



Pages 14 & 15

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Page 15

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16 PAGES

150 FILS

'Keep distance for uninterrupted operations'

Kuwait urges maritime caution around Al-Zour Refinery

Opinion

What happened in Gaza must be subjected to an Arab tribunal

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IT is necessary to open up about a fateful issue like the one that the Gaza Strip and its people, indeed the entire Palestinian people, are experiencing.

For the past 75 years, the Palestinians have been a victim of Arab hypocrisy, flattery, and fake victories that organizations exploit to strengthen their political presence. They were exploited by leaders to hoard more money and live in bliss, while millions languish below the poverty line and in camps, and do not have the minimum natural rights.

The "humanitarian truce" that was announced is nothing more than an attempt to reveal the truth of what Hamas did on October 7th through the terrible killing and destruction. Eventually, after 50 days of fighting, the Hamas Movement submitted to the Israeli conditions, and this is considered a major defeat for it.

That is why we hope that Ismail Haniyeh, Khaled Meshal, and their entire clique, will not come out to us to declare that what happened is a divine victory, or repeat the statement issued by Hassan Nasrallah after the 2006 war - If I had known that kidnapping the two Israeli soldiers would lead to all this killing and destruction, we would not have done it - followed by the destruction of Lebanon and the fall of hundreds of Lebanese victims.

Today, any words issued by Hamas leaders regarding achieving gains are just "empty" words, and have no place in politics, especially after Haniyeh came out to say with his usual elegance, "We are still holding the strings of the game, and that the truce is a victory for the Palestinian people."

That is why we frankly say it to him - You are the defeated one, and the Arabs are also defeated, because they were not able to bring in a single aid truck, except after Tel Aviv's approval and inspection.

We hoped that rationality would prevail in the Arab world, and that there would be a vision, so that all the opportunists would not be allowed to invest in Palestinian blood, and when the hour of truth approached, they all retreated into their hideout - Iran - which for four decades portrayed itself as carrying the banner of liberating Palestine and the Aqsa Mosque. However, in reality, it has never fired a single bullet throughout those years towards Israel, and on October 7th, it complied with American and Israeli threats.

Likewise, Hezbollah acted rationally this time, because its leaders saw that the wave was greater than their capabilities. Instead of boasting about the "unity of the arenas" that implicated the Palestinians in this attack, they worked to exploit the battle to strengthen their political power in Lebanon.

As for the "Houthi" group, which tried to expand its terrorism through attacks, today it has fallen into a trap it set for itself, while the Iraqi militias have committed more adventures that Tehran is currently investing in its contacts with Washington to collect more billions of dollars.

Regarding Syria, it acted rationally because it had no choice but to confront the United States and Israel.

Is this adventure, which was committed by the "Al-Qassam Brigades" without consulting anyone, worth the death of 15,000 innocent people, including 7,000 children and 5,000 women? Is it worth the destruction of 60 percent of the Gaza Strip, and the displacement of about one and a half million residents of the northern Strip to its southern part?

In all this we beg to ask - What is the benefit of all this? Perhaps there might be some who say that the Palestinian issue has returned to the forefront internationally, and that the world public opinion has become more supportive of it. But is this enough? Isn't the concern of the Americans, British, French, Germans, and others in the world only their internal issues and the improvement of their lives, without caring about what is happening abroad?

For 50 days, Khaled Meshal and the leaders of Hamas disappeared, and all the leaders of the so-called "axis of resistance" disappeared, because they were feeling their throats and trying to invest in the Palestinian blood spilled on the streets of Gaza.

On the other hand, the popularity of the Israeli extreme right increased, and armed attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank increased.

Likewise, the Israelis have become more demanding to eliminate not only Hamas, but also the forces supporting it. This means that what comes after the truce will not be the same as before it, and that the tragedy will become even more horrific. Did Haniyeh, Meshal, Sinwar, Al-Deif, and everyone who looked around to understand, realize this?

Continued on Page 5

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WAR CLAIMS KEY HAMAS LEADER IN NORTHERN GAZA

Second wave of hostages freed in tense Gaza swap

Truce fragile

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, Nov 26, (Agencies): The tense cease-fire between Israel and Hamas appeared to be back on track early Sunday after the release of a second group of militant-held hostages and Palestinians from Israeli prisons, but the swap followed an hours-long delay that underscored the truce's fragility.

In a separate development, Hamas announced Sunday that one of its top commanders had been killed, without saying when or how.

The exchange was delayed Saturday evening after Hamas accused Israel of violating the agreement, which has brought the first significant pause in seven weeks of war marked by the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades, vast destruction and displacement across the Gaza Strip, and a hostage crisis that has shaken Israel.

Qatar and Egypt, which mediate with Hamas, announced late Saturday that the obstacles to the exchange had been overcome. The militants released 13 Israelis and four Thais, while Israel freed 39 Palestinian prisoners.

Thousands of people gathered in central Tel Aviv late Saturday to call for the release of all the estimated 240 people captured by Hamas in its Oct. 7 rampage across southern Israel, which ignited the war. They accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of not doing enough to bring them back.

Pressure from the hostages' families has sharpened the dilemma facing the country's leaders, who seek to eliminate Hamas as a military and governing power while returning all the captives.

The war has already claimed the lives of more than 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians killed by Hamas in the initial attack. More than 13,300 Palestinians have been killed, roughly two thirds of them women and minors, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza.

The four-day cease-fire, which began Friday, was brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the United States. Hamas is to release at least 50 Israeli hostages, and Israel 150 Palestinian prisoners. All are women and minors.

Israel has said the truce can be extended by an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed, but has vowed to quickly resume its offensive once it ends.

Hamas announced the death of Ahmed al-Ghandour, who was in charge of northern Gaza and a member of its top military council. He is the highest-ranking militant known to have been killed in the fighting.

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo

A glimpse of one of the two Kuwaiti relief planes bound for Al-Arish city, Egypt, before takeoff, as the departure adds up to a total of 29 relief aid planes.



Released Palestinian female detainee warmly welcomed by her family.

KUNA photo

Newswatch

Winter solstice Dec 22

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center announced on Sunday that the winter solstice would fall on December 22nd.

The Winter Solstice occurs when the sun becomes at its lowest daily maximum elevation in the sky, leading to short day-time hours and long evenings.

The center said in a statement, obtained by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), that the same month would witness a group of astronomical events like the meteor showers called the Geminids.

MANAMA: The Office of the GCC's Technical Secretariat to Combat Harmful Practices in International Trade has started measures for anti-dumping investigations against some Gulf imports from China, said the Bahraini Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

The measures include, among others, GCC imports of sheets and coated aluminum, the ministry said in a press release, carried by Bahrain News Agency (BNA) on Sunday. (KUNA)

Election law amendments on agenda

Amiri amnesty issued without pressure: MP

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: MP Muhammad Hayef praised the decision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on granting Amiri amnesty to those convicted of participating in the by-elections organized by Mutair Tribe, those convicted of illegally collecting donations for Syria and some citizens whose citizenship was withdrawn for involvement in various cases.

Hayef thanked HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the government for exerting tremendous efforts to conclude the Amiri amnesty.

He vehemently denied the rumor that the issuance of the Amiri amnesty is the fruit of parliamentary pressure in the form of the grilling motion filed against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He clarified that the amnesty was made possible through an agreement with the government since the beginning of the 17th parliamentary term, stressing the recent amnesty is part of agreements settled before the submission of the grilling motion. He hoped there will be another amnesty to include those convicted in State security cases.

MP Badr Nashmi Al-Anzi has submitted a proposal to grant salaries and allowances to social workers in different public institutions to be equal with their counterparts in the Ministry of Education.

He pointed out that advanced countries have a high demand for social workers due to the importance of their job. The proposal was referred to the Human Resources Development Committee.

On the other hand, MP Abduwahab Al-Essa criticized the removal of the bill on the establishment of Harir City in the northern part of the country from the agenda of the ordinary session slated for Tuesday.

He and a number of his colleagues intend to submit a proposal to withdraw the bill from the concerned parliamentary committee and then forward it to the Assembly for inclusion in the agenda of the upcoming session. He emphasized the importance of the bill; stressing it is much more important than all the other bills combined, as Harir City is expected to provide more than 200,000 jobs and enhance non-oil income such that 65 percent of revenues come from oil and 35 percent are non-oil, instead of 95 oil revenues and

five percent non-oil revenues. He believes this is a remarkable project that will strengthen partnership with foreign investors and protect Kuwait's northern borders from the Iraqi blackmail and threats. He cited the interviews of HH the late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah highlighting the significance of the project.

MP Majed Al-Mutairi has proposed reducing the monthly installment for loans that the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) grants to retirees from 15 percent to 10 percent of the pension.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee on Sunday discussed the bills on amending the National Assembly Election Law and reforming constituencies with Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun in attendance.

Continued on Page 5

'Israeli-linked' oil tanker seized off coast of Aden

DUBAI, Nov 26, (AP): An unknown force has seized an oil tanker linked to Israel off the coast of Aden, Yemen, a private security firm said Sunday.

The Central Park, managed and owned by Zodiac Maritime, was seized in the Gulf of Aden, private intelligence firm Ambrey said.

It wasn't immediately clear who was behind the attack. Aden is held by forces allied to Yemen's internationally recognized government and a Saudi-led coalition that has battled Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels for years. That part of the Gulf of Aden in theory is under the control of those forces and is fairly distant from Houthi-controlled territory in the country. Somali pirates also are not known to operate in that area.

The U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, which patrols the Mid-east, did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press. Ambrey said that it appeared that "U.S. naval forces are engaged in the situation and have asked vessels to stay clear of the area."

London-based Zodiac Maritime, part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group, has been targeted previously amid a wider years-long shadow war between Iran and Israel.

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:57	Asr	14:30
Sunrise	06:20	Sunset	16:50
Zuhr	11:35	Isha.....	18:11

Local

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

Expected Weather for the Net 24 hours
By Day: Mild with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speed of 08 – 30 k h
By Night: Rather cold to cold with light to moderate southeasterly wind changing

Weather
to northwesterly wind, with speed of 10 – 38 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas and some scattered clouds will appear.
Station Max Exp Min Rec
Kuwait City 24 16

Kuwait Airport	25	13
Abdaly	25	11
Jahra	26	14
Salmiya	23	19
Nuwaisib	25	14
Wafra	25	12

Two-state solution only option; global peace threatened: Jibril Rajoub

‘Israelis have been exposed in the swamp of terrorism, genocide’

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Lieutenant General Jibril Rajoub, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Fatah Movement and head of the Palestinian Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, confirmed that the Israelis have been exposed in the swamp of terrorism and genocide of the Palestinian people.

During a press conference, he said the truce was imposed on them by American and international will, but he wonders if the international pressure elements are capable of perpetuating the truce and ensuring the stopping the aggression as a prelude to stopping all hostilities against the Palestinians in all the Palestinian territories and establishing serious mechanisms to end the occupation and establish the state.



Jibril Rajoub

Lieutenant General Jibril Rajoub said, “There is a set of facts that formed the compass for our political and militant behavior during the past years, the first of which is the strength of the Palestinian cause with this strategic human reserve in the presence of seven million Palestinians in our country. This is the most important element of strength for the benefit of our cause. Our national responsibility to protect our political project is based on providing all the reasons for steadfastness and survival for these people.

“There is a consensus that the Palestinians have the right to self-determination, and that the Palestinians do not have anyone as their guardian, their decisions are independent, their will is national, and the protection of their interests is the compass.

“We were disappointed with the outcomes of the Arab Summit. Where is the political will? Where are the executive mechanisms? Where is the financial support for the Palestinian people?”

“We ask the Arab governments to think only about their interests and we do not want anything from them. Is their interest biased or neutral in this conflict? If neutral, then they are free. If it is biased, then there are interpretations, connotations and messages for it, but we have no choice but to remain steadfast in our country and we have no choice but to protect this homeland with our bare chests and humble capabilities, and we will live on gallbladder and grass.

“The PLO is a legitimate representative and a moral and umbrella homeland for all Palestinians. This strategic reserve, the Palestinian state, and national identity are an acquired right in the face of conflict.

“October 7 represents an earthquake in all senses and an unprecedented event. From day one, the reading was that this is a turning point and we should not waste its gains. This day came in the context of a defensive war that the people have been waging for 75 years.

“What happened in October achieved a break in the aura of power for the Israeli army, as it was a lie and like a spider’s web. It shook the confidence of the Israeli citizens about their personal security. A quarter of a million Jews are currently staying in hotels for fear of the lack of personal security, but what happened on October 7 thwarted the Israeli goal to work on integrating Israel into the Middle East in isolation from the Palestinian cause.”

“Regarding the difficulty in deciding on a two-state solution in the current situation,” Lieutenant General Jibril Rajoub said, “October 7 was the spark for the future explosions in the West Bank if there is not a firm and decisive international stance to confront this occupation, settlement and “cancer”. This is a danger to the Israelis who live in peace and a danger to regional stability and world peace.

“The right-wing government seeks to have a regional war, and a regional war means that the region cannot escape the use of a nuclear weapon. If this aggression is contained by an international policy led by America with an approach different from the past with the Israelis, they do not have the right to lead Europe.”

Lieutenant General Jibril Rajoub said, “Political Islam, led by Hamas, is part of our struggle, social and political fabric, but what is in our hands must not be lost. What is in our hands is a state and a legitimate representative, a reference for a solution, and an acknowledgment of the unity of the Palestinian territories.

“We are a project of liberation, not martyrdom, and as individuals we are projects of martyrdom. There is criticism on the street that we understand. Our compass is based on national, moral, and humanitarian foundations and has nothing to do with factional interests or the will of any regional party. What is indirectly targeted is the national and Palestinian identity.

“There are two countries that share our pain and hope - Egypt and Jordan - in everything. What happened recently was a touchstone and test, as the issue of displacement is a strategic goal because it wants to remove you from history and geography. The position of the Egyptians was consistent with protecting their national security, and Jordan’s position was consistent with their interest and national security.”

In addition, Lieutenant General Jibril Rajoub revealed he had received two invitations from two brotherly countries, one of which was Algeria, from the Algerian president.

He informed the FIFA president that Algeria is a home stadium for Palestine, and Algeria is ready to host any tournament on its soil, adding, “FIFA and the Asian Confederation asked us to specify our home stadium, and we informed them of our home stadium in Algeria. Unfortunately, they refused under the pretext that the match should be held in an Asian country”.

Lieutenant General Jibril Rajoub revealed, “There was a noble message from the Kuwaiti Union, based on directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, and the government, to host our national team. As a Kuwaiti national desire, we were happy, and this is Kuwaiti chivalry.

“Thanks to His Highness the Amir, who is considered a symbol of Kuwait’s unity and pride, and thanks to the Crown Prince, all the ruling family, and the great Kuwaiti people who interacted ethically. We are grateful, and I hope that the message reaches all components of our family, our people, and the residents.”

In his response to a question about the formation of the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee and the visits it is making to world capitals, which might revive the dormant consciences that stood with the occupation, Lieutenant General Jibril Rajoub said, “We do not want to revive consciences or open files. What we want today is bread and milk for our children, hope and personal security.”



Minister of Social Affairs Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah visits Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) pavilion at the 46th International Book Fair.



KUNA photos

Young readers flock to book signing stalls within the activities of the Kuwait International Book Fair at the Mishref Fairgrounds.

Al-Enezi acquittal upheld

No verdict on ex-PM in Army Fund case; Al-Jarrah gets jail

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Court of Cassation, presided by Judge Sultan Bouresli, refrained from pronouncing its verdict on the former Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak in relation to the Army Fund case. It also ruled to sentence Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah and others to seven-year imprisonment with hard labor, and upheld the acquittal of Adel Al-Enezi.

The Court of Ministers, presided over by Judge Nasr Al-Heid, had acquitted former Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, former minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah, former undersecretary of Defense Jassar Al-Jassar, former military attaché in London Fahad Al-Baz, former military attaché in Bahrain Ali Al-Asker, former military attaché in Lebanon Adel Al-Enezi, former army treasurer at the Ministry of Defense Samir Morgan, Army treasurer Hamad Al-Banwan, Director of the Office of the Minister of Defense Wael Al-Furaih and an officer with the rank of colonel on all charges.

The court rejected the appeal submitted by the Permanent Investigation Committee of the Ministerial Court. It also rejected the appeal submitted by Hamad Sabah Al-Sabah and Abdullah Nasser Sabah Al-Sabah, and revoked the bail. It accepted the appeal submitted by the Public Prosecution in form and in substance by upholding the appealed ruling.

Regarding the subject of the case, to punish each of the defendants - Khaled Jarrah Muhammad Al-Sabah, Jassar Abdul Razzaq Jassar Al-Jassar, Fahad Abdul Rahman Al-Baz, Ali Suleiman Ibrahim Al-Asaker, Hamad Youssef Imran Al-Banwan, and Wael Othman Ibrahim Al-Fraih - with imprisonment for a period of seven years with hard work for the accusations against them, except for the charges against them in clause 3, the first paragraph of clause 4, and clauses 6 and 8 of the indictment report.

Obligating the second defendant (Khaled Jarrah Muhammad Al-Sabah), the third (Jassar Abdul Razzaq Jassar Al-Jassar), the fourth (Fahad Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Al-Baz), and the sixth (Ali Suleiman Ibrahim Al-Asaker) to return the amount of KD 33,562,76.75, and fining them twice this amount jointly for what was leveled against them in the second and third paragraphs of Clause Second and Clause Fifth of the indictment report.

Also compelling the accused Khaled Jarrah Muhammad Al-Sabah, Jassar Abdul Razzaq Jassar Al-Jassar, Fahad Abdul Rahman Labarhim Al-Baz, Hamad Youssef Omran Al-Banwan and Wael Othman Ibrahim Al-Fraih to refund the amount of KD

10,499,986 and jointly fining them double this amount than what was assigned to them in the fifth paragraph of item two, and item nine of the indictment report.

Defendants Khaled Jarrah Muhammad Al-Sabah, Jassar Abdul Razzaq Jassar Al-Jassar and Fahd Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Al-Baz were obligated to return the amount of KD 20,157,807.120, and fined twice this amount than what was assigned to them in the sixth paragraph of the second item, and the second paragraph of the fourth item of the indictment report.

The third accused (Jassar Abdul Razzaq Jassar Al-Jassar) was obligated to return the amount of KD 50,614,060.710, and fined twice this amount than what was assigned to him in the first, second and third paragraphs of Clause Three of the indictment report.

In addition, the court decided to refrain from pronouncing punishment against the first defendant - Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the third - Jassar Abdul Razzaq Jassar Al-Jassar, and the fifth - Samir Murjan Adam Ahmed, and assigned each of them to assess the promise accompanied by a financial guarantee of KD 10,000 , commit to “Good Conduct” for two years regarding the charges leveled against them in the first, fourth, and fifth paragraphs of Clause One, and the fourth paragraphs.

What does it mean for the court to refrain from pronouncing the penalty?!

It is an assessment by the court that the offender committed the crime charged against him and was proven guilty, which would necessitate his punishment if the court proceeded with the trial. However, it was able to stop the procedures at this point due to what it saw as the availability of mitigating considerations. The basis for this is Article 81 of the Penal Code. The court uses the leave assigned to it pursuant to this article.

Condition: To order the accused to provide a pledge, with or without bail, in which he commits to good behavior. If he violates the terms of this pledge, the court may, upon a request from the charging authority, the person supervising him, or the victim, proceed with the trial to impose on him the penalty prescribed for the crime he committed and for which he was found guilty. An example of the Public Prosecution’s request to the Court of Appeal to proceed with the case and punish the appellant according to the articles of accusation.

Company owns 2 transport ships

KLTTC marks 50th anniversary

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Kuwait Livestock Transport and Trading Company (KLTTC) celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding by launching exclusive offers to customers in its showrooms in appreciation of their trust, reports Al-Rai daily.

The company pointed out in a statement that the idea of “Al-Mawashi” began with the awareness of a group of the parents realizing the need to establish the company stressing its commitment to proceed in accordance with the vision established by the founders.

“In continuation of the founders’ vision of performing the role for which the company was established, drawn up for itself and taken upon itself, it has developed a strategy to keep pace with the continuous development in the field of trade, manu-

facture and sale of meat worldwide by modernizing its maritime transport fleet to be in line with international requirements and specifications for maritime transport.”

The company’s fleet currently consists of two ships -- the Al-Masila ship, with a load of approximately 70,000 heads of sheep, and the Kuwait ship, with a load of approximately 11,500 heads of calves and cows, or approximately 68,000 heads of sheep.

The company explained that, “As a continuation of the company’s development of its activities and businesses locally and internationally, Al-Mawashi provides livestock transportation services to others, from South America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, all the way to China, Turkey, and the Arabian Gulf.”

‘Indonesia to send house workers’

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Chairman of Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO) Khaled Al-Dakhnan confirmed that Indonesia is ready to export skilled and trained domestic workers to Kuwait after completing or renewing the joint governmental Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two sides, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Dakhnan revealed this in a special statement to the daily on the sidelines of the union’s visit to the Republic of Indonesia at the invitation of the Indonesian Union for the purpose of exchanging information regarding new matters in the field of bringing domestic workers to Kuwait, which has been halted for a long time.

He added that during this visit, private education centers for training domestic workers were visited and assessed to prepare and equip workers before traveling and starting work. He said they had

a meeting with the directors general of the Training and Qualification Center for Domestic and Skilled Workers, and the Contracts and External Relations Department with the representatives of the Kuwaiti and Indonesian unions in attendance.

He explained that at the end of the meeting held at the conference headquarters in Jakarta, the Indonesian side confirmed their readiness to hold meetings with the Kuwaiti government in order to renew the expired MoU or conclude a new MoU between the two sides for labor recruitment and contracting to resume.

He appealed to the concerned authorities to expedite the signing of such memorandums that will open new doors and diversify the sources of labor recruitment to avoid falling into recurring crises that ultimately lead to scarcity of applications, especially with the advent of the holy month of Ramadan.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The latest statistics issued by the Sharia Documentation Department in the Ministry of Justice revealed that the number of Kuwaiti-Kuwaiti marriages from the beginning of January until the end of October 2023 reached 7,300, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the statistics showing that the number of Kuwaiti men who got married to non-Kuwaiti women totaled 1,100; while 420 Kuwaiti women got married to non-Kuwaitis, 170 non-Kuwaiti men got married to non-Kuwaiti women and 48 Kuwaiti women got married to Bedoun men.

The highest number of marriage and divorce cases recorded is among the university degree holders. Divorce among Kuwaitis is prevalent among couples with smaller number of children, considering that the highest number is among couples with only one child -- a total of 650 divorce cases in the last 10 months. The lowest number of divorce cases is among Kuwaiti couples with many children -- 130 among couples with six children, 320 among those with four children.

The statistics disclosed that the highest number of marriage between Kuwaiti men and non-Kuwaiti women under a marriage contract inside Kuwait are women from Saudi Arabia -- 380 Kuwaiti men got married to Saudi women, eight to American women, nine to African women, 98 to Moroccan women, 117 to Asian women, 38 to Egyptian women, 63 to Syrian women, 97 to Iraqi women, 50 to Jordanian women, 15 to European women, 36 to Lebanese women, three to Palestinian women, 15 to Bahraini women, four to Qatari women, one to an Omani woman and one marriage to an Emirati woman.

