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# KUWAIT WELCOMES HUMANITARIAN PAUSE AGREEMENT IN GAZA Ceasefire set to begin Friday: Qatar

Deal hits snag

**DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, Nov 23, (Agencies): A four-day cease-fire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas will begin Friday morning, Qatar said, a day later than originally announced, as negotiators worked out final details of the deal, which is to lead to the release of dozens of hostages held by militants and Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.**

The diplomatic breakthrough promised some relief for the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza who have endured weeks of Israeli bombardment, as well as families in Israel fearful for the fate of their loved ones taken captive during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war.

The deal appeared to hit a last-minute snag when Israel's national security adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, announced a one-day delay late Wednesday, without providing a reason. The cease-fire was originally set to begin Thursday morning.

On Thursday, Majed al-Ansari, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of Qatar, which played a key role in mediating with Hamas, announced the ceasefire will start at 7 a.m. local time Friday (5 a.m. GMT.)

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## Opinion

Netanyahu ... are you the modern day Hitler?

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

WHEN Nazi Germany began measures in the year 1939 to punish Jews for the practices of some of them, which was followed by the ethnic cleansing operations that took place in most of the countries that the German army entered, the world was against the mass destruction, which was called "The Holocaust" at the time because human nature is fundamentally against injustice, whatever it may be, even though Europe suffered from Jewish practices at that time.

Therefore, when the European countries, after eliminating Nazism, tried to atone for their sin and used flimsy justifications for the so-called "the promised homeland for the Jews", it was offering a solution to the internal European issue at the expense of other people, who would later submit, from the first moment of the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, to oppression that was more arbitrary and ferocious than what Hitler did in the 1940s.

If gas chambers were regarded as the most horrific means at that time, then the world has never witnessed anything like the systematic genocide practiced by the Israeli army and the Netanyahu government today in all its wars.

What is happening in Gaza is a genocide in every sense of the word, through justifications that a young child cannot accept, but the Western world turns a blind eye to it for its own political reasons, even if that was at the expense of humanity, which Western governments and parliaments spoke so much about, and worked to impose on developing countries and people.

Therefore, people in various countries of the world are demonstrating against the Holocaust practiced by the modern-day Hitler and Zionist Nazism, because they believe that the former victim has become today's executioner that is even more brutal than the German Hitler and his Nazi party.

The Zionists are trying to legitimize their presence on a land that is not theirs by exterminating its people, while the Palestinians, who accepted a state that could live on 22 percent of their land, have become scattered and displaced. Their crops have been burned and their institutions have been brought down. All sources of life have been cut off from them.

For 75 years, the Palestinians tried to achieve their rights in various ways. In the past four decades, they took the path of peaceful resistance in order to have a homeland, but not on 50 percent of the land, as stipulated in the United Nations' resolution No. 181/1947. The Israeli response was to further annex areas through settlements that made the West Bank more like a sieve.

Successive Netanyahu governments brought in more settlers until their number today reached 750,000, including more than 220,000 armed men and women who practiced the most severe forms of oppression with the help of the Israeli army against the residents of the West Bank.

The Israeli practices were different from what was agreed upon in Oslo in 1993 and also Camp David in 1978, as well as all the agreements agreed to by Tel Aviv. It has also ignored international resolutions.

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## China's mysterious pneumonia cases prompt WHO inquiry

GENEVA, Nov 23, (AP): The World Health Organization says it has made an official request to China for information about a potentially worrying spike in respiratory illnesses and clusters of pneumonia in children.

The U.N. health agency cited unspecified media reports and a global infectious disease monitoring service as reporting clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia in children in northern China. In a statement late Wednesday, WHO said it was unclear whether those were linked to a rise in respiratory infections reported by Chinese authorities.

Outside scientists said the situation warranted close monitoring, but were not convinced that the recent spike in respiratory illnesses in China signaled the start of a new global outbreak.

The emergence of new diseases, particularly new flu strains or other viruses capable of triggering pandemics, typically starts with undiagnosed clusters of re-

spiratory illness. Both SARS and COVID-19 were first reported as unusual types of pneumonia.

WHO noted that authorities at China's National Health Commission on Nov. 13 reported an increase in respiratory diseases, which they said was due to the lifting of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Other countries also saw a jump in respiratory diseases such as respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, when pandemic restrictions ended.

WHO said media reports about a week later reported clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia in children in northern China.

"It is unclear if these are associated with the overall increase in respiratory infections previously reported by Chinese authorities, or separate events," WHO said, adding that it had requested more details from China about currently circulating viruses and any increased burden on hospitals, via an international legal mechanism.

Kuwait prioritizes access to medications: MoH

## 'No shortage of medicines for cancer patients'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi affirmed the great attention that the Ministry of Health gives the medicine security system in the country, stressing that it works on providing all kinds of medicines, including cancer medicines, despite their specificity and diversity between chemical, immunological and other medicines.

In a press statement issued yesterday on the sidelines of the inauguration of the First International Conference on Gynecologic Oncology in the State of Kuwait, Dr. Al-Awadhi insisted that there is no shortage of medicines for cancer patients, either for children or adults.

He affirmed the keenness of the ministry to bring all medicines from all around the world, in coordination and continuous communication with the department concerned with medicines and medical consumables.

The minister said the ministry has exerted all efforts to build the new hospital for the Kuwait Cancer Control

Center with a clinical capacity of up to 600 beds.

He added that it paid great attention to combating cancer and developed multiple programs for it in terms of early detection, treatment, and support for scientific research.

Dr. Al-Awadhi explained that the conference will contribute effectively to exchanging experiences in this specialty, benefiting from diverse medical experiences, and building bridges of scientific knowledge among a distinguished group of lecturers from Britain, Ireland, Germany, Spain, Turkey, Austria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to an elite group of Kuwaiti doctors. It is aimed to learn about the latest findings of modern science in the field of diagnosis, treatment and prevention methods in the specialty of cancerous tumors.

The title of "Gynecologic Cancers" was chosen for the conference because of the utmost importance it represents, as it is considered a common tumor and comes in second place after breast cancer.

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## Kuwait unveils first locally-made Coast Guard vessel



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at the inauguration of the first Kuwaiti-made Coast Guard interception vessel.

### Sheikh Talal stresses Kuwait's commitment to security

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Bolstering the ability of the Kuwaiti Coast Guard is important to handle security challenges and protect the country from marine threats, said First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday.

According to the Interior Ministry's Public Relations and Security Media Department, Sheikh Talal said -- during the reveal of the first Kuwaiti-made Coast Guard interception vessel -- that it was important to encourage national staff to excel especially in the security domain.

He affirmed that locally made vessels and boats would boost the security abilities of the Coast Guard to better handle alarming situation and fend off those meaning harm to Kuwait.

During the event, Sheikh Talal was briefed about the process of manufacturing of the vessel before it being deployed to the sea.

Senior officials from the Interior Ministry attended the ceremony.

### Day by Day

THE nefarious tactics have come to light, shattering the illusions he had fostered among his victims.

It is often said that a wrongdoer inadvertently leaves behind traces or evidence that ultimately unveil their deceitful maneuvers.

Numerous individuals, whom he falsely implicated in his thefts, will now see justice served. Each participant in his devious schemes, from his wife and the woman he divorced, to the four unsuspecting accomplices he used as pawns -- even their names were exploited by this unscrupulous individual in recording his thefts from companies whose trust he betrayed -- will now face the consequences of their actions.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

**Zahed Matar**

### US airstrikes target militants

## Iran-backed group vows to 'retaliate'

WASHINGTON, Nov 23, (AP): A major Iranian-backed militant group in Iraq warned it may strike additional U.S. targets after U.S. warplanes killed multiple militants in response to the first use of short-range ballistic missiles against U.S. forces at Al-Asad Air Base Monday.

U.S. fighter jets struck a Kataib Hezbollah operations center and a Kataib Hezbollah command and control node near Al Anbar and Jurf al Saqr, south of Baghdad, on Tuesday, two defense officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity to provide additional sensitive details of the attacks.

There were Kataib Hezbollah personnel at both sites at the time of the strikes, but the officials said they could not yet confirm whether anyone there was killed.

Militia officials in Iraq said the attack had killed eight Kataib Hezbollah members.

The U.S. airstrikes followed an earlier retaliatory strike by an AC-130 gunship that was in the air when the Iranian-backed militants fired two short-range ballistic missiles at Al-Asad Air Base in Iraq late Monday evening. The gunship was able to locate the origin of the missiles, and fired on several militants who had fled in a vehicle, killing several of them.

Kataib Hezbollah in a statement meanwhile said it was considering "expanding the scope of targets" if the U.S. military continues with its strikes, adding that the attack "will not go unpunished".

The dangerous back-and-forth strikes have escalated since Iranian-backed militant groups under the umbrella group called the Islamic Resistance in Iraq and Syria began striking U.S. facilities Oct. 17, the date that a blast at a hospital in Gaza killed hundreds. The attacks have continued unabated since, with at least 66 rocket and missile attacks hitting U.S. facilities and wounding at least 62 service members.

The Monday attack stood out in that it was the first time militants had used ballistic missiles, and the U.S. response inside Iraq was immediate.

It was also noteworthy because the previous planned counterattacks by U.S. warplanes had focused on militant weapons caches and training centers in Syria, due to political sensitivities in Iraq.

The office of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, who rose to power through the backing of an Iran-backed political coalition, called the recent escalations "a dangerous development," reflecting the delicate balance the government must strike between Iranian factions and U.S. military presence.

### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** Japan's Canon Corporation selected Kuwaiti **Mohammad Murad**, a wildlife photographer, as ambassador within this field. The selection is part of the corporation's ambassadors' program initiative.



Murad

Speaking on the issue, Murad told KUNA on Thursday the initiative brought together best photographers and videographers in the world to cooperate with Canon. (KUNA)

**VIENNA:** Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Delegate to UN Organizations in Vienna **Talal Al-Fassam** said Thursday **Israel** have threatened to drop a nuclear bomb on the **Gaza Strip**; in a loud incitement to use weapons of mass destruction.

In a statement delivered before the regular meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, currently held in Vienna, Al-Fassam reiterated Kuwait's strongest condemnation to Israeli aggression against Gaza and those criminal statements that clearly violate international law and blatantly challenge the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament system in a way that threatens peace and security. (KUNA)



KUNA photo  
Palestinian volunteers in Gaza, affiliated to Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), on Thursday resumed distributing wheat to thousands of relocated Palestinians including medical teams and journalists.





# SPECIAL REPORT

## HERITAGE



Members of the old Kuwaiti Crafts Association include many women.

# Crafting a legacy ...

## Old Kuwaiti Crafts Association rescues heritage skills from obscurity



Above: MP Dr Jenan Boushehri at a stall selling the thoub, a traditional garment worn by Kuwaiti women. Right: A stall selling miniature dhows and boats at a bazaar.



**By Chaitali B. Roy**  
Special to the Arab Times

In the middle of the twentieth century, the tiny Gulf nation of Kuwait looked very different from what it does today. The discovery of oil and the development of the oil industry in Kuwait led to the slow disappearance of a way of life that the country had known for centuries. In the middle of the sixties, the ruthless bulldozing of old traditional buildings - that had existed when Kuwait was a pearl diving, shipping and trading nation- led to a complete change in the landscape. Along with the landscape, it changed the material culture.

Before the discovery of oil, handcrafting was a source of livelihood and coping with the harsh living conditions. Weaving Sadu and investing the yarn with vibrant colours allowed the weaver some control over her living environment, which was harsh and brutal. With time, these handicrafts became symbols of Kuwait's national identity. Different types of handicrafts were practised in Kuwait. They included beautiful dhows built by the Al Gallaleef's traditional ship builders who created magnificent sailing boats that the mariners used to sail to India and the East coast of Africa. Some Kuwaiti women, especially the ones who lived with their tribes in the desert, wove sadu, a form of Bedouin weaving which has, over the years, transcended from being a craft to an art form. Bisht was a form of urban weaving practised in the urban areas of Kuwait. Other handicrafts included palm frond weaving, crafting Kuwaiti chests or boxes and jewellery making.

With money pouring in after the discovery of oil and subsequent modernisation and mechanisation, young Kuwaiti craftspeople increasingly opted for jobs in the public sector. They no longer wanted to invest time and energy in crafts that were time and labour-intensive and not financially viable. Soon, the handicraft sector of Kuwait started to die down.

Individuals like Sheikhha Altaf Salem Al Ali Al Sabah made it their mission

to resurrect certain aspects of Kuwait's heritage. She co-founded the Sadu Weaving Cooperative at the right time to infuse new life into the dying craft of Sadu, modernise it, and make it more relevant. Without her efforts, Sadu would have died and not enjoyed the special status under UNESCO that it enjoys now. But what about other crafts local to Kuwait? The other crafts were dying a sure death because of apathy, lack of patronage and paucity of crafters. The Old Kuwaiti Crafts Association was formed to help revive old crafts and give them a new lease of life. Salman Al Bolond, President of the Old Kuwaiti Crafts Association and former Superintendent of the Kuwait National Museum, who had observed the struggles of the artisans and craftspeople, is empathetic. "Handcrafters do not receive much government or private sector support," said Al Bolond. "They find it very difficult to survive on these crafts. In Kuwait, there used to be 200 artisans practising different types of crafts. But right now, only six or seven craftspeople can truly depend on it for their livelihood. The rest live life differently. They have transitioned to a smooth lifestyle in an oil-rich community."

Many challenges face craftspeople today. Al Bolond prefers to highlight two main challenges. He says, "The first challenge is the one craftsmen face between their products and mass-produced, cheap items. The other challenge is the gap between them and society, which looks at the craftsman/woman as someone belonging to the lower strata of society. They do not treat craftspeople with the respect they deserve."

The lack of opportunities to commercially sell locally-made handicrafts in Kuwait is a big headache for artisans. "There used to be many such shops before the invasion, but no more," shares Al Bolond. "There are no shops in the airport, museum, or other public space. Around three and a half million foreigners and 120 nationalities live in Kuwait, but they don't know much about our traditions." He rues the lack of visitors to the local Museums. "Most of our visitors to the museums are Indians. The rest are either not interested, or

they don't know. Locally-made Kuwaiti crafts could serve as beautiful souvenirs to take home for the millions of expatriate residents, and the government and craftsmen are losing out on an important source of revenue."

Al Bolond adds that one cannot live or survive on occasional bazaars and fairs. "You don't have enough events or activities which allow craftspeople to survive on their craft. This is where the Old Crafts Association contributes. The association aims to support craftspeople to lead a comfortable life by helping them navigate new rules and providing more work." This is in keeping with the government's aim to reduce the public sector load by encouraging artisans to start their businesses and improve their sustainability. "Craftsmen need better regulations from the Ministry of Justice and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters." Al Bolond has sought help from the Minister of Information and the Minister of Labour. "We are trying to work on suggestions that will provide the craftsmen the opportunity to work throughout the year," said Al Bolond. "We also organise lectures for the crafters and provide training courses to better their skills."

"One way to help craftspeople without making it look like charity is to keep their products in your shop. Pay them once you sell it," Al Bolond urges local businesses." However, all is not lost. Recently, some Ministries intervened. "I thank the Ministry of Finance for giving licenses to craftsmen to run shops from their homes. They don't need a shop any more. They can sell through social media, and that makes life so much easier for craftspeople who do not have the money for downpayment to open shops, employ people, etc."

The Old Crafts Association began a few months back with fifty founding members. In a short time, the membership has grown to 135. Although the summer months were sluggish, the association picked up momentum, and now, they have exhibitions and showings every two to three weeks. "I am happy to say half of our members are women," says Al Bolond. "And unlike public perception, all our members work very hard. Most manage two jobs. They work for the government and pursue their crafts after working hours. Some are retired people who prefer to work instead of getting bored." Salman Al Bolond wants all Kuwaitis who feel they have the skill and talent for a craft to come forward and join the organisation.

The members of the Old Crafts Association practice different types of crafts. A young Kuwaiti crafter creates laptop and iPhone covers out of palm fronds; some shipbuilders build ships and boats; tailors work on traditional clothing like Bisht; potters make utensils; artisans work with recycled material; artisans crochet and make thoub al Kuwaiti. Jalila Al Qattan makes handmade jewellery from semiprecious stones. "I joined the Old Kuwaiti Crafts Society because I am a Kuwaiti and an artisan with a craft," she says. Speaking of the benefits she enjoys as a member, Jalila, a well-known artist, says, "I joined the association mainly to meet other craftspeople and to be introduced to government associations, as it is good for exposure." According to her, crafts are a form of art that should be appreciated and valued. "Heritage crafts are particularly important because they tell a story of the history of a nation. Humanity is richer by its cultural and heritage diversity." Ali Majid Dashti specialises in plaster and acrylic crafting. He joined the association to have better access to the public and improve his knowledge through regular exchanges with other members. Ali believes he still has not realised the full benefits of joining the organisation. "The reason for this is that public are still not aware of handicrafts made by using plaster nor do they appreciate." But the journey has started to a better awareness and sustainability for heritage crafts. It will be interesting to see how the organization navigates the coming months.

editor's choice





Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	04:55	Asr .....	14:31
Sunrise .....	06:18	Sunset .....	16:50
Zuhr .....	11:34	Isha .....	18:11

# Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours.

**By Day:** Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 – 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

**By Night:** Rather cold, cloudy to partly

## Weather

cloudy and with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 10 – 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	23	15

Kuwait Airport	23	14
Abdaly	23	09
Jahra	24	13
Salmiyah	22	16
Nuwaisib	24	14
Wafra	23	13

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

## FM, Deputy FM attend National Day

# ‘Kuwait, Oman ties historic, spread over a span of 50 years’



Photo by Mohammad Morsi  
Ambassador of Oman to the State of Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharusi (center) at the ceremony.

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Ambassador of Oman to the State of Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharusi says the Sultanate of Oman has always celebrated its National Day year after year in remembrance of the past, living with the present, drawing inspiration for the future, mobilizing inspiration, commemorating values, and renewing national action in various fields and courses.

During an event held to celebrate the 53rd National Day of the Sultanate of Oman in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Al-Sabah, the ambassador explained that the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Oman are close, distinguished and historical, and have come a long way over a period of more than half a century. This relationship includes all forms of cooperation in various political, diplomatic, economic, media, cultural and artistic fields, under the special patronage and royal directives of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad.

Among the mechanisms for activating bilateral Omani-Kuwaiti relations is the joint committee that was established in 2003. It held nine sessions in March, which resulted in many agreements that would contribute to opening the horizons of cooperation in an expanded manner.

The ambassador revealed that the number of agreements signed between the two countries since 1974 has reached 32 until date.

He affirmed Oman's firm position in

supporting the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to freedom, dignity and self-determination.

Ambassador Al-Kharusi stressed that what the Gaza Strip is being exposed to is the brutal and indiscriminate Israeli aggression affecting thousands of innocent victims, widespread destruction of infrastructure, service and humanitarian facilities, and housing, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands from their areas of origin and the loss of their loved ones.

He said everyone is required today to stand true to his human conscience and do everything in his power to immediately stop this senseless war, open safe corridors for relief aid to enter the Gaza Strip, and for the international community to fulfill its moral and legal duty.

Ambassador Al-Kharusi insisted that the solution to the Palestinian issue lies in ending the illegal Israeli occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state on the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in implementation of international law and United Nations resolutions in this regard and establishing the two-state solution as stipulated in the Arab Peace Initiative.

Meanwhile, the Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Highness Prince Sultan bin Saad Al Saud, affirmed that His Highness the Crown Prince delivered a speech and interjected in the virtual meeting of BRICS leaders, during which he stressed the Kingdom's standing with the Palestinian people and trying to limit the genocide to which the Palestinian people are being subjected.

## KIB partners with Marafi Villas to help fulfill dreams of customers

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced a strategic partnership agreement with Marafi Villas, the number one Italian kitchen company manufacturer and high quality home solutions supplier. With flexible and exclusive financing deals, the new collaboration will be a significant step forward in making home improvement more financially accessible, fitting the needs of customers' lifestyles.

Commenting on the agreement, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Head of the Central Sales Unit - Retail at KIB, said: "We are thrilled to announce a strategic partnership with Marafi Villas, a prominent player in the home solutions industry. This partnership will provide all our customers with a unique opportunity to access both top-notch kitchen solutions and the financial support they need to help them turn their kitchen dreams into reality."

Al-Shammari added: "The agreement offers both KIB and Marafi Villas' customers an array of unrivaled benefits, allowing them the financial flexibility they need to transform their houses into havens. Customers can get easy and flexible monthly

payments, enjoy convenient grace periods, and make use of KIB's 'Best' financing program; the strongest program of its kind in Kuwait that matches their demands and aspirations."

The new agreement allows customers seeking Marafi Villas' services to receive easy financing for a duration of up to two years. They will also have the opportunity to access a financing package, offering a range from KD 300 to KD 25,000, with a maximum duration of up to 60 months.

To make it easier to invest in premium kitchen solutions from Marafi Villas, customers can apply for the financing offer through KIB's digital platform, PayTally. The innovative platform offers a wide range of services and products provided by the Bank's retail and service partners, and allows applicants to easily track their submitted requests. Customers wishing to benefit from the partnership can also visit Marafi Villas, contact the Bank's call center, or pass by one of its many branches across the country.

It is worth noting that KIB constantly strives to build long-term relationships and partnerships that elevate the banking experience and create value for its customers. By introducing a range of exclusive benefits and services for its esteemed customers and catering to their modern lifestyles, KIB continues to live up to its 'Bank for Life' slogan.



Al-Shammari



KUNA photo  
The Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, students and visitors at the exhibition.

## Book fair pulls students

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Education has organized students' visits to the fair-ground of Kuwait International Book Fair in the district of Mishref.

The 46th edition of the fair has at-

tracted many reading advocates including groups of students whose visits are organized by the ministry as an encouragement for the youth to develop the good habit of reading. (KUNA)

# ‘Indemnity must be given to all’

Add more non-commissioned officers: MP

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah asked Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd why the decision issued by the Higher Defense Council and approved by the Council of Ministers to grant indemnity to the officers who retired from Jan 1, 2015 to March 31, 2021 excluded the non-commissioned officers.

He wants to know if there is a plan to add the non-commissioned officers to the beneficiaries of the decision.

He asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari why the non-commissioned officers at the Kuwait Army, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Firefighting Force and National Guard were excluded from the beneficiaries of Decision No. 495/2008 on granting merit bonus to the officers who retired from Jan 1, 2010 to Dec 31, 2014. He inquired if the court ruling affirming that the non-commissioned officers deserve the bonus was implemented. If yes, he requested for copies of documents proving so. If no, he wants to know the reasons behind the non-implementation of the ruling.

