank is excited to announce a special promotion tailored for female MastercardRose Gold credit cardholders. This unique offer allows cardholders to enjoy a generous 25% cashback on all their transactions at restaurants and cafes in Kuwait, as well as online food deliveries. This limited-time offer, valid until 30 November 2023, is part of Gulf Bank's commitment to rewarding its valued customers, especially women using the Rose Gold card.

To qualify for the 25% cashback, minimum purchase value required is KD100 accumulated throughout the promotional period. Each customer is eligible for a maximum cashback of KD 40, which will be credited to their Rose Gold card by 21 December 2023, and informedvia SMS notification.

The MastercardRose Gold Ladies Card not only provides cashback benefits, but also offers a range of discounts at over 1,000 stores catering to the modern woman's lifestyle. Cardholders also participate in the Gulf Points program, an efficient rewards system in Kuwait, allowing them to accumulate points for every transaction. For every Kuwaiti Dinar spent, Rose Gold credit cardholders earn 20 points on spas, salons, and gyms, seven points on dining, five points on international online transactions, and two points for every Kuwaiti Dinar spent locally or internationally.

These accumulated points are redeemable for flights, hotel stays, and exclusive seasonal travel packages, ensuring a seamless and delightful travel experience.

Najla Aleisa, Gulf Bank

Market Movements 10-11-2023

			Change	Closing pts
UAE	-	DFM	+39.87	3,969.28
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+1,092.29	55,399.66

			Change	Closing pts
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	-26.33	6,161.89
EUROPE	-	EURO STOXX 50	-31.84	4,197.36
UK	-	FTSE 100	-95.12	7,360.55

Business

Average long-term US mortgage rate falls to 7.5%

US applications for jobless benefits slip, still at healthy levels

WASHINGTON, Nov 11, (AP): Slightly fewer Americans applied for jobless claims last week, further indicating that the labor market remains strong in an era of high interest rates.

Applications for unemployment benefits fell by 3,000 to 217,000 for the week ending Nov. 4, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

Jobless claim applications are seen as representative of the number of layoffs in a given week.

The four-week moving average of claims, a less volatile measure, inched up by 1,500 to 212,250.

Overall, 1.83 million people were collecting unemployment benefits the week that ended Oct. 28, about 22,000 more than the previous week and the most since April.

Those "continuing claims," analyst suggest, are rising because many of those who are already unemployed may now be having a harder time finding new work.

Still, the American labor market continues to show resiliency in the midst of the Federal Reserve's campaign to get inflation back down to its 2% target.

Though Fed officials opted to leave the benchmark rate alone last week, the U.S. central bank has raised rates 11 times since March of 2022 in an effort to tame inflation, which reached a four-decade high in 2022. Part of the Fed's goal is too cool the economy and labor market, which officials say should slow price growth.

A for sale sign stands outside a single-family home on the market on Friday, Oct. 27, 2023, in Denver. (AP)

In September, consumer prices were up 3.7% from a year earlier, down from a peak 9.1% in June last year. However, U.S. economic growth surged in the July-September quarter on the back of robust consumer spending.

The Labor Department reported last week that employers posted 9.6 million job openings in September, up from 9.5 million in August. Layoffs fell to 1.5 million from 1.7 million.

U.S. private employers slowed their hiring in October, adding a modest but still decent 150,000 jobs.

Last month's job growth, though down sharply from a robust 297,000 gain in September, was solid enough to suggest that many companies still want to hire and that the economy remains sturdy.

ALSO:

WASHINGTON: The average rate on the benchmark 30-year home loan fell for the second week in a row, positive news for prospective homebuyers after rates touched a 22-year high just last month.

The latest decline brought the average rate on a 30-year mortgage down to 7.5% from 7.76% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 7.08%.

As mortgage rates rise, they can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, limiting how much they can afford in a market already out of reach for many Americans. They also discourage homeowners who locked in far lower rates two years ago, when they were around 3%, from selling.

The combination of rising mortgage rates and home prices have weighed on sales of previously occupied U.S. homes, which fell in September for the fourth month in a row, grinding to their slowest pace in more than a decade.

This average rate on a 30-year mortgage is now at the lowest level it's been since the first week of October, when it was 7.49%.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loan, also declined, with the average rate falling to 6.81% from 7.03% last week. A year ago, it averaged 6.38%, Freddie Mac said.

The average rate on a 30-year home loan climbed above 6% in September 2022 and has remained above that threshold since, reaching 7.79% two weeks ago. That was the highest average on record going back to late 2000.

Rates have risen along with the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing loans. Investors' expectations for future inflation, global demand for U.S. Treasurys and what the Fed does with interest rates can influence rates on home loans.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury had been rising in recent weeks, jumping to more than 5% two weeks ago, its highest level since 2007, as bond traders responded to signals from the Federal Reserve that the central bank might have to keep its key short-term rate higher for longer in order to tame inflation.

But long-term bond yields have been easing since last week, when the Federal Reserve opted against raising its main interest rate for a second straight policy meeting.

The yield was at 4.54% in midday trading Thursday. It was at roughly 3.50% in May and just 0.50% early in the pandemic.

KPC unveils KD 18 bln capital expenditure for five-year plan

KOC leads with 14.7 bln dinar share in capital allocation

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The KPC has disclosed that it has allocated 18.18 billion dinars earmarking as capital expenditure for projects within the five-year plan spanning from 2022 to 2026. Notably, the actual spending until March 2023 has reached 11 billion dinars, constituting 61% of the allocated sum. The KPC and its subsidiaries reported a capital spending of 1.8 billion dinars for the fiscal year 2022/2023, reports Al-Anba daily.

Breaking down the figures, the Kuwait Oil Company took the largest share of the capital allocation within the five-year plan, amounting to 14.7 billion dinars. As of now, the company has disbursed approximately 8.7 billion dinars, equivalent to 59.4% of the designated amount. Meanwhile, the National Petroleum Company allocated 247.6 million dinars for its projects, with actual disbursement reaching around 81.6 million dinars, constituting 33% of the total allocation.

Kuwait Petroleum International Company has a total capital expenditure of about 1.6 billion dinars within the five-year plan, with spending until March 2023 reaching about 1.3 billion dinars, reflecting a 77.9% utilization rate. Kuwait Gulf Oil Company allocated approximately 591.7 million dinars, with actual spending until March 2023 amounting to 278.9 million dinars, equivalent to 47.1% of the total allocation.

In the case of the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company, it recorded a capital spending of 71.4 million dinars during the five-year plan, with actual spending reaching about 16.5 million dinars, indicating a 23.2% utilization rate. Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) planned to spend around 829.9 million dinars, and as of March 2023, the actual disbursement stood at about 629.9 million dinars, or 75.9% of the allocated amount. For the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (head office), a spending allocation of 5.8 million dinars was made during the plan years, but the actual amount spent was only approximately 859 thousand dinars, accounting for 14.8% of the total allocation.

'Long-term impact might drop GDP by 12% & 660,000 people in poverty risk'

UN reveals 4% GDP plunge in Palestinian economy

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 11, (AP): A U.N. report paints a stark picture of the devastation of the collapse of the Palestinian economy after a month of war and Israel's near-total siege of Gaza.

The gross domestic product shrank 4% in the West Bank and Gaza in the war's first month, sending over 400,000 people into poverty - an economic impact unseen in the conflicts Syria and Ukraine, or any previous Israel-Hamas war, the U.N. said.

Hamas militants, who rule Gaza, launched a surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7 killing over 1,400 people, mainly civilians, and kidnapping about 240 others. More than two-thirds of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes since Israel launched weeks of intense airstrikes followed by an ongoing ground operation, vowing to obliterate Hamas. The Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza said Thursday that 10,818 Palestinians, including more than 4,400 children, have been killed so far.

The rapid assessment of economic consequences of the Gaza war released Thursday by the U.N. Development Program and the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for West Asia was the first U.N. report showing the devastating impact of the conflict especially on the Palestinians.

If the war continues for a second month, the U.N. projects that the Palestinian GDP, which was $20.4 billion before the war began, will drop by 8.4% - a loss of $1.7 billion. And if the conflict lasts a third month, Palestinian GDP will drop by 12%, with losses of $2.5 billion and more than 660,000 people pushed into poverty, it projects.

U.N. Development Program Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah Al Dardari told a news conference that a 12% GDP loss at the end of the year would be "massive and unprecedented." By comparison, he said, the Syrian economy used to lose 1% of its GDP per month at the height of its conflict, and it took Ukraine a year and a half of fighting to lose 30% of its GDP, an average of about 1.6% a month. At the beginning of 2023, the Palestinian territories - the West Bank and Gaza - were considered a lower middle-income economy with a poverty level of $6 per day per person, Economic Commission Executive Secretary Rola Dashti said.

In January, Gaza was already grappling with high unemployment of about 46%, three-and-a-half times higher than the West Bank's 13%, the report said.

But just weeks of war has destroyed hundreds of thousands of jobs.

"As the war hits the one-month mark, 61% of employment in Gaza, equivalent to 182,000 jobs, is estimated to have been lost," it said. "Around 24% of employment in the West Bank has also been lost, equivalent to 208,000 jobs."

Al Dardari pointed to massive disruption to the economy in the West Bank, which is responsible for 82% of Palestinian GDP, explaining that this is supposed to be the season for olive and citrus farmers to collect their products but they can't because of the war. And "the tourism season is practically gone - and agriculture and tourism represent 40% of the GDP in the West Bank," he said.

In addition, Al Dardari said, there are major disruptions to trade, to the transfer of money from Israel to the Palestinian Authority, which controls the West Bank, and no investment.

The Economic Commission's Dashti said "the level of destruction is unimaginable and unprecedented" in Gaza.

"As of November 3, it is estimated that 35,000 housing units have been totally demolished and about 220,000 units are partially damaged," she said. The report said at least 45% of Gaza's housing units have been destroyed or damaged.

If this persists, the majority of Gazans will have no homes and Al Dardari said even if fighting ended now there will be massive long-term displacement, "with all its humanitarian economic development and security consequences."

Al Dardari said it breaks his heart that the Palestinian territories had become lower middle income economies, "because all of that growth and development is going to regress between 11, 16, or even 19 years if the fighting continues. ... We will go back to 2002."

KFH sees huge customer demand on Zaheb

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has witnessed huge customers demand on "Zaheb" digital platform for merchants and owners of small and medium enterprises.

The Zaheb platform is specialized in providing innovative payment and acceptance of payment methods (invoice link, QR code payment). This step is in line with KFH's dedication to offering the best innovative payment solutions, promote financial inclusion and facilitate secure and swift transfer of funds in the market.

The Zaheb platform targets merchant customers and owners of SMEs to contribute to the development of their businesses and attract them to the regulated banking market. The latest advancements in financial transactions worldwide can be achieved through this new service, which aims to enhance e-payment methods, increase security, and ensure faster processing.

The new service affirms KFH's commitment to digital development, catering to different customer segments and meeting their interests and aspirations in line with global standards.

Moreover, Zaheb platform offers to local merchants the utmost cutting-edge payment solutions across various fields of business, taking into consideration the different sales systems and customer preferences.

The services in the platform include: "Invoice Link" for individuals and groups, which enables merchants to generate invoice links to be shared with their customers via e-mail or SMS, and the "QR code payment", where merchants can generate dynamic or static QR code that customers can scan to pay them directly using their debit or credit card.

The "Zaheb" platform provides its services to all business owners from SMEs and large enterprises operating in accordance with Shari'a and having a current account in KFH. The new service is expected to meet a large part of e-payments that have recently increased in demand and become a priority in companies' sales strategies.

Other Voices

Our economy is good, and privatization is the solution

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

According to our finance minister, Kuwait's economy is strong and solid, but short of cash and liquidity. This is attributed to our increase in annual expenses which cannot be met because the global oil price has not reached the range of $90 per barrel and above. Adding to this is our MPs' usual request for increasing cash benefits, including an increase in the monthly salaries and benefits for the government employees. These benefits and subsidies currently cost more than KD 1,500 per month for each citizen through subsidies for oil, water, electricity, food baskets, allowances and retirement benefits.

Al-Harami

At the same time, our government simply cannot refuse our MPs' demands and is unable to face the usual grillings, because it has only one choice of conceding, as it just cannot survive otherwise, and wouldn't last.

Of course, we have many options including borrowing from international financing houses, or even borrowing from our sovereign wealth fund, if approved by the parliament, as the funds belong to our future generations.

There is another alternative, which is to copy Saudi Aramco in selling five percent of its share for generating cash to pay for its mega projects.

There are rumors circulating in the market about the possibility of Aramco selling another five percent in the coming months and of China being the top candidate to participate in the second sale. This probably must be aimed at covering the expenses of another mega project or for contributing to financing the hosting of the World Cup in 2034.

It seems that Saudi Arabia is going on a spree of projects just to become the top leaders in almost every field such as tourism, sports, culture, music, opera, theatre and new events, in the hope of recovering its long-term investments with clear objectives.

On the other hand, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation owns more than ten companies of various oil activities covering every aspect of the oil industry such as both upstream and downstream, refining, shipping, petrochemical, aviation, lube oils factories, overseas exploration and overseas retailing activities. The government can generate millions of Kuwaiti dinars by selling up to 40 percent of its activities to the private sector, especially since most of our oil companies originally were partially or wholly owned by the private sector.

For example, Kuwait National Petroleum Company was 40 percent private, Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) and Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) were 100 percent privately owned. Hence, what is the harm in converting or selling parts to the private sector like the way we are doing currently with our local gas stations, as two main stations are privately owned?!