On the marriage of Kuwaiti women to non-Kuwaiti men, the statistics revealed that 200 Kuwaiti women got married to Saudi Arabians, nine to Europeans, 11 to Americans, 20 to Asians, 21 to Iraqis, 16 to Syrians, nine to Jordanians, 11 to Egyptians, five to Africans, two to Lebanese, eight to Bahrainis, 25 to Qataris, 13 to Emiratis and eight to Omanis.

The highest number of marriages among Kuwaitis in terms of educational level are the university graduates with 2,500; 46 with primary school diplomas are married to various nationalities, those with intermediate diploma among Kuwaiti-Kuwaiti marriages reached 760, two are illiterates -- a university graduate woman married an illiterate man and an illiterate man married a woman with an intermediate certificate. The number of marriages among Kuwaitis with higher degrees reached 21, compared to 200 among doctorate degree holders with various types of specialization. The number of marriages among Kuwaiti women to men of various nationalities with different academic degrees reached 105.

In addition; 4,100 of more than 200,000 marriage contracts recorded by the Public Authority for Civil Information ended in divorce, while 364 of those who got married in the current year got divorced. Most of these divorce cases were recorded among university students with 800, 61 among those with primary school education, and nine illiterate people of various nationalities.

Hajj prices likely to decrease this year

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Head of the Hajj Caravans Union Ahmed Al-Duwaihi confirmed that this year’s Hajj season will be distinct from other seasons due to the decision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding the early registration of pilgrims in order to give the caravans and companies more time to fully prepare and provide all services way before the start of the Hajj season, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Duwaihi explained that the central registration for the 2024 Hajj season through the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs platform will continue until Dec 13. The fifth Hajj exhibition will be held from Dec 14-20 under the patronage of Minister of Information, Endowments and Islamic Affairs Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi.

On the prices this year, he expects that Hajj prices this year will be better than the previous season due to the early registration scheme, as it gives caravans more time to contract with hotels and other necessary services.

Al-Duwaihi stressed that the exhibition this year is different due to the participation of the majority of Hajj caravans and companies, which will provide services and all means of comfort to the pilgrims.

Regarding the number of pilgrims, Al-Duwaihi revealed that Kuwait’s quota this year is 8,000 through 63 caravans nominated to receive pilgrims. He added Kuwait, represented by the ministry, requested that the number of pilgrims from the country will increase to 8,000 this year. “Our brothers in the Kingdom will do their best for us,” he asserted.

Regarding the registration of Bedouns, Al-Duwaihi affirmed that the process of registering Bedouns continues until the last day of the registration on Dec 13 or until the necessary approvals are obtained from the concerned authorities in the Kingdom.

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Sewage water tackled: The Ministry of Public Works has signed a contract with a company specialized in providing public services to protect the environment from sewage pollutants valued at KD1.23 million, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed the duration of the contract is 1,095 days; noting that the scope of its work includes solving problems in sanitation and rainwater facilities, performing periodic maintenance and protection of these facilities to ensure the continuity of their efficient operation, and utilizing several environmental treatment methods for emergency in the facilities.

Turkish minister says ties between his country and Kuwait ‘excellent’

Serdar Çam opens second Turkish-Kuwaiti Village



Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait welcomes Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Serdar Çam during the opening of the event.

Sahel Lab initiative aims to improve app

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Under the patronage of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Ali Al-Shuala, the first sessions of the Sahel Lab initiative were launched.

This initiative embodies the marathon model of ideas with the aim of developing the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel) through a series of interactive workshops to find innovative ideas hosted by the Central Agency for Information Technology.

During the launch of the initiative, the Acting Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology Dr. Ammar Al-Husseini explained in a speech he delivered on behalf of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad

Al-Shuala that this initiative is an opportunity to communicate with different segments of Kuwaiti society to identify aspects for developing the application users' experience in the unified government electronic services (Sahel) through the Sahel Lab initiative.

This initiative consists of brainstorming sessions and a series of workshops and dialogues that will involve a marathon of ideas that aims to create innovative additions that enhance the ability of the entities supervising the application to implement the visions of the government's work program regarding the trend towards digital transformation.

These dialogue spaces provide the possibility for citizens to communicate with the government directly by presenting ideas that contribute to developing and updating the services of the Sahel application to the image that the citizen would like to see embodied within the application, which is one of the most prominent Kuwaiti government digital products.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of Turkey Serdar Çam expressed his pride in the efforts and endeavors exerted to develop his country's relations with Kuwait, describing them as "excellent."

In his speech at the opening of the second Turkish-Kuwaiti Village in the presence of Turkish Ambassador Tuba Nur Sonmez, Çam said, "From trade to defense, health and education, we strive to strengthen cooperation between us to advance it further and further under the wise leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad.

We are only one month away from celebrating the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations with Kuwait, in addition to the relations of friendship and cooperation that are based on a long history. Such events contribute directly to strengthening these ties.

We remember the strong cultural ties that constitute the core of the fraternal relations between Turkey and Kuwait. The two countries also share many common values. Our customs are similar, and our cuisines are distinguished by noticeable similarities. We also belong to the same great Islamic civilization, which is what gives rise to pride.

Both countries belong to an ancient civilization that promotes the values of compassion, peace and diversity. Our civilization has an inherited spirit of peaceful coexistence.

Furthermore, we cannot remain silent in the face of great tragedy and persecution ongoing in Gaza, which deeply hurts our souls.

The Israeli attacks since October 7 have turned Gaza into a cemetery for children, destroyed thousands of buildings including hospitals, mosques and churches, and caused the martyrdom of more than 13,000 innocent souls. More than 1.4 million people have been displaced, basic services disrupted, and basic life necessities depleted.

The situation in Gaza is no longer tolerable, in light of international double standards, the green light given to the Israeli occupation, and the inability of international institutions to stop the violence, all of which confirm the importance of unity among Muslims.



Top and above: Some more photos from the opening of the second Turkish-Kuwaiti Village.

MP Al-Jumhur raises some demands

Eng Al-Enezi briefs housing minister on 'East Taima Project' during tour

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Minister of Justice and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Rakba held an inspection tour of the East Taima project last Thursday in the presence of MP Fayez Al-Jumhur and the leaders of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

In a press statement, PAHW explained that the housing minister, during the visit, was given a brief explanation from the Acting Director General of Housing Affairs Eng. Rashid Al-Enezi regarding the components of the project, which includes 509 houses, each of which consists of two floors, in addition to its infrastructure services and a number of public buildings.

The Minister of Housing Affairs Al-Rakba also listened to the observations of a number of citizens whom he met during the tour, and some of the demands raised by MP Fayez Al-Jumhur.

The citizens' comments centered around their desire to be allowed to construct an additional floor for the residents of the area, in addition to their request to be allowed to exchange between them and citizens the same type of houses in East Sabah Al-Ahmad

City that were created for the same category, namely "those who sold their houses".

Citizens submitted a request for approval to the Kuwait Credit Bank to issue a loan for people with special needs to build additional facilities in these houses such as an elevator, just like their fellow citizens in residential homes in the organization's regular distributions.

Minister Al-Rakba promised the citizens that all their demands will be studied, and that he would strive to approve them.

He stressed the keenness of the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly to alleviate the suffering of Kuwaiti citizens as soon as they became aware of them.

In his speech, the minister indicated that all the observations made by citizens are essential and deserve to be examined and taken into consideration as soon as possible after completing the legal, technical and administrative frameworks for them.

At the end of the tour, the minister thanked MP Fayez Al-Jumhur, the citizens, and the technical staff supervising the implementation of the project. He also issued instructions to the director general of PAHW to submit an urgent report to him within the next week regarding the citizens' demands and the necessary measures to achieve them.

Municipal Council's panels to meet

Awqaf request okayed to allot mosque site within Quran Printing Authority's premises

By Inass Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Kuwait Municipality has approved the request of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to allocate a mosque site within the boundaries of the building of the Public Authority for the Printing and Publishing of Quran, the Sunna and its Sciences, with an area of 2,897 square meters, located in South Surra.

Regarding the proposal of the Municipal Council members Sharifa Al-Shalfan and Ismail Behbehani to amend the Municipal Council's decision for a bicycle path, the municipality said it is not possible to approve the path permanently until a decision is issued to prepare recommendations and standards for bicycle paths.

In this context, the joint committee of the Technical Committee and the Legal and Financial Committee of the Municipal Council, headed by Dr. Hassan Kamal, will hold a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the amendment of the regulations organizing construction works and the schedules attached to it, in addition to discussing the final version of the proposal to amend schedule No. 1 regarding the requirements

and specifications for private and model residential buildings.

On the other hand, the Municipal Council's Technical Committee, headed by Dr. Hassan Kamal, will hold a meeting on Wednesday to discuss a number of items on its agenda, the most important of which is the request of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) to amend the decision of the committee in charge of carrying out the duties of the Municipal Council by licensing more than one shop for one activity for each of the permitted activities.

The committee is studying the proposal submitted by the Chairman of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri regarding unifying the uses of the plots overlooking the main streets in Kuwait City, and the two proposals submitted by member Dr. Hassan Kamal regarding allocating land for storage and establishing service areas at the Kuwaiti border posts.

It is also studying the proposal submitted by member Fahad Al-Abduljader regarding abandoned properties, in addition to a proposal submitted by member Alia Al-Farisi for moving and allocating a new site for uses and activities located in East Dajeej and South Khaitan.

News in Brief

Al-Ghazali Road to close: The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport announced that the authority, in coordination with the General Traffic Department, will close Al-Ghazali Road in both directions for 4 hours from 1:00 am until 5:00 am for two days, as of from Tuesday, reports Al-Rai daily.

Tool to ID non-smokers at risk: Researchers from the Massachusetts General Hospital Cardiovascular Imaging Research Center and Harvard Medical School in Boston, United States of America have developed an artificial intelligence tool that can identify non-smokers at risk of developing lung cancer, reports Al-Qabas daily.

It has been reported that researchers developed the 'CXR Lung-Risk' model using 147,000 chest images of the more than 17,000 patients included in the study with an average age of 63 years. They found out that 28 percent of the patients were consid-

ered high-risk by artificial intelligence and 29 percent of them were later diagnosed with lung cancer.

48 e-services provided: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is moving at a steady pace towards converting all its services into electronic ones through various applications, in addition to the Sahel application, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed that the ministry currently provides more than 48 services through its platforms; including customer service, extensions and others. Sources said the ministry has started working on introducing artificial intelligence into its services to keep pace with modern technology and provide better services to the public. Sources explained that artificial intelligence will make it easier for customers to complete their transactions once their data is entered into the system, indicating that work is underway to program special systems which will work on artificial intel-

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
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 61.000/-net	BHD 136.198/-net

Promo period from 1st – 30th November 2023 Terms & conditions apply*

KFH launches ‘Movember’ campaign

Bid to raise awareness on men’s health ... follow right preventive measures

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: In continuation of its health awareness campaign that is part of its corporate social responsibility program, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched the ‘Movember’ campaign to raise awareness on men’s health and encourage them to follow the right preventive measures, reports Al-Anba daily.

Through its corporate social responsibility program, KFH is organizing such campaigns throughout the year as part of its ongoing commitment to raise public health awareness in order to encourage its employees and the public to follow a healthy lifestyle. This is in addition to achieving the sustainability goals of KFH to maintain the safety and health of its staff, and the public in general.

The ‘Movember’ campaign is a global event that is held every November to focus on health, specifically for men; similar to the breast cancer awareness campaign in October, during which women are made aware of the significance of early screening to increase the rate of survival from breast cancer.

The ‘Movember’ campaign includes many awareness events like the posts on various social media accounts of KFH under @KFHGroup. These posts are awareness messages from specialized doctors in cooperation with Al-Salam Hospital and the

Dasman Diabetes Institute.

A short film showing Mohammed Al-Hajri, a medical student who has been suffering from diabetes since childhood, is uploaded on the social media accounts of KFH.

In the film, Al-Hajri talks about his way of living with the disease, and his advice on how to deal with diabetes through a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

At the human resources level, the bank launched a special health awareness campaign for men; providing various advice on taking care of one’s health, urging people to exercise and pay attention to nutritional values to achieve balance.

MoE said records highest number with 278

‘Over 524 posts lying vacant in number of educational bodies’

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: “All in ruins to its roofs” is a description of the condition of most educational institutions that have witnessed a large vacancy in their leadership and supervisory positions for years, until they have become managed in acting capacity in an attempt to cushion its negative effects.

According to informed sources, the number of vacant positions in various leadership and supervisory positions in various educational institutions exceeded 524 positions, including undersecretaries, assistant undersecretaries, directors, general secretaries, deans, inspectors, and department heads.

The Ministry of Education recorded the highest vacant positions with 278 vacant positions, followed by the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training with 140 vacant positions, Kuwait University with 49 vacant positions, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research with 29 vacant positions, Ministry of Higher Education with 19 vacant positions, in addition to the National Center for Development, the Secretary General of Private Universities, and the Supreme Education Council.

Some educational institutions attributed the reasons for the delay in filling these positions to the dissolution of the National Assembly several times, which led to obstructing the work of the Personnel Affairs Committee to fill vacant supervisory positions, in addition to the resignation of the government during the previous period several times, which led to the cessation of appointments to supervisory positions in the state.

Educational institutions have a list of all vacant supervisory positions in all their sectors that have not been filled for a long time, due to the lack of employees in the ministry who meet the conditions for filling them, and are content with temporary assignments, which sometimes last for years, to fill



KUNA photo
Al-Mannai during his participation in the media forum.

KUNA partakes in Jeddah media forum

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) partook in the International Media Forum titled (The Role of Media in Inciting Hatred and Violence - Risks of Misinformation and Bias) held in Jeddah on Sunday.

The one-day forum was organized by the Union of News Agencies of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (UNA) with a specific focus on the Palestinian cause and

involved participant-led discussion sessions aimed at fostering optimal cooperation and understanding to attain the forum's intended objectives.

Deputy Director General for Administrative and Financial Affairs Mohammad Al-Mannai and Director of Marketing and Public Relation Issam Al-Ruwayeh represented KUNA at the forum. (KUNA)

this supervisory position.

The sources warned against the filling of leadership positions and vacant supervisory positions through favoritism, disregarding competencies and experiences, and adhering to the “this is our son” approach, demanding the listing of the names of employees holding supervisory positions in acting capacity without being assigned such positions officially, in addition with a statement of their titles, job grades, academic certificates, years of practical experience, and the duration of their tenure in the assigned supervisory position.

They stressed also the need to determine whether any of the occupants of supervisory positions are eligible to

be placed in the position they are assigned to work in, and to ensure the conditions of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) are applied to them, so that transparency is the principle and approach used to fill these positions and it is not left to the whims of an official or coordination between the members of the interview committees.

The sources said the Ministry of Education is considered the top educational body in terms of vacancies, as a total of 278 vacant positions were listed including the undersecretary position, and eight assistant undersecretary positions, which means all leadership positions are vacant in the Ministry of Education.

MoC seeks to invest in restaurant site in Liberation Tower

PAMA organizes open meeting for top officials

By Abdel Nasser Al-Aslami and Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA) organized an open meeting for about 80 of its supervisors, including deputies, directors, inspectors, and department heads, with the acting Director General of PAMA Engineer Hamad Abdulatif Al-Barjas to discuss mechanisms for the effective implementation of strategies, plans, and programs for developing performance and new services for PAMA in the coming period.



Eng Al-Barjas

During the meeting titled “Authority Deserves the Best” organized by the Training and Administrative Development Department, Al-Barjas affirmed the importance of dialogue and interaction between the PAMA’s cadres to enhance common understanding, coordination and cooperation between the various departments and cadres to ensure the accurate and effective application of the requirements for implementing strategies, plans and programs on all levels.

He also stressed the importance of

the human element, which represents the pillar of developing performance and services in PAMA, taking into account the privacy of those under care, clients, and those dealing with PAMA, as well as the nature of the PAMA’s service work and its humanitarian mission.

Al-Barjas revealed that PAMA will implement many initiatives to motivate and encourage PAMA’s cadres and enhance the spirit of belonging and giving, including rewarding distinguished employees in each department on a regular basis, and intensifying training and qualification programs, especially in the areas of enhancing communication skills and the spirit of responsibility on an ongoing basis.

He explained that PAMA will continue to focus during the coming period on developing performance based on raising productivity and the level of quality of services by intensifying mechanization programs and reducing the documentary cycle to implement more digital transformation solutions. It will implement more programs to measure performance and quality of services, and seek the opinions of those dealing with PAMA in order to increase the level of general satisfaction among clients and those under care from various segments.

□ □ □

MoC to invest in eatery site: According to informed sources from the Ministry of Communications, the ministry is currently seeking to remove all

obstacles related to the delay in issuing a bid to invest in the site designated for a restaurant in the Liberation Tower. Among the procedures that the ministry is seeking to finalize is the licensing of the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, with which a meeting was held recently.

The sources explained that the ministry was late by 18 years in investing in the site and did not launch a public bid, which led to the public treasury being deprived of generating revenues that it would have obtained by investing in the site, as it is located in a strategic location in the Liberation Tower.

The ministry’s endeavor to invest in the site comes in implementation of Cabinet’s Decision No. 405, which includes items related to ways to develop revenues in the public finances of all government agencies, including the Ministry of Communications.

In a separate context, the sources reported that the ministry had addressed the concerned authorities to create an organizational unit that would follow up on the ministry’s debts and dues to others, which amounted to KD 87.4 million, in exchange for the ministry’s telephone and non-telephone services.

They said this step comes in implementation of the directives and decisions of the Council of Ministers aimed at taking measures to collect debts so that they do not result in any accumulation of debts and then the loss of public money, and in consideration of the difficulty in collecting the debts.

iam Al-Hashmi in attendance. He also met with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub and Ambassador of Serbia to Kuwait Filip Katic.

Kuwait urges

Continued from Page 1

transport boats. Such disturbances, the company explained, have the potential to negatively impact the efficiency and operational activities of foreign exports associated with the refinery.

The appeal serves as a proactive measure to ensure the smooth functioning and unhindered operations of Al-Zour Refinery, a vital component of Kuwait’s petroleum infrastructure. By urging seafarers and fishing boats to steer clear of the designated area, the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company aims to prevent any unintended disruptions that may impede the refinery’s critical role in the country’s oil and gas sector.

Second wave

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Kuwait is keen on continuing support for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and this sentiment is evident in the Kuwaiti air bridge, which features the participation of more than 30 entities, said an official on Sunday.

This came in a statement by Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Malek Al-Sabah to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) prior to the takeoff of two relief planes heading towards Al-Arish city, Egypt. The departure of the aircrafts brings the total of relief aid planes to 29.

The minister revealed that the amount of relief aid sent to the people of Gaza since the start of the campaign reached a total of 850 tons.

On his part, Kuwait Red Crescent Society’s (KRCS) director of emergency management Yousef Al-Miraj affirmed that all Kuwaiti relief shipments had arrived inside the Gaza strip.

Al-Miraj explained that today’s KRCS relief flight consisted of 10 tons of materials, loaded with medical and relief supplies.

The KRCS’s volunteers will accompany the materials to Al-Arish airport and then to the Egyptian Red Crescent in preparation for handing it over to its Palestinian counterpart, who in turn will distribute it in Gaza.

On his part, Kuwait Relief Society’s Deputy Director General and General Supervisor of the (support for Palestine) campaign, Omar Al-Thuwaini said that today’s trip saw the society delivering 40 tons of material and consisting of 300 tents, food, winter clothes, sterilizers, medical tools and two ambulances.

Al-Thuwaini affirmed the society’s keenness to provide assistance to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip until the situation stabilizes, pointing out that the selection of various relief materials was due to the strong demand by the Palestinians, especially with the arrival of winter and the shortage of medical supplies.

The pause has given some respite to Gaza’s 2.3 million people, still reeling from relentless Israeli bombardment that has driven three-quarters of the population from their homes and leveled residential areas. Rocket fire from Gaza militants into Israel also went silent.

War-weary Palestinians in northern Gaza, where the offensive has focused, returned to the streets to survey the damage Entire city blocks in and around Gaza City have been gutted by airstrikes that hollowed out buildings and left drifts of rubble in the street.

In southern Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people from the north have sought refuge, residents lined up outside gas stations for a second day, hoping to stock up on fuel. Palestinians who have tried to return to the north to see if their homes are still intact have been turned back by Israeli troops.

“Many are desperate to return to their homes, but they open fire on anyone approaching from the south,” said Rami Hazarein, who fled from Gaza City last month.

The Israeli military has ordered Palestinians not to return to the north or approach within a kilometer (0.6 mile) of the border fence. The Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service said Israeli forces opened fire Sunday on two farmers in central Gaza, killing one and wounding the other. It did not provide further details, and there was no immediate comment from the military.

What happened

Continued from Page 1

If there was a realistic Arab vision, then those who committed this adventure must be tried by an Arab tribunal composed of all countries, as no one can take millions to a massacre to implement a suspicious agenda.

For once, the Arabs must have the heart of one man, and know how to steer this situation, and not be separated by Israeli electronic files or petty calculations. What happened in Gaza is much greater than all petty calculations, but we can’t stop to wonder whether Arabs realize this or not.

Amiri amnesty

Continued from Page 1

The Complaints and Petitions Committee met on the same day with State Minister for Municipal and Communications Affairs Fahd Al-Shualah, as well as Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban in attendance.

The Budgets and Final Accounts Committee also met to discuss the most important comments of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) about the recruitment procedures for fiscal 2022/2023. The representatives of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) attended the meeting.

The Human Rights Protection Committee discussed the role of charities in supporting the Palestinian issue with the representatives of a number of charities.

The Public Facilities Committee discussed the bill on amending Kuwait Municipality Law number 33/2016.

Furthermore, in his interview with Al-Majlis TV (National Assembly TV), member of the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee MP Shuaib Shabaan confirmed that the current parliamentarian-parliamentarian and parliamentarian-governmental cooperation is unprecedented. He hopes this cooperation will continue in favor of the citizens.

“Initially, the government has no objection to increasing the zero-interest loan amount for retirees. The point of contention is over the maximum amount of loan as the MPs are keen on specifying the maximum loan amount at 21 times of the beneficiary’s pension, while the government insists that it should be 14 times only,” he explained.

He also stressed the need to amend the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Law in order to require Assembly approval before granting loans, such that the citizens are aware of how its funds are spent.

He praised the efforts exerted by the Parliamentary Priorities Committee to present a clear schedule for the second round of the 17th parliamentary term.

On the other hand, Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun recently met with Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait Muhammad Toutouchi with Secretary at the Iranian Embassy Mar-

«Mujezat Al-Shifa»: Bee bread cleanses the body of accumulated toxins and heavy metals

The nutrition consultant at Mujezat Al-Shifa Company reported that the majority of people are exposed to degrees of poisoning with heavy metals, the most common of which is aluminum, as it leaks into foods cooked in aluminum pots and there are particles of it in the air and in drinking water.



She said: Bee bread is one of the richest bee products with antioxidants and nutritional content of proteins, including essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals necessary to re-synthesize hemoglobin and get rid of anemia. Moreover, studies have scientifically proven its superior ability to quickly purify the body and its organs of toxins, especially the liver, due to the presence of the mineral selenium in abundance in bee bread.