He asked Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al-Ostad about the plan of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to open outlets for selling fodder near the farms. He pointed out that breeders are suffering; as they have to buy fodder from Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, which is far and crowded most of the time.

He wants to know if PAAAFR carried out campaigns to deal with illegal sales outlets or black markets for fodder in Kabb, Abdally and Wafra. If yes, he inquired about the penalties imposed on those who violated the regulations, budget allocated for fodder subsidy and if there is a plan to increase it.

He asked Minister of Justice and State Minister for Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Raqaba about the measures taken to implement the decision that the Cabinet issued on Oct 1, 2022 to handover land in South Qairawan measuring 3,169,000 square meters to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) for the establishment of a new residential area; and if PAHW coordinated with the concerned institutions in order launch this housing project. If yes, he demanded for copies of supporting documents. If no, what are the reasons?

He asked Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Manea why teaching is not classified as a difficult profession.

MP Muhammad Al-Mahan asked Minister of Information, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi about the number of suspended projects at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, causes of delay, average accomplishment rate, steps taken to address the causes of delay, if a committee was formed to investigate the causes, names and qualifications of committee members, conclusion of the relevant reports, if the monitoring institutions approved the tenders floated by the ministry, and if Kuwait Municipality refused to supply electricity for any project.

MP Osama Al-Shaheen asked Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban about the method that Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) adopted to inspect the properties of individuals and private shipments. He wants to know if KGAC has advanced devices for determining the contents of shipments without opening them.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sa'adoun recently met with Jordanian Ambassador to Kuwait Senan Rakan Al-Majali with Deputy Ambassador of Rahfaa Al-Awaysa in attendance.

Al-Sa'adoun also met with Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Kuwait Dr Matar Al-Nejadi.

## KPC plans to hire 2,938 Kuwaitis from 2023-'27

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) intends to employ about 2,938 Kuwaitis from 2023 to 2027, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source.

The source affirmed that based on the strategic plan of its executive management; KPC is committed to developing the capabilities of its employees and contractors. He said this increases the national workforce to 93.6 percent including those employed in Ahmadi Hospital and 90.17 percent if they are excluded.

KPC follows a mechanism for Kuwaitizing jobs and appointing citizens in the oil sector based on the oil companies' need for their specializations. This means nationals are hired according to their academic qualifications and depending on the job vacancies in the annual general budget of the corporation and its subsidiaries, as well as the recruitment rules and regulations in the oil sector to ensure the recruitment of highly qualified people in oil companies, he explained.

He pointed out that the job vacancies in the oil sector are estimated as per the manpower needs of the relevant work groups in light of future projects and movement of the workforce.

□ □ □

**Sheikh Talal honored:** The Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Sports Creativity Award has declared Sheikh Dr Talal Al-Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as winner in the Arab Sports Personality Category of the 12th edition of the award (2023), reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement, the Media Office of the award disclosed that Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad served as president of Kuwait Football Association from 2010 and 2016,

and was the former vice president of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports in Kuwait.

Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad won the award, alongside Arab and international figures and athletes. They were honored for their role in advancing sports around the world.

It is worth mentioning that the Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Sports Creativity Award highlights the efforts of sports creators in a manner befitting their work. It also supports efforts aimed at growing and developing the sports sector in various fields and advancing it to global levels.



Photo by Samer Shaqair  
Heavy traffic was witnessed on Kuwait roads Thursday, Nov 23. The country also saw a slight drizzle and cloudy weather as predicted by the weather experts. More heavy rain is likely in the latter part of the day.

## TAG recognized as prestigious law firm globally for year 2022

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Taher Group Law Firm Company (TAG), which specializes in advocacy and legal consultations, was recognized as one of the globally prestigious law firms for the year 2022.

Featured in this recognition are attorneys Abdulaziz, Khaled, Jamal Taher and Dr Fawaz Khaled Al-Khateeb.

The firm has earned esteemed ratings from notable global rating agencies like 'Chambers and Partners' and 'Legal 500' in litigation and legal disputes, as well as 'IFLR1000' in corporate law and the financial sector.

Founder of the firm Abdulaziz Taher Al-Khateeb expressed his pride in the firm's independent evaluations. He believes these accolades reflect the high level of professional and legal services they offer. He commended the team's dedication to delivering quality legal services, citing the implementation of a quality management system adhering to ISO 9001 standards from Lloyd's of London — a globally recognized British company.

He disclosed that in 2022, the firm handled legal transactions valued at \$2.3 billion; emphasizing that the lawyers' commitment to modern innovation and advanced technologies is balanced with maintaining traditional professional standards.

Khaled Taher Al-Khateeb highlighted the significance of accumulated experience and leadership in legal work. He then pointed

out the firm's ongoing efforts to enhance its performance.

He added that in line with its international strategy, the firm is a member of TAG Alliances; thereby, strengthening its presence and expansion in the global legal arena while serving leading Fortune 500 companies.

In conclusion, he stressed the importance of raising the standards of the legal profession to meet international criteria; while upholding the profession's values and traditions. The firm is dedicated to empowering young men and women through extensive professional training, continuing to share legal knowledge for awareness, and promoting the rule of law by spreading legal culture within the community for over

55 years, he revealed.

It is also noteworthy that in 2023, Taher Group Law Firm was nominated by Thomson Reuters for the 'Best Legal Office in Kuwait' award, acknowledging their legal excellence and innovation.

This is in addition to Dr Fawaz Al-Khateeb's nomination for the 'Best Managing Partner' award, after a rigorous selection from 300 candidates to the final six chosen by the panel of judges. This reflects the Kuwaiti lawyers' commitment and leadership in achieving legal and economic successes regionally and in the Arab world; thus, enhancing Kuwait's global legal standing.



Dr Fawaz



Khaled



Jamal



Abdulaziz

## Minister shuts six private clinics

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: In continuation of the surprise inspection campaigns targeting private clinics Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued a decision to close six clinics, most of which operate in the field of cosmetics without a license and involved in illegal recruitment, reports reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources from

the health sector.

Sources said these campaigns have so far led to the punishment of nine doctors — seven non-Kuwaiti and two Kuwaiti. Sources disclosed that four of these doctors were penalized for committing financial violations, while five are suspended.

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# Mental test eyed for killer

Vital lead obtained in arson at judge's house

**By Jaber Al-Hamoud**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Court of Appeals has ordered to refer a Kuwaiti citizen to psychiatry for examining the level of his mental soundness.**

Earlier, the Criminal Court had sentenced to death the citizen after convicting him of killing his mother-in-law and attempting to end the life of her daughter (his wife) using a firearm (Kalashnikov) in Wafra, after his wife left him and refused to stay with him due to family problems.

The case boils down to a report received by the Ministry of Interior's Control Room from the citizen's wife stating that her mother was shot dead while they were driving in their vehicle on Wafra Road.

When the security personnel arrived, they found her covered in blood inside the vehicle, and the front and rear windows of the car shattered by gunfire.

The suspect was arrested after an informant confirmed that her husband was the one who committed the crime. He was referred to the Public Prosecution on charges of premeditated murder, and possession of a firearm and ammunition without a license.

The security officers were able to find the accused's vehicle in Wafra, and the weapon that was used to carry out the crime was found buried in the area.

The suspect claimed that the Kalashnikov was a remnant of the Iraqi invasion, and he had kept it with him from the time he found it.

He explained that he committed the crime due to family disputes that resulted in his wife leaving the marital home and not wanting to return to it.

He spotted her and her mother in Sabah Al-Ahmad City and followed their vehicle until he opened heavy fire on her on Wafra Road, but she miraculously survived while her mother succumbed to the gunshot injuries.

□ □ □

**Police imposter caught robbing people**

**By Munaif Naif**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: A young man in his twenties was arrested for impersonating a detective and robbing passersby in Salmi, as well as possessing a sharp instrument and a vest belonging to the police.

According to security sources, the security officers were able to arrest the suspect, even though he had resisted. He was referred to Taima police station to complete the legal procedures.

**Case adjourned:** The Criminal Court adjourned to December 20 the trial of the owner of the fictitious account "The Octopus", for reviewing and photocopying the case documents.

The Criminal Court had arraigned the owner of the fake account and leveled him with charges of defaming the entity of the Amir, misusing a smartphone, and publishing documents belonging to others. In response to the charges, the suspect alleged that his account was hacked.

□ □ □

**Vital lead obtained:** Less than a week after the arson in the house of Cassation Court Judge Sultan Buresli, a security source revealed that the Ministry of Interior obtained vital information, which will most likely lead to identifying the two masked individuals who started the fire and then fled on a motorcycle, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The source explained that the ongoing investigations resulted in the discovery of important clues to solve this crime and those suspected of involvement have been summoned.

He added several neighbors of Buresli gave their statements on the incident, especially the eyewitness who happened to be passing by at the time the two masked people poured gasoline and set fire to the premises of the house, which led to the burning of the fence and a car.

He affirmed this witness provided important information about the physical characteristics of the two suspects, which matched the footage recorded by surveillance cameras.

The source indicated that some of the traces removed from the crime scene were transferred to forensics for examination, while the movement of these masked men was tracked by the surveillance cameras after they fled from the

vicinity of Buresli's house.

The source added that the Ministry of Interior is capable of arresting the accused through its relevant agencies, but it is not possible to specify a time -- whether a week or a month -- to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice once the evidence is complete.

The source confirmed that First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled is personally supervising the investigations and closely following up the progress. He said the minister has given strict directives to exhaust all means to quickly arrest the suspects and to identify the mastermind.

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**Acquitted in 'fraud' case:** The Misdemeanor Division in the Court of First Instance has acquitted an individual of swindling a real estate company of KD59,000 as he allegedly tricked the latter into managing and investing in real estate properties, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Earlier, the Public Prosecution charged the defendant with deceiving the company, with the intention of misleading it in order to force it to hand over money in its possession. The prosecution argued that the defendant used fraudulent methods to swindle the company by highlighting its ability to manage and invest in real estate, owing to its vast experience in this field.

Attorney Abdullah Al-Alanda, lawyer for the accused, told the court that there were commercial disputes between his client and the company. He also affirmed that his client paid part of the rent and the amount of arrears is small. He pointed out the maliciousness of the accusation, civility of the dispute and absence of the elements of the crime.

The accused was acquitted based on these arguments and the pieces of evidence presented to the court.

## diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

### ‘Pain is inevitable but suffering is optional’

"WHO among us is not surprised by circumstances? Who among us is immune to pain? Life's events do not end, and we all experience or hear about strange situations that are described as "unexpected," or even worse than that! Difficulties and misfortunes follow one another," columnist **Sarah Saleh Al-Rashed** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"But if some people encounter a problem, they make their whole life a dilemma! You see them worried, spreading their sorrows in all physical and electronic platforms! Their conversations center around an incident they experienced, or challenges they face, and the truth is all these are challenges of life. Even getting out of bed to start your day is a challenge. Because the quality of life is lacking of everything, disappearance, fatigue, and transformation, it is not a place for decision-making!



Al-Rashed

"The relationship between the two brotherly peoples of Kuwait and Oman has deep and historical roots. Since ancient times, the Omanis have participated with Kuwaiti sailors on their travels to India and East Africa. Kuwait and its people participated with the people of Oman in their national celebrations due to the closeness that the Kuwaitis feel in the various fields that connect the two countries, as embodied by bilateral relations which should be developed through full understanding between the two brotherly countries," columnist **Abdul Mohsen Muhammad Al-Husseini** wrote for **Anba** daily.

"The Omani people and Sultan Qaboos, may God have mercy on him, had friendly relations with the Kuwaiti leadership and people, as His Majesty had a strong relationship with the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, who used to spend a large amount of his vacations in the Sultanate of Oman because of the love and affection he felt from the Omani people.

"Also, the Kuwaitis cannot forget the positions of Sultan Qaboos and the Omani people during the Iraqi occupation, as the Omani people embraced their Kuwaiti brothers and provided all means of comfort and accommodation.

"After the liberation, the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, may God have mercy on him, visited Oman and presented Sultan Qaboos and the Omani people to thank them and appreciate their positions in support of the Kuwaiti legitimacy.

"Sultan Qaboos also later visited Kuwait in 2002 and 2005 in order to coordinate between the two countries in various fields. He was received by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, may God have mercy on him, who honored him with the Mubarak Al-Kabeer order and Sultan Qaboos reciprocated by bestowing on the then Amir the "Oman Civil Medal."

"Later, relations between the two countries continued to develop in various fields, including the military field, as military officials in Kuwait and Oman held discussions that focused on strengthening cooperation relations in the military field. In this context, Omani Foreign Minister Badr Al Busaidi issued a ministerial decision to announce the Omani-Kuwaiti Friendship Association was issued to strengthen relations between the two countries and revive a long history of rapprochement between them.

"As we recall that era of history and the fraternal relationship between the two brotherly countries, it pleases us to join our brothers, the people of Oman, in their celebrations of National Day, hoping that the Almighty God will perpetuate security and safety and further progress for the brotherly country and for Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Sultan of Oman, may God protect and preserve him.

"In this regard and on this glorious national occasion, we would like to repeat our sincere congratulations to the leadership and people of the sisterly State of Kuwait on the return of things to normal, calling on God Almighty to provide them with His help and grant them success in order to advance Kuwait so that it can fulfill its role on the regional and international arenas."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



# November

## Room Promotion



Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173/-net	BHD 128.000/-net
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NOW	NOW
BHD 61.000/-net	BHD 136.198/-net

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023      Terms & conditions apply\*

### Fetus dumped in Mishref

## Police nab 2 youths with drugs

**By Mansour Sultan**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Patrolmen supporting the Jahra Security Directorate were able to arrest two young men in possession of narcotic drugs and drug paraphernalia in the Sulaibiya area.

During their tour in the Sulaibiya area, Jahra security patrolmen suspected a car moving slowly in the parking lot of a school.

After heading to it and forcing its driver to stop, they found two people inside it consuming drugs. They were arrested and searched and police seized from them 3 sachets of the shabu and drug paraphernalia. The seized items were referred to the General Administration for Drug Control.

□ □ □

**Fetus dumped:** Security sources reported to Al-Rai that the body of a newborn fetus was found in an open area in the suburb of

Mishref, reports Al-Rai daily.

The sources stated that the security, investigation and forensic personnel moved to the scene of the accident and referred the fetus to Forensics.

The incident is being investigated.

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**2 rescued from boat:** In the early hours of Wednesday, the Shuwaikh Fire and Marine Rescue Center fire brigade successfully responded to an incident involving a sinking boat.

Thanks to their prompt response, two individuals aboard the cruiser were rescued, found to be in good health, and subsequently handed over to the concerned authorities.

Simultaneously, the Al-Mangaf Fire Brigade dealt with a vehicle fire on Wednesday morning, which spread to nearby trees. The accident happened near a house in the Al-Egaila area.

Firefighters put out the blaze and averted significant injuries or damages from the incident.

## Power cut in 415 bachelor homes

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The municipality has compiled a comprehensive report detailing the accomplishments of the committee tasked with monitoring the phenomenon of single-person occupancy in private and model housing areas from January 1 to June 30, reports Al-Anba daily.

Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous, the Acting Director General of the Municipality, said in his letter to the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Fahd Al-Shoula, that a total of 415 properties across all governorates had their electricity cut off during the specified period. In the report, Eng. Al-Dabbous referenced the letter from the Vice President of the Government Performance Monitoring Agency on 10/31/2023 and Ministerial Resolution No. 128 of 2023 dated 4/16/2023, which formed the commit-

tee to address the issue.

The report highlighted the committee's adherence to its mandate, providing periodic reports and recommendations for the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs to take necessary actions. The committee, established following the ministerial resolution, promptly initiated its activities with a coordination meeting on 4/26/2023. During this meeting, representatives from the committee members unified procedures and discussed ways to address the phenomenon of single-person housing in private and model housing areas across all municipality branches in the governorates.

The mechanism for disconnecting electricity in properties occupied by single individuals was reviewed, along with identifying obstacles faced by the municipal executive body in executing its tasks.



Confirm facilitation of procedures for elderly priority card holders: MoSA

‘CSC okays age requirement raise for postgraduate scholarships’

Adultery, abortion case set for Wed

Court to look into appeal against ruling in Municipal’s bribery case

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Court of Cassation is considering the appeal submitted against the ruling issued on the Municipal bribery case to sentence a Municipal Council member and a former official of Kuwait Municipality to ten-year imprisonment, and a trader to five-year imprisonment with hard labor, and impose fines on them next 14.

According to the case file, the Criminal Court had ruled in March to sentence a member of the Municipal Council and an employee to ten-year imprisonment each, remove them from their jobs, and impose fines on them. It also sentenced a businessman to five-year imprisonment with hard labor, after convicting them of crimes of bribery and peddling.

The court charged the Municipal Council member with abuse of power and taking bribes worth KD 100,000 in order to vote on a transaction in the council related to a land area and register it under the name of a company.

In November, the security services of the Ministry of Interior arrested the aforementioned member red-handed while he was receiving the bribe through an intermediary to complete transactions in the municipality. The employee whose phone revealed his connection to another bribery incident was arrested, along with the businessman.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court has adjourned to Wednesday next week the case of adultery, abortion, and the burial of a fetus filed against three expatriates, in order to pronounce the verdict.

The first defendant was charged with selling abortion pills to another expatriate (his friend), who had asked his help to abort the fetus in his wife. The husband (the second defendant) presented them to his wife (the third defendant)

so that she could abort the fetus that she had carried in her womb for seven months.

After the abortion, the woman and her husband buried the fetus in the yard of the building where they lived in Farwaniya and made a grave. When the expatriate friend (the informant) came to know that her friend had purchased abortion pills from her husband, aborted her fetus, and buried it, she informed the police.

Immediately, the detectives conducted their secret investigations and found out that the third suspect is married to the second suspect in a common law contract, she became pregnant and she aborted the fetus.

The Public Prosecution was notified, the grave in the building was dug up, the suspects were arrested, and a DNA test was carried out, through which it was discovered that the first suspect was the father of the fetus. Investigations revealed that the third suspect had cheated on her husband with his friend and became pregnant.

When confronted, the third suspect admitted that she had aborted the fetus with the help of her husband, who had decided to do so because of his intense love for her but without knowing that the fetus was not his.

When the husband (second suspect) was confronted with this, he was shocked to know that the fetus was not his own, but was of his special friend who betrayed him by having a secret affair with his wife.

The woman revealed that she had been married to her husband for six years but his friend managed to play with her mind and convince her into an adulterous relationship with him. She became pregnant but her husband bought abortion pills from her lover without knowing that the fetus was not his but of his friend’s.

of all tumors registered in Kuwait. The number of surgeries for cancerous tumors at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center during the last five years reached 8,500, including 1,000 surgeries for gynecological tumors, representing 12 percent of the total surgical operations.

Ceasefire set

Continued from Page 1

He said the two sides had exchanged lists of those to be released, and the first group of hostages held by Hamas - including 13 women and children - would be freed Friday afternoon. Increased aid for Palestinians will start to enter “as soon as possible,” al-Ansari said.

Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed Thursday the announcement by Qatar for successful mediation in brokering a humanitarian pause agreement in Gaza Strip, in partnership with the US and Egypt.

The humanitarian pause will trigger an exchange of hostages and detainees, notably women and children, in Israeli occupation prisons and in Gaza Strip, in addition to a temporary ceasefire and entry of humanitarian and relief aid into Gaza, said the Foreign Ministry in a statement.

The State of Kuwait praises the agreement, but calls for continuation of such efforts to ensure a permanent ceasefire and protect Palestinians in Gaza from ferocious attacks by occupied Israeli forces.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza, meanwhile, resumed its detailed count of Palestinian casualties from the war, saying over 13,300 have been killed. The new numbers were not fully broken down, but in past tallies, women and minors have consistently made up around two-thirds of the dead.

The figures do not include updated numbers from hospitals in the north, where services and communication largely broke down earlier this month. The ministry says some 6,000 people have been reported missing and are feared to be buried under rubble.

The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and militants in its death tolls. Israel says it has killed thousands of Hamas fighters, without presenting evidence for its count.

The ministry stopped publishing casualty counts as of Nov. 11, saying it had lost the ability to do so because of the collapse of the health sector in the north.

The truce agreement had raised hopes of eventually winding down the war, which has leveled vast swaths of Gaza, fueled a surge of violence in the occupied West Bank, and stirred fears of a wider conflagration across the Middle East.

Air raid sirens sounded across northern Israel on Thursday as Hezbollah said it fired 48 Katyusha rockets from southern Lebanon. The barrage came after an Israeli strike killed five Hezbollah fighters, including the son of the head of the group’s parliamentary bloc.

The Israeli military said it was striking the sources of the launches. Israel and Hezbollah, which fought a monthlong war in 2006, have repeatedly traded fire across the border since the war in Gaza broke out.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to continue the war after the truce expires, with the goal of destroying Hamas’ military capabilities, ending its 16-year rule in Gaza and returning all of the estimated 240 captives held in Gaza by Hamas and other groups.

“We will continue it until we achieve all our goals,” Netanyahu said, adding that he had delivered the same message in a phone call to U.S. President Joe Biden. Washington has provided extensive military and diplomatic support to Israel since the start of the war.

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shoula sent a circular to his affiliated agencies and bodies regarding the decision taken by the Civil Service Commission during its meeting No. 18/2023 held on 15/10/2023 related to the Civil Service Com-

mission’s approval to increase the age requirement for scholarships for postgraduate studies to 50 years instead of 40 years, effective from May 30, 2023.

In a related context, the Ministry of Social Affairs addressed the Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous to confirm the facilitation of procedures for holders of a priority card for the elderly.

The ministry based its letter on Article 10 of the Law No. 18/2016

regarding social care for the elderly, which stipulates that relevant government agencies are obligated to take the necessary measures to ensure that the elderly benefit from public services. These services include giving priority to the elderly in curative, preventive and counseling services in health centers and government hospitals, providing a sufficient number of mobile service and day care centers for the elderly in all parts of Kuwait, and allocating

parking for the elderly’s vehicles in public facilities, places of worship, entertainment centers, market entrances, parking lots, and other facilities frequented by the elderly. It also includes giving priority to the elderly in completing their transactions in various state institutions, and providing special equipment in public transportation to take care of the elderly in accordance with what is regulated by the executive regulations.

Municipality chief monitors process to test supervisory posts’ applicants

Proposal to remove residential waste of large quantities

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous, accompanied by the Deputy Director General for Capital and Jahra Governorate Affairs Thamer Al-Mutairi, carried out a field visit to ensure the progress of the procedures related to the tests for supervisory positions given to the 174 applicants for those positions on the first day, with only 16 applicants being selected from them.