This way the government can benefit from generating cash and avoiding the hustle, financial downgrading and the search for the best deal. Selling part of its assets certainly could lead to more efficient and better organization while keeping the companies slimmer.

This however would be possible only if there was someone to listen or to lead, or if such ideas would have been accepted by the parliament without being accused of "selling the country".

In order to be serious, we need to prepare and form professional teams that are ready to initiate, present the idea to the parliament and the executive authority, and debate on it, so that it is not killed before birth.

Despite our strong economy, the government must be ready for new challenges. It must be clever and have smart initiatives, instead of issuing the same old statement that Kuwait is short of cash, something that none of us believe.

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Hungary asks EU to take action against Bulgaria's transit tax

Hungary has asked the European Union's executive to open a legal procedure against Bulgaria over a tax it recently imposed on Russian natural gas passing through its territory, a government minister said on Friday.

Bulgaria believes the tax, which it levied in October, will reduce the privileged position of Russia's state-owned energy company Gazprom in southeastern Europe and deter Russian influence in the region.

But the tax has angered Bulgaria's neighbor Serbia, as well as fellow EU member Hungary, which are heavily dependent on Russian gas coming mostly via Turkey and Bulgaria through the Turk-Stream pipeline.

In a Facebook video, Hungary's minister for EU affairs, Janos Boka, said he had sent a letter to the European Commission urging it to launch an infringement procedure against Bulgaria, the first potential step the bloc can use to ensure its laws are upheld by member states.

Boka complained that Bulgaria had imposed the tax without consulting first with Hungary, and that he believed the measure was in violation of the EU's laws on customs and trade.

UK cracks down on crypto tax evaders

The UK agreed a historic joint statement with 48 countries to help combat criminals using crypto-assets to evade and avoid billions in missing tax, a British Treasury Ministry statement said Friday.

The Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF), spearheaded by the UK, is the OECD's latest flagship tax transparency standard. It will mean crypto platforms will need to start sharing taxpayer information with tax authorities, which currently they do not do, ensuring these authorities can exchange information to enforce tax compliance. The CARF is expected to take effect in time for exchanges with other countries to start from 2027.

The new framework announced today will be essential to counter the increasing level of tax avoidance brought about by the rapid growth of the global crypto market, with some estimates suggesting that tax non-compliance on crypto-asset holdings could range from as high as 55% to 95%.

The UK, which stands to potentially recoup hundreds of millions of pounds as a result of the CARF's implementation, used its position as a global leader in tax transparency to scope, negotiate and finalise provisions for CARF while galvanising international support. (KUNA)

Council expects to have a mining code draft by 2025

Negotiations over proposed regulations for deep-sea mining plod along

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Nov 11, (AP): Debate over proposed regulations for deep-sea mining will stretch into next year as a U.N. agency that presides over the international seabed concluded its last meeting of the year on Wednesday.

The ongoing debate has led to growing concerns that a company or country will be the first in the world to apply for an exploitation license before any regulatory framework is in place.

Juan José González, president of the International Seabed Authority's council, told reporters that if an application is submitted, the council has an obligation to discuss it.

"We would prefer, of course, to have the regulations in place," he said.

Michael Lodge, the agency's secretary general, said the council expects to have a mining code draft by 2025.

However, a Canadian company whose subsidiary is widely expected to be the first to apply for a deep-sea mining license, said late last week that it expects to do so in mid-2024.

Corey McLachlan, with The Metals Company, noted that while any country or company now has the legal right to apply for such a license, "we are willing to give (the agency) that additional time and effort."

The International Seabed Authority has issued more than 30 exploration licenses, but no exploitation ones.

The exploration is taking place in an area of 1.7 million square miles (4.5 million square kilometers) between Hawaii and Mexico at depths of up to 19,000 feet (6,000 meters).

Among those holding an exploration license is Nauru Ocean Resources, Inc., a subsidiary of The Metals Company. It is working with the government of Nauru, a small island in the Pacific, which has pushed for deep-sea mining.

Those seeking to launch deep-sea mining operations say they are meeting an increase in demand for metals including copper, nickel and cobalt used in clean energy technologies. They also argue it is cheaper than land mining and would have less of an environmental impact.

However, scientists and environmental activists have warned that such mining could unleash noise, light and smothering dust storms. They say not enough is known about the world's deep seas, noting that less than 1% has been explored.

More than 20 countries have called for a moratorium or a ban, and companies including BMW and Samsung have promised to avoid using minerals mined from the ocean's abyss.

The meeting that ended Wednesday followed nearly two weeks' worth of negotiations on issues including inspection, enforcement, royalties, environmental concerns and financial terms of potential contracts.

"All countries may well have very different positions on all sorts of things, but all countries agree there should be no exploitation without regulation," Lodge said.

Budget statement to bolster growth

British economy flatlines in the 3rd quarter of the year, update shows

LONDON, Nov 11, (AP): The British economy flatlined in the third quarter of the year, official figures showed Friday ahead of a budget statement from the government later this month that it hopes will bolster growth in the run-up to national elections.

The Office for National Statistics said growth in the July-to-September period was zero compared to the previous three-months. All sectors, such as manufacturing and construction, broadly showed the same subdued picture.

Despite the uninspiring headline figure, the quarterly outcome was slightly ahead of analysts' expectations for a modest decline in output.

The British economy, like many others particularly in the world, is facing headwinds in the form of higher interest rates, which are aimed at taming inflation.

Last week, the Bank of England kept its main interest rate unchanged at the 15-year high of 5.25% and indicated that borrowing costs will likely remain at these elevated levels for a while to get inflation back to its target of 2% from the current 6.7%

The Bank of England, like other central banks, raised interest rates aggressively from near zero as it sought to counter price rises first stoked by supply chain issues during the coronavirus pandemic and then Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which pushed up food and energy costs.

One way higher interest rates work in getting inflation down is by making it more expensive for consumers and businesses to borrow, thereby reining in spending.

"With higher interest rates feeding through to mortgage holders and with challenges in the labour market, activity is likely to flatline through to the middle of next year," said Ian Stewart, chief economist at Deloitte.

Though a widely predicted recession has not materialized over the past year, the economic backdrop is hardly ideal for the governing Conservative Party given that a general election must take place by January 2025. The main opposition Labour Party is way ahead in opinion polls at present.

Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt said a budget statement he will deliver on Nov. 22 will focus on how to "get the economy growing healthily again by unlocking investment." Labour economy spokesperson Rachel Reeves said the figures provide "further evidence that the economy is not working under the Conservatives."

Talks with He laid the groundwork for Biden's meeting with Xi: Yellen

US Treasury Secretary says plans to return to China

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 11, (AP): U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Friday that she and her Chinese counterpart agreed to work toward a "healthy economic relationship," during two days of talks that she said helped lay the groundwork for a productive meeting next week between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Yellen said many disagreements remain between the two countries, but she and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng committed to working together "on global challenges, from debt issues to climate change-related economic issues."

And both countries, she said, "welcome the objective of a healthy economic relationship that provides a level playing field for companies and workers in both countries and benefits the two peoples."

She added that she plans to return to China next year after making her first trip there as treasury secretary in July.

Biden and Xi will meet Wednesday on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, the first engagement in a year between the leaders of the world's two biggest economies.

Their finance chiefs held talks in San Francisco this week with the aim of making progress on a slew of economic and trade issues at a time when competition has markedly intensified between their countries.

A Treasury Department readout of the meetings said both sides agreed to increase communications on economic issues and emphasized a commitment not to break economic ties.

"Our mutual desire, both China and the United States, is to create a level playing field and ongoing, meaningful and mutually beneficial economic relations," Yellen said. "That is our main focus."

Yellen has met with a host of Chinese officials throughout this year.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, (right), greets Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023, in San Francisco. Yellen and Lifeng are meeting in San Francisco on Thursday to start two days of talks aimed at making progress on a slew of economic issues when competition has markedly intensified between their countries. (AP)

In January, she had her first face-to-face meeting with former Vice Premier Liu He in Zurich. She traveled to China in July to discuss economic policies between the nations and urged Chinese government officials to cooperate on climate change and other global challenges and not let sharp disagreements about trade and other irritants derail relations.

Ransomware attack on China's biggest bank minimally disrupted Treasury market trades

WASHINGTON, Nov 11, (AP): U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen suggested Friday that a ransomware attack that forced China's biggest bank to take some systems offline only minimally disrupted the U.S. Treasury market.

She said U.S. and Chinese finance officials discussed the attack in San Francisco, where they met Friday ahead of a regional economic summit next week.

"We've not seen an impact on the Treasury market," Yellen told reporters. "I think it's an example of why we need close communications. This is situation where it's critical to be able to pick up the phone and know that you will have a good response on the other end, and that we can trust one another to work together."

The impacted Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Financial Services handles trades and other services for financial institutions.

In a statement on its website, the bank said a ransomware attack Wednesday forced it to disconnect and isolate affected systems to limit the impact from the attack.

The company, which is based in New York, said it was investigating and had reported the problem to law enforcement.

All Treasury trades executed Wednesday and repo financing trades on Thursday were cleared, it said. It said ICBC's banking, email and other systems were not affected.

As of August, China held $805.4 billion in U.S. Treasury securities, according to Treasury Department data. It is the second largest holder of U.S. debt after Japan.

A representative from the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association said it had no comment on the attack.

ICBC gave no further details but reports said the attack was by LockBit, a ransomware syndicate dominated by Russian speakers that does not target former Soviet countries.

It is one of the most efficient ransomware variants around, according to the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft. Active since September 2019, it has attacked thousands of organizations.

Successful cyberattacks on bank are rare. The financial industry is generally among the best protected, with serious investment in cybersecurity and segmented operations to discourage theft.

Tesla faces strikes in Sweden

Pressure is growing on Tesla in Sweden, where a trade union is demanding that the Texas-based automaker sign a collective bargaining agreement, which most employees in the Scandinavian country have.

Tesla has no manufacturing plant in Sweden, but 130 members of the powerful metalworkers' union IF Metall walked out on Oct. 27 at seven workshops across the country where its popular electric cars are serviced.

Other trade unions joined in solidarity, including dockworkers at Sweden's four largest ports who decided Tuesday to stop the delivery of Tesla vehicles to increase pressure on the automaker to accept the metal workers' demands.

On Friday, the Painters' Union said 53 painting companies would not do any work on Tesla vehicles in sympathy with IF Metall. If there is no agreement with Tesla by Tuesday, "a total of 109 companies may be prevented from handling and painting Tesla cars," it said in a statement.

Another major trade union, the Swedish Union for Service and Communications Employees, said it will halt shipments to Tesla on Nov. 20. Its head, Gabriella Lavecchia, said Tesla is "refusing to comply with the rules of the game here in Sweden," calling it "completely unacceptable."

"The fight that IF Metall is now taking on is important for the entire Swedish collective agreement model," Lavecchia said.

Sweden's former Social Democratic prime minister, Stefan Löfven, who once headed IF Metall, also encouraged Swedes to suspend purchases of Teslas until an agreement is signed.

"Shame on you, Tesla, shame on you," Löfven wrote on Facebook on Oct. 26.

Tesla, which is non-unionized globally, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The IF Metall union and Tesla Sweden have meet twice without results, according to Swedish media.

IF Metall said Tesla Sweden has "refused to sign a collective agreement and violates basic principles in the Swedish labor market." It called such agreements "the backbone of the Swedish model."

"We do not want a model where some companies compete with other -- serious -- employers by offering employees worse conditions than they would have with a collective agreement," it said. The union asked for the understanding of consumers, saying "we are doing this for the sake of our members, to ensure that they have safe working conditions."

The strike resembles the situation in 1995 when the Toys R Us toy chain started up in Sweden, refused to sign a collective agreement and hired only non-union workers. It resulted in a three-month strike by the retail-store employees union that snowballed into an all-out boycott as other unions joined in sympathy strikes. The company eventually agreed to sign collective agreements. (AP)

Uzbekistan hosts summit of regional economic alliance

MOSCOW, Nov 11, (AP): An economic bloc that includes several ex-Soviet nations along with Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey held a summit Thursday, with leaders vowing to further expand trade and economic ties.

Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), who met in Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent, discussed plans for speeding regional economic integration.

They also talked about the need for increasing the ECO's global profile through fostering regional and global partnerships.

"Our vast region, which is home to half a billion people, has a great potential for developing cooperation in trade, economy, industry, investment, innovation and transport," the summit's host, Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, said in a speech at the summit.

He said it was important to "fully utilize the potential of transcontinental transport corridors that pass through our territories and link us with major markets in the Asia-Pacific region, South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe."

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stressed the need to develop trade routes across the Caspian Sea region, which includes several of the countries. He said the the grouping's participants must "continue to work in coordination and improve the functionality of the corridor, which is to the benefit of us all of us."

Erdogan noted "we are one step closer to permanent peace in our region" after ECO's member Azerbaijan in September quickly reclaimed the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh that had been controlled by local Armenian forces backed by Armenia for more than 30 years.

The summit's participants also urged the international community to come up with a "more serious and fruitful response" to the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip amid the Israel-Hamas war and called for increased humanitarian assistance to people in Afghanistan.

REAL ESTATE

Business Plus

California town marks 5-year anniversary of deadly wildfire

Rising home insurance rates cast shadow on Paradise

Jose Villanueva carries siding while building a home, Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023, in Paradise, Calif. The project is partly funded by ReCoverCA, a state program providing money to rebuild homes in disaster areas. (AP)

> ‘Homeowners insurance rates are determined using a number of different variables, including historical loss data, loss trends, age and construction-type of structures, etc’

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 11, (AP): Heidi Lange was among the first to rebuild after the deadliest wildfire in California history destroyed her home in 2018 along with much of the town of Paradise.