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World News Roundup

Europe

‘Frozen conflict’

Finland blames Russia for ‘influx’ of migrants

HELSINKI, Nov 26, (AP): When Finland joined NATO earlier this year, Russia threatened retaliation. Now, hundreds of migrants from the Middle East and Africa have appeared at Finland’s border from Russia, seeking entry into the Nordic country.

Finnish officials say the sudden surge in asylum-seekers is no coincidence. They accuse Russia of driving the migrants to the border to sow discord as pay-back for Finland’s membership in NATO.

There has long been a trickle of asylum-seekers showing up at border checkpoints in Finland, which is the European Union’s easternmost member. But this month saw a sudden surge.

According to official statistics, more than 900 migrants have arrived in Finland so far since August, more than 800 in November alone.



Valtonen

Finnish authorities say they hail from countries including Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan, and that unlike in the past, the Russian authorities let them get that far even though they lack documents.

They arrive in sneakers in Finland’s harsh winter conditions, most riding bicycles.

“We have proof showing that, unlike before, not only Russian border authorities are letting people without proper documentation to the Finnish border, but they are also actively helping them to the border zone,” Finnish Foreign Minister **Elina Valtonen** told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Finnish authorities quickly closed four checkpoints and then three more, leaving just one Arctic crossing point open for asylum-seekers. They sent Finnish soldiers to erect barbed wire and concrete barriers along the frontier.

Finland also asked for help from EU border agency Frontex, which said it would send dozens of officers and equipment as reinforcements to the Finnish border. Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said there has been a “serious disruption of border security,” but authorities also insist that they have the situation under control.

Closures

The Kremlin denies encouraging the migrants, and says it regrets the Finnish border closures. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova argued Wednesday that Helsinki should have instead tried to “to work out a mutually acceptable solution or receive explanation.”

Western countries have for years accused Russia and its ally Belarus of using migrants seeking safety and economic opportunity in Europe as pawns to destabilize Western democracies. European leaders called it a form of “hybrid warfare” that Moscow deploys against them, along with disinformation, election interference and cyber attacks.

Finnish Foreign Minister Valtonen told the AP that there is no doubt that Russia “is instrumentalizing migrants” as part of its “hybrid warfare” against Finland following the nation’s entry into NATO - a decision prompted by Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Other Western experts agree. “The Finns are quite right the Russians have been weaponizing migration for some time allied with aggressive disinformation - the idea being simply to produce ‘wedges’ within societies they judge to be hostile,” said Klaus Dodds, a geopolitics professor at Royal Holloway, University of London.

EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said this week that the challenges on Finland’s border gave her a feeling of “deja vu.”

Finnish President Sauli Niinistö noted this week that Russia, in 2015 and 2016, permitted asylum-seekers to approach border checkpoints in northern Finland. It was seen as a response to Finland increasing training activities with NATO.

Also:

MOSCOW: Russian authorities on Sunday claimed that **Ukraine** tried to attack Moscow with dozens of drones overnight, just a day after Russia launched its most intense drone attack on **Kyiv** since the beginning of its full-scale war in 2022, according to Ukrainian officials.

Russian air defenses brought down at least 24 drones over the Moscow region - which surrounds but does not include the capital - and three other provinces to the south and west, the Russian Defense Ministry and Moscow mayor **Sergei Sobyanin** reported in a series of Telegram updates. Neither referenced any casualties.

Andrei Vorobyev, governor of the Moscow region, wrote on Telegram that the drone strikes damaged three unspecified buildings there, adding that no one was hurt.



PRAGUE: Slovakia’s new prime minister, **Robert Fico**, said on Friday he considers the war between Ukraine and Russia a frozen conflict that cannot be solved by sending arms to the Ukrainian armed forces.

Fico ended his country’s military aid for Ukraine after his new government was sworn in on Oct. 25.

After meeting his Czech counterpart, **Petr Fiala**, in Prague on Friday, he said he would prefer the Russian and Ukrainian sides sit at a negotiation table. He didn’t say how to achieve that.

Fico traveled to Prague for his first bilateral foreign trip. The leaders of the two countries that once formed Czechoslovakia traditionally visit each other after they get elected before visiting any other heads of state. They have remained close to each since after Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993.



ROME: Tens of thousands took to the streets of Italy’s main cities on Saturday to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, just as an Italian man suspected of killing his ex-girlfriend was extradited from Germany.

The slaying of 22-year-old university student **Giulia Cecchetti**, allegedly at the hands of her former boyfriend, sparked outrage across Italy, where on average one woman is killed every three days.

Suspect **Filippo Turetta**, 21, landed at the Venice airport around mid-morning on Saturday. He was immediately transferred to a prison in the northern city of Verona to face questions in the investigation into Cecchetti’s death, Italian media reported.

Cecchetti had disappeared after meeting Turetta for a burger at a shopping mall near Venice, just days before she was to receive her degree in biomedical engineering. The case gripped Italy.



US President Joe Biden meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the East Room of the White House on Sept 21, 2023, in Washington. Biden’s nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs sits idle in Congress, neither approved nor rejected, but subjected to new political demands. Republicans are insisting on US-Mexico border policy provisions in exchange for any new funds for Ukraine to fight Russia. (AP)

Politics

Santos says he expects to be kicked out of Congress

Trump draws cheers, jeers in Haley’s backyard

COLUMBIA, South Carolina, Nov 26, (AP): Donald Trump used college football rivalry weekend to bask among his supporters in a state and region that are key to his presidential fortunes, while trying to upstage his Republican opponent Nikki Haley on her home turf at the Clemson-South Carolina football game.

The former president and current front-runner for the 2024 Republican nomination walked into Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia on Saturday night to chants of “We want Trump! We want Trump!” from fans gathered for the annual Palmetto Bowl, the state’s biggest sporting event of the year.

Haley, a Clemson alumna and trustee who was twice elected South Carolina governor, did not attend.

Political

Trump was a guest of Gov Henry McMaster, Haley’s successor. The entourage, which entered through a veritable tunnel of Trump supporters on its way to a private suite, also included South Carolina’s senior U.S. Sen Lindsey Graham, giving the former president a show of local political force at a game featuring Haley’s alma mater.

McMaster ascended to the governor’s office in 2017 when Trump elevated Haley to United Nations ambassador. Graham and Haley have mostly been allies over the years. But both men now back Trump, and the former president enjoys a wide polling lead among Republican primary voters. That includes nationally and in early nominating states like South Carolina.

At halftime, Trump came down to the field with McMaster, drawing mostly cheers and a smattering of boos as he walked around, posed for a few photos and waved. ESPN’s broadcast on the SEC Network also showed the former president sitting with McMaster during the game.

Hours before kickoff, Trump’s campaign announced that he had been endorsed by “more South Carolina legislators than all opposing candidates combined,” including new backing from six state lawmakers who had previously supported US Sen Tim Scott, before the South Carolinian ended his presidential bid earlier this month.

Columbia was primed for Trump’s

laying US military aid to Kyiv and Israel, along with humanitarian assistance for Gaza, in the midst of two wars, potentially undermining America’s global standing.

“It’s coming at a crucial time,” said Luke Coffey, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, which recently hosted Andriy Yermak, the Ukrainian president’s chief of staff, at the discussion in Washington.

“We’re running out of money,” Coffey said in an interview. What just a year ago was overwhelming support for Ukraine’s young democracy as it reaches for an alliance with the West to stop Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion has devolved into another partisan fight in the United States.

Members of Congress overwhelmingly support Ukraine, embracing Zelenskyy as they did when he arrived on a surprise visit last December to a hero’s welcome. But the continued delivery of U.S. military and government aid is losing favor with a hard-right wing of Republican lawmakers and with some Americans.

visit. Around the stadium Saturday afternoon, more than a half-dozen electronic billboards around the capital city of Columbia boasted a message noting Trump’s 2020 election loss and his pending legal cases: “You lost. You’re guilty. Welcome to Columbia, Donald.”

Some vendors around the venue, meanwhile, hawked Trump-related merchandise, including “Trump 2020” flags, from the previous election cycle. And some fans entering the stadium before Trump’s arrival chanted “Let’s Go Brandon!” - a derogatory reference to President Joe Biden, who defeated Trump in 2020.

Also:

NEW YORK: US Rep **George Santos** said he expects to be expelled from Congress following a scathing report

by the House Ethics Committee that found substantial evidence of law-breaking by the New York Republican.

In a defiant speech Friday sprinkled with taunts and obscenities aimed at his congressional colleagues, Santos insisted he was “not going anywhere.” But he acknowledged that his time as a member of Congress, at least, may soon be coming to an end.

“I know I’m going to get expelled when this expulsion resolution goes to the floor,” he said Friday night during a conversation on X Spaces. “I’ve done the math over and over, and it doesn’t look really good.”

The comments came one week after the Republican chairman of the House Ethics Committee, **Michael Guest**, introduced a resolution to expel Santos once the body returns from Thanksgiving break.

3-year-old killed at hotel: A 3-year-old was shot and killed Saturday at an extended stay hotel in South Florida, authorities said.

Deputies and first responders from Tamarac Fire Rescue responded to a call about a shooting just after 8 am, the Broward Sheriff’s Office said in a news release.

Officials said the injured child was accompanied by a woman. The child was pronounced dead at the scene.

The news release did not offer details about the relationship between the woman and child, nor did officials provide their names or the child’s gender. The release also offered no details about what led to the shooting.

The Broward Sheriff’s Office Homicide Unit is investigating. (AP)



Mayor breaks ribs in crash: The mayor of a south Louisiana city underwent surgery Saturday for a broken collarbone, ribs and ankle after a hunting accident.

Plaquemine Mayor **Ed Reeves** was hunting Friday morning when his four-wheeler hit a large hole, flipped and landed on top of him, according to a post shared to the city’s Facebook page.

The city noted that Reeves will be in the hospital for a few days.

“He is expected to make a full recovery,” the post reads. “We ask that you keep him in your prayers.” (AP)



People gather in the parking lot of the Hamilton County Board of Elections as people arrive for early in-person voting in Cincinnati on Nov 2. Ohio’s new constitutional projections for abortion access are supposed to take effect Dec 7. But existing abortion-related lawsuits are moving again now that voters have decided the question, creating uncertainty about how and when the amendment will be implemented. (AP)



Reeves



Floyd

America

‘Family received no updates’: An attorney for Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer convicted of murdering **George Floyd**, said Saturday that Chauvin’s family has been kept in the dark by federal prison officials after he was stabbed in prison.

The lawyer, Gregory M. Erickson, slammed the lack of transparency by the Federal Bureau of Prisons a day after his client was stabbed on Friday by another inmate at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tucson, Arizona, a prison that has been plagued by security lapses and staffing shortages.

A person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Friday that Chauvin was seriously injured in the stabbing. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the attack. On Saturday, Brian Evans, a spokesperson for the Minnesota attorney general’s office, said: “We have heard that he is expected to survive.”

Erickson said Chauvin’s family and his attorneys have hit a wall trying to obtain information about the attack from Bureau of Prisons officials. He said Chauvin’s family has been forced to assume he is in stable condition, based only on news accounts, and has been contacting the prison repeatedly seeking updates but have been provided with no information. (AP)



Flight data recorder recovered: The flight data recorder of a large US Navy plane that overshot a runway and ended up in the water near Honolulu this week has been recovered as the military continues to plan for the aircraft’s removal.

The Navy’s Aircraft Mishap Board is investigating on scene at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, trying to determine the cause of the accident and any contributing factors, the Navy said Friday in a statement.

Sailors from a mobile diving and salvage unit retrieved the data recorder Thursday and conducted a hydrographic survey to assess the P-8A plane’s structural integrity.

The survey also assessed the coral and marine environment around the plane, which will aid them in minimizing impact during its removal, the Navy said.

Kaneohe Bay residents have expressed concerns about possible coral reef damage and other potential harm from fuel or other chemicals in the area, which is about 1.5

miles (2.4 kilometers) from an ancient fishing point. (AP)



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, next to Emma White, hammers a piece of jewellery during a meeting with small business owners from Sunny Bank Mills, at The Emma White Jewellery Studio in Sunny Bank Mills, Farsley, Britain on Nov 23. (AP)

Lat/Am

Unions vow pushback

Ecuador’s president repeals ‘guidelines’

QUITO, Ecuador, Nov 26, (AP): Less than 48 hours into his term, Ecuador President **Daniel Noboa** has repealed controversial guidelines established by the country’s left a decade ago that eliminated penalties for people found carrying illegal drugs under certain amounts.

Noboa’s decision fulfilled a campaign promise to fight drug trafficking. Consequences of the illegal trade, particularly cocaine, have kept Ecuadorians on edge as killings, kidnappings, robberies, extortion and other crimes reached unprecedented levels.

A statement from Noboa’s office announcing the move argued that the old guidelines “encouraged micro-trafficking” and characterized them as a “harmful element for Ecuadorian society.” Noboa also directed the ministries of interior and public health to develop “coordinated information, prevention and control programs on the consumption of narcotic and psychotropic substances” and to offer treatment and rehabilitation to “habitual and problematic occasional users.”

The guidelines were adopted in 2013 during the presidency of Rafael Correa under the argument that illegal drug use was a public health problem and users should not be sent to prison. The quantities used in the guidelines attempted to differentiate drug consumption from drug trafficking.



Noboa

Carry

Under the parameters, an individual could carry for personal use up to 10 grams of marijuana, 2 grams of cocaine paste, 1 gram of cocaine, 0.10 grams of heroin and 0.04 grams of amphetamine.

The guidelines were highly criticized from the start by Ecuador’s right, and in general, the country’s conservative society.

It remained unclear how Noboa’s decision will be implemented. His predecessor, President Guillermo Lasso, announced in January 2021 his own decision to eliminate the parameters, arguing that they affected “young people and children,” but it was never implemented.

In addition, a ruling from Ecuador’s Constitutional Court orders judges to distinguish between consumers and traffickers when determining possible punishments. Without the guidelines, however, it is unclear how they will make the distinction.

Noboa was sworn in to office Thursday after defeating Luisa Gonzalez, a Correa mentee, in a runoff election Oct. 15. His term will run only through May 2025, which is what remained of Lasso’s tenure. Lasso cut his term short when he dissolved the National Assembly in May as lawmakers pursued impeachment proceedings against him.

Under Lasso’s watch, violent deaths in Ecuador soared, reaching a record 4,600 in 2022, which was double the number from the year before.

The spike in violence is tied to the trafficking of cocaine produced in neighboring Colombia and Peru. Mexican, Colombian and Balkan cartels have set down roots in Ecuador and operate with assistance from local criminal gangs.

Also:

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina: Right-wing populist **Javier Milei** has been president-elect just four days and already Argentina’s unions and social organizations are vowing pushback and even protests if he makes good on his promises to slash the size of the state and privatize companies.

Milei, who famously campaigned with a revving chainsaw to demonstrate what he would do to public spending, says radical measures are needed to get the South American country’s moribund economy back to life and reduce annual inflation of 140%.

The day after winning the election with a wider than expected margin, 56% to 44%, the libertarian said in a radio interview that “everything that can be in the hands of the private sector will be in the hands of the private sector.” He has said he wants to privatize state-owned media companies and state-run oil and gas firms, and has raised the possibility of privatizing water distribution and train service, as well as ending all public works.

Labor union leaders said Thursday they are paying close attention to what the libertarian president-elect says and what they are hearing is in opposition to their interests.

“We clearly have as a central idea for the country development, with production and the creation of jobs, and it seems that all (Milei’s) affirmations about cuts in the economy, about privatizations and other things do not go down this path,” **Héctor Dear**, the secretary general of the powerful General Confederation of Labor umbrella organization, said following a meeting with labor leaders.

The most emphatic opposition so far to Milei’s privatization plans came from the head of the Airline Pilots Association, **Pablo Biró**, who said Wednesday that Milei “will have to literally kill us” to go through with his plan to change the ownership structure of state-owned airline Aerolíneas Argentinas.

Most labor leaders, however, have emphasized a wait-and-see attitude, saying they’re on alert but recognize Argentines voted for Milei and will wait for him to implement policies.

“In the moment they move forward with reforms related to labor rights, both individual and collective, and when the labor organizations affected by these adjustments request it, the CGT will take a stance,” Dear said.

Some, however, made clear the resistance has already started.

“We cannot wait to see if this man succeeds,” **Daniel Catalano**, secretary general of the State Workers’ Association, said during the march by the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. “We expect absolutely nothing from Javier Milei.”

Catalano was one of the representatives of labor unions and social organizations who joined the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in their weekly march in downtown Buenos Aires Thursday.

The weekly event by the human rights group made up of mothers of children who disappeared during Argentina’s military dictatorship (1976-1983) took on a different tone Thursday as groups called on supporters to join the mothers to symbolically represent opposition to Milei’s government.

There’s also concern among human rights organizations about a potential setback in policies that allowed for the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against humanity during the dictatorship.

제10차 한일중 외교장관회의
대한민국 부산, 2023.11.26.

The Tenth Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting
The Republic of Korea, Japan and the People's Republic of China
Busan, Korea, November 26, 2023



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, (right), South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin (center), and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa pose for a photo prior to the trilateral foreign ministers’ meeting in Busan, South Korea on Nov 26. (AP)

Asia

‘Drone attack by groups destroyed about 120 trucks’

SKorea, Japan & China agree to resume summit

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov 26, (AP): Meeting for the first time in about four years, the top diplomats from South Korea, Japan and China agreed Sunday to revive cooperation among the Asian neighbors and resume their leaders’ trilateral summit - but without a specific timing.

Closely linked economically and culturally with one another, the three countries together account for about 25% of the global gross domestic product. But efforts to boost cooperation have often hit a snag because of a mix of issues including historical disputes stemming from Japan’s wartime aggression and the strategic competition between China and the United States.

“We three ministers agreed to restore and normalize three-nation cooperation at an early date,” South Korean Foreign Minister told reporters after his meeting with Japan’s Yoko Kamikawa and China’s Wang Yi in Busan, South Korea.

Park said the three ministers affirmed an earlier agreement by lower-level officials to restart the summit “at the earliest mutually convenient time” and agreed to expedite preparations for the meeting. Kamikawa separately said the ministers agreed to speed up their work to achieve the summit “at an early and appropriate timing.”

Cooperation

The three ministers also agreed to push for diverse cooperation projects in areas such as people-to-people exchange, trade, technology, public health, sustainable development and security, according to South Korean and Japanese statements.

The lack of an agreement on the timing for the trilateral summit would suggest the top-level gathering won’t likely happen this year as South Korea, the chair of the next summit, had hoped, observers say. Still, Kamikawa said, “I believe it is an important step toward achieving an upcoming Japan-China-South Korea summit.”

Since they held their first stand-alone, trilateral summit in 2008, the leaders of the three countries had been supposed to meet annually. Instead, the summit has been suspended or stalled since 2019. The meeting Sunday was also the first of since 2019.

South Korea and Japan are key US military allies, hosting a total of 80,000 American troops on their territories. Their recent push to beef up a trilateral security cooperation with the United States has angered China, which is extremely sensitive to any

moves it perceives as seeking to contain its rise to dominance in Asia.

But some observers say that the fact that Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden struck a conciliatory tone in their first face-to-face meeting in a year earlier this month would provide Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing with diplomatic rooms to maneuver to find ways to revive three-way cooperation.

After her meeting with Wang on Saturday, Kamikawa said she renewed Japan’s demand that China remove its ban on seafood imports from Japan in response to Tokyo’s discharge of treated radioactive wastewater from its tsunami-hit nuclear power plant. Wang, for his part, said China opposed Japan’s “irresponsible action” of releasing the wastewater and called for an independent monitoring mechanism of the process, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Ties between South Korea and Japan deteriorated severely in past years due to issues originating from Japan’s 1910-45 colonization of the Korean Peninsula. But their relations have warmed significantly in recent months as the two countries took a series of major steps to move beyond history wrangling and boost cooperation in the face of North Korea’s advancing nuclear program and other shared challenges.

In a reminder of their difficult relations, however, a Seoul court earlier this week ordered Japan to financially compensate Koreans forced into sexual slavery by Japanese troops during the colonial period.

During her meeting with Park earlier Sunday, Kamikawa called the court verdict “extremely regrettable” and urged South Korea to take appropriate steps to remedy the breaches of international law, according to Japan’s Consulate in Busan. South Korea’s Foreign Ministry said the ministers discussed the court ruling as well as ways to work together to reinvigorate three-way cooperation with China. The ministry also said that both strongly condemned the North’s spy satellite launch last week.

Park also asked Wang for China to play a constructive role in persuading North Korea to halt provocations and take steps toward denuclearization, according to South Korea’s Foreign Ministry.

Wang described China as “a stabilizing force” in the region that has “always played and will continue to play a constructive role in easing the situation on the peninsula,” accord-

ing to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. It said Wang called for stronger trade and economic ties between the two countries and criticized the “tendency to politicize economic issues.”

North Korea’s growing arsenal of nuclear-capable missiles poses a major security threat to South Korea and Japan.

Also:

BANGKOK: Myanmar’s military-controlled government said that almost half of more than 250 cargo trucks stranded by fighting against ethnic minority armed groups near the north-eastern border with **China** have been destroyed in a fire caused by bombs dropped by drones.

Maj Gen **Zaw Min Tun**, spokesperson of the ruling military council, said in a statement phoned to state television MRTV that trucks parked in a compound near a trade zone in Muse township caught fire after drones belonging to ethnic armed organizations launched an attack at about 9:45 a.m. on Thursday.

The action was one of the most dramatic, and in terms of property damage, most extensive since the self-styled Three Brotherhood Alliance of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Ta’ang National Liberation Army and the Arakan Army launched a coordinated offensive in northern **Shan** state on Oct. 27. The trucks are used to carry goods to and from China.

Zaw Min Tun said about 120 of 258 trucks, which were parked near the **Kyin-San-Kyawt** Border Gate, were destroyed in the fire, which he blamed on the alliance. He said the fire was put out after about six hours but made no mention of casualties.

Le Kyar Win, the spokesperson of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, denied the alliance carried out the attack, blaming the military itself.

“To be honest, this is an act that harms the people. And that place is not our military target. So there is no reason for us to attack,” Le Kyar Win said.

The alliance has claimed widespread victories, and the military government acknowledged soon after fighting began that it had lost three towns. The fighting has included destroying bridges and cutting key roads from Myanmar’s interior, Zaw Min Tun said.

The fighting of the past three weeks appears to have stopped almost all legal cross-border trade with China, a major economic disruption for Myanmar.

■ ■ ■

Militants kill 14 farmers: Militants from a shadowy extremist organization with ties to the Islamic State Group killed at least 14 farmers in Congo’s hard-hit eastern region, a local official said Saturday.

The Allied Democratic Forces attacked Mamove village in North Kivu province on Friday night where they beheaded the farmers working on their fields, said Samson Simara, a delegate of the provincial governor.

“This death toll could rise because other farmers are missing,” he told local media, adding that the militants also burned down several houses in the village.

Armed violence in eastern Congo has been simmering for decades as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities, but it spiked in late 2021 when another rebel group, that goes by M23 and had been largely dormant, resurfaced and initiated attacks to seize land.

