



basketball

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soccer

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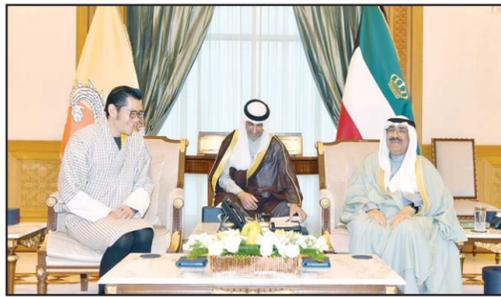
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16 PAGES

150 FILS

Kuwait Amir congratulates Qatar on AFC Asian Cup victory

— Details Page 16 —



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

Bhutanese monarch visits Kuwait

HH Amir receives Prime Minister, Defense Minister

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

He also received Deputy
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Supreme Commander to patronize 23rd cadet batch graduation at Military Academy Monday

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces -- will patronize and attend the graduation ceremony for the 23rd batch of cadets at Ali Al-Sabah Military Academy 10:00 a.m. local-time Monday.

Opinion

Time and tide wait for no man

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE proverb "Time and tide wait for no man" is a popular one. Lately, time is considered one of the most important sciences that is vital in the management of institutions and countries.

Studies have been developed regarding time management, on the basis of which the success and failure of a manager is determined. It also determines the state's ability to make use of its resources including time, which is a limited resource that must be managed efficiently so that it does not become a source of the state's failure.

It seems that time in Kuwait is running out of time, and its sword is cutting all our resources. This is because there are decisions made that are "mishmash" to put it mildly. This does not amount to successful management of the executive branch, which has currently inherited great burdens. This has become apparent in the level of decline in all aspects.

When the head of the state, the Prime Minister, economists, traders, real estate owners, and even the majority of citizens call for the necessity of opening the country, the executive authority comes to set impossible conditions for opening the door for visitors, or for people to join their family members, and it does not implement the leadership's decision. Rather, it operates according to a backward vision, or it continues to flounder, as if the deep state still dominates the sources of decision-making.

For this reason, fragmentary treatments are like a throw of ash in the eyes. An example of this is making allowances for visits, for which some weird conditions were set.

In addition, the state's executive apparatus did not benefit from the residency and visit visa system in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. As per the conditions for anyone who wants his relative to visit him here, we have set conditions that his salary must be a certain amount, he should hold a university degree, and the flight ticket must be issued by the "national carrier."

As for joining a family member, it is not a secret that the conditions are impossible. These were all put in place to continue the closure of the country.

Therefore, in international tourism reports, Kuwait was ranked last in the Gulf region in terms of the number of tourists who visited it in the year 2023. It received a total of 203,000 visitors and tourists, and it does not aim to reach any particular number of visitors in the year 2030, unlike the rest of the Gulf countries.

In fact, all reports issued in the past five years were negative in terms of enhancing the national product related to tourism and services.

On the other hand, the UAE ranked fourth in the world on the list of markets with the highest income from tourism, with about \$61 billion last year. Countries around the world have opened their doors to exploit this important sector for their national income, and have provided all visiting opportunities, even transit.

As for us, the matter is still limited to reactions to what is published on social media, or the words uttered in some diwanias. Needless to say, countries are not managed in this manner.

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Rainfall triggers alert



Traffic congestion grips Kuwait along the 4th Ring Road amidst thunderstorms on Sunday.

Photo by Rezk Tawfik

Caution urged

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Minister of Public Works and the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan visited the Control Room on Saturday evening to monitor the latest developments in the weather situation and the ministry's preparations to deal with it.

In this regard, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Public Works Eng. Ahmed Saad Al-Saleh stated Sunday that the ministry, its concerned leaders, and all its emergency teams are following the weather condition of the country. The teams have been stationed in critical locations, and field tours of residential areas are being carried out to monitor any accumulation of rainwater.

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NewsWatch

Parliamentarians criticize hasty implementation

Teachers fingerprint protest gains MP support

By Saeed Mahmud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: MPs Meteb Al-Raathan and Falah Al-Hajri joined the teachers when they gathered at the headquarters of the Ministry of Education on Sunday -- the first day of implementing the decision to apply the fingerprint attendance system on teachers -- to voice their views on the decision.

Al-Raathan clarified the teachers are not against the implementation of the fingerprint attendance system in schools, as they are rather demanding for amendment of the organizational structure to lessen their administrative tasks. He said Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani provoked the teachers when he declared that teaching is not a difficult job. He pointed out that Al-Adwani should have consulted the professionals and experts before issuing such a statement. He added he will meet Al-Adwani soon to discuss the teachers' demands. He disclosed that in case the minister does not respond, a grilling motion will be filed.

He stated the parliamentary Education, Culture and Guidance Affairs Committee is working on bills aimed at developing education, but more bills are needed to protect the teachers' rights. He asserted that except Kuwait, education in all other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has witnessed remarkable development; because their senior officials are keen on developing education, while their counterparts in Kuwait are more

concerned about proving the teachers are in schools throughout the working hours.

In addition, Al-Hajri said the decision was not studied well, calling on Al-Adwani to suspend its implementation until the completion of comprehensive studies in this regard. He warned that imposing the fingerprint attendance system on teachers has negative consequences, such as exacerbating the traffic problem. He also pointed out that three former ministers of education did not take such a decision for many reasons like the need for a new organizational structure and to consider the consequences. He made clear that he neither threatens nor blackmails any minister, but the citizens' rights are a red line that nobody should cross. He then stressed that parliamentary tools will be used whenever the need arises.

In a related development, Chairman of the Budgets and Final Accounts Committee MP Osama Al-Zaid has denied the alleged intention to divide the people into two parties -- those who support the decision of Al-Adwani in a bid to instill discipline and those against the decision who have been branded as "supporters of carelessness and laziness". He revealed the committee met on Jan 17, 2024 with representatives of the Ministry of Education including the undersecretary and head of the concerned department, during which the committee asked if the ministry studied the decision and the reply was 'no'.

He added that in his capacity as chairman of the Budgets and Final Accounts Committee; he sent a letter to the Education, Culture and Guidance Affairs Committee requesting for a study on the decision, specifying the pros and cons. He said Chairman of the Education, Culture and Guidance Affairs Committee MP Hamad Al-Elyan informed him that they will discuss the issue with the representatives of the Ministry of Education on Thursday.

He explained that he will not announce his stand on the decision unless it is proven useful or not. He said Al-Adwani did not respect the agreement with the Budgets and Final Accounts Committee as he took the decision without consulting the concerned institutions or Kuwait Teachers Society. He urged HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah to announce a clear position on this decision in order to prevent the issuance of decisions randomly or without conducting studies and consultations.

Continued on Page 5

DUBAI, Feb 11, (KUNA): Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) sealed an agreement during a key Arab fiscal forum in Dubai aiming to avoid double taxation on income and prevent tax evasion, Kuwait's finance ministry said on Sunday.

The pan-Arab gathering looked into comparisons between state budget balance sheets among countries in the region, with Kuwait taking the opportunity to discuss its experiences on the matter, according to a ministry statement.

With experts from the International Monetary Fund monitoring the talks, Kuwait's Finance Minister Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf and his UAE counterpart Mohamed Hussaini put their respective signatures on the agreement as part of broader financial cooperation between the Gulf Arab countries, it said.

The talks come a day ahead of the World Governments Summit in Dubai, with Kuwait being represented through its state-run news agency KUNA's director general Dr. Fatma Al-Salem, alongside acting Public Authority for Civil Information chief Mansour Al-Methen.

Dubai's 2024 World Governments Summit (WGS) kicks off on Monday, as one of the most important international platforms for envisioning the development of tools and policies that will shape the governments of the future.

This year's summit will witness a wide international participation with 120 gov-

ernment delegations, 85 international, regional and intergovernmental organizations, including 23 ministerial meetings and roundtables, 200 Speakers, 25 reports and much more.

WGS will take place under the theme of 'Shaping Future Governments' where the conversation will involve governments, international organizations, thought leaders, and private sector leaders from around the globe to international cooperation and enable governments to identify innovative solutions for future challenges, further rippling to inspire and empower the next generation of governments.

The Arab interest in expanding in the current summit with the participation of 100 Arab minister, divided into ministers of finance, youth, sports, communications, industry and advanced technology, health, as well as heads of government development agencies.

The summit agenda witnesses broader Arab participation, including discussion about government acceleration and transformation, artificial intelligence and the next frontiers, reimagining development and future economies, future societies and education, sustainability and the new global shifts, urbanization and global health priorities.

The summit, with its exceptional and qualitative outcomes, represents a valuable opportunity for the region to explore future opportunities, stay up to date on global developments.



Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed

Teachers convened at the Ministry of Education headquarters on Sunday, marking the inaugural day of the implementation of the fingerprint attendance system, to express their perspectives on the decision.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:11 Asr 15:11
 Sunrise .. 06:31 Maghrib .. 17:34
 Zohr 12:02 Isha 18:52

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
 Kuwait City 19 15

Kuwait Airport	20	15
Abdaly	22	15
Jahra	22	13
Salmiyah	17	15
Nuwaisib	19	15
Wafra	21	13

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

HH Amir, HH PM congratulate El Salvador president

HH Amir, HH PM congratulate Azerbaijan's President on re-election

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Sunday sent a cable to President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev congratulating him on being re-elected as president.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir

wished him good health and further progress and prosperity for Azerbaijan and its friendly people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President of

Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the occasion of re-electing him as a president for Azerbaijan.

El Salvador

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Sunday sent a cable to President of El Salvador

Nayib Bukele congratulating him on being elected as president.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished him good health and further progress and prosperity for El Salvador and its friendly people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Nayib Bukele of the Republic of El Salvador on the occasion of electing him as a president of the nation.

Traffic jam caused at roundabout

Plan to shift Mangaf filling station

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: According to informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Kuwait Municipality has addressed the ministry to bear all the costs of restoring the site of the current water filling station in Mangaf, Block 2 to what it was previously without demanding any compensation, after receiving the alternative site for the station.

The sources explained that the municipality allocated two adjacent sites in Al-Muqwa, which is south of Dhahr next to the central slaughterhouse and the livestock market. One of them is the site of a water filling station as an alternative to the current filling station within Mangaf Block 2, and the other is adjacent to the station and designated for consumer affairs services buildings and their annexes for Ahmadi Governorate, in accordance with Municipal Council's Resolution No. MB/LD1/18/2019.

The boundaries of the two adjacent sites allocated to the south of Dhahr are fixed. They were handed over to the representative of the ministry according to a receipt report.

The ministry intends to move the location of the Mangaf station due to the negative effects it has on the residents, as it is considered inappropriate from all technical aspects.

It is adjacent to the fire station and causes congestion and traffic jam at the entrance and exit of the area to the highway, which makes movement on the roundabout between the Sabahiya and Mangaf areas closed and very crowded most of the time.

The presence of the station in this area also led to the deterioration of the roads surrounding it due to the large number of people passing through it, causing it to crack. It has reached the extent of making it difficult for any car to pass through it due to the large number of potholes on the roads near the pump. It is also causing inconvenience to citizens who have been lodging several complaints in this regard.

Kuwaiti authorities support hailed

Indonesians cast vote at embassy

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Hundreds of Indonesians residing in the country cast their votes in the general election -- to choose the new president, vice president, a central parliament, and at the regional and provincial levels -- at the Indonesian Embassy from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Friday, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Indonesian Ambassador to Kuwait Lena Maryana was the first to cast her vote, along with her husband and their daughter.

The turnout of voters had been high since early morning, as those entitled to vote flocked to the embassy building.

Before the election, a total of 55 volunteers who were assigned in eight polling stations at the embassy building took an oath that they would work with complete integrity and transparency in monitoring the electoral process.

Chairperson of the Indonesian Elections Organizing Committee in Kuwait Osriniketa Zubona praised the efforts and support of the Kuwaiti authorities and all concerned parties in facilitating the voting process.

In a statement to reporters, Zubona expressed her happiness over the large turnout of voters who participated in determining the future of their country.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian Ambassador stated in a press conference at the embassy that the number of Indonesians in Kuwait is about 6,000; while the number of those entitled to vote is 3,630 -- 1,189 males and 2,441 females.

In addition, the 'mobile election' was conducted two days ago in three different regions in Kuwait, during which the Election Commission employees visited the workplaces or residences of about 30 Indonesians whose circumstances prevented them from voting at the embassy, so they were allowed to cast their votes in their respective workplaces or homes.



Lena Maryana

Driving license for 1st-timer bedoun

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Central System for Remediating the Status of Illegal Residents (CSRSIR) has confirmed the issuance of 2,160 driving licenses for the first time to Bedouns in 2023, in cooperation with the General Traffic Department (GTD) at the Ministry of Interior, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Director of the Information Department at the CSRSIR Abdullah Al-Farhan praised the ongoing cooperation with the ministry regarding the issuance and renewal of private driving licenses for Bedouns.

Al-Farhan disclosed that 26,437 driving licenses were renewed from Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2023. He said Jahra Governorate issued the highest number of licenses for the first time in 2023 with a total of 1,268; followed by the Capital Governorate with 322; Farwaniya with 283; Ahmadi with 207; Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 50 and Hawalli with 30.

He revealed that "driving licenses are issued for the first time to those who hold valid security cards and have reached the age of 18."

He explained that "the process of issuing driving licenses is in accordance with Cabinet Resolution No. 409/2011 on granting a number of benefits and facilities to Bedouns."

On the other hand, the voters agreed that the election was organized, while affirming their commitment to choose the best leaders for their country even though they are in Kuwait.

They described Indonesia as a "very rich country," indicating there is still room for improvement and make it a more prosperous country like the developed countries throughout the world.

They added that their participation in the election was aimed at combating corruption and to bring about positive change for their country.

'She loves the dog more than me'

Many divorce cases reported over looking after cats, dogs

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Although raising pets carries connotations of compassion for all living beings by taking care of them and sympathizing with them; it is striking and ironic that raising cats and dogs in Kuwaiti homes caused marital problems and intensified disagreements between some couples, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a reliable source.

The source revealed that 40 divorce cases among Kuwaitis in 2023 were due to raising pets at home. It became clear in the details of cases filed in courts that "the attachment of one spouse to pets and his excessive interest in them provoked the ire of the other party, who demanded for the right to receive care and attention."

According to the source, a man filed for divorce because his wife took care of the dog in an excessive

manner; such that it takes up most of her time. She provides the dog with four meals, cleans and treats him; in addition to entertaining him by taking him to the sea, parks and open air to take care of his emotional well-being.

Case files indicate that the husband told the court: "She is supposed to take care of me, more than the dog that gets her full attention."

The source pointed out that some disputes and issues reached a dead end due to excessive interest in cats, indicating the phrase, "Oh me, oh cat" caused separation in some cases.

The source revealed some husbands and wives refused to give up the hobby of raising pets; stressing that this hobby brings psychological comfort and inner peace, so all attempts at reconciliation between the two parties proved futile.



About 70 teachers held a protest in front of the Ministry of Education building.

Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed

Teachers stage sit-in, oppose use of fingerprint attendance system

All 'late-comers', teachers report on time

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Ministry of Education's schools yesterday morning launched a project to implement the electronic fingerprint system on an experimental basis for the employees of government schools to record their entry and exit, along with the paper signature.

Because of this, the schools at all levels recorded unprecedented attendance and commitment, especially by some teachers who are accustomed to not being disciplined in terms of attendance in the morning.

Meanwhile, about 70 teachers held a protest in front of the Ministry of Education building yesterday morning against the application of the fingerprint attendance system for teachers in schools.

They clarified that they are not against the application of the fingerprint attendance system but that it must be flexible and implemented at the beginning of the school year and after the organizational structure of the ministry is approved.

In this regard, one of the protesting teachers Abdullah Al-Sharif said the sit-in does not represent an objection to the fingerprint system, but rather to its implementation, as it must take into condition several aspects, the most important of which is granting teachers their full rights, adopting the new organizational structure, and setting the date for implementing the fingerprint system at the beginning of the school year after explaining the mechanism for its implementation and clarifying whether it takes into consideration the flexible working hours or not.

Also, another protesting teacher Talal Al-Enezi affirmed that the goal of the teachers' sit-in is not to eliminate the fingerprint system, but rather to demand that the government, the Minister of Education, and leaders of the Ministry of Education study any decision before issuing it.

He highlighted that teachers carry out roles in the school that are not part of their work duties.

In addition, the Rapporteur of the Parliament's Educational Committee Fahad Al-Masoud announced that the committee will invite the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani to attend a meeting on Thursday to discuss the mechanism for implementing the fingerprint system in schools.

In a press statement, Al-Masoud explained that the Ministry of Education is required to develop a plan to dispel the fear among teachers about the fingerprint attendance system, and develop an organizational structure for schools that includes the distribution of tasks and responsibilities for each teacher.

The fingerprint system is linked to several regulatory bodies, including the Civil Service Commission and the State Audit Bureau.



Municipality vehicles out in full force to clean up the streets and coastal areas.

KUNA photo

Street vendors targeted

Municipality launches campaign to clean areas for national fests

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11,

(KUNA): The Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department has announced an acceleration in preparations for the upcoming national holiday celebrations, unveiling a meticulous field plan to coincide with the 63rd National Day and the 33rd Liberation Day anniversary.

Commencing this morning, the cleaning department teams across all governorates have embarked on preparatory measures for the national holiday festivities. Their efforts are focused on ensuring the cleanliness and readiness of all venues designated for hosting activities and events throughout the month of February.

The municipality's public relations underscored that the plan entails the removal of any unauthorized activities conducted on state property or by individuals failing to comply with licensing regulations. Moreover, Kuwait Municipality's supervisory authorities are set to heighten inspection campaigns aimed at monitoring and regulating street vendors.

Strict enforcement measures will be implemented, with le-

PAHW plans to distribute 262 plots

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) will soon announce the distribution of 262 plots in Block Three, Fourth District, South Saad Al-Abdullah Housing City -- the 14th distribution; bringing the total number of distributed lots to 3,767 within three months, reports Al-Anba daily.

PAHW announced the first distribution on Nov 10, 2023. Sources disclosed that the previous distributions (13) are as follows: 318 in the first distribution, 240 in the second distribution, 254 in the third distribution, 300 in the fourth distribution,

258 in the fifth distribution, 261 in the sixth distribution, 304 in the seventh distribution, 275 in the eighth distribution, 281 in the ninth distribution, 254 in the 10th distribution, 258 in the 11th distribution, 258 in the 12th distribution and 244 in the 13th distribution.

Sources confirmed that PAHW will announce the 14th distribution within the next few days -- 262 plots, so the total number of plots in the 14 distributions will reach 3,767.

Sources added that each plot measures 400 square meters, indicating PAHW recently announced the 13th distribution.

gal actions taken against violators. Emphasizing that maintaining cleanliness in facilities, streets, and public spaces is a national obligation, the municipality aims to mitigate negative occurrences often associated with national celebrations.

Concurrently, the Hawalli Governorate Cleaning Management Team has initiated a field campaign to ensure the readiness of the coastal areas. Additionally, containers have been strategically deployed in locations earmarked for the national festivities.

'Kuwaiti farmers need special gov't attention to up produce'

"DEVELOPED countries with food resources have well-thought-out plans, programs, and follow-ups to benefit from, renew, and protect areas specialized in these resources, which are the fuel of life in times of peace and war, in order to protect that reserve and provide its most appropriate, orderly and clean environment, so that it becomes a permanent wealth that benefits people by providing them with nutrition. It is a joy for those who look at the beautiful green color of various crops and the benefits they provide for industries as well," columnist **Muhammad Al-Saqr** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.



Muhammad Al-Saqr

"Protecting food security requires efforts and attention by developing plans that will implement visions to achieve this goal. It must be noted here that it is necessary to expand the cultivated areas in order to provide the largest possible amount of food needs locally, including seasonal crops as well as vegetables and fruits that everyone needs.

"Care must also be taken to increase the quality of these agricultural products so that they compete with what is imported, by providing the highest standards of quality and health safety, and working to meet consumers' preferences in a way that makes them prefer the local product over the imported one.

"The state's commendable efforts in supporting the local product and Kuwaiti farmers are in this direction, and more efforts should be made in this regard and work should be done on the good distribution and marketing of these products in various sales centers, so that this support for citizens lead to increasing their production and raising its quality, which will reflect positively on the national economy. At the same time, it falls within the framework of protecting food security.

"Finally, the relevant authorities' follow-up of farmers during the care of their crops and providing them with all the scientific and technical information they need and supplies of fertilizers, pesticides, etc., all of this would provide a climate that increases production and it increases its efficiency and quality, in a way that achieves the interest of all producers and consumers."