Al-Dabbous explained that the vacant positions were announced in the first phase a month ago and 670 applicants who met the conditions applied for 39 supervisory positions. The applicants who were able to pass the conditions set for them were vetted. Only those with national competencies who worked in the field have the highest chances of succeeding. The current tests are characterized by transparency and are considered a gateway to renewing blood in the municipality, especially since they are proceeding according to several stages, and not within one stage.

He stressed that the municipality will be the first to advance the mechanism of supervisory positions, indicating that the next stage will witness the announcement of those who passed the tests on social media sites and the official website of the municipality, after which personal interviews will begin according to specific requirements.

Revealing

Al-Dabbous concluded by revealing the next stages of filling supervisory positions, which will include completing the testing process to fill 200 to 250 supervisory positions in the various sectors of Kuwait Municipality.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Affairs Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting recently headed by Alia Al-Farsi, referred to the executive body the proposal submitted by Al-Farsi regarding the bulky waste service for removing residential waste of large quantities and sizes, and the letter submitted by the Kuwait Green Wall Project regarding the green oasis project in the area located between the Abdullah Port Refinery and Al-Zour Refinery to provide a study on them.

The committee returned the proposal submitted by member Alia Al-Farsi regarding the allocation of date palm land in the north of the country to the executive branch to propose an alternative location in coordination with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).

The committee kept on its agenda the proposal submitted by member Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding maintaining the cleanliness of the marine environment, with the invitation of the Environment Public Authority and the Ministry of Communication.

During the committee meeting, the chairperson Alia Al-Farsi highlighted the desired goals of her proposal related to the service of removing bulky residential waste of large quantities and sizes. They include organizing the mechanism for producing residential waste of large sizes or large quantities, reducing the amounts of waste that is sent to the landfill, preserving the cultural and aesthetic appearance, enhancing mental comfort by limiting and preventing the random disposal of bulky waste by organizing the disposal mechanism,



Saud Al-Dabbous



Top and above: Some photos from the opening of the LuLu Exchange branch at Khaitan-2.

Opening marks 311th global center of LuLu Financial Holdings

LuLu Exchange opens its 36th Customer Engagement Center at Khaitan-2 Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: LuLu Exchange Kuwait, one of the nation’s most trusted names in cross-border payments and foreign currency exchange, opened its 36th customer engagement center in Khaitan-2 on Thursday. This marks the 311th Global Customer Engagement Center under LuLu Financial Holdings, strategically aligned with the company’s expansion strategy in Kuwait. The new engagement center at Khaitan-2 was inaugurated by Mr. AdeebAhamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings, in the presence of other senior management of the country operations.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. AdeebAhamed said, “The opening of our latest customer engagement center in Khaitan-2, brings us

great joy and inspiration. This new center will serve as a connection point for our varied financial services, streamlining the integration of our digital payment solutions for customers. Kuwait holds a strategic position in our operations, and we extend our gratitude to the government, regulators, and partners for their support in contributing to our ongoing expansion.”

Established in 2011, LuLu Exchange Kuwait is one of the country’s leading financial services providers. It has been at the forefront of digital transformation, introducing several industry-first initiatives to enhance the service experience for both retail and corporate customers. As one of the most future-focused payment companies in Kuwait,

LuLu Exchange delivers financial services with a focus on timeliness, transparency, and reliability through its network of customer engagement centers and the mobile payments app - LuLu Money.

As LuLu Exchange Kuwait anticipates continued growth, the commitment to sustained excellence in the dynamic financial services landscape remains unwavering. The company is poised to navigate the future with resilience, innovation, and a steadfast focus on meeting the evolving needs of its valued customers and contributing to its financial inclusion goals.

Visit [www.luluexchange.com](http://www.luluexchange.com) to know more.

‘Young Leaders Program 2023’ is an opportunity to participate in decision-making: Kuwaiti team

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Kuwaiti delegation to the ‘Young Leaders Program 2023’ in the Kingdom of Bahrain confirmed that the program is an opportunity for them to participate in decision-making, and to exchange experiences and viewpoints, especially with regard to the security aspect, reports Al-Rai daily.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies organized the 19th session of the Manama Dialogue, which concluded recently.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of the event, official at the Ministry of Defense Colonel Sheikh Sabah Mohammad Al-Sabah stressed the need to strengthen Gulf cooperation through the unified military leadership of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, especially

in light of the challenges that the region and the world are currently facing. He said the Gulf military leadership is a role model, praising its efforts to develop ways to coordinate and unify military efforts to ensure the security and stability of GCC countries.

On the other hand, Diplomatic Attaché at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ahmad Salmeen pointed out that participating in such programs gives young leaders a chance to develop their capabilities by exchanging views on the security challenges in the region.

He also emphasized the importance of fortifying multilateral action mechanisms to address existing and emerging challenges in a sustainable manner, as well as speeding

the pace of constructive cooperation between countries.

Assistant Professor at Kuwait University Dr Fahd Zaman expressed his pride over the contributions of competent Kuwaitis by organizing or participating in such dialogues. He affirmed that he is happy to participate in dialogues on regional and international policies in general, and those related to the space security sector, due to their importance in shaping the economic and technological future of the region.

The Manama Dialogue is one of the most important forums in the world, as it focuses on the most important political and security issues and ways to enhance strategic international cooperation to address regional and international challenges.

and utilizing the waste and sending it to the beneficiaries through an organized process as well as achieving the principle of hierarchy of municipal solid waste.

Al-Farsi touched on the proposed mechanism for activating the service, which begins with creating a special application for the municipality that allows the user to dispose of bulky waste of large quantities

and sizes that are normally difficult to dispose of in regular garbage containers.

She revealed that registration in the application is done electronically by entering the service applicant’s data such as name, civil ID number, mobile phone number and location, uploading photos of the waste, then clicking on “Submit” to begin the work cycle by the municipality to

remove the waste to the collection points.

Al-Farsi stressed the necessity of providing the possibility of chatting with the area’s cleaning official, and emphasizing the right of each residential unit to remove bulky waste for the purpose of disposal and removal through the service provided by the municipality only four times a year.



World News Roundup

Europe

‘More NATO troops’

Wilders wins ‘big’ in Netherlands election

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Nov 23, (AP): **Geert Wilders** won a huge victory in Dutch elections, according to a near complete count of the vote early Thursday, in a stunning lurch to the far right for a nation once famed as a beacon of tolerance.

The result will send shockwaves through Europe, where far-right ideology is on the rise, and puts Wilders in line to lead talks to form the next governing coalition and possibly become the first far-right prime minister of the Netherlands.

With nearly all votes counted, Wilders’ Party for Freedom was forecast to win 37 seats in the 150-seat lower house of parliament, two more than predicted by an exit poll when voting finished Wednesday night and more than double the 17 he won at the last election.



Wilders

“I had to pinch my arm,” a jubilant Wilders said.

Political parties were set to hold separate meetings Thursday to discuss the outcome before what is likely to be an arduous process of forming a new governing coalition begins Friday.

Despite his harsh rhetoric, Wilders has already begun courting other right and center parties by saying in a victory speech that whatever policies he pushes will be “with-in the law and constitution.”

Wilders’ election program included calls for a referendum on the Netherlands leaving the European Union, a total halt to accepting asylum-seekers and migrant pushbacks at Dutch borders.

It also advocates the “de-Islamization” of the Netherlands. He says he wants no mosques or Islamic schools in the country, although he has been milder about Islam during this election campaign than in the past.

Instead, his victory seems based on his campaign to rein-in migration -- the issue that caused the last governing coalition to quit in July -- and tackle issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and housing shortages.

□ □ □

**4 leaders disagree on military aid:** The presidents of four Central European countries found some common ground Wednesday on Ukraine despite their governments’ diverging views on military support for its fight against Russia’s invasion.

The Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia, all four post-communist European Union and NATO members, form an informal collective known as the Visegrad Group.

At their annual meeting, the host, Czech President Petr Pavel, noted the leaders didn’t have sharply different opinions on the war, saying that “we’ve all agreed that it is in our imminent interest that Ukraine succeeds.”

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**EU pays 1.5b euro in assistance to Ukraine:** The European Commission Wednesday announced that it has paid 1.5 billion euro (USD 1.6 billion) under the Macro-financial Assistance package for Ukraine which is worth up to 18 billion euro (USD 19.6 billion).

This support will help Ukraine to continue paying wages and pensions, and keep essential public services running, such as hospitals, schools, and housing for relocated people, it said in a press release.

With today’s payment, Ukraine has so far received 16.5 billion euro (USD 17.9 billion) this year under the EU’s Macro-financial Assistance.

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**Finland erects barriers at border:** Finnish border guards and soldiers began erecting barriers including concrete obstacles topped with barbed-wire at some crossing points on the Nordic country’s lengthy border with Russia to better control an influx of migrants, officials said Wednesday. Finland said it will close three more crossing points, leaving only one Arctic point open for migrants seeking asylum.

Some 600 migrants without proper visas and documentation, mostly from the Middle East and Africa, have arrived in Finland in November compared to a few dozen in September and October. The arrivals include residents of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Kenya, Morocco and Somalia, border officials said.

“We need to do this to maintain order (at the crossing points) and guarantee the security of legal border traffic,” Tomi Tirkkonen, deputy commander of the Kainuu border guard district in eastern Finland, told The Associated Press.

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**Albania PM calls for more NATO troops:** Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama urged NATO on Wednesday to further boost its military forces in Kosovo and secure the country’s borders with Serbia, warning that recent ethnic violence in Kosovo could potentially trigger a wider Balkan conflict.

Kosovo’s border with Serbia was “out of control,” Rama said after an informal meeting of Western Balkan NATO members in North Macedonia.

He said the frontier was being used for a host of illegal activities, including drugs and arms smuggling and infiltration by ultra nationalists, that could lead to “great disturbances” in the region.

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**Hand grenade explosion injures 10:** A hand grenade exploded in an animal market in a southern city in Kosovo on Wednesday, injuring 10 people, authorities said.

A police statement said they arrested one of the three suspects while the other two remain at large following the explosion in Prizren, 85 kilometers (52 miles) south of the capital Pristina. One of them hurled the grenade after a quarrel in the market.

Police said they were pursuing the two others and that an investigation is ongoing.

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**Germany to extradite Italian man:** A German court on Wednesday ordered the extradition of an Italian man suspected in the killing of a 22-year-old woman that stirred outrage in Italy.

The Higher Regional Court in Naumburg, in the eastern German state of Saxony-Anhalt announced the 21-year-old suspect’s extradition, according to German news agency dpa.

The suspect, Filippo Turetta, was arrested on the weekend near the eastern city of Leipzig and is currently in custody in Halle.

The court said Turetta agreed to the extradition. He will remain in custody until he is handed over to the Italian authorities. It was not immediately clear when the extradition would take place. Italy had requested his extradition on Tuesday, dpa reported.



Law enforcement personnel block off the entrance to the Rainbow Bridge border crossing on Nov 22 in Niagara Falls, NY. Inset: Debris is scattered about inside the customs plaza at the Rainbow Bridge border crossing, Wednesday. (AP)

Explosion

Officials say no sign of terrorism

Fiery crash kills 2 at Rainbow border bridge

NIAGARA FALLS, NY, Nov 23, (AP): A vehicle speeding toward a US-Canada bridge from the American side crashed and exploded at a checkpoint in Niagara Falls on Wednesday, killing two people and prompting the closing of multiple border crossings for hours. Authorities weren’t sure what spurred the wreck but said there were no signs it was a terror attack.

The FBI’s Buffalo office said late Wednesday that it had concluded its investigation: “A search of the scene revealed no explosive materials, and no terrorism nexus was identified,” it said in a statement. “The matter has been turned over to the Niagara Falls Police Department as a traffic investigation.”

Much remained unclear about the incident at the Rainbow Bridge, which prompted concerns on both sides of the border as the U.S. headed into the Thanksgiving holiday. Both U.S. President Joe Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau were briefed soon afterward, and Trudeau excused himself from Question Period in the House of Commons to get further information, saying officials were “taking this extraordinarily seriously.”

A few hours later, New York Gov Kathy Hochul and western New York’s US attorney, Trini Ross, both sought to ease fears.

“Based on what we know at this moment,” Hochul said at a news conference, “there is no sign of terrorist activity in this crash.”

At a separate news conference with Ross nearby in Buffalo, Erie County Sheriff John Garcia said, “We can go on with our lives.”

Released

Security camera video released by the US government showed the car race through an intersection on a wet road, hit a low median and vault high into the air in a U.S. Customs and Border Protection area just east of the main vehicle checkpoint. The car flew for yards (meters), twisting, and then crashed into a line of booths out of the camera’s view.

Rickie Wilson, a Niagara Falls tour guide, was by his parked car nearby and turned around when he saw something in the air.

“I first thought it was an airplane. It

looked like slow motion,” he said. “I said, ‘My God, it’s a car. It’s a vehicle, and it’s flying through the air.’”

The identities of those in the car weren’t released. Hochul said it wasn’t clear whether the driver - a western New York resident - was intentionally heading for the bridge, which crosses the Niagara River.

The two people who died were a husband and wife, according to a person briefed on the investigation who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release information about the people who were killed.

Matthew Miraglia, the FBI special agent in charge in Buffalo, said investigators so far had found no “derogatory” information on the driver.

“We’re scanning his social media. There’s nothing there,” Miraglia said.

New York Sen Chuck Schumer said Wednesday night that he had been in contact with both the FBI and the White House and investigators had found “no connection to any terrorist or criminal group.” Investigators swabbed the scene and found no evidence of chemicals or substances used for explosives, he added.

Approached

Officials said the car was traveling at tremendous speed as it approached the bridge at around 11:30 am in downtown Niagara Falls in an area that includes several hotels and a casino.

Hochul said the car ended up “basically incinerated,” with nothing left but the engine. Debris was scattered across a dozen checkpoint booths. The governor, a Democrat, called video of the airborne car “absolutely surreal.”

Photos and video taken by bystanders and posted on social media showed thick smoke, flames on the pavement and a singed security booth. A Customs and Border Protection worker in a checkpoint booth was treated at a hospital for minor injuries and released, Hochul said.

From inside Niagara Falls State Park, Melissa Raffalow said she saw “a huge plume of black smoke” rise up over the border crossing, roughly 50 yards (45 meters) away from the popular tourist destination. Raffalow told

AP in a message that police arrived soon after, urging visitors to disperse as they began cordoning off the street.

Raghu Bhattarai said by phone that he was inside his restaurant, the Niagara Tandoori Hut, near the bridge when he heard a sound he described as a “boom.” A few minutes later, he saw black smoke rising.

The Rainbow Bridge - a short span that offers striking views of the falls - and three others between western New York and Ontario were quickly closed as a precaution, though the other three later reopened. The Buffalo-Niagara International Airport began security checks on all cars and told passengers to expect additional screenings.

Measures

The safety measures tied up traffic at the airport and elsewhere on one of the busiest US travel days of the year, ahead of the American Thanksgiving holiday.

Sanchit Chatha, his wife Reyshu and their 13-year-old daughter, Trisha, had stopped in Niagara Falls for lunch en route home to Toronto from Buffalo when they started getting news notifications about the explosion. Worried friends called, knowing the family was in the area.

Trisha was concerned at seeing the bridges to Canada shut down, her mother said.

“She has a math test tomorrow,” the mother explained as the family waited to find out when the crossings would open.

In Toronto, about 100 miles (about 160 kilometers) away, police said they were increasing patrols as a precaution. New York City police were monitoring the news from Buffalo but already had boosted security at various spots because of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade on Thursday.

About 6,000 vehicles cross the Rainbow Bridge each day, according to the US Federal Highway Administration’s National Bridge Inventory. About 5% is truck traffic, according to the federal data.

The bridge, constructed in 1941, is just over 1,440 feet (439 meters) long and has a main span constructed of steel, according to the data.

reported.

“As seemed pretty clear last night, these more final results clearly indicate that Mayor Mendenhall has won reelection,” Anderson said. “I wish her the very best and I hope she and her team succeeds.”

Mendenhall’s campaign said Anderson called the mayor Wednesday afternoon to concede. (AP)

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**Vander Plaats endorses DeSantis:** Bob Vander Plaats, an influential Iowa evangelical leader, endorsed Ron DeSantis for president Tuesday, boosting the Florida governor as he goes all in on the leadoff caucus state in an effort to trip up Republican front-runner Donald Trump.

Vander Plaats is the second major backer DeSantis has picked up in Iowa this month, joining popular Gov. Kim Reynolds.

Evangelicals are a crucial voting bloc in Iowa’s Republican caucuses. Vander Plaats, president of the Family Leader, has endorsed the eventual winner in every GOP caucus since 2008 and is potentially jeopardizing his streak by picking DeSantis, who trails far behind Trump in polls.

His decision will test his sway among Iowa evangelicals, many of whom continue to support Trump. (AP)



A makeshift memorial for a high school student lines a fence along an alleyway near Rancho High School in eastern Las Vegas on Nov 21. Authorities have arrested at least eight students in connection with the beating of Jonathan Lewis Jr, who died a week after a prearranged fight over a pair of headphones and a vape pen. (AP)



Beshear



Mendenhall

America

**Town urged to evacuate:** A train derailed and spilled a chemical in a remote part of eastern Kentucky on Wednesday, prompting officials to encourage residents of a small town to evacuate amid concerns about air quality.

Gov **Andy Beshear** said in a statement that local officials in Rockcastle County were encouraging residents of Livingston, with a population of about 200, to evacuate. News outlets reported that a shelter was opened at a local middle school.

The derailment involving at least 16 cars happened around 2:30 p.m., according to Bryan Tucker, a spokesperson for railroad operator CSX. Two of the derailed cars were carrying molten sulfur, which caught fire after the cars were breached, Tucker said in an emailed statement. The company was still working to extinguish the fire as of late Wednesday, he said. (AP)

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**Search continues for missing:** Searchers with heat-sensing drones and a cadaver-dog kept up the search Wednesday for three people missing in a landslide that barreled down a mountain and slammed into homes in a remote Alaska fishing community, leaving three confirmed dead.

Monday night’s slide churned up the earth from near the top of the mountain down to the ocean, tearing down a wide swath of evergreen trees and burying a highway in the island community of Wrangell, about 155 miles (250 kilometers) south of Juneau. Rescue crews found the body of a girl in an initial search Monday night and the bodies of two adults late Tuesday.

Around 54 homes are cut off from town by the landslide, and roughly 35 to 45 people have chosen to stay in that area, interim borough manager Mason Villarma said. Boats are being used to provide supplies, including food, fuel and water, and prescription medications, to those residents. (AP)

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**Mendenhall wins re-election:** Incumbent **Erin Mendenhall** has won her reelection bid for mayor of Utah’s capital

in a ranked-choice contest that included a challenge by Salt Lake City’s former Mayor Rocky Anderson.

Ballot returns released Wednesday,

which included all scannable ballots in the Salt Lake County clerk’s possession, showed Mendenhall with 58% of the vote to Anderson’s 34%, the Salt Lake Tribune



Bystanders watch the balloon inflation for the 97th Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York on Nov. 22, 2023. Beloved characters like Snoopy and SpongeBob SquarePants will take to the skies above New York City Thursday while bands march along the streets below as the annual Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade ushers in the holiday season. (AP)



Lat/Am

‘El Nini’ arrested

Milei ‘racing’ against clock to remake govt

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Nov 23, (AP): Argentina’s President-elect **Javier Milei** has called for the wholesale reinvention of the government but he has precious little time.

And with less than three weeks until his Dec 10 inauguration, Milei has no executive experience and few allies in his bullpen.

From the moment of the wild-haired outsider’s decisive victory on Sunday night, the clock started ticking. Argentina’s presidential transition period is one of the shortest in Latin America; it lasts at least six weeks in Colombia and two months in Brazil. Next year’s election in Mexico will feature a six-month handover.



Milei

Milei “is new to politics, leads a minor political party and has not built an experienced team. He could use more time to prepare his agenda, recruit advisers and senior officials, and build coalitions in the new Congress,” Benjamin Gedan, director of the Latin America Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center, told The Associated Press. “This is especially important because Argentina is on the verge of collapse, so he will have no time for learning on the job.”

The key position to appoint is that of economy minister, given Argentina’s gaping budget deficit, depleted dollar reserves, and a \$44 billion loan program with the International Monetary Fund that it must continue paying down. Four in 10 Argentines are living in poverty, annual inflation is running at the red-hot rate of 143% and it is likely to continue accelerating, at least in the short term.

Strong

The White House said that President Joe Biden spoke with Milei Wednesday about “the strong relationship between the United States and Argentina on economic issues, on regional and multilateral cooperation, and on shared priorities, including advocating for the protection of human rights, addressing food insecurity and investing in clean energy.”

During his victory speech on Sunday night, Milei said that “Argentina’s situation is critical. The changes our country needs are drastic. There is no room for gradualism, no room for lukewarm measures.”

Milei rose to prominence as a television talking head who blasted the political elite as corrupt and self-serving. He parlayed that fame into a lawmaker’s seat two years ago with his newly founded political party. Then he defied almost all political experts’ predictions when he won the presidency.

A libertarian populist in a country where the state has an outsized presence, he was even more of a novelty. He has said he will halve the number of government ministries, slash public spending with his “chainsaw plan” and privatize each and every state-owned and state-run company that he can. He has also said he will get rid of the Central Bank.

Proposal

Milei’s ambition to shrink the state requires personnel with a deep understanding of its minutiae in order to make decisions that are both bureaucratic and political, said Sergio Berensztein, a Buenos Aires-based political analyst. His official government proposal was thin on details and full of points like making it easier to buy handguns.

“This is planning for a war; you can’t just go ahead and without proper strategy start doing the thing. If you do that, it is going to fail,” Berensztein said by phone. “You have to do things correctly, need a plan, need a strategy ... So far, we have no indication whatsoever that is the case.”

Milei said in an interview on Nov. 21 that any of his ministers who increase spending will be immediately dismissed. When contacted by the AP, a spokesperson declined to comment on appointee plans.

For now, at least, the market seems to be giving Milei the benefit of the doubt. Argentine stocks and sovereign bonds have risen and the peso has lost a bit of its value, but hasn’t taken the plunge many had been expecting.

“The great merit that Milei has is that the market seems to believe him a little more than it seemed to do before the election,” said Javier Timerman, Managing Partner at AdCap Asset Management in New York.

Also:

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexico’s National Guard officers on Wednesday arrested the hyper violent, alleged security chief for the “Chapitos” wing of the Sinaloa drug cartel.

The Public Safety Department’s arrest registry says **Nestor Isidro Pérez Salas** was detained around 1:30 pm Wednesday at a walled property in the Sinaloa state capital of Culiacan. The department listed his alias as “El Nini.”