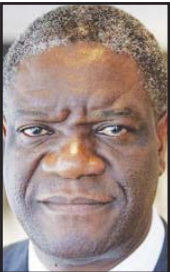
The attacks have heightened tensions ahead of Congo’s presidential election in December, with many residents in affected communities afraid for their safety. (AP)



People are helped to cross through a flooded Muoni River, where 8 people are said to have drowned overnight while crossing the river at Mukaa area, Makueni county, Kenya’s eastern region on Nov 24. Flood-related death toll is going higher everyday as heavy rains continue to pound across East Africa. (AP)



Bio



Mukwege

Africa

Mukwege kicks off campaign: Congolese Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr **Denis Mukwege** kicked off his campaign for president in next month’s election on Saturday, promising to tackle corruption and the violent conflict ravaging communities in the country’s east.

The 68-year-old renowned medical doctor told a crowd of supporters in Bukavu city in the eastern South Kivu province that he would also end famine in Congo, a richly endowed but impoverished country battling high rates of poverty and hunger.

“This is the pillar of the work we are going to do to give back to the Congolese people their dignity and their value,” Mukwege told to about 2,000 people gathered in Bukavu, his hometown.

Mukwege was named the joint winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 for his work in supporting victims of sexual violence in the fighting in Congo through the Panzi Hospital he founded.

He is known for his yearslong activism in the country, surviving an assassination attempt in 2012 and facing death threats.

Mukwege is seeking to run in the Dec 20 election against Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi - who is seeking reelection - and several other popular opposition figures, including Martin Fayulu, a former oil executive who lost to Tshisekedi five years ago; businessman Moïse Katumbi; and former Prime Minister Matata Ponyo.

“When you entrust me with the governance of this country, the first thing I want to do is to do everything to set up an army that will be structured and modernized,” he said. “If you vote well, your lives will improve and if you vote badly, you will still remain slaves.” (AP)

■ ■ ■

Sierra Leone declares curfew: Sierra Leone’s President **Julius Maada Bio** declared a nationwide curfew Sunday after gunmen attacked the military’s main and largest barracks in the West African nation’s capital, raising fears of a breakdown of order amid a surge of coups in the region.

The unidentified gunmen attacked the military armory within the Wilberforce barracks in the capital, Freetown, early morning, Bio said in a statement posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, adding that they were driven back by security forces and “calm has been restored.”

“As the combined team of our Security Forces continue to root out the remnant of the fleeing renegades, a nationwide curfew has been declared and citizens are encouraged to stay indoors,” he wrote.

The country’s Ministry of Information



Friends and family of slain activist **Adolfo Enriquez Vanderkam** mourn at his funeral in Leon, Guanajuato state, Mexico on Nov 23. Enriquez was shot Wednesday night as he was leaving a taco shop. Enriquez described himself on his social media profiles as an ‘activist, demanding a country with the rule of law.’ (AP)

gold prices exceed USD 2,000 oz

Gold prices exceeded the USD 2,000 per ounce threshold at the end of last week's trading, following expectations of the imminent end of monetary tightening measures by the US Federal Reserve (central bank), said economic source Sunday.

Gold futures for next December rose by 0.5 percent to reach USD 2003 per ounce, in conjunction with the decline in the index that measures the US dollar with other currencies at a rate of 0.55

percent at 103.3 points, the Kuwaiti (Dar-alsabaek) company in a specialized report.

Expectations for US interest rates are to remain unchanged after the US (central bank) meeting scheduled early December, as analysts believe that the United States will not raise the interest rates ceiling during the current year, with the possibility of reducing it by April next year, the report added.

Gold prices will be affected

positively by any US decision to lower interest rates in the coming months, in addition to geo-political factors, namely prospected rise of military tensions in the Middle East region, it explained.

The People's Bank of China (central bank) fixed base interest rates on one-year loans at 3.45 percent, and for five years at 2.4 percent, which improved gold's performance during last week's trading, it added. (KUNA)

Egypt inks USD 2.5mln gold mining deal

The Egyptian Mineral Resources Authority (EMRA) and Lotus Gold Corporation Co. signed on Sunday a contract for gold mining in three sectors with investments estimated at USD 2.5 million.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Petroleum, Egyptian Mineral Resources Authority Chairman Yaser Ramadhan and Regional Director of Lotus Gold Corporation Omar Abdunnasser signed the contract in the city of

Marsa Alam with the attendance of Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (Eng) Tareq Al-Mulla, Canadian Ambassador Louis Dumas, and Director of Lotus Gold Corp. Michael Silver.

The statement added that the Canadian corporation participated in the first and second rounds of the International Gold Bid in 2020. It obtained seven sectors that cover an area of about 1,219 km2, and then inked two research con-

tracts that include the areas which were delivered to the company in 2021 after obtaining all the necessary approvals and requirements.

The corporation obtained three sectors, with a space of 525km2, in the second round of the International Gold Bid.

Minister Al-Mulla added that Egypt managed to amend the Mineral Wealth Law, issue its executive regulations and launch international bids under the amended law. (KUNA)

Market Movements 26-11-2023

	SAUDI	Tadawul	Change	Closing pts	EGYPT	EGX 30	Change	Closing pts
			+12.34	11,090.42			-219.17	25,300.32
	▲				▼			

Business

US consumer sentiment dips for fourth month in row

Fed reiterates rates will remain high, rules out cuts in near future

By National Bank of Kuwait

North America

FOMC Meeting Minutes

At their most recent meeting, US Federal Reserve officials showed that there is no desire to cut interest rates anytime soon, especially when inflation is still above their targeted 2% level. The committee members still worry that inflation could be sticky and might move higher, and that more may need to be done. In addition, the minutes revealed that members feel they should proceed cautiously and base their judgments on the entirety of incoming information and its implications for the economic outlook as well as the balance of risks. However, the minutes did not indicate that the members even discussed lowering rates, which was reflected in chairman Jerome Powell post meeting news conference as he stated that, "the Committee is not thinking about rate cuts right now at all."

Revised UoM Consumer Sentiment

In the US, consumer sentiment fell for the fourth month in a row, reaching 61.3 in the month of November, down from 63.8 in October. The dip indicates that despite the recent downturn, consumers are still expecting inflation rates to increase in the upcoming months, with expectations of it reaching levels of around 4.5% within the next 12 months, and 3.2% in the next 5 years. The data published by the University of Michigan shows mixed signals regarding different age groups among consumers, with young and middle-aged consumers showing strong declines in economic attitudes. Joanne Hsu, the director of the survey, mentions that consumers have been more negative this year than their actual behavior with regards to the current economic situation.

US Unemployment Claims

The US labor market is proving to be more resilient than expected, as unemployment claims dropped to 209,000 from 233,000 previously. Expectations were for the print to come in at 226,000 claims. Furthermore, in

another sign of a resilient labor market, continuing claims dropped to 1.84 million, down by 22,000 from the previous reading. Despite a historic tightening cycle by the Fed, job growth remains strong while unemployment remains historically at the low end. Meanwhile, inflation dropped from a peak of 9.1% to 3.2% last month. It is wildly expected by markets that the Federal Reserve will end the year holding rates steady.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 103.403.

Europe

ECB Speakers

In a speech given by ECB's president Christine Lagarde, she stated that it is too early to "start declaring victory" in ECB's fight against inflation. Lagarde added that the current downward pressure on inflation was a result of unwinding in energy prices and a shock in supply, which accounted for two thirds of inflation surge. Lagard added that while the current interest rates are seen as sufficient to bring inflation back to 2%, it is expected for a small rise in inflation to occur in the upcoming months, after bringing it down from 10.6% in January to 2.9% in October.

Eurozone PMIs

The latest readings to come out showed slight hope for the Eurozone's largest economy, Germany. Both manufacturing and services showed an increase from their previous readings giving confidence to the idea that economic growth is plausible in the near future. Despite the positive readings, German PMIs remain in contraction territory. Over in France, output declined for the 6th consecutive month, mainly a result of weak domestic and overseas demand. As manufacturers are laying off workers, along with a highly anticipated Q4 decline, a rise in unemployment is also upon us. Unlike Germany, there seems to be no glimmer of hope for the French economy as it appears to be at a dead-end. As for the Eurozone as a whole, both the manufacturing and services sectors continued to contract, signaling a second consecutive quarter of shrinking GDP. Wages have also been increasing

Rates – 26th November, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.0911	1.0850	1.0964	1.0939	1.0830	1.1150	1.0988
GBP	1.2454	1.2444	1.2615	1.2603	1.2440	1.2835	1.2612
JPY	149.62	147.14	149.99	149.44	148.35	150.75	147.25
CHF	0.8858	0.8809	0.8874	0.8824	0.8600	0.8900	0.8740

rapidly along with output prices increasing at an unusual high rate, proving that inflation is still lingering in the Eurozone and is unlikely to significantly decrease in the near future.

The EUR/USD currency pair ended the week at 1.0939.

United Kingdom

BoE Speakers

Bank of England's governor Andrew Bailey spoke on Monday, stating that the possibility of rate cuts is far too early, and that an increase in borrowing costs is still on the table if inflation persists. The speech comes following a second hold in interest rates, after 14 consecutive hikes which led inflation rates to drop from 11% in October of 2022, to 4.6% in October of 2023. However, policy makers remain cautious regarding their approach in fighting inflation. Additionally, Bailey added that the pressure on incomes due to higher food and energy prices may be the reason for wage demands.

PMIs

The latest PMI news to come out show that the UK has finally left contraction territory and entered expansion territory when it comes to services. The Bank of England's decision to pause interest rate hikes, along with a

clear slowdown in headline inflation have helped support business activity. The services PMI was strengthened by corporate budgets for technology as well as general spending on essential business services. The manufacturing PMI similarly increased to 46.7 from 44.8 previously, although the PMI still remains in the contraction territory.

The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.2603.

Asia Pacific

Australian Monetary Policy Meeting Minutes

The Head of Australia's national bank spoke last week, following the recent hike in interest rates, marking a 12-year high of 4.35%. Furthermore, members of the RBA expressed concerns regarding businesses passing on higher costs on to consumers, leading to higher pressures on households and contributing to higher inflation. The aussie strengthened following the release, with the AUD/USD pair spiking from early November's levels 0.6370 all the way to the current trading price of 0.6582.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30810.

Oil prices drop for fifth week amid future contract selling

Brent crude slips 0.4% to \$80.58

Banks reshape personal loan landscape

Kuwaiti banks race to revitalize individual financing market by innovative approach

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): Oil prices went down for the fifth consecutive week due to an increase in selling of future contracts as well as a decrease in geopolitical tension over in the Middle East, which in turn lessened fears over energy supplies' interruption, said experts on Sunday.

Speaking to KUNA in various interviews, the experts said that a decrease in US commercial oil reserves as well as reserves of gasoline in addition to the recovery of the US Dollar index boosted economic data, which also showed a decrease in unemployment rates.

The price of the Brent crude last week saw a decrease of 0.4 percent to settle at USD 80.58 per barrel, while the West Texas Intermediate decreased by 0.5 percent at USD 75.54 per barrel.

The oil market saw unhinged selling operations and fears of entering depression and slow economic growth after the release of US retail data showing a decrease in spending and purchases by American consumers, said member of the teaching staff at the College of Technological Studies of the Public Authority for Applied Science and Education (PAAET) Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri.

He predicted that there would be an extension of the OPEC+'s production reduction deal; however, he noted that Mongolia and Nigeria were not abiding by their share in the deal approved by the coalition.

On his part, energy sector expert Jamal Al-Gharabally predicted that the war carried out by the Israeli occupation regime on the Gaza Strip would continue after the current humanitarian truce, leading to the hike in oil prices, which might reach USD 120 pb.

He went on to say that extracting from the US crude reserves during winter would increase prices and also increase voluntary supplies from Saudi Arabia and Russia by around one million barrel per day.

Meanwhile, oil expert Fares Al-Salem said that oil prices saw a decrease due to global demand on oil derivatives, but such situation would change by the coming of winter in North America and Europe, leading to an expected increase in energy demands this time of the year.

He indicated that the status of Chinese economy remained "vague" especially with the pilling up of crude oil reserves with expectation of oil import decrease by the first half of next year.

These factors would encourage the OPEC+ coalition to extend its production reduction deal for another period.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Banks have recently adopted a novel approach to competing in the individual financing market through unconventional means, part of a competitive race to expand their shares in a sector that has experienced a slowdown since the start of the year, as per official data, reports Al-Rai daily.

Reliable sources have revealed that certain credit policy influencers have been actively engaged in attracting new customers with enticing offers, particularly targeting Kuwaitis with high job qualifications.

The overarching theme of this phase can be summarized as "the escalating practice of pre-packaging personal loans and rescheduling them even before their regulatory deadlines," offering more favorable interest rates.

They explained that while intense competition for lending to customers is not a new phenomenon in banking, the recent change is associated with altering the method of competing for customers, particularly focusing on the segment that does not meet the criteria for loan rescheduling.

This is achieved by hinting at the pros-

He indicated that OPEC's expected an increase in China's oil demand by 3.2 percent in the first half of 2024, while the International Energy Agency (IEA) expected an increase of 3.9 percent, less than the growth between 2016 and 2019 where it was before the pandemic at

pect of cheaper interest rates and the broader benefits of loan rescheduling, coupled with the opening of new accounts. Additionally, there is the option for customers to settle the debt in cash if they are unable to meet the conditions for early settlement, provided they offer specific guarantees. The remaining loan difference is withheld in the customer's account until the contract is fulfilled.

The sources clarified that this behavior is not widespread across the general customer base but is primarily directed at individuals with a high credit rating or those considered elite customers, as per credit inquiry reports issued by the Credit Information Network Company (Ci-Net).

Furthermore, some banks exclusively target customers who meet specific conditions, employing a strategy that swiftly activates the financing contract and deposits the loan into the customer's account before their existing bank realizes it may lose their business. This is achieved by delaying the issuance of Certificates of Clearance to other banks.

4.5 percent annually, which would affect global demand.

Al-Salem said that China's global demand for oil was at 25 percent, which was not a factor that would lead to stability in prices without the OPEC+ reduction scheme.

USD stabilizes at KD 0.308, Euro hikes

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): The exchange rate of US Dollar stabilized against the Kuwaiti Dinar at KD 0.308, while the exchange rate of Euro went up by 0.33 percent to KD 0.337 compared to rates last Thursday, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK)

on Sunday.

The CBK indicated in its daily bulletin that the Pound Sterling went up by 0.80 percent to KD 0.388, while Swiss Franc stabilized by KD 0.349 as well as the Japanese Yen at KD 0.002.

‘Kuwaiti travelers showcase our cultural bridge’

Jumeirah Group sets sights on Kuwait for strategic expansion

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Jumeirah Group, the global luxury hospitality company and member of Dubai Holding, continues to build a strong customer base in Kuwait, announcing a 62% increase in room nights booked in 2023 YTD compared to the same period in 2022. The announcement was made during the brand's annual GCC Roadshow held in Kuwait for members of the travel trade, tour operators, travel agencies and clients as part of its strategy to drive growth further in the country.

The significant increase in guest arrivals for the luxury operator follows a period of global expansion for the brand with the opening of several new resorts over the past 18 months, including the recent opening of Jumeirah Makkah in September, in addition to Jumeirah Gulf of Bahrain Resort & Spa, Jumeirah Muscat Bay and Jumeirah Bali. In tandem, several of the Group's UAE-based properties have recently been enhanced, with refurbishments at Jumeirah Mina A'Salam and the ultra-exclusive Malakiya Villas at Jumeirah Dar Al Masyaf, as well as new beachscapes at Jumeirah Beach Hotel and Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort.

Growth

Commenting during the recent roadshow, Alexander Lee, Chief Commercial Officer at Jumeirah Group, said: "Kuwait is a very important growth market for Jumeirah Group and we are continually looking at ways in which we can welcome more guests from this market. Achieving consistent year-on-year growth in bookings from discerning Kuwaiti travellers is a testament to our capacity to connect people and cultures to create distinctive experiences and to meet the specific needs of our GCC visitors. As we enter a new era for the brand, Kuwait remains a key focus for Jumeirah, with opportunity for growth in line with our own vision for expansion and evolution."

With an international portfolio of prestigious properties in sought after locations across the globe, Jumeirah Group revealed key updates on its ongoing investment in guest experience, as well as new hotels and resorts planned in key markets for Kuwait audiences.

This includes the recent opening of its first property in Saudi Arabia, Jumeirah Makkah, located a short walk from the Great Mosque of Makkah (Masjid Al Haram), as well as the highly anticipated Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab in Dubai, set to introduce a new expression of ultra-luxury hospitality for the brand. The Group is also set to open its second resort in Saudi Arabia, Jumeirah The Red Sea, in 2024. Set within the Kingdom's most ambitious regenerative tourism project on its west coast, the resort comprises 180 keys and has been designed with relaxation and self-discovery in mind.

Portfolio

In addition to hotels and resorts, Jumeirah Group outlined its commitment to expanding its portfolio of branded residences and unique living concepts with the announcement of Jumeirah Living Business Bay, scheduled to open in Dubai next year. Featuring a selection of two-, three-, and four-bedroom residences and five-bedroom simplex and duplex penthouses as well as one full-floor master penthouse, the building offers the ultimate in immersive luxury living with stunning views of the Dubai Canal and/or Burj Khalifa.

Ahead of COP28 in Dubai later this month, Jumeirah Group is also reinforcing its commitment to responsible hospitality through innovation and industry collaboration, with the Group becoming a key member of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance. Targeting tangible, scalable and practical sustainable solutions for the hospitality industry, Jumeirah Group is focusing on three key pillars: Planet, People & Culture and Governance.



Jumeirah Group, the global luxury hospitality company and member of Dubai Holding, continues to build a strong customer base in Kuwait.

Slovakia signs memo with Chinese co

The Slovak government signed a memorandum of understanding on Thursday with Chinese electric vehicle battery maker Gotion High-Tech and its local partner, InoBat, to build a car battery plant in Slovakia.

The two companies formed Gotion InoBat Batteries, a Chinese-Slovak venture to build the plant in the town of Surany, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Bratislava. It should create about 1,500 jobs and become operational in 2026 with an initial production of 20GWh.

Financial details about the investment were not given.

German car giant Volkswagen is the largest shareholder in Gotion High-Tech with a 24.77% stake. Volkswagen has a car plant in Slovakia.

Gotion High-Tech began production in its first European plant in Gottingen, Germany, in September. (AP)

Hanoi's plan for its clean energy transition to be announced at COP28

A plan for how Vietnam will spend \$15.5 billion to transition to cleaner energy has been finalized and will be announced at the COP28 climate conference, which begins in Dubai next week.

Mark George, the climate counselor for the British Embassy in Hanoi, said that after months of coordination with key Vietnamese ministries to iron out details of how the money will be used, the final plan was finalized on Thursday.

George gave no details of the plan. The United Kingdom is co-chair of a group of nine, rich industrialized nations that have agreed to provide the \$15.5 billion to help Vietnam end its reliance on dirty coal power and more quickly switch to renewable energy as a part of a Just Energy Transition Partnership, or JETP. "That is a really important milestone," said George.

George was speaking at a panel discussion hosted by the UK-Vietnam Joint Economic and Trade Committee centered around opportunities for the two nations after Britain officially joined an Asia-Pacific trade group that includes Japan and 10 other nations. Earlier this year, Vietnam released a national energy plan that aimed to more than double the maximum power Vietnam can generate to some 150 gigawatts by 2030. It called for a drastic shift away from heavily polluting coal and pledges that no new coal-fired plants will be built after 2030. It also called for expanding use of domestic gas and imported liquefied natural gas or LNG, which will account for about 25% of total generating capacity, while hydropower, wind, solar, and other renewable sources will account for nearly 50% by 2030. (AP)

Lead, nickel, aluminium, zinc and copper added

FP Markets expands its commodity CFDs offering

SYDNEY, Nov 26, (PRNewswire): FP Markets, a leading provider of on-line Forex and CFDs, has announced the expansion of its commodity CFDs offering. In response to increased client demand, the move will allow traders and investors at FP Markets to capitalise on new opportunities in the commodities market and help facilitate diversification to a broader investment portfolio.

Complementing its existing range of commodity CFDs, clients trading with FP Markets can now trade and invest in several new and exciting commodities. This includes spot gold (XAU) versus several widely traded currencies, such as the British pound (GBP), the Singapore dollar (SGD) and the Chinese Renminbi (CNH), as well as other popular hard commodities traded against the US dollar:

The CFDs are available on the FP Markets MetaTrader 4 (MT4), MetaT-

rader 5 (MT5) and cTrader platforms. A comprehensive list can be found on the FP Markets website.

FP Markets Head of Market Risk and Dealing (Europe), Christodoulos Psomas, commented: 'We are excited to introduce a range of new metal products, expanding our portfolio and offering more diversification options for our clients. This addition enhances our commitment to innovation, ensuring we provide comprehensive trading opportunities tailored to our clients' evolving needs'.

The additional commodity CFDs deliver flexibility and choice. Having the freedom to select from a wide range of markets is imperative, particularly for those who invest with a diversified portfolio. In addition to commodity CFDs, FP Markets provides access to more than 10,000 trading instruments, ranging from more than 70 Currency Pairs, worldwide equity

Indices, individual Stocks, a broad range of Digital Currencies and popular Bonds and ETFs.

Established in 2005, FP Markets is a Multi-Regulated Brand providing clients with over 10,000 tradable instruments across key asset classes and offers aggregate pricing across several top-tier liquidity providers. Additionally, FP Markets deliver Consistently Tight Spreads, Rapid Execution, Unmatched 24/7 Multilingual Customer Support, and various Account Types to suit all trading strategies and styles.

Notes to Editors
About FP Markets:
For more information on FP Markets' comprehensive range of products and services, visit <https://www.fpmarkets.com/>.

Mexico issues decree

Private freight railway lines forced to give preference to passenger service

MEXICO CITY, Nov 26, (AP): Mexico's government recently issued a decree that will force private freight railway lines to give preference to passenger train service over their normal freight runs.

The decree gives the two main private concessionary rail operators until Jan. 15 to present proposals for offering the passenger service themselves. If they decline, the government will put the army or the navy, which have no experience operating railways, in charge of the services.

Almost all of Mexican railway traffic currently carries freight except for minor tourist train services like northern Mexico's Copper Canyon and the western tequila-producing region around Jalisco.

The government wants four short inter-city routes where passenger trains would run on tracks normally used only for freight.

But the biggest challenge could be three long passenger routes the government also wants to establish from central Mexico to the U.S. border: the 700-mile (1,120-kilometer) proposed passenger service from Mexico City to Nuevo Laredo, the 900-mile (1,450-kilometer) run from Aguascalientes to the border city of Ciudad Juarez, and the 1,350-mile (2,180-kilometer) route from the capital to the border city of Nogales.

The decree combines two interests of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador: his nostalgia for passenger train services that ran in Mexico before private concessionary operators were allowed in, and his reliance on the military for everything from law enforcement to building projects.

The two main private operators in Mexico are the multinational Canadian Pacific Kansas City, known as CPKS, and Mexico's Ferromex. Both operate freight services.

Five passenger train systems in the world are profitable. Most rely heavily on government subsidies. The decree contains no mention of whether the private companies would be offered subsidies.

Mexico's army is building the Tren Maya tourist railroad on the Yucatan peninsula, and the Navy is in charge of the revamped trans-Isthmus railway connecting the Gulf of Mexico to Pacific ports. But neither is fully operational.

In the decree, the president's office wrote that "preference will be given to public passenger rail service, and freight rail transport will

be respected, according to the terms of the corresponding concession."

That raises the potential for delays. When the government last provided passenger service through a state-owned company in the 1990s, trains seldom ran on time.