After the fire, she got divorced, which left her with only half the money paid out by insurance - but she budgeted, planned ahead and even paid extra for stucco siding and a metal roof to make her new house more resistant to fire. She thought the hard part was over. So the office manager was stunned to learn nearly four years living in the same home, this month the annual premium on her home insurance would rise dramatically - from $1,200 to $9,750.

“To see we’ve come so far, only to have the legs kicked out from under us,” she said. “This is so crazy to me. How is this the biggest thing we’re dealing with?”

The soaring cost of home insurance has consumed the town of Paradise, residents and officials say, as it marked the five-year anniversary of the Nov. 8, 2018, Camp Fire. Residents have received annual premiums that near or exceed $10,000 - leaving many to wonder how they’re supposed to rebuild their hard-hit community when insurance is so shockingly high for houses in an area that is supposed to be among the most affordable in California.

The wildfire that ripped through Paradise and surrounding areas, killing 85, sounded an alarm to national home insurers about the costs of wildfires fueled by climate change. Seven of the 12 top home-insurers in California - including Farmers Insurance, State Farm, Allstate - have paused or restricted new business in California, saying they can’t afford to take on new clients.

California’s Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara is trying to step in to reform the system and to make the private market more robust, but the bulk of the changes won’t take effect for at least another year.

Neither the state Insurance Department nor a major industry lobbying group could explain the sharp price increases five years after the fire, when so many steps have been taken to protect the community against future wildfires, including initiatives to bury power lines, and clear brush and trees away from buildings. The state did not have data on the average premium increase for the town.

Michael Soller, spokesperson for the Insurance Department, said premiums depend on a number of factors, including the cost of rebuilding, increased coverage or decreased deductibles as well as rate increases approved by the state. He said private insurers should be able to offer discounts for community fire-hardening efforts sometime early next year, but the risk of wildfire still exists in Paradise.

Farmers Insurance was cited by several residents as the company that raised their premiums, but residents also said they couldn’t find other insurers offering more affordable policies. Farmers declined an interview request.

“Homeowners insurance rates are determined using a number of different variables, including historical loss data, loss trends, age and construction-type of structures, etc. These and other factors, combined with inflation adjustments, are reflected in customer rates,” the company said in a statement.

Rex Frazier, president of the Personal Insurance Federation of California, said insurers lost more than two decades’ worth of profits from the wildfires of 2017 and 2018, and people may have to pay more to live in wildland areas.

Carl Johnsen, a retired drywall contractor, has lived in the same house since 1979, when he moved to Paradise. It survived the 2018 fire but his previous insurer dropped him, and he received a new quote of over $14,000 that he’s not inclined to pay, he said.

Johnsen doesn’t feel good about going without fire and liability coverage, but feels he has little choice.

“I guess I’d rather do that and have a place to live, unless it burns down,” he said of forgoing insurance. “I gotta have money to buy food ... and pay taxes.”

Gene Robinson, 61, and his wife purchased a new home in Paradise with the insurance proceeds from the house that burned in the Camp Fire. This year, the insurance premium offered by Farmers on their four-bedroom, three-bath home soared from $2,800 to $9,550.

The couple opted for basic fire coverage through California’s insurer of last resort, which is quickly becoming the only option left for people in Paradise. The Robinsons are paying $4,500 through the California Fair Access to Insurance Requirements Plan, and $750 with another insurer for supplemental liability coverage.

“It’s a beautiful home, but it really makes you think about staying in the state,” said Robinson, a retiree.

The FAIR Plan is averaging 1,000 new applications a weekday from homeowners unable to find affordable home insurance in the private market. As of September, it had written more than 330,000 policies - up from nearly 273,000 plans last year and 127,000 in 2018.

Lara, the insurance commissioner, wants to allow insurance companies to consider climate change when setting their rates, but only if they write more policies for households that live in areas threatened by wildfire.

The state is also moving to allow insurers to make discounts available for homeowners who take certain measures, such as installing roofs that are fire-resistant rated and upgrading to multi-paned windows, said Soller, the department spokesperson.

He said home insurance premiums in California increased about 35% on average between 2017 and 2022, driven by historic wildfire losses, but are still lower than other large states with major climate risks, including Louisiana, Texas and Florida.

Kathy Ehrhart, a litigator in Chicago who focuses on the insurance industry, applauds California’s efforts to persuade insurance companies to stay in the state, because that should eventually promote competition and stability.

“Unfortunately for the homeowner today paying their bill,” she says, “that takes some time.”

Lange, a lifelong resident of the area, is frustrated that elected officials and insurance companies can’t figure out a fix. She may have to go through the state to insure her home, although that will still cost $7,300.

She considered leaving Paradise after the fire.

“But this is where my friends and my family and my church and my work - it’s where my village is,” she said, breaking down in tears. “And I just wasn’t going to let that be taken away.”

Measure could ultimately cost taxpayers more than they save

Property tax relief proposal falls flat in Colorado election

> ‘Voters in Colorado weren’t fooled - they wanted simple property tax relief and instead the Legislature and governor gave them a 48 page confusing bill that went after TABOR refunds’

DENVER, Nov 11, (AP): Despite seeing assessed home values soar by double digits, Colorado voters on Tuesday rejected a measure that would have lowered property tax bills for homeowners in return for decreasing a tax refund unique to the state that last year provided $750 to each taxpayer.

Under the measure the the owner of a $500,000 home would have paid anywhere from $186 to $276 less in property taxes this year than they normally would, depending on local tax rates, according to estimates by legislative analysts.

In exchange, after an initial increase in the taxpayer refund for everyone this year, the refund checks would have started to decrease and possibly disappear for people of all income levels over the next decade, depending on how much revenue the state takes in, according to legislative analysts.

And renters would have gotten smaller taxpayer refunds - known as the TABOR refund, a reference to Colorado’s Taxpayers Bill of Rights - without getting any of the direct relief that homeowners do.

Opponents of Proposition HH including Republican state lawmakers and conservative groups, argued the measure could ultimately cost taxpayers more than they save on property tax bills.

“Voters in Colorado weren’t fooled - they wanted simple property tax relief and instead the Legislature and governor gave them a 48 page confusing bill that went after TABOR refunds,” said Michael Fields, president of Advance Colorado, which led the charge against the measure.

Fields said property taxes must be cut and he hopes for a solution in a special legislative session, which would have to be instigated by Colorado Gov. Jared Polis.

Proponents of the measure had argued it was the best way to prevent devastating property tax bill increases, particularly for seniors and working families, without hurting the services those taxes funded.

State Senate President Steve Fenberg, who chaired the campaign for the measure, said in a statement Tuesday night that he thinks the measure fell prey to “to a misinformation slogan campaign by the far right, who would prefer to cut property taxes on the backs of our schools and fire districts.”

For property tax relief, said Fenberg, “it’s unclear tonight what the pathway forward is.”

Under the complicated measure, owners of primary residences would have seen greater reductions than the owners of second homes and rental properties. It also would have allowed senior citizens to take an existing property tax break for those 65 and older with them if they decided to downsize to another home. Currently, they only get that break if they have lived in a home for 10 years.

This year residents would have each gotten an estimated $148 more in a flat taxpayer refund, for a total of $898. But then starting in 2024 the refund would have reverted back to the traditional method of being determined by income and start to decline below even what the old rules would dictate.

People with an adjusted gross income of $52,000 or less were expected to get a $326 refund next year, $31 less than under current law under the measure. Those with an income of $289,001 were set to get checks for $1,028, $100 less.

Put on the ballot by the Democratic-led Legislature, the property tax measure would have slowed the increase of property tax bills over the next decade in two ways. Proposition HH would have lowered the statewide assessment rate that is used to calculate how much people have to pay to their local governments based on the value of their homes. It also would have exempted a portion of a home’s value from being taxed.

In the latest tax assessments this year, residential property values increased by between 35% and 45% in the Denver area and up to 60% in parts of the mountains. So homeowners were still set to get bigger property tax bills for this year compared to last year. The ballot measure would have just eased the increase.

Voters approved a second tax measure that will permit millions more dollars from a tobacco tax to go toward the state’s new universal preschool program.

That measure deals with taxes on cigarettes and tobacco products approved by voters in 2020. Analysts underestimated how much it would take in so, under the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights, voters needed to be asked if the state can keep the extra $23.65 million the taxes brought in in the first year, including interest, or if it should be refunded.

editor’s choice

Leaders tout money gains and AI rights

Hollywood actors union board approves strike-ending deal

LOS ANGELES, Nov 11, (AP): Board members from Hollywood's actors union voted Friday to approve the deal with studios that ended their strike after nearly four months, with the union's leadership touting the gains made in weeks of methodical negotiations.

Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists' executive director and chief negotiator, announced at an afternoon news conference that the tentative agreement was approved with 86% of the vote.

The three-year contract agreement next goes to a vote from the union's members, who are now learning what they earned through spending the summer and early fall on picket lines instead of film and television sets. That vote begins Tuesday and continues into December.

Crabtree-Ireland said the deal "will keep the motion picture industry sustainable as a profession for working class performers."

SAG-AFTRA President Fran Drescher said the studios believed they could outlast actors by waiting more than two months before initiating talks.

"What were they doing? Were they trying to smoke us out?" she said. "Well honey, I quit smoking a long time ago."

Crabtree-Ireland and Drescher would not give specifics on who disapproved of the deal, and why. The board vote was weighted, so it's not immediately clear how many people voted against approval.

Overall, the happy scene at SAG-AFTRA's Los Angeles headquarters was as different as can be from the defiant, angry tone of a news conference in the same room in July, when guild leaders announced that actors would join writers in a historic strike that shook the industry.

The successful vote from the board, whose members include actors Billy Porter, Jennifer Beals, Sean Astin and Sharon Stone, was expected, as many of the same people were on the committee that negotiated the deal. And it was in some ways drained of its drama by union leaders declaring the strike over as soon as the tentative deal was reached with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers on Wednesday, rather than waiting for the approval.

But it was still an essential step in returning to business as usual in Hollywood, if there is any such thing.

Actors need not wait for the ratification to start acting again - "in fact some of them already have," Crabtree-Ireland said.

Dealbreaker

Contract provisions surrounding the control of artificial intelligence were among the last sticking points in the agreement.

"AI was a dealbreaker," Drescher said. "If we didn't get that package, then what are we doing to protect our members?"

Here's a look at those and some of the other contract gains that union leaders outlined Friday. A more detailed look the terms will come next week, they said.

Productions must get the informed consent of actors whose digital replicas are used. That means there will be a reasonably specific description of how an actor's image will just be used - a vague, boilerplate sentence will not suffice. This includes the consent of background actors used for crowd scenes and similar simulations.

When artificial intelligence is used for a movie or show an actor is already working on, they will be compensated the same as if they'd actually performed what their digital likeness does, the guild said. Companies will need to negotiate new permission to use a likeness in a new project.

"The caveat to the consent is that it's only for the one job," Drescher told The Associated Press in an interview. "They have to come back if they want to use it for something else. That's kind of huge."

When it's a licensed image on a show where an actor, living or dead, is not otherwise performing, the license holders have a right to negotiate a rate.

In a hard-won provision that SAG-AFTRA said came on the final day of negotiations, when generative AI is used to create a synthetic character from the images of several different performers - be it Denzel Washington's eyes or Margot Robbie's hair - consent must be obtained from every person used, and the union must be able to negotiate pay for each.

The contract includes a creation of a new fund to pay performers for future viewings of their work on streaming services, in addition to traditional residuals paid for the showing of movies or series. The issue derailed talks for more than a week last month before studios returned to the table.

"They leaned pretty far because they were willing to accept that a new stream of revenue had to be established," Drescher told the AP.

A 7% general wage increase is effective immediately, with another 4% hike in July, and another 3.5% a year after that.

An 11% increase for background actors is effective immediately, with the same 4% and 3.5% increases in the coming years.

There will also be more money for the relocation of actors who have to move to appear in TV series.

Productions will be required to hire intimacy coordinators for any scenes involving nudity or simulated sex. While this has become an increasingly common practice in recent years, it had not been mandatory.

Variety

Features

This image released by Lionsgate shows Rachel Zegler, (center), in a scene from 'The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes.' (AP)

Film

Prequel adds a melancholic twist to saga

Hunger Games back with odds in its favor

By Jake Coyle

Two hours and 37 minutes is pretty long for a "ballad," but you can't call it "The Hunger Games: The Three-Cycle Opera of Songbirds and Snakes" now, can you?

Concision was never much in favor in the four "Hunger Games" films, which reached a seeming finale with 2015's "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2." The intervening years have done nothing to shrink the ambitions of this unapologetically gaudy dystopic series where the brutal deaths of kids are watched over by outrageously styled Capitol denizens with names like Effie Trinket.

That clash of YA allegory and color palette is just as pronounced, if not more so, in "The Hunger Games: Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," a prequel set 64 years before the original books, adapted from Suzanne Collins' 2020 book of the same name.

"The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," which opens in theaters Nov. 16, is an origin story of the Hunger Games, themselves, as well as numerous characters - primarily the devious President Coriolanus Snow, played by Donald Sutherland in the first four films. Here, Snow is an impoverished but opportunistic 18-year-old student played by Tom Blyth.

Just as in the "Hunger Games" films led by Jennifer Lawrence's Katniss Everdeen, the new one proves how much you can sacrifice in story when you've got a thrilling young performer commanding the screen.