The US Drug Enforcement Administration in April had posted a \$3 million reward for his capture. Pérez Salas is wanted on US charges of conspiracy to import and distribute fentanyl in the United States. But he also allegedly left a trail of murder and torture behind him in Mexico.

He allegedly protected the sons of imprisoned drug lord **Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán**. The sons lead a faction of the cartel known as the little Chapos, or “Chapitos” that has been identified as one of the main exporters of fentanyl, a deadly synthetic opioid, to the US market.

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**MEXICO CITY:** Mexico’s governmental human rights agency said Wednesday that soldiers opened fire “without reason” a year ago in the violent border city of **Nuevo Laredo**, killing a man.

The National Human Rights Commission said soldiers had argued that the occupants of a pickup truck had opened fire first on a road in Nuevo Laredo, across the border from Laredo, **Texas**.

But the commission said no gunshot residue was found on any of the four people in the truck following the confrontation on Nov 4, 2022.

The commission said none of the victims had fired a gun, and issued a call for the Defense Department to cooperate in the investigation and take action to compensate the survivors.

Meanwhile, An activist who documented murders in one of Mexico’s deadliest cities has himself been killed, authorities confirmed Wednesday.

Adolfo Enriquez was killed in the city of Leon, in north-central Guanajuato state. The city has the third-highest number of homicides in Mexico, trailing only the border cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez.

Enriquez described himself on his social media profiles as an “activist, demanding a country with the rule of law.”



This image made from video shows a helicopter dumping water on a fire in Perth, Western Australia, Australia on Nov 23. (AP)

Dozens evacuate, 10 homes destroyed by wildfire burning out of control on edge of Perth

Dozens of residents have been evacuated and at least 10 homes destroyed by a wildfire burning out of control on the northern fringe of the west coast city of Perth during heat wave spring conditions, authorities said Thursday.

There were no deaths reported, but several firefighters had sustained minor injuries including smoke inhalation, Western Australia state Department of Fires and Emergency Services Commissioner Darren Klemm said.

The fire began Wednesday afternoon in a pine tree plantation on Perth’s northeast edge and was fanned overnight by 60-kilometer (37-mile) -an-hour winds, incident controller Clinton Kuchel said. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

The temperature in Perth was forecast to peak at 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) on Thursday - which is extraordinarily hot for the Southern Hemisphere spring - and winds remained strong.

“Perth is experiencing ... heat wave conditions. So overlay that on top of the fire and you can imagine the conditions that our firefighters and our support staff are working on. It’s really challenging,” Kuchel told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

“Whilst we’re building containment lines on this fire, the conditions and the environment are such that even if we contain it, it may not be contained all the time. There may be breakouts. So it’s a really challenging and dynamic environment,” Kuchel added. (AP)

Asia

Fiji’s leader says he hopes to work with China

3 NZ leaders reach deal to form next govt

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Nov 23, (AP): Three New Zealand political leaders said Thursday that they have reached an agreement to form the next government, pending a final signoff from their parties which they expected within hours.

The three party leaders said they expected to hold a formal signing ceremony Friday at Parliament.

The announcement brought to an end nearly six weeks of negotiations since New Zealand held a general election on Oct 14.

What has never been in question is that former businessman Christopher Luxon will be the next prime minister, after his conservative National Party won 38% of the vote, the largest proportion of any party. What has been at play is what policies the three parties can agree upon to jointly govern, and what positions various lawmakers will hold.

Relations

The parties went into the election campaign with different policies on tax, race relations and economic management. Luxon said they would release details of their agreement on Friday.

“I’m really proud of the negotiations,” Luxon told reporters. “When you see the agreements tomorrow, you’ll understand how comprehensive they are. We’ve covered a tremendous amount of material.”

Under New Zealand’s proportional voting system, parties typically need to form alliances in order to command a governing majority.

Luxon negotiated with David Seymour, the leader of the libertarian ACT Party, which won 9% of the vote, and Winston Peters, the 78-year-old maverick leader of the populist New Zealand First party, which won 6%.

On the election night count, the closely aligned National and ACT parties had just enough votes to govern. But a final count, which included special votes, changed the equation and made for the tougher three-way negotiations.

Outgoing Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, who decided he wouldn’t work

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov 23, (AP): South Korea has concluded that Russian support likely enabled North Korea to put a spy satellite into orbit for the first time this week, and will know whether it is functioning properly by early next week, officials said Thursday.

The launch has deepened regional animosities, with both Koreas threatening to breach a past reconciliation deal and taking hostile actions along their heavily armed border.

After two launch failures earlier this year, North Korea said it successfully placed its “Malligyeong-1” satellite into orbit on Tuesday night. South Korea’s military has confirmed that the satellite entered orbit, but said it needs several more days to verify whether it is working properly.

In a closed-door briefing, South Korea’s spy agency told lawmakers on Thursday that Russian as-

sistance was likely the main reason the launch was successful, according to lawmakers who attended the meeting.

The National Intelligence Service cited Russian President Vladimir Putin’s earlier mention of a promise to support North Korea’s satellite program. It said it also obtained intelligence that North Korea had sent Russia the design and other data for its new “Chollima-1” rocket used in the two previous failed launches. The intelligence showed that Russia returned its analysis of the North Korean data, according to lawmaker Yoo Sang-bum, who attended the NIS briefing.

South Korean Defense Minister Shin Wonsik told a separate parliamentary committee meeting Thursday that Russia appears to have been providing technological assistance for North Korea’s satellite program.

with Peters, had already conceded to Luxon on election night.

Hipkins, who leads the liberal Labour Party, held the top job for just nine months. He took over from Jacinda Ardern, who unexpectedly stepped down in January, saying she no longer had “enough in the tank” to do the job justice.

Ardern won the previous election in a landslide, but her popularity waned as people got tired of COVID-19 restrictions and inflation threatened the economy.

Also:

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand:** Fiji’s leader says that after meeting with China’s President **Xi Jinping**, he hopes to collaborate with China on upgrading his nation’s shipyards and ports.

**Sitiveni Rabuka** made the remarks to lawmakers in Parliament on Wednesday.

Rabuka is generally viewed as leaning less toward China than his predecessor **Frank Bainimarama**, and in a visit to Australia last month, Rabuka emphasized he was “more comfortable dealing with traditional friends” such as Australia.

But in his Wednesday remarks, Rabuka highlighted the economic ties his small South Pacific island nation has forged with China over 50 years of diplomatic relations.

Rabuka said that in his meeting with Xi last week on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference in San Francisco, he discussed how China’s assistance was pivotal to Fiji’s post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

Rabuka said China’s Belt and Road Initiative aligned with Fiji’s development agenda and that China had contributed toward a number of grants and assistance packages.

Kumar Tsukwam, sector commander of Nigeria’s Federal Road Safety Corps in Niger, told The Associated Press that it’s believed some of the passengers wanted

to travel with the trailer through Tuesday night to avoid unsafe roads during the day.

“The passengers were not mindful of



Britain’s Prince Edward (right), Duke of Edinburgh, watches as a volunteer demonstrates equipment during a visit to the NSW State Emergency Services offices in Sydney, Australia on Nov 23. (AP)



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, (left), and Russian President Vladimir Putin shake hands before their talk at the Vostochny cosmodrome outside the city of Tsiolkovsky, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) from the city of Blagoveshchensk in the far eastern Amur region, Russia on Sept. 13. (AP)



Bazoum



Tshisekedi

Africa

**Rebel seizes town:** A rebel group with alleged links to neighboring Rwanda claimed Wednesday to have seized a key town in Congo’s conflict-hit eastern region amid intense fighting, raising further security concerns ahead of the country’s Dec. 20 presidential election.

Mweso town, which is about 100 kilometres (62 miles) from the North Kivu provincial capital of Goma, came under the control of the M23 rebel group following days of fighting with government-backed forces, Lawrence Kanyuka, the group’s spokesman, said.

Residents in the area told The Associated Press they witnessed gunfire between the rebels and security forces. “The enemy has managed to reoccupy Mweso,” said one, Alain Kamala.

The AP was not immediately able to verify who was in control of the town. The Congolese army confirmed there was fighting under way around the area.

M23 rose to prominence 10 years ago when its fighters seized Goma, eastern Congo’s largest city on the border with Rwanda. It derives its name from a March 23, 2009, peace deal which it accuses the Congo government of not implementing.

Congolese President **Felix Tshisekedi** blames Rwanda for destabilizing Congo by backing the M23 rebels. U.N. experts have linked the rebels to Rwandan forces. Rwanda denies this. (AP)

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**Overloaded truck crashes, 25 dead:** A truck overloaded with food items and more than 200 people crashed in north-central Nigeria’s Niger state, killing 25 passengers and injuring dozens of others, authorities said Wednesday.

The truck was on its way to Nigeria’s economic hub of Lagos on Tuesday when it crashed in Takalafia village in Niger’s Magama district on Tuesday, according to Nigeria’s road safety agency.

Niger Gov Mohammed Umaru Bago said in a statement that the 25 victims have been taken to a nearby mortuary while other passengers were being treated for their injuries.

the (nature of the) road and the goods it was conveying,” Tsukwam said. (AP)

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**‘Lift sanctions’:** Niger’s junta on Tuesday asked West Africa’s regional court to order the lifting of sanctions imposed on the country by its neighbors following a July coup in which the democratically elected president was deposed.

“There is no sector of the Nigerian society that has not been affected by these sanctions” which have caused untold economic hardship in one of the world’s poorest countries, Younkaila Yaye, one of the junta’s lawyers, argued at the hearing in Abuja, Nigeria’s capital.

After elite soldiers toppled Niger’s President **Mohamed Bazoum**, the country faced economic sanctions from West Africa’s regional bloc, ECOWAS, as well as countries including the United States that had provided aid for health, security and infrastructure needs.

Neighbors shut their borders with Niger and more than 70% of its electricity, supplied by Nigeria, was cut off after financial transactions with West African countries were suspended. Niger’s assets in external banks were frozen and hundreds of millions of dollars in aid were withheld.

The sanctions were the most stringent yet imposed by the regional bloc in an effort to stem the tide of coups in Africa’s volatile Sahel region. (AP)



US unemployment claims plummet, 24k drop to 209k

The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits fell sharply last week, a sign that U.S. job market remains resilient despite higher interest rates. The Labor Department reported Wednesday that jobless claims dropped by 24,000 to 209,000. The previous week's total - 233,000 - had been the highest since August. The four-week moving average of claims, which smooths out week-to-week volatility, fell by 750 to 220,000.

The applications are viewed as a proxy for layoffs. They remain extraordinarily low by historical standards, signalling that most Americans enjoy unusual job security. Overall, 1.84 million Americans were receiving unemployment benefits the week that ended Nov. 11, down by 22,000 from the week before. The Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark interest rate 11 times since March 2022 to slow the economy and rein in inflation that hit a four-decade high last year. The job market and economic growth remained surprisingly resilient, defying predictions that the economy would slip into a recession this year.

But hiring has slowed from the breakneck pace of 2021 and 2022 when the economy roared back unexpectedly from the COVID-19 recession. (AP)

US long-term mortgage rates extend drop for fourth week

The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate fell for the fourth time in as many weeks, more positive news for prospective homebuyers who have been held back by sharply higher borrowing costs and heightened competition for relatively few homes for sale. The latest decline brought the average rate on a 30-year mortgage down to 7.29% from 7.44% last week, mortgage buyer Fred-

die Mac said Wednesday. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.58%. Despite the recent pullback, the average rate on a 30-year home loan is still sharply higher than just two years ago, when it was around 3%. Higher rates 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 from selling.

The elevated mortgage rates and a near-historic-low supply of homes on the market have stymied sales of previously occupied U.S. homes, which slumped in October to their slowest pace in more than 13 years and have now fallen 20.2% through the first 10 months of the year versus the same period in 2022. (AP)

Market Movements		23-11-2023	
		Change	Closing pts
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+489.92	25,519.49
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+97.69	33,451.83
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+732.53	58,910.80
		Change	Closing pts
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	-6.98	6,246.20
SAUDI	- Tawadul	-21.90	11,078.08
UAE	- DFM	-12.00	3,984.99

Business

Fiscal positions expected to modestly deteriorate due to lower oil prices

Bahrain, Oman and Qatar experience economic growth slowdown in 2023

By National Bank of Kuwait  
Macro outlook: Bahrain, Oman & Qatar

After the strong expansion seen last year, economic growth in Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar has moderated in 2023 curbed by contractionary monetary policy and limited hydrocarbon sector growth. Growth should improve in 2024 helped by higher projected oil output in Bahrain and Oman, while the non-hydrocarbon sector should continue to drive the Qatari economy, supported by continued project spending and robust consumer demand. A modest deterioration in fiscal positions is expected on lower oil prices since the highs of 2022. Adverse geopolitics and lower oil prices that weaken fiscal balances further are key downside risks, while lower interest rates, higher energy prices, stronger project spending and swifter reform progress are risks to the upside.

Bahrain: Wider fiscal deficit in 2023, but FBP commitment intact

Economic growth has moderated in 2023, forecast at 2.5% versus a well-above-trend 4.9% in 2022 amid elevated interest rates that have hit consumption and borrowing, and lower oil prices. We see improvement next year, led by a 3.2% expansion in the hydrocarbon sector as the completion of maintenance on the Bahrain oil field pushes output higher to 196 kb/d. Growth in non-oil activity (around 80% of the economy), should be broadly steady at 3% amid the peaking of the monetary policy tightening cycle, the government's continued commitment to development projects and still high oil prices. Decent expansion in non-oil GDP should contribute to slightly higher inflation (+1.5%) and credit growth (+2.4%) after softness in 2023.

Some previous progress in narrowing the fiscal deficit was reversed this year, with the deficit forecast to widen to 4.1% of GDP in 2023 (4.8% in H1 2023) on lower oil revenues (around 60% of all receipts). However, we see only limited spending growth and the government's commitment to its Fiscal

Balance Program is intact. We expect the deficit to resume its narrowing path in 2024 albeit achieving fiscal balance would require a higher oil price than in our base case. Public debt (including concessional GCC development fund loans) declined to 100% of GDP by end-2022 as bond amortizations and nominal GDP rose. With debt issuance picking up in 2023-2024 to cover a larger fiscal deficit, the debt-to-GDP ratio could edge back up slightly. Given ongoing fiscal consolidation steps, a sharp drop in oil prices remains a key risk to the outlook.

Oman: Better fiscal and debt metrics generate rating upgrades

Following an expected slowdown to 1.5% in 2023, Oman's GDP growth could improve to 3.0% in 2024 aided by the government's economic diversification strategy (Vision 2040) initiatives and higher oil output. Having contracted in 2023, we forecast oil GDP up 3.6% in 2024, given the expected unwinding of OPEC+ voluntary output cuts from January 2024 and higher gas production. Non-oil GDP growth is forecast to improve to 2.7% from 2.4% in 2023 amid higher construction sector output (helped by the Sultan Haitham Smart City and Oman-UAE Rail projects), a potential boost in tourism, and refining gains linked to the ramping up of the OQ8 Duqm refinery – though constrained somewhat by the ongoing need for fiscal caution.

The Medium-Term Fiscal Plan is bearing fruit and we expect the government to post a surplus through the forecast period – just about. This year we forecast a reduced surplus of 0.3% of GDP on the back of lower oil receipts, widening to 1.8% in 2024 on increased oil revenues. Public debt is expected to continue its downward trajectory from 40% of GDP in 2022 (and a peak of 70% in 2020), with the authorities recently identifying a 'safe' debt limit of 30% of GDP signaling that debt reduction will remain a key theme. More positive fiscal and debt metrics prompted ratings agencies Fitch and S&P to upgrade the government's credit rating

to "BB+" from "BB" in recent months. Lower-than-expected oil prices or an increase in the government debt-to-GDP ratio due to looser fiscal policy provide the most significant downside risks to our outlook. Key upside risks include higher-than-expected oil prices and stronger-than-projected non-oil growth, which would improve fiscal revenues and reduce social spending pressures on the government.

Qatar: Growth to moderate from exceptionally strong 2022

Economic activity is set to moderate in 2023 from last year's exceptional World Cup-driven growth, curbed by tighter monetary conditions, limited hydrocarbon sector growth, and relative to a very strong 2022. With only minor further increases in gas production expected, the private sector should drive economic growth over the forecast period, with monthly data since April signaling a pickup in non-hydrocarbon activity. PMI numbers were consistently in expansion (9-month average of 53), visitor arrivals remained elevated (up 150% y/y in the period Jan-Aug), while credit growth hit a 19-month high in September of 4.5% despite higher interest rates. We forecast GDP growth of 2.3% and 2.5% in 2023 and 2024 respectively, with non-oil output up 3.1% and 3.5%. Further out, economic activity will be supported by higher construction activity as progress on the \$30 billion North field gas expansion megaproject accelerates ahead of the scheduled completion of phase 1 in 2026, which would raise LNG output significantly (from the current 77 mtpa to 127 mtpa), boosting hydrocarbon revenues and enabling the funding of other Vision-linked infrastructure projects.

We forecast fiscal surpluses in 2023 (8.4% of GDP) and 2024 (7.3% of GDP) on the back of still-elevated hydrocarbon receipts and relative spending restraint, although capex on strategic projects may pick up in 2024 as the government takes advantage of improved fiscal space, with its debt-to-GDP ratio having declined from a peak of 73% in 2020 to 48% in 2022. Upside risks to the outlook include higher

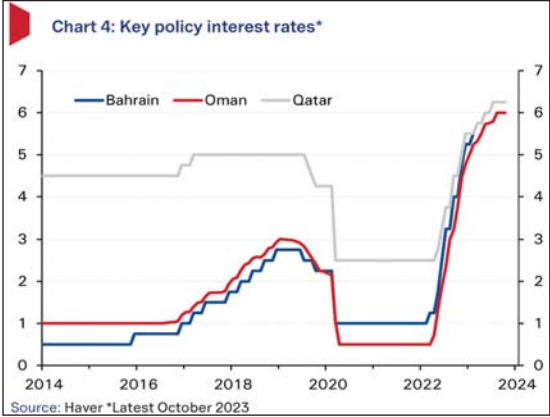
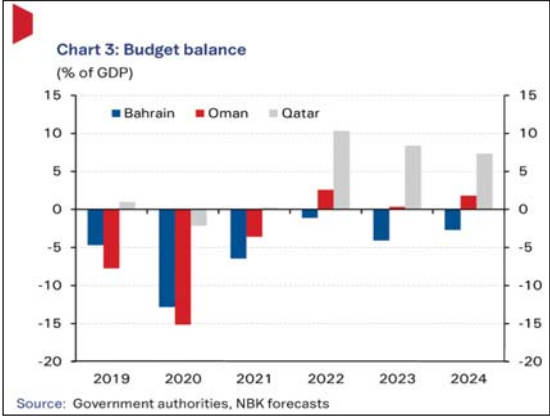
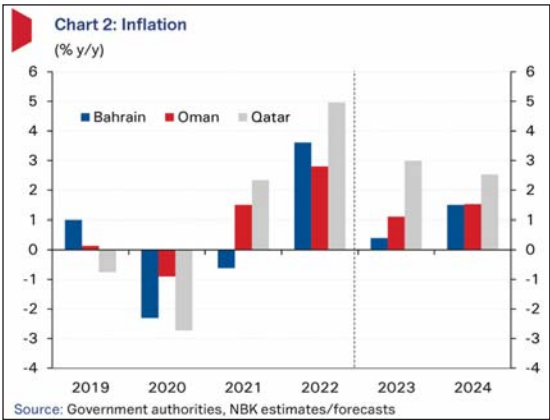
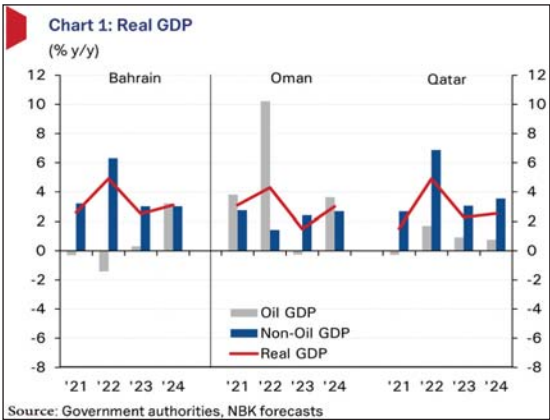




Table 1: Key economic indicators

		Bahrain			Oman			Qatar		
		2022	2023f	2024f	2022	2023f	2024f	2022	2023f	2024f
Nominal GDP	\$ billion	44.4	44.3	46.4	115.1	110.1	115.2	233.2	205.2	215.5
Real GDP	% y/y	4.9	2.5	3.1	4.3	1.5	3.0	4.9	2.3	2.5
- Oil sector	% y/y	-1.4	0.3	3.2	10.2	-0.3	3.6	1.7	0.9	0.7
- Non-oil sector	% y/y	6.3	3.0	3.0	1.4	2.4	2.7	6.9	3.1	3.5
Inflation	% y/y	3.6	0.4	1.5	2.8	1.1	1.5	5.0	3.0	2.5
Budget Balance	% of GDP	-1.1	-4.1	-2.7	2.6	0.3	1.8	10.3	8.4	7.3
Current account balance	% of GDP	15.4	7.0	6.3	5.0	1.2	2.2	26.6	14.0	13.4

Source: Official sources, NBK estimates.

gas prices possibly from a renewed shortage or a stronger global demand. Downside risks stem from a flare-up in geopolitical tensions or a global recession leading to lower gas demand and prices.

Kuwait's real estate peaks ahead of Assembly session

Real estate contracts skyrocket to 3.60bn dinars

By Mahmoud Shendi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: In the lead-up to the National Assembly session slated for next Tuesday, where the law “Regulating Real Estate Agency and Combating Vacant Lands” is set for a second deliberation and potential imposition of additional controls, Kuwait's real estate market witnessed a significant surge described as “historical trading.” The total value of real estate contracts and agencies reached approximately 3.60 billion dinars during the past week, a notable increase from the previous week's 36.272 million dinars.

The uptick in trading was notably supported by record-breaking deals in Al-Ahmadi Governorate, particularly in the Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine region across commercial, investment, and private sectors.

Contracts

Statistics from the Department of Real Estate Registration and Documentation in the Ministry of Justice revealed that between November 12 and 16 of this year, a total of 4,720 contracts were traded across the six governorates, amounting to 3.59 billion dinars. Additionally, the value of real estate agencies stood at about 400 thousand dinars, involving a single deal in the Capital Governorate.

The week saw the registration of 3,523 private real estate contracts valued at 2.67 billion dinars, 395 investment properties totaling 295.32 million dinars, 75 industrial properties amounting to 57.47 million di-

Signs MoUs with OGDCL, MPCL & Prime

Kuwait's KUFPEC strengthens 'ties' with Pakistani oil giants

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) signed Thursday memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with companies operating in Pakistan in line with the company's strategic objectives to boost the value of KUFPEC's assets.