Ferromex hasn't commented. In a statement over the weekend, CPKS wrote that it doesn't expect problems, as long as the Mexican government lives up to its pledge not to allow the proposed passenger services to disturb freight runs.

"The draft decree emphasizes that the public freight rail service will be respected and as such, we do not expect an adverse impact on our concession," the company wrote. "CPKC has extensive experience hosting passenger rail services in multiple locations across its network in the United States and Canada while efficiently managing freight service."

The company said its Mexican subsidiary, CPKS de Mexico "has previously reached an agreement with the Mexican Federal Government to perform a study of what is required for the proposed new passenger rail service on the right of way of the corridor between Mexico City and Querétaro."

The government also wants to establish passenger service from Mexico City to the north-central city of San Luis Potosí, through Monterrey and on to the Texas border city of Laredo. CPKS said that "as required by our concession, CPKC de México will work closely with the Mexican Federal Government to evaluate passenger service on that corridor."

The government also wants to run passenger trains from Mexico City to the Gulf port city of Coatzacoalcas, from the capital to the nearby cities of Queretaro and Aguascalientes, and a short run from the new Mexico City airport to the nearby city of Pachuca.

The plans also include connecting the Pacific coast port of Manzanillo with the cities of Guadalajara and Irapuato. Manzanillo is mainly known as a freight port and has relatively little tourist infrastructure.

Because rail lines are currently designed for and operated as a slower-moving freight services, and are often full of trains and at-grade crossings, the passenger trains may not move very fast. When long passenger runs were offered in the 1990s, they sometimes took days to reach their destination.

LONDON, Nov 26, (AP): Nissan will invest \$1.4 billion to update its factory in northeast England to make electric versions of its two best-selling cars, a boost for the British government as it tries to revive the country's ailing economy.

The Japanese automaker manufactures the gasoline or gas-hybrid Qashqai and smaller Juke crossover vehicles at the factory in Sunderland, which employs 6,000 workers.

Nissan Motor Co. said it's directly investing up to 1.12 billion pounds (\$1.4 billion) to produce electric successors to the two models. The money also will enable "wider investment in infrastructure projects and the supply chain, including a new gigafactory" for EV batteries at the site, the government said in a separate press release.

"Nissan's investment is a massive vote of confidence in the U.K.'s automotive industry," which contributes 71 billion pounds a year to the economy, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said.

Sunak visited the factory for the announcement, posing for photos with Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt in front of a blue Qashqai on the assembly line, meeting workers and getting a tour from plant staff. The day before, Hunt announced tax cuts and other budget priorities ahead of a national election next year, coming as economic growth is weak in the U.K. and still-high inflation is squeezing consumers.

The Qashqai is the U.K.'s second most popular vehicle this year, while the Juke is the seventh. Nissan also said it will make the next generation of its long-running Leaf electric car at the factory.

Planned

The company said in 2021 that it planned to build an electric vehicle at the factory, alongside batteries made next door by supplier AESC, owned by China's Envision. AESC already has two gigafactories in Sunderland, and Friday's announcement adds a third.

EVs are "at the heart of our plans to achieve carbon neutrality," Nissan President and CEO Makoto Uchida said in a statement. "With electric versions of our core European models on the way, we are accelerating towards a new era for Nissan, for industry and for our customers."

Nissan has set a target of electrifying its entire European passenger car lineup by 2030.

"With today's announcement, we are making that vision happen," Uchida said at the plant, which temporarily stopped production for the ceremony.

The future of Nissan's Sunderland had been in question before and after Britain's 2016 vote to leave the European Union. Brexit opponents said leaving the bloc without a trade deal would damage Britain's economy because companies like Nissan would face tariffs on exports to the EU.

The auto industry is bracing for 10% post-Brexit trade tariffs taking effect in January. They threaten to raise the cost of new EVs by punishing manufacturers in their respective markets for not sourcing enough of their components from either the EU or Britain.

Many EV makers will struggle to meet the requirement because Europe lags behind Asia in battery production. Nissan, however, is the only carmaker in the U.K. with a dedicated battery plant nearby.

Nissan joins other automakers making the transition to EV production in the U.K., even as Sunak pushed back a deadline to end the sale of new gas and diesel cars by five years, to 2035.

BMW said earlier this year that it's investing 600 million pounds into its Mini factory in Oxford, England, to start making electric vehicles by 2026.

India's Tata Sons, which owns Jaguar Land Rover, is building a 4 billion-



Participants in the Macau event pose for a group photo.

The 2023 Shenzhen New Energy Vehicle Industry 'showcased' its devt in Macao

MACAO, Nov 26, (BUSINESS WIRE): The 2023 Shenzhen New Energy Vehicle Industry (Macao) Conference was held on 22nd November at the Wynn Palace in Macao. It comprehensively showcased the achievements of Shenzhen's new energy vehicle industry development and promoted the market-oriented, rule-of-law, and internationalized business environment in Shenzhen. The event welcomed and encouraged various sectors in Macao to seize the opportunities for the development of China's new energy vehicle industry. Mr. Wang Shourui, Vice Mayor of Shenzhen, Yang Hao, Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau SAR, Zhang Zuowen, Director of the Policy Research and Regional Development Bureau of the Macao SAR Government, Zan Dong, Deputy Secretary-General of the Permanent Secretariat of the China-Portuguese-Speaking Countries Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum (Macao) (appointed by Portuguese-speaking countries), Jiang Likun, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of Shenzhen, and representatives from various sectors of government and business in Shenzhen and Macao, totaling nearly a hundred people, attended the event.

Vice Mayor Wang Shourui emphasized that transitioning to new energy vehicles represents the sole pathway for China to evolve from merely a large automotive manufacturer to an automotive powerhouse. The new energy vehicles serve as a fresh avenue for transforming, elevating, and fostering high-quality growth within China's automotive sector. For eight consecutive years, China has maintained the top spot globally in both the production and sales of new energy vehicles. Shenzhen, a pinnacle and exemplar city in the new energy vehicle realm. The city has a population of 860,000 new energy vehicles, achieving a penetration rate surpassing 60%, a leading position worldwide. Given the ongoing development in the scientific and technological evolution, Shenzhen aims to leverage its industrial strengths in high-tech clustering. Simultaneously, Macao seeks to maximize its

position as a gateway for Greater Bay Area with its global connectivity. Collaboratively, Shenzhen and Macao aim to harness their respective strengths, enhancing multi-faceted cooperation, particularly in the new energy vehicle industry. Their joint endeavour to explore international markets promises to significantly contribute to enriching the "one country, two systems" framework and expediting the attainment of advanced scientific and technological self-reliance.

Transitioning

Director Zhang Zuowen commented that the automotive industry is transitioning toward green, digital, and intelligent advancements. Shenzhen's automotive sector has spearheaded the progress in developing new energy and intelligent connected vehicles, leading China in advocating for and implementing new energy vehicle technology. Its robust competitiveness in key technological innovation continues to grow. Within the context of the high-caliber collaborative efforts shaping the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and guided by the operational framework of the Shenzhen-Macao Cooperation Conference and the Special Cooperation Class, Macao intends to fully leverage the institutional advantages afforded by the "one country, two systems" model. Macao also aims to amplify the role of its "Connect the World" business cooperation service platform. This involves deepening collaboration with Shenzhen across multiple fronts, including new energy vehicles, ecological preservation, and environmental protection. The objective is to aid Shenzhen's new energy vehicles in exploring global markets, particularly those in Portuguese-speaking countries, while supporting the advancement of Shenzhen's new energy vehicle industry and the establishment of a "new generation world-class automotive city."

Deputy Secretary-General Zandong highlighted that Portuguese-speaking countries possess strategic geographical locations and abundant natural resources, presenting significant potential for economic development. Their economic and trade ties with China are progressively deepening,

fostering expansive prospects for collaboration. China's new energy automobile industry is rapidly gaining recognition in the global automotive industry for its advance technology development. The conference gathering offers a rare opportunity for Portuguese-speaking countries to grasp the dynamics within Shenzhen's new energy vehicle industry and seize the developmental possibilities it offers. The Permanent Secretariat of the Forum between China and Portuguese-speaking countries pledges to remain a facilitative platform for fostering exchanges and cooperation between China and these nations. It aims to support both Shenzhen and Macao in actively expanding their market presence within Portuguese-speaking countries. Furthermore, it intends to comprehensively fortify economic and trade cooperation across various sectors with these nations.

Director Jiang Likun emphasized that the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area stands as a significant national strategy personally envisioned, planned, and advocated by President Xi Jinping. This conference centers on the theme of "expanding the global market presence of this new energy vehicles" and aims to promote high quality advancement of new energy automotive industry within the Greater Bay Area. Shenzhen will intensely focus on the objective of establishing an international hub for science and technology innovation within the Greater Bay Area. It is determined to grasp firmly the developmental necessities of the "20+8" industrial cluster. Additionally, it aims to enhance understanding among Hong Kong, Macao, and the global community regarding Shenzhen's industrial policies, investment milieu, and its future developmental. The goal is to encourage Hong Kong and Macao to actively participate in the holistic development of the country. This collective endeavour is to spearhead development of advance technology hub in the Greater Bay Area for both domestic and international market growth in tandem. Thereby the vision is contributing significantly to the establishment of an advance world-class bay area.

Honda is recalling select Accords and HR-Vs over missing piece in seat belt

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP): Honda is recalling select 2023-2024 Accord and HR-V vehicles due to a missing piece in the front seat belt pretensioners, which could increase injury risks during a crash.

According to notices published by Honda and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration earlier this week, the pretensioners - which tighten seat belts in place upon impact - may be missing the rivet that secures the quick connector and wire plate. This means that passengers may not be properly restrained in a crash, regulators said.

The NHTSA credited the issue to an error made during assembly. More than 300,000 Accords and HR-Vs are potentially affected.

As of Nov. 16, Honda had received seven warranty claims, but no reports of injuries or deaths related to the faulty pretensioners, according to documents published by the NHTSA.

For consumers impacted by this recall, dealers will inspect all cars and potentially replace the seat belt pretensioner assembly at no cost. Those who have already paid for these repairs at their own expense may also be eligible for reimbursement.

Honda estimates that less than 1% of the potentially affected vehicles will require a replacement. The vast majority are expected to be satisfied by an inspection alone, a Honda spokesperson told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Notification letters will be sent via mail to registered owners of the affected vehicles starting Jan. 8, 2024. Replacement parts should be available to dealers by the end of the month, the spokesperson said, but consumers can go to an authorized Honda dealer for the inspection now.

For more information about the recall, consumers can visit the NHTSA website and Honda's and online recall pages.

pound EV battery factory in the U.K. that's expected to produce about 40 gigawatt hours of battery cells every

year, enough to provide half the U.K.'s electric vehicle batteries.

Stellantis, parent company of British

automaker Vauxhall, is investing 100 million pounds to make electric vans and cars in northwestern England.

Webinar highlights importance of policies in private and public sector

AmCham, UNICEF collaborate to advance family-friendly policies in Gulf region

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: AmCham Kuwait, in conjunction with UNICEF, AmCham Oman, and AmCham Lebanon, and in collaboration with the British Business Forum, the Canadians in Kuwait, the Lebanese Business Council, and the Portuguese Business Council, hosted a webinar addressing the critical importance of family-friendly policies in both private and public sector in the Arab Gulf region. The event, held virtually, gathered experts, policymakers, and thought leaders to explore and discuss multifaceted approaches to support working families. The event served as a platform for key discussions and insights from prominent speakers, including Walid Abou Jaoude, Erika Strand, and Christopher Kip, all from UNICEF.

The webinar commenced with an enlightening presentation by Walid Abou Jaoude, shedding light on UNICEF's overarching mandate to champion the rights of children at all stages of development. Emphasizing UNICEF's strategic goals, he outlined the organization's commitment to protecting children from violence,

ensured access to education, social protection, creation of a safe environment, and promotion of children's overall well-being, as he highlighted the framework of engagement and collaboration with the private sector to better support children through different channels, via advocacy, resource and financial mobilization along with other means that are reflected through such as parental policies at work and other means that further children friendly outcomes.

Further, the discussion delved into UNICEF's critical role in addressing emergencies, climate change actions, and innovative solutions to improve the lives of children globally.

Erika Strand, in her presentation, focused on the cascading impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on families and children. Presenting new evidence on child development, she highlighted core capacities whose timely development is essential for cognitive, mental, and physical health. Strand also spoke about the forthcoming research on family-friendly policies that UNICEF will present in 2024. The study

that will provide more detailed descriptions of the policies governments have already put in place in Gulf countries, as well as remaining gaps.

Finally, Christopher Kip concluded the session by emphasizing the significance of family-friendly policies that can be undertaken in the workplace. Defined as measures balancing family and work life, Kip urged for inclusive and gender-sensitive policies, linking working conditions for parents to the health, well-being, and development of their children. He outlined key asks and actions for governments and businesses, including paid parental leave, support for breastfeeding, affordable, quality childcare, and adequate wages and child benefits.

The collaborative effort between AmCham Kuwait, and UNICEF reflects a shared commitment to creating supportive environments for working families, with the ultimate goal of maximizing children's potential and fostering social and economic development.

Company holds exciting programs, sports competitions for students in Atlanta

Zain sponsors annual NUKS USA conference

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: As part of its extended strategic partnership with the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States of America (NUKS USA), and in continuation of its efforts to support student activities abroad, Zain has sponsored the 39th annual NUKS USA conference held in Atlanta, Georgia. The event was attended by H.E. Ambassador of Kuwait to the United States Sheikh Al Zain Al Sabah.

Zain's participation and support to this event, considered the biggest of its kind, came to reflect the company's commitment as the main supporter of NUKS USA for over 20 years. Under this ongoing strategic partnership, Zain supports a plethora of programs and student activities held for NUKS USA members throughout

the year at both Kuwait and the US.

During his opening speech at the event, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al Musaibeeh said: "This event presents an invaluable opportunity for us to engage with the biggest gathering of students abroad. Every year, we witness a great exchange of ideas and experiences between students and guests, and that is why we are committed – as a private sector company – to support such programs."

"Zain has always been at the forefront of national institutions that support our young people, and this is especially true as the Kuwaiti community is a relatively youthful one, where young people make up its biggest part. For this, we continue



Sheikha Al Zain Al Sabah with Al Musaibeeh and NUKS USA members.



Zain recognized for supporting the conference.



From Zain's padel tournament for students in Atlanta.

Event draws over 700 enthusiastic participants

IMA YouthWing's Grand Conference sparks empowerment among Indian Muslim youth

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Indian Muslim Association - YouthWing (IMA-YW) recently concluded a momentous Grand Youth Conference on November 23rd, 2023, at the revered Masjid-e-Mariyam, Mahboubia. Under the theme "Do Not Weaken, Do Not Grieve," this conference served as a culmination of an almost two months-long Associate Making Campaign (AMC) aimed at galvanizing Indian youths in

Kuwait, this campaign was led by Mr. Asim Karel.

Mr. Muhammed Qizar Sharief was the conference organizer under the leadership of Janab Dawood Hasan Absami, President-YouthWing, and Mr. Asif Ishaq as the Convener, the event drew over 700 enthusiastic participants, predominantly comprising 650 impassioned youths, eager to engage and learn.

The conference commenced with a spiritually uplifting



Tilawat e Quran by Hafiz Afridi Khan, setting the tone for an evening focused on empowerment and unity. The inaugural words and introduction of YouthWing by Mr. Asim Karel laid the foundation for an eventful evening.

Distinguished guest speaker, Maulana Ishteyaaq Alam Falahi, shared profound insights on the significance of "Bait al Maqdis and Our Responsibilities," urging attendees to embrace their roles in the global context.



The event took a thought-provoking turn as Jb. Shara-fuddin Soofi delved into the theme "Do Not Weaken, Do Not Grieve" in the Indian context, offering perspectives and guidance pertinent to the Indian Muslim Youth. Maulana Umar Falahi's speech on "Zaad-e-Raah" provided a path for spiritual and personal growth.

The culmination came with YouthWing President Mr. Dawood Hasan Absami's stirring concluding words, expressing gratitude and offering a vote of thanks to all participants, speakers, and contributors who made the event impactful.

Acknowledging outstanding contributions, gifts were distributed to guests, organizers, cricket winners, and campaign top performers, fostering a sense of recognition and appreciation.

IMA Dignitaries like Mr. Arshad Habib, Mr. Shamoil Parvez, Mr. Jafar Sadiq with other IMA Ahabb and Youth-Wing members were also present for conference.

Post-conference, the spirit of camaraderie continued as food packets were generously distributed among all attendees, reinforcing a sense of unity and shared purpose.

The event stood as a landmark, enlightening Indian Muslim Youth in Kuwait, inspiring them to embrace responsibilities and seize opportunities for a brighter future.

The IMA-YouthWing extends heartfelt appreciation to everyone involved, ensuring the Grand Youth Conference was a resounding success, resonating with the spirit of empowerment and community engagement.



Top & above: Photos taken during the Grand Youth Conference.



His Excellency the Romanian Ambassador to Kuwait, Mugurel Stanescu, with Dr. Qais Saleh Al-Duwairi, Director General of Dasman Diabetes Institute, during the ambassador's visit to Dasman Diabetes Institute.

Collaborative opportunities eyed

Romanian ambassador to Kuwait praises Dasman Diabetes Institute achievements

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: His Excellency the Romanian Ambassador to Kuwait, Mugurel Stanescu, paid a field visit to Dasman Diabetes Institute, which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. H. E. was met by Dr. Qais Saleh Al-Duwairi, Director General of Dasman Diabetes Institute.

His Excellency's visit aimed of getting to know closely the important institutions in Kuwait and strengthening scientific cooperation. During

his visit to the institute, many scientific and research topics, and issues of common interests between the two sides, were discussed.

The Ambassador was briefed about the institute's scientific progress, its importance, and its role in the service of scientific research in Kuwait, discussing ways to enhance joint research and scientific cooperation.

In turn, H.E. praised the institute's impressive developments and achievements.



Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (DPS), Kuwait, honors Arnav Nishant Kumbhare, a young, grade 8th student for his accomplishments.



Kumbhare strikes gold and silver at CBSE National

DPS Kuwait's swimming prodigy makes waves

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: In a display of exceptional talent and single-minded dedication, Arnav Nishant Kumbhare, a young, grade 8th student of Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (DPS), Kuwait, has emerged as a shining star in the realm of swimming, bagging a gold medal and a silver medal at the prestigious CBSE National School Games held in India. This remarkable achievement is a testament to his spirit and determination of this budding athlete, which has set a new benchmark for excellence in the sport.

Rooted in FAIPS (DPS) since Kindergarten, Arnav has always harboured a deep passion for swimming, dedicating countless hours honing his skills and perfecting various techniques. His tireless efforts have paid off dividends, enabled him to excel in various competitions and to showcase his prowess in the pool.

At the recently concluded CBSE National School Games, Arnav rose to the occasion, leaving an indelible mark on the tournament. In the gruelling 100-meter freestyle event, he displayed remarkable speed and agility, securing the coveted gold medal. His success continued in the 200-meter freestyle category, where he clinched a well-deserved silver medal.

These remarkable achievements have not only brought laurels to the School but have also ignited a wave of inspiration among fellow students and aspiring athletes. Arnav has become an embodiment of the school's motto, "Service before self," demonstrating that, with dedication and perseverance even the most ambitious dreams can be realized.

Felicitating Arnav, along with his proud parents, the school principal, Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, expressed immense pride in Arnav's accomplishments and stated that he is an exceptional talent who has set new standards in swimming in schools in Kuwait. He also stated that Arnav's dedication and passion are a source of inspiration for everyone. The management, principal and staff wholeheartedly wish Arnav a brilliant future.

Ringo Starr reveals his colorful past in ‘Beats & Threads’

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP): Ringo Starr’s latest project is for fans of music and of fashion.

Published Friday, “Beats & Threads” is an illustrated journey through the former Beatles drummer’s decades in show business, featuring images of everything from his drum kits to his trend-setting wardrobe. The 312-page book is being sold through the publishing division of Julien’s Auctions.

“Featuring nearly 300 shimmering images capturing iconic and many never-before-seen intimate moments of Ringo’s illustrious life and career, along with the drum icon’s warm memories told in his own words, this immense tribute to the enduring influence and time transcending impact of the Fab Four member is a ticket to ride through fashion and Beatles history,” the publisher announced.

“Beats and Threads” has a list price of \$80, along with signed limited editions for as much as \$750. All proceeds will be donated to the Lotus Foundation, which offers support for various charitable projects, from substance abuse to homelessness.

Starr, 83, has had a busy 2023, releasing the EP “Rewind Forward,” touring with his All-Starr Band and working with Paul McCartney on the “final” Beatles song, “Now and Then.”

If you’re thinking of checking out the new memoir by **Elton John’s** lyricist to learn more about the Rocket Man, you’re out of luck. This is **Bernie Taupin’s** song to sing.

“Scattershot: Life, Music, Elton & Me” is a fascinating read for the pictures it paints of the music scene of the 1970s, ’80s and ’90s but if John is what you seek, he writes, the singer-pianist is “in absentia for

much of this narrative.”

“What people don’t realize is that we were joined at the hip at the beginning. It was sort of me and him against the world,” Taupin said in a recent interview. “But I think once that we gained a modicum of success, it was natural that we would sort of separate and find our own lives.”

“Scattershot” is the story of an Englishman bewitched by country music and the American West who grows up to supply lyrics to one of rock n ’roll’s all-time superstars and later in life embraces art and becomes a bona fide cowboy.

“It was a great sort of psychological adventure, in a way,” he says. “It was like being on the couch and remembering things, being prodded by myself rather than a psychiatrist.”

Inspired

Readers will learn that “Bennie and the Jets” was inspired by Fritz Lang’s landmark film “Metropolis,” “Tiny Dancer” actually describes a handful of Los Angeles women, and “I’m Still Standing” was based on a breakup suffered by Taupin.

They’ll learn he was buzzed and poolside in Barbados when John called him for lyrics to a new duet he was working on. Taupin threw something together that was “simplistic without being overly trite.” It became “Don’t Go Breaking My Heart,” their first U.K. No. 1 and winner of an Ivor Novello Award. “Not bad for 10 minutes of drunken scribbling,” he writes.

Of meeting John the first time, he writes: “I like him tremendously because he’s not condescending. I sense a kindred spirit; we’re outsiders looking for a way in, and I’m willing to play along, **Sancho Panza**

to his Don Quixote.” He also writes about gracefully declining an early pass from John, paving the way for 50 years of friendship.

Taupin reveals he once punched **John Belushi**, ate a half block of opium on a flight from New York, split his pants at a reception at Kensington Palace and that **Marilyn Monroe** was not the initial choice to anchor “Candle in the Wind.”

When he and John revisited the song to honor **Diana**, Princess of Wales, Taupin spent just half an hour and acknowledges in his memoir that “if you put a gun to my head right now and threatened to kill me if I didn’t recite the lyric, I’d be a dead man. I don’t remember a word of it.” It would become the highest selling single of all time.

Taupin doesn’t avoid spilling tea. Of **Andy Warhol**, he writes: “Talking to Andy was like conversing with an 8-year-old girl” and he wasn’t a fan of **Hugh Hefner**: “He was the possessor of a perpetual, passive smirk that I found unsettling.”

“I always find that people tend to tiptoe around in autobiographies. But you have to call people out,” he said in the interview. “I call out a few people, some more than others. But I also compliment the ones that deserve to be complimented.”