Also:

"Observing National Day presents a valuable occasion to highlight the nation's advancements with genuine enthusiasm," columnist **Muzaffar Abdullah** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"Throughout our academic journey, we've come to understand Kuwait's position amid geopolitical uncertainties, given its proximity to larger, more populous, and powerful neighboring nations. This prevailing sense of unease is evident in the diligent efforts of our capable governments to bolster national security and in the ongoing concerns and dialogues among our populace, which remain largely unchanged despite geographical stability.

"Over the past six decades, external anxieties have evolved alongside the shifting landscape of influential figures within the Gulf region and beyond.

"Consequently, there's been a continuous pursuit of security measures. Internally, anxiety has roots in the establishment of the state's bureaucratic framework, which has now burgeoned into a pressing issue demanding immediate attention, especially as it perpetuates a rentier economy mindset.

"Today, amidst discussions of a new administration and ambitious goals, the ticking clock poses a real threat. Urgent solutions are imperative to address various pressing matters, including:

- Enhancing the political process to empower citizens' right to choose, free from electoral district manipulations, with the Election Commission Law serving as a positive step forward.

- Curbing misappropriation and squandering of public funds.

- Revamping youth-focused institutions to foster healthy competition and advancement opportunities.

- Combating fictitious employment by creating genuine job prospects through development projects.

- Prioritizing the well-being of children and young adults, recognizing their pivotal role in the nation's future, through comprehensive educational, psychological, and social support.

- Adopting a rigorous media approach to address our challenges, devoid of superficiality or deliberate omissions prevalent in many media outlets.

- Strategically reducing reliance on oil, acknowledging its precarious role in

the state's future stability.

- Entertainment and cultural endeavors as strategic choices for promoting public happiness.

- Preserving and restoring the health of our marine, terrestrial, and air environments by mitigating pollution rates.

"These challenges, among others, serve as a litmus test for the state's genuine security and well-being."

□ □ □

"Food waste is one of the reasons for the disappearance of blessings. The Ministry of Commerce published a report on food waste in the country, which reached 400 tons annually. This indicates the extravagance that the vast majority of Kuwaiti people are suffering from, although our country is a desert and does not produce food, except the small quantity of vegetables, eggs and dairy products. We import various types of food, yet we still waste food, up to the point that the per capita share of food waste has reached 95 kilograms -- enough for a family of five people," columnist **Hamad Salem Al-Marri** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Another reason for the disappearance of blessings is lack of gratitude and extravagance is one of the forms of lack of gratitude. We have an example -- the people of Ma'rib who used to live in comfort and luxury. They enjoyed the abundance of orchards producing different types of fruits and vegetables, drank fresh water and ate delicious food until they reached the stage of extravagance. Then, they turned away from Allah, so Allah the Almighty changed their situation and flooded their land. Allah Almighty said in Surat Saba (15-16): 'Saba was indeed in their abode, two gardens on the right and on the left. Eat of the provision of your Lord and give thanks. They had a good town and a Forgiving Lord, yet they turned away, so We sent upon them a torrent of rain and replaced them with two gardens of their own, full of food, wine and thyme, and a little sidr.'

"Our ancestors lived in poverty, afflicted by famines and diseases, while the countries surrounding the Arabian Peninsula lived in prosperity, enjoying the cultivation and production of different fruits and vegetables, the abundance of water wells, the flow of fresh rivers, and the abundance of livestock, including cows, sheep and others. Some of these countries were sending their zakat to us in the Arabian Peninsula, because we suffered from extreme poverty.

"As the years went by, the situation changed. Allah Almighty blessed us with oil and a ruling family that cared for the people and managed this wealth properly. Now, we live in prosperity, while these countries lived in poverty and instability. We send them our zakat and alms.

"Our beloved country is neither agricultural nor industrial. It is rather a consumer country that only produces oil and its derivatives. Despite this, we have different types of food and drinks, which come from the East, West, North and South, up to the point that we were included on the World Health Organization's list of peoples suffering from obesity. This is in accordance with what Allah Almighty says in Surah An-Nahl (verse 112): 'And Allah sets forth an example of a town that is safe and secure, whose provision comes in abundance from every place.'

"In order to preserve these blessings that Allah has bestowed upon us from many peoples, we must thank Allah Almighty in word and deed by adhering to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). We have to share these blessings with the poor and needy through charity, otherwise, our fate will be as Allah Almighty said in the continuation of this verse: 'They denied the blessings of Allah, so Allah made them taste the guise of hunger and fear because of what they were doing.'

"Unfortunately, we suffer from a scourge that we keep on ignoring, because we have become accustomed to it -- the scourge of excessive food and drink, most of which are thrown into the garbage bin. If we only thought a little about the amount of meals we prepare in our homes -- breakfast, lunch or dinner, we would find that they were enough to feed our family members many times over. This has been the case until the garbage bins are full and the cats are satiated from the large amount of wasted food.

"Therefore, must be economical in preparing food, not extravagant. This is in line with the words of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace): 'The food of two is sufficient for three, and the food of three is sufficient for four.'"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Drugs, weapon seized

Police nab drug addict in Al-Qasr

By Mansour Al-Sultan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Jahra security support patrols have arrested a young man in his thirties in the Al-Qasr area for consuming narcotic substances and in possession of approximately 90 narcotic pills and drug paraphernalia.

Patrol men during their tour in the Al-Qasr area, suspected a car parked on the side of the road with its interior lights on and after approaching it, discovered the man behind the wheel was busy consuming drugs.

□ □ □

Drugs, gun seized: The Ministry of Interior continues to exert tremendous efforts in combating drugs, track down drug dealers and smugglers and protect society from this devastating scourge, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

Officers from the Drugs Control General Department in the Criminal Security Sector recently arrested three people for the possession of six kilos of shabu and hashish, other drugs and an unlicensed firearm in three different cases.

During interrogation, those arrested admitted owning the drugs confiscated from them for the purpose of trading and personal consumption. They were referred to the concerned authorities, along with the confiscated narcotic substances.

Other Voices

The forger ... the bearer of lengthy rosaries

By Ahmad alsarraf

After the events of the Arab Spring, the government abandoned the Brotherhood and brought its opponents closer to the Salaf.

But someone revealed the involvement of some predecessor leaders and cadres in purchasing academic credentials that are not worth the value of the paper they were written on, and what prompted them to commit this serious crime was the desire to cover up their feeling of inferiority, and to claim to hold high academic degrees, which were in fact stolen or issued by fake universities, and in best case unrecognized.

Our colleague Badr Al-Bahr asserts in his recent newspaper article that the actions of certain individuals amount to a crime far beyond the realm of what any ordinary citizen, let alone a woman in a swimsuit, would contemplate.

From their perspective, such actions are seen as defiance, Al-Bahr suggests that common sense might lead the perpetrator to repent later, yet some members of these parties brazenly perpetrate such crimes without hesitation.



alsarraf

Al-Bahr goes on to detail how, in his capacity as the head of the Association for the Defense of Quality Education, he confronted these individuals.

He mentions submitting reports to the prosecution and issuing warnings to relevant ministers in the form of official reports. Eventually, their efforts bore fruit as these individuals were compelled to relinquish their fraudulent titles, especially following the enactment of legislation proposed by the association, which prohibited the use of illegitimate academic credentials.

In a somewhat satirical tone, Al-Bahr recounts how this charade elevated certain individuals with only intermediate education certificates to the status of supposed doctorate holders.

Parties were thrown in their honor, beginning in 2011, where they celebrated their fabricated achievements amidst the blessings of many attendees.

Subsequently, they assumed leadership roles in councils and began teaching religious lessons, all while being addressed with the esteemed title of "doctor."

Among the most notable impostors were a Kuwaiti individual known for his lengthy prayer beads and an expatriate who frequently changed his surname. It is revealed that the organization responsible for selling these false

credentials, along with many others, was prosecuted in the United States.

Notably, these individuals, prior to their exposure, wielded significant influence, even participating in elections and infiltrating various government agencies; one of them was appointed by the Council of Ministers to head an important committee and serve on another, despite possessing forged academic degrees.

The Association for the Defense of Quality Education possesses conclusive evidence of their deception, and Al-Bahr urges the Prime Minister to scrutinize his ministers' backgrounds, as some have played a detrimental role in empowering these charlatans. Shockingly, one of the individuals who aided in elevating the fraudsters now holds a government ministerial position.

On the other hand, brother Khaled Al-Sultan, the former president of the Heritage Revival Society, or the Salaf, stated: "The (Muslim) Brotherhood is the best effective Islamic organization, and the majority of the others are under the cloak of the government or are infiltrators or dervishes (often meaning the Salaf) and these are not trusted to deal with" with the major issues of Islam, such as liberating Palestine from the Zionists... and that the Brotherhood achieved the defeat of the entity...!

□ □ □

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Sponsor rejects maltreatment, denies salary not paid for years

Boat owner files complaint; 'Workers were under travel ban'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (Agencies): A member of Kuwaiti Fishermen's Union, **Abdullah Al-Sarhid**, has filed a complaint with the Fahaheel Police Station accusing 3 men of stealing his private cruiser and escaping with it to their homeland, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

Al-Sarhid said, during a press conference, he will seek the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to recover the boat and prosecute those accused of theft.

Al-Sarhid denied rumors that the suspects were not paid their salaries for two years, or that he had maltreated them and withheld their passports, stressing that this talk is completely untrue and a mere fabrication and lie.

He added, the embassy of the suspect men summoned him some time ago and showed him that there was a travel ban imposed on the three suspects (as the court had found the three to be involved in consuming liquor cases) and that he informed the embassy that, he was ready to pay the travel tickets if the embassy could issue the necessary documents.

He stressed that Kuwait is a state of institutions and laws, and there are parties that protect the rights of the worker, and if they had rights, they would have resorted to them or to the embassy of their country, but they escaped with the boat, which is worth more than 35 thousand dinars.

He pointed out that the police in their (expatriates) home country have arrested the three fugitives, and the authorities contacted him via video calls, listened to his testimony, and charged the fugitives with -- stealing a boat, leaving a country, and entering another country illegally.

The Indian workers who attempted the getaway on a boat valued at 35,000 dinars almost succeeded until Indian authorities intercepted them upon their arrival. Subsequent investigations delved into their illegal return and implicated the boat's owner, **Abdullah Al-Sarhid**.

However, media reports, notably from India, highlighted the fugitives' allegations of mistreatment and unpaid wages, omitting Al-Sarhid's



The alleged fishing boat on which the Indian workers fled to Mumbai.

Expat accountant steals employer's money

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Criminal Security Sector has referred an expatriate to the Public Prosecution for allegedly seizing 56 thousand dinars from his employer by approving checks to purchase items and then transferring the checks to his own account. Monitoring the expatriate's bank movements revealed that he transferred large sums of money from his account to his homeland, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

According to a security source, information received by the Criminal Investigation Department shows that an expatriate who works as an

accountant in an educational agency forged purchase document and then transferred the value of the checks to his account.

The source added: Further investigations were conducted, which concluded that the expatriate was involved in embezzlement and breach of trust, and accordingly, permission was obtained from the prosecution and the accused was arrested.

During his investigation, he admitted that during the past few years he had been submitting purchase orders and then signing checks and transferring them back to his account.

perspective, adds *Al-Nahar* daily.

Al-Sarhid, a member of the Kuwaiti Fishermen's Union, initially notified the Indian embassy of the situation but broke his silence in light of media scrutiny.

He refuted claims of unpaid wages and mistreatment, asserting that the escapees resorted to theft due to their own motives, not any wrongdoing on his part.

The Indian embassy, having previously been briefed on the travel bans, assured Al-Sarhid of

their cooperation in deporting the fugitives. However, he expressed disappointment in the biased portrayal by Indian media, emphasizing the deceitfulness of the accused.

Taking legal action, Al-Sarhid filed a theft case against the absconders and sought assistance from both local authorities and the Indian embassy to recover his boat.

He remains committed to pursuing justice and retrieving his property, hoping for appropriate consequences for the perpetrators.

Court declares man not guilty in 'fraud lawsuit'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Misdemeanor Court of Appeals has overturned the ruling of the court of first instance imprisoning an expatriate for two years with hard work and deporting him from the country, after the public prosecution had attributed his arrest to embezzling 120 thousand dinars belonging to a company for which he worked, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The daily added, the man was arrested after a breach of trust case was filed at the Maidan Hawalli police station which said an investment contract was signed between a company and the accused, and that the suspect received two check books in the name of the company, which the suspect had failed to return.

However, the Appeals Court found him not guilty.

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Betrayal of trust: The Abdullah Port detectives are investigating a case which has been filed under the title betrayal of trust, reports *Al-Anba* daily. According to a security source, the lawyer for a company specializing in transportation and handling said a company had rented 4 power generators from the company entrusted to it with a rental contract worth 68 thousand dinars, pointing out that the company against which the complaint was filed had failed to pay the rent or return the generators.

The source confirmed that the detectives were asked to investigate the incident, seize and bring the generators, summon the legal representative of the company against which the complaint was made, or its owner, and explain his legal responsibility for the incident.

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Air ambulance employed: An unidentified expatriate was rushed to the Jahra Hospital with multiple fractures following a motorcycle accident near the port on Abdali Road, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

Due to the severity of the man's condition, he was taken to the Jahra Hospital in an air ambulance.

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Group photo during the MoU signing ceremony.

Educational partnership for development and innovation

KIBS and ktech strengthen ties with MoU

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies and Kuwait Technical College sign a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation in the fields of education and innovation.

The strategic partnership aims to create unique learning opportunities that enhance development and innovation in the society. The Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) and Kuwait technical college (ktech) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation and deepen educational partnerships in the fields of education and innovation. The MoU was signed by Ms. Rana Abdullah Al-Nibari, Director General of KIBS, and Mr. Meshari Ayman Boodai, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ktech, in a ceremony held at the KIBS headquarters.

The MoU aims to exchange experiences, expertise and information, and the necessity of mutual benefit from the capabilities available to each of them to advance the tasks entrusted to their work and the desire of both parties to enhance and consolidate and support the joint cooperation relationship to become a strategic partnership. The MoU reflects the commitment of KIBS as an educational institution to provide a stimulating educational environment that enhances personal and professional development and provides trainees with the necessary experiences to face challenges and open up horizons of opportunities for them to learn new things in the fields of banking, business and marketing management, as well as arm them with the necessary experience and skill. While ktech is committed to providing technical



Ms. Rana Abdullah Al-Nibari, Director General of KIBS, and Mr. Meshari Ayman Boodai, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ktech during the signing of MoU held at the KIBS headquarters.

education and innovation, which contributes to developing the skills and abilities of trainees.

The two parties affirmed that this strategic alliance reflects their common interest and readiness to enhance cooperation in various fields, as this partnership is a starting point for advanced educational programs and projects that contribute to motivating trainees and qualifying them to face future challenges with confidence and efficiency and enhance the interaction between the educational and technical sectors, and pave the way for unique learning opportunities that enhance development and innovation in the society.

"We are delighted to sign this MoU with ktech, which is a leading institution in the field

of technical education and innovation. This MoU will strengthen our collaboration and enable us to offer our trainees the best of both worlds: the practical and the theoretical. We believe that this partnership will create a positive impact on the banking and financial sector and the society as a whole," said Ms. Rana Abdullah Al-Nibari, Director General of KIBS.

The two parties will also work on exchanging experiences and training staff and exchanging educational resources, facilities and infrastructure to enrich the educational experience and create a suitable learning environment for the participants in the training programs, and the two parties will present research and development projects to bridge the gap between the banking and technical fields, enhancing innovation and knowledge exchange. And they will work together to organize joint events, conferences, seminars, sponsorships, and nominations for programs including business management that contribute to enhancing synergy between the banking and technical sectors.

The Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) is a leading educational institution in the banking and financial sector in the State of Kuwait for more than five decades. It offers a range of services, including accredited certificate programs, executive leadership development programs, and various training and development activities within ten main areas, in addition to measurement and testing services, English language training, e-learning, and research publications in the banking and financial fields.

Kuwaiti leader receives congratulations

HH Amir extends 'congratulations' to Iran's President on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Sunday to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on his country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Raisi good health and wellbeing, as well as progress and prosperity to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Sunday to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on his country's national day.

Speaker of the National Assembly Ah-

mad Al-Saadoun sent on Sunday a cable of congratulations to the Speaker of the Iranian Shura Council Mohammad Ghalibaf on his country's national day.

The Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received congratulatory cables from the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Bola Ahmad Tinubu, and the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedow, on assuming leadership. Both leaders extended wishes for success, prosperity, and lifelong good health to the Amir. In response, the Amir expressed gratitude for the sentiments and reciprocated the well-wishes in cables to both presidents.

PAHW to sell recovered houses in various areas

24 homes set for public auction

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare issued a decision to sell recovered houses in a number of areas, totaling 24 houses, which are residential units that are recovered by PAHW either due to the beneficiary committing one of the usufruct violations or due to the absence of a beneficiary for them.

According to a statement issued by PAHW, eight houses were transferred to the Board of Directors to take the necessary procedures for the sale, and 16 houses were withdrawn. The procedures related to them are being completed after which they will be presented to the board in accordance with the controls, provisions and procedures.

The relevant sector submitted a memorandum to the housing minister regarding the recovered houses presented to the Board of Directors so that a decision can be taken to sell or re-allocate them, and a decision was issued to sell the recovered houses.

The Auctions Committee stipulated in article 10 of the executive regulations of law No. 113/2014 issued pursuant to Cabinet resolution No. 419/2015 that it shall undertake all procedures related to the sale of recovered residential alternatives at a public auction.

As stated therein, they will be sold at public auction to those entitled to housing care, and the award will be made to the bidder with the highest price who meets the bidding conditions. If no buyer comes forward during the sale session, the bidding will be repeated with a decrease of one-tenth of the basic price.

In the event that the sale is not completed for those entitled to housing care, the bidding will be repeated for all citizens according to the basic price for selling the housing alternative.

If the sale is not made as stated above, a memorandum will be submitted to the Board of Directors to take a decision in this regard.

PAHW indicated that a single person is not entitled to obtain more than one such housing alternative through public auction.

It stated that it will contact the Kuwait Credit Bank regarding the housing alternatives that will be put up for public auction in order to provide it with the latest debt in this regard.

PAHW explained that in the event that there is an increase in the housing alternative in the building in relation to the house or in the loan amount for the plot, this increase is evaluated independently. The evaluation committee of PAHW stipulated in Cabinet resolution No. 419/2015 is considered an evaluator within the meaning of this clause.

The offer will be for sale and the date of the public auction will be determined by a decision of the Director General, provided

Bids end March 21

PAHW opens tender to build 3,345 homes

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) yesterday announced the launch of a tender for consulting services for management and supervision of the construction and completion of 3,345 homes and public buildings in the Affordable Housing Project among local and international offices and consulting firms.

In a press statement, PAHW explained that the tender launch date will be February 11, and it will end on March 21. The selling price of the documents is KD 1,000, and the initial guarantee is KD 150 valid for 90 days.

The "consulting office/house" must be licensed by the Kuwait Municipality under the system for practicing the profession for engineering offices and consulting houses issued by ministerial Resolution No. 93/2007 and its amendments, and that it must have been established at least 15 years ago. The number of technical staff under the sponsorship of the consulting office must not be less than 120 individuals in various specializations. It must have financial reports from accredited audit offices for its budget for the last three years.

It must have previously contracted to supervise the implementation of government projects similar to the subject of the tender for no less than three projects with a total value of KD 200 million or more. It must not have three current contracts with PAHW.

Interested offices can receive a copy of the documents on flash memory from the office of the Deputy Director General for Implementation Affairs in exchange for a non-refundable amount of KD 1,000 to be paid at PAHW's headquarters starting today until Thursday, March 21 at 1:00 pm. The extent to which the conditions are met will be evaluated after the bids are submitted.

that the auction will be announced by publication in the official gazette, in at least two daily Kuwaiti newspapers published in the Arabic language, and on PAHW's official website and social media outlets.

The ownership document will not be issued until the auction bidder fulfills all the conditions required by PAHW.

After the public auction is done, the amount is deposited in PAHW's account, the ownership document is issued, and PAHW transfers to the credit bank whatever debt amount it may owe.

The circulars of the Ministry of Finance regarding government auctions are applied, unless stipulated in this section, and the proceeds from the sale of the recovered housing alternative are transferred to PAHW and added to its capital. This will be after deducting the debt owed to the Kuwait Credit Bank, if any, and deducting the value of the increase in the housing alternative, if any, and transferring it to the concerned parties.

Project reaches 99% completion

Minister Al-Mashaan inspects final stages of a new maternity hospital

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan has inspected the completion stages of the new maternity hospital project, which has entered the final construction stages and is scheduled to be delivered soon, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Mashaan looked into many of the project's facilities, including the patient departments, delivery rooms, laboratories, central radiology unit, outpatient clinics, lecture hall and outpatient pharmacy.