KUFPEC seeks, through these MoUs, to expand its exploration portfolio in Pakistan via strategic cooperation with prominent companies, the company said in a press release.

The MoUs have been signed with the Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Mari Petroleum Company Limited (MPCL), and Prime Pakistan Limited (Prime) which are leading oil companies with high success rates and remarkable technical capabilities in drilling and exploration, it added.

KUFPEC Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Al-Haimer was quoted as saying in the statement: The MoUs are not limited to strengthening strategic partnerships to expand our exploration portfolio in Pakistan, but also provide important opportunities to enhance KUFPEC's assets, inde-



KUFPEC Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Al-Haimer

pendent peer reviews, knowledge exchange, and utilizing the expertise of our global partners.”

KUFPEC is an international upstream company engaged in exploration, development and production of crude oil and natural gas outside the State of Kuwait and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

nars, and 735 commercial properties with a combined worth of 568.48 million dinars. Notably, there were no recorded transactions for craft real estate, coastal strips, showrooms, or warehouses.

Sources within the real estate sector attributed the surge in transaction volume to the efforts of several companies and real estate portfolios aiming to circumvent the eligibility for loan renewals obtained in 2018 when interest rates were considerably lower (around 3 percent). With

current rates soaring to approximately 7 percent, companies sought large deals to avoid or mitigate the financial burdens associated with loan maturity renewals.

These sources anticipate that the upcoming year may witness banks auctioning several properties due to a confluence of factors, including policy changes affecting housing structures and the rise in vacant apartments within the investment sector, creating significant pressure on the real estate sector.

Among top five global telecom companies

Zain ranks highly in Global Child Forum's 'The State of Children's Rights and Business 2023' benchmark

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa announces the final scores of Global Child Forum's The State of Children's Rights and Business 2023, in which the company was ranked among the top five global Telecom companies and 21st across all sectors amongst nearly 3,000 of the largest global companies.

Zain scored higher than the sector average and doubled the ranking of many regional corporates in key children's rights categories. Described as a 'Leader' in the benchmarking rankings, Zain scored 8.4/10 overall against an ICT sector average of 5.8/10 and a regional average of just 3.4/10. The average of all global companies benchmarked stood at 4.9/10.

Founded in 2009 by the Swedish Royal Family, Global Child Forum is a leading forum for children's rights and businesses dedicated to innovative thinking, knowledge-sharing and networking.

The results are included within Global Child Forum's "The State of Children's Rights and Business 2023" report conducted in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group. Global Child Forum assessed how companies implement children's rights, and sustainability governance using publicly available data. This global study covered nine sectors and assessed companies against 25 indicators.

As a 'Leader', Zain was described in the report as a company that "has developed and implemented several policies and practices that address your organization's impact on children's rights across several important areas. Your company has taken concrete steps to move beyond policies and have embedded children's rights into company practice, following-up through monitoring, transparent reporting and programs to create action for children's rights."

Through Zain's community-oriented and child well being initiatives, the company looks to continue to improve and safeguard the livelihoods of the communities it serves and beyond. This notable benchmarking recognition helps assess Zain's progress to-date in children's rights and safety and inspires the company to do even better in the future.

Child Online Safety is of great importance for Zain given that over 30% of all internet users are estimated to be children and given the expansion of broadband access, this number is only set to rise over time. Zain is fully committed to address the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.2 calling on ending all forms of violence against children by 2030.

Zain scored perfect marks in several categories in the Benchmarking exercise, including Standards & Guidelines; Board accountability; Materiality assessment; Supplier assessment; Grievance mechanisms; Collaboration; Product safety; Policies & commitments; and Resource use and damage to the environment, cementing its position as a leading proponent of corporate governance, sustainability, children's rights, and sound business practices.

Following the feedback from the report, the next step advised for Zain was to address remaining gaps in its practice, strengthen and maintain performance where it is already doing well, and embrace its leadership on children's rights issues.

Zain firmly believes that children and youth are the cornerstone of any progressive society, and has made uplifting young people through digitization and protecting them from the perils of digital transformation a central theme of the company's activities. As part of its ambition to provide meaningful connectivity, the company will continue to build



Zain-Children's Day

public awareness to draw attention to highly relevant issues such as child online safety and much more. Examples of some Zain focused child awareness campaigns

With the aim to further raise awareness on children's rights and online safety, Zain expanded its partnership with Child Helpline International to support child helplines across its operational countries. This partnership aims to enhance collaboration between child helplines, Zain and key child protection stakeholders, explore new technologies and software to enhance the helplines, create awareness campaigns, and expand services to include instant messaging and social media.

Zain has been actively working on implementing child sexual abuse material blocking mechanisms across its operations. In 2020, the company assessed the regulations and existing blocking mechanisms in each market. As a result, Zain established a goal for all its markets to have CSAM blocking mechanisms in place. Currently, 5 out of 7 operations fully integrated blocking controls for child sexual abuse materials in a bid to ensure such content is never displayed in Zain's network.

Zain Group launched the second phase of its Internet Monsters campaign in 2022, showcasing the company's commitment to raise further awareness on the risks children face online with lessons being taught through the adaptation of popular fairy tales. The campaign supports the SDGs 16.2 and reinforces Zain's recent joining of the UN's Global Compact initiative, of which 10 principles include upholding human rights and protecting children in the digital and physical realms. The campaign successfully reached 7.2 million individuals across groupwide communication channels, including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Global Child Forum believes in the power and responsibility of business, working in partnership with all parts of society, to create a prosperous, sustainable and just society for the world's children. A comprehensive view of Zain's Global Child Forum's Corporate Sector and Children's Rights Benchmark 2023 scorecard can be viewed here: Global Child Forum - Scorecard (benchmarkingframework.com).



### Germany and Italy agree on joint ‘action plan’

Germany and Italy agreed Wednesday to work closer together in the fields of energy, technology, climate protection, security and cultural co-operation among other issues. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni signed an “action plan” in Berlin after a meeting of top officials from both countries and the two leaders’ participation earlier in the day

in a virtual G20 summit. The action plan will lead to new cooperation projects and create new formats for cooperation, Scholz said, specifically mentioning stronger co-operation in the field of energy to ensure long-term security of supply for gas and hydrogen. Scholz also announced the construction of a new pipeline across the Alps. “We agree that we want

to expand our energy cooperation in order to strengthen long-term supply, security and transformation,” the chancellor said. “With a new pipeline across the Alps, we want to increase the security of supply of both our countries,” Scholz added. “At the same time, we want to quickly conclude a German-Italian gas and solidarity agreement.”

### Czech president approves plan introducing budget cuts

Czech President Petr Pavel has signed Wednesday into law an economic package of dozens of measures introducing budget cuts and increased taxes designed to keep the ballooning budget deficit under control. Pavel’s signature was the last step before the government proposal - which was approved by parliament - turned into law that would see Czechs pay more taxes on alcoholic beverages, in the country

renowned for its beer, and medicine. Businesses would also pay higher corporate taxes. Prime Minister Petr Fiala previously said the austerity measures were necessary because the debt was rising at a “threatening” pace. Pavel said the current situation is unsustainable. According to the government, the measures should reduce the budget deficit by 97 billion Czech crowns (\$4.3 billion) next year and for 2025

by 150 billion (\$6.7 billion). As a result, the deficit of 3.5% of the gross domestic product expected for this year should drop to 1.8% next year and to 1.2% in 2025. Corporation tax will go up by two points to 21% while property tax for individuals will be also hiked, as well as the tax on alcohol, tobacco and betting. Value-added tax will have two rates, 12% and 21%, instead of the current three - 10%, 15% and 21%. (AP)

### Media first to go under policy

## Argentina’s president-elect wants public companies in private hands

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Nov 23, (AP): Argentina’s right-wing president-elect gave the first indications Monday of how he plans to start shaking up South America’s second-largest economy: with a slew of privatizations. Populist Javier Milei, a libertarian economist and self-described “anarcho-capitalist,” won a presidential runoff election on Sunday with 55.7% of the vote. He said Monday that he would move quickly to privatize the country’s state-owned media outlets and look to do the same with other public companies.

“Everything that can be in the hands of the private sector will be in the hands of the private sector,” Milei told Bueno Aires station Radio Mitre. Experts immediately questioned how far Milei would get in fulfilling that vision without the support of Argentina’s National Congress, where his party holds a relatively small share of seats. However, some analysts said his resounding election victory could give him leverage.

“The decisiveness of the victory - a doubt until yesterday - allows him to signal to all parties who is in control of the transition and the formation of the Cabinet,” said Mariano Machado, principal analyst for the Americas at Verisk Maplecroft, a global risk intelligence firm.

In his radio comments, Milei described the public media outlets he wants to make private as amounting to “a covert ministry of propaganda.” He complained during the presidential race that the coverage of his campaign in state-run outlets was highly negative.

Milei also signaled that he intends to act on some of his most controversial ideas from his campaign for slashing the size of the state and reining in Argentina’s triple-digit inflation. They include reducing the number of government ministries by half, to eight.

He said he still wanted to close the Central Bank of Argentina, calling it “a moral decision,” but appeared to put his plans for replacing the local currency, the peso, with the U.S. dollar on the back burner.

“In conceptual terms, the central axis is to close the Central Bank, and subsequently, the currency (will be) whichever one Argentines choose freely,” he said, characterizing a potential change in the national currency as “a second-order issue.”

Milei predicted it would take him up to half of his presidential term - “between 18 and 24 months” - to decrease inflation, which polls showed was the biggest concern for Argentine voters as consumer prices have increased 140% over the past year.

“Working to reduce the size of the government and eliminate taxes,” Diana Mondino, a lawmaker from Milei’s Liberty Advances party who is widely seen as likely to be Milei’s pick for foreign minister, wrote on social media. She posted a photo showing the newly elected president meeting with several key allies.

State-controlled energy firm YPF, the country’s largest integrated energy company, is another entity the president-elect thinks should be privatized but only once its finances are shored up so it can be “sold in a very, very, very beneficial way for Argentines.”

Milei claimed the company’s balance sheet deteriorated after a majority stake was nationalized during the government of former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who is now the outgoing vice president.

## US electric vehicle sales to hit record this yr, but still 'lag behind' China & Germany

DETROIT, Nov 23, (AP): Electric vehicle sales are expected to hit a record 9% of all passenger vehicles in the U.S. this year, according to Atlas Public Policy. That will be up from 7.3% of new car sales in 2022.

It will be the first time more than 1 million EVs are sold in the U.S. in one calendar year, probably reaching between 1.3 million and 1.4 million cars, the research firm predicts.

Although the numbers show significant progress for electrification, the nation is lagging behind countries like China, Germany and Norway.

EVs reached 33% of sales in China, 35% in Germany, and 90% in Norway for the first six months of 2023, according to a BloombergNEF EV outlook published in June. These figures include both battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid EVs.

In those countries, ambitious government zero-emissions targets, vehicle tax incentives and subsidies, and affordable options play a role in a consumer’s decision to adopt a plug-in vehicle.

Several factors helped boost U.S. EV adoption this year, but in a word, prices have gone down.

Tesla, the current EV market leader, dropped the prices for its popular vehicles multiple times throughout the year. This forced other automakers to try to keep up. Car companies are also now offering greater incentives on their electric models, and dealers are discounting more deeply as EV supply builds up at dealerships.

The Inflation Reduction Act, which increased tax credits for qualifying new and used EV purchases, also helped bring EV costs down for buyers, by \$3,750 or \$7,500, depending on certain requirements.

Electric car battery costs are also falling as critical battery materials like lithium get less expensive, making the vehicles increasingly affordable, too.

But even as U.S. EV market share grows steadily, hurdles still stand in the way for some car buyers con-

sidering electric. Early EV buyers were largely higher-income, willing to try unfamiliar technology, and more likely to be able to charge their electric vehicles at home. The auto industry needs to address disparities with these factors as it targets the next wave of EV shoppers.

For many consumers, unreliable and inaccessible public charging infrastructure, as well as the increased upfront cost of going electric, remain barriers, according to BloombergNEF. Last month, new EVs still cost on average \$3,826 more than the average new car, going for \$51,762 versus \$47,936, Kelley Blue Book estimates.

To combat some infrastructure challenges, several major automakers have signed on to Tesla’s charging technology. Tesla has long used the North American Charging Standard for its EV plugs, and it has also had the strongest public charging network. The rest of the industry has largely operated on one called CCS, or the Combined Charging System. Incorporating Tesla’s tech will give non-Tesla EV drivers more opportunity to charge elsewhere, and alleviate charging concerns. But those changes won’t start to kick in until next year and 2025.

The industry is also grappling with concerns over an EV market slowdown. Some automakers, including Ford Motor Co. and General Motors, are scaling back on their electrification targets.

But at the same time, many non-domestic car companies are amping up their plans. Consumers can expect Chinese EV-makers such as BYD to find their way to the U.S. market in the coming years.

Several U.S. states have set target dates by which they expect vehicle sales to be majority zero-emissions. California and Washington have mandated that 100% of new vehicles sold in the state be zero-emission by 2035, while New Jersey will ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by that same year.

### LONDON, Nov 23, (AP): Britain’s Conservative government sought to regain the political initiative Wednesday with a series of tax cuts for businesses and individuals that it hopes will bolster its chances in a national election next year that opinion polls suggest it will lose.

Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt said the British economy “had turned a corner,” with inflation and government borrowing down, allowing him to offer what he termed the biggest set of tax cuts since the 1980s.

“After a global pandemic and energy crisis, we have taken difficult decisions to put our economy back on track,” he told the House of Commons.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Hunt are desperately searching for an economic feelgood factor to boost Conservative election fortunes. It comes as opinion polls for months have put the governing Conservative Party, which has been in power since 2010, well behind the main opposition Labour Party.

The most high-profile measure in Hunt’s autumn budget statement was a bigger-than-expected cut to national insurance - a tax that employees pay - by 2 percentage points to 10%, which 27 million individuals are expected to see in their wages as soon as January.

“If we want people to get up early in the morning, if we want people to work nights, if we want an economy where people go the extra mile and work hard, then we need to recognise that their hard work benefits all of us,” he added.

Other potential sweeteners for voters were hefty increases in the minimum wage, pensions and benefits.

Though Britain avoided the recession that many had anticipated this year, expectations for the country’s economic growth have been downgraded by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility.

This year, the British economy is expected to grow 0.6%, up from a March forecast of a 0.2% contrac-



Britain’s Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt, centre, speaks with Airbus public affairs senior vice president Oriol Petry, centre left and head of Airbus Broughton plant Jerome Blandin, during a visit to the Airbus Broughton plant in Broughton, north Wales, Thursday, Nov 23, 2023. (AP)

tion. Over the next two years, growth is predicted to be 0.7% and 1.4%, respectively, way down from the previous forecasts of 1.8% in 2024 and 2.5% in 2025.

That means the election will be fought amid in a low-growth environment. The election must be held by January 2025, with speculation focusing on May or sometime next fall.

To bolster economic growth and living standards, Hunt said the British economy needs to be more productive. As such, he said 110 budget measures outlined Wednesday on such things as skills, housing and planning will “unlock” 20 billion pounds (\$25 billion) worth of investment and boost productivity.

His biggest measure for business was to make permanent full expensing of capital investment, which allows firms to offset their spending on plant and machinery against profits.

“That is the biggest-ever boost for

business investment in modern times,” he said.

Despite the tax cuts, the overall tax burden in the U.K. is still expected to rise to its highest level since World War II because higher inflation is dragging more people into higher tax bands, which have been frozen for years.

That’s an uncomfortable position for the Conservative Party, which has traditionally identified itself as the low-tax party.

The Office for Budget Responsibility said Wednesday’s measures would reduce the tax burden by 0.7 percentage point of Britain’s annual economic output, but it still rises every year to a post-war high of 37.7% in 2028-29. Living standards, it added, are forecast to be 3.5% lower in 2024-25 than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

It also noted that much of the government’s largesse relied on a decision not to raise departmental spending by

inflation - a commitment that many economists think will be difficult to meet.

With public finances still stretched by historical standards, economic growth muted at best and inflation set to remain double the Bank of England’s target rate of 2% next year, experts have warned that the government hasn’t got much room for further big giveaways in the run-up to the election. Gemma Tetlow, chief economist at the Institute for Government, said that for all Hunt’s rosy comments about the British economy’s better-than-anticipated performance this year, the growth outlook has actually deteriorated, making it difficult for him to cut taxes again before the election.

“He is taking a bit of a gamble by giving away all of the good news that things don’t move against him next time, which could leave him scrambling around to find savings somewhere else,” she said.



Attendees look at the Han electric vehicle from Chinese automaker BYD during the Auto Shanghai 2023 show in Shanghai, April 19, 2023. Electric vehicle prices in the U.S. have been falling. Although the numbers show significant progress for electrification in the U.S., the nation is lagging behind countries like China, Germany and Norway. (AP)

PANAMA CITY, Nov 23, (AP): The Canadian mining company whose contract with Panama’s government has triggered weeks of protests said Monday that it has reduced operations and soon may have to suspend them due to a blockade of its mine’s power plant.

Minera Panama, the local subsidiary of First Quantum Minerals, said in a statement that small boats had blocked its port in Colon province, preventing supplies from reaching the copper mine.

“If the illegal actions continue impeding the necessary supplies to oper-

ate the power plant, the company will reduce the remaining processing train this week and will temporarily suspend production,” the statement said.

Last week, naval police reported that a ship carrying coal decided to turn back rather than dock in the mine’s port due to “hostility from a group of protesters who from their boats threw rocks and blunt homemade objects” before being dispersed by authorities.

Panama has been roiled by weeks of massive street protests and highway blockades as citizens worried about the impact on the environment pressure the government to revoke the contract. The

protesters, a broad coalition of Panamanians, fear the mine’s impact on nature and especially on the water supply.

The mine employs thousands and accounts for 3% of Panama’s gross domestic product.

In March, Panama’s legislature reached an agreement with First Quantum allowing Minera Panama to continue operating a huge open-pit copper mine in central Panama for at least 20 more years.

The mine was temporarily closed last year when talks between the government and First Quantum broke down over payments the government

wanted.

The contract, given final approval Oct. 20, allows the subsidiary to continue operating the copper mine in a biodiverse jungle west of the capital for the next 20 years, with the possibility of extending for a further 20 years if the mine remains productive.

Since protests began, the government nearly passed legislation that would have revoked the contract, but it backtracked in a late evening debate in the National Assembly on Nov. 2.

Protesters hope Panama’s courts will declare the contract unconstitutional.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Business Plus



Safety risks posed by AI as technology advances

What does Altman’s firing and quick reinstatement mean for future of AI?



Sam Altman participates in a discussion during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Summit, Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, in San Francisco. Sam Altman the ousted leader of ChatGPT maker OpenAI will return to the company that fired him just days ago, concluding a short but chaotic power struggle that shocked the tech industry and underscored the conflicts around how to safely build artificial intelligence. (AP)

OpenAI episode shows how fragile the AI ecosystem is right now, including addressing AI’s risks

NEW YORK, Nov 23, (AP): It’s been quite a week for ChatGPT-maker OpenAI - and co-founder Sam Altman. Altman, who helped start OpenAI as a nonprofit research lab back in 2015, was removed as CEO Friday in a sudden and mostly unexplained exit that stunned the industry. And while his chief executive title was swiftly reinstated just days later, a lot of questions are still up in the air. If you’re just catching up on the OpenAI saga and what’s at stake for the artificial intelligence space as a whole, you’ve come to the right place. Here’s a rundown of what you need to know. Altman is co-founder of OpenAI, the San Francisco-based company behind ChatGPT (yes,

the chatbot that’s seemingly everywhere today - from schools to health care ). The explosion of ChatGPT since its arrival one year ago propelled Altman into the spotlight of the rapid commercialization of generative AI - which can produce novel imagery, passages of text and other media. And as he became Silicon Valley’s most sought-after voice on the promise and potential dangers of this technology, Altman helped transform OpenAI into a world-renowned startup. But his position at OpenAI hit some rocky turns in a whirlwind that was the past week. Altman was fired as CEO Friday - and days later, he was back on the job with a new board of directors.

Within that time, Microsoft, which has invested billions of dollars in OpenAI and has rights to its existing technology, helped drive Altman’s return, quickly hiring him as well as another OpenAI co-founder and former president, Greg Brockman, who quit in protest after the CEO’s ousting. Meanwhile, hundreds of OpenAI employees threatened to resign. Both Altman and Brockman celebrated their returns to the company in posts on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, early Wednesday. There’s a lot that remains unknown about Altman’s initial ousting. Friday’s announcement said he was “not consistently candid in his communications” with the then-board of directors, which

refused to provide more specific details. Regardless, the news sent shockwaves throughout the AI world - and, because OpenAI and Altman are such leading players in this space, may raise trust concerns around a burgeoning technology that many people still have questions about. “The OpenAI episode shows how fragile the AI ecosystem is right now, including addressing AI’s risks,” said Johann Laux, an expert at the Oxford Internet Institute focusing on human oversight of artificial intelligence. The turmoil also accentuated the differences between Altman and members of the company’s previous board, who have expressed various views on the safety risks posed by AI as the technology

advances. Multiple experts add that this drama highlights how it should be governments - and not big tech companies - that should be calling the shots on AI regulation, particularly for fast-evolving technologies like generative AI. “The events of the last few days have not only jeopardized OpenAI’s attempt to introduce more ethical corporate governance in the management of their company, but it also shows that corporate governance alone, even when well-intended, can easily end up cannibalized by other corporate’s dynamics and interests,” said Enza Iannopollo, principal analyst at Forrester. The lesson, Iannopollo said, is that companies can’t alone deliver the level of safety and trust in AI that society needs. “Rules and guardrails, designed with companies and enforced by regulators with rigor, are crucial if we are to benefit from AI,” he added. Unlike traditional AI, which processes data and completes tasks using predetermined rules, generative AI (including chatbots like ChatGPT) can create something new. Tech companies are still leading the show when it comes to governing AI and its risks, while governments around the world work to catch up. In the European Union, negotiators are putting the final touches on what’s expected to be the world’s first comprehensive AI regulations. But they’ve reportedly been bogged down over whether and how to include the most contentious and revolutionary AI products, the commercialized large-language models that underpin generative AI systems including ChatGPT. Chatbots were barely mentioned when Brussels first laid out its initial draft legislation in 2021, which focused on AI with specific uses. But officials have been racing to figure out how to incorporate these systems, also known as foundation models, into the final version. Meanwhile, in the U.S., President Joe Biden signed an ambitious executive order last month seeking to balance the needs of cutting-edge technology companies with national security and consumer risks. The order - which will likely need to be augmented by congressional action - is an initial step that is meant to ensure that AI is trustworthy and helpful, rather than deceptive and destructive. It seeks to steer how AI is developed so that companies can profit without putting public safety in jeopardy.