Francis Lawrence's prequel often wobbles, especially in the early going. And yet, in the end, "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," propelled by Blyth's performance, manages to be the deepest expression yet of the series' melodrama of adolescence. In Panem, the only thing more tragic than the suffering inflicted by adults on the young may be a bright kid warping wickedly into one of those elders, too.

That generational divide was always at the heart of the appeal of "The Hungers Games," a fantasy where no adult or institution can be trusted, and the normal pressures of teendom are amplified in a modern, televised Roman Coliseum - an "American Idol" with murder - concocted by elders. It's madness shrugged off as, "That's just the way it is."

In "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," we see how it got to be that way. The 10th annual Hunger Games are approaching but it feels more like pre-Super Bowl times when the NFL and the AFL played in separate leagues. The broadcast is low rent, the ratings are poor and the games themselves are staged in a dilapidated stadium.

With little food in the fridge, Coriolanus is living with his cousin Tigris (Hunter Schafer) and grandmother (Fionnula Flanagan). Their family has fallen on hard times, in part because of a family rivalry with Casca Highbottom (Peter Dinklage), the dean of the academy who harbors hatred for the Snows.

Warrior

As the students gather amid Third Reich architectures and the games' founder Volumnia Gaul (Viola Davis, majestic in blue, with a turquoise eye) gazes on, Coriolanus is assigned his tribute, Lucy Gray Baird, a bold young woman from District 12 (also the home of Katniss) who wears a rainbow skirt and sports a dubious Southern accent. During the reaping ceremony, she makes an immediate impression, putting a snake down the back of a rival and bursting into song for the cameras. See, now there's concision, I thought. You get your songbird and snake, straight off.

Lawrence's Katniss was a thrilling female warrior whose seizing of center stage had reverberations off screen, paving the way for blockbuster female protagonists. Rachel Zegler's Lucy Gray is inevitably a disappointment by comparison. Lawrence's film, scripted by Michael Arndt and Michael Lesslie, for a while has the stale feeling of an unneeded retread. The tonal fluctuations, always a tricky balance in Panem, can be ridiculous. The stadium is abruptly bombed by unseen rebels. Once the games begin, one tribute concocts rabies.

The main thing holding our attention at this point is Jason Schwartzman's Lucretius Flickerman, a TV host with a Salvador Dali mustache who wants the games wrapped up just so he can make his dinner reservations.

But "Songbirds and Snakes" sneakily begins making a case for itself. The relationship between Coriolanus and Lucy Gray is compellingly complex. He works desperately to help her survive the games because he believes in her, and maybe loves her, but also because her success benefits him, too. Whether Lucy Gray is as purehearted as her songs, too, is up for debate. Both, we sense, are cunningly playing the hands they've been delt, seeking an advantage where they can. When Coriolanus begins making suggestions for the games to Volumnia, he proves himself a natural-born marketer.

That there's tension in Coriolanus' character, considering we know how he ultimately ends up, is a tribute to just how good Blyth is. We've by now seen plenty of prequels that show us how some famous villain broke bad, but there's nothing in Blyth's performance that telegraphs his future. He's a sincere striver - we root for him because of his poverty and his puck - who's operating in the society he's found himself. He's a villain born entirely of circumstance.

"The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" extends the saga for a third act that takes places in District 12, an addition that another franchise might have saved for the next installment. But it's also where that tragedy of "The Hunger Games," and Coriolanus' fate, earns some of the Shakespearean touches that have liberally been sprinkled throughout. (Shakespeare's "Coriolanus," is likewise about an ambiguous warrior set amid times of famine and class struggle.)

"The Hunger Games" kicked off a YA craze in film that had its ups and downs but petered out several years ago. Whether "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" is enough to relight those embers remains to be seen, but it is a reminder how good a platform they offered young actors. It's a ritual worth returning to.

"The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes," a Lionsgate release is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for strong violent content and disturbing material. Running time: 157 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

ARAB TIMES
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2023

LOS ANGELES: **John Bailey**, a cinematographer who led the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences during the initial #MeToo reckoning, died Friday at 81.

Bailey died "peacefully in his sleep" in Los Angeles, his wife, **Carol Littleton**, said in a statement distributed by the film academy.

Bailey - who worked on films ranging from "Ordinary People" to "Groundhog Day" to "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" - was the first cinematographer to preside over the Academy, serving two terms that spanned 2017-2019.

Those were tumultuous years for the film industry. When Bailey took over, the Oscars alone had been grappling with falling ratings, controversies over the homogeneity of its choices (#OscarsSoWhite) and the infamous envelope flub in 2017 that marred the best picture win for "Moonlight." Scarcely two months into his presidency, The New York Times and The New Yorker released bombshell reports about sexual assault allegations against movie mogul **Harvey Weinstein** that ignited an industry-wide reckoning about power structures and abuses.

The Academy's Board of Governors voted to expel Weinstein shortly after the reports. Afterward, with questions arising about other members who remained in good standing despite being accused, Bailey said in a memo to members that the organization "cannot, and will not, be an inquisitorial court, but we can be a part of a larger initiative to define standards of behavior and to support the vulnerable women and men who may be at personal and career risk because of violations of ethical standards by their peers."

The Academy subsequently adopted a code of conduct stipulating it was no place for "people who abuse their status, power or influence in a manner that violates standards of decency," and made it easier to suspend or expel members.

"I may be a 75-year-old white male, but I'm every bit as gratified as the youngest of you here that the fossilized bedrock of many of **Hollywood**'s worst abuses are being jackhammered into oblivion," Bailey said at the 2018 Oscars luncheon.

Soon after, Bailey himself was accused of attempting to touch a woman inappropriately on a movie set a decade prior. Bailey denied the allegation and an Academy investigation determined no further action was required in March 2018.

Bailey

Renne

❑ ❑ ❑

MILAN: The new creative director of **Moschino, Davide Renne**, has died after a sudden illness, the owner of the Milan-based fashion house announced on Friday.

Renne, 46, took over the role of creative director on Nov. 1, and his first collection was to have been shown during Milan Fashion Week womenswear previews in February.

"With Davide, we were working on an ambitious project, in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and optimism for the future,'' said **Massimo Ferretti**, chairman of Moschino-owner Aeffe SpA. "Even though he was only with us for a very short time, Davide was able to immediately make himself loved and respected."

Renne arrived from Gucci, where he had worked for two decades, reaching the position of head designer of womenswear. He was taking over for Jeremy Scott, who resigned in March after a decade at Moschino, known for its wacky and ironic collections. (AP)

People & Places

People

Harry vs Daily Mail

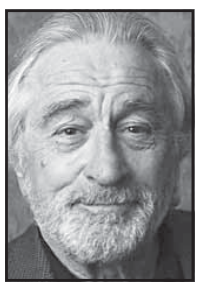
Jury awards $1.2m to De Niro's ex-assistant

NEW YORK, Nov 11, (AP): A jury awarded more than $1.2 million to **Robert De Niro**'s former personal assistant Thursday, finding one of his companies responsible for subjecting her to a toxic work environment.

While the jury found De Niro was not personally liable for the abuse, it said his company, Canal Productions, engaged in gender discrimination and retaliation against former assistant Graham Chase Robinson and should make two payments of $632,142 to her.

De Niro, who spent three days at the two-week trial - including two on the witness stand - has been ensnared in dueling lawsuits with Robinson since she quit in April 2019. He was not in the courtroom when the verdict was read aloud Thursday afternoon.

Robinson, 41, smiled as the verdict was being delivered. After the jury left the room, she hugged her lawyers.



De Niro

Outside the courthouse, she smiled broadly and at other times seemed to be near tears. She did not comment.

Lawyers on both sides claimed victory.

"We're thrilled with the verdict," Robinson's attorney, Brent Hannafan, said as he stood with his client outside the courthouse. "Couldn't be happier."

Meanwhile, De Niro attorney Richard Schoenstein called the verdict "a great victory for Mr. De Niro."

"He is absolved. He is not liable for anything that was charged against him at all," Schoenstein said. "There's a modest award against the company. But, you know, they were looking for $12 million."

The lawyer said De Niro's lawyers could try to reduce the award with post-verdict motions to the judge, but he wasn't sure there would be any. He said he didn't know if there would be an appeal.

Robinson had testified that De Niro, 80, and his girlfriend, Tiffany Chen, teamed up against her to turn a job she once loved into a nightmare.

Testified

De Niro and Chen each testified that Robinson became the problem when her aspirations to move beyond Canal Productions, the De Niro company that employed her, led her to make escalating demands to remain on the job.

Emails in which Chen told De Niro that she thought Robinson was having "imaginary intimacy" with him and wished she was his wife were shown to jurors. Robinson testified that she never had romantic interest in De Niro.

In two days on the witness stand, the actor told jurors that he boosted Robinson's salary from less than $100,000 annually to $300,000 and elevated her title to vice president of production and finance at her request, even though her responsibilities remained largely the same.

When she quit, De Niro said, Robinson stole about $85,000 in airline miles from him, betrayed his trust and violated his unwritten rules to use common sense and always do the right thing.

At times, De Niro acknowledged from the witness stand many of the claims Robinson made to support her $12 million gender discrimination and retaliation lawsuit, including that he may have told her that his personal trainer was paid more than her in part because he had a family to support.

He agreed he had asked her to scratch his back on at least two occasions, dismissing a question about it with: "Ok, twice? You got me!"

He admitted that he had berated her, though he disputed ever aiming a profanity her way, saying: "I was never abusive, ever."

❑ ❑ ❑

A lawsuit by **Prince Harry**, **Elton John** and five other public figures accusing a newspaper publisher of using private detectives and listening devices to illegally snoop on them should go to a full trial, a British judge ruled Friday.

Judge **Matthew Nicklin** rejected a bid by the publisher of the Daily Mail to dismiss the case without trial, saying defense lawyers had not delivered a "knockout blow" to the claims.

The claimants, who include John's husband **David Furnish** and actors **Elizabeth Hurley** and **Sadie Frost**, accuse publisher Associated Newspapers Ltd. of unlawfully gathering information by bugging homes and cars, recording phone conversations and using deceit to obtain medical records.

Harry said the publisher targeted him and the people closest to him by unlawfully hacking voicemails, tapping landlines, obtaining itemized phone bills and the flight information of his then-girlfriend, **Chelsy Davy**.

Associated Newspapers strongly denies the allegations and asked the judge to throw out the case. At hearings in March its lawyers argued that the claims -- which date as far back as 1993 -- were brought too late and that claimants were relying on confidential evidence the papers turned over to a 2012 public inquiry into tabloid wrongdoing, sparked by revelations of phone hacking by the now-defunct News of the World.

Confidential

Nicklin ruled that the claimants cannot rely on the documents handed over to the inquiry, which were ordered to be kept confidential by its head, **Brian Leveson**. They allegedly include records of payments to private investigators by the Daily Mail and the Mail on Sunday.

But the judge said the case can go ahead because the claims "have a real prospect of succeeding."

"Associated has not been able to deliver a 'knockout blow' to the claims of any of these claimants," the judge said in a written ruling.

He rejected the publisher's argument that the case should be dismissed because the claims had not been brought within six years of the alleged offense.

"In my judgment, each claimant has a real prospect of demonstrating that Associated, or those for whom Associated is responsible, concealed from him/her the relevant facts upon which a worthwhile claim of unlawful information gathering could have been advanced," the judge wrote.

The seven claimants, who also include anti-racism campaigner **Doreen Lawrence** and former politician **Simon Hughes**, said they were "delighted" by the judgment.

"As we have maintained since the outset, we bring our claims over the deplorable and illegal activities which took place over many years, including private investigators being hired to place secretly listening devices inside our cars and homes, the tapping of our phone calls, corrupt payments to police for inside information, and the illegal accessing of our medical information from hospitals and financial information from banks," they said in a statement issued through their lawyers.

SZA, winner of the award for best pop duo/group performance for 'Kiss Me More,' poses in the press room at the 64th Annual Grammy Awards on April 3, 2022, in Las Vegas. SZA received nine Grammy nominations on Friday. (AP)

Olivia Rodrigo performs on NBC's 'Today' show at Rockefeller Plaza on Friday, Sept. 8, in New York. Rodrigo received six Grammy nominations on Friday. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: "Nope" star **Keke Palmer** alleges in civil court documents that she suffered physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her ex-boyfriend, with whom she shares a son.

The filing this week in Los Angeles County Superior Court included a request for a domestic violence restraining order against **Darius Jackson**, 29. Judge **Wendy L. Wilcox** on Thursday issued a temporary order pending a Dec. 5 hearing.

Telephone messages seeking comment from Jackson were left on voicemail at a number associated with his address as listed in the court filing. The documents did not list any attorney who might comment on his behalf.

Incidents of violence, both recent and in the past, were described in a legal declaration under the actor's real name, **Lauren Palmer**. She said she dated Jackson from June 2021 until the relationship ended this past October because of physical and emotional abuse.

"On Sunday, November 5, Darius trespassed into my home, physically attacked me, knocked me over my couch and pinned me down, and stole my phone after I threatened to call the police. This was all caught on home surveillance video," the declaration said.

Among other incidents, she wrote, Jackson became "irrationally angry" at a party in February 2022 when she showed him a picture of herself in a bikini demonstrating workout results. At home, the declaration stated, she was slammed onto the floor and slapped, and the next morning she was grabbed by the neck and body-slammed onto a stairway. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

LOS ANGELES: With new categories, SZA, and "Barbie" - there's a lot to discuss regarding the 2024 Grammy Award nominations. Who didn't make the cut? What were the best surprises of all? Let's take a look.