He also isn’t shy about criticizing his own work. He and John’s first album, “Empty Sky,” was “an acceptable debut, but more importantly, a harbinger of growth and improvement.” Later, the album “Jump Up!” was “definitely subpar.”

Ben Schafer, an executive editor at Hachette Books who worked with Taupin on the memoir and is thanked in the acknowledgements, said “Scattershot” benefits from a writer living in two worlds.

Variety



This image released by Focus Features shows Dominic Sessa, (left), and Paul Giamatti in a scene from ‘The Holdovers.’ (AP)

Film

Payne on movies that shaped him

‘Holdovers’ taps into ‘70s film vibes

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP): There are rituals to an Alexander Payne movie. In post-production, he and his longtime editor, Kevin Tent, will gather collaborators for Tie Day Tuesday and Friday night party, during which Payne pulls out his 16mm projector to play old reels he’s collected on eBay.

“I kind of overbought,” Payne says, smiling. “If you don’t have the right storage facility, you start getting vinegar syndrome. I had a beautiful print of ‘The Breaking Point’ – it’s one of my favorite films – and within a year it got vinegar syndrome and I had to throw it out.”

A deep affection for cinema tends to run alongside the moviemaking. Payne’s latest, the acclaimed “The Holdovers,” started, years ago, with an old film. The 62-year-old, Omaha, Nebraska-based director caught a restoration of the 1935 French comedy “Merlusse.” The plot’s basic framework — a much-disliked teacher stays over Christmas break with a handful of kids with nowhere to go home to — struck him as a good basis for a movie.

“The Holdovers,” stars Paul Giamatti as a curmudgeonly classics teacher in a similar situation at a New England prep school in 1970. The film, penned by David Hemingson, pares away some of the comic conceit to focus on three disparate characters brought together: Paul Hunham (Giamatti), a smart, less well-off student named Angus Tully (Dominic Sessa) and grieving cafeteria manager Mary Lamb (Da’Vine Joy Randolph).

“The Holdovers” is Payne’s attempt to make not just a ’70-set film but an actual ’70s film, styled after some of the movies he grew up with. Older films have an influence, too. “The Holdovers” is, like Leo McCarey’s luminous 1937 film “Make Way for Tomorrow” — a film beloved by Payne — a tender drama made with the humanistic touch of a filmmaker most at home in comedy.

On a recent fall day in Manhattan, Payne met a reporter to talk about some of the movies that inspired “The Holdovers” and that formed him as a filmmaker — a conversation that, as in the midst of promoting his expected Oscar contender, he welcomed.

“I like talking about other people’s movies more than my own,” Payne shrugged.

AP: Did you screen any films for your cast or crew before shooting “The Holdovers”?

Payne: In the Somerville Theatre in Boston they were kind enough to let me screen six or seven prints of films – ’70s movies – for the cinematographer, the production designer, the costume designer and also for Dominic because he hadn’t really seen those movies and I wanted him to get a sense of the movie he was about to be in. I ran “The Graduate,” “The Landlord,” “Harold and Maude,” “The Last Detail,” “Klute,” “Paper Moon” and maybe “All the President’s Men.” We weren’t trying to consciously emulate the look and feel of any single one of those films but we all wanted to splash around in the films of our contemporaries, had we been making a movie then.

AP: How did you first encounter those films?

Payne: As a kid. “Little Big Man” is in the movie. I saw it probably four times when I was 9 years old. It was at the theater down the street. I could walk to it. I loved that movie. Still do.

AP: You seem to be especially channeling Hal Ashby in “The Holdovers.” What did he mean to you?

Payne: I saw “Harold and Maude” when it first came out. I was 10 or 11. I had a funny relationship with “Harold and Maude.” I loved it when it came out. Later when I was a teenager, I thought it was too cornball. Later I saw it again and liked it again. “The Last Detail” was too dirty. No one would take me to see that. My birthday parties, we’d go see “Chinatown” or “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.” I’m a big film buff, I’ve seen a lot. But that’s the period when I was a teenager and a sense of taste was being imprinted on me. And what I was told was a commercial American feature film. Now they’re considered art films or whatever. “The last golden age.” Well, you never know when you’re living in a golden age.

AP: Were you thinking then about becoming a filmmaker?

Payne: The first thing I ever wanted to be in my life, like under 10, was a projectionist. I had a couple projectors and I loved showing movies. In high school, I kind of wanted to be a journalist. But there was always that distant dream of not being a filmmaker but just going to film school. My parents were hammering me to go to law school. I was a senior at Stanford, I did

take the LSAT but that’s as far as I went. I applied to five film schools and Columbia School of Journalism. When I was a junior in college at Stanford, I was seeing a bunch of movies. When I saw “Seven Samurai,” restored version, at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco in the spring of 1983, that’s when I thought: I absolutely have to apply to film school. The line I told myself and I’ve repeated it since is: I will never climb a mountain that high but I want to be on that mountain.

AP: Were there any other foundational filmgoing experiences for you?

Payne: Previous to that the two touchstone movies for me were probably “Modern Times,” which I first saw when I was five and have since seen it a hundred times. And earlier in college I had seen Bunuel’s “Viridiana.” I was studying in Spain at the time where it had been banned under Franco. This was 1981, Franco died in 1975. So I was still in that period where films that had been banned under Franco were finally trickling into release in Spain. I was in Spain the first time they screened “La Dolce Vita.” And “Viridiana.” I just couldn’t believe a movie could be that ferocious.

AP: You’ve said before that, with many exceptions, you gravitate to movies that have at least some humor to them.

Payne: Oh yeah. You gotta have a joke in a movie. Even Antonioni has humor to him. Even Kurosawa. You gotta have humor. It’s unfair of me to say but I say it. I’ll walk out of a movie and someone will say, “How was it?” I’ll say, “It was pretty good, but no jokes.”

AP: Were there filmmakers that you got to know after “Citizen Ruth” or “Election”?

Payne: Mike Nichols and Francis Coppola both reached out to me after “Election” and said, “Hey kid, liked your movie.” I immediately said, “Can I come meet you?” And then we developed some friendship. Lifechanging. I met (“Five Easy Pieces” director) Bob Rafelson many times. He and I corresponded shortly before he passed away. Milos Forman I met. Jim Taylor, my co-writer, used to be Ivan Passer’s assistant. Milos and Ivan were writing partners who Jim and I saw ourselves mirrored in a little bit. We so loved “Fireman’s Ball.”



Palacios

Vijayan

With clunky rhetoric reminiscent of **North Korea**, Vice president and First Lady **Rosario Murillo** lashed out Wednesday at opposition social media sites (many run from exile) that celebrated Palacios’ win as a victory for the opposition.

“In these days of a new victory, we are seeing the evil, terrorist com-

mentators making a clumsy and insulting attempt to turn what should be a beautiful and well-deserved moment of pride into destructive coup-mongering,” Murillo said.

Thousands have fled into exile since Nicaraguan security forces violently put down mass anti-government protests in 2018. Ortega says the protests were an

attempted coup with foreign backing, aiming for his overthrow.

Ortega’s government seized and closed the Jesuit University of Central America in Nicaragua, which was a hub for 2018 protests against the Ortega regime, along with at least 26 other Nicaraguan universities.

The government has also out-

lawed or closed more than 3,000 civic groups and non-governmental organizations, arrested and expelled opponents, stripped them of their citizenship and confiscated their assets.

Palacios, who became the first Nicaraguan to win Miss Universe, has not commented on the situation. (AP)

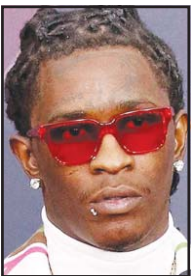
People & Places

People

Racketeering saga

Rapper Young Thug finally heads to trial

ATLANTA, Nov 26, (AP): Opening statements are expected this week in Atlanta in the trial of rapper **Young Thug**, who’s accused of co-founding a violent criminal street gang and using his music to promote it. The Atlanta-based artist, whose given name is Jeffery Lamar Williams, is charged with violating Georgia’s anti-racketeering and gang laws, among other things. He was indicted last year along with more than two dozen other people, five of whom are set to stand trial with him. The trial is projected to last months and will likely include testimony from a number of high-profile music industry figures. Prosecutors are expected to take the controversial step of using Young Thug’s rap lyrics as evidence against him.



Young Thug

Here are some things to know as the trial gets underway: Young Thug’s eccentric style and mumble rap - along with breakout hits such as “Stoner” and “Best Friend” - have made him popular. His squeaky high-pitched vocals can be heard in the background of Childish Gambino’s “This is America,” a social-political hit that became the first hip-hop track to win the song of the year Grammy Award. Young Thug won a Grammy in 2019 for his co-writing efforts on the track, which included 21 Savage, Quavo, BlocBoy JB, Slim Jxmmi of the duo Rae Sremmurd. He has had several mixtapes and three studio albums including his recent “Business is Business” music project, which was released in June. Young Thug has collaborated with some of music’s best including Drake, Chris Brown, T.I. and Travis Scott. Elton John called working with Young Thug an “amazing moment” after recording the song “Always Love You” featuring Nicki Minaj and Gunna. Young Thug has three chart-topping songs including “Havana” with Camila Cabello, “Way 2 Sexy” with Drake and Future and “Franchise” featuring Travis Scott and M.I.A. He signed with Gucci Mane’s 1017 Records in 2013.

Campaign

In a hyper-masculine hip-hop scene, Young Thug refused to play by traditional gender rules. He wore a dress on the cover of his 2016 mixtape “Jeffery” and said there’s no such thing as gender as part of a Calvin Klein campaign. On social media, some noticed Young Thug referencing his male friends as “bae,” “lover” and “hubby.” Young Thug grew up in a rough suburban Atlanta housing project where crime was the norm. He became a father at the age of 17 and currently has six children. Prosecutors have painted Young Thug as a gang leader known as King Slime, someone who calls the shots and directs others to engage in criminal activity. A Fulton County grand jury indicted Young Thug in May 2022, and more charges were added in a subsequent indictment in August of that year. The second indictment accuses Young Thug and 27 other people of conspiring to violate Georgia’s Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as RICO. The rapper is also accused of participation in criminal street gang activity, as well as drug and gun charges. Prosecutors say Young Thug and two other people co-founded a violent criminal street gang in 2012 called Young Slime Life, or YSL, which they say is associated with the national Bloods gang. The indictment says Young Thug “made YSL a well-known name by referring to it in his songs and on social media.” In addition to specific charges, the August indictment includes a wide-ranging list of 191 acts that prosecutors say were committed between 2013 and 2022 as part of the alleged conspiracy to further the gang’s interests. Included in that list is an allegation that Young Thug threatened in July 2015 to shoot a security guard who was trying to get him to leave an Atlanta-area mall. The indictment also says Young Thug rented a silver Infiniti sedan that was used in the killing of a rival gang member. And, on numerous occasions, he and others are alleged to have possessed various illegal drugs that they intended to distribute. Young Thug’s lawyers have said in multiple court filings that he is innocent of all crimes charged in the indictment. They argue YSL is simply a record label. The rapper has pleaded not guilty. Multiple defense attorneys in the case have said prosecutors were overzealous in their use of the RICO statute and the anti-gang law, both of which carry heavy penalties.

Conspiracy

Rapper Gunna, whose given name is Sergio Kitchens, was charged with a single count of racketeering conspiracy. He entered an Alford plea in December, which means he maintains his innocence but recognizes that it’s in his best interest to plead guilty. During Gunna’s plea hearing, the rapper responded, “Yes, ma’am” when when a prosecutor said that “YSL is a music label and a gang” and that he had knowledge that its members or associates had committed crimes in furtherance of the gang. The other two people accused of co-founding the YSL gang - Walter Murphy and Trontavious Stephens - were also charged. They each pleaded guilty in December to one count of conspiracy to violate the anti-racketeering law. Young Thug has been in jail since his arrest on May 9, 2022, having been denied bond several times since then. More than a year after he was jailed, Young Thug surprisingly released his third studio album “Business is Business,” which was executive produced by Metro Boomin. The album - which featured Drake, Future and Lil Uzi Vert - debuted No. 2 on the Billboard 200 chart. Young Thug’s album dropped a week after Gunna released his new project. Young Thug’s racketeering conspiracy charge and two gang charges each carry a penalty of five to 20 years in prison. The other five charges also carry potential prison time. Jury selection began in January. At that time, 14 of the 28 people charged in the indictment were set to be tried together. That number has dwindled to six after some defendants either took plea deals or were separated to be tried later. It took nearly 10 months to seat a jury, which is highly unusual. It took so long for a variety of reasons.



This undated publicity photo released by ABC shows Kerry Washington as Olivia Pope in a scene from the season finale, ‘White Hat’s Back On,’ from ABC Television Network’s show, ‘Scandal.’ (AP)

The Conversation

‘Scandal’ and ‘Madam Secretary’ ignite political passion

TV dramas empower women in politics

By Jennifer Hoewe
Purdue University

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

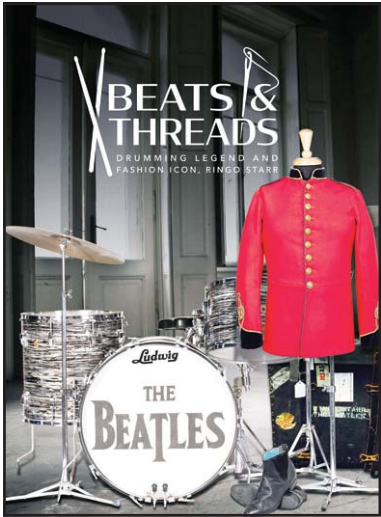
Hillary Clinton famously did not win the 2016 election and become the first female US president. Yet Clinton’s presidential campaign still resonated with many women who have said it made them more likely to get involved in politics. When women run for office, it can inspire other women and girls to become more politically active. Clinton, Vice President Kamala Harris, presidential candidate Nikki Haley and other high-profile female politicians have motivated women to follow in their footsteps and consider running for office. It turns out that same sort of inspiration can happen when a female politician is not actually real, but instead is a character on a fictional TV show. I am a scholar of political communication and media psychology. My research shows that when women watch a female lead character on a fictional political TV show, it can increase their interest in participating in politics and their belief that they can make a difference in the electoral process and results. Women run for office in the US and serve in political positions less often than men. Only 28% of Congress and 24% of state governors are women. The US ranks 86th among 152 countries when it comes to the number of women who serve in political office - and how long they hold those positions, according to the World Economic Forum. With the exception of voting, women are less likely than men to participate in political activities. Compared with men, women often have less confidence in their abilities to understand politics. The role model effect documents that women and girls become more encouraged to participate in politics

when they see other women run for political office. And my research team found that this role model effect can translate into fictional TV content as well. The fictional characters Alicia Florrick, Olivia Pope and Elizabeth McCord are examples of women whose political power exists only on TV. Alicia Florrick, played by Julianna Margulies, worked as a Chicago-based lawyer before she eventually ran for Illinois state attorney general in CBS’s drama “The Good Wife,” which aired from 2009 until 2016. Olivia Pope, played by Kerry Washington, worked as a high-profile political fixer and consultant on ABC’s political thriller series “Scandal,” which started in 2012 and ended in 2018. Elizabeth McCord, played by Téa Leoni, regularly overcame political obstacles as U.S. secretary of state - and later as the first female US president - on the CBS drama “Madam Secretary,” which ran from 2014 to 2019. Each of these shows includes a woman lead character in a nonstereotypical role - a leader successfully tackling political problems.

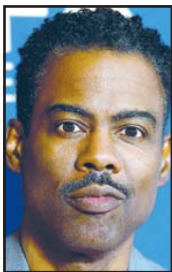
Connection

When people watch these TV shows, they can feel a strong bond with their characters, a connection researchers call parasocial relationships. Viewers even use their attachments to TV characters to satisfy their need to feel connected with other people. Sometimes, connecting with fictional characters - and seeing strong, female characters - can even spark viewers to become more involved in politics. Two studies that I co-authored show how viewers’ connections with TV show characters influence their political engagement. Political engagement can mean a range of things, including how closely someone follows news about the government and elections. Political engagement can also be someone feeling that they can make a difference in an election and that they have a say in

what the government does. Political engagement can also include circulating a petition, attending a political rally or speech and, of course, voting. We found that viewers formed strong bonds with these fictional women, and these connections persisted even after the credits rolled at the end of each episode. In our first study on this topic in 2019, we surveyed people who watched one or more of three shows: “Madam Secretary,” “The Good Wife” and “Scandal.” When compared with individuals who watched less often, viewers who regularly watched one of these shows, who were mostly women, had particularly strong connections with that show’s lead female character. These bonds with the fictional character translated into viewers saying they had a growing interest in politics, feelings of making a difference in the election process and greater intentions to participate in politics. In our second study from 2020, we collected data from people who were much less familiar with these shows. Participants in an experiment viewed a leading female character in “Madam Secretary,” or a leading male character in another show, with either a political- or family-focused plotline. When compared with the other experimental conditions, participants who self-identified as more feminine, primarily women, experienced greater connections with the female lead character when she was shown in a plotline that addressed a political problem. That then increased their interest in politics, feelings of political self-efficacy and plans for political participation. Importantly, our study concluded that merely seeing women as lead characters on TV is not enough to prompt women and girls to become more involved in politics. Instead, these women characters must be shown as a political leader. Fictional television can influence viewers’ political attitudes and policy preferences. Political TV shows, in particular, can be both fun and thought-provoking for viewers. (AP)



This cover image released by Julien's Auctions shows 'Beats & Threads' by Ringo Starr, an illustrated journey through the former Beatles drummer's career, featuring images of everything from his drum kits to his trend-setting wardrobe. The 312-page book is being sold through the publishing division of Julien's Auctions. (AP) - Details Page 11



Rock



Franklin

Variety

NEW YORK: The decline of local news in the United States is speeding up despite attention paid to the issue, to the point where the nation has lost one-third of its newspapers and two-thirds of its newspaper journalists since 2005. An average of 2.5 newspapers closed each week in 2023 compared to two a week the previous year, a reflection of an ever-worsening advertising climate, according to a Northwestern University study issued recently. Most are weekly publications, in areas with few or no other sources for news. “My concern is that the acceleration that we’re seeing is only going to worsen,” said **Tim Franklin**, who heads the local news initiative at Northwestern’s Medill journalism school. At its current pace, the country will hit 3,000 newspapers closed in two decades sometime next year, with just under 6,000 remaining, the report said. At the same time, 43,000 newspaper journalists lost jobs, most of them at daily publications, with the advertising market collapsing. While digital outlets have emerged to fill some voids, they’re closing at roughly the same rate as new ones start, the report said. There is talk of public financing helping the industry, and more philanthropic money is coming in, but none of that has changed the trajectory. Few media outlets are immune from financial concerns. The Washington Post said last month it needed to cut 240 jobs through voluntary buyouts, the website Jezebel said last week that it was closing, NPR is laying off employees, and The Associated Press this week began soliciting donations from readers. The problems of local news, however, are like a slow drip that has affected every corner of the country. There are 204 counties in the United States with no local news outlet, and 1,562 with only one, usually a weekly newspaper, the Northwestern report said. That’s more than half of the nation’s 3,143 counties. Northwestern placed 228 of the counties with only one news source on a “watch list,” declaring that single outlet endangered. Texas, the nation’s second most populous state, has grown 50% since 2005 yet has lost 65% of its newspaper journalists, the report said.

“I don’t think there’s a demand problem for local news,” Franklin said. “I think there’s a supply problem. I don’t think there’s one solution to these problems. I think there are

going to be multiple solutions.” An uptick in local news readership during the pandemic shows people respond when there’s an urgent need to know what



Japanese director Otsuka Ryuji, (right), Chinese director Huang Ji, (centre), and Liao Ching-sung hold their awards for Best Narrative Feature and Best Film Editing at the 60th Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan, Saturday, Nov. 25. They won for the film ‘Stonewalling’ at this year’s Golden Horse Awards, the Chinese-language film industry’s biggest annual events. (AP)

is going on in their communities, he said. But the decline in local news has likely made many potential customers get out of the habit of looking for it. Job cuts at dailies have given rise to “ghost newspapers,” so-named because the product is a shadow of what it used to be, and readers have noticed. The Alliance of Audited Media said that paid print and digital circulation at the 504 newspapers it has audited this year was 10.2 million. Print circulation alone for those newspapers was over 50 million in 2005. Rural and poor areas are affected disproportionately, the report said. While new local digital sites have emerged in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Boston, for example, most were based in more affluent, suburban communities with strong broadband access. (AP)

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,” 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)

The Conversation

PM2.5 linked to lung and heart disease, cancer, dementia and other diseases

Coal plants pollution kills far more than scientists realized

By Lucas Henneman
George Mason University

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

Air pollution particles from coal-fired power plants are more harmful to human health than many experts realized, and it's more than twice as likely to contribute to premature deaths as air pollution particles from other sources, new research demonstrates.

In the study, published in the journal Science, colleagues and I mapped how US coal power plant emissions traveled through the atmosphere, then linked each power plant's emissions with death records of Americans over 65 years old on Medicare.

Our results suggest that air pollutants released from coal power plants were associated with nearly half a million premature deaths of elderly Americans from 1999 to 2020.

It's a staggering number, but the study also has good news: Annual deaths associated with US coal power plants have fallen sharply since the mid-2000s as federal regulations compelled operators to install emissions scrubbers and many utilities shut down coal plants entirely.

In 1999, 55,000 deaths were attributable to coal air pollution in the US, according to our findings. By 2020, that number had fallen to 1,600.

In the US, coal is being displaced by natural gas and renewable energy for generating electricity. Globally, how-

ever, coal use is projected to increase in coming years. That makes our results all the more urgent for global decision-makers to understand as they develop future policies.

A landmark study in the 1990s, known as the Harvard Six Cities Study, linked tiny airborne particles called PM2.5 to increased risk of early death. Other studies have since linked PM2.5 to lung and heart disease, cancer, dementia and other diseases.

Following that research, the Environmental Protection Agency began regulating PM2.5 concentrations in 1997 and has lowered the acceptable limit over time.

PM2.5 - particles small enough to be inhaled deep into our lungs - comes from several different sources, including gasoline combustion in vehicles and smoke from wood fires and power plants. It is made up of many different chemicals.

Emissions

Coal is also a mix of many chemicals - carbon, hydrogen, sulfur, even metals. When coal is burned, all of these chemicals are emitted to the atmosphere either as gases or particles. Once there, they are transported by the wind and interact with other chemicals already in the atmosphere.

As a result, anyone downwind of a coal plant may be breathing a complex cocktail of chemicals, each with its own potential effects on human health.

To understand the risks coal emissions pose to human health, we tracked how sulfur dioxide emissions from each of the 480 largest US coal power plants operating

at any point since 1999 traveled with the wind and turned into tiny particles - coal PM2.5. We used sulfur dioxide because of its known health effects and drastic decreases in emissions over the study period.

We then used a statistical model to link coal PM2.5 exposure to Medicare records of nearly 70 million people from 1999 to 2020. This model allowed us to calculate the number of deaths associated with coal PM2.5.

Controlled

In our statistical model, we controlled for other pollution sources and accounted for many other known risk factors, like smoking status, local meteorology and income level. We tested multiple statistical approaches that all yielded consistent results. We compared the results of our statistical model with previous results testing the health impacts of PM2.5 from other sources and found that PM2.5 from coal is twice as harmful as PM2.5 from all other sources.