Unseen impact: Biases, risks, and the path forward

Forget dystopian scenarios - AI is pervasive today, and the risks are often hidden

By Anjana Susarla Michigan State University

How everyday algorithms work - and how they can harm people

The turmoil at ChatGPT-maker OpenAI, bookended by the board of directors firing high-profile CEO Sam Altman on Nov. 17, 2023, and rehiring him just four days later, has put a spotlight on artificial intelligence safety and concerns about the rapid development of artificial general intelligence, or AGI. AGI is loosely defined as human-level intelligence across a range of tasks. The OpenAI board stated that Altman’s termination was for lack of candor, but speculation has centered on a rift between Altman and members of the board over concerns that OpenAI’s remarkable growth - products such as ChatGPT and Dall-E have acquired hundreds of millions of users worldwide - has hindered the company’s ability to focus on catastrophic risks posed by AGI. OpenAI’s goal of developing AGI has become entwined with the idea of AI acquiring superintelligent capabilities and the need to safeguard against the technology being misused or going rogue. But for now, AGI and its attendant risks are speculative. Task-specific forms of

AI, meanwhile, are very real, have become widespread and often fly under the radar. As a researcher of information systems and responsible AI, I study how these everyday algorithms work - and how they can harm people. AI plays a visible part in many people’s daily lives, from face recognition unlocking your phone to speech recognition powering your digital assistant. It also plays roles you might be vaguely aware of - for example, shaping your social media and online shopping sessions, guiding your video-watching choices and matching you with a driver in a ride-sharing service. AI also affects your life in ways that might completely escape your notice. If you’re applying for a job, many employers use AI in the hiring process. Your bosses might be using it to identify employees who are likely to quit. If you’re applying for a loan, odds are your bank is using AI to decide whether to grant it. If you’re being treated for a medical condition, your health care providers might use it to assess your medical images. And if you know someone caught up in the criminal justice system, AI could well play a role in determining the course

of their life. Many of the AI systems that fly under the radar have biases that can cause harm. For example, machine learning methods use inductive logic, which starts with a set of premises, to generalize patterns from training data. A machine learning-based resume screening tool was found to be biased against women because the training data reflected past practices when most resumes were submitted by men. The use of predictive methods in areas ranging from health care to child welfare could exhibit biases such as cohort bias that lead to unequal risk assessments across different groups in society. Even when legal practices prohibit discrimination based on attributes such as race and gender - for example, in consumer lending - proxy discrimination can still occur. This happens when algorithmic decision-making models do not use characteristics that are legally protected, such as race, and instead use characteristics that are highly correlated or connected with the legally protected characteristic, like neighborhood. Studies have found that risk-equivalent Black and Latino borrowers pay significantly higher interest rates on government-

sponsored enterprise securitized and Federal Housing Authority insured loans than white borrowers. Another form of bias occurs when decision-makers use an algorithm differently from how the algorithm’s designers intended. In a well-known example, a neural network learned to associate asthma with a lower risk of death from pneumonia. This was because asthmatics with pneumonia are traditionally given more aggressive treatment that lowers their mortality risk compared to the overall population. However, if the outcome from such a neural network is used in hospital bed allocation, then those with asthma and admitted with pneumonia would be dangerously deprioritized. Biases from algorithms can also result from complex societal feedback loops. For example, when predicting recidivism, authorities attempt to predict which people convicted of crimes are likely to commit crimes again. But the data used to train predictive algorithms is actually about who is likely to get re-arrested. The Biden administration’s recent executive order and enforcement efforts by federal agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission are the first steps in recognizing and

safeguarding against algorithmic harms. And though large language models, such as GPT-3 that powers ChatGPT, and multimodal large language models, such as GPT-4, are steps on the road toward artificial general intelligence, they are also algorithms people are increasingly using in school, work and daily life. It’s important to consider the biases that result from widespread use of large language models. For example, these models could exhibit biases resulting from negative stereotyping involving gender, race or religion, as well as biases in representation of minorities and disabled people. As these models demonstrate the ability to outperform humans on tests such as the bar exam, I believe that they require greater scrutiny to ensure that AI-augmented work conforms to standards of transparency, accuracy and source crediting, and that stakeholders have the authority to enforce such standards. Ultimately, who wins and loses from large-scale deployment of AI may not be about rogue superintelligence, but about understanding who is vulnerable when algorithmic decision-making is ubiquitous. (AP)

editor’s choice





Rolling Stones announces 2024 North American tour

King Charles III honors Blackpink during S. Korea state visit

LONDON, Nov 23, (AP): King Charles III honored the K-pop band Blackpink on Wednesday for their work in raising awareness about climate change, as South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged closer cooperation between their two countries on technology and defense.

On the second day of Yoon’s three-day state visit to London, Charles made Blackpink members Jennie Kim, Jisoo Kim and Lalisa Manoban honorary Members of the Order of the British Empire.

Bandmate Roseanne (Rosé) Park also received an MBE, though hers came without the “honorary” qualifier because she has dual citizenship in New Zealand, one of the 14 countries where the UK monarch is head of state.

The honors were presented during a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in recognition of Blackpink’s role in promoting the work of the COP26 summit on climate change two years ago in Glasgow, Scotland. The awards are part of Britain’s honors system, which recognizes outstanding service to the nation and the wider world.

Charles had lauded the K-pop girl group on Tuesday during a state banquet in honor of Yoon and first lady Kim Keon Hee “for their role in bringing the message of environmental sustainability to a global audience.

“I can only admire how they can prioritize these vital issues, as well as being global superstars,” Charles said at the banquet.

The Korean president is being treated to royal and diplomatic pomp

on the visit, which the U.K. government hopes will help cement an “Indo-Pacific tilt” in its foreign and trade policy.

Yoon met Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at the British leader’s 10 Downing St. residence for talks focused on trade, technology and defense.

To coincide with the visit, UK and Korean officials launched talks on an “upgraded” free trade agreement to replace their current deal, which largely replicates the arrangements the UK had before it left the European Union.

The leaders also signed an agreement dubbed the “Downing Street Accord” pledging closer cooperation on defense and technology, including artificial intelligence. Britain hosted the first international AI Safety Summit this month, and South Korea intends to hold a follow-up event next year.

**Friendship**

The two countries also agreed joint naval patrols to curb smuggling and to enforce UN sanctions imposed on North Korea to curb its nuclear weapons ambitions.

“Your state visit underlies the deep partnership and friendship between our two countries and the signing of the Downing Street Accord today strengthens that friendship,” Sunak told the Korean leader.

Yoon has not commented directly on North Korea’s launch of a spy satellite on Tuesday, or its suspected failed missile test on Wednesday,

both of which took place while he was in London.

In a speech to both houses of Britain’s Parliament on Tuesday, Yoon said Britain and South Korea would work together on “geopolitical risks like the war in Ukraine, the Israel and Hamas conflict, and the North Korean nuclear threats.”

“Korea stands united with the United Kingdom and the international community to fight against illegal aggression and provocations,” he said.

**Also:**

**LOS ANGELES:** Last month, The Rolling Stones released “Hackney Diamonds,” their first album of original material in 18 years.

Tuesday, the legendary English band announced they’re taking it on the road. Starting on April 28 in **Houston** and concluding in **Santa Clara, California**, on July 17, the Stones will make their way across the U.S. and **Canada**.

The tour hits 16 major cities, including **New Orleans, Las Vegas, Seattle, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Denver, Chicago**, Los Angeles and **Vancouver, British Columbia**.

Fans can expect to experience the Stones’ most popular hits as well as new tracks from “Hackney Diamonds,” the band’s “best new work in decades,” as The Associated Press’ **Jocelyn Noveck** wrote in her review of the album. She argues the 12-song collection is “tight, focused, full of heart and swagger.”

Variety



This image released by Amazon Prime Video shows Jacob Elordi in a scene from ‘Saltburn.’ (AP)

Film

Fennell chronicles a promising young man in new film

‘Saltburn’ delivers style, shock, belonging

By Jocelyn Noveck

Two years ago Emerald Fennell stood on the Oscars stage hoisting her writing trophy for “Promising Young Woman,” a scathing look at rape culture and a balancing act of wit, style, shock value, audacity, great acting and pitch-black humor - plus a timely #MeToo message.

That’s a lot for a debut film, and we didn’t even mention the best director nomination. Not surprisingly, anticipation has been hot for the writer-director’s next effort.

Now “Saltburn” is here, and the results are enticing but decidedly mixed - perhaps because Fennell seems to be trying to one-up herself by leaning on the shock value, at the eventual expense of other storytelling elements.

Make no mistake, the clever writing is here, as is the style, the sleek technique, and some terrific performances (Rosamund Pike is especially delicious in a supporting role). What’s missing, or muddled, is the message - and perhaps even more, the heart. After two hours of cringing and gasping in both awe and discomfort, we’re left admiring the “how” of what she’s doing but still figuring out the “why.”

One thing that’s not lacking: beauty. Unsurprisingly, Fennell excels at lush production values, especially in presenting the imposing, seductive and somewhat debauched Saltburn - no, not a person, but a country manor! This is England, and a story of class dynamics, so it’s surely fitting that the star be a piece of real estate. (And let’s just say, the phrase “real estate porn” takes on an added dimension here.)

We start, though, at Oxford. Here we meet our main character, Oliver Quick (and if that doesn’t take you straight back to Dickens, nothing will). It’s 2006, and Oliver (Barry Keoghan, ever-watchable and unpredictable) is a freshman on scholarship, feeling out of his league. At his first tutorial, he announces he read all 50 books on the summer reading list. His bemused teacher tells him nobody does that.

Oliver soon learns that life at Oxford isn’t about what you’ve read, but who you know. In the Hog-

warts-style dining hall, he can barely find someone to sit with - only a needy mathematics major. He has no earthly connection to the rest of the privileged, entitled (and in some cases, titled) student body, but aches to fit in.

And then aristocratic golden boy Felix appears, like a Greek legend. Played by Jacob Elordi, currently appearing as Elvis in “Priscilla,” Felix is gorgeous and effortlessly rakish; he seems to have never encountered hardship. Unless you count a flat tire on his bike, which is how Oliver meets him, lending his own bike so Felix can get to class.

The two become friends. It’s obvious what’s in it for Oliver, but what’s in it for Felix? That’s less clear, but Oliver’s home life has been hard. So, when Oliver tells Felix a tragedy has occurred involving his drug-addicted parents, Felix invites him to spend the summer at his family palace, er, home.

**Portraits**

The family includes Felix’s beautiful but unstable sister, Venetia (Alison Oliver), his comically out-of-touch father, Sir James (Richard E. Grant, very funny), and the terrifically droll Pike as Elspeth, Felix’s glamorous, clueless mother. Also spending the summer is cousin Farleigh (Archie Madekwe, excellent) a Saltburn outsider himself - American-born, a person of color - but compared to Oliver an insider, which is crucial. The great Carey Mulligan, Oscar-nominated for “Promising Young Woman,” has a welcome cameo as an unwelcome guest.

The early Saltburn days are intoxicating. Felix points out the various Rubens portraits, the original Shakespeare folios, that sort of thing. Days are spent lounging languidly on the lawn by the mossy pond. Dinner is black tie, so Oliver needs a loaner jacket and cufflinks. These people even play tennis in tuxes.

Then the really crazy stuff starts happening.

And we mean Fennell-level crazy. In “Promising Young Woman” there was a slow burn to the shocking, graphic ending. Here, the shocks come early. A few involve bodily fluids. Fennell knows how to startle the most jaded of film audiences - guests at the screening

I attended either gasped or giggled in embarrassment.

Fennell is also comfortable with the world she seeks to paint. Even if you didn’t know beforehand, it’s pretty clear from the vividly rendered Oxford scenes that the director attended Oxford herself, and her scenes of student life at that storied institution, seen through outsider Oliver, form the most authentic-feeling part of the film.

But how long will Oliver remain an outsider? Will this uncertain and complicated young man, who arrives at the Saltburn gates too early and too naive to have waited for the footmen to collect him at the station, ever fit in, something he covets above all else? That’s the question the rest of the movie answers, taking increasingly sinister twists and turns.

As if in a garden maze, perhaps? Like any self-respecting, spectacular period mansion, Saltburn has one of those, too, where some key action takes place. More broadly, though, the maze seems to symbolize the effect of this film: pretty, seductive, challenging, forbidding and ultimately confounding.

“Saltburn,” an Amazon/MGM Studios release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association “for strong sexual content, graphic nudity, language throughout, some disturbing violent content, and drug use.” Running time: 127 minutes. Two stars out of four.

**Also:**

**NEW YORK:** Good golly, Miss Molly, is Little Richard the uncrowned king of rock ‘n’ roll? The documentary “Little Richard: I Am Everything,” directed by **Lisa Cortés** and streaming on Max on Thursday, makes a solid case. His flamboyant and boundary pushing lyrics, style and music had a direct influence on famous acts to follow, including the Beatles, **David Bowie, Elton John, Mick Jagger** and even filmmaker **John Waters**, who calls his own mustache a “twisted tribute” to Little Richard. In his review, AP critic **Mark Kennedy** wrote “Cortés’ film is also the story of American rock itself, the way transistor radios allowed teens in the ‘50s to rebel against their parents’ staid music and how Black music was appropriated by white bands.”(AP)

ance Nov. 17 at a pro-Palestinian rally in New York.

“There are a lot of people afraid of being Jewish at this time, and are getting a taste of what it feels like to be a Muslim in this country, so often subjected to violence,” Sarandon said, according to the New York Post. (AP)

□ □ □



Barrera



Sarandon

**LAS VEGAS:** Formula One’s return to Las Vegas drew the largest audience for the series since June, despite starting in the middle of the night for viewers on the East Coast, according to ESPN.

The race, which began at 1 a.m. Eastern, attracted 1.3 million viewers, one of its largest audi-

ences for the series this season, ESPN said.

The telecast, which ran until just after 3 a.m. Eastern, averaged 1.3 million viewers. That’s the third-largest F1 audience of the season on cable and sixth-largest overall on ESPN platforms this season.

The Las Vegas Grand Prix, run

for the first time since 1982 in **Sin City**, was the most-viewed F1 race since June’s Canadian Grand Prix on ABC (1.76 million) and the most-watched telecast of any kind on cable after 11 p.m. Eastern on Saturday night and in the over-night hours. Viewership for the race peaked at 1.5 million between 1:15-1:30 a.m. EST. (AP)



People & Places

Television

From classics to new

Holiday TV bonanza: What to watch, when

LOS ANGELES, Nov 23, (AP): Festive TV programming is starting to stack up like toys in Santa’s sleigh. Holiday favorites like “A Charlie Brown Christmas” and “A Christmas Story” will soon return, along with new family friendly films including “Dashing Through the Snow” on Disney+ and Melissa McCarthy’s “Genie” on Peacock.

There’s music to enjoy too, with Hannah Waddingham leading an Apple TV+ special and the annual Tabernacle Choir concert airing on PBS. Plus, familiar faces including Lori Loughlin, Teri Hatcher and Lacey Chabert have holiday rom-coms airing.

Here’s where - and when, in Eastern Standard Time - to watch this year’s holiday TV bonanza.

Hulu has its own original feel-good holiday movies: “A Christmas Frequency” starring Denise Richards and “Reporting for Christmas,” which are among the offerings available now.

“Desperate Housewives” star Hatcher stars in a cute twist on Kate Hudson’s “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days” with “How to Fall in Love by the Holidays,” now up on the Roku Channel. Hatcher plays a reporter reluctantly writing a column with tips on finding in love in time for Christmas - and sparks her own romance.

Loughlin returns in her first original holiday movie since getting ensnared in a massive college admissions bribery scandal, called “A Christmas Blessing,” now available on Great American Family. Loughlin plays a chef who has just wrapped her long-running TV cooking show and is planning a two-year sojourn to write a book. A quick detour to Milwaukee to handle some family business ends up taking her longer than expected when she finds love with James Tupper.

Experience

Chris “Ludacris” Bridges plays Eddie, a dad who has been anti-Christmas because of a traumatic childhood experience in “Dashing through the Snow” for Disney+. When his estranged wife (Teyonah Parris) asks him to take their young daughter out on Christmas Eve, they encounter a man named Nick (played by Lil Rel Howery), who seems to think he’s Santa Claus. Eddie thinks the man needs medical attention but ends up going on a magical adventure. It begins streaming Friday.

Another exciting duo to watch is former “Party of Five” co-stars Lacey Chabert and Scott Wolf who again, play siblings in “A Merry Scottish Christmas” for the Hallmark Channel premiering Saturday at 8 p.m.

Jenn Lilley and Matthew Morrison also jet set in their Great American Family film, “A Paris Christmas Waltz” airing at 8 p.m. on Sunday.

Hatcher offers a second holiday movie helping this season with a rekindling romance rom-com. She co-stars in “Christmas at the Chalet” with William DeVry on Nov. 25 at 8 p.m. on Lifetime.

Chabert also has two holiday movies this year. She stars in “Haul Out the Holly: Lit Up” - a sequel to last year’s hit, “Haul out the Holly” - about a neighborhood that takes their holiday decoration competition very seriously. The lights go up Nov. 25 at 8 p.m. on Hallmark Channel.

Kristoffer Polaha and Bethany Joy Lenz filmed a time-traveling romance story at the famed Biltmore Estate in North Carolina. “A Biltmore Christmas” debuts on Hallmark at 8 p.m. on Nov. 26.

Loni Anderson, Morgan Fairchild, Linda Gray, Donna Mills and Nicollette Sheridan team up in “Ladies of the ‘80s: A Divas Christmas” for Lifetime at 8 p.m. on Dec. 2. The quintet portray former soap opera co-stars who come together for a live holiday special and play matchmakers with their producer and director.

Another Hallmark regular, Jonathan Bennett, returns with a dose of holiday cheer in “Christmas on Cherry Lane” airing at 8 p.m. Dec. 9. He stars alongside Vincent Rodriguez III (“Crazy Ex- Girlfriend”), Erin Cahill and John Brotherton. The project is also an onscreen reunion for James Denton and Catherine Bell of “The Good Witch.”

A book editor in New York returns to her family farm and the Amish community she lived in as a child where she helps save a family bakery and meets a handsome local. “Christmas at the Amish Bakery” premieres Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. on UPTV.

Interest

In “Yes, Chef!”, Tia Mowry stars as a culinary instructor whose life takes a surprising turn when she competes in an annual Kringle Cook-Off where she finds career challenges and a possible love interest. Buddy Valastro, known as The Cake Boss, makes his acting debut. It airs Dec. 10 on Lifetime at 8 p.m.

The weekend after Thanksgiving is a big one for Candace Cameron Bure’s household. Both she and her daughter, Natasha Bure, have movies on Great American Family this season. Candace’s movie “My Christmas Hero” airs Nov. 24 at 8 p.m. and Natasha makes her acting debut in “A Christmas for the Ages” alongside Cheryl Ladd, at 8 p.m. on Nov. 26.

“The Bad Guys: A Very Bad Holiday,” based on the animated feature “The Bad Guys,” features villains Mr. Wolf, Mr. Piranha, Mr. Snake, Mr. Shark, and Ms. Tarantula, setting out to do what they do best, (be bad) on Christmas. But when the holiday is canceled, they change course to pull off a happy holiday. Drops on Netflix Nov. 30.

CBS will air the Christmas classic “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” at 8 p.m. on Nov. 27. It will repeat at 8 p.m. on Dec. 16, followed by long-time favorites “Frosty the Snowman” and “Frosty Returns.”

Apple TV+ once again makes “A Charlie Brown Christmas” available for free Dec. 16 and 17 so viewers can test out the streaming service, and enjoy the Christmas classic.

The 24-hour marathon of “A Christmas Story” begins Dec. 24 on both TNT and TBS.

“Season of Light: Christmas with The Tabernacle Choir,” airs Dec. 12 on PBS at 8 p.m. and Dec. 17 at 8 p.m. on BYUtv. Broadway’s Lea Salonga leads the annual concert with the beloved Tabernacle Choir that was recorded in 2022 to air this year. Sir David Suchet narrates.

Fox’s hit show “The Masked Singer” gets into the holiday spirit with “The Masked Singer Holiday Sing-Along” on Dec. 12, featuring season 10 contestants, “Masked Singer” alums and Nick Cannon, Jenny McCarthy-Wahlberg, Ken Jeong, Robin Thicke and Nicole Scherzinger as “carolers.”



Comedian Heather McMahan poses for a portrait in West Hollywood, Calif., on Nov. 2. McMahan self-produced a comedy special ‘Heather McMahan: Son I Never Had,’ now streaming on Netflix (AP)

Television

Comic reveals her secret behind the laughs

McMahan builds success on grief, wigs

LOS ANGELES, Nov 23, (AP): When Heather McMahan recently debuted her first Netflix comedy special, “Son I Never Had,” the fan reaction was as though their best girlfriend had achieved a major win.

“The coolest thing about this job is a lot of people have been on this journey with me from the beginning,” said McMahan recently over Zoom. “They found me on social media years ago and they’ve been rooting for me. It kind of feels like I’ve been in this giant life sorority and everyone’s like, ‘She did it.’”

McMahan moved from Los Angeles back home to Atlanta when her father died from pancreatic cancer in 2015. As a distraction from grief, McMahan would create characters and post short bits on social media and built a following. There was boozy Brenda Carlyle, Mississippi’s (self-proclaimed) No. 1 real estate agent and “Hollywood assistant to the stars” Margie McDaniels.

“I just said, ‘I want to make stuff that makes me laugh’ so I started doing a ton of characters on Instagram, and that’s what really took off,” said McMahan.

Amassing a fan base has helped McMahan stay busy. She just taped a second stand-up special premiering next year and is selling tour dates for 2024, including shows in Australia. McMahan also hosts a weekly podcast called “Absolutely Not,” has a development deal for a TV show, plus plans to write a book.

McMahan talked to The Associated Press about her career, living situation and how to handle other

people’s grief.

**AP:** You and your husband, Jeff, live with your mother, Robin. Do you ever feel like you have to explain that to people?

**McMahan:** Every day of my life. I was talking to somebody the other day, and they were like, “So, like, when are you moving out?” And I said, “What do you mean?” They’re like, “I thought this was just like a (comedy) bit” or “I thought you were just doing this through COVID.” I said, “No, no, no. My mother lives with us. We live with her. We’re doing this life thing together.” It’s a very hard concept for people to understand, but if you look at any other culture, the grandparents live with the family. The parents are there. You have multi-generations of people under one roof. I guess it’s just weird for Americans.