There's a lot to love about the nominations for the 66th Grammy Awards - and quite a bit to be a little confused by. **Reneé Rapp**, **Peso Pluma** and **Pink Pantheress** are absent from the best new artist category despite having remarkable years. Rapp's "Snow Angel" was the biggest debut solo album from a female artist this year.

Rapp and PinkPantheress were both shut out and Peso Pluma only picked up one nomination: best música Mexicana album (including Tejano) for his third studio album, "Génesis."

In fact, in a year dominated by música Mexicana, it is surprising to see no nods for Eslabon Armado or Grupo Frontera, particularly for their songs "Ella Baila Sola" with **Peso Pluma** and "Un x100to" with **Bad Bunny**, respectively. **Natanael Cano** and **Fuerza Regida** are also noticeably absent.

This year, there are only three nominees for best música urbana album - because the category received fewer than 40 entries - and accounts for Karol G's sole nomination, for her historic 2023 album "Mañana Será Bonito."

Undeniably, country music has had a massive 2023. In July, country acts held the top three spots on the Hot 100 for the first time: Controversy hoisted **Jason Aldean**'s "Try That In a Small Town" to No. 1, followed by **Morgan Wallen**'s "Last Night" and Luke Combs' cover of **Tracy Chapman**'s "Fast Car."

Also, over the summer, country singer **Oliver Anthony** Music's became the first artist to debut on the Hot 100 at the top of it, with the viral "Rich Men North of Richmond." Aldean and Anthony's dominance wasn't long - and Combs did earn a 2024 Grammy nomination for best country solo performance - but Wallen stands out as an obvious exclusion.

While "Last Night" is nominated for best country song, a songwriter's award, Wallen himself isn't despite his successful year. His latest album, "One Thing at a Time," had, as of Oct. 14, spent 16 weeks at the top - which meant he's held the top spot for nearly 40% of the year so far ... and his record was released in March. (AP)

Palmer

Aldean

Music

Women outpace men in key categories

SZA leads Grammy nominations

LOS ANGELES, Nov 11, (AP): Killing her ex? That's a bad idea. Writing "Kill Bill" and releasing her critically acclaimed sophomore album "SOS" earlier this year? That was a great one. SZA is the lead contender for the 66th Grammy Awards, with nine nominations announced Friday.

"Kill Bill," her revenge anthem cloaked in an R&B ballad, earned her nods for record of the year, song of the year, and best R&B performance. "SOS" is also up for album of the year and best progressive R&B album. The 2024 ceremony will mark the second time SZA has been nominated for record, album, and song of the year in the same year.

And just like at the box office, "Barbie" will be seen - and heard - at the Grammys. Music from the hit film's soundtrack earned 11 nominations, including nabbing four of the five slots in the visual media song category.

If there is an overall trend in the 2024 nominations, it's that female acts outperformed their male counterparts. The majority of leading nominees are women and include superstars like Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish, Miley Cyrus and Olivia Rodrigo. In both the record and album of the year categories, the only man represented is Jon Batiste.

"Seeing the women nominees this year, and the number of them, was not a surprise but it was something that made me happy," the Recording Academy CEO and President Harvey Mason jr. told The Associated Press. He believes that representation allows the next group of creators to look at the nominees and say: "Maybe somebody will love what I do one day, or maybe I have an opportunity to express myself or voice my thoughts like that person."

Performance

SZA, of course, leads the charge, also picking up nominations for best traditional R&B performance ("Love Language"), best R&B song ("Snooze"), best melodic rap performance ("Low"), and best pop duo/group performance ("Ghost in the Machine"). The last features Phoebe Bridgers, who - alongside Victoria Monét, the only leading nominee also up for best new artist - boasts the second-most nominations with seven.

Six of Bridgers' nods are with her band boygenius, nominated for the first time for record of the year, album of the year, best rock performance, best rock song, best alternative music performance, and best alternative music album.

Also earning six nominations: Swift, Rodrigo, Cyrus, Eilish, Brandy Clark, Batiste and producer Jack Antonoff.

Only recordings released between Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 15, 2023 were eligible.

In addition to Monét, the best new artist category is rounded out by Gracie Abrams, Fred again.., Ice Spice, Jelly Roll, Coco Jones, Noah Kahan and The War and Treaty.

For album of the year, it's again Batiste, boygenius, Cyrus, Rodrigo, Swift, and SZA, but with the addition of Lana Del Rey's "Did you know that there's a tunnel under Ocean Blvd" and Janelle Monáe's "The Age of Pleasure."

The song of the year category features Del Rey's "A&W," Swift's "Anti-Hero," Batiste's "Butterfly," Cyrus' "Flowers," SZA's "Kill Bill," Rodrigo's "vampire," and two tracks from the "Barbie" soundtrack: Dua Lipa's "Dance The Night" and Eilish's "What Was I Made For?"

While "I'm Just Ken" from "Barbie" did get a nomination, it's in a songwriting category - so actor Ryan Gosling is not up for a Grammy.

What else is missing? Some fans may notice a dearth of Latin and country musicians in the main categories.

"We need to do more work with our country voters and continue to invite more country voters to the process," says Mason jr. "Another thing that surprised me was, as big of a year that Latin had this year, (that) we didn't have more Latin representation in some of the general fields."

"We want to make sure that our membership is representative of the music that's being created and concerned," he added. "So, these nominations always inform us on what we're going to do over the next few years.

Partial list of nominees for the 66th annual 'Grammy Awards'

LOS ANGELES, Nov 11, (AP): A partial list of nominees in the top categories at the 66th annual Grammy Awards, announced Friday by The Recording Academy.

■ Album of the year: "World Music Radio," Jon Batiste; "The Record," boygenius; "Endless Summer Vacation," Miley Cyrus; "Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd," Lana Del Rey; "The Age of Pleasure," Janelle Monáe; "GUTS," Olivia Rodrigo; "Midnights," Taylor Swift; "SOS," SZA.

■ Record of the year: "Worship," Jon Batiste; "Not Strong Enough," boygenius; "Flowers," Miley Cyrus; "What Was I Made For?", Billie Eilish; "On My Mama," Victoria Monét; "Vampire," Olivia Rodrigo; "Anti-Hero," Taylor Swift; "Kill Bill," SZA.

■ Song of the year (songwriter's award): "A&W," Jack Antonoff, Lana Del Rey and Sam Dew; "Anti-Hero," Jack Antonoff and Taylor Swift; "Butterfly," Jon Batiste and Dan Wilson; "Dance the Night," Caroline Ailin, Dua Lipa, Mark Ronson and Andrew Wyatt; "Flowers," Miley Cyrus, Gregory Aldae Hein and Michael Pollack; "Kill Bill," Rob Bisel, Carter Lang and Solána Rowe; "Vampire," Daniel Nigro and Olivia Rodrigo; "What Was I Made For?", Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell.

■ Best new artist: Gracie Abrams; Fred again..; Ice Spice; Jelly Roll; Coco Jones; Noah Kahan; Victoria Monét; The War and Treaty.

■ Songwriter of the Year: Edgar Barrera; Jessie Jo Dillon; Shane McAnally; Theron Thomas; Justin Tranter.

■ Best pop solo performance: "Flowers," Miley Cyrus; "Paint the Town Red," Doja Cat; "What Was I Made For?", Billie Eilish; "Vampire," Olivia Rodrigo; "Anti-Hero," Taylor Swift.

■ Best pop duo/group performance: "Thousand Miles," Miley Cyrus featuring Brandi Carlile; "Candy Necklace," Lana Del Rey featuring Jon Batiste; "Never Felt So Alone," Labrinth featuring Billie Eilish; "Karma," Taylor Swift featuring Ice Spice; "Ghost in the Machine," SZA featuring Phoebe Bridgers.

■ Best pop vocal album: "Chemistry," Kelly Clarkson; "Endless Summer Vacation," Miley Cyrus; "GUTS," Olivia Rodrigo; -(Subtract), Ed Sheeran; "Midnights," Taylor Swift.

■ Best rap album: "Her Loss," Drake and 21 Savage; "Michael," Killer Mike; "Heroes & Villains," Metro Boomin; "King's Disease III," Nas; "Utopia," Travis Scott.

■ Best country album: "Rolling Up the Welcome Mat," Kelsea Ballerini; "Brothers Osborne," Brothers Osborne; "Zach Bryan," Zach Bryan; "Rustin' in the Rain," Tyler Childers; "Bell Bottom Country," Lainey Wilson.

■ Best dance/electronic album: "Blackbox Life Recorder 21F," Aphex Twin; "Loading," James Blake; "Higher Than Ever Before," Disclosure; "Strong," Romy and Fred again..; "Rumble," Skrillex, Fred again.. and Flowdan.

■ Best rock album: "But Here We Are," Foo Fighters; "Starcatcher," Greta Van Fleet; "72 Seasons," Metallica; "This Is Why," Paramore; "In Times New Roman…," Queens of the Stone Age.

■ Best alternative music album: "The Car," Arctic Monkeys; "The Record," boygenius; "Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd," Lana Del Rey; "Cracker Island," Gorillaz; "I Inside the Old Year Dying," PJ Harvey.

45th Ear, Nose and Throat symposium to start Nov 14

Kuwait ENT conference to highlight ear surgeries, implant innovations

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11, (KUNA): The 45th Kuwait Ear, Nose, and Throat Conference is set to commence on the 14th of this month, sponsored by Health Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi. Dr. Mutlaq Al-Sihan, Chairman of the Ear, Nose, and Throat Departments Council, and the Conference, announced that the three-day event will showcase advancements in ear surgeries, cochlear implants, and implantable hearing devices.

During the conference, various specialized topics will be discussed, such as nasal surgeries, sleep diseases, and snoring, including sleep surgeries. Workshops on reconstructive and cosmetic surgeries for the head, neck, and face, hearing diseases and treatments, cochlear implant patient rehabilitation, and speech pathology are scheduled.

Featuring a diverse range of scientific papers and surgical techniques, the conference will include a workshop at the Zain Center laboratory for training on microscopic ear surgeries for Kuwaiti Board doctors. Distinguished consultants and experts from countries worldwide, including the United States, Britain, Canada, Austria, Italy, Turkey, and India, as well as Arab consultants from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait, will participate.

Dr. Mutlaq Al-Sihan

The conference aims to disseminate knowledge about the latest surgical techniques from international medical schools, aligning with the Ministry of Health's objectives to enhance local expertise and elevate the scientific and surgical proficiency of otolaryngologists across various health sectors. This year's conference offers participants 24 points of continuing medical education, expecting significant participation from professionals in the ear, nose, and throat field, including audiologists, balance doctors, and speech-language pathologists from both the Ministry of Health and the private sector.

Experts fear opioid crisis repeat

Mind-altering ketamine takes center stage as pain therapy

WASHINGTON, Nov 11, (AP): As US doctors scale back their use of opioid painkillers, a new option for hard-to-treat pain is taking root: ketamine, the decades-old surgical drug that is now a trendy psychedelic therapy.

Prescriptions for ketamine have soared in recent years, driven by for-profit clinics and telehealth services offering the medication as a treatment for pain, depression, anxiety and other conditions. The generic drug can be purchased cheaply and prescribed by most physicians and some nurses, regardless of their training.

With limited research on its effectiveness against pain, some experts worry the US may be repeating mistakes that gave rise to the opioid crisis: overprescribing a questionable drug that carries significant safety and abuse risks.

"There's a paucity of options for pain and so there's a tendency to just grab the next thing that can make a difference," said Dr. Padma Gulur, a Duke University pain specialist who is studying ketamine's use. "A medical journal will publish a few papers saying, 'Oh, look, this is doing good things,' and then there's rampant off-label use, without necessarily the science behind it."

When Gulur and her colleagues tracked 300 patients receiving ketamine at Duke, more than a third of them reported significant side effects that required professional attention, such as hallucinations, troubling thoughts and visual disturbances.

Research

Ketamine also didn't result in lower rates of opioid prescribing in the months following treatment, a common goal of therapy, according to Gulur. Her research is under review for medical journal publication.

Ketamine was approved more than 50 years ago as a powerful anesthetic for patients undergoing surgery. At lower doses, it can produce psychedelic, out-of-body experiences, which made it a popular club drug in the 1990s. With its recent adoption for pain, patients are increasingly encountering those same effects.

Daniel Bass, of Southgate, Kentucky, found the visual disturbances "horrifying." His doctors prescribed four- to six-hour IV infusions of ketamine for pain related to a rare bone and joint disorder. Seated in a bare hospital room with no stimulation or guidance on the drug's psychological effects, Bass says he felt "like a lab rat."

Still, he credits ketamine with reducing his pain during the year that he received twice-a-month infusions.

"No matter how horrific an experience is, if it allows me to be more functional, I will do it," Bass said.

Ketamine targets a brain chemical messenger called glutamate, which is thought to play a role in both pain and depression. It's unclear whether the psychedelic experience is part of the drug's therapeutic effect, though some practitioners consider it essential.

"We want patients to disassociate or feel separate from their pain, depression or anxiety," said Dr. David Mahjoubi, owner of Ketamine Healing Clinic in Los Angeles. "If they feel like they're just sitting in the chair the whole time, we actually give them more."

Mahjoubi's practice is typical of the burgeoning industry: He offers IV ketamine for alcohol addiction, chronic pain, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. The ketamine doses for those indications are well below those used for surgery, but Mahjoubi favors higher doses for pain than for psychiatric conditions.

Patients pay cash because most insurers don't cover non-surgical uses of ketamine, none of which are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Mahjoubi's background is in anesthesiology, not psychiatry or addiction.