The number of deaths associated with individual power plants depended on multiple factors - how much the plant emits, which way the wind blows and how many people breathe in the pollution. Unfortunately, U.S. utilities located many of their plants upwind of major population centers on the East Coast. This siting amplified these plants' impacts.

In an interactive online tool, users can look up our estimates of annual deaths associated with each US power plant and also see how those numbers have fallen over time at most US coal plants.

Engineers have been designing effective scrubbers and other pollution-control devices that can reduce pollution from coal-fired power plants for several years. And the EPA has rules specifically to encourage utilities that used coal to install them, and most facilities that did not install scrubbers have shut down.

The results have been dramatic: Sulfur dioxide emissions decreased about 90% in facilities that reported installing scrubbers. Nationwide, sulfur dioxide emissions decreased 95% since 1999. According to our tally, deaths attributable to each facility that installed a scrubber or shut down decreased drastically.

As advances in fracking techniques reduced the cost of natural gas, and regulations made running coal plants more expensive, utilities began replacing coal with natural gas plants and renewable energy. The shift to natural gas - a cleaner-burning fossil fuel than coal but still a greenhouse gas contributing to climate change - led to even further air pollution reductions.

Today, coal contributes about 27% of electricity in the US, down from 56% in 1999.

Globally, however, the outlook for coal is mixed. While the US and other nations are headed toward a future with substantially less coal, the International Energy Agency expects global coal use to increase through at least 2025.

Our study and others like it make clear that increases in coal use will harm human health and the climate. Making full use of emissions controls and a turn toward renewables are surefire ways to reduce coal's negative impacts. (AP)

Diphtheria outbreaks

Dengue fever claims over 356 lives in Burkina Faso

ALGIERS, Nov 26, (Agencies): Health authorities in Burkina Faso announced on Saturday the death of 356 people due to dengue fever during the period from mid-October to mid-November.

In a statement, the health authorities said, "During the period from November 13 to 19, 59 deaths were recorded," indicating that "during the same period, 13,896 suspected cases of dengue fever were reported, including 6,829 possible cases and 1,101 severe cases requiring hospitalization."

The statement explained that "public authorities launched a campaign to spray mosquito-killing substances in the two most affected cities, the capital (Ouagadougou) located in the center, and the economic capital (Bobo-Dioulasso) located in the west of the country."

It pointed out that since January 2023, the country located in West Africa has recorded 570 deaths due to this common disease in Africa, which is transmitted by mosquitoes. Burkina Faso has witnessed deaths from dengue fever since the 1960s, but the first documented epidemic in the country due to this disease dates back to 2017, where 13 people died due to infection.

□ □ □

Diphtheria: Authorities in several West African countries are trying to manage their huge diphtheria outbreaks, including in Nigeria where a top health official said Thursday that millions are being vaccinated to cover wide gaps in immunity against the disease.

At least 573 people out of the 11,640 diagnosed with the disease in Nigeria have died since the current outbreak started in December 2022, though officials estimate the toll - now on the decline because of treatment efforts - could be much higher across states unable to detect many cases.

In other countries like Niger, 37 people had died out of the 865 cases as of October, while Guinea has reported 58 deaths out of 497 since its outbreak started in June.

"As far as the history that I am aware of, this is the largest outbreak that we have had," Ifedayo Adetifa, head of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, told The Associated Press.

Contagious

The highly contagious bacterial infection has been reported in 20 of Nigeria's 36 states so far.

A major driver of the high rate of infection in the region has been a historically wide vaccination gap, the French medical organization Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, said in a statement on Tuesday.

In Nigeria, only 42% of children under 15 years old are fully protected from diphtheria, according to a government survey, while Guinea has a 47% immunization rate - both far below the 80-85% rate recommended by the World Health Organization to maintain community protection.

The fate of the affected countries is worsened by the global shortages of the diphtheria vaccine as demand has increased to respond to outbreaks, the MSF said.

"We're not seeing vaccination happen, not at the scale that is needed," said Dr. Dagmedidit Tesfaye Worku, emergency medical program manager for MSF in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. "What is needed is a truly massive scale-up of vaccination, as soon as possible."

The Nigerian government is ramping up vaccination for targeted populations while assisting states to boost their capacity to detect and manage cases, said Adetifa, the Nigeria CDC head.

But several states continue to struggle, including Kano, which accounts for more than 75% of cases in Nigeria but has only two diphtheria treatment centers, according to Abubakar Labaran Yusuf, the state's top health official.

"Once people have to travel or move significant distances to access treatment, that becomes a challenge," Adetifa said.

S. Africa, Colombia, and others take on drugmakers

Countries fight for affordable TB, HIV drugs

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Nov 26, (AP): South Africa, Colombia and other countries that lost out in the global race for coronavirus vaccines are taking a more combative approach towards drugmakers and pushing back on policies that deny cheap treatment to millions of people with tuberculosis and HIV.

Experts see it as a shift in how such countries deal with pharmaceutical behemoths and say it could trigger more efforts to make lifesaving medicines more widely available.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, rich countries bought most of the world's vaccines early, leaving few shots for poor countries and creating a disparity the World Health Organization called "a catastrophic moral failure."

Now, poorer countries are trying to become more self-reliant "because they've realized after COVID they can't count on anyone else," said Brook Baker, who studies treatment-access issues at Northeastern University.

Targets

One of the targets is a drug, bedaquiline, that is used for treating people with drug-resistant versions of tuberculosis. The pills are especially important for South Africa, where TB killed more than 50,000 people in 2021, making it the country's leading cause of death.

In recent months, activists have protested efforts by Johnson & Johnson to protect its patent on the drug. In March, TB patients petitioned the Indian government, calling for cheaper generics; the government ultimately agreed J&J's patent could be broken. Belarus and Ukraine then wrote to J&J, also asking it to drop its patents, but with little response.

In July, J&J's patent on the drug expired in South Africa, but the company had it extended until 2027, enraging activists who accused it of profiteering.

The South African government then began investigating the company's pricing policies. It had been paying about 5,400 rand (\$282) per treatment course, more than twice as much as poor countries that got the drug via a global effort called the Stop TB partnership.

In September, about a week after South Africa's probe began, J&J announced that it would drop its patent in more than 130 countries, allowing generic-makers to copy the drug.

"This addresses any misconception that access to our medicines is limited," the company said.

Christophe Perrin, a TB expert at Doctors Without Borders, called J&J's reversal "a big surprise"

because aggressive patent protection was typically a "cornerstone" of pharmaceutical companies' strategy.

Meanwhile, in Colombia, the government declared last month that it would issue a compulsory license for the HIV drug dolutegravir without permission from the drug's patent-holder, Viiv Healthcare. The decision came after more than 120 groups asked the Colombian government to expand access to the WHO-recommended drug.

"This is Colombia taking the reins after the extreme inequity of COVID and challenging a major pharmaceutical to ensure affordable AIDS treatment for its people," said Peter Maybarduk of the Washington advocacy group Public Citizen. He noted that Brazilian activists are pushing their government to make a similar move.

Still, some experts said much more needs to change before poorer countries can produce their own medicines and vaccines.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, Africa produced fewer than 1% of all vaccines made globally but used more than half of the world's supply, according to Petro Terblanche, managing director of Afrigen Biologics.

The company is part of a WHO-backed effort to produce a COVID vaccine using the same mRNA technology as those made by Pfizer and Moderna.

Terblanche estimated about 14 million people died of AIDS in Africa in the late 1990s-2000s, when countries couldn't get the necessary medicines.

Patents

Back then, President Nelson Mandela's government in South Africa eventually suspended patents to allow wider access to AIDS drugs. That prompted more than 30 drugmakers to take it to court in 1998, in a case dubbed "Mandela vs. Big Pharma."

Doctors Without Borders described the episode as "a public relations disaster" for the drug companies, which dropped the lawsuit in 2001.

Terblanche said that Africa's past experience during the HIV epidemic has proven instructive.

"It's not acceptable for a listed company to hold intellectual property that stands in the way of saving lives and so, we will see more countries fighting back," she said.

Challenging pharmaceutical companies is just one piece to ensuring Africa has equal access to treatments and vaccines, Terblanche said. More robust health systems are critical.

"If we can't get (vaccines and medicines) to the

people who need them, they aren't useful," she said.

Yet some experts pointed out that South Africa's own intellectual property laws still haven't been changed sufficiently and make it too easy for pharmaceutical companies to acquire patents and extend their monopolies.

While many other developing countries allow legal challenges to a patent or a patent extension, South Africa has no clear law that allows it to do that, said Lynette Kenelwe Mabote-Eyde, a health care activist who consults for the nonprofit Treatment Action Group.

The South African department of health didn't respond to a request for comment regarding drug procurement and patents.

Andy Gray, who advises the South African government on essential medicines, said J&J's recent decision to not enforce its patent may have more to do with the drug's limited future earnings than caving to pressure from activists.

"Because bedaquiline is not ever going to sell in huge volumes in high-income countries, it's the sort of product they would love to offload at some stage and perhaps earn a royalty from," said Gray, a senior lecturer in pharmacology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Treatment

In its annual report on TB released earlier this month, the World Health Organization said there were more than 10 million people sickened by the disease last year and 1.3 million deaths. After COVID-19, tuberculosis is the world's deadliest infectious disease and it is now the top killer of people with HIV.

WHO noted only about 2 in 5 people with drug-resistant TB are being treated.

Zolelwa Sifumba, a South African doctor, was diagnosed with drug-resistant TB in 2012 when she was a medical student and endured 18 months of treatment taking about 20 pills every day in addition to daily injections, which left her in "immense pain" and resulted in some hearing loss. Bedaquiline was not rolled out as a standard treatment in South Africa until 2018.

"I wanted to quit (treatment) every single day," she said. Since her recovery, Sifumba has become an advocate for better TB treatment, saying it makes little sense to charge poor countries high prices for essential medicines.

"TB is everywhere but the burden of it is in your lower and middle income countries," she said. "If the lower income countries can't get it (the drug), then what's the point? Who are you making it for?"

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Australia's Min Woo Lee holds his trophy after winning the Australian PGA Championship in Brisbane, Sunday, Nov. 26, 2023. (AP)

'Best atmosphere shot I've ever hit'

Lee serves up victory at Australian PGA Championship

BRISBANE, Australia, Nov 26, (AP): Min Woo Lee started celebrating his first Australian PGA Championship title on the next-to-last hole Sunday when he put on a chef's hat and did a synchronized clap along with the boisterous crowd before jogging off to the 18th.

He narrowly missed par at the last but still closed with a 3-under 68 to finish 20 under for the tournament and a three-shot win over Japan's Riyuka Hoshino, who also closed with 68.

Lee, who is ranked No. 45 and comes from Western Australia, has made "let him cook" his popular catch phrase.

And so, with a four-shot lead going into the final hole, he put on a chef's hat and clapped his hands above his head in time with the crowd at the 17th, the so-called Party Hole at Royal Queensland Golf Club.

He also brought the crowd alive with a long chip for an eagle at the par-5 ninth.

"The best atmosphere shot I've ever hit," Lee said. "That one, at that point, it was getting close."

"I was in a pretty average position. To chip that in - it was

GOLF

amazing. It's one of the best shots I've probably hit."

Lee had a wire-to-wire win in the Asian Tour's Macau Open last month for his first victory since 2021, and added this one quickly on home soil. It was his fourth career title.

Marc Leishman made seven birdies in a closing 64 to move into third place at 16 under, one ahead of Curtis Luck (69).

Davis scores season-high 32 points in Lakers' 121-115 victory over Cavaliers

76ers end Thunder's winning streak

CLEVELAND, Nov 26, (AP): Anthony Davis scored 23 of his season-high 32 points in the second half and grabbed 13 rebounds, LeBron James had 22 points and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 121-115 on Saturday night.

James added six rebounds, six assists and two steals in beating Cleveland for the 18th time in 21 career games. The 39-year-old attended St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in nearby Akron and spent 11 seasons with the Cavaliers, leading them to the 2016 title.

Austin Reeves had 15 points and 10 assists, Christian Wood scored 13 points and Max Christie had 12 for the Lakers.

BASKETBALL

Donovan Mitchell, who missed the previous four games with a right hamstring strain, went 4 of 18 from the field and had 22 points and six assists for Cleveland. Jarrett Allen added 21 points and 14 rebounds.

76ers 127, Thunder 123

In Oklahoma City, Joel Embiid just missed Philadelphia's first triple-double of the season with 35 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists and the 76ers ended Oklahoma City's winning streak at six.

Embiid made six free throws in the final 9.8 seconds. The 76ers had a nine-point lead with 49 seconds left shrink to two after Chet Holmgren's basket with 2.5 seconds to go.

Tyrese Maxey added 28 points and eight rebounds, and Tobias Harris scored 16 points for the 76ers, who moved to 11-5, the same as the Thunder. Philadelphia had a big advantage at the free throw line, making 37 of 45 to



Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis (3) shoots over Cleveland Cavaliers center Jarrett Allen (31) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023, in Cleveland. (AP)

21 of 26 for Oklahoma City.

Holmgren led Oklahoma City with 33 points. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 31.

Clippers 107, Mavericks 88

In Los Angeles, Paul George had 25 points and nine rebounds, Terance Mann added 17 points and Los Angeles beat Dallas for its fourth victory in five games.

James Harden had just eight points and seven assists, while Kawhi Leonard

UCLA pummels Niagara

Baldwin helps Wolfpack women defeat Buffaloes at Paradise Jam

ST. THOMAS, U.S. Virgin Islands, Nov 26, (AP): River Baldwin scored a career-high 26 points and No. 10 North Carolina State beat a team ranked in the top 3 of the AP poll for the second time this month, topping No. 3 Colorado 78-60 at the Paradise Jam on Saturday.

Baldwin scored 16 points in the first half as the Wolfpack (7-0) pulled ahead by as many as 27 en route to their second signature win of the season. N.C. State beat then-No. 2 UConn 92-81 on Nov. 12 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Baldwin, whose previous career best was 19 points during her freshman year at Florida State in 2019, made 9 of 12 from the field and 8 of 8 free throws. She also had eight rebounds.

Aziyia James scored 13 points, Madison Hayes had 11 points and Madi Collins added 10 points for the Wolfpack, who scored the game's first nine points and never trailed.

Jaylyn Sherrod led the Buffaloes (6-

BASKETBALL

1) with 20 points and Frida Formann scored 14. Aaronette Vonleh, the team's leading scorer at 18.3 per game, was held to five points.

UCLA 97, Niagara 46

In George Town, Cayman Islands, Gabriela Jaquez scored a game-high 23 points and Londynn Jones had 21 as UCLA beat Niagara at the Cayman Islands Classic.

Angela Dugalic added 14 points and had seven rebounds for the Bruins (6-0), who scored the game's first 23 points.

Niagara finally got on the board when Destiny Strother made a pair of free throws with 2:19 left in the first quarter. She finished with 16 points for the Purple Eagles (2-4).

Iowa 100, Florida Gulf Coast 62

In Estero, Florida, Caitlin Clark scored 21 points, coach Lisa Bluder got her 500th victory at Iowa and the Hawkeyes had no trouble on the way to beating Florida Gulf Coast in the semifinals of the Gulf Coast Showcase.

Iowa (6-1) set a school record with 20 3-pointers. The Hawkeyes will get



rematch with Kansas State for the tournament title on Sunday night; the Wildcats won in Iowa City on Nov. 16, topping the Hawkeyes for the second consecutive season.

Taylor McCabe (6 for 7), Gabbie Marshall (4 for 5) and Sydney Affolter (3 for 3) combined to go 13 for 15 from beyond the arc for the Hawkeyes. McCabe scored a career-high for 18 for Iowa, while Marshall and Affolter each added 12 and Kate Martin finished with 11.

Maca Retamales scored 16 and Dolly Cairns added 13 for Florida Gulf Coast (4-2), which trailed 55-19 at the half.

UConn 71, Kansas 63

In George Town, Cayman Islands, Paige Bueckers scored 22 points and Aubrey Griffin added 20 as No. 6 UConn beat Kansas 71-63 on Saturday at the Cayman Islands Classic.

Griffin grabbed a team-best eight rebounds and Nika Muhl had six assists for the Huskies (4-2).

Taiyanna Jackson led Kansas (2-3) with 16 points and 12 rebounds for her third double-double of the season. Wyvette Mayberry and S'Maya Nichols each scored 14.

Bueckers scored just two points on a pair of field goal attempts in the first half, but exploded for 20 after the half-time break.

Michigan beats Ohio State 30-24 for 3rd straight win in rivalry

Milton, No. 1 Georgia hold off Georgia Tech

ATLANTA, Nov 26, (AP): Kendall Milton ran for a career-high 156 yards and two touchdowns and No. 1 Georgia held off Georgia Tech 31-23 on Saturday night to cap its third consecutive undefeated regular season with its sixth straight victory in the state rivalry.

Georgia (12-0, No. 1 College Football Playoff) extended its school-record winning streak to 29 games. The Bulldogs have won 19 of the last 22 against Georgia Tech (6-6), but this was more competitive than most recent battles for the Governor's Cup Trophy.

Quarterback Haynes King had two touchdown runs and Jamal Haynes also ran for a score. Eric Singleton Jr. had four catches for 96 yards as the Yellow Jackets gained 363 yards, including 205 on the ground.

King's 5-yard scoring run with 3:46 remaining cut Georgia's lead to 31-23. Georgia recovered an onside kick and relied on its running game, led by Milton and Daijun Edwards, to run out the clock. Milton's rushing total set a season high for a Georgia running back.

Georgia protected its hopes of becoming the first team to win three straight national championships in The Associated Press poll era.

Michigan 30, Ohio State 24

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, With Jim Harbaugh nowhere in sight and a scandal hanging over their heads, J.J. McCarthy and No. 3 Michigan stared down No. 2 Ohio State and ran the school's win streak against the Buckeyes to three games with a 30-24 victory in maybe the most consequential game in the history of the storied rivalry.

Michigan's Rod Moore intercepted Kyle McCord's wobbly pass intended for All-American Marvin Harrison Jr. at the Wolverines' 21-yard line with 25 seconds left, setting off a wild celebration on the home team's sideline.

Washington 24, Washington St 21

In Seattle, Grady Gross made a

42-yard field goal on the final play, Rome Odunze caught two touchdown passes from Michael Penix Jr. and No. 4 Washington beat Washington State 24-21 in the Apple Cup for an undefeated regular season.

Playing likely his final game at Husky Stadium, Odunze caught a 40-yard touchdown pass in the second quarter and hauled in a 21-yarder on

FOOTBALL

the final play of the third quarter to give the Huskies a 21-14 lead.

Odunze then added his biggest running play of the year. Facing fourth-and-1 at their own 29 with 1:11 left, he took a reverse 23 yards. Odunze later played defender breaking up a potential interception at the goal line and Gross nailed the winner.

Florida State 24, Florida 15

In Gainesville, Florida, Trey Benson ran for three touchdowns, including a 26-yarder on third down with less than three minutes to play, and No. 5 Florida State beat rival Florida 24-15 to extend its winning streak to 18.

Benson finished with 95 yards on 19 carries and helped take pressure off new quarterback Tate Rodemaker as the Seminoles (12-0) moved a victory from a potential spot in the College Football Playoff.



McCarthy

Alabama 27, Auburn 24

In Auburn, Alabama, Jalen Milroe and Isaiah Bond rescued No. 8 Alabama's playoff hopes, connecting for a last-minute touchdown on fourth-and-goal from the 31 to beat Auburn 27-24.

Bond caught Milroe's desperation heave in the left corner of the end zone with 32 seconds left to give the Crimson Tide (11-1, 8-0 Southeastern Conference) a 10th straight win in the latest dramatic Iron Bowl at

Jordan-Hare Stadium.

Payton Thorne passed for 91 yards and a touchdown and ran for 58 yards for Auburn. Jarquez Hunter ran for 93 yards and Damari Alston gained 85.

Kentucky 38, Louisville 31

In Louisville, Kentucky, Ray Davis broke free for a go-ahead, 37-yard touchdown run with 1:02 remaining and caught two second-half touchdowns, helping Kentucky rally past No. 9 Louisville 38-31 in the Governor's Cup.

Davis' third score capped a wild second half for the Wildcats (7-5) in which the Bluegrass State rivals combined for 42 points and closed alternating touchdowns. The winner came after Louisville tied the game at 31 on Jack Plummer's 21-yard touchdown pass to Ahmari Huggins-Bruce with 2:33 remaining. Jarvis Brownlee Jr. set up that improbable opportunity for Louisville by intercepting Devin Leary's floating pass as he was hit by Ashton Gillotte.

LSU 42, Texas A&M 30

In Baton Rouge, La., Jayden Daniels passed for four touchdowns and accounted for 355 yards of total offense against one of the nation's top defenses, and No. 14 LSU beat Texas A&M 42-30.

Daniels completed 16 of 24 passes for 235 yards and ran 11 times for 120 yards - a fine day by most quarterbacks' standards but somewhat short of the Heisman Trophy candidate's usual production this season.

Time will tell if he did enough to win over Heisman voters, who will get an additional look at two other top candidates - Washington quarterback Michael Penix Jr. and Oregon QB Bo Nix - when their teams meet in the Pac-12 title game on Friday.

Malik Nabers caught six passes for 122 yards and two TDs for LSU (9-3, 6-2 SEC). In the process, he became LSU's career record holder in receptions with 186, eclipsing Wendell Davis' mark of 183.

UIC tops George Washington

No. 17 Alabama bounces back from first loss, 'topples' Oregon

NICEVILLE, Florida, Nov 26, (AP): Mark Sears scored 27 points, Aaron Estrada added 22 and No. 17 Alabama followed its first loss with a 99-91 victory over Oregon on Saturday in the third-place game of the Emerald Coast Classic.

Those two were among four Alabama players scoring in double figures in a mid-afternoon game after the Crimson Tide's 92-81 loss to Ohio State on Friday night.

The Crimson Tide expanded an eight-point halftime lead with a 15-5 surge, capped by Estrada's 3-pointer with 9:28 remaining, for a 78-61 lead. Alabama led by as much as 18 before Oregon got within six points with 2:46 left, but couldn't get closer.

The game at Raider Arena at Northwest Florida State College was the first meeting between these teams in seven years. Jermaine Couisnard led Oregon with 24 points.



Sears

UIC 89, George Washington 79

In Nassau, Bahamas, Isaiah Rivera's 23 points helped UIC defeat George Washington 89-79 at the Baha Mar Hoops Nassau Championship.

Rivera shot 8 for 13 (4 for 7 from 3-point range) and 3 of 4 from the free-throw line for the Flames (5-1). Christian Jones added 22 points, five rebounds and seven assists. Toby Okani shot 6 for 9, including 2 for 3 from beyond the arc to finish with 14 points.

The Revolutionaries (5-1) were led in scoring by James Bishop, who finished with 22 points and six assists. Darren Buchanan Jr. added 14 points and two steals for George Washington. Maximus Edwards also put up 12 points, seven rebounds and two steals.

BASKETBALL

Loyola Marymount 67, UTEP 47

In Los Angeles, Justin Wright had 20 points in Loyola Marymount's 67-47 win against UTEP.

Wright added six rebounds for the Lions (4-3). Keli Leapepe and Lars Thiemann added 13 points apiece.