In a press statement, the agency tasked to implement the project confirmed that 99 percent of the construction work has been completed, excluding operation and maintenance; indicating that the remaining work is currently being completed within the terms of the construction contract such as furnishings, installation of equipment, and completing the testing and operation processes. It also disclosed that this hospital is considered one of the largest healthcare projects in

the region with an estimated capacity of 789 beds.

On the other hand, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Arab Office Eng Tariq Shuaib confirmed that the new hospital is one of the most distinguished and advanced medical projects in the region, combining operational strength with innovative and modern designs to become a vital edifice and an architectural masterpiece at the same time.

It is expected that the main building of the new maternity hospital will be opened soon, consisting of three towers that include the inpatient building, outpatient clinics building and a multi-storey parking lot.

With a capacity of 789 beds; the hospital consists of 460 special wards for maternal healthcare, 52 beds for maternal intensive care, outpatient clinics building consisting of a ground floor and five other floors, two basements designated for parking with a capacity of about 530 cars, lecture and training halls, and offices for administrative and financial affairs.

The project occupies a total building area of 360,000 square meters in Sabah Medical District – a strategic location along the coast of Kuwait City.



Dr Al-Mashaan



February

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Photo during the cleanup drive at Shuwaikh Beach.

Strong cooperation commended

NBK and Kuwait Diving Team organize cleanup campaign at Shuwaikh Beach

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: As part of the environmental cooperation between the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) and Kuwait Diving Team to protect the country's waterfront for the second year in a row, the two entities organized a cleanup drive at Shuwaikh Beach recently, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, NBK revealed the campaign falls within the framework of social responsibility, sustainable development, and the necessity of preserving beaches from any waste that is harmful to the marine environment and its organisms.

According to NBK, volunteers from the bank and diving team participated in the cleanup drive with the aim of raising environmental awareness among community members.

Talking about NBK's sponsorship of the campaign, Senior Director of the Public Relations Department at NBK Talal Al-Turki disclosed: "This sponsorship is one of our priorities in social responsibility and sustainable development, which reflects the importance of protecting the environment. We are proud to support the diving team in its initiatives and activities to preserve the environment. This

partnership with the diving team is also in line with NBK's corporate sustainability strategy and our commitment to the environment, which is translated through launching this type of partnership with local environmental bodies."

He pointed out that cooperation with the diving team includes many trips and field tours to protect the waterfront in Kuwait. He praised the skills of this national team, "which we are proud of, particularly its role in implementing serious environmental projects and disseminating information to raise environmental awareness locally and globally."

On the other hand, Kuwait Diving Team Leader Walid Al-Fadil expressed his pride in the partnership with NBK. He lauded the strong cooperation between the two sides to achieve the same goals, most notably the protection of the marine environment.

The campaign aims to remove waste from the beaches, especially since they suffer from stress due to the presence of large numbers of plastic and other waste, which greatly affect the marine environment; hence, the need for concerted efforts to remove them.

Arab Parliament Speaker hails Kuwait's policies and stances

Officials discuss Gazans' hardships

CAIRO, Feb 11, (KUNA): Arab Parliament Speaker, Adel Al-Asoumi, praised Sunday Kuwait's policies and stances under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

This came during a meeting between Al-Asoumi and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi.

In remarks to KUNA, Al-Mutairi affirmed that Al-Asoumi emphasized the Kuwaiti role in helping and supporting the Palestinian cause as well as the challenges in the region.

Ambassador Al-Mutairi praised the contributions of the Arab Parliament in supporting and strengthening joint Arab action and defending the Palestinian cause.

Arab officials held a meeting at a junior level on Sunday examining various files namely the hard conditions suffered by the war-battered people of Gaza.

The meeting was held at the Arab League General Secretariat's headquarters as a prelude to the upcoming 113th ministerial session of the Arab Economic and Social Council. The officials grouped in the Arab social affairs committee and the session was chaired by Jordan.

Topics on the table would be submitted to the 33rd regular Arab summit, scheduled in Bahrain in May.

Ambassador Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazala, the Arab League Secretary General's Assistant and head of the social affairs division, said in a



KUNA photo Arab Parliament Speaker, Adel Al-Asoumi and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi.

statement that the agenda includes resolutions that had been taken at the ministerial level to alleviate the hard social, humanitarian and health conditions suffered by the brothers in Gaza Strip.

She thanked Egypt namely the Egyptian Red Crescent for delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza, hoping that "this humanitarian tragedy ends, that the blood spilling stops and conditions restore to normalcy so that development efforts begins that the Palestinian citizen lives in peace and security."

Her words came amid ongoing Israeli aggression in the strip, with latest reports indicating that Tel Aviv planned an imminent assault on Rafah, the last - relatively safe - refuge for hundreds of thousands of Gazans whose houses had turned into heaps of rubble as a result of the heavy Israeli attacks.

Ambassador Abu Ghazala add-

ed that the secretariat general had worked out the agenda with consideration to the current developments, namely with respect of the social and economic files that concern every Arab national. She explained that the issues under examination were related to the social, health, educational, technical, professional and youth realms.

There are also other important initiatives on the table - aimed at boosting the joint Arab social action - in addition to other topics such as dialogue among civilizations, technology, creativity and women affairs.

Another meeting at this level would be held tomorrow to address Arab economic affairs.

The State of Kuwait's delegation at the meeting is headed by Talal Al-Nimsh, the acting assistant undersecretary for economic affairs at the Ministry of Finance.

Al-Roumi recommended as chairman

Municipal Council forms committee for disabled, recommends leadership roles

By Inaas Awad
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Municipal Council's Committee for the Disabled held its first meeting yesterday during which member Farah Al-Roumi was recommended as the committee chairman, and architect Sharifa Al-Shalfan was recommended as the rapporteur.

In its last regular session, the Municipal Council agreed to form a temporary committee specialized in the affairs of the disabled, with a total of five members: - Dr. Hassan Kamal, Alia Al-Farsi,

Munira Al-Amir, Farah Al-Roumi, and Sharifa Al-Shalfan. It decided that the committee would be responsible for holding periodic workshops to identify the needs of the disabled people, and ways to respond to them, as well as develop a road map to facilitate the activation of the "Kuwait Code" for accessibility according to the general design, in addition to discussing other topics referred by the council.

In a press statement issued after the meeting, Al-Roumi said the committee aims to improve the lives of people with disabilities by enhancing cooperation with the authorities concerned with the

affairs of the disabled, and ensuring the implementation of the Kuwait Code for accessibility according to the general design approved by the Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs, and removing obstacles to achieve an accessible environment for all segments of society to integrate people with disabilities into all areas of life.

She stated that the committee is fully prepared to hear proposals and overcome the obstacles facing people with disabilities, as well as adopt any idea in their interest, offer empowerment, achieve equality in all services, and integrate them into society.

Improved amenities mark milestones

Makashat 2 visitors exceed 5,000 daily on weekends and holidays

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs and Chairman of the National Cooperative Projects Committee, Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi, stated that the number of visitors to Makashat 2 exceeds 5,000 per day on weekends and holidays—an increase from the expected and estimated 1,500 visitors.

In a press statement today, Sunday, Al-Mutairi praised the efforts that contributed to the success of the Al-Makashat 2 project and the achievement that was carefully planned with direct guidance and instructions from the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah.

He added that the huts are often fully booked at the end of the week due to high demand, indicating that service capacity has been increased. This includes improvements in electricity, water, cleaning, increased seating areas, and the provision of another verse, along with an increase in daily activities to suit all ages.

He explained that a golf car has been provided to transport visitors, aiming to increase the number of beneficiaries of the huts, including people with special needs and participants from the "From Earning My



KUNA photo Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Hand" project. Al-Mutairi pointed out that a special schedule for national celebrations has been prepared to suit everyone, with a live broadcast of the Makshat activities on Kuwait State TV twice a week.

He expressed his gratitude to the parties participating in Al-Makashat 2, including the Ministries of Information, Interior, Health, Electricity and Water, the General Fire Department, the Public Authority for Youth, the Kuwait Municipality, and other official and private bodies.

Company's vision for a greener future

KIC aligns with Kuwait Vision '35 through 'sustainability' initiatives

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Kuwait Insurance Company (KIC) has demonstrated its dedication to sustainability by sponsoring the third Kuwait Sustainability Exhibition held in Murooj for three days starting from Feb. 8 reports Al-Jarida daily.

Sami Sharif, CEO of Kuwait Insurance Company, expressed his pride in the company's sponsorship of such impactful events centered around sustainability and development.

He stressed the importance of cultivating a culture of sustainability within society and raising awareness about the imperative of constructing a sustainable future for future generations.

Sharif affirmed that Kuwait Insurance is committed to enhancing its sustainability initiatives, adopting a comprehensive approach to development that integrates social, economic, and environmental considerations to advance sustainability both internally and externally.

Emphasizing the significance of sponsoring the exhibition, Sharif highlighted the vital role of collaboration between the private and public sectors in driving meaningful positive changes for the environment on a global scale. He underscored that sustainable development requires

KPC considering group insurance for workers

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is currently considering the awarding of a contract for a group insurance policy -- life, personal accidents and workers' injuries -- for its employees and that of its subsidiaries at a total value of KD13 million, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the oil sector.

Sources said KPC is moving forward with obtaining official approvals from the regulatory authorities to award and sign the contract within the next two weeks. Sources added the number of beneficiaries of the insurance policy is estimated at more than 21,500.

Sources stated that the Comprehensive Risk Management Department at KPC prepared the document for the combined coverages required for employee insurance.

unwavering commitment and cooperation from all sectors of society.

Given Kuwait's steadfast focus on sustainability, Sharif reiterated Kuwait Insurance Company's pledge to support the state's endeavors in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims to realize comprehensive sustainability objectives.

Time and

Continued from Page 1

Your Highness the Prime Minister, the country needs a clear vision in this aspect. It must get rid of the darkness that has befallen it over the past 20 years, the price of which we are still paying today.

Therefore make it easier for the people, because that will benefit Kuwait. Almighty Allah said in the Quran - "It is He who has made the earth subservient to you. You walk through its vast valleys and eat of its sustenance. Before Him you will all be resurrected." Hence, it is necessary to reconsider the impossible conditions for people to visit the country or join their family, and open the country like the rest of the Gulf countries and the world, because time and tide wait for no man.

Rainfall triggers

Continued from Page 1

In a press statement Eng. Al-Saleh said the country is witnessing scattered rainfall of moderate intensity in some southern and central parts of the country since the early morning hours of Sunday.

He affirmed that the concerned teams are carrying out their duties to inspect roads and highways to deal with any accumulation of rainwater.

Eng. Al-Saleh revealed the lack of accumulation of rainwater on any of the highways, highlighting that the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation is handling the complaints that are registered on the complaints system via the hotline No. 150 to address them quickly.

He urged motorists to be careful when driving vehicles on the roads during rainy conditions, adhere to the requirements of the Ministry of Interior, not pay attention to unofficial sources, and follow up on the weather condition through the Kuwait Meteorological Department affiliated to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

He prayed that Almighty Allah will make the rain a blessing for the State of Kuwait.

HH Amir

Continued from Page 1

Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and the Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh



Photo by Rezk Tawfik

Kuwait encountered significant rainfall on Sunday, causing traffic congestion in certain areas.

Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and his delegation on their official visit to the country.

Teachers fingerprint

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the Public Facilities Committee on Sunday discussed the bills on using and allocating unde-

veloped State-owned plots for investment. The representatives of Kuwait Municipality and Ministry of Finance attended the meeting.

The Health, Social and Labor Affairs Committee met with representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a number of charities to discuss the bills on organizing charitable activities.

Chairman of the Modern and Remote Areas Development Committee MP Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi affirmed that they met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Emad Al-Atiqi and Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipal Affairs

World News Roundup

Europe

Finns vote for new president: Voters in Finland are choosing Sunday between two experienced politicians to be their next president, whose main task will be to steer the Nordic country's foreign and security policy now that it is a member of NATO, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Former prime minister **Alexander Stubb**, 55, on the center right, and former foreign minister **Pekka Haavisto**, 65, from the green left, largely agree on Finland's foreign policy and security priorities.

These include maintaining a hard line toward Moscow and Russia's current leadership, strengthening security ties with Washington, and the need to help Ukraine both militarily and at a civilian level. Finland shares a 1,340-kilometer (832-mile) border with Russia.

Unlike in most European countries, the president of Finland holds executive power in formulating foreign and security policy together with the government, especially concerning countries outside the European Union such as the United States, Russia and China.

The head of state also commands the military - particularly important in Europe's current security environment and the changed geopolitical situation of Finland, which joined NATO in April 2023 in the aftermath of Russia's attack on Ukraine a year earlier.

A politician with the conservative National Coalition Party who led the government in 2014-2015 and earlier held several other Cabinet posts, Stubb took the top spot in the first round of the election on Jan. 28 with 27.2% percent of the votes and is the favorite to win the presidency. (AP)

Russia launches 45 drones over Ukraine: Russian forces launched 45 drones over Ukraine Sunday in a five-and-a-half-hour barrage, officials said, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy continued the reshuffle of his war cabinet as the war enters its third year.

In a statement, the Ukrainian air force said it had shot down 40 of the Iranian-made Shahed drones over nine different regions, including on the outskirts of the country's capital, Kyiv.

The five-and-a-half-hour attack targeted agricultural facilities and coastal infrastructure, officials for Ukraine's southern defense forces wrote on Telegram. They said that a strike in the Mykolaiv region had injured one person, sparking a fire and damaging nearby residential buildings.

Another person was injured in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region when a blaze broke out due to falling debris from a destroyed drone, said the head of the region's military administration, Serhiy Lysak.

The strikes come as Zelenskyy continues his shakeup of military commanders in a bid to maintain momentum against attacking Russian forces. (AP)

Charles sends message of thanks for support: King Charles III has expressed his thanks for the messages of support he has received since he revealed last week that he had been diagnosed with cancer.

In a statement issued late Saturday, the monarch said that such thoughts are "the greatest comfort and encouragement."

"It is equally heartening to hear how sharing my own diagnosis has helped promote public understanding and shine a light on the work of all those organizations which support cancer patients and their families across the UK and wider world," he said in a statement.

"My lifelong admiration for their tireless care and dedication is all the greater as a result of my own personal experience."

The British monarch has been recuperating at his Sandringham estate in eastern England following his first treatment for an unspecified type of cancer. Buckingham Palace announced the diagnosis on Monday. (AP)

Hungary's president resigns: Hungary's conservative president has resigned amid public outcry over a pardon she granted to a man convicted as an accomplice in a child sexual abuse case, a decision that unleashed an unprecedented political scandal for the long-serving nationalist government.

Katalin Novák, 46, announced in a televised message on Saturday that she would step down from the presidency, an office she has held since 2022.

Her decision came after more than a week of public outrage after it was revealed that she issued a presidential pardon in April 2023 to a man convicted of hiding a string of child sexual abuses in a state-run children's home.

"I issued a pardon that caused bewilderment and unrest for many people," Novák said on Saturday. "I made a mistake." (AP)

2 Spanish police officers die: Two Spanish police officers have been killed when a speedboat suspected of belonging to drug smugglers smashed into their patrol craft, Spain's Civil Guard said Saturday.

The incident occurred late on Friday, police said, when the Civil Guard craft was tasked with identifying speedboats spotted in the southern port of Barbate. Video footage showed how one speedboat slammed into the patrol craft in the port's waters.

The Civil Guard said Saturday that it had arrested eight suspects.

Another two officers from the six-member crew were hurt, the Civil Guard said. (AP)

Activists gather in Hungary: Antifascist activists gathered in Hungary's capital on Saturday to oppose an annual commemoration held by far-right groups, underscoring diplomatic tensions between Budapest and Rome over the detention of an Italian citizen in a Hungarian jail.

Hundreds of activists marched through central Budapest alongside a heavy police presence, and called for "freedom for every antifascist." They said they sought to prevent the far-right from observing the "Day of Honor," an annual event marking the failed attempt by Nazi and allied Hungarian soldiers to break out of Budapest during the Red Army's siege of the city in 1945.

The demonstration came as an Italian antifascist activist is being held in a Hungarian jail for allegedly being involved in assaults against suspected participants in the Day of Honor commemoration in Budapest last year.

Images of the activist, Ilaria Salis, chained and shackled at a Budapest court hearing sparked official protests by the Italian government. Prosecutors are seeking an 11-year sentence for the woman. (AP)

3 killed in hiking accident: Three Dutch citizens were found dead in western Switzerland after an apparent hiking accident, police said Saturday.

The mother and her two adult children, who had been reported missing Thursday, were found near the Rochers-de-Naye mountain in the canton of Vaud, local police said in a statement.

The 57-year-old woman, her 25-year-old daughter and her 22-year-old son had set off on a hike Wednesday morning and had not been heard from since then. A large-scale search operation was launched Thursday, and the bodies of all three were found Friday morning about 300 meters (1,000 feet) below a steep path.

The mother and daughter were on vacation in Switzerland while the son lived in the region, police said. The three victims were not identified by name, in line with Swiss privacy rules. (AP)

Georgian parliament names new PM: The former chairman of Georgia's ruling party was appointed by parliament as the prime minister of the Caucasus nation's on Thursday in a reshuffle ahead of national elections in the autumn.

Irakli Kobakhidze was named to the job by a 84-10 parliament vote. He previously stepped down as chairman of the ruling Georgian Dream party and was replaced by the former prime minister, Irakli Garibashvili, who resigned last month.

The reshuffle came after Georgian Dream's founder, billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, returned as the party's honorary chairman. Ivanishvili, who made his fortune in Russia, served as Georgia's prime minister from 2012 to 2013. (AP)



US Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump speaks to supporters during a rally in the closing weeks ahead of South Carolina's Feb. 24 Republican presidential primary on Feb. 10 in Conway, S.C. Trump is backed by a number of South Carolina elected officials who have endorsed him over former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, who also served as the state's governor, in the GOP primary campaign. (AP)

Politics

US Republican primary looms in SC

Haley challenges Trump on her home turf

CONWAY, S.C., Feb. 11, (AP) — With two weeks to go before the South Carolina Republican primary, Nikki Haley is challenging Donald Trump on her home turf while the former president is turning to his familiar playbook of personal attacks as he tries to quash his last major rival for the nomination.

Trump, turning his campaign focus to the southern state days after an easy victory in Nevada, revved up a huge crowd of supporters at a Saturday afternoon rally in Conway, near Myrtle Beach, by touting his time in office, repeating his false claims that the 2020 election he lost was rigged, maligning a news media he sees as biased against him and lobbing attacks on Haley, her husband and President Joe Biden.

In his rally speech, Trump insulted Haley by using his derisive nickname for her, "Birdbrain," and lavished praise on South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, who endorsed him early. Trump claimed that he selected Haley to serve as his ambassador to the United Nations in 2017 and represent America on the world stage only because he was motivated to make McMaster - her second-in-command - the governor of South Carolina.

"She did a job. She was fine. She was OK. But I didn't put her there because I wanted her there at the United Nations," he said. "I wanted to take your lieutenant governor, who is right here, and make him governor."

Deserved

"I wanted him because I felt he deserved it," Trump added.

Trump on Saturday questioned why Haley's husband wasn't on the campaign trail, drawing sharp responses from both the former UN ambassador and her husband, who is currently abroad on a National Guard mission.

"What happened to her husband?" Trump told a crowd in Conway, South Carolina, as he and Haley held events across the state ahead of its Feb. 24 Republican primary. "Where is he? He's gone. He knew. He knew."

Responded Haley in a post on X: "Michael is deployed serving our country, something you know nothing about."

It's the latest example of Trump disparaging his opponents based on their US military service, going back to his questioning of whether the late Sen. John McCain, a prisoner of war in Vietnam, was a hero because Trump liked "people who weren't captured." Throughout his political career, Trump has been accused of disregarding longstanding norms on avoiding attacking current or past service members or people in a politician's family.

Michael Haley began a yearlong stint in June with the South Carolina Army National Guard. Haley is being deployed as a staff officer with the 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, which the National Guard says is providing support in the Horn of Africa.

Chances

Trump, who has long been the front-runner in the GOP presidential race, won three states in a row and is looking to use South Carolina's Feb. 24 primary to close out Haley's chances and turn his focus fully on an expected rematch with Biden in the general election.

Haley skipped the Nevada caucuses, condemning the contest as rigged for Trump, and has instead focused on South Carolina, kicking off a two-week bus tour across the state where she served as governor from 2011 to 2017.

Speaking to about a couple hundred people gathered outside a historic opera house in Newberry, Haley on Saturday portrayed Trump as an erratic and self-absorbed figure not focused on the American people.

She pointed to the way he flexed his influence over the Republican Party this past week, successfully pressuring GOP lawmakers in Washington to reject a bipartisan border security deal and publicly pressed Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel to consider leaving her job.