Approved

Patients can pay extra for ketamine nasal sprays and tablets to use between infusions. Those formulations are also not FDA approved and are compounded by specialty pharmacies.

Sending ketamine through the mail has become its own profitable business for telehealth services, such as MindBloom, which jumped into the space after regulators relaxed online prescribing rules during COVID-19.

Pain specialists who study ketamine say there's little evidence for those versions.

"The literature for the nasal and oral formulations is pretty scant," said Dr. Eric Schwenk of Thomas Jefferson University. "There's just not a lot of good evidence to guide you."

Demand for ketamine has sent prescriptions soaring more than 500% since 2017, according to Epic Research, which analyzed the trend using a database of more than 125 million patients. In each year, pain was the No. 1 condition for which ketamine was prescribed, though depression has been rising quickly.

The prescribing boom has led to shortages of manufactured ketamine, driving up sales of compounded versions.

There is more evidence for ketamine's use against depression than for pain. In 2019, the FDA approved a ketamine-related chemical developed by Johnson & Johnson for severe depression. The drug, Spravato, is subject to strict FDA safety rules on where and how it can be administered by doctors.

Medical equipment used to customize ketamine infusions for patients is seen at the Duke Specialty Infusion Center, Friday, Oct. 27, 2023, in Durham, N.C. (AP)

It's a step toward one day restoring sight

Man gets first eye transplant plus new face

NEW YORK, Nov 11, (AP): Surgeons have performed the world's first transplant of an entire human eye, an extraordinary addition to a face transplant - although it's far too soon to know if the man will ever see through his new left eye.

An accident with high-voltage power lines had destroyed most of Aaron James' face and one eye. His right eye still works. But surgeons at NYU Langone Health hoped replacing the missing one would yield better cosmetic results for his new face, by supporting the transplanted eye socket and lid.

The NYU team announced Thursday that so far, it's doing just that. James is recovering well from the dual transplant last May and the donated eye looks remarkably healthy.

"It feels good. I still don't have any movement in it yet. My eyelid, I can't blink yet. But I'm getting sensation now," James told The Associated Press as doctors examined his progress recently.

"You got to start somewhere, there's got to be a first person somewhere," added James, 46, of Hot Springs, Arkansas. "Maybe you'll learn something from it that will help the next person."

Connect

Today, transplants of the cornea - the clear tissue in front of the eye - are common to treat certain types of vision loss. But transplanting the whole eye - the eyeball, its blood supply and the critical optic nerve that must connect it to the brain - is considered a moonshot in the quest to cure blindness.

Whatever happens next, James' surgery offers scientists an unprecedented window into how the human eye tries to heal.

"We're not claiming that we are going to restore sight," said Dr. Eduardo Rodriguez, NYU's plastic surgery chief, who led the transplant. "But there's no doubt in my mind we are one step closer."

Some specialists had feared the eye would quickly shrivel like a raisin. Instead, when Rodriguez propped open James' left eyelid last month, the donated hazel-colored eye was as plump and full of fluid as his own blue eye. Doctors see good blood flow and no sign of rejection.

Now researchers have begun analyzing scans of James' brain that detected some puzzling signals from that all-important but injured optic nerve.

One scientist who has long studied how to make eye transplants a reality called the surgery exciting.

"It's an amazing validation" of animal experiments that have kept transplanted eyes alive, said Dr. Jeffrey Goldberg, chair of ophthalmology at Stanford University.

The hurdle is how to regrow the optic nerve, although animal studies are making strides, Goldberg added. He praised the NYU team's "audacity" in even aiming for optic nerve repair and hopes the transplant will spur more research.

This combination of photos provided by NYU Langone Health in November 2023 shows Aaron James before and after his high-voltage electricity accident and after a facial and eye transplant. (AP)

"We're really on the precipice of being able to do this," Goldberg said.

James was working for a power line company in June 2021 when he was shocked by a live wire. He nearly died. Ultimately he lost his left arm, requiring a prosthetic. His damaged left eye was so painful it had to be removed. Multiple reconstructive surgeries couldn't repair extensive facial injuries including his missing nose and lips.

Therapy

James pushed through physical therapy until he was strong enough to escort his daughter Allie to a high school homecoming ceremony, wearing a face mask and eye patch. Still he required breathing and feeding tubes, and longed to smell, taste and eat solid food again.

"In his mind and his heart, it's him - so I didn't care that, you know, he didn't have a nose. But I did care that it bothered him," said his wife, Meagan James.

Face transplants remain rare and risky. James' is only the 19th in the U.S., the fifth Rodriguez has performed. The eye experiment added even more complexity. But James figured he'd be no worse off if the donated eye failed.

Three months after James was placed on the national transplant waiting list, a matching donor was found. Kidneys, a liver and pancreas from the donor, a man in his 30s, saved three other people.

During James' 21-hour operation, surgeons added another experimental twist: When they spliced together the donated optic nerve to what remained of James' original, they injected special stem cells from the donor in hopes of spurring its repair.

Last month, tingles heralded healing facial nerves. James can't yet open the eyelid, and wears a patch to protect it. But as Rodriguez pushed on the closed eye, James felt sensation - although on his nose rather than his eyelid, presumably until slow-growing nerves get reoriented. The surgeon also detected subtle movements beginning in muscles around the eye.

Then came a closer look. NYU ophthalmologist Dr. Vaidehi Dedania ran a battery of tests. She found expected damage in the light-sensing retina in the back of the eye. But she said it appears to have enough special cells called photoreceptors to do the job of converting light to electrical signals, one step in creating vision.

Normally, the optic nerve then would send those signals to the brain to be interpreted. James' optic nerve clearly hasn't healed. Yet when light was flashed into the donated eye during an MRI, the scan recorded some sort of brain signaling.

That both excited and baffled researchers, although it wasn't the right type for vision and may simply be a fluke, cautioned Dr. Steven Galetta, NYU's neurology chair. Only time and more study may tell.

Still, the surgery marks "a technical tour de force," said Dr. David Klassen, chief medical officer of the United Network for Organ Sharing, which runs the nation's transplant system. "You can learn a tremendous amount from a single transplant" that could propel the field.

As for James, "we're just taking it one day at a time," he said.

Also:

NEW YORK: An additional 1.2 million chickens will be slaughtered to prevent the spread of the bird flu after the virus was confirmed on an Iowa egg farm in the second massive case this week.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship announced the latest bird flu infection at a farm in Taylor County Friday, and Iowa's governor immediately declared a disaster there to make sure the state has the resources to respond quickly.

The Iowa case is just the latest one in the outbreak that began early last year and has prompted officials to kill a total of nearly 63 million birds. Earlier this week, 1 million chickens were killed on a Minnesota egg farm. But the vast majority of the cases, or nearly 58 million birds, occurred last year

Anytime a case of bird flu is found the entire flock is killed to help keep the highly contagious virus from spreading to another farm.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has been finding fewer wild birds carrying the virus this year, which suggests that some ducks and geese may be developing immunity. Farmers also have been working hard to keep the virus off their farms, and the government has been trying to respond quickly anytime bird flu is found.

Iowa remains the hardest hit state in the nation, with more than 17 million birds killed there since the outbreak began. The state is the nation's leading egg producer and egg farms tend to have the most birds. In one case last year, 5 million chickens were slaughtered on a single Iowa egg farm.

Nebraska comes next with more than 6.7 million birds killed, followed by Colorado's 6.26 million and Minnesota's 5.6 million.

Most of the recent cases this fall have been found in Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa along one of the major migratory paths ducks and geese follow as they fly south for winter.

Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant (35) drives on Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Friday, Nov. 10, 2023, in Phoenix. (AP)

Lakers rally past Suns, snap three-game skid

76ers open in-season tourney with 7th win in a row

PHOENIX, Nov 11, (AP): LeBron James scored 32 points, D'Angelo Russell had 19 and the Los Angeles Lakers snapped a three-game losing streak, beating the Phoenix Suns 122-119 on Friday night in the NBA In-Season Tournament.

James was 11 of 17 from the field, making 3 of 4 3s. He had 11 rebounds and six assists in 36 minutes in one of nine tournament games on the night.

Kevin Durant led Phoenix with 38 points and Bradley Beal added 24 - 20 in the first half - in his Suns debut. Devin Booker missed his fourth straight game because of a strained right calf.

Austin Reaves made a layup with 9:25 remaining - part of a 14-0 run - to give the Lakers their first lead of the second half at 97-96. Reaves added a couple mid-range jumpers in the fourth to help Los Angeles stay ahead.

Cam Reddish had 17 points, including a corner 3 on a pass from James that put the Lakers up 118-113 with 1:10 remaining. Los Angeles grabbed three offensive rebounds on the position before Reddish made the shot.

76ers 114, Pistons 106

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid had 33 points and 16 rebounds and Philadelphia won its seventh straight game and handed Detroit its seventh loss in a row.

Tyrese Maxey had 29 points and 10 assists for the 76ers, undefeated since an opening loss at Milwaukee. Former Piston Tobias Harris had 24 points.

BASKETBALL

The 76ers got a brief injury scare in the third quarter when Cunningham lost his footing on the gray court and slid into Embiid's legs as he was taking a jumper. Embiid got up slowly and limped off, but was able to return after a timeout. Killian Hayes led Detroit with 23 points.

Mavericks 144, Clippers 126

In Dallas, Luka Doncic scored 44 points and Dallas routed Los Angeles, handing the Clippers their third straight loss since James Harden joined the lineup.

Doncic was 17 of 21 from the field, going 6 of 9 from 3-point range. Kyrie Irving added 27 points, hitting 5 of 8 3-pointers, to help Dallas improve to 1-1 in the tournament after an opening loss at Denver.

Kawhi Leonard led the Clippers with 26 points in their tournament opener. Harden, who joined the team last week following the Nov. 1 trade from Philadelphia, had 14 points - all in the first quarter.

Timberwolves 117, Spurs 110

In San Antonio, Karl-Anthony Towns had 29 points and 12 rebounds and Minnesota overcame 29 points from Victor Wembanyama to beat San Antonio.

Anthony Edwards added 28 points and Rudy Gobert had 11 points and 10 rebounds to help Minnesota win its fifth straight.

Wembanyama was 12 for 21 from the field and 3 for 7 on 3-pointers. Devin Vassell also had 29 points for San Antonio.

Celtics 121, Nets 107

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored 28 points, making five of Boston's 19 3-pointers against Brooklyn.

Jayson Tatum added 23 points and 10 rebounds to help the Celtics snap a two-game skid.

Lonnie Walker IV led the Nets with 20 points and seven rebounds.

Kings 105, Thunder 98

In Sacramento, Calif., Domantas Sabonis had 17 points, 13 assists and 12 rebounds to move into sole possession of second place on the Kings' career list for triple-doubles, leading Sacramento past Oklahoma City.

Sabonis had his first triple-double of the season and 15th with the Kings, breaking a tie with Chris Webber. Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson holds the franchise record with 176. Sabonis has 33 career triple-doubles.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 33 points for the Thunder.

Rockets 104, Pelicans 101

In Houston, Jalen Green scored 25 points, Alperen Sengun added 24 and Houston beat New Orleans for its fifth straight victory.

Fred VanVleet scored 10 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter for the Rockets in the tournament opener for both teams.

Brandon Ingram led New Orleans with 31 points. Zion Williamson had 24 points and eight rebounds.

Jazz 127, Grizzlies 121

In Memphis, Tenn., Lauri Markkanen and Jordan Clarkson each scored 26 points and Utah Jazz held off Memphis.

John Collins added 18, and Ochai Agbaji had 15 to help the Jazz snap a four-game losing streak in their tournament opener.

Desmond Bane led Memphis with 37 points, one short of his career high.

An NBA-worst 1-8 and are 0-2 in the tournament, the Grizzlies are without star guard Ja Morant while he serves a 25-game suspension to start the season. He was penalized for a second online video showing him flashing a handgun.

Hornets 124, Wizards 117

In Washington, Gordon Hayward scored 27 points, LaMelo Ball added 25 and Charlotte beat Washington. Mark Williams added 21 points and career-high 24 rebounds for the Hornets.

Kyle Kuzma scored 17 points for Washington.

Kansas forward K.J. Adams Jr. (24) gets past Manhattan forward Daniel Rouzan (23) to dunk the ball during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game Friday, Nov. 10, 2023, in Lawrence, Kansas. (AP)

Purdue rolls over Morehead State

Dickinson, Adams lead Kansas past Manhattan in 'tuneup' for Kentucky

LAWRENCE, Kansas, Nov 11, (AP): Hunter Dickinson had 18 points, KJ Adams Jr. dunked his way to 14 and top-ranked Kansas blew out Manhattan 99-61 on Friday night in a final tuneup before facing No. 16 Kentucky in the Champions Classic next week.

Kevin McCullar Jr. and freshman Johnny Furphy added 15 points apiece for the Jayhawks (2-0), who gave Bill Self an easy night in their first game since he signed a lifetime contract that made him the highest-paid basketball coach at a public university.

Seydou Traore had 16 points for the Jaspers (1-1). Brett Rumpel had 11.

Purdue 87, Morehead St 57

In West Lafayette, Ind., Zach Edey had 18 points and eight rebounds, Lance Jones scored 11 of his 15 points in the second half and No. 3 Purdue rolled to its second straight rout, 87-57 over Morehead State.

Kalil Thomas made a 3-pointer to start the second half, making it a 10-point game, but then Edey's supporting cast took the cue. Jones scored eight points in a 15-5 spurt that gave Purdue a 57-37 cushion.

Braden Smith had 11 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds for the Boilermakers.