**AP:** Your comedy special addresses your dad’s sudden death from pancreatic cancer. Did that loss teach you anything about how to react to someone in that situation? So often people don’t know what to do or say.

**McMahan:** Most of the time when you’re grieving, you want people to validate how you feel. Start with, “This sucks. I’m so sorry. What do you need?” Also, six months down the road, check in with those people. You’re always surrounded by people as soon as something happens but what happens when it gets quiet and nobody’s calling? That’s when I was like, “Oh, wow, this is when it really hits.”

**AP:** You’re constantly touring,

posting on social media, and you have a podcast. How do you have so much fresh content?

**McMahan:** I’m such a well of stories and jokes, but it’s really hard. I’m just living life and writing it down. I’m keeping very, very thorough notes.

**AP:** Do you feel female comics are held to a different standard than men?

**McMahan:** It’s funny. This guy was like, “Man, you really go in on married life and your husband.” Guys have been doing this forever. It’s just because I’m a woman, it seems a little jarring. Ali Wong talked about her family. Amy Schumer talks about her family. All these other fabulous people talk about their families, but when the girls do it, people have something to say about it. How long have men been talking about how crazy their wives are and how their kids are driving them nuts?

Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Since “ Fargo” began airing on FX as an anthology series, each season has featured an impressive roster of talent including **Billy Bob Thornton**, **Chris Rock** and **Kirsten Dunst** stepping into its quirky world of folksy Midwesterners mixed up in the law. “ Fargo: Year 5” debuting Tuesday, is no different. **Juno Temple** stars as a woman whose strange behavior catches the attention of local authorities. **Jon Hamm**, **Jennifer Jason Leigh**, **Richa Moorjani**, **Joe Keery**, **Lamorne Morris** and **Dave Foley** also appear. (AP)



Jesse Armstrong poses in the press room with the Founder’s Award Emmy at the 51st International Emmy Awards at the New York Hilton Midtown on Monday, Nov. 20, in New York. (AP)



Zemeckis



Axl Rose

Variety

**NEW YORK:** A former Penthouse magazine model sued Guns N’ Roses singer **Axl Rose** on Wednesday, saying he raped her in a 1989 attack at a New York City hotel that left her with anxiety and depression and harmed her career.

**Sheila Kennedy**, 61, filed the lawsuit in State Supreme Court in **Manhattan**, seeking unspecified compensatory and punitive damages for physical injury, pain and suffering, severe emotional distress, mental anguish, humiliation, embarrassment, anxiety and economic harm.

The lawsuit was filed against Rose, 61, of **Malibu, California**, under a temporary New York law, the Adult Survivors Act, that lets adult victims sue over attacks that occurred even decades ago. The law expires after Thursday.

Attorney **Alan S. Gutman** said in a statement on behalf of Rose: “Simply put, this incident never happened. Notably, these fictional claims were filed the day before the New York State filing deadline expires.”

He added: “Though he doesn’t deny the possibility of a fan photo taken in passing, Mr. Rose has no recollection of ever meeting or speaking to the Plaintiff, and has never heard about these fictional allegations prior to today. Mr. Rose is confident this case will be resolved in his favor.”

In her lawsuit, Kennedy, of **Palm Springs, California**, alleges that she met Rose in February 1989 in a Manhattan nightclub, where the singer invited her to join a party in his hotel suite afterward.

According to the lawsuit, Kennedy saw Rose have sex with another model before he became angry with the woman, ordering her out of his suite.

He then turned toward Kennedy, dragging her across a floor by the hair and tying her hands together with pantyhose, before assaulting her from behind, the lawsuit said.

“Rose made no attempt to ask for or check that Kennedy was consenting,” the lawsuit said. “He treated her like property used solely for his sexual pleasure.”

The lawsuit said the attack left Kennedy with lifelong emotional, physical, psychological and financial damage and “symptoms akin to post-traumatic stress disorder whenever she hears Rose’s name or the music of Guns N’ Roses.” (AP)



From left: Lisa (Lalisa Manoban), Jennie Kim, South Korea’s President Yoon Suk Yeol, King Charles III, first lady of South Korea Kim Keon Hee, Rose (Rosé-seanne Park), and Jisoo Kim pose for a photo following a special investiture ceremony to present the members of the K-Pop band Blackpink with Honorary MBEs, Member of the Order of the British Empire, at Buckingham Palace, in London, Wednesday, Nov. 22. (AP) — **Details Page 11**



The Conversation

‘Viruses get inside a cell, make more virus, get out, repeat’

Species jumping or pandemic? Exploring virus’ infection tactics

By Peter Kasson  
University of Virginia

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

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COVID-19, flu, mpox, noroviral diarrhea: How do the viruses that cause these diseases actually infect you? Viruses cannot replicate on their own, so they must infect cells in your body to make more copies of themselves. The life cycle of a virus can thus be roughly described as: get inside a cell, make more virus, get out, repeat.

Getting inside a cell, or viral entry, is the part of the cycle that most vaccines target, as well as a key barrier for viruses jumping from one species to another. My lab and many others study this process to better anticipate and combat emerging viruses.

Different viruses travel into the body in various ways - via airborne droplets, on food, through contact with mucous membranes or through injection. They typically first infect host cells near their site of entry - the cells lining the respiratory tract for most airborne viruses - then either remain there or spread throughout the body.

Viruses recognize specific proteins or sugars on host cells and stick to them. Each virus gets only one shot at putting its genome inside a cell - if their entry machinery misfires, they risk becoming inactivated. So they use several mechanisms to prevent triggering entry prematurely.

Target

After the virus binds to the cell, specific molecules on the cell’s surface or within the cell’s recycling machinery activate viral coat proteins for entry. An example is the SARS-CoV-2 spike that COVID-19 vaccines target. These proteins need to modify the cell membrane to allow the viral genome to get through without killing the cell in the process. Different viruses use different tricks for this, but most work like cellular secretion - how cells release materials into their environment - in reverse. Specialized viral proteins help merge the membranes of the virus and the cell together and release the viral core into the interior of the cell.

At this point, the viral genome can enter the cell and start replicating. Some viruses use only the cell’s machinery to replicate, while others carry along portions of their own replication machinery and borrow some parts from the cell. After replicating their genomes, viruses assemble the components required to make new viruses. Two central questions scientists are studying about viral entry are how your body’s defenses can disrupt it and what determines whether a virus from other species can infect people.

Your body has a multilayered defense system against viral threats. But the part of your immune system called the antibody response is generally thought to be most effective at sterilizing immunity - preventing an infection from taking hold in the first place as opposed to just limiting its scope and severity.

For many viruses, antibodies target the part of the virus that binds to cells. This is the case not just for current COVID-19 vaccines but also the majority of immunity against influenza, whether from vaccines or from prior infection.

However, some antibodies target the entry machinery instead: Rather than preventing the virus from sticking, they prevent the virus from working altogether. Such antibodies are often harder for the viruses to escape from but are difficult to reproduce with vaccines. For that reason, developing antibodies that inhibit cell entry has been the goal of many next-generation vaccine efforts.

Cause

The other key question researchers are asking about viral entry is how to tell when a virus from another species poses a threat to people. This is particularly important because many viruses are first identified in animals such as bats, birds and pigs before they spread to humans, but it’s unclear which ones may cause a pandemic.

The part of viruses that stick to human cells varies the most across species, while the part that gets the virus into cells tends to stay mostly the same. Many researchers have thought that viruses changing in ways that bind better to human cells, like influenza viruses that bind to cells in the nose and throat, are some of the most important warning signs for pandemic risk.

However, coronaviruses - the family of viruses containing SARS-CoV-2 - are prompting re-examination of that idea. This is because several animal coronaviruses can actually bind to human cells, but only a few seem to be able to transmit well between people.

Only time will tell whether researchers need to broaden their pandemic prevention horizons or if their current prioritization of risky viruses is correct. The one grim reality of pandemic research, like earthquake research, is that there will always be another one - we just don’t know when or where, and we want to be ready. (AP)

Bank promotes healthy lifestyle

KFH’s Movember drive raises men’s health awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (AP): As part of its social responsibility and continuous health awareness efforts, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched the Movember campaign to raise awareness of men’s health and encourage them to adopt healthy preventive measures.

This campaign is part of KFH’s continuous dedication to promoting public health awareness and encouraging employees and the public to adopt a healthy lifestyle. To achieve the sustainability goals, KFH’s primary emphasis lies in

giving priority to the well-being and safety of its employees and the broader society.

Movember is an annual global event held each year in November to raise awareness of men’s health issues. It is similar to the Annual Breast Cancer Awareness campaign, which focuses on women’s health and the importance of early screening.

KFH’s Movember campaign included various awareness events, through KFH’s social media platforms (@KFHGroup) such as awareness messages from specialized doctors in coopera-



KFH’s Movember campaign photo.

tion with Al Salam Hospital and Dasman Diabetes Institute.

A short film was also filmed with Mohammed Al-Hajri, a medicine student diagnosed with diabetes from a young age. He explained how he copes with the disease and advised ways to deal with diabetes through a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

Additionally, KFH launched a special campaign for employees to raise awareness of men’s health. It included tips on paying attention to health, exercise and nutritional values.

FDA launches probe, urges caution

More children sickened by lead in fruit pouches

Levels more than 100 times the limits

Biden declares emergency over lead in water

WASHINGTON, Nov 23, (AP): More children were apparently sickened by apple puree pouches recently recalled due to dangerous lead contamination, the Food and Drug Administration said.

The agency has received 52 reports of elevated lead levels among children who reportedly consumed the products, which is up from 34 cases reported last week. The reports span 22 states and involve children between the ages of 1 to 4, according to the FDA’s online update on the investigation.

The pouches were marketed to parents and children under three brands: WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree and Schnucks and Weis cinnamon applesauce pouches. They were sold by national grocery chains, including Dollar Tree, and online retailers such as Amazon.

Recalled

The FDA said it is still working with Dollar Tree to get the recalled products off of shelves in several states.

“This product should not be available for sale and consumers should not purchase or consume this product,” the agency said.

Parents should dispose of the pouches by emptying the contents into the trash and discarding the packaging, the agency said.

The FDA said Wednesday it is investigating the source of the contamination in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency previously said cinnamon imported from a manufacturer in Ecuador was the “likely source” of the lead contamination.

Lead exposure can lead to serious learning and behavior problems. Heavy metals like lead can get into food products



This image provided by the US FDA, shows three recalled applesauce products - WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree pouches, Schnucks-brand cinnamon-flavored applesauce pouches and variety pack, and Weis-brand cinnamon applesauce pouches. (AP)

WASHINGTON, Nov 23, (AP): President Joe Biden declared an emergency over lead-in-water contamination in the US Virgin Islands earlier this week after tests on St. Croix revealed levels more than 100 times the limits set by the Environmental Protection Agency - among the worst results a US community has seen in decades.

“On a personal level, it’s been frightening and frustrating,” said resident Frandelle Gerard, executive director of Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism, Inc.

Officials told residents to stop using their taps and began distributing vouchers for bottled water. Lead can have devastating effects on childhood development, behavior and IQ scores.

But experts consulted by The Associated Press said the frightening results may be false because they came from testing that does not meet EPA standards.

“The data should be thrown into the garbage,” said Marc Edwards, a Virginia Tech lead and water expert who helped identify the lead problems in Flint, Michigan.

If the information given to St. Croix residents turns out to be bad, it won’t be the first time that’s happened. Poor information often plagues communities, and they are often majority-Black communities, facing lead crises, leaving people unsure what to believe. In Flint, officials initially concealed high lead levels. When levels spiked in Newark, officials emphasized the safety of the city’s reservoirs even though it is lead pipes - not the source - that are usually the problem. In Benton Harbor, Michigan, residents waited months for officials to confirm that filters truly work, relying on bottled water.

On the Caribbean island of St. Croix, officials avoided some of those pitfalls and quickly told residents of the results. The governor declared an emergency.

“This is not something that we shy away from talking about,” said Andrew Smith, head of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority.

Edwards does not believe the sky-high

results reflect reality and said the problem is how the samples were collected. For lead testing, workers usually take water from a household faucet. But the samples that tested so high on St. Croix were collected from the meter.

“When you (unscrew) it, you are literally ripping the leaded-brass apart and a chunk of leaded-brass gets in your sample,” he said. It produces artificially high results.

Chemical

Tom Neltner, a chemical and lead expert at the Environmental Defense Fund, agreed that testing from the water meter isn’t accurate. “There’s a lot of oddities” about how St. Croix’s sampling was done, he said.

Parents in St. Croix therefore still have no idea how much lead their kids were consuming.

Here’s what is known: In September, officials tested in the normal way, at faucets, following EPA lead testing rules. Those results showed the water was safe.

But island residents, who had long dealt with discolored water, said the color was getting even worse in recent months. So officials took more samples, this time at the meter, to see whether the utility’s pipes were the problem. It is some of these tests that first recorded astronomically high lead levels.

“We were all shocked and surprised by the results,” Smith said.

Retesting found results were still too high. Other locations including two schools, however, were low.

A more definitive answer should come soon. Local and federal officials did detailed testing to find the root cause in early November. A final report is expected in mid-December.

Smith said about 3,400 homes are affected and that the utility worked with EPA on the sampling.

Even though the tests didn’t follow the

normal procedure, EPA water expert Christine Ash said “out of an abundance of caution, we are recommending that folks who use (utility) water piped to their homes not consume the water until we’re able to do further investigation to identify if there is a potential source of lead and what it might be.”

Fortunately on St. Croix, that doesn’t include everyone.

A lot of people rely on rainwater they collect in cisterns.

On the mainland, in many cities, lead pipes are the main threat to drinking water. That’s not the problem on the island, however. Instead, it’s brass fittings that contain lead and can corrode into the water, Smith said.

And regardless of the test results, the water system needs attention and fixing. Smith and his colleagues are flushing water through it. When people don’t use the water, it sits and can pick up contaminants. They are also fixing how they treat their water so it is less corrosive and working to replace components that contain lead. That replacement work might take 12 to 18 months, Smith said. Plus, the island’s water system is old and in the coming years, major upgrades are planned.

Gerard said people on the island are overwhelmed.

“There’s this sense of well, what’s next for St. Croix?” she said, adding that residents have endured a devastating hurricane, the pandemic and water contamination from a refinery, all in recent years. Many people gave up on tap water long ago, she said, and it’s hard to know what to make of these latest developments.

“As a fairly literate person, reading the reports has almost left us with more questions than answers.” Many people probably don’t understand just how high these lead test results are, she said.

As for the temporary measure of flushing lots of water through the pipes to reduce lead, it’s ill-suited to the island, she said.

“We’re a water conserving society,” Gerard said. “Water is a precious commodity.”

with higher levels than most. The affected children’s blood lead levels ranged from 4 to 29 micrograms per deciliter.

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De Minaur keeps Aussies alive

Australia beat Czech Republic to reach Davis Cup semifinals

MALAGA, Spain, Nov 23, (AP): A game away from elimination, Australia found a way to rally and make its way back to the Davis Cup semifinals.

Australia came from behind to defeat the Czech Republic 2-1 and reach the last-four for the second straight year on Wednesday.

Alex de Minaur recovered from a set and a break down to keep the Aussies alive, then Max Purcell and Matthew Ebden won the decisive doubles match to set up a last-four encounter with Finland on Friday.

Tomas Machac defeated Jordan Thompson 6-4, 7-5 in the first singles to put the Czechs ahead, but De Minaur beat Jiri Lehecka 4-6, 7-6 (2) 7-5, and then Purcell and Ebden - the 2022 Wimbledon champions - sealed the comeback by defeating Adam Pavlasek and Lehecka 6-4, 7-5 in the doubles.

"I prided myself on a never-say-die attitude and he's certainly in the same category", Australia captain Lleyton Hewitt said of De Minaur. "For him to go out there and put the boys on his back again, we're so proud of him. He had to dig really deep and yet again he saved us."

De Minaur, the top-ranked Australian and No. 12 in the world, broke back at 3-5 down in the second set and went on to force a tiebreaker. He then broke serve at 5-5 in the final set before closing out the match with four straight points.

"It would have been quite easy for me to roll over under the circumstances, but that's just not the type of player I am," the 24-year-old De Minaur said. "I have had plenty of these types of matches in my career. It's part of my identity. I'm not going to give up. I'm going to fight until the end."

Lehecka, No. 31 in the world, finished his season early to be



De Minaur

fully fit for the last-eight in Malaga.

Machac broke Thompson's serve once in the first set and twice in the second, including at 5-5 before closing out the match in the first singles. In the doubles, Purcell and Ebden broke serve once in each set to clinch the victory.

"These two, what they just did, let's not take it for granted," Hewitt said. "That was massive effort, not knowing if they were coming out here or not, riding the ups and downs of the first two matches and then coming out and putting on a clinic like that, it was bloody impressive."

Australia became only the second nation, after the United States, to reach 200 tie victories in the Davis Cup.

TENNIS

Finland upset defending champion Canada 2-1 on Tuesday. Last year, Australia lost to Canada in the final after defeating Croatia in the last four.

The second semifinal will be played on Saturday, with the final taking place on Sunday.



Australia's Matthew Ebden hits the ball next to Australia's Max Purcell during a Davis Cup quarter-final tennis match against Jiri Lehecka of the Czech Republic and Adam Pavlasek of the Czech Republic in Malaga, Spain, Wednesday, Nov 22, 2023. (AP)



Purdue players hold a banner after a win over Marquette in an NCAA college basketball game for the championship of the Maui Invitational, Wednesday, Nov 22, 2023, in Honolulu. (AP)

Edey's double-double powers Purdue past Marquette to clinch Maui Invitational title

Kansas rebounds to defeat Tennessee 69-60 for 3rd place

HONOLULU, Nov 23, (AP): Zach Edey had 28 points and 15 rebounds to carry No. 2 Purdue to a 78-75 win over No. 4 Marquette in the championship game of the Maui Invitational on Wednesday.

Edey, the reigning national Player of the Year, shot 11 of 19 from the field and led the Boilermakers (6-0) to their first Maui Invitational title.

Purdue led by 15 early in the second half, but Marquette chipped away and pulled to 76-75 on a basket by Oso Ig-hodaro with less than a minute to play. Edey gave his team some breathing room with a right-handed putback of



Kansas center Hunter Dickinson (1) tries to get past Marquette forward Oso Ig-hodaro (13) during an NCAA college basketball game, Tuesday, Nov 21, 2023, in Honolulu. (AP)

Braden Smith's missed jumper for a 78-75 lead with 18 seconds remaining.

**Kansas 69, Tennessee 60**  
In Honolulu, Hunter Dickinson had 17 points and 20 rebounds and Kansas beat Tennessee.

The Jayhawks (5-1) bounced back from a 14-point loss a day earlier to take third place in the Maui Invitational over the Volunteers (4-2), who have dropped their last two games.

**Creighton 88, Loyola Chicago 65**  
In Kansas City, Mo., Baylor Scheierman had 24 points and 12 rebounds, Ryan Kalkbrenner added 29 points as Creighton topped Loyola Chicago advanced to the Hall of Fame Classic championship game.

Steven Ashworth added 10 points for the Bluejays (5-0), who will try for their first in-season tournament title since the 2018 Cayman Islands Classic when they play Colorado State on Thursday. The Rams beat Boston College in their semifinal.

**Gonzaga 69, UCLA 65**  
In Honolulu, Anton Watson scored a

career-high 32 points on nearly perfect shooting and No. 11 Gonzaga held off UCLA in the fifth-place game at the Maui Invitational.

The Bulldogs (4-1) led by 13 in the first half before staving off a late charge from the Bruins (4-2) in the finale of a Thanksgiving week tournament that featured five teams ranked among the top 11 in the nation.

BASKETBALL

**Baylor 88, Oregon State 72**  
In New York, Ja'Kobe Walter scored 24 points and 7-foot freshman Yves Missi posted his first career double-double as Baylor beat Oregon State in the opening game of the NIT Season Tip-Off at Barclays Center.

Baylor (5-0) led the entire way and will face Florida in the championship game Friday evening.

**North Carolina 91, N. Iowa 69**  
In Nassau, Bahamas, Harrison Ingram scored 16 points, Cormac Ryan added 15 and North Carolina used a

big second-half run to beat Northern Iowa in the opening game of the Battle 4 Atlantis.

North Carolina (4-0) will play Villanova on Thursday. Northern Iowa (1-3) moves into the consolation bracket and will face Texas Tech.

**Arkansas 77, Stanford 74, 2OT**  
In Nassau, Bahamas, Travon Mark scored the last six points of the second overtime and finished with 25 for Arkansas in a win over Stanford at the Battle 4 Atlantis.

Arkansas (4-1) advanced to play Memphis in a semifinal Thursday, while Stanford (3-2) will take on Michigan.

After Mark's driving layup with 19 seconds left in the second OT, Stanford's Spencer Jones and Benny Gealer missed 3-point attempts that could have tied it.

**James Madison 95, Fresno State 64**

In Cancun, Mexico, Noah Freidel scored 26 points and James Madison jumped out to a huge lead in the first nine-plus minutes against Fresno State in the Cancun Challenge Championship.

T.J. Bickerstaff added 15 points on 7-of-8 shooting for the Dukes (6-0). Rackwon Horton had 13 off the bench, and Julien Wooden scored 10.

**Virginia 56, West Virginia 54**  
In Fort Myers, Fla., Ryan Dunn scored 13 points and grabbed a rebound of teammate Reece Beekman's missed free throw with 2.3 seconds left to secure Virginia's win over West Virginia in the third-place game of the Fort Myers Tip-Off.

Beekman hit the first of two free throws and when his second attempt missed, Dunn snagged the long rebound with 0.4 seconds left and added another from the line for the Cavaliers.

Beekman scored five of his 12 points in the final 2:41.

USC women edge Penn State 71-70 in Bahamas

Stanford survives tough battle with Belmont

HENDERSON, Nevada, Nov 23, (AP): Cameron Brink scored 27 points and grabbed 16 rebounds to help lead No. 4 Stanford to a 74-55 victory over Belmont on Wednesday in the opening round of the Ball Dawgs Classic.

The Bruins turned in a formidable performance before national powerhouse Stanford (5-0) pulled away for the win.

After falling behind 33-32 early in the third quarter, a 3-pointer by Hannah Jump ignited a 9-0 run - the other six points coming from Brink - as the Cardinal took a 41-33 lead to seize control.

BASKETBALL

And when the Bruins (2-3) cut their deficit to six, 59-53 with 4:34 left in the game, the Cardinal closed things out on a 15-2 run for the win.

Kiki Iriafen scored 14 points and nine rebounds for Stanford.

Tuti Jones and Tessa Miller each scored 18 points to lead Belmont. Jai-lyn Banks chipped in 10 for Belmont, while Kendal Cheesman grabbed 14 rebounds.

**USC 71, Penn State 70**  
In Nassau, Bahamas, JuJu Watkins scored 31 points, including the last seven points of the game plus a half-court buzzer beater, and No. 8 Southern California pulled out a 71-70 win over Penn State at the Baha Mar Pink Flamingo Championship in the Bahamas.

The Trojans (5-0) led by eight early in the fourth quarter when Penn State (5-1) scored 14-straight points with five different players scoring for a 68-64 lead with 3:11 to play.

Watkins ended a 6 1/2-minute



Stanford guard Elena Bosgana (20) shoots over Belmont forward Tessa Miller (22) during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game Wednesday, Nov. 22, 2023, in Henderson, Nevada. (AP)

drought that included seven-consecutive misses, with a layup with two minutes to go. She quickly followed with a 3-pointer and then put the Trojans back on top, the 15th lead change, with a split-the-defense layup 30 seconds left.

Penn State was called for traveling 10 seconds later but the Trojans threw away the in-bounds. The Nittany Lions' Shay Ciezki's missed a short jumper to end it.

**Florida State 90, Northwestern 52**  
In Henderson, Nevada, Sara Bejedi scored 17 points and No. 13 Florida State used a fast start to cruise to a 90-52 win over Northwestern in the Ball Dawgs Classic.

Alexis Tucker added 15 points, seven rebounds and five assists for the Seminoles (5-0), who hadn't played

in the Las Vegas area since 2010. O'Mariah Gordon had four 3s and 14 points and Carla Viegas had 11 points.

Hailey Weaver scored 12 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for the Wildcats (3-2), whose other loss was 110-52 to No. 17 Notre Dame.

**Ohio State 75, Oklahoma State 57**  
In Nassau, Bahamas, Jacy Shelton scored 22 points, Taylor Thierry had a double-double and Ohio State defeated Oklahoma State 75-57 in the Baha Mar Pink Flamingo Championship.

The Cowgirls were within eight two minutes into the fourth quarter but went 3 of 12 from there.

Thierry had 16 points and 14 rebounds, nine on the offensive end. Cor-tie McMahon added 14 points for the Buckeyes (4-1).

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The victorious Deloitte team celebrates.

Deloitte crowned champions in ‘inaugural’ soccer tournament

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Deloitte emerged victorious in the inaugural soccer tournament held at the Kuwait Technical College (Ktech) stadiums, clinching the championship title. The decisive final match saw Deloitte triumph over the PWC team with a scoreline of two goals to one, drawing an enthusiastic crowd that passionately supported both teams until the final whistle.

Deloitte’s journey to the title included a notable victory over the Mazars team, securing a three-goal lead to advance to the final. The PWC team earned their spot in the championship clash by overcoming the EY team in a penalty shoot-out, with a final score of 8/7.

Fahd Musaed, the tournament sponsor, extended congratulations

to the Deloitte team for their well-deserved victory. He acknowledged the intense excitement that characterized the competition from start to finish, emphasizing that the positive outcomes of the inaugural edition motivate the organizing committee to start preparations for the second edition, ensuring its continued success.

SOCCER

Musaed remarked, “We have successfully organized and executed the tournament with distinction, and our focus is on enhancing it to foster a competitive sports atmosphere among employees in auditing offices.”



Festival logo

Inaugural festival

Kuwait Gymnastics ‘Federation’ hosts rhythmic gymnastics event

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The inaugural festival for rhythmic gymnastics academies, organized by the Kuwait Gymnastics Federation, is set to commence today at 12:00 noon in the Kazma Club hall.

**GYMNASTICS**

The event anticipates broad participation from players representing academies officially affiliated with the federation. Fatima Hayat, a member of the Board of Directors of the Olympic Committee and Head of the Women’s Sports Committee, will be the esteemed patron of the festival. A total of 54 players from Gymnastics, Akro, and Salto academies, along with

Quick Steps, will be showcasing their talents.

The federation underscored the festival’s purpose, emphasizing the creation of genuine competition opportunities among players to enhance their skills and accumulate valuable experience. Furthermore, the festival aims to set the stage for the upcoming launch of a rhythmic gymnastics league exclusively for girls.

Expressing gratitude, the federation extended sincere thanks to Fatima Hayat for her commitment to this sport and her sponsorship of the festival. It affirmed ongoing efforts to elevate the sport, with a commitment to officially organize competitions and enhance the overall gymnastics experience.

Zain Premier League resumes

Highly anticipated clash between Al-Kuwait and Al-Arabi postponed

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Zain Premier League resumes after a 22-day hiatus due to World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers with two exciting matches scheduled for tomorrow, Saturday. Al-Jahra faces Al-Nasr at the Friendship and Peace Stadium at 8:25 pm, while Al-Fahaheel takes on Kazma at the Al-Fahaheel Stadium at 10:10 pm.**

The weekend action concludes on Sunday with two matches: Khaitan locks horns with Al-Shabab and Al-Qadsia plays Al-Salmiya. However, the highly anticipated clash between Kuwait and

Al-Arabi has been postponed until December 3 due to their involvement in the AFC Cup competition.

Kuwait leads the league standings with 17 points, closely followed by Al-Qadsia with 15 points, and Al-Arabi in third place with 14 points. Al-Salmiya is fourth with 12 points, while Al-Nasr and Kazma share the fifth spot with 10 points each. Al-Shabab has 8 points, and Al-Fahaheel and Khaitan occupy the bottom of the table with 5 points each, while Al-Jahra lags behind with just one point.

SOCCER

In Saturday’s matches, Al-Jahra seeks its first victory, and it marks the potential departure of coach Gasinier da Silva, with negotiations underway for a new coach.

Meanwhile, Al-Nasr aims to build on recent positive results, including a notable victory over Al-Arabi in the last round.

Al-Dhiyab credits Al-Qadsia for success in 26th Asian Handball Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Jassem Al-Dhiyab, the Technical Director of the Asian Handball Federation, affirms that the 26th edition of the Asian Handball Champions League, presently hosted by Al-Qadsia Club, showcases an impressive general technical standard. This is evident in the fierce competition among more than five clubs vying for coveted spots in the tournament’s semi-finals.

HANDBALL

Al-Dhiyab emphasizes the commendable efforts of Al-Qadsia Club in providing top-notch facilities and comfort for all stakeholders, including the technical committee, referees, and participating delegations.

He notes the widespread acclaim for the organization and collaboration displayed by the tournament’s organizing committee, with no complaints or concerns raised by any parties. The successful outset of the tournament reflects the overall accomplishment of Al-Qadsia and the event itself.

Highlighting the efficiency of the AFC Technical Committee in a highly competitive environment, Al-Dhiyab acknowledges the smooth proceedings of matches.

He credits this to the presence of a cadre of elite referees, possibly among the best in the Yellow Continent and even globally. Saleh



Abdullah Al-Dhiyab, Technical Director of the Asian Handball Federation.

Ashour, the Emirati Chairman of the AFC Referees Committee, leads this distinguished group with extensive experience in managing international tournaments.

Al-Dhiyab expresses appreciation for the enthusiastic attendance of fans, particularly the Saudi supporters rallying behind Al-Khaleej Club. Their strong presence since the beginning of the tournament has significantly contributed to bolstering the success of Al-Khaleej in the competition.



Jahra coach Gasinier

The second match on Saturday features Kazma, eager to bounce back from a recent loss to Al-Qadsia, against Al-Fahaheel, looking to

recover from a heavy defeat against Kuwait in the previous round and secure its second victory in the competition.

Burgan play Al-Sahel in volleyball league

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Kazma Club’s first volleyball team is on a quest for its inaugural victory in the league. The team is set to face Al-Shabab in the second round at 7:15 pm in the Al-Itihad Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. Simultaneously, Burgan and Al-Sahel will compete at 5:15 pm, and Yarmouk will face Sulaibikhat at 7:00 pm in Mishref.**

VOLLEYBALL

Current standings show Al-Qadsia, Al-Arabi, and Al-Shabab teams leading with 3 points each, followed by Al-Kuwait and Burgan with 2 points. Kazma and Yarmouk trail with 1 point, while Al-Sahel, Al-Tadamon, and Sulaibikhat have yet to secure any points.

The tournament adopts an international point calculation system, where a 3-0 or 3-1 win awards the victor three points, and the loser receives none. A 3-2 win grants two points to the winner and one point to the loser. Kazma, guided by Iranian coach Javad Shamami, aims to secure three points in today’s match, seeking redemption after a narrow 2-3 loss to Kuwait in the initial match. Despite an inconsistent season in the Al-Itihad Championship, where they finished fourth, and a Super Cup semi-final defeat to Al-Qadsia, Orange remains determined for a

Ex-West Indies allrounder Samuels banned

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Nov 23, (AP): Former West Indies all-rounder Marlon Samuels has been banned from all cricket for six years for breaching four counts of the ICC’s anti-corruption code while playing in a limited-overs competition in the United Arab Emirates.

The charges against Samuels, who hasn’t played for West Indies since 2018, relate to the T10 League in Abu Dhabi, the International Cricket Council said when the charges were laid in 2021.

Samuels was found guilty in August of failing to disclose “the receipt of any gift, payment, hospitality or other benefit” that could bring him into disrepute, as well as the receipt of hospitality worth \$750 or more.

The ICC also said Samuels failed to co-operate with an anti-corruption official and concealed information that may have been relevant to the investigation.

Samuels played international cricket for close to two decades, during which he participated in numerous anti-corruption sessions and knew exactly what his obligations were under the Anti-Corruption Codes,” the International Cricket Council’s integrity unit manager, Alex Marshall, said in a statement announcing the sanction on Thursday. “Though he is retired now, Mr. Samuels was a participant when the offenses were committed. The ban of six years will act as a strong deterrent to any participant who intends to break the rules.”

In 2008, Samuels received a two-year ban from the ICC after being caught on tape passing on match-related information to an Indian bookmaker during West Indies’ ODI series in India the previous year.

He made a strong comeback in 2011

Stokes to skip IPL

and continued playing test cricket until 2016, and limited-overs internationals for a further two years. Samuels made his test and ODI debuts for West Indies in 2000 at the age of 19.

He played 71 tests, 207 ODIs and 67 Twenty20 internationals and tallied more than 11,000 runs in international cricket. His highlight was a 56-ball 78 in the World T20 final against Sri Lanka in 2012 to help the West Indies win the title.

England test captain Ben Stokes has made himself unavailable for the 2024 Indian Premier League “to manage his workload and fitness,” the Chennai Super Kings said Thursday.

Stokes said during the recently completed Cricket World Cup that he would be undergoing left knee surgery after the tournament in an effort to be fit for England’s five-test tour of India, which starts Jan. 25.

He also wants to play a part in England’s title defense of the Twenty20 World Cup in the United States and the Caribbean in June. That takes place after the IPL.

“The Chennai Super Kings management is supportive of Ben in his decision to manage his workload,” the team said.

Stokes was the five-time IPL champions’ most expensive purchase at the auction ahead of the 2023 season. He played just two games before ruling himself out of the rest of the season, ahead of playing for England in every test of the Ashes series against Australia.

The Super Kings didn’t say if they intended to retain the services of Stokes ahead of the auction for the IPL in 2025.

Stokes said he was undergoing surgery so he could return to being an allrounder. He barely bowled during the Ashes because of his longstanding knee problem and was only used as a batter in the World Cup, where England failed to reach the semifinals in its underwhelming title defense.



Players in action during the Kuwait Volleyball League





England's Ben Stokes plays a shot during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between Pakistan and England in Kolkata, India. Stokes to skip the Indian Premier League in 2024 to manage workload after knee surgery. (AP) — See Page 15

# Sports

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Financial milestone: 20-year, KD28 million investment in the club

## Kuwait Olympic Committee's verdict: No recognition for Jahra Club's Board

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Kuwait Olympic Committee has urged all affiliated sports bodies to adhere to the decision made by the National Authority for Sports Arbitration on September 4. The decision entails the non-recognition of the Jahra Club's Board of Directors, as stated in the arbitration ruling. In a late-night statement on Wednesday, the committee, through Secretary Hussein Al-Musallam, declared its refusal to acknowledge any decisions made by general assemblies of sports bodies if members of the invalidated Jahra Club's Board of Directors are present.

The statement emphasized the invalidity of the procedures related to the General Assembly held on January 12, 2023, and the subsequent elections, in accordance with the earlier ruling on the Jahra Club's Board of Directors. Furthermore, it highlighted a ruling on November 5, rejecting the dispute and underscoring the binding nature of arbitration awards once signed by the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, in accordance with Law No. 87 of 2017.

Meanwhile, the Jahra Club's Board of Directors has achieved a



The General Assembly of the Kuwait Olympic Committee in progress.

historic financial milestone through a 20-year, 28 million dinars investment in a 3,000-square-meter area

by an investment company. Board member Tawari Madloul expressed the board's commitment to benefit

ing the club and emphasized that tenders would be issued for larger areas without impacting the club's

### Kuwait in Group D of U-23 Asian Cup

DOHA, Nov 23, (KUNA): Kuwait found its spot in Group D for the 2024 Qatar U-23 Asian Cup in football, alongside Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

#### SOCCER

The draw, conducted in Doha, Qatar, on Thursday, placed the Qataris in Group A alongside Australia, Jordan, and Indonesia. Meanwhile, Group B includes Japan, South Korea, the UAE, and China, and Group C features

Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Thailand, and Tajikistan.

As the tournament unfolds between April 15 and May 3, 2024, the top two teams from each group will progress to the subsequent stages. A noteworthy incentive awaits the top three teams, granting them eligibility to participate in the Paris Olympic Games later in the same year. Conversely, the team securing the fourth position will face a squad from the African continent for a chance to compete in the Games.

game fields, following legal frameworks and sports body regulations.

The Kuwait Olympic Committee's extraordinary general assembly is scheduled for December 3, where the new board of directors will be elected. The approval of the previous Board of Directors' meeting and the selection of the Electoral Committee members, Abdullah Adnan Al-Roudhan, Athbi Tawfiq Al-

Tahoun, and Muhammad Murshid Al-Otaibi, were announced. Candidacy for Kuwait Olympic Committee membership opens on the upcoming Sunday for three days, with a tripartite committee formed to review the meeting minutes. Arbitrators Saud Al-Hamdan and Ahmed Shaaban were also approved for National Authority for Sports Arbitration membership.

## Tatum, Brown lead Celtics past Bucks in showdown of leaders

Dallas blows 20-pt lead in 4th, but Kyrie's 3-pointer pushes Mavs past Lakers

BOSTON, Nov 23, (AP): Jayson Tatum shook off an illness to have 23 points and 11 rebounds, carrying the Boston Celtics over the Milwaukee Bucks 119-116 on Wednesday night in an early showdown of top Eastern Conference teams.

Jaylen Brown had 26 points and eight assists for Boston, which improved the NBA's best record to 12-3. Kristaps Porzingis added 21 points and Derrick White scored 13.

The Celtics opened a 21-point lead in the first half and never trailed. They held that double-digit edge until the Bucks made a late charge in the final two minutes, slicing it to 114-111 before Tatum hit three free throws in the closing 21.2 seconds.

#### Clippers 109, Spurs 102

In San Antonio, Kawhi Leonard scored 26 points while hearing boos that prompted San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich to admonish the crowd, Paul George added 24 and Los Angeles beat San Antonio.

Victory Wembanyama, the No. 1 overall draft pick, had 22 points and 14 rebounds for the Spurs, whose fans were more focused on jeering one of their former stars.

#### Mavericks 104, Lakers 101

In Los Angeles, Kyrie Irving scored 28 points and hit the go-ahead 3-pointer with 22 seconds to play, and Dallas blew

#### BASKETBALL

a 20-point lead in the fourth quarter before rallying back to beat Los Angeles.

#### Suns 123, Warriors 115

In Phoenix, Kevin Durant scored 32 points, Devin Booker added 25 and Phoenix won its fifth straight game by beating Golden State.

The Suns had a 23-point lead midway through the third quarter, but the Warriors managed to cut the advantage to 118-115 with 19 seconds left after Durant was called for a technical foul. Booker made a pair of free throws with 12.4 seconds left to thwart the rally.

#### Nuggets 124, Magic 119

In Orlando, Franz Wagner scored 24 of his 27 points in the second half, Paolo Banchero added 23 points, and Orlando beat Denver for its fifth straight win. Nikola Jokic finished with 30 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists for the Nuggets, who fell to 4-4 without injured guard Jamal Murray. The triple-double was the sixth of the season for Jokic and 111th of his career.

#### Timberwolves 112, 76ers 99

In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards scored 31 points, Karl-Anthony Towns added 23 points and 11 rebounds, and Minnesota beat Philadelphia, which was playing without MVP Joel Embiid.

Embiid missed his first game of the season with left hip soreness after play-



Players battle for the ball.

ing 38 minutes with 38 points and 12 rebounds in the 76ers' 122-119 overtime loss at Cleveland a night earlier.

#### Thunder 116, Bulls 102

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 40 points, Chet Holmgren had 18 points, 13 rebounds and four blocked shots, and Oklahoma City beat Chicago for its sixth straight victory.

Isaiah Joe added 20 points for the Thunder (11-4), on their longest winning streak since the 2018-19 season.

#### Hawks 147, Nets 145, OT

In Atlanta, Trae Young scored a season-high 43 points, including 14 in overtime, and Atlanta outlasted Brooklyn in its second shootout in two nights.

A night after falling 157-152 to the Indiana Pacers, the Hawks snapped a three-game losing streak and got back to .500.

#### Heat 129, Cavaliers 96

In Cleveland, Kyle Lowry made seven 3-pointers and scored a season-high 28 points, and Miami rolled past sluggish Cleveland.

Lowry made his first five 3s and finished 7 of 9 from long range. The Heat were without injured All-Star center Bam Adebayo but built a 19-point lead in first half and never trailed in winning for the ninth time in 10 games. Rookie Jaime Jaquez Jr. had his best game as a pro with 20 points.

#### Raptors 132, Pacers 131

In Indianapolis, Pascal Siakam scored 36 points, Scottie Barnes drove for the go-ahead dunk with 27 seconds left, and

## Optimism for future: Promising outlook for Kuwait's newly-formed soccer team

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The school team is scheduled to face its Libyan counterpart at 10:00 am in the consolation rounds of the Arab School Sports Championship in Cairo. In the event of a victory over Libya, the school's blue team will contend for seventh and

eighth place, while a loss will see them competing in the ninth and tenth match, following the tournament system that assigns these rankings to teams not qualifying for the final rounds after the fifth and sixth confrontations.

Faisal Al-Maqseed, President of

Toronto beat Indiana.

Barnes had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and his slam put Toronto ahead 130-129 for the last of five lead changes in the final 1:22. Dennis Schroder scored 26 points for the Raptors.

#### Pelicans 117, Kings 112

In New Orleans, Zion Williamson scored 25 points, Brandon Ingram added 21 and New Orleans beat Sacramento.

Jonas Valanciunas had 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Pelicans, who also beat the Kings in New Orleans on Monday night. Jordan Hawkins added 13 points and Naji Marshall scored 12.

#### Rockets 111, Grizzlies 91

In Houston, Jalen Green scored 26 of his season-high 34 points in the second half and Houston beat Memphis to stop a three-game skid.

Desmond Bane and Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 23 points each for the Grizzlies, who lost for the third time in four games.



Phoenix Suns guard Grayson Allen (8) is fouled by Golden State Warriors forward Gui Santos (15) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Phoenix. (AP)

the Kuwaiti School Sports and Higher Education Federation and head of the delegation, highlighted the positive participation of Kuwait in the current edition of school sports. Despite stiff competition, particularly from the Egyptian and Saudi gold and silver medalists in swimming, Kuwait managed to secure several medals. Al-Maqseed expressed optimism about the newly formed football team, emphasizing its promising potential. He underscored the federation's commitment to implementing its strategy, focusing on nur-

#### SCHOOL GAMES

turing talents within schools to support various national teams. Al-Maqseed noted that the tournament serves as a platform to identify and encourage emerging talents, and he emphasized the positive indicator of full player commitment to the instructions provided by the technical and administrative bodies. This commitment reflects a promising outlook for the new stage, centered on preparing young players for competition and achieving titles that will enhance Kuwait's sports legacy.

### Man U head to Goodison Park

Everton fueled by resentment and ire at record EPL sanction

LONDON, Nov 23, (AP): Fueled by a sense of perceived injustice, Everton is ready to turn its Goodison Park home into a bearpit in response to being deducted a Premier League-record 10 points for breaching financial rules.

Manchester United, beware.

Everton's first match since receiving a sanction that stunned many in soccer - not least those associated with the Merseyside club in question - is on Sunday when United visits a stadium which will be seething with fury and resentment.

Goodison Park, an old and compact ground, is famously atmospheric and often hostile, with the vocal home fans never shy about getting their point across - even toward their own players and officials.

This time, the ire will be directed toward the Premier League following a penalty that puts Everton's 70-year status in the top flight at huge risk.

An appeal has been launched by Everton but that hasn't stopped its director of football, Kevin Thelwell, speaking of a "wholly disproportionate and unjust ruling" that will provide "additional fuel" for the club.

A fans group, the 1878s, has organized a protest that is calling on supporters inside the stadium to chant an expletive-laden phrase, suggesting corruption in the league, in the 10th minute of the game against United. On the back of a crowdfunding campaign that has raised more than \$50,000, tens of thousands of pink cards featuring the word "corrupt" and the logo of the Premier League will be distributed among fans of both Everton and maybe even United. There are reports that a plane will be flown over Manchester City's Etihad Stadium during the Saturday lunchtime match

#### SOCCER

against Liverpool with a banner containing a message about the 10-point deduction.

"We won't take this lying down," the 1878s group said, vowing to make Goodison "as hostile and electric as it can be at a pivotal time for Everton Football Club."

Local lawmakers have voiced their complaints in parliament. Liverpool's mayor, Steve Rotherham, has described the points penalty as "ludicrous."

At the heart of Everton's anger is frustration at the severity of the sanction for going less than 20 million pounds over the maximum losses allowed of 105 million pounds (\$130 million) across a three-year period, especially when that period was partly during a pandemic and while the club was attempting to finance a move to a state-of-the-art new stadium.

Everton has accepted wrongdoing - it has been working with the league in recent years to get the club's finances back in order - and feels the punishment doesn't fit the crime. There's also a sense Everton is being made an example amid fears that the likes of City and Chelsea, who have been accused by the league of various breaches of regulations - in City's case 115 of them - might not be dealt with so severely.



Thelwell