"What is happening?" Haley said. "On that day of all those losses, he had his fingerprints all over it," she added.

US Republican front-runner **Donald Trump** said Saturday that, as president, he warned NATO allies that he "would encourage" Russia "to do whatever the hell they want" to countries that are "delinquent" as he ramped up his attacks on foreign aid and longstanding international alliances.

Confronted

Speaking at a rally in Conway, South Carolina, Trump recounted a story he has told before about an unidentified NATO member who confronted him over his threat not to defend members who fail to meet the trans-Atlantic alliance's defense spending targets.

But this time, Trump went further, saying had told the member that he would, in fact, "encourage" Russia to do as it wishes in that case.

"You didn't pay? You're delinquent?" Trump recounted saying. "No I would not protect you. In fact, I would encourage them to do whatever the hell they want. You gotta pay. You gotta pay your bills."

NATO allies agreed in 2014, after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, to halt the spending cuts they had made after the Cold War and move toward spending 2% of their GDPs on defense by 2024.

White House spokesperson **Andrew Bates** responded, saying that "Encouraging invasions of our closest allies by murderous regimes is appalling and unhinged - and it endangers American national security, global stability, and our economy at home."



In this image made from video shown in the Blount County Sheriff's Office's Facebook page, an official shows a picture of Deputy Greg McCowan in Maryville, Tenn., on Feb. 9. Authorities in eastern Tennessee were searching early Friday for a suspect they say was involved in a shooting that killed one sheriff's deputy and left another wounded. (AP)



Berrong



Caban

America

Police hunt for suspect: Law enforcement in eastern Tennessee continued their search Saturday for a man who is accused of fatally shooting one sheriff's deputy and injuring another during a traffic stop.

The Blount County Sheriff's Office on Saturday increased the reward to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest of 42-year-old Kenneth DeHart.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said it has issued warrants charging DeHart with first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder and being a felon in possession of a firearm in the Thursday evening shootings.

Deputy Greg McCowan, 43, was killed in the shooting, while Deputy Shelby Eggers, 22, was treated at a hospital and released, the sheriff's office said Friday.

"We're committed to track him down," Blount County Sheriff **James Lee Berrong** said Friday. "We're going to get him and he's going to be brought to justice in Blount County." (AP)

Teenager charged: A 15-year-old accused of shooting a Brazilian tourist in the leg in Times Square Thursday night and then firing at a police officer was charged Saturday as an adult with two counts of attempted murder.

Identified by police as a resident of a migrant shelter in Manhattan who arrived in New York from Venezuela late last year, the teenager was ordered held without bail after the assistant district attorney said he "cannot be trusted to return to court," the New York Daily News reported.

The teen also faces assault and weapons possession charges stemming from the shooting that began in a sporting goods store and spilled out onto the streets of Midtown Manhattan.

Police took the teen into custody Friday at a residential house that police believe may be linked to a family member in

Yonkers. He is also considered a suspect in an armed robbery in the Bronx and a separate shooting in Times Square last month, police said.

At a press conference announcing the arrest Friday evening, New York City Police Commissioner **Edward Caban** said it was an "actual miracle" that no one was

seriously injured in the shooting. (AP)

Copter crashes in Mojave: A helicopter with six people on board crashed Friday night in Southern California's Mojave Desert, authorities said.

It's not clear what happened to the peo-



A woman casts her ballot at a polling station during presidential election, Helsinki, Finland, on Feb. 11. Finnish voters are choosing between two experienced politicians to be their next president. The winner's main task will be to steer the Nordic country's foreign and security policy now that it is a member of NATO, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. (AP)

ple on board. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said they have not found any survivors. But they also did not say if anyone was killed.

The department learned of the crash at 10:12 pm on Friday. They said the helicopter crashed east of Interstate 15 near Hesperian Springs Road, which is near the California-Nevada border and about an 80-mile drive (128.75 kilometers) from Las Vegas.

The Federal Aviation Administration confirmed the helicopter - a Eurocopter EC 120 - had six people aboard. The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board will investigate. The NTSB said investigators would arrive on Saturday and begin gathering information. (AP)

No one hurt in crash landing: The pilot and lone passenger escaped injury when a small airplane made a crash landing Saturday on a residential street in a suburban neighborhood on the west edge of Phoenix, Goodyear police said.

The single engine plane experienced mechanical problems shortly after takeoff Saturday morning from nearby Glendale Airport, police said. The pilot attempted to make an emergency landing at Phoenix Goodyear Airport but the engine lost power so the pilot had to put the aircraft down on the street in Goodyear, south of Interstate 10, at about 8:30 a.m., police said.

The Cessna 172P struck a tree, a mailbox and a parked, unoccupied vehicle that suffered minimal damage but no one in the plane or on the ground was hurt, police said. (AP)

Asia

'Ships near waters'

Indonesia's prez still 'popular' in last term

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Feb 11, (AP): **Joko Widodo's** phenomenal rise from a riverside slum, where he grew up, to the presidency of Indonesia spotlighted how far the world's third-largest democracy had veered from a brutal authoritarian era a decade ago.

With his second and final five-year term ending in October, Widodo - regarded by some as Asia's Barack Obama - is leaving a legacy of impressive economic growth and an ambitious array of infrastructure projects topped by a \$33 billion plan to relocate Indonesia's congested capital to the frontier island of Borneo.

Dismissed as a political lightweight by rivals when he first won the presidency in 2014, Widodo built a reputation as a soft-spoken reformer who promised to fight poverty and inequalities by exploiting Indonesia's abundant resources and tourism draw to propel its economy, the largest in Southeast Asia. He served as mayor of Solo city, where he was born to a working-class family in illegally built shacks along a river, then became governor of the capital, Jakarta, before clinching his first presidential term.



Widodo

Widodo was the first Indonesian president to emerge outside the political and military elite. But critics say he thrived on political compromises, became beholden to political party supporters and accommodated ex-generals who served under the late authoritarian leader Suharto. His pragmatic deals cushioned opposition to his leadership but also threatened Indonesia's fragile democracy that sprang a commoner like him, the son of a wood seller, to power.

Forging political compromises in the world's largest archipelago nation with deep religious, ethnic and economic divides has been a constant struggle even by past leaders.

Widodo was widely criticized when he appointed Prabowo Subianto - his main challenger in two presidential elections - as defense minister in 2019, after winning his second term.

A special forces general accused of committing human rights atrocities in the Suharto era, Subianto is now the frontrunner in the Feb. 14 elections. His vice-presidential running mate is Widodo's eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, who is the mayor of Surakarta, Widodo's hometown in Central Java province.

Exception

Widodo's son did not meet the age requirement of 40 for his candidacy but the Constitutional Court - headed by the president's brother-in-law - made an exception in a ruling last year.

A group of critics was considering an impeachment complaint against Widodo but legal experts said the chances of it succeeding are slim. He's still popular and parliament is dominated by his allies.

Also known as Jokowi, Widodo, now 62, nurtured an image of an Indonesian everyman with a soft spot for the underclass and down-to-earth lifestyle that resonated with a wide base of ordinary voters.

He often mingled with working-class crowds in cheap sneakers and rolled-up sleeves to check on their concerns. He took selfies with hordes of journalists and is one of the biggest fans of Metallica, the American heavy metal band whose concerts in the Indonesian capital he watched when he was the Jakarta governor.

Widodo has enjoyed consistently high approval ratings of over 70% in recent months, an impressive feat in the final years of a decadelong presidency. It also makes him a powerful election endorser, a kingmaker, despite legal restrictions against the practice. Opponents have accused him of covertly using his clout to back his son and Subianto to create a new political dynasty.

He has laughed off the accusations and called on Indonesians to help the next leaders press on with reforms to foster economic growth.

Widodo's flagship projects centered on linking the nation of more than 17,000 islands with bridges, a high-speed train, toll roads, ports and airports.

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: Combat exercises between the United States and the Philippines involving thousands of forces each year will not be affected by America's focus on the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, a US general said.

The Biden administration has been strengthening an arc of military alliances in the Indo-Pacific region to build deterrence and to better counter China, including in any future confrontation over Taiwan and the disputed South China Sea.

But there have been concerns that the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas conflict could hamper America's pivot to Asia and the Pacific and divert military resources intended for the region.

"Certainly, it does not affect our presence," Maj Gen **Marcus Evans**, commanding general of the US Army's 25th Infantry Division, told The Associated Press in an interview late Thursday when asked to comment on those concerns.

"If anything, it drives an increased sense of urgency to focus on these partnerships that we've developed decades ago and it's our responsibility to continue to build on these unique training opportunities," said Evans, who has 12,000 soldiers under his command.

Evans, who is based in Hawaii, was in Manila for talks with his Philippine army counterparts ahead of largescale combat maneuvers between the U.S. and Philippine forces.

TOKYO: Chinese coast guard vessels have been passing by Japanese-claimed waters for weeks in the East China Sea and China's warships have been edging near Japan's southwestern islands in recent days, Japanese officials said.

A fleet of four Chinese coast guard vessels on Thursday passed just outside of the territorial waters of Japan-controlled islands, which Beijing also claims, for the 49th day in a row, the Japanese Coast Guard said.

It warned China's vessels against further approaching the islands, called the Senkaku in Japanese, while Beijing calls them the Diaoyu. China's Coast Guard on Tuesday acknowledged that it was patrolling waters off the Diaoyu Islands, which are also claimed by Taiwan. China routinely sends coast guard vessels and planes into waters and airspace surrounding the islands to harass Japanese vessels in the area and force Japan to scramble jets in response.

Japan Coast Guard Commandant **Shohei Ishii** said last month that Chinese Coast Guard activity in infiltrating Japanese territorial waters violates international law, and that the "situation is extremely serious and is unpredictable."



Economic Freedom Fighters leader Julius Malema gestures at the party's manifesto launch at Moses Mabhida Stadium in KwaZulu Natal province, South Africa on Feb 10. Economic Freedom Fighters party launched its election campaign manifesto in a province set to be the stage for hot political contestation in the South African elections later this year. (AP)

Africa

Senegal's president defends delaying elections

Malema promises jobs, land ahead of poll

DURBAN, South Africa, Feb 11, (AP): The controversial leader of South Africa's third largest political party promised Saturday to create jobs for millions of the country's unemployed and turn around its economy as he seeks to attract voters ahead of a much anticipated general election.

Economic Freedom Fighters party founder Julius Malema addressed a packed 56,000-capacity Moses Mabhida Stadium in the coastal city of Durban as he launched the party's election manifesto to the delight of supporters.

"This is not a manifesto of promises, it's a manifesto of commitments," he said.

With election season well underway in South Africa, most political parties who have not launched their manifestos are expected to do so in the coming weeks. A date for the election has not been announced.

The election is expected to be highly contested because the ruling African National Congress, which has governed the country since Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first democratically-elected leader in 1994, faces myriad challenges.

EFF party supporters Saturday clad in red party regalia, including T-shirts with Malema's likeness, went into a frenzy as he entered the stadium, singing struggle songs and liberation slogans.

The EFF is popular among many disenfranchised South Africans, especially youth, due to its radical policies that include the expropriation of white-owned land and the nationalization of mines and banks.

Controversial

Malema, a controversial figure who largely divides opinion for his radical proposals to solve the country's problems, continues to enjoy widening popularity in South Africa and increasingly across Africa.

A former ANC youth leader who was expelled from the party, Malema is now among the ruling party's staunchest critics. He's an outspoken lawmaker who has become a thorn in the side of the ANC and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The EFF garnered 10% of the national vote in the country's 2019 elections to become the third largest opposition party.

Buoyed by the decline in support for the ANC, which has governed South Africa since 1994, the party expects

to increase its support in the upcoming elections.

Recent polls by polling firm Ipsos released this week estimated the EFF could perform better in the upcoming polls and replace the Democratic Alliance as the second biggest party in the country.

The same polls also suggest the ANC may dip under 50% of electoral support in what is expected to be the ruling party's toughest elections yet.

Malema announced the party's slogan for the coming elections as "Jobs and land now! Stop loadshedding," a phrase that alludes to the country's high unemployment rate of more than 30%, the slow pace of land redistribution and the country's electricity crisis, which has resulted in rolling power blackouts.

"This manifesto is a manifesto of the people swimming in the pool of poverty," said Malema.

Malema said the party would stop the power blackouts that are impacting the country's economy and would create jobs through, among other things, the creation of social housing and road infrastructure.

He also promised to jail politicians and public servants who are implicated in corruption and vowed to introduce incentives for police to fight the country's high prevalence of crime.

Increase

"We are going to increase the visibility of police and soldiers. Many of you can't say that you saw the police on your way here," he said.

Malema also promised to increase social welfare grants and introduce a basic income grant for the unemployed.

Some EFF supporters who spoke to The Associated Press expressed confidence in the party's chances in the upcoming elections.

Nomonde Simelane, 28, a staunch EFF supporter wearing party regalia, said the party was the only one serious about changing Black people's economic situation in South Africa.

"No other party is serious about returning the land, or making sure that Black people also benefit from the country's economy," said Simelane.

Raymond Zitha, 33, said he didn't vote in the last election but would do so this year to support the EFF. He was among supporters who were bussed in to the rally in Durban by the party from various parts of KwaZulu-Natal province, where fierce political competition

is expected.

Some smaller parties led by former leaders and members of major political parties will also take part in the elections.

Former ANC and South Africa President Jacob Zuma announced the formation of a new party, Umkhonto we Sizwe ("Spear Of The Nation"), which has been registered to compete in this year's elections.

Mmusi Maimane, the former leader of the opposition Democratic Alliance, has started BOSA, a new party set to run for the first time, while former Johannesburg mayor and DA member Herman Mashaba's Action SA will take part in its first national election.

Also:

DAKAR, Senegal: Senegalese President **Macky Sall** defended his decision to postpone elections as violent protests erupted across the country on Friday.

In his first interview since announcing the delay, Sall brushed off allegations that the decision was unconstitutional and that he'd created a constitutional crisis, saying the country needed more time to resolve controversies over the disqualification of some candidates and a conflict between the legislative and judicial branches of government.

But much of the public fears that Sall, who faces term limits, is just seeking to delay leaving office.

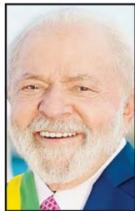
Senegal is one of West Africa's most stable democracies, but the presidential vote has been dogged by controversies from deadly protests that resulted in Sall announcing that he would not seek a third term, to the disqualification of two opposition leaders by the highest election authority.

Sall denied that he's trying to hold on to power. "I am absolutely seeking for nothing except to leave a country in peace and stability," said Sall. "I am completely ready to pass the baton. I have always been programmed for that."

Sall spoke to the AP inside the presidential palace in the capital, Dakar, while outside, hundreds of protesters took to the streets, burning tires, throwing stones and blocking traffic as security forces used tear gas to disperse them. At least one student was killed on a school campus following demonstrations in the country's northern city of Saint Louis, according to a statement from the public prosecutor.



Asylum-seeking migrants from Peru and Ecuador take shelter from the wind and rain as they wait to be processed in a makeshift, mountainous campsite after crossing the border with Mexico on Feb 2 near Jacumba Hot Springs, Calif. (AP)



Lula



Bolsonaro

Lat/Am

Bolsonaro's top aides probed: Brazilian police searched homes and offices of former president **Jair Bolsonaro's** top aides in an investigation alleging they plotted a coup and that the ex-president was aware of the plan, court documents showed.

The alleged plot in the event Bolsonaro lost the 2022 election involved having him sign a decree declaring the vote fraudulent to justify a possible military intervention and convene new elections. Though Bolsonaro did lose the election, the right-wing leader never issued the decree to set the final stage of the alleged plot into motion.

Bolsonaro was not himself a target of Thursday's searches, but like others was ordered to forfeit his passport, according to a decision by Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes made public Thursday.

Police said in a statement that they searched several homes and offices of suspects who "acted to attempt a coup d'etat" that would have kept Bolsonaro in power after his October 2022 election defeat to leftist leader **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva**.

Police alleged the group had prepared to allege voting fraud "in order to enable and legitimize a military intervention."

Supreme Court documents authorizing the searches show that police claim that Filipe Martins, a special adviser, presented Bolsonaro a draft decree ahead of the election that included ordering the arrest of two Supreme Court justices, including Moraes, who presided over the election body overseeing the election.

Bolsonaro allegedly asked to have several items removed from the decree, while keeping a call for new elections and modifying the order to arrest only one of the Supreme Court justices - de Moraes. Bolsonaro also allegedly called a meeting with the heads of the armed forces to present the modified plan and get them to "adhere" to it. (AP)

Activist killed in Mexicali: A gunman has killed an activist who led a group of volunteers searching for some of Mexico's over 100,000 missing people, prosecutors said.

The killer burst into a beauty salon in the northern border city of Mexicali and shot to death **Ángela León**, who apparently ran the shop.

León was at least the seventh volunteer searcher killed since 2021. An eighth activist was abducted in January and has not been heard from since.

Prosecutors in the northern border state of Baja California pledged Friday to investigate the crime, which is all the more shocking because most searchers say they are not

trying to put anyone in jail.

León was the head of the search group "Union and Strength for Our Disappeared," and had been searching since 2018 for her brother, José Juan Vázquez, who disappeared in Tecate that year.

The group said in a statement that "she had received threats and filed complaints, but they (authorities) did nothing!"

In January, gunmen burst into a home in

the central Mexico state of Guanajuato and

abducted search activist **Lorena Cano**, and killed her husband and son. Cano remains missing.

Mexican drug cartels and kidnapping gangs frequently use shallow graves, vacant lots or caustic chemicals to dispose of the bodies of their victims. (AP)



An aerial view of the tiny islands in the East China Sea, called Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese are seen in Sept 2012. Chinese coast guard vessels have been passing by Japanese-claimed waters for weeks in the East China Sea and China's warships have been edging near Japan's southwestern islands in recent days, Japanese officials said on Feb 8. (AP)

the central Mexico state of Guanajuato and abducted search activist **Lorena Cano**, and killed her husband and son. Cano remains missing.

Mexican drug cartels and kidnapping gangs frequently use shallow graves, vacant lots or caustic chemicals to dispose of the bodies of their victims. (AP)

'Military on the move again': Guyana's government said Saturday that it has satellite imagery evidence from friendly western allies showing Venezuelan military movements near the South American country's eastern border with Guyana.

Officials claimed the administration of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro is breaching a peace agreement signed in the Caribbean in December to ease tensions over border demarcation lines. Foreign Minister Hugh Todd and Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud said Guyana is monitoring the situation across the river border.

The two sides have feuded over border lines for decades. Venezuela has been laying claim to the mineral-rich Essequibo region, which covers about two thirds of Guyana's surface area.

They condemned Venezuela for not abiding with the Argyle Agreement signed on the island of St. Vincent in December, in which the two countries agreed not to use force or to threaten each other. The talks were brokered by Brazil and Caribbean governments. (AP)

dollar stable

The exchange rate of the US Dollar on Sunday stabilized at KD 0.307 and the Euro at 0.331, compared to last Wednesday prices, according to the Central Bank (CBK), Sunday.

The CBK said in its daily bulletin that the British Sterling Pound went up to KD 0.388, the Swiss franc down to KD 0.351, and the Japanese Yen stabilized at KD 0.002. (KUNA)

KFH promotes secure investment via banks & authorized entities

As part of its active support to Diraya Campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has urged individuals wishing to grow their savings in a secure manner to contact local banks and authorized entities, as they offer a diversified array of investment opportunities in a regulated and clear framework subject to the regulations of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK).

In a press release, KFH added that the investment options offered by local banks are a safe haven and a stable source for financial investments, along with other companies and official institutions licensed and subject to the supervision of regulatory authorities responsible for protecting the national economy and the investment sector.

KFH pointed out that the secure investment services and products obviate the need for involvement in investment activities with unfamiliar entities that promise financial returns from fraudulent or high-risk projects. KFH also stated that banks are assisting individuals seeking to invest in their funds through a variety of investment tools and experienced employees subject to the regulations and guidelines of regulators.

Additionally, KFH explained that among these safe investment services the banks offer are investment deposits, investment funds, investment saving accounts in addition to the long and short-term investment plans. Meanwhile, KFH warns

customers against investing in high-risk projects that are not subject to the supervision of CBK, or local, or foreign regulatory authorities, such as cryptocurrencies, and FX trading through shell companies and other online scammers that promote quick profits.

KFH advises people to contact the Capital Markets Authority, and other official local regulators such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and CBK to verify and provide investment advice on the authenticity of the investment parties. KFH also urges customers to avoid suspicious communications, invitations, fake websites, and anonymous online and SMS messages that promise people higher returns.



Diraya logo, KFH

Market Movements 11-02-2024

Country	Market	Change	Closing pts	Country	Market	Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	Tadawul	+6.28	12,209.06	EGYPT	EGX 30	-212.37	28,199.04

Business

stc upgraded to Premier Market in Boursa Kuwait

CEO reflects on 'upgrade' and 'future vision'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, has been upgraded from Boursa Kuwait's Main Market to the Premier Market as of Feb 11th 2024. The upgrade marks a significant step for the Company and its shareholders after stc's compliance with the Premier Market's standards and requirements.

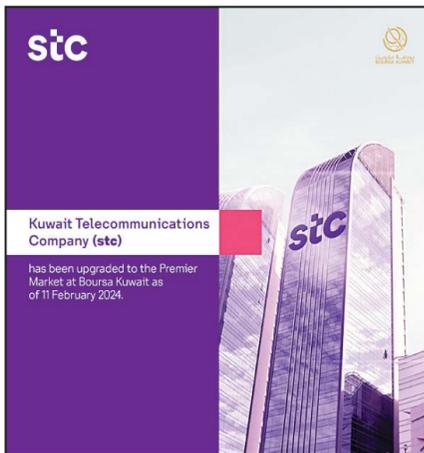
Whereby, in Boursa Kuwait's 2024 annual review, stc has met the high liquidity requirements and market capitalization to be upgraded to the Premier Market.

In light of the significant milestone, engineer Maziad Alharbi, CEO of stc, commented, "We are pleased to witness the upgrade of stc to the Premier Market, which not only reflects our financial robustness but serves as a clear indicator of our strategic direction and operational strengths. Over the past several years, stc has gone through major transformative shifts and acquisitions that have enabled us to become one of the leading telecom and digital solutions providers in Kuwait and throughout the region. Coming to this moment, our journey so far has been remarkable, but what excites us more is the future that lies ahead."

Alharbi added, "The transition to the Premier Market is a key driver for stc's growth strategy. It enhances our visibility in the investment community, attracting a broader spectrum of institutional investors and elevating our position in the market. This upgrade is a testament to the trust our investors place in us and the solid foundation we have built over the years. Our focus remains persistent on delivering innovative services, ICT solutions, and enabling digital transformation for our customers and the communities we serve."

Alharbi concluded, "Looking forward, we are committed to our mission of enriching the lifestyles of our customers and providing added value to our shareholders. As we step into this new era, our priority will be to continue investing in cutting-edge technologies and expanding our service offerings. We are dedicated to maintaining our leadership position in the telecommunications sector and playing a pivotal role in the growth of Kuwait's economy."

About stc: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is a Kuwaiti shareholding company incorporated pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 187 on 22 July, 2008, to operate and manage the third GSM mobile network in Kuwait as per Law No. 2 of 2007. Accordingly, stc launched its operations in December 2008 and was listed



stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, has been upgraded from Boursa Kuwait's Main Market to the Premier Market as of Feb 11, 2024.

on Boursa Kuwait in December 2014. It is a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and is a subsidiary of stc Group. stc has rapidly reached a leadership stance in the market through its customer and employee centric strategy.

stc offers an innovative range of world-class products, services and solutions with high quality, that cater to the customers' needs and demands, both for individuals and enterprises (solutions by stc). In 2019, stc acquired 100% of the share capital of the Internet Service Provider, Qualitynet General Trading and Contracting Company (solutions by stc) in Kuwait. Further enhancing its digital capabilities, in 2022 stc acquired the entire share capital of e-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries, one of the most prominent ICT providers in Kuwait.

In 2021, stc obtained the approval from the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority's (CITRA) to launch the first-of-its-kind mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) license to launch Virgin Mobile Kuwait in partnership with Virgin Mobile Middle East & Africa.

stc offers high internet speeds due to the implementation of the most advanced 5G network and deployment of the largest network nationwide. In 2021, stc was the first operator in Kuwait to launch the latest 5G Standalone technology dubbed 'FULL 5G' that brings the 5G experience to a new level with better speeds, lower latency, and improved coverage.

stc's CSR program focuses on outreaching to the local community with a primary focus on health, environment, entrepreneurship, sports, and education through contributing and supporting various community-driven initiatives.

1,619 suspended portfolios among 4,339 active

Boursa sees surge in suspended portfolios

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Kuwait Stock Exchange has seen a rise in the percentage of suspended portfolios despite an increase in the overall number of investment portfolios since the beginning of the year. Currently, suspended portfolios account for 37%, with the remaining 63% active, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to reliable sources, there are currently 1,619 suspended investment portfolios out of a total of 4,339 active portfolios.

These suspensions can be attributed to various factors, including personal decisions by portfolio managers, disciplinary actions taken by the Disciplinary Board, or scrutiny

by the Capital Markets Authority for violations.

The prevalence of manipulative practices in the stock exchange has heightened concerns among traders, leading many to prefer institutional channels for investment rather than managing portfolios independently to mitigate potential risks and errors. There are concerns regarding the conduct of some investment companies managing portfolios, with reported violations including unauthorized transfers of funds from clients' bank accounts, failure to follow established procedures for managing investment portfolios, and discrepancies in

reconciling client accounts.

Additionally, some companies have failed to disclose commissions charged for portfolio management services, violating regulations governing fee structures and client communication.

Regulatory requirements mandate portfolio managers to submit periodic reports to the Capital Markets Authority, detailing portfolio creation and closure, executed trades, and personnel involved. The implementation of an automated reporting system through the electronic portal of the Capital Markets Authority has improved oversight and operational efficiency in the financial market.

DGCA inks \$25.9 mln deal with LEONARDO

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) signed on Sunday a contract with the German company LEONARDO to execute three projects at Kuwait International Airport worth KD eight million (about USD 25.9 million). The three projects were related to the installation, operation and provision of training, warranty, maintenance and technical

support services at the airport.

DGCA'S Acting Director General Emad Al-Jalawi told KUNA that the project's aim was to provide a weather data system at Kuwait International Airport, which provides maximum security and safety for air navigation.

On his part, DGCA's Deputy Director General for planning and projects affairs Saad Al-Otaibi told

KUNA that the project consisted of a system for measuring the speed of wind and a system for detecting air turbulence in the last stages of landing.

Al-Otaibi added that the first project was an early warning system for wind shear, the second project was a disturbance detection system, while the third project was a Doppler radar system.



KUNA photo

Kuwait Civil Aviation, German company sign KD 8 mln multi-projects contract.

Car rental market set for 9.8% annual growth

Research firm forecasts significant surge in Kuwait's car rental and leasing market

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: A specialized economic report from an international research firm has forecasted a significant upsurge in Kuwait's car rental and leasing market predicting a compound annual growth rate of approximately 9.8% between 2022 and 2027, citing various factors contributing to this expansion, notably tourism and advancements in technology such as the convenience of renting via applications, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the market study conducted by the Ken Company, the car rental market is anticipated to reach \$268 million by 2027, up from \$168 million in 2022. This reflects a compound annual growth rate of 9.8%, compared to the 7.6% growth rate witnessed between 2017 and 2022, with revenues reaching \$116 million in 2022.

The report attributes the projected growth to the recent initiatives promoting tourism in Kuwait, which are expected to generate increased demand for car rentals. Furthermore, the proliferation of online booking platforms, mobile applications, and GPS systems is anticipated to enhance the overall rental experience, making it more accessible and efficient.

Economic development and the burgeoning tourism sector are identified as key drivers influencing the car rental market in Kuwait. The report underscores the correlation between market growth and factors such as gross domestic product expansion and disposable income levels.

The Kuwaiti car rental market is described as fiercely competitive, with both international and local players vying for a share of the market. This competition fosters innovation in service offerings and pricing strategies, ultimately benefiting consumers. Additionally, government regulations aimed at ensuring safety standards, fair business practices, and environmental considerations shape the operational landscape for companies in the sector.

In terms of service types, the Kuwaiti car rental market is divided into immediate rentals and limousine services, with immediate rentals holding a dominant share of approximately 95%. Short-term rentals are noted to be more cost-effective for certain users, particularly for brief periods or during holiday seasons.

Several emerging trends are highlighted in the report, including the growing popularity of short-term rentals and subscription services due to changing consumer behavior and preferences. Moreover, there is a rising interest in electric cars among rental companies, driven by environmental concerns and global trends towards sustainability.

Sedans are identified as the most common type of vehicle rented, constituting 24% of the market share. This preference is attributed to the suitability of sedans for both short and long trips, appealing to individuals and families alike. Additionally, the market is segmented based on vehicle types, including SUVs, luxury cars, passenger vans, buses, pickups, and trucks.

'Never incorporate your company in state of Delaware'

Elon Musk's Neuralink moves legal home to Nevada after Delaware judge invalidates his Tesla pay deal

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb 11, (AP): Elon Musk's brain implant company Neuralink has moved its legal corporate home from Delaware to Nevada after a Delaware judge struck down Musk's \$55.8 billion pay package as CEO of Tesla.

Neuralink, which has its physical headquarters in Fremont, California, became a Nevada company on Thursday, according to state records. Delaware records also list the company's legal home as Nevada.

The move comes after Musk wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that shareholders of Austin-based Tesla would be asked to consider moving the company's corporate registration to Texas. "Never incorporate your company

in the state of Delaware," he wrote in one post after the court ruling. He later added, "I recommend incorporating in Nevada or Texas if you prefer shareholders to decide matters."

Legal experts say most corporations set up legal shop in Delaware because laws there favor corporations. "Delaware built its preferred state of incorporation business by being friendly to company management, not shareholders," said Erik Gordon, a business and law professor at the University of Michigan.

On Jan. 30, Delaware Chancellor Kathleen St. Jude McCormick invalidated the pay package that Tesla established for Musk in 2018, ruling that the process was "flawed" and the price "un-

fair." In her ruling, she called the package "the largest potential compensation opportunity ever observed in public markets by multiple orders of magnitude."

McCormick's ruling bumped Musk out of the top spot on the Forbes list of wealthiest people.

Musk, a co-founder of the privately held Neuralink, is listed as company president in Nevada documents. Messages were left Saturday seeking comment from Neuralink and Tesla.

McCormick determined that Tesla's board lacked independence from Musk. His lawyers said the package needed to be rich to give Musk an incentive not to leave - a line of reasoning the judge shot down.

Al-Mulaifi targets SME growth in national economy

Gulf Bank concludes GB Market with 11 small to medium-sized businesses

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: In the midst of a bustling crowd and considerable public interest, Gulf Bank wrapped up its GB Market event, highlighting the involvement of approximately 11 businesses and initiatives exclusively owned by young Kuwaitis. These enterprises represented diverse sectors, including perfumes, jewelry, restaurants, and cafes. Participants were selected through competitions and voting by followers on Gulf Bank's social media platform, reflecting their preferences for specific stores and products.

Mr. Abdullah Al-Mulaifi, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, expressed satisfaction with the significant public participation throughout the event. This event effectively accomplished its primary goal of supporting young individuals and entrepreneurs, particularly those managing small to medium-sized businesses. He further stated, "At Gulf Bank, we are committed to maintaining our distinctive role in supporting young entrepreneurs and owners of small to medium-sized businesses." He noted that GB Market provides an outstanding opportunity for entrepreneurs and business owners to directly showcase their products, thus fostering the growth of these enterprises and enhancing their contributions to the national economy.

Al-Mulaifi emphasized Gulf Bank's keenness to actively engage in events that cultivate the potential of youth, stressing that promoting sustainability in society and supporting youth initiatives are fundamental pillars of the bank's 2025 strategy.

He also noted that the event offered the public a chance to explore products from their favorite stores, while having an enjoyable family day, filled with various entertainment options and prize giveaways.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the lead-



A glimpse of the event.



Group photo of the Gulf Bank Corporate Communications Team.

ing Kuwaiti Bank of the future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking

transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

CEO of major Nigerian bank killed in California helicopter crash

The CEO of one of Nigeria's largest banks was killed Friday along with his wife and son when a helicopter they were riding in crashed near Interstate 15 in Southern California's Mojave Desert.

Herbert Wigwe, chief executive of Access Bank, was among the six people on board when the aircraft went down shortly after 10 p.m. Bamofin Abimbola Ogunbanjo, former chair of NGX Group, the Nigerian stock exchange, was also killed. Their deaths were confirmed Saturday by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a former Nigerian finance minister who is now the director-general of the World Trade Organization.

"Terribly saddened by the news of the terrible loss

of Herbert Wigwe ... his wife and son as well as Bimbo Ogunbanjo in a helicopter crash," Okonjo-Iweala wrote in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter. "May the souls of the departed rest in perfect peace."

The death of Wigwe, 57, shocked many in Nigeria and in the banking sector. He was widely seen as an industry leader, having been involved in two of the country's biggest banks, including Guaranty Trust Bank, where he was previously executive director. Under Wigwe's leadership, Access Bank's assets and presence grew beyond borders in several African countries.

His death is "a terrible blow" for Nigeria and Africa's banking industry, Nigerian presidential spokesman

Bayo Onanuga wrote on X. "Wigwe had a big vision to make Access Holdings (the parent company) Africa's biggest, with all the unquenchable thirst for acquisitions," Onanuga added.

Wigwe's interests also spanned the education sector. His private university, founded in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region where he was from, is scheduled to open in September. Last year he said the university was "an opportunity for me to give back to society."

"This is surreal and I am lost for words," Festus Keyamo, Nigeria's minister of aviation and aerospace development, wrote in a post on X. "May Almighty God comfort his aged parents and sibling ... his im-

mediate family members, his staff, friends across Nigeria and dependents."

The crash happened east of I-15 near Halloran Springs Road and not far from the California-Nevada border. Halloran Springs Road crosses the highway in an area known to travelers for an abandoned gas station with a sign declaring "Lo Gas" and "Eat."

It's a remote area of the desert, with an elevation of nearly 3,000 feet (914.40 meters), and about a 60- to 80-mile (100- to 130-kilometer) drive from Las Vegas. Logs from the California Highway Patrol show there was rain and snow in the area around the time of the crash. (AP)

Zain launches 'Bede' in Bahrain

Innovative fintech app offers instant Islamic personal finance solutions

MANAMA, Bahrain, Feb 11: Zain FinTech, the financial services arm of Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces the launch of its new fintech brand, Bede (in my hand).

Commercially launched first in Bahrain as per the Central Bank of Bahrain guidelines, Bede is an innovative Shariah-compliant fintech mobile app offering a seamless and convenient consumer micro finance service in just a few taps. Applicants can download the app, receive instant, hassle-free approvals based on their credit profile, thereby making accessing funds they require easier than ever. In due course, subject to local regulatory and commercial considerations across Zain's footprint, the range of services offered by Bede will extend from beyond consumer micro-finance to also include payments, remittances and credit cards.

The official launch event of the Bede brand in Bahrain marks a significant milestone in Zain FinTech's journey across its footprint and the Kingdom's digital landscape, with the aim to drive financial inclusion and revolutionize the growth of the regional fintech ecosystem.

The launch ceremony at the Ritz Carlton, Bahrain was attended by the Kingdom's Minister of Finance and National Economy, H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa; Zain Group Chairman, Osamah Al-Furaih; Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi; Zain Bahrain Chairman, H.E. Shaikh Ahmed bin Ali Al-Khalifa; and Zain Group board members, other key stakeholders, industry experts, and government officials, who



Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa with Osamah Al-Furaih, Bader Al-Kharafi, Shaikh Ahmed bin Ali Al-Khalifa, Zain Group board members, and other dignitaries.



Osamah Al-Furaih, Bader Al-Kharafi, Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq, and Zaki Al-Busaidi during the event.

witnessed first-hand the dynamic features of Bede.

Bader Al-Kharafi commented, "The launch of the new fintech brand Bede, first in Bahrain is another milestone of the Board of Director's initiated '4Sight' strategy and vision to expand much-needed fintech services in Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and soon in Kuwait and Sudan. The expansion of innovative fintech services drives financial inclusion and advances the region's digital ecosystem, supporting the socio-economic visions of the countries we serve."

"Bede aims to allow everything to be made in the palm of one's hand, catering to consumers' lifestyles and emerging demands beyond basic telecom services. The introduction of a new fintech brand represents a major step in Zain's

strategic aspirations to expand its regional leadership in the fintech arena supported by our footprint, customer base, and leading technologies."

Al Kharafi thanked, "The Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) for granting Bede a license and for its efforts to promote innovation in the financial sector in line with the Kingdom's 2030 economic vision. I also thank and recognize the efforts of the fintech teams at Zain and Bede, in realizing this opportunity and embracing a future where financial services are accessible, efficient, and inclusive for all."

The Bede name and logo Bede stems from the Arabic meaning of "in my hand", hence the customers' freedom to manage their financials, the way they desire, in their own hands. The brand's colors are inspired by a

human approach which translates to a friendly and approachable personality. The primary colors are black and white with injected bright and playful colors which focus on the positive energy of banking and the human element of the brand that offers a clean and direct approach. With its brand slogan "When you get more, you do more", Bede believes in providing the tools and solutions that allow everyone a level playing field to be able to achieve and go as far as possible.

More on Bede The cutting-edge mobile app leverages advanced technology and innovative features to simplify the financial journey for those seeking convenient, ethical, and Shariah-compliant financial services. Bede's end-to-end digital solution

leverages the power of mobile apps for digital onboarding and eKYC as well as artificial intelligence for fast creditworthiness assessment of customers.

Developed by FOO, a leading fintech solutions provider, the Bede app prioritizes the security and privacy of its customers to protect user data and transactions, ensuring a safe and reliable experience tailored to users' unique financial needs and goals.

The impact of Bede in Bahrain will go beyond convenience and efficiency. It is designed with inclusivity at its core, ensuring that it is accessible and beneficial to everyone, whether the individual is looking to fund an emergency situation or manage their day-to-day expenses more efficiently.

Through strategic partnerships with selected employers, Bede also extends

its services to offer Islamic personal finance options to their employees, providing added convenience and accessibility.

The Zain FinTech umbrella As the financial services arm of Zain Group and playing a key part of Zain's '4Sight' strategy by introducing and overseeing fintech services across the company's Middle East and African footprint, Zain FinTech focuses on rolling out innovative products and services related to payments, remittances, credit cards and micro-finance within the Zain ecosystem and beyond. Other entities championed by Zain FinTech include Zain Cash in Iraq and Jordan, and Tamam in Saudi Arabia. Zain aims to roll-out FinTech services in Kuwait and Sudan in the near future, subject to regulatory approvals.

Dispute over currency ban

Leaders of Serbia and Kosovo spar at the UN

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 11, (AP) — The leaders of Serbia and Kosovo sparred at the United Nations over the latter's ban of the use of the Serbian currency in areas where minority Serbs live, the latest crisis between the two governments.

Tensions escalated after the government of Kosovo, a former Serbian province, banned banks and other financial institutions in the Serb-populated areas from using the dinar in local transactions, starting Feb. 1, and imposed the euro.

The dinar was widely used in ethnic Serb-dominated areas, especially in Kosovo's north, to pay pensions and salaries to staff in Serbian parallel institutions, including schools and hospitals. Serbia said last week it would seek an emergency meeting at the U.N. Security Council over the issue.

In 1999, a 78-day NATO bombing campaign ended a war between Serbian government forces and ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo. Serbian forces were pushed out but Belgrade never recognized Kosovo's independence and still considers it a Serbian province.

At a heated meeting on Thursday, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic told the council that abolishing the dinar was a push to make living conditions unbearable for the minority Serb community with the goal of expelling them.

He said it was "nothing more than another in a series of facts of persecution, and a systematic and widespread attack on the Serbian population - in one word, a crime against humanity."

Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti retorted that claims his country is conducting an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Serbs are "a lie," and said that abolishing the dinar will prevent criminal groups in Kosovo from receiving illegal cash.

"Serbs who leave Kosovo just as those who leave Serbia, do so to pursue opportunities in Western Europe, not to flee some fictional ethnic cleansing campaign," Kurti said.

The European Union and the United States expressed concern that Kosovo's ban of the dinar could raise tensions in an already volatile region and called for consultations and a delay in the ban.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield urged for an immediate postponement of the ban, telling the council "the decision was taken without adequate preparation or consultation with the local population."

She also expressed deep concern at "uncoordinated actions" taken by the Kosovo government, including law enforcement operations at offices of Serb-supported institutions in western Kosovo and the nongovernmental Center for Peace and Tolerance in the capital of Pristina, an ethnic Serb institution where papers and computers were confiscated.

Russia's deputy ambassador Dmitry Polyansky strongly criticized Kurti for calling ethnic Serbs "criminals" and accused Kosovo of organizing "anti-Serbian terror" and trying to get rid of the "non-Albanian population."

He said the ban of the dinar was "a criminal and deceitful step" and that about 100,000 non-Albanians risk being left without their pensions, scholarships and salaries. Polyansky also said it "undermines all efforts made by the international community to find compromises and lasting solutions and dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina."

"As a result, what we have is a direct risk that there will be a new outbreak of violence in the Balkans," he added.



People lined up at a cash machine in northern Serb-dominated part of ethnically divided town of Mitrovica, Kosovo, Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024. The European Union on Thursday called on Kosovo to postpone an effort to force ethnic Serb-dominated areas to adopt the same currency as the rest of the country, as rules that would block use of the Serbian dinar went into effect. Most of Kosovo uses the Euro, even though the country is not part of the EU, but parts of its north populated mostly by ethnic Serbs continue to use the dinar. (AP)

Thousands of doctors in England to strike again

Health likely to become a key UK election issue

LONDON, Feb 11, (AP) — Thousands of doctors in the early years of their careers in England are to go on strike later this month for another five-day stretch as their long-standing pay dispute with the British government remains in stasis.

The British Medical Association, the union that represents the so-called junior doctors, said on Friday that the government had "failed to meet the deadline to put an improved pay offer on the table" and that they would go on strike from Feb. 24 to Feb. 28.

The junior doctors, who form the backbone of hospital and clinical care as they train up to be specialists in a particular field, have walked off the job on nine occasions over the past year and last month they went on strike for six days, the longest in the history of the state-funded National Health Service.

"We remain willing to carry on talking and to cancel the forthcoming strikes if significant progress is made and a credible offer is put forward," the BMA's junior doctors committee co-chairs Dr. Robert Laurensen and Dr. Vivek Trivedi said.

The union says newly qualified doctors earn 15.53 pounds (\$19.37) an hour - the U.K. minimum wage is just over 10 pounds an hour - though salaries rise rapidly after the first year. The BMA has been asking for 35% "pay restoration" as its starting position, but has said it is willing to negotiate.

The Conservative government has said it won't negotiate unless the union calls off the strike.

"We already provided them with a pay increase of up to 10.3% and were prepared to go further," said Health Secretary Victoria Atkins. "I ask the junior doctors' committee to cancel their action and come back to the table to find a way forward for patients and our NHS."

Senior doctors, known as consultants, and other medics have been drafted in to cover for emergency services, critical care and maternity services during the strikes. The consultants themselves are also in dispute with the government over their recent pay award but have yet to set any dates for any further strikes.

The upcoming strike means thousands more canceled appointments and operations, putting further pressure on the NHS to deal with a backlog that is likely to be a key issue in the general election later this year.



Junior doctor members of the BMA (British Medical Association) join the picket line at the University College Hospital in London, Monday, Aug. 14, 2023. Thousands of doctors in the early years of their careers in England are set to go on strike later this month for another five-day stretch as their long-standing pay dispute with the British government remains in stasis. (AP)

Finnair is asking passengers to voluntarily weigh themselves before boarding flights

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Feb 11, (AP) — Almost everything that gets onto a commercial plane - fuel, checked-in baggage, cargo and meals - is weighed. For passengers and their cabin bags, most airlines use average data.

But Finland's national carrier Finnair said Friday that it started asking passengers this week voluntarily and anonymously hop onto a scale with their hand luggage at the country's main airport in Helsinki, the airline said Friday. The aim is to get their own figures.

"We will need data for both winter season and for summer season - in winter season people typically have heavier clothing, which impacts weights," Finnair spokeswoman Päivi Tällqvist

told The Associated Press, adding that the survey would last until May.

Passengers boarding onto European and long-haul flights won't be "penalized for their weight," and "the numbers are kept discreet, away from prying eyes," she added.

So far, about 800 people have joined the survey, and those who agree to take part receive a small gift - a reflective baggage tag, Tällqvist said.

Airlines can either use official data by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, known as EASA, or do their own standard weights measurements, Tällqvist said. Finnair has chosen the latter, but safety authorities require that the survey is renewed every five years. The last

time Finnair weighed passengers was in 2018.

In June, New Zealand's national airline also weighed passengers before boarding.

The weight figures will be sent to the Finnish transport and communications agency later this year and will be used for balancing aircraft and loading calculations for the period running from 2025 until 2030.

"We hope to have a good sample of volunteers, both business and leisure travelers, also this time, so that we can get the most accurate information possible for important balance calculations," Satu Munnukka, head of ground processes at Finnair, said in a statement.

Britain has endured a year of rolling strikes across the health sector as staff sought pay rises to offset the soaring cost of living. Unions say wages, especially in the public sector, have fallen in real terms over the past decade, and double-digit inflation in late 2022 and early 2023, fueled by sharply rising food and energy prices, left many workers struggling to pay their bills.

Many groups within the NHS, such as nurses and ambulance crews, have

reached pay deals with the government, but the union representing junior doctors has held out, and negotiations broke down late last year.

If it goes ahead, the strike would be the junior doctors' last on the current mandate, which expires at the end of the month. Further strikes would require another vote among members which the BMA is currently undertaking.

The government is seeking to appoint many of the problems in the NHS

on the junior doctors, while the main opposition Labour Party, which is way ahead in opinion polls, points the finger at Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for personally blocking progress.

"He bears responsibility for the canceled operations and appointments desperate patients will face once again," said Wes Streeting, Labour's health spokesman. "This can't go on. Patients are desperate and staff are worn out."

Association President Dr. Rania Azmi leads global call to action

Fadia Survive & Thrive marks World Cancer Day 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The World Cancer Day, led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) worldwide, aims to mobilize urgent action to improve cancer risk awareness, prevention, treatment, and care services for all individuals.

Fadia Survive and Thrive has been organizing every year the World Cancer Day, especially this year being the final one in the UICC campaign's "Close the Care Gap", which started in 2022.

Fadia Survive and Thrive marked the first year of the campaign in 2022 by initiating the elderly patients with cancer initiative, in which Dr. Rania Azmi, the Fadia Association President, presented worldwide this initiative's pillars at the UICC livestreaming.

This year, 2024, the Fadia Association organized its World Cancer Day with a focus on "Closing The Care Gap" campaign, where the Association's Presidents signed two calls to action one in Kuwait and one in Egypt, while advocating for the rest of the world to take part of the UICC call to action during this world cancer day.

This international activity took part at the Boulevard Park and mall in Salmiya, with a variety of activities for different stakeholders.

Many cancer stakeholders and community partners and public figures, with VIP guests, all gathered with Fadia Survive and Thrive at the Boulevard to commemorate the Fadia 2024 World Cancer Day, to continue to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.

The event was attended by many participants and guests of honour from over 15 nations. Dr. Azmi, President of Fadia Survive and Thrive took the opportunity to welcome everyone from diverse backgrounds: "The World Cancer Day and any day around the year that commemorate the importance of cancer prevention or awareness is essential to change the status quo in the fight against cancer. I believe that together, all cancer stakeholders - from patients, caregivers, and patient organizations, to nutritionists, nurses, oncologists and ministries of health around the world - we can be unstoppable in continuously improving the quality of life for all cancer patients, regardless of who they are and where they live." The event recognized many speakers and presented the volunteers with certificates of appreciation for completing volun-



Photos during the Fadia Survive & Thrive's World Cancer Day 2024 celebration.

teers training and being great ambassadors for awareness throughout the world cancer day. The event concluded with thanking everyone for joining and believing in the

importance of prevention in closing the care gap, calling everyone participated today "ambassadors for prevention in their own community of work or friends."

importance of prevention in closing the care gap, calling everyone participated today "ambassadors for prevention in their own community of work or friends."



Photos during the IMA Weekend Islamic School educational tour.

Students gain insights of Kuwait's heritage

IMAWIS organizes educational tour

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: IMA Weekend Islamic School (IMAWIS) is delighted to announce the successful organization of an educational tour for its students on February 8th, 2024. The tour took place at the Kuwait National Museum and American Cultural Center Kuwait. With gratitude to Allah, the tour was immensely successful, providing an enriching experience for the students, who gained valuable insights into the art and rich history of Kuwait.

The tour was a captivating expedition, offering students a unique opportunity to delve into the rich tapestry of Kuwait's cultural heritage. The primary objective of the educational tour was to enhance students' understanding of history, art, and culture by immersing them in the exhibits and collections housed at the Kuwait National Museum and American Cultural Center.

The documentaries screened at the American Cultural Center provided an opportunity for students to explore various periods of Kuwait's

history. Meticulously curated exhibits showcasing ancient artifacts to modern historical milestones, the museum provided a chronological journey that deepened students' appreciation for the past.

IMAWIS employed Parent-Teacher relationship method to ensure proper learning of the children in the online environment which resulted in positive outcome. The Islamic knowledge, dedication and expertise of the pious and professional teachers plays an important role in shaping the students to be the torch bearers for future generations.

Imaniyat, Seerah, Hifdh, Tafseer, Duas, Stories of Sahabah and the Urdu Language are some subjects being taught at IMAWIS. Learning these subjects with teachers who have in-depth knowledge and profound insights in Islamic theology is a quite inspiring experience for the students.

The new academic year (2024-2025) starts from April 2024. Admissions are open for those who are

interested. IMAWIS offers brilliant online platform for Islamic studies for boys and girls of 5-14 years age group. Interested parents are requested to enroll their children by registering at www.imakuwait.org/school. Queries may be directed to Mr. Mohammed Yunus at 66771517/5090 8108 or Mr. Rizwan Danish at 9963 2314 or through email at imawis@imakuwait.org.

Indian Muslim Association (IMA Kuwait) is an Indian socio-religious organization in Kuwait which carries out its various activities under the patronage of "Ministry of Aqqaaf" & "Islamic Affairs", Kuwait and Indian Embassy. IMA Kuwait always focusses to provide platform for enhancement of expatriates living in Kuwait for their spiritual & social aspect through various programs & webinars. It looks forward for organizing various beneficial programs in future, considering the occasions and requirements of expatriates in general and specifically Indian community.

US Ambassador Sasahara attends event

AAW celebrates grand opening of New Balance store in Assima Mall



Her Excellency Ms. Karen Sasahara, Mr. Stuart Henwood, Mr. Faisal Al-Mutawa, and Mr. Khalid Al-Mutawa during the opening ribbon cutting.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) and New Balance announced the launch of the New Balance store in the heart of Kuwait City, in the Assima Mall. The event was attended by the U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait, Her Excellency Ms. Karen Sasahara, the General Manager of New Balance, Mr. Stuart Henwood, Chairman and CEO of AAW, Mr. Faisal Ali Al Mutawa, Deputy CEO of AAW, Mr. Khalid Faisal Al Mutawa.

In commemoration of the opening, New Balance embraced the Sadu design tradition, highlighting and supporting local artisanship in collaboration with "Sadu House". The opening celebration featured activities and entertainment that showcased the essence of Kuwaiti heritage.

The store was decorated with traditional Sadu pieces, and offered an Arabic calligraphy corner, oud player, and a customized sand drawing performance that blended elements of both New Balance and Kuwaiti craftsmanship.

The New Balance Assima marks AAW's second franchised store in Kuwait, with the first one being in 360 Mall. Located on the ground floor of the Assima Mall, the New Balance store offers a diverse range of modern sports and lifestyle footwear and apparel, specializing in running, and catering to men, women, and children. The New Balance products are renowned for their functionality, appealing to all age groups, from athletes and enthusiasts to fans of a sporty and modern lifestyle.

New Balance was founded in Boston, Massachusetts, USA in 1906, with the goal of demonstrating responsible leadership and establishing a global brand that is a source of pride for partners and communities alike.

It always strives to empower people through sports and craftsmanship, to create positive change in communities around the world.



New Balance branch opened in Capital Mall.



A photo from the grand opening ceremony of the New Balance Mall branch.



Photo during the association's executive meeting.

Leaders forge path for organizational excellence

FOKE conducts executive meet 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Friends of Kannur Kuwait Expats' Association (FOKE) organized an executive meet for the leaders of various levels of the organisation.

The executive meet held at United Indian School Auditorium was attended by more than 250 of the executives. The meeting helped the newly elected executives and the leadership to get to know each other and have open discussions. The meeting allowed the unit committee members to part their ideas to the top leadership for the betterment of the organisational culture and operations.

The participants were elected at various general body meetings to lead various committees in 2024, which includes Central Committee, 3 Zonal Committees, 17 Unit Committees, Vanithavedi, Balavadi, Advisory Committee and Patron Members.

President Lijesh presided over the function, in which FOKE General Secretary Hariprasad welcomed the audience. FOKE Patron - Praveen Aduthila, addressed the audience.

Prizes were also distributed to the winners of the raffle competition held on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the organisation. Joint Treasurer Suraj expressed vote of thanks.



President Lijesh speaks at FOKE executive meet.

<p>FEB 12 LECTURE</p> <p>DR. SOURAYA NOUJAIM</p> <p>BEYOND FRONTIERS, CONNECTED STORIES OF ISLAMIC ART</p> <p>YARMOUK CULTURAL CENTRE</p> <p>7 PM مساءً</p>	<p>13-15 فبراير ورشحة</p> <p>ماريا شكرى</p> <p>"الفرصة السريعة"</p> <p>مركز الرمحول الثقافي</p> <p>5-7 مساءً</p>	<p>14 فبراير MUSIC</p> <p>ماجد الكويتي MAJED ALKUWAITI</p> <p>أمسية بدوية BADAWI MUSIC</p> <p>YARMOUK CULTURAL CENTRE</p> <p>7 PM مساءً</p>
<p>دار الآباء الأصلاء Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah The Al-Sabah Collection</p>		

People

Tracking Taylor: Fans on edge as Swift jets to Super Bowl

Online sleuths track her Tokyo to LAX flight

LOS ANGELES, Feb 11, (AP): Will she make it in time? Intrepid flight trackers online seem to think so.

On social media, fans of Taylor Swift and aviation journalists believe they've identified Swift's private jet, labeled "The Football Era." It arrived from Tokyo's Haneda Airport to Los Angeles' LAX airport just after 3:30 p.m. local time.

Her transportation plans onward to Las Vegas, where her boyfriend, NFL star tight end Travis Kelce, will play in Sunday's Super Bowl, have yet to be revealed.

Representatives for Swift and VistaJet, the world's only global private aviation company, did not immediately respond to AP's request for comment.

Swift's last song was still ringing in the ears of thousands of fans at the Tokyo Dome on Saturday night when the singer rushed to a private jet at Haneda airport, presumably embarking on an intensely scrutinized journey to see Kelce.

"We're all gonna go on a great adventure," Swift told the crowd earlier. She was speaking of the music, but it might also describe her race against time, which was to cross nine time zones and the international date line.

With a final bow at the end of her sold-out show, clad in a blue sequined outfit, the crowd screaming, strobe lights pulsing, confetti falling, Swift disappeared beneath the stage and her journey to the other side of the world began.

Her expected trip to see Kelce's Kansas City Chiefs play the San

Francisco 49ers in Las Vegas has fired imaginations, and speculation, for weeks.

"I hope she can return in time. It's so romantic," said office worker Hitomi Takahashi, 29, who bought matching Taylor Swift sweatshirts with her friend and was taking photos just outside the Tokyo Dome.

About an hour after the end of the concert, AP journalists were near Haneda's private jet area when minivans drove up and someone went inside the gate area, as four to five people carrying large black umbrellas obstructed the view of the person.

Evidence

There was plenty of evidence at the concert of the unique cultural phenomenon that is the Swift-Kelce relationship, a nexus of professional football and the huge star power of Swift. In addition to people wearing sequined dresses celebrating Swift, there were Kelce jerseys and hats and other Chiefs gear.

Some spent thousands of dollars to attend the pop superstar's concerts this week.

"Romeo, take me somewhere we can be alone," Swift sang.

She won't find that Sunday in Las Vegas when a sold-out crowd, not to mention millions around the world, will be watching her.

To call the worldwide scrutiny of Swift's travels intense is an understatement.

Fans have tracked her jet. The planet-warming carbon emissions of her globe-trotting travels have been criticized. Officials have weighed

in on her ability to park her jet at Las Vegas airports.

Even Japanese diplomats have gotten into the act. The Japanese Embassy in Washington posted on social media that she could make the Super Bowl in time, including in their statement three Swift song titles - "Speak Now", "Fearless" and "Red."

"If she departs Tokyo in the evening after her concert, she should comfortably arrive in Las Vegas before the Super Bowl begins," it said.

Takahashi, the fan at the Tokyo Dome, was aware of the criticism Swift has faced about her private jets but said the singer was being singled out unfairly.

"Many other people are flying on business, and she is here for her work. She faces a bashing because she is famous and stands out," Takahashi said.

Swift has been crisscrossing the globe this week.

Before coming to Asia, she attended the Grammys in Los Angeles, winning her 14th Grammy and a record-breaking fourth Album of the Year award for "Midnights." The show was watched by nearly 17 million people. She also made a surprise announcement that her next album is ready to drop in April.

Then the four concerts in Tokyo, and now the trip back to the States. She has followed Kelce for much of the Chiefs' season.

Swift is expected to fly to Australia later this week to continue her tour.

"This week is truly the best kind of chaos," she posted Wednesday on Instagram.

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows director Denis Villeneuve, (right), with actor Timothée Chalamet on the set of 'Dune: Part Two.' (AP)

Film

Sequel is the culmination of an epic journey

In 'Dune 2,' Villeneuve realizes his dream

LOS ANGELES, Feb 11, (AP): Denis Villeneuve doesn't feel like he came back to Arrakis for "Dune: Part Two." In his mind, he never left.

The sequel, which opens in theaters on March 1, is the culmination of a six-year filmmaking journey, preceded by 40 years of dreaming about it. And it's one that Christopher Nolan has already compared to "The Empire Strikes Back."

Realizing Frank Herbert's novel for the big screen is a feat that has bested and befuddled some of the greats, including David Lean, Alejandro Jodorowsky and David Lynch, the only one who actually got to make a film. But his 1984 film was such a flop that its two sequels were quickly abandoned.

Villeneuve finally got his chance at one of the more turbulent times in Hollywood history, facing two delayed releases (one because of the pandemic, the other because of the Hollywood strikes), an historic shift to streaming and zero guarantee that he would get "Part Two" at all.

"The conditions could not have been worse to release (Part One)," Villeneuve said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "And still the movie did a decent box office."

Even in that limbo time, he never stopped working on the script for "Part Two" knowing that if they got the greenlight, he wanted to be ready to go. By the time his cinematographer Greig Fraser was picking up the best cinematography Oscar for "Dune," they were deep into pre-production for the second. And everyone was soon back in Budapest with cameras rolling by July. But though they'd conquered the desert in "Part One," new challenges awaited.

"We all walked at the beginning into this project feeling confident," Villeneuve said. "And that confidence quickly eroded."

"Dune: Part Two" would be much more technically challenging, with at least seven major action sequences compared to two in the first. It picks up with Timothée Chalamet's Paul Atrides in the aftermath of the calculated and devastating attack by a rival house on his family and followers who had just established control of the mineral rich desert planet Arrakis. With his father dead, Paul and his mother Jessica (Rebecca Ferguson)

retreat to the desert where they establish a tenuous alliance with Arrakis natives known as the Fremen (including Zendaya). Paul trains to fight alongside them against the Harkonnen invaders.

Among the challenges: Filming Chalamet "surfing" on a sandworm in a way that is thrilling and transportive and not at all silly - something that Villeneuve had to figure out how to translate from what he'd imagined into words that would make sense to all the craftspeople working to make it happen in the brutally hot sun.

But none of those stresses seemed to transfer to the atmosphere on location in Wadi Rum, Budapest and Abu Dhabi. In fact, Chalamet said, it was the opposite. Villeneuve appeared to be having fun while making it.

"Denis is so playful. It's like the greatest evidence of self-confidence to me," Chalamet said. "It's ultimately a playful, creative exercise to get to direct any movie. The man who takes himself too seriously, is more focused on the people around him, the audience, than the actual product reeks of a movie that's pretentious."

Personality

Josh Brolin, who has now worked with Villeneuve on three films, including "Sicario" and both "Dunes," where he plays Atrides warrior Gurney Halleck, said it takes a unique personality to be a great filmmaker, but that Villeneuve is right up there with the Coen brothers in his ability to do it well.

"Great filmmakers that I've had the gift of being able to work with are misfits. They're true misfits. They're not cool people. They're socially totally inept," Brolin said. "And they found this medium to be able to work through, (where) they can express themselves wildly and specifically. And what's going on in their head that we never were privy to? Now we get to experience it."

Villeneuve has almost gotten used to delayed releases - and both times his films have benefitted from the cushion. The first was held almost a year because of the pandemic, which allowed him to tweak and perfect. This time, he got to do something different: Make a film transfer so that it could be projected on IMAX 70mm and 70mm, even though it was shot on digital.

"It's the ultimate viewing experience and the ultimate format," Villeneuve said.

"Dune: Part Two" cost a reported \$122 million to produce and is arriving in theaters not a moment too soon. The marketplace is a little emptier than usual because of the residual effects of the labor standoff in Hollywood last year, and it's also a landscape where superheroes are no longer the trusty "tentpoles" that they once were.

But "Dune" is a different kind of franchise. The first "Dune" made just over \$400 million even though it was also released day-and-date on Max (then HBO Max). And Villeneuve is more hopeful this time around. Audience appetite for theatrical is stronger than it was in late 2021, after all. He also believes "Part Two" is both more broadly entertaining and can be enjoyed without having seen the first.

"Part One was more meditative," he said. "We were following a boy discovering a culture. Now we are with the boy avenging his father, falling in love. And it's more of an action movie."

He knows that "Part Two" "has a soul" as well, but he's not quite ready to step back and enjoy it as the 13-year-old boy who started him on this path in the first place. It's one of those paradoxes of adapting something you love, that in order to do so, you have to sacrifice some or all of that, and it will no longer mean what it once did to you.

Before they started on the first, composer Hans Zimmer, also a lifetime fan of "Dune," asked him a question to this effect.

"He said to me, 'is it a good idea to try to life a dream that we had when we were kids? Is it meant to fail?'" Villeneuve said. "There's part of the movie that when I look at it, it's closed the dream. Other parts are new because it's an adaptation and I have to make choices and distort really the reality of the book in order to make it fit into a film format."

"It's mixed emotions," he said. "It's joy and pain."

But even if he can't yet experience it as a fan, his peers can. When Nolan compared it to "The Empire Strikes Back," Villeneuve demurred, but the internet went wild.

"There's a tremendous amount of visual imagination and worldbuilding on a scale that I have not seen before in a very long time," Nolan said. "It's somebody using all of the advantages of cinema in a way that doesn't often happen."

MEMPHIS, Tenn.: J.M. "Jimmy" Van Eaton, a pioneering rock 'n' roll drummer who played behind the likes of Jerry Lee Lewis and Billy Lee Riley at Sun Records in Memphis, Tennessee, died Friday at age 86, a family member said.

Van Eaton, a Memphis native who came to the famous record label as a teenager, died at his home in Alabama after dealing with health issues over the last year, The Commercial Appeal of Memphis reported, with a daughter, Terri Van Eaton Downing, confirming his death.

Van Eaton was known for his bluesy playing style that the newspaper said powered classic early-rock hits at Sun like "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" by Lewis and "Red Hot" by Riley. He also played with Bill Justis and Charlie Rich.

James Mack Van Eaton initially began playing trumpet in a school band, but he soon moved to drums, saying in a 2015 interview that "it was an instrument that intrigued me."

Van Eaton had his own rock 'n' roll band called The Echoes that would record a demo at the recording studio operated by Sam Phillips. His work there led him to connect with Riley and later Lewis.

"The hardest man to play with in the world was Jerry Lee. I told every musician to stay out of this man's way," Phillips told The Commercial Appeal in 2000. "The one exception was JM Van Eaton."

Van Eaton became a core of musicians that performed at Sun through the 1950s, the newspaper reported. (AP)

LONDON: Prince Harry said Friday that his "mission" to rein in the British media continues, after he accepted costs and damages from a tabloid publisher that invaded his privacy with phone hacking and other illegal snooping.

Harry's attorney, David Sherborne, said at a court hearing that Mirror Group Newspapers had agreed to pay all of the prince's legal costs, plus "substantial" damages, and would make an interim payment of 400,000 pounds (\$505,000) within 14 days. The final tab will be assessed later.

Harry said he had been vindicated, and vowed: "Our mission continues."

"We have uncovered and proved the shockingly dishonest way in which the Mirror acted for so many years, and then sought to conceal the truth," the 39-year-old royal said in a statement read outside the High Court in London by his lawyer.

Harry was awarded 140,000 pounds (\$177,000) in damages in December, after a judge found that phone hacking was "widespread and habitual" at Mirror Group Newspapers in the late 1990s, went on for more than a decade and that executives at the papers covered it up. Judge Timothy Fancourt found that Harry's phone



Van Eaton



Harry

was hacked "to a modest extent." The settlement avoids new trials over 115 more tabloid articles that Harry says were the product of hacking or other intrusions.

Mirror Group said in a statement that it was "pleased to have reached this agreement, which gives our business further clarity to move forward from events that

took place many years ago and for which we have apologized."

Harry's case against the publisher of the Daily Mirror is one of several that he has launched in a campaign against the British media, which he blames for blighting his life and hounding both his late mother Princess Diana and his wife Meghan. (AP)

People & Places

Television

Comedy legend returns

Can Stewart reignite the late-night's fire?

NEW YORK, Feb. 11, (AP) — As host of "The Daily Show" from 1999 to 2015, Jon Stewart changed comedy - and arguably journalism, too - with sharp, satirical takes on politics and current events. He became an essential part of the nation's conversation.

Now let's see if he can turn back time. Stewart, who walked away from "The Daily Show" to much fanfare, returns to his old perch Monday night. He's agreed to host each Monday through the election, and to executive produce the weeknight show for Comedy Central into next year to help it through another transition.

Comebacks are hard enough in an industry that doesn't always reward second acts. Catching lightning again will be difficult - particularly at a time when late-night television is greatly diminished as a cultural force and others, some from Stewart's family tree, are now competitors.

It can be even tougher when, as Salon critic Melanie McFarland put it, the current Jon Stewart is forced to compete with memories of the old Jon Stewart.

"The world has changed," says veteran television executive Doug Herzog, who hired Stewart and his successor, Trevor Noah, for Comedy Central. "The media environment has changed. The business has changed. It's just so different. I'll never speak for Jon, but he's always been about going forward, he's not about moving backwards. And that's what I would expect him to do."

Let's pay homage to what Stewart achieved when he hit his stride in the early 2000s.

Political humor had largely consisted of tame one-liners before Stewart and his team of mock "correspondents" - people you've come to know well like Steve Carell and Stephen Colbert - dove into the news of the day. He exposed double-talk, pointed out hypocrisy and could draw laughter with a wide-eyed look of incredulity or fear.

Debate

Studies found "The Daily Show" was a key news source for many young Americans. Stewart's comedy targeted journalists, too. CNN cancelled its political debate show "Crossfire" after Stewart skewered a then-bowtie Tucker Carlson. "The Daily Show" may not have pioneered the use of past video to prove a point, but it certainly reminded journalists of its effectiveness.

"Jon Stewart totally changed the face of late-night," says Robert Thompson, director of the Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture at Syracuse University. And the television executive who lured Stewart back, Chris McCarthy, called him "the voice of our generation."

Stewart hasn't been talking about it publicly, although he did offer a joke - what else? - on social media. "After much reflection I have decided to enter the transfer portal for my last year of eligibility," he said on X, formerly Twitter.

He ended his previous hosting stint on Aug. 6, 2015, precisely as Trump emerged as a force in presidential politics. Some of Stewart's fans were sorely disappointed that he was not there to offer his nightly take on the Trump presidency. Perhaps the chance to offer his voice during another Trump campaign proved irresistible.

Tough political humor didn't leave with Stewart and has even thrived. Colbert makes Donald Trump a nightly punching bag on CBS. John Oliver, an alumni of "The Daily Show," has an award-winning, issue-oriented show on HBO. Another "Daily" vet, Samantha Bee, held forth on TBS from 2016 to 2022. Jimmy Kimmel and Seth Meyers are tartly topical, and Greg Gutfeld seeks laughs from a conservative perspective on Fox News Channel.

So Stewart will return to a crowded field of comics looking to mine much of the same material.

His appearances on Mondays - the same nights that Rachel Maddow does her once-a-week show on MSNBC - offer liberals a television murderer's row.

It's a more serious Stewart that fans have gotten to know since he left, both through his activism on behalf of rescue workers from Sept. 11, 2001, and his short-lived show on the Apple TV+ streaming service, "The Problem with Jon Stewart." It's legitimate to ask whether his comedy will be able to get rolling again after a nine-year absence, on the air just once a week, and if he can assemble a staff of writers as good as he once had.

In short, can this dedicated Mets fan still throw the fastball?

Popular culture is littered with stars who tried to come back but could never recapture the magic - Arsenio Hall, Lucille Ball and Roseanne Barr are examples just from comedy. Name a musical act that reformed and substantially added to its legacy.

Often it had little to do with talent. The moment had simply passed, and Thompson worries that the same might be true now.

Highlights

"There's something so 2010 about Jon Stewart now," he says.

Late-night comedy has far less of an imprint on the culture now than it did when Americans turned off the bedroom light after hearing Johnny Carson's monologue, or even when Stewart went away.

Rather than stay up late, many Americans now log on to the Internet the next morning to catch late-night highlights, the best jokes. People who do stay up, young people in particular, are as apt to get lost on TikTok, play a video game or choose a show to stream.

"People don't talk about late-night anymore," Herzog said. "Night in and night out, it doesn't play the same cultural role. We don't stay up to watch Johnny Carson anymore, Cher on David Letterman, whatever it was. I don't feel like it's there anymore. It's fragmented and gotten smaller, just like everything else."

During the 2014-15 season, "The Daily Show," Jimmy Fallon's "Tonight," Kimmel and Letterman in his last year at CBS collectively averaged 10.5 million viewers, according to the Nielsen company. The same four shows - Colbert now in place of Letterman - have 4.8 million viewers now. The shows took in \$859 million in ad revenue in 2015. Through last November, the 2023 tally was \$259 million, the ad intelligence provider Vivvix said.

Separate out "The Daily Show," and the decline is much sharper. Stewart had more than 1.3 million viewers in his last season; Trevor Noah was down to 372,000 in 2022 and those numbers surely dropped last year with the botched effort to find a successor. During Stewart's last full year in 2014, "The Daily Show" earned an estimated \$129 million in advertising revenue. Last year it was down to \$19 million through November, per Vivvix.



This combination of photos shows Mary J. Blige, (from left), Cher, and Mariah Carey, who are among the 2024 nominees for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. (AP)



Ryan Gosling, (left), a cast member in 'Barbie,' poses with the film's director Greta Gerwig as she holds her DGA Awards Feature Film Medallion backstage at the 76th DGA Awards, Saturday, Feb. 10, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)



Usher

Tiësto

Variety

LAS VEGAS: In a short film shown at the end of the Super Bowl halftime performer news conference, the show's headliner Usher comes up missing. The singer's sudden absence prompts instant panic from his friends including Ludacris, Lil Jon and Taraji P. Henson, sparking a search at various Las Vegas landmarks.

Ultimately, Usher is found splashing water while dancing in a Caesar's Palace fountain in the seven-minute film "Where's Usher!?" It's one of the many creative projects from Apple Music, which has made a concerted effort to amplify the anticipation around Sunday's halftime show.

Since Apple Music became the halftime show sponsor, the streaming service is pushing to leave an influential mark like never before.

"We're trying to extend the campaign to more than just a show on a Sunday afternoon," said Oliver Schusser, the vice president of Apple Music and Beats. The streaming service became the sponsor for the show in 2022 replacing Pepsi, which held the position for a decade.

Schusser said Apple Music stepped in as a company that understands the music landscape. He called their partnership a "very powerful" one with the NFL and Jay-Z's Roc Nation, which has produced the halftime show since 2019. (AP)

THE HAGUE: Dutch music producer DJ Tiësto has withdrawn from performing at Sunday's Super Bowl due to an undisclosed family matter.

Tiësto, whose real name is Tijs Verwest, wrote on social media on Thursday he would miss the matchup between the San Francisco 49ers and the Kansas City Chiefs in Las Vegas as he needed to return home.

"It was a tough decision to miss the game, but family always comes first," the 55-year-old wrote on X.

The Grammy-winning musician was selected as the first ever in-game DJ, slotted to warm up the crowd before kickoff and throughout the game.

Tiësto did not provide details about the emergency. He married model Annika Backes in 2019 and the couple have two children.

His performances scheduled for Friday evening in New York and Saturday evening in Las Vegas - where the Super Bowl is being held - have not been canceled, according to his website. Tiësto said in his message he will need to return home "on Sunday."

The Dutchman has been repeatedly named as the world's best DJ during his 40-year career. He previously performed at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens and

Music

Iconic names vie for Rock Hall induction

2024 Hall of Fame nominees revealed

NEW YORK, Feb. 11, (AP) — Mary J. Blige, Mariah Carey, Cher, Lenny Kravitz, the late Sinéad O'Connor and heavy metal's so-called Prince of Darkness are some of the 2024 nominees for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a wide musical net that also includes the pop-soul of Sade and Britpopers Oasis.

Ozzy Osbourne, who led many parents in the 1980s to clutch their pearls with his devil imagery and sludgy music, gets the nod as a solo artist, having already gone into the hall with Black Sabbath. Nominations also were handed to hip-hop duo Eric B. & Rakim, soft rockers Foreigner, singer-guitarist Peter Frampton, alt-rockers Jane's Addiction and Dave Matthews Band, and dance icons Kool & the Gang.

Impact

"Continuing in the true spirit of rock 'n' roll, these artists have created their own sounds that have impacted generations and influenced countless others that have followed in their footsteps," said John Sykes, Chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation in a statement.

Ten of the 15 nominees are on the ballot for the first time, including Carey, Cher, Foreigner, Frampton, Kool & the Gang, Kravitz, Oasis, O'Connor, Osbourne and Sade. Sade, whose 1980s soft rock hits include "Smooth Operator" and "By Your Side," is having a moment, having last year been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Carey, with 19 No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, Blige with eight multi-platinum albums and nine Grammy Awards, and Cher - the only artist to have a No. 1 song in each of the past six decades - would help boost the number of women in the hall.

Artists must have released their first commercial recording at least 25 years before they're eligible for induction. The induction ceremony will take place in Cleveland this fall.

at the Las Vegas Grand Prix. (AP)

MEMPHIS, Tenn.: Jurors in the trial of two men charged with killing Young Dolph will come from outside of Memphis because of intense media coverage of the fatal shooting in the rapper's hometown, a judge ruled Friday.

Judge Jennifer J. Mitchell decided in

favor of a change of venue motion filed by Justin Johnson's lawyer, who argued during a Feb. 2 hearing that Johnson cannot get a fair trial before Memphis jurors due to the intense media attention and "public visceral outrage" over the slaying.

A jury will be brought to Memphis from outside of Shelby County for the June 3 trial of Johnson and Cornelius Smith Jr. Both men have pleaded not

guilty to first-degree murder charges in the daytime ambush of Young Dolph, who was buying cookies at a Memphis bakery when he was gunned down in November 2021.

"This court is wary that jurors from Shelby County will not be able to lay aside their opinions or impressions and render a verdict based upon the evidence presented," Mitchell said while announcing her ruling.

Young Dolph, whose real name was Adolph Thornton Jr., was a rapper, producer and independent music label owner. He was gunned down while he was visiting his hometown to see a sick relative and hand out Thanksgiving turkeys. (AP)

Day broke through with her standout single "Rise Up." She eventually won a Grammy and Golden Globe for her acting and musical work on the film "The United States vs. Billie Holiday." After starring in the "Billie Holiday" and "The Deliverance" films, Day has re-focused her attention to making her own music. She recorded music while filming those projects and she's almost ready to reveal her second solo album "Cassandra," which is expected to release in the spring.

It'll be Day's first album since her 2015 debut "Cheers to the Fall," which earned a Grammy nomination along with "Rise Up."

On her upcoming album, Day wants to explore relationships and her spiritual walk with God. She'll also look to touch on her happiness and her not-so proud moments stemmed from selfish decisions.

Day said she wrote and sang through those experiences using it as her therapy.

"I wanted to show up as myself," she said. "Not necessarily do the right thing or say the right thing. I just want to show the iterations of me."

the other professional ballots.

Last year, Missy Elliott, Willie Nelson, Sheryl Crow, Chaka Khan, "Soul Train" creator Don Cornelius, Kate Bush and the late George Michael were some of the artists who got into the hall.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.: A drug possession charge against South Florida rapper Kodak Black was dismissed Friday, two months after an arrest, though a drug trafficking case from 2022 remains ongoing.

Broward County Circuit Judge Barbara Duffy ruled that prosecutors could not refute or negate the fact that the rapper, whose real name is Bill Kapri, had an oxycodone prescription filled by a pharmacy, the Sun Sentinel reported.

Plantation police arrested Kapri in December after finding him asleep at the wheel with white powder around his mouth, officials said. The powder initially tested positive for cocaine, but a lab test later revealed it was oxycodone, for which Kapri obtained a prescription in July 2022.

Kapri still faces a tampering with evidence charge related to the arrest, but his attorney, Bradford Cohen, hopes to get that dismissed, as well. (AP)



Celine Song, (right), director of the film 'Past Lives,' poses with presenter Patty Jenkins after she won the Michael Apted First-Time Theatrical Feature Film Director Award at the 76th DGA Awards at the Beverly Hilton, Saturday, Feb. 10, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

The Conversation

Breastfeeding – a lifesaving practice for mothers and infants

Human milk is personalized medicine for mom and infant

By Tisha Felder and Joynelle Jackson
University of South Carolina

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

Four babies are born every second in the world, and there are only two options for their first food at birth: human milk or formula.

Global and US health authorities agree, however, that human milk provides the optimal nutrition for infants. The World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant's life. Following the introduction of solid foods, these organizations recommend continued breastfeeding up to two years and beyond.

Human milk can be given to infants directly through breastfeeding or by pumping or expressing human milk into a cup or bottle. The health benefits of breastfeeding and human milk for infants stem from its composition, which includes vitamins, minerals and antibodies that can prompt its composition to change over time to meet the growing infant's needs. The dynamic nature of human milk leads to commonly known benefits, such as lower risks of ear and gastrointestinal infections among infants who are breastfed.

However, there are other benefits for infants that many people aren't aware of, as well as for the breastfeeding mother and society.

We are women's health scholars with combined professional expertise in maternal obstetrics nursing and public health. Together, we co-founded Mocha Mamas Milk, a research and support initiative focused on improving breastfeeding among Black families in South Carolina, a state where just 55.1% of Black infants are breastfed, compared with 75.2% of white infants.

Human milk is personalized medicine that can benefit both the mother and infant. We are personally and professionally passionate about this because many people are not aware that some of these benefits can save lives and reduce persistent health disparities.

One significant benefit of breastfeeding not widely known by the public is its ability to lower the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS. SIDS, sometimes referred to as "crib death," is the unexplained death of a baby, usually under 1 year of age.

Protection

Some risk factors include stomach- or side-lying sleep, low birth weight, sleeping on a soft surface or overheating. A large analysis of studies found that infants who received any human milk for at least two months had nearly a 50% lower risk of SIDS.

This reduction is notable for two reasons. First, the reduction in risk occurs about 60 days following birth, which is several months before the six-month exclusive breastfeeding guideline is met. Second, the protection from SIDS was the same for infants who were exclusively breastfed compared to infants who may have received formula in addition to any breastfeeding.

In addition, breastfeeding can significantly protect premature infants - those born before 37 weeks of pregnancy - from developing a condition called necrotizing enterocolitis, an inflammation of the intestines that can be fatal. While this condition is rare in full-term infants, it occurs in 5% to 15% of preterm infants.

Breastfeeding also provides important benefits for the mother, such as reducing risks of diabetes and breast and ovarian cancers. Breastfeeding for any length of time compared to never is associated with a 10% decrease in hormone receptor-negative breast cancers, which are more common in younger women. These cancers cannot be treated with hormonal therapy and often grow faster than the more commonly diagnosed hormone receptor-positive breast cancers.

The reduction in risk from breastfeeding is even greater for Black women, who are more likely to be diagnosed with these hormone receptor-negative breast cancers and have worse prognoses and fewer treatment options. Any way of reducing the risk for Black women is critically important because, compared to white women, Black women are 40% more likely to die from breast cancer, yet 4% less likely to be diagnosed with the disease.

There is also growing research suggesting the positive impact of breastfeeding on a mother's mental health. One possible reason for this is that oxytocin - often called the "love hormone" because of its association with bonding - plays a role in the maternal-infant bonding process.

After delivery, the release of oxytocin causes human milk to flow - a process called the letdown reflex - and initiate breastfeeding. This release of milk can satisfy the new baby and leave the mom with "warm and fuzzy" feelings toward her baby. Research also suggests that breastfeeding can reduce the risk of depression. A 2021 study also found that the longer a woman breastfed, the lower her risk for postpartum depression.

Barriers

Despite the benefits of breastfeeding to both infants and mothers, few US families are able to sustain breastfeeding over time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2022 Breastfeeding Report Card - the latest data that is currently available - shows that more than 80% of infants start out receiving human milk, yet just over a quarter of them are exclusively breastfed through six months.

Black infant-mother pairs not only have the lowest breastfeeding rates in South Carolina, but they also have the lowest rates nationally, compared to other US racial and ethnic groups. More recent data from the National Vital Statistics System of US infants born in 2020 and 2021, shows that only 74.5% of Black infants were breastfed, compared with non-Hispanic Asian infants (90.1%), non-Hispanic white infants (84.0%) and Hispanic infants (86.8%), based on analysis of birth records collected by the CDC.

Black infants are also more likely to die from SIDS and to be born prematurely. So increasing breastfeeding among Black families could lead to saving significantly more Black infant lives. The Southeast US is where the widest racial gaps in breastfeeding exist. In addition, infants living in Southern states are less likely to achieve national goals for breastfeeding at 6 or 12 months old compared to infants living in other regions of the country.

Reducing barriers is critical to closing racial and geographic gaps in breastfeeding and allowing US mothers and their infants the opportunity to benefit from the life-saving qualities of human milk. Studies show that addressing work-related barriers by making investments in paid family leave, for example, could increase exclusive breastfeeding rates by 15%.

The US is one of the only countries in the world that does not provide national paid family leave. Workplaces that support breastfeeding breaks and provide safe and clean spaces for expressing and storing human milk are also important in promoting breastfeeding.

Given that US women's labor force participation rates are at a record high, the importance of reducing barriers in the workplace cannot be overstated.

The US Agency for International Development estimates that every US dollar invested in breastfeeding yields \$35 in economic returns.

Societal investments in breastfeeding-friendly workplace policies will not only yield cost savings and extend breastfeeding rates, but they will shift the burden of breastfeeding from simply being an individual choice to being a public health priority. (AP)

Science behind verbal flubs: Aging, stress, and memory

Verbal gaffe or sign of trouble?

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP) - Any parent who's ever called one of their children by the other's name - or even the family pet's name - likely could empathize when President Joe Biden mixed up the names of French leaders Macron and Mitterrand.

The human brain has trouble pulling names out of stuffed memory banks on cue. But when are those and other verbal stumbles normal, and when might they be a sign of cognitive trouble?

"When I see somebody make a flub on TV, I'm really not all that concerned," said well-known aging researcher S. Jay Olshansky of the University of Illinois at Chicago. "What science will tell you about flubs is that they're perfectly normal, and they are exacerbated by stress for sure."

Biden, 81, has a decades-long history of verbal gaffes. But they're getting

new attention after a special counsel this past week decided Biden shouldn't face criminal charges for his handling of classified documents - while describing him as an old man with trouble remembering dates, even the date his son Beau died.

That prompted a visibly angry Biden to lash out from the White House, saying, "My memory is fine." As for his son's 2015 death from brain cancer, "Frankly, when I was asked the question, I thought to myself, it wasn't any of their damn business," Biden said.

Biden is not the only candidate making verbal slips. Former President Donald Trump, Biden's likely opponent in the November presidential election, has also. Last month the 77-year-old Trump confused his major opponent for the GOP nomination, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, with former House

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Health experts caution that neither verbal gaffes nor a lawyer's opinions can reveal whether someone is having cognitive trouble. That takes medical testing.

But certain glitches are common at any age. "To easily recall names, right in the moment, is the hardest thing for us to do accurately," said Dr. Eric Lenze of Washington University in St. Louis, a geriatric psychiatrist who evaluates cognition in older adults.

Studies

Some studies have suggested that everyday "misnaming" may occur when the brain has names stored by category - like your family members or perhaps in Biden's case, world leaders he's long known - and grabs the wrong one. Or the miss may be phonetic, as the names of France's current president, Emmanuel Macron, and former President Francois Mitterrand both begin with "M." Mitterrand died in 1996.

As for dates, emotion may tag certain memories but not run-of-the-mill ones, such as the special counsel's questions about when Biden handled a box of documents.

"Attaching a calendar date to an event is not really something that the human brain does at any age," Lenze said. "It's not like a spreadsheet."

Whether it's a name, date or something else, memory also can be affected by stress and distractions - if someone's thinking about more than one thing, Olshansky said. And while everybody's had an "it's on the tip of my tongue" lapse, flubs by presidents, or would-be presidents, tend to be caught on TV.

Olshansky watches recordings of his presentations at science meetings and "there isn't a single time I don't make a mistake," he said. "I'm 69 years old, which I do not consider to be old, but I made the same mistakes when I was 39."

It's reasonable for people to wonder if leaders in their 70s and 80s remain sharp, Lenze said. What's reassuring is if overall, what someone says is overall accurate despite a verbal gaffe.

Some cognitive aging is normal, including delay in memory retrieval. People's brains age differently, and heart health, blood pressure and physical activity play a role in brain health.

And while Trump often brags about passing a screening-style memory test several years ago, Lenze said the best assessment includes rigorous neuropsychological testing.

Also:

LAS VEGAS: A Nevada jury has awarded about \$130 million in damages in a lawsuit filed by five people who suffered liver damage after drinking bottled water marketed by a Las Vegas-based company before the product was recalled from store shelves in 2021.

The Clark County District Court jury awarded more than \$30 million in compensatory damages to the plaintiffs including Myles Hunwardsen, a Henderson man who underwent a liver transplant at age 29. The jury levied another \$100 million in punitive damages.

The verdict reached Tuesday was the second large-sum award in a negligence and product liability case involving AffinityLifestyles.com Inc. and its Real Water brand, which was sold in distinctive boxy blue bottles as premium treated "alkalized" drinking water with healthy detoxifying properties. In October, a state court jury awarded more than \$228 million in damages to several plaintiffs including relatives of a 69-year-old woman who died and a 7-month-old boy who was hospitalized. Both were diagnosed with severe liver failure.

"We want to send a message to food and beverage manufacturers that they should be committed to quality assurance," Will Kemp, a lawyer who represented plaintiffs in both trials, said Thursday.

Kemp said several more negligence and product liability cases are pending against the company, including one scheduled to begin in May stemming from liver damage diagnoses of six children who ranged in age from 7 months to 11 years old at the time.



New AI-powered brain imaging software offers enhanced image quality and ease of use.

High quality and easy-to-use

Innovative AI-powered system redefines 'brain imaging' tech

GUILDFORD, Conn., Feb 11, (Agencies): Hyperfine, Inc., the groundbreaking medical device company that has redefined brain imaging with the world's first FDA-cleared portable magnetic resonance brain imaging system—the Swoop system—recently launched the AI-powered eighth generation of Swoop system software. The software's diffusion-weighted imaging (DWI) AI denoising feature received US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clearance in October 2023, and it has been rolled out at select sites over the past several weeks through a limited market release. The latest software improves Swoop system image quality and introduces valuable ease-of-use features, including a real-time aid for more precise patient loading and positioning and a streamlined image upload process.

With CE and UKCA certifications for this latest software, Hyperfine, Inc. is well positioned for future international expansion, bringing the Swoop system to a broader global market.

"Our latest AI-powered software, the eighth generation of our proprietary software platform, embodies our commitment to supporting clinicians in critical decision-making," remarked Tom Teisseyre PhD, Chief Operating Officer of Hyperfine, Inc. "Our focus on image quality with this latest software has been on the DWI sequence, which is key in stroke imaging. Since its first FDA clearance in 2020, we've been dedicated to continually enhancing image quality and workflow efficiencies to define best-in-class, user-centric, ultra-low field MR brain imaging."

Over 50 exams were performed in hospitals taking part in the limited market release phase, and users commented favorably on DWI image quality. Participating sites confirmed that the new streamlined upload feature materially shortened upload completion

times, and the fast-positioning check was a time-saving aid and helped improve image acquisition.

"The software update on the Swoop system has been most beneficial to our workflow. We are now able to view each series as it is being performed and can communicate with the technologist whether additional series are needed. Additionally, we can communicate with clinicians any critical findings in real-time without having to wait for the whole study to be completed," says Jennifer Villa Frabizzio MD, neuroradiologist, Radiology Group of Abington.

Aerin Medical Inc., a company dedicated to providing Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) physicians with non-invasive solutions for the treatment of chronic nasal conditions, has announced that has published positive two-year outcomes from the VATRAC trial. The study showed a single in-office treatment with VivAer resulted in sustained improvement in symptoms of nasal airway obstruction (NAO) caused by nasal valve collapse, and reduced both daytime sleepiness and the use of medications and mechanical aids. Previously published three-month results of the randomized controlled trial demonstrated that treatment with VivAer was safe and superior to a sham procedure.

"These data demonstrating the significant and lasting improvements in nasal airway obstruction symptoms mark a breakthrough in addressing a common and often-challenging cause of the condition," said Joseph K. Han, M.D., professor, chief of the division of rhinology and endoscopic sinus and skull base surgery, and chief for the division of allergy at Eastern Virginia Medical School, who served as the co-principal investigator of the VATRAC clinical trial.

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Dominate 1st week at worlds

Chinese capture titles in artistic swimming, diving

DOHA, Qatar, Feb 11, (AP): China finished a dominant first week at the World Aquatics Championships with more titles in artistic swimming and diving Saturday to top the medal table with 16 golds out of 29.

Cheng Wentao and Shi Haoyu retained their world title in the artistic mixed duet free event and Yang Hao won the 10-meter platform diving for a sixth career gold at worlds.

Australia took the other gold on offer Saturday as storied diver Maddison Keeney paired with Dominic Bedgood to win the mixed 3-meter synchronized

Their score of 224.1437 points was more than 15 points ahead of silver medalists Mireia Hernandez and Dennis Gonzalez of Spain. Bronze went to Mexico's Trinidad Meza and Diego Villalobos.

Yang's sixth world title was his first individual success, and added to the gold he won Thursday in synchronized 10-meter platform with partner Lian Junjie.

Yang's points total of 564 was more than 10 ahead of teammate Cao Yuan. Ukrainian teenager Oleksiy Sereda took bronze, as he did Thursday in the synchro with partner Kirill Boliukh.

In the mixed synchro diving Saturday, Keeney regained the title she had won five years ago with a different partner, Matthew Carter.

Keeney and Bedgood scored more than 300 points to win by 13 from Italian pair Chiara Pellacani and Matteo Santoro. Bronze medals went to Kim Su-ji and Yi Jaeyoung of South Korea.

Keeney's gold followed silver in Doha in the women's 3-meter springboard synchro, with Anabelle Smith - the pair that took bronze at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics - and bronze in the mixed team event.

In women's water polo Saturday, Australia, Canada, Greece and the Netherlands advanced to the quarterfinals.

DIVING

springboard - a rare event in which China did not compete.

Ahead of swimming events starting Sunday, Australia's three golds so far is best of the rest of the world behind the Chinese wave of success in Doha.

Cheng and Shi had taken silver in the mixed duet technical event last weekend, and improved on that in Aspire Dome arena performing a routine on the theme of "Romeo and Juliet."

"Winning the gold medal at the World Championship on the Chinese New Year is indeed a great feeling," Cheng said.



Cao Yuan of China competes during the men's 10m platform diving final at the World Aquatics Championships in Doha, Qatar, Saturday, Feb. 10, 2024. (AP)

Mavs' win streak at four with 146-111 victory over Thunder

Curry's late 3-pointer sends Warriors past Suns

DALLAS, Feb 11, (AP): Luka Doncic scored 32 points, and the Dallas Mavericks matched their longest winning streak of the season at four games in a 146-111 rout of the Oklahoma City Thunder on Saturday.

Kyrie Irving scored 25 points and Daniel Gafford had 19 points and nine rebounds in his Dallas debut alongside P.J. Washington (14 points) after both were acquired in trades before Thursday's deadline.

Doncic, who sat the fourth quarter, had nine assists and eight rebounds as Dallas improved to 4-0 with Doncic and Irving in the lineup since Irving's return from a sprained thumb.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 25 points for the Thunder, who got Gordon Hayward from the Hornets at the deadline but aren't expected to play the 2017 All-Star before next week's All-Star break.

Warriors 113, Suns 112

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry made a 3-pointer with 0.7 seconds left and Golden State beat Phoenix for its sixth victory in seven games.

With the Warriors down 112-110 and 3.3 seconds to play, Curry caught the inbounds pass from Brandin Podziemski, turned and hit a 33-footer for his ninth 3-pointer of the night. He had 30 points.

Devin Booker led Phoenix with 32 points, and Kevin Durant had 24. The Suns had two chances after Curry's 3-pointer, but Booker was fouled under the basket and the first and Durant couldn't get a shot off on the second.

Jonathan Kuminga added 21 points for Golden State. Draymond Green had 15 points, nine assists and seven rebounds.

Clippers 112, Pistons 106

In Los Angeles, Paul George scored 33 points and Kawhi Leonard added 24 as Los Angeles rallied in the fourth quarter and denied Detroit its first three-game win streak



New Orleans Pelicans forward Brandon Ingram, (center right), blocks the shot of Portland Trail Blazers forward Jerami Grant, as Pelicans center Jonas Valanciunas, (left), defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Saturday Feb. 10, 2024. (AP)

of the season.

George scored 15 points in the fourth, hitting back-to-back 3-pointers that capped an 11-0 run and pushed the Clippers ahead to stay. James Harden finished with 14 points, eight assists and six rebounds.

Jaden Ivey scored 23 points to lead the Pistons, who dropped their 10th in a row to the Clippers. Cade Cunningham had 22 points and 10 assists, and Jalen Duren had 10 points and 18 rebounds. Simone Fontecchio added 20 points and nine rebounds off the bench.

Nets 123, Spurs 103

In New York, Dennis Schroder had 15 points and 12 assists in his Brooklyn debut and Cam Thomas scored 25 points as the Nets spoiled Victor Wembanyama's return to the arena where he was the No. 1 pick in the NBA draft.

Nic Claxton added 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Nets, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Ben Simmons scored 13 points on 6-for-7 shooting.

Wembanyama scored 21 points, but the 7-foot-3 Frenchman grabbed just four rebounds after managing only one in a loss at Orlando in his last game. Keldon Johnson scored 19 points for the Spurs, who have lost seven straight and fell to 0-3 on a nine-game trip that bridges the All-Star break.

Hornets 115, Grizzlies 106

In Charlotte, N.C. Miles Bridges scored 25 points, newcomer Vasilije Micic added 18 points and nine assists and new-look Charlotte snapped a 10-game losing streak.

Brandon Miller added 18 points to help the Hornets win at home for the first time since Jan. 19.

Micic joined Tre Mann (nine points, nine rebounds), Grant Williams (15 points, eight rebounds), Davis Bertans and Seth Curry in the Hornets' rotation for the first time after Charlotte dealt mainstays P.J. Washington to Dallas and Gordon Hayward to Oklahoma City on Thursday.

Jaren Jackson Jr. had 29 points for the Grizzlies, who have lost eight straight and played without seven injured players.

Magic 114, Bulls 108, OT

In Orlando, Fla. Franz Wagner scored 36 points, Cole Anthony had 14 points and 11 rebounds off the bench, and Orlando turned back Chicago.

Paolo Banchero had 19 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for Orlando. Jonathan Isaac finished with 12 rebounds, seven points and three blocks.

DeMar DeRozan led Chicago with 28 points. Nikola Vucevic added 26 points and 17 rebounds, and Ayo Dosunmu scored 19 for the Bulls despite playing much of the game with five fouls. Coby White finished with 14 points and seven assists.

76ers 119, Wizards 113

In Washington, Tyrese Maxey scored 28 points, Buddy Hield added 23 and Philadelphia snapped a four-game losing streak.

Ricky Council IV added 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Sixers in their sixth consecutive game with-

BASKETBALL

out seven-time All-Star Joel Embiid, who underwent left knee surgery on Tuesday. Maxey also had nine rebounds and seven assists.

Tyus Jones scored a season-high 25 points and hit a career-best six 3-pointers for the Wizards, who lost their sixth straight and slipped to 2-7 under interim coach Brian Keefe.

Deni Avdija added 21 points and 13 rebounds and Kyle Kuzma scored 21 points for Washington, which never led after the first quarter.

Cavaliers 119, Raptors 95

In Toronto, Jarrett Allen had 18 points and 15 rebounds, Evan Mobley added 17 points and 11 rebounds, and Cleveland extended its winning streak to a season-high nine games.

Donovan Mitchell scored 15 points and Max Strus had 14 as the surging Cavs won for the 22nd time in 26 games and improved their NBA-best road record to 17-8.

Caris LeVert and Georges Niang each scored 13 points for Cleveland. Isaac Okoro scored 12 points and Darius Garland had 11.

Toronto's Scottie Barnes scored 20 of his 24 points in the first half, matched his season-high with 10 assists, and added 10 rebounds for his fourth career triple-double and third this season. Grady Dick and RJ Barrett scored 14 points each and Immanuel Quickley had 10.

Pacers 125, Knicks 111

In New York, Myles Turner scored 23 points and Tyrese Haliburton added 22 as Indiana sent New York to its third loss in four games.

Pascal Siakam added 19 points and T.J. McConnell finished with 16 for Indiana, which shot 61% (50 for 82) in the game, including 48.3% (14 for 29) from 3-point distance. Isaiah Jackson finished with 12 points and Aaron Nesmith had 13.

Jalen Brunson returned to the Knicks' lineup after missing Thursday's loss to Dallas due to a sprained right ankle and scored 39 points.

Alec Burks returned to New York as part of a deal with Bojan Bogdanovic from the Detroit Pistons before Thursday's trade deadline. Burks, who was with the Knicks from 2020-22, scored 22 points and Bogdanovic scored all 11 of his points in the first half of his New York debut.

Precious Achiuwa scored 15 points and Dante DiVincenzo 14 for the Knicks.

Hawks 122, Rockets 113

In Atlanta, Dejounte Murray had 34 points and Atlanta overcame a sluggish start to beat Houston for its sixth win in eight games.

Trae Young had 18 points and eight assists, Saddiq Bey scored 24 and Jalen Johnson added 21 for the Hawks.

Jalen Green had 26 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists for the Rockets, who lost all four games on their road trip. Jeff Green scored a season-high 19. Aaron Holiday had 18 points against the team he played for last season.

Pelicans 93, Trail Blazers 84

In Portland, Ore., Trey Murphy III scored 24 points and New Orleans won for the fifth time in six games.

Brandon Ingram added 17 points, nine assists and five rebounds, and Jonas Valanciunas had 16 points and nine rebounds to help New Orleans rebound from a loss at the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday night. The Pelicans were without Zion Williamson because of a bruised left foot.

Jerami Grant led Portland with 24 points, and Deandre Ayton had 18 points and 17 rebounds. Dalano Banton scored 12 points in his first game with the Trail Blazers after coming over from Boston at the trade deadline.

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Larsson wins World Cup slalom

SOLDEU, Andorra, Feb 11, (AP): Swedish skier Anna Swenn Larsson earned her second career victory Sunday in the first women's World Cup slalom in nearly 13 years with neither Mikaela Shiffrin nor Petra Vlhova competing.

The American star and her Slovakian rival, whose gripping duels have been dominating women's slalom racing for years, are both out with knee injuries.

"It's unbelievable, and for sure it's sad that not the two queens are here, but I'm so happy to grab a victory," Swenn Larsson said.

SKIING

While Shiffrin still hopes to return over the next few weeks, Vlhova had her season ended when she tore ligaments in her right knee in January. Shiffrin hurt her left knee, but avoided damage to the ligaments, while landing from a jump and crashing into the safety netting at a downhill in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, 16 days ago.

Swenn Larsson defended her first-run lead and beat Croatian prodigy Zrinka Ljutic by 0.35 seconds. After finishing, she lay down on the snow for 15 seconds.

"I didn't see much of green lights in the first half of the season, but I have been feeling really well lately," said the Swede, who has been hampered by persistent lower-back problems but secured a World Cup podium spot with a third-place finish in Jasna in January.

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SPORTS

Al-Salmiya eye continued success

Al-Arabi look to bounce back in league

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Today marks the completion of the fifteenth round of the Zain Premier League with two scheduled matches. In the first, Al-Salmiya will face Al-Shabab at Thamer Stadium at 4:45 p.m., followed by the second match between Al-Arabi and Al-Jahra at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium

SOCCER

at 7:25 pm.

Al-Arabi, currently with 33 points, approaches today's match with multiple objectives. The team aims to regain confidence following their exit from the Amir's Cup, where they suffered a 1-2 defeat to traditional rivals Al-Qadisiya in the semi-finals. Additionally, they seek to replicate their previous victory over Al-Jahra, having



Al-Arabi dribbles past an opponent during Zain Premier League match.

beaten them 2-1 in the first division. The team's Bosnian coach, Darko Nestorović, understands the importance of securing a victory today to maintain the trust of fans and the board of directors, given the high expectations placed on him to compete for a podium finish in the league standings.

Al-Jahra, currently at the bottom with two points, faces challenging circumstances due to administrative problems affecting team stability. These issues have cast a shadow on their focus and secured their participation in the "Avoid Relegation" league competitions. Continued poor performance may

lead to Al-Jahra being relegated to the Zain League for the first division.

In the other match, Al-Salmiya, led by Croatian coach Ante Mica, with 20 points, aims to boost the morale of its players following their qualification for the Emir's Cup final. The team seeks to replicate their