Tennessee 80, Wisconsin 70

In Madison, Wis., Dalton Knecht scored 24 points to continue his smooth transition to high-major basketball as No. 9 Tennessee defeated Wisconsin 80-70t.

BASKETBALL

Josiah-Jordan James scored 14 points, while Jonas Aidoo and Jordan Gainey each added 10 for Tennessee (2-0). AJ Storr scored 17, Steven Crowl 14, Chucky Hepburn 13 and Tyler Wahl 10 for Wisconsin (1-1).

France, Germany eliminated, Italy advance

Czech Republic reach Billie Jean King Cup semis

SEVILLE, Spain, Nov 11, (AP): Barbora Krejcikova and Katerina Siniakova sent the Czech Republic into the semifinals of the Billie Jean King Cup by beating American duo Danielle Collins and Taylor Townsend 6-3, 7-5 in their decisive doubles match on Friday.

Siniakova and Krejcikova completed a 2-1 comeback against the U.S. team on the indoor hard court in Seville to eliminate the Americans. The Czechs will face Canada in Saturday's semifinals. Italy will face Slovenia in the other semifinal on the indoor hard court in Seville.

TENNIS

Krejcikova, the 2021 French Open champion, has also paired with Siniakova to win seven major doubles titles including this year's Australian Open. Their champion pedigree showed in a dominant performance that included converting six of eight break points.

Siniakova had started the day by losing to Collins, who won their opening singles match 6-3, 6-2 to give the U.S. a 1-0 lead in a matchup to decide which teams would advance from Group A. But Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova pulled the Czechs level at 1-1 after she brushed aside Sofia Kenin 6-1, 6-1.

Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova returns the ball to US Sofia Kenin during their group stage tennis match at the Billie Jean King Cup finals at La Cartuja stadium in Seville, southern Spain, Spain, Friday, Nov. 10, 2023. (AP)

It was the final appearance for U.S. captain Kathy Rinaldi, who will be replace by Linsday Davenport after having led the team for seven years, the fourth longest stint in team history.

These are the the two most successful teams in the competition's history - the U.S. has the most titles with 18 and the Czechs the second most with 11. But the Czechs have now won their last three meetings with the Americans.

The Americans were without their two highest-ranked players. No. 3 Coco Gauff and No. 5 Jessica Pegula both played in the WTA finals in Mexico, which finished just before the Billie Jean King Cup Finals.

The U.S. beat defending champion Switzerland in their group-phase opener on Thursday.

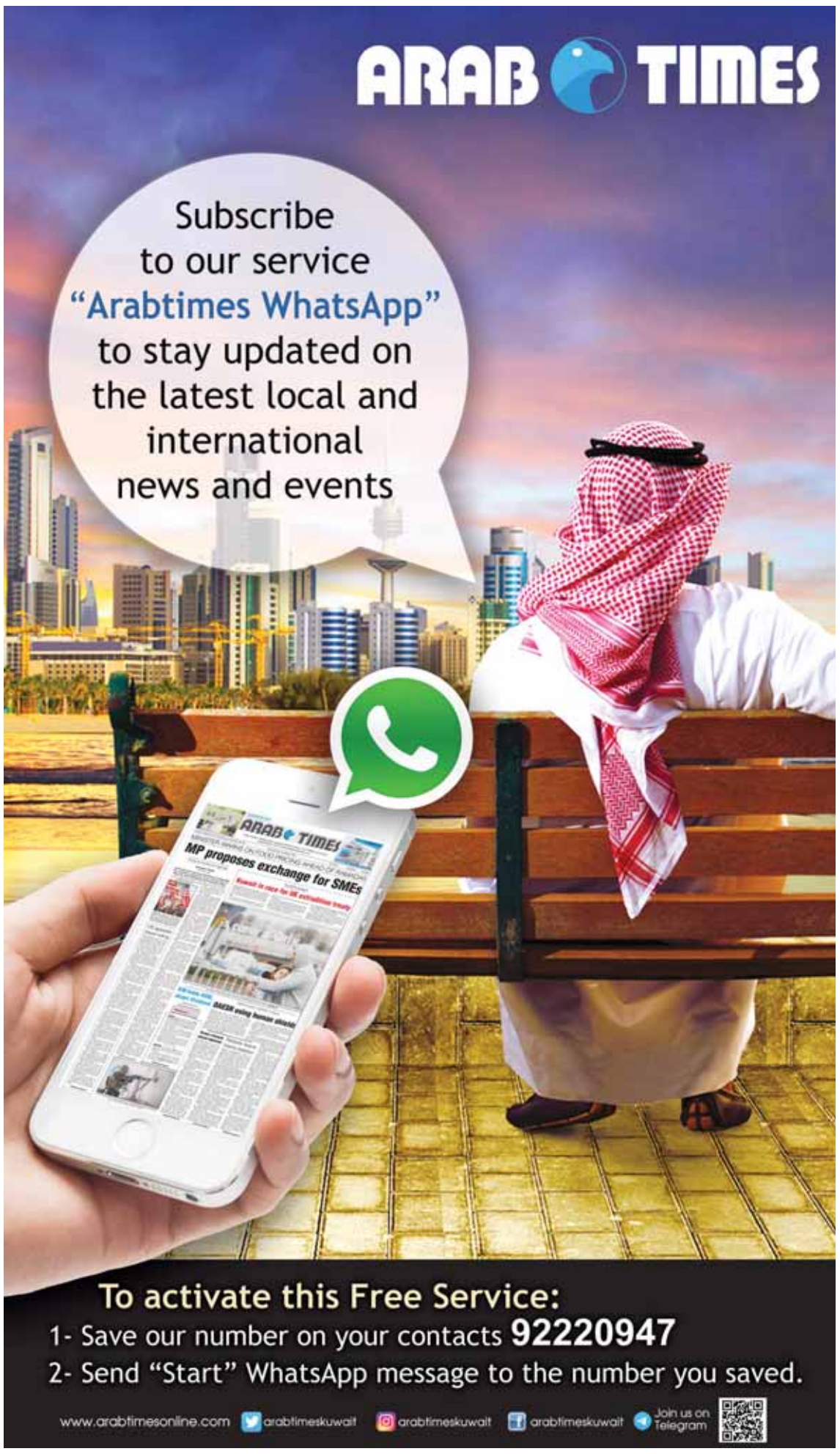
Canada advanced by winning its two matches over Spain and Poland in Group C earlier this week.

Slovenia made it to the semifinals for the first time despite losing 2-1 to Kazakhstan.

Slovenia finished atop Group B thanks to the best sets win-loss record of the three teams after Slovenia, Kazakhstan and Australia all finished with a 1-1 record and with three match victories each.

France beat Germany 3-0 with both having already been eliminated in group D, where winner Italy advanced after beating both rivals earlier this week.

France's Clara Burel beat Laura Siegemund 6-4, 6-3, while Germany's Tatjana Maria had to retire from her match against Varvara Gracheva.



Creighton women rout South Dakota in home opener

No. 25 Mississippi State beats Southeastern Louisiana

STARKVILLE, Miss., Nov 11, (AP): Debreasha Powe had 19 points and nine rebounds, JerKaila Jordan added 13 points and No. 25 Mississippi State beat Southeastern Louisiana 67-46 on Friday night.

Mississippi State went on a 23-2 run in the third quarter to break the game open. SE Louisiana went 2 for 11 from the field to begin the second half and got outscored 24-8 in the third quarter.

Jessika Carter scored 12 points for Mississippi State (2-0). Carter, Jordan and Erynn Barnum each recorded a double-double, becoming the first Bulldog trio to record double-doubles in the same game since Dec. 19, 2021.

Kennedy Paul scored 11 points and Hailey Giaratano had 10 points and eight rebounds for SE Louisiana (1-1).

Creighton 81, S. Dakota 55

In Omaha, Neb., Morgan Maly matched a career high with 30 points, Emma Ronsiek added 16 points and Creighton (2-0) won its second straight game in the series with South Dakota (1-1) after losing six in a row.

Maly, who also scored 30 points against Providence in January, was subbed out with 3:06 remaining in the fourth. She shot 10 of 19 from the field and had 10 rebounds. Lauren Jensen had 11 points and a team-high six assists. Molly Mogensen (nine rebounds) and Mallory Brake each scored 10 points.

Tori DePerry led South Dakota (1-1) with 13 points. Grace Larkins had nine points and 13 rebounds.

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Anticipation is high: President of Kuwait School Sports and Higher Education Federation

Kuwait University, Kuwait College of Science and Technology set for showdown

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The final showdown of The Warba Bank Volleyball League in the Kuwait School Sports Federation and Higher Education's third Higher Education Sports Games is set to unfold between Kuwait University and the Kuwait College of Science and Technology at 7:00 in the Gulf University Hall. Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, play for the third and fourth places.

Kuwait University earned their spot in the final clash by overcoming

VOLLEYBALL

Kuwait Technical College, while the Kuwait College of Science and Technology secured their place in the finale after defeating the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

Faisal Al-Maqseed, President of the Kuwait School Sports and Higher Education Federation, assured that the Supreme Committee has completed all arrangements for the final match and the contest for third and fourth places. Anticipation is high for a spirited competition to claim the coveted title.

A file photo of players challenging for the ball.

Dr. Salman Haji, Vice Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee for the tournament, highlighted the players' strong desire to clinch the title. The committee strategically scheduled the volleyball tournament at times accommodating for all participating colleges and entities, fostering a robust competitive spirit. Dr. Haji also emphasized the support provided by Warba Bank throughout the third session of higher education, a partnership strategy with the Kuwait School Sports Federation and Higher Education that is set to yield results at the tournament's conclusion today.

Thriving equestrian scene: Sahara Equestrian Club's commitment to devt

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: Equestrian expert Dalal Al-Obaid, the General Manager of Sahara Equestrian Resort, affirms the peak status of Kuwaiti equestrianism. This is notably evident with the surge in equestrian clubs and a growing number of male and female riders across all age groups in recent years—a positive trend supported by both government and private sectors.

Al-Obaid emphasizes Sahara Equestrian Club's dedication to fostering the sport's growth by organizing numerous local tournaments. The club places particular emphasis on the beginner category, starting from 6 years old. Local trainers within Kuwait, as well as foreign trainers from the Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy, lead these aspiring riders. Sahara Equestrian Club sets itself apart by initiating tournaments with hurdle heights beginning at 50 cm, a crucial starting point for

Dalal Al-Obaid with Nabila Al-Kharafi.

the junior category. This is especially noteworthy since many clubs commence their competitions at higher heights, typically starting from 70 cm.

Al-Obaid highlights Kuwait's inclusion of an esteemed cadre of referees and coaches with

EQUESTRIAN

a significant global impact in the equestrian realm. She further notes the distinguished role played by women in the field of equestrian arbitration.

The Sahara Club officially commenced its activities in early January, actively participating in local tournaments that draw more than 100 male and female riders.

Kuwait intensify training for WCup & Asian Cup qualifiers

Kuwait players in a training session for the upcoming World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers.

Door still open to all players: Al-Mousa

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: In preparation for the upcoming clash against India in the joint qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup, Kuwait intensified their training at the Friendship and Peace Stadium. The group, which includes Qatar and Afghanistan, are committed to achieving success in Group A competitions.

The Azraq delegation is set to depart for Dammam on Friday for the second round of qualifiers against Afghanistan at Al-Ittifaq Club Stadium on November 21.

Team director Abdul Rahman Al-Mousa highlighted the coach's focus on stability in recent selections, with limited choices and a cautious approach to incorporating one or two players at a time.

Regarding the absence of certain standout performers, Al-Mousa emphasized that the selected players have been consistent and part of the coach's current selection circle. He clarified, "The door will remain open to receive the best and those capable of providing the required addition to the team."

The return of Abdulaziz Wadi is noted after his recovery and stand-

SOCCER

out performances with Al-Qadsia. Al-Mousa also highlighted Aqeel Al-Hazeem as one of the noteworthy new faces.

With the team in a closed camp since last Wednesday, Al-Mousa expressed hopes for the readiness of all players, particularly Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, who undergoes an intensive treatment program to regain strength, although his chances of playing against India are slim.

Al-Mousa acknowledged the challenging competition ahead, citing the prominence of the Qatari team and the speedy Indian team. He emphasized that the team approaches each match individually, striving for the best performance in the qualifiers.

Concluding his remarks, Al-Mousa expressed great confidence in the selected team members, affirming their desire to advance in the qualifiers and their capability to tackle the challenging task ahead.

A historic Kuwait debut in Asian MMA Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: In a groundbreaking moment for Kuwait's sports history, the nation is set to participate for the first time in the Asian Mixed Martial Arts Championship, now in its fourth edition. The championship is scheduled to take place in the Kingdom of Bahrain this December, marking Bahrain as the inaugural Gulf and Arab country to host the continental competi-

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

tion. This event caters to youth under 18, featuring both general and junior categories. Previous editions were held in Singapore, Thailand, and Tajikistan.

Muhammad Qambar, President of the Bahraini and Asian Mixed Martial Arts Federations, confirmed the official approval for a Kuwaiti team to join the Bahrain Sports Forum for Mixed Martial Arts. This forum is slated to run for a full week, coinciding with Bahrain's national holiday celebrations. The event is conducted in collaboration with Brave International, a prominent international sports organization with a focus on martial arts and self-defense.

Muhammad Qambar, President of the Bahraini and Asian Mixed Martial Arts Federations.