The Miners (5-2) were led by Tae Hardy, who recorded 12 points. Zid Powell added nine points and six rebounds for UTEP.

St. John's 91, Holy Cross 45

In New York, Joel Soriano scored 16 points as St. John's beat Holy Cross 91-45.

Soriano also contributed six rebounds for the Red Storm (4-2). RJ Luis added 14 points while going 6 of 12 from the field, and they also had three steals. Jordan Dingle had 11 points and shot 5 for 8, including 1 for 4 from beyond the arc.

Wichita State 80, Norfolk State 67

In Wichita, Kansas, Kenny Pohto's 25 points helped Wichita State defeat Norfolk State 80-67.

Pohto also contributed six rebounds and five assists for the Shockers (6-1). Harlond Beverly added 13 points while going 4 of 7 from the floor, including 1 for 3 from 3-point range, and 4 for 6 from the line, and he also had five rebounds and eight assists. Quincy Ballard had 13 points and finished 6 of 7 from the floor.

Everything is open in the fascinating Group F

CL group stage resumes this week with much at stake for all teams

GENEVA, Nov 26, (AP): The Champions League group stage moves into the final two rounds of matches on Tuesday with the results also affecting entries to other international competitions this season and next.

The 2025 FIFA Club World Cup. Next season's Champions League. This season's Europa League knockout rounds. They're effectively in play right now.


That gives extra incentive even to those teams which have already advanced to the Champions League round of 16 in February - Manchester City, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Inter Milan, Real Sociedad, Leipzig - to keep pushing for the best possible results. Likewise for the six teams already out of contention: Benfica, Red Star Belgrade, Antwerp, Salzburg, Union Berlin, Young Boys.

The first priority is trying to earn one of the 10 remaining places in the Champions League round-of-16 draw on Dec. 18.

Napoli would advance with a win Wednesday at Madrid, the already qualified Group C leader, though likely must wait for a final game showdown hosting Braga on Dec. 12.

Arsenal will go through with just a draw Wednesday at home to Lens in Group B, and Atletico Madrid can advance with a win at Feyenoord on Tuesday in Group E.

Everything is open in the fascinating Group F where Borussia Dortmund,



Arsenal's goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale punches the ball away during the English Premier League soccer match between Brentford and Arsenal at the Gtech Community stadium in London. (AP)

Paris Saint-Germain, AC Milan and Newcastle can still finish in any position from first to last. On Tuesday, PSG hosts Newcastle and Milan hosts Dortmund.

It's equally tight between Manchester United, Galatasaray and Copenhagen to finish second behind Group A winner Bayern.

Galatasaray hosting Man United on Wednesday could be the highest-stakes Champions League game of the week, with implications for each club and their respective countries. A loss for either team in Istanbul raises the risk of finishing last in the group which would mean no European football in February.

Third-place finishers in each Champions League group next month continue playing in February. Those eight teams move across to the Europa League knockout playoffs, which also are drawn on Dec. 18.

For English soccer, it is a problem if Man United and Newcastle remain last

SOCCER

in their groups and play no European games for the rest of the season.

Expanding the Champions League next season in a new 36-team format means four more teams qualifying and two more guaranteed games for each in a single-standings league phase.

Two of the four extra entries will go to the countries whose teams collectively have the best overall record in this season's European competitions.

When UEFA confirmed this policy last year, England and Spain were predicted to earn those bonus places that would then be given to fifth-place finishers in the Premier League and La Liga. After all, English and Spanish clubs win most European trophies.

Right now, however, Turkey and Belgium are in line for those bonus entries. Clubs from those countries have the best average total of UEFA ranking points this season - 8.75 and 8.40, respectively.

In Turkey that's because Galatasaray advanced through three qualifying rounds to get into a Champions League group - where it beat Man United at Old Trafford - and Fenerbahce has won nine games since July in the third-tier Europa Conference League.

All three Belgian clubs in the Conference League - Brugge, Gent and

Al-Qaqaa qualifies for Equestrian Championship finals



Winners crowned on the podium.

DOHA, Nov 26: Knight Al-Qaqaa bin Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani secured the top position in the second preliminary rounds held during the concluding day of the initial stages of the Al Shaqab International Show Jumping League Championship. This victory earns Al-Qaqaa a spot in the finals of the International Federation for Equestrian Championship, Group 7, for the cubs, juniors, and youth categories.

The championship, organized by Al Shaqab under the auspices of the Qatar Foundation, unfolds throughout the year and recently took place at the Longines Indoor Arena in Al Shaqab.

Al-Qaqaa, astride the horse "Gritje WS," clinched the first-place position in the round set at a height of 60, completing the course in an impressive time of 59.72 seconds. Ibrahim Al-Musleh secured the second position,

followed by Ibrahim Al-Amin in third place.

Saif Al Nuaimi, Director of

EQUESTRIAN

Operations at Al Shaqab, affirmed the organization's commitment to establishing the Al Shaqab International

League Championship as a distinguished platform for riders of diverse backgrounds and skill levels in show jumping competition. Emphasizing a focus on enhancing opportunities for women and juniors, Al Nuaimi stated that Al Shaqab aims to prepare riders to reach the pinnacle of equestrian sports, fostering confidence and sportsmanship to excel as pioneering riders.

Al-Arabi face Al-Zawraa in a decisive AFC Cup encounter

Nestorovic has complete team as key players return

By Hassan Musa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Al-Arabi is rallying under the banner of victory as it strives to secure a spot in the semi-finals of the AFC Cup's West Asia region. The crucial encounter against Al-Zawraa of Iraq, scheduled for 9:00 pm at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, marks the fifth round of the second group stage.

Currently in third place with 4 points, Al-Arabi trails behind Iraq's Al-Zawraa (7 points), while Bahrain's Al-Riffaa leads with 10

SOCCER

points. A triumph in today's match is imperative for securing the top position, surpassing Bahrain's Al-Riffaa and leaving no room for Lebanon's Al-Najma, who has only one point and is already out of contention.

The top three teams from each group, along with the best second-placed team, will advance to the West Asia semi-finals. Despite a strong start, including a 2-1 victory over Al-Zawraa in their home turf, Al-Arabi faced setbacks, drawing with the underdog Al-Najma in the second round and succumbing to defeats against Al-Riffaa in the third and fourth rounds. This has made the direct qualification ticket a challenging pursuit.

In response to the decline in performance, Al-Arabi's board, in collaboration with Bosnian coach Darko Nestorović, decided to bring him in as the successor to German Thomas Berdarcic. The team acknowledges the difficulties ahead, especially considering recent player injuries. However, the pause period allowed for the return and recovery of key players, making the squad complete for the clash against the Iraqi team.

Al-Zawraa, well-prepared for the encounter, secured a 4-0 victory against Al-Kadhimiya in a recent friendly match. Despite resting some key players, coach Hossam Al-Badri emphasized the importance of achieving victory for Al-Zawraa's progress. Both coaches, Darko and Al-Badri, concurred on the challenging nature of the match and stressed

Al-Qadsia overcome Al-Nasr

High-stakes showdown: Al-Kuwait gear up for Al-Rayyan in Asian Super League



Players vie for the ball during the Kuwait Basketball Premier League.

the significance of securing a win to continue their journey in the competition. Darko, acknowledging the team's nine injuries, expressed de-

termination to persevere, while Al-Badri highlighted his team's readiness and the necessity of securing three points for advancement.



Hamza Khaba shoots in this file photo.

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Al-Kuwait basketball team is set to host Al-Rayyan, its Qatari counterpart, at 5:00 pm at Al-Itihad Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. This matchup is part of the second round of the Asian Super League Championship for the Gulf region's first group competitions.

Al-Abyad, the runner-up in the previous edition, comes into this contest following a victory in the first round against Bahrain's Al-Muharraq. Similarly, Al-Rayyan secured a win against Al-Ahly of Saudi Arabia. The battle between these two teams aims to establish an early lead in the group. The

BASKETBALL

Kuwaiti team boasts a roster of distinguished players, including the Muhammad brothers, Hamad Adnan, Turki Al-Shammari, Alex Al-Ghais, Omran Johar, Mustafa Al-Rifai, and Abdul Rahman Al-Sahu. Additionally, they have three professionals, Marcus Georgius Hunt, Cadi LaLanne, and Baker, under the guidance of German coach Peter Schumers.

In recent General Basketball League action, Al-Qadsia triumphed over Al-Nasr with a score of 95-82, boosting their tally to 12 points, while Al-Anabi now stands at 8 points.

In another matchup, Al-Qurain secured a 95-79 victory over Yarmouk, bringing their point total to 7, while Yarmouk reached 5 points. Kazma also emerged victorious against Al-Arabi with a score of 73-70, while Kuwait halted Sulaibikhat's winning streak with a commanding 123-50 victory.

Taylor becomes undisputed champ

Benavidez stops Andrade

LAS VEGAS, Nov 26, (AP): David Benavidez retained the interim world super middleweight belt by stopping Demetrius Andrade after the sixth round Saturday night.

In what was billed as clash of styles that could go the distance between unbeaten 168-pounders, Benavidez (28-0, 24 KOs) looked more like a clinician with a dominating performance before Andrade's corner requested the stoppage after the sixth round.

Andrade (32-1) suffered the first loss of his career.

Benavidez is widely recognized as the world's best super middleweight after Canelo Alvarez. Immediately after his win he called for a match against Alvarez to unify the super middleweight title as an announced gathering of 9,585 fans roared their approval.

"I think I solidified myself as the dominant performer I am," Benavidez said in the ring during the post-fight interview on Showtime. "Now just give me the fight that everyone wants to see."

"Let's give the people what they want to see and they want to see David Benavidez against Canelo!"

After three close rounds, Benavidez, 26, lived up to his nickname of "The Mexican Monster" by neutralizing Andrade's technical skills by implementing a violent non-stop pounding over the final three rounds.

In the fourth round, Benavidez began landing solid shots and taking advantage of openings for follow-up combinations while absorbing everything Andrade threw before scoring a knockdown just before the bell.

Benavidez's boxing skills were on full display in the fifth round, as he moved forward aggressively and continued to impose his size and power to weaken the former two-division world champion.

"It's the fighting spirit ... it's my passion," Benavidez said about being triggered every time he was hit. "If you hit with me one or two punches, I'll come back with five or six." Benavidez closed a minus-430 favorite at FanDuel, which means bettors would have had to lay \$430 to win \$100. He hopes his command performance will be what it takes to finally lure Alvarez into the ring.

"I just want to say welcome to the David Benavidez era," Benavidez said.

In the co-main event, WBC middleweight champion Jermall Charlo and Jose Benavidez Jr. put on a show in a 10-round non-title match. Charlo (33-0, 22 KOs) spent much of the fight absorbing shots from Benavidez Jr. (28-3-1), but delivered much more damage than he received. Charlo's rapid-fire left-uppercut, right-hook combination stopped Benavidez in his tracks several times as the champ kept his perfect record intact.

Subriel Matias (20-1, 20 KOs) retained his IBF junior welterweight belt by way of TKO. After



David Benavidez knocks down Demetrius Andrade during a super middleweight boxing match in Las Vegas. (AP)

dominating the first two rounds of the fight, Shohjahon Ergashev endured a rash of pummeling from Matias over the next three rounds, never appearing injured, but clearly taking a beating. Called two seconds into the sixth round at the request of his team, Ergashev (23-1) didn't come out of his corner.

Lamont Roach (24-1-1, 9 KOs) took Hector Garcia's WBA super featherweight belt with a split decision. Though he scored a knockdown in the 12th round with an inadvertent shot to the back of Garcia's head, Roach may have put an exclamation on his victory with his biggest punch of the fight in the 11th round. Roach stepped into a power right that staggered Garcia (16-2) and followed it with a battering of combinations until the bell sounded. Judges Tim Cheatham (114-113) and Robert Hoyle 111-116 scored the fight in favor of Roach, while Max DeLuca (114-113) had Garcia winning the bout.

Meanwhile, Katie Taylor avenged her only professional loss by beating Chantelle Cameron in a majority decision to become a two-weight undisputed champion.

The Irishwoman improved to 23-1 after the judges scored the

BOXING

bout 98-92, 96-94 and 95-95 at 3Arena in Dublin, six months after a majority decision went Cameron's way in the same venue.

The 37-year-old Taylor, whose lightweight belts weren't on the line, now adds Cameron's world super-lightweight titles at 140 pounds.

"That was the longest six months of my life waiting for this rematch," Taylor said in the ring. "Tonight, you've seen the real me, and when I box like that nobody can beat me."

Taylor said she's open to a third fight with Cameron and named Ireland's largest stadium as a location. "Let's get the trilogy at Croke Park," she said of the 82,000-capacity venue. It was Cameron's first professional loss. The 32-year-old Englishwoman's record is 18-1.



Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq with other winners on the podium. KUNA photo

Sports

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‘Our Talents in Our Schools’ strategy garners praise

Kuwait to host Arab School Sports Championship 2024



Officials pose for group photo after the announcement.

CAIRO, Nov 26: Faisal Al-Maqseed, President of the Kuwait School Sports and Higher Education Federation, has declared that Kuwait is set to host the upcoming edition of the Arab School Sports Championship in 2024. The event will feature competitions in grass football and girls’ futsal, accompanied by a scientific conference aimed at benefiting academics and students alike. Al-Maqseed made this announcement during a ceremony dedicated to honoring participating delegations in the ongoing Cairo 2023 tournament.

Highlighting the achievements of the Kuwaiti delegation in their inaugural participation in the Arab School Championship, Al-Maqseed emphasized the significant responsibility on the shoulders of the Kuwait School Sports Federation’s Board of Directors and the technical committees. He expressed the commitment to build on these successes and secure more accomplishments for Kuwaiti students on the championship podiums.

Moreover, Walid Ayesh, Vice President of the Kuwait School Sports and Education Federation, was unanimously elected as Vice President of the Arab Federation during the General Assembly meeting held on the sidelines of the Arab School Sports Championship in Cairo.

SCHOOL GAMES

Ayesh’s election stands as a culmination of the Kuwaiti Federation’s efforts, particularly in implementing the “Our Talents in Our Schools” strategy (2021-2026), which garnered praise from participants in the Arab Championship and the third forum for school sports leaders in the Arab world.

Additionally, the Kuwaiti Swimming Federation team achieved a commendable second-place finish in the Arab Championship, securing a total of 9 medals (2 silver and 7 bronze).

Kuwait claim second spot in Kyokushinkan World Tourney

KAZAKHSTAN, Nov 26: Kuwait’s team secured a second-place finish at the Kyokushinkan World Tournament in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Sunday. Hasan Al-Kandari, the head of Kuwait’s delegation, informed KUNA that Al-Zayed, a Kyokushinkan player, clinched second place in the open weight category for men over 45, following the Russian team.

Al-Kandari commended the Kuwaiti team’s performance throughout the tournament, expressing their intent to participate in the upcoming Arab Kyokushinkan tournament hosted by Saudi Arabia in December, as well as the Asian and European tournament scheduled for Istanbul next year.

The Kuwaiti team, led by coach Mubarak Al-Ajmi and assistant coach Dhari Al-Shammari, includes players Khaled Al-Zayed, Dhari Al-Enezi, Saud Al-Daihan, Othman Al-Mashoh, Sulaiman Al-Zaidan, Essa Al-Fahad, Mohammad Al-Saedi, and Abdulaziz Al-Azmi.

Kyokushinkan Karate gained popularity in Kuwait in 1975, leading to the formation of a committee under the Olympic committee’s purview in 2007 to oversee the sport.



Khaled Al-Zayed celebrates.

KUNA photo

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Nov 26 (AP): Max Verstappen’s outstanding season ended with a comfortable victory at the Abu Dhabi on Sunday, earning the Formula One champion a record-extending 19th victory of the campaign and 54th overall to move into third on the all-time list.

Verstappen finished ahead of Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc and Mercedes driver George Russell, and also collected a bonus point for the fastest lap. His 54th career win moved him one ahead of former Red Bull great Sebastian Vettel, with only Michael Schumacher (91) and Lewis Hamilton (103) left ahead of him.

“What an incredible year,” Verstappen said after crossing the line. “It was a bit emotional on the in-lap.”

MOTOR RACING

Red Bull won 21 of 22 races this season, with Sergio Perez claiming two wins.

“It will be very hard to have another season like this, we know that,” Verstappen said. “We will see, we are working hard for next year to have a very competitive car.”

After winning two of the first four races, Perez fell quickly behind his star teammate.

“You’ve smashed it out of the park this year,” Red Bull team principal Christian Horner told Verstappen on the radio. “We’re all incredibly proud of you.”

Perez crossed the line in second place but dropped to fourth because of a five-second time penalty following an incident with McLaren’s Lando Norris late on.

Leclerc let Perez go past him on the final lap in the hope that Perez would finish more than five seconds ahead of Russell, with Mercedes and Ferrari both fighting for second place in the constructors’ championship.

With Russell’s teammate Hamilton finishing ninth for two points and Ferrari’s Carlos Sainz Jr. out of the points, Mercedes clinched second behind Red Bull in the constructors’ table.

“Unfortunately it wasn’t enough,” said Leclerc, after his third podium in the past four races. “It’s just a shame

Leclerc settles for second

Battle for third: Al-Kuwait and Al-Qadsia face off

Curtain falls on Asian Club Handball Championship

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Today marks the conclusion of the 26th edition of the Asian Club Handball Championship, featuring two matches held in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex in Sabah Al-Salem suburb. The first matchup, determining third and fourth places, involves Al-Kuwait and Al-Qadsia teams at 4:00

pm. Subsequently, at 6:30 pm, the Qatari and Saudi teams vie for the coveted titles of Arab continental and Gulf champions.

Al-Arabi secured a spot in the final by topping the second group and defeating Kuwait in the semi-final with a close score of 31-30. Meanwhile, Al-Khaleej emerged victorious in the first group and overcame Al-Qadsia in the semi-final with a score of 30-29.

In praise of the tournament, Ahmed

we finished third in constructors, that’s all that mattered to me, we didn’t achieve that but I want to thank the team for doing such incredible work.”

Mercedes beat Ferrari by just three points, and while Sainz is the only other driver to win a race this season - in Singapore two months ago - his failure to score in Abu Dhabi proved costly for Ferrari.

At the end, it was Russell who delivered.

“It means a huge amount, there’s so many people back at the factory who have worked so hard to achieve this, it’s been a really challenging season,” Russell said after only his second podium this season. “I’ve let the side down a couple of times this year so I’m pleased to have brought it across the line today.”

Al-Abdulrazzaq secures the top spot in SLALOM GP1 category

JAKARTA, Nov 26, (KUNA): Kuwait Marine Sports Club’s rider, Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq, secured the top spot in the (SLALOM GP1) category and clinched the third position in the

Lake Toba in Indonesia. In a phone interview with KUNA on Sunday, Al-Abdulrazzaq expressed immense joy at achieving this milestone in the prestigious world championship, supported by the International Union of Marine Sports (UIM). He highlighted that the tournament commenced its activities on November 24 and concluded earlier on the same day, featuring 25 contestants from 22 countries who fiercely competed across various categories.

JET SKIING

overall points standings for the (RUN-ABOUT GP1) category at the 2023 World Jet Ski Championship, held at

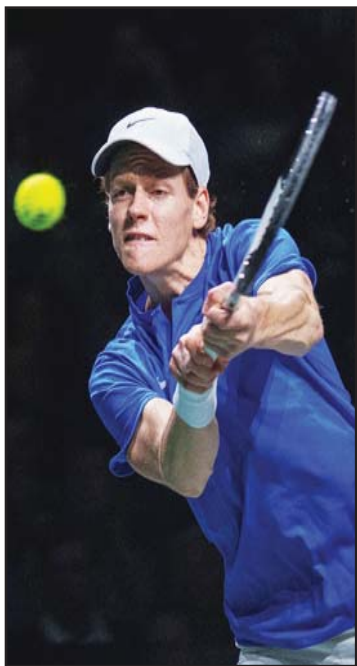
Venables, ‘former’ England dies at 80

LONDON, Nov 26, (AP): Terry Venables, a former England soccer player who led the national team to the European Championship semifinals as a charismatic coach and won trophies at club level with Barcelona and Tottenham, has died. He was 80.

The death of Venables was announced on Sunday in a statement by his family to British media, saying he died on Saturday after a long illness.

The English Football Association and Tottenham, one of the clubs he coached, were among those sending tributes to Venables. Former England captain Gary Lineker called him “the best, most innovative coach that I had the privilege and pleasure of playing for.”

Charming and popular, Venables, who was born just outside London, played for Chelsea, Tottenham, Queens Park Rangers and Crystal Palace - all clubs in the capital - in a 16-year senior career that included two caps for England.

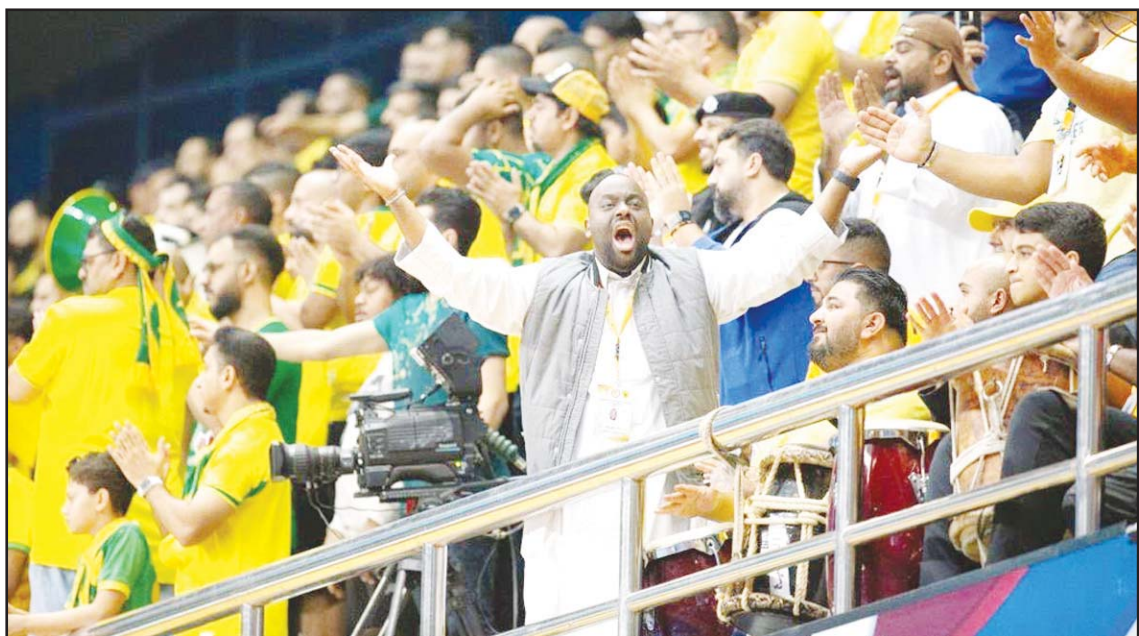


Jannik Sinner of Italy returns the ball against Novak Djokovic of Serbia during a Davis Cup semifinal tennis match between Italy and Serbia in Malaga, Spain. Sinner enjoyed double success over Djokovic to lead Italy into the Davis Cup final. (AP)

Verstappen wins Abu Dhabi GP for 19th win of record-breaking season



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands leads the field after the start during the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix race at the Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, UAE. (AP)



Fans support their teams during the Asian Club Handball Championship.