Kuwait's delegation is expected to comprise 15 players, each participating in one of the seven different weight categories officially approved by the game's Asian Federation program. Qambar revealed that Bahrain's preparations, in coordination with the International Federation of Martial Arts, have been underway for over two months. Registration has seen a significant influx of interest, with expectations of 17 countries participating in the tournament

Mancini unveils Saudi Arabia squad

RIYADH, Nov 11: In preparation for the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup, Italian coach Roberto Mancini has revealed the Saudi Arabia squad. The team is set to host Pakistan at Al-Fateh Club Stadium in Al-Ahsa on November 16, followed by a match against the Jordanian national team at Amman International Stadium on the 21st of the same month. Group

SOCCER

Seven also features the Tajikistan national team.

Squad:

Muhammad Al-Owais, Nawaf Al-Aqidi, Raghed Najjar, Hamed Youssef, Yasser Al-Shahrani, Walid Al-Ahmad, Aoun Al-Salouli, Ali Al-Bulaihi, Abdul-Ilah Al-Omari, Hassan Al-Tambakti, Saud Abdul-Hamid, Moaz Faqihi, Hassan Kadish, Fawaz Al-Yami,

Saudi Arabia coach Roberto Mancini.

Mukhtar Ali, Abdul-Ilah Al-Maliki, Ali Hazazi, Eid Al-Mawlid, Nasser Al-Dosari, Faisal Al-Ghamdi, Abbas Al-Hassan, Salem Al-Dosari, Abdul-Rahman Gharib, Ayman Yahya, Muhammad Maran, Abdullah Radif, Talal Haji, Saleh Al-Shehri.

'There are challenges'

Darko committed to giving his best as he leads Al-Arabi training session

By Hassan Musa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11,:Bosnian coach Darko Nesterovic initiated his role with Al-Arabi by leading the team's first training session. This appointment followed Al-Arabi's decision to bring him on board as a replacement for the dismissed German coach, Thomas Berdaric.

Darko expressed his joy at returning to the "Green Castle" for the third time, extending his gratitude to the Board of Directors and club president Abdulaziz Ashour for their trust.

"I am committed to giving my best to achieve the desired positive outcomes," Darko stated.

Recognizing the challenges that Al-Arabi are currently

SOCCER

facing, he maintained confidence in the potential for improvement. Darko hoped for a collaborative effort from the players, emphasizing their cooperation with his coaching staff and adherence to his training methods.

Highlighting Al-Arabi's status as a premier team in Kuwait, Darko acknowledged the high expectations of the dedicated fanbase, assuring them of his dedication to achieving success. Darko revealed that several players were dealing with injuries, leading him to conduct training with a reduced squad due to the absence of players called up to the first and Olympic teams. He specified that he would be working with 10 players currently unavailable.

While expressing a preference for a full squad, Darko acknowledged the need to adapt to the circumstances and anticipated the return of over 10 players after completing their national team duties.

Looking ahead, Darko faces two challenging matchups early in his tenure with "Al-Akhdar." The team is set to host Al-Zawraa of Iraq on November 27 in the fifth round of the AFC Cup Championship's third group competitions. Following that, they will confront Kuwait in a pivotal eighth-round fixture of the Zain Premier League on December 3.

Bosnian coach Darko Nesterovic giving instructions to Al-Arabi players.

Al-Qadsia secure Excellence Shield again

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: Al-Qadsia Club's water polo teams clinched the General Water Polo Excellence Shield for the third consecutive season, amassing a total of 23 points across various public and yearly competitions in the current season. This outstanding performance propelled the yellow team to the summit of the

WATER POLO

general rankings for superiority in the sport.

Hassan Abu Al-Hassan, the Secretary-General and General Director of Water Polo at Al-Qadsia Club, commended the technical and administrative bodies of the game for their exceptional levels and results throughout the season. He highlighted their evident progress and prowess, emphasizing that the Yellow Water Polo players demonstrated a commendable sense of responsibility and met the magnitude of their aspirations, whether at the general public level or across all age groups.

Hassan Abu Al-Hassan, the Secretary-General and General Director of Water Polo at Al-Qadsia Club receives Excellence Shield.

Abu Al-Hassan expressed gratitude to the Board of Directors of Al-Qadsia Club, led by Sheikh Khaled Al-Fahd, for their keen interest and continuous support. He also extended thanks to the dedicated and loyal fans of Al-Qadsia, as well as the parents of the players, acknowledging their presence and unwavering support for the water polo teams. The combined efforts of these elements, coupled with the hard work of players and staff at the administrative and technical levels in the Royal Club Governorate, resulted in the achievement of the Excellence Shield in the game for the third consecutive time.

Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobel (right), saves the follow-up shot from Stuttgart's Chris Führich (center), after his missed penalty during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Stuttgart and Borussia Dortmund, at the MHP Arena in Stuttgart, Germany. (AP)

Sports

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Winners with officials after the awarding ceremony.

Kuwait handball players hold training session.

Photos by Mahmoud Jadeed

Winners honored

'Successful' conclusion of junior Fencing Championship in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11: The Kuwaiti Fencing Federation recently organized the Kuwait General Championship for juniors, featuring competitions in three fencing weapons: saber, fluorescent, and epee. A total of 114 players from various local clubs participated in the event, which took place at the Federation Hall in the Daiya area.

Abdulkarim Al-Shamlan, President of the Kuwaiti Fencing Federation, along with members of the Board of Directors, honored the winning players in each category. The results were as follows:

Fluorescent Weapon:

Gold: Ahmed Awad (Al-Shabab)

Silver: Saleh Abdul Karim (Al-Arabi)

Silver (shared): Hussein Al-Khayyat and Hussein Faraj (Al-Shabab)

Epee Weapon:

Gold: Abdullah Al-Dhafiri (Al-Jahra)

Silver: Ghazi Qaisar Al-Zamil (Al-Jahra)

Bronze (shared): Rakan Al-Harban and Nasser Al-Harban (Kuwait)

Saber Weapon:

Gold: Muhammad Abdul Karim (Al-Arabi)

Silver: Hamad Al-Shamlan (Al-Qadisiyah)

Bronze (shared): Baraa Al-Ashqar and Hussein Al-Ammari (Al-Qadisiyah)

The championship showcased the talent and skill of young fencers from various clubs, contributing to the development and promotion of fencing in Kuwait.

Al-Kuwait suffer loss to Egypt's Al-Ahly

Kuwait draw Qatar for Asian Handball Championship

Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Nov 11: The draw for the 21st edition of the Asian Men's Handball Championship, also serving as the 2025 World Cup Qualifiers, placed Kuwait in Group A alongside Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman, and Chinese Taipei. The draw took place in the Kingdom of Bahrain, set to host the Asian competitions from January 11-25, with the presence of Badr Al-Dhiyab, Vice President of the International Handball Federation for the Asian continent, and the President and members of the Bahrain Football Federation, along with representatives of the participating clubs.

Group B features Iran, South Korea, China, and New Zealand, while Group C includes Saudi Arabia, Iraq, India, and Japan. Group D consists of Bahrain, the Emirates, Hong Kong, and Kazakhstan.

Faisal Siwan, the director of the national teams at the Hand Federation, revealed that Kuwait will embark on a European camp in Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary from December 15 to 17 in preparation for the Asian Championship.

HANDBALL

The camp will include several trial matches.

He noted that injured players Mohammed Amer and Abdulaziz Yassin, along with Al-Kuwait players currently involved in the World Club Championship, will be absent from training. Al-Qadsia players will also miss training during the Asian Club Championship starting next Friday.

Siwan expressed concerns about the lack of training facilities for the national teams, emphasizing the need for additional venues beyond the Da'iya hall. The junior team is currently training in the Al-Nasr hall, thanks to the club's management's approval and the accommodating game schedule, while the youth and senior teams practice in Da'iya during noon hours, which poses challenges for players balancing work commitments and family responsibilities.

In other news, Al-Kuwait suffered a loss to Egypt's Al-Ahly with a score of 25-35 at the Club World Cup Championship in Dammam. The defeat means "Al-Abyad" will face the losers of the match between Al-Najma Al-Bahraini and Al-Khaleej Al-Saudi to determine seventh and eighth places in the World Championship.

Al-Kuwait manager Haitham Al-Rashidi attributed the loss to Al-Ahly's superior physical performance throughout the match and the team's missed opportunities. He expressed dissatisfaction with the players' performance, citing injuries that needed attention before the Asian Club Championship.

Meanwhile, Al-Qadsia secured the services of Sulaibikhat professional Karl Tom, for his participation with the "Yellow" team in the upcoming Asian Club Championship.

Spurs fail to regain lead

Wolverhampton Wanderers' Hwang Hee-chan (left), duels for the ball with Tottenham's Brennan Johnson during the English Premier League soccer match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Tottenham, at the Molineux Stadium, in Wolverhampton, England. (AP)

Wolves win

WOLVERHAMPTON, England, Nov 11, (AP): Wolverhampton scored twice in stoppage time to beat Tottenham 2-1 in the Premier League on Saturday, handing Spurs back-to-back losses for the first time this season.

Mario Lemina struck in the 97th-minute after Pablo Sarabia had evened the score six minutes earlier at Molineux Stadium.

The visitors led from Brennan Johnson's goal after just three minutes and were poised to regain first place from

SOCCER

Manchester City.

Instead, new manager Ange Postecoglou's team remained one point behind the defending champions after having gone unbeaten in the first 10 games of the season.

Tottenham lost 4-1 to Chelsea on Monday after having two players sent off. The game at Molineux was going to be a test of its character and Johnson's early goal was the perfect response.

Sarabia evened the score when he controlled Matheus Cunha's cross and volleyed a left-footed shot past Guglielmo Vicario at the near post.

For the winner, Sarabia was the provider with an incisive pass into the box. Lemina connected with a first time shot from close range to find the bottom corner of the net.

Wolves' late goals sparked wild scenes that could see Spurs drop down to fourth by the end of the weekend.

Crystal Palace midfielder Eberechi Eze has signed a contract extension to stay with the Premier League club until 2027.

The 25-year-old England international scored 10 goals last season and has one this campaign. He joined the south London club from Queens Park Rangers in 2020.

"I'm loving every moment," Eze said in a club statement on Friday. "I'm praying for exciting performances, fun times, goals and wins."

Eze made his England debut this summer. He was also eligible to represent Nigeria.

"As an England international and proven performer at Premier League level, his talents are well-known, but he also brings with that an exemplary mentality and character in everything he does," Palace chairman Steve Parish said.

Tottenham midfielder James Maddison has been withdrawn from the England squad for the upcoming European Championship qualifiers because of an ankle injury that will likely keep him sidelined until January.

The playmaker was injured in the first half of Tottenham's 4-1 loss to Chelsea in the Premier League on Monday.

Spurs confirmed that Maddison will stay with the team for rehabilitation.

Marsh records career-best score

Australia rout Bangladesh, secure 3rd spot

PUNE, India, Nov 11, (AP): Mitchell Marsh recorded his career-best score as Australia beat Bangladesh by eight wickets in the Cricket World Cup on Saturday.

CRICKET

Marsh reached 177 not out off 132 balls as Australia registered their highest successful run-chase in World Cup history.

Australia's Marnus Labuschagne fields a ball during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between Australia and Bangladesh in Pune, India. (AP)

He put on 175 runs off 135 balls for the unbeaten third wicket with Steve Smith, who scored 63 not out as Australia finished with 307-2 in 44.4 overs.

This was after Adam Zampa picked 2-32 in 10 overs to help restrict Bangladesh to 306-8.

It was Australia's seventh straight win in the tournament. The five-time champions had started slow with losses to India and South Africa, but bounced back in style to confirm a semifinal spot.

Australia finished third in the standings with 14 points - equal with second-placed South Africa but lower on net run-rate.

The Aussies will play South Africa in the semifinals on Thursday in Kolkata. The two sides had also met in the 1999 World Cup semifinal at Edgbaston, where Australia advanced after a thrilling tied game.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh are placed eighth despite and will qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy unless the Netherlands beat India on Sunday.

In Pune, Australia's chase got off to a poor start as Travis Head was bowled for 10.

David Warner scored 53 off 61 balls, his second half-century of the tournament. The opener also has two hundreds in the tournament. Warner put on 120 runs off 116 balls for the second wicket with Marsh. He hit six fours, while Marsh reached 50 off only 37 balls, hitting six fours and three sixes.

Australia were ahead of the curve at 132-1 in 22 overs when Warner was out caught against the run of play.

Messi's Ballon D'Or celebrated by Miami

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Nov 11, (AP): Lionel Messi held the Ballon D'Or over his head as fireworks lit up the sky to bring a pregame ceremony to a close. And with that, Inter Miami got to celebrate the game's greatest player one more time in 2023.

Messi was on the field for his Major League Soccer club on Friday night for a friendly against New York City FC, a match put together to commemorate his eighth time winning the Ballon D'Or - presented annually to the game's top player - at a black-tie ceremony in Paris last month. No other player has won that award more than five times.

Messi - carrying the trophy in his left hand - walked to midfield

SOCCER

on a gold carpet laid out across the pitch, where MLS Commissioner Don Garber was among those awaiting his arrival for a brief pregame ceremony. He embraced Garber, Inter Miami owners Jorge and Jose Mas, then hoisted the trophy as the crowd roared.

"To me, it is something beautiful to share with you," Messi said. "I've only been here a little while but it really feels like I've been here a long time." Here's how big a deal the moment was: Even Garber pulled out his cell phone to take a picture of the moment.

"You, Inter Miami fans, have the best player who's ever played the game," Garber said. "The winner of his eighth Ballon D'Or, the guy who lifted as captain the Leagues Cup for your team, thank you Leo for your belief in Major League Soccer and making your club and your league a league of choice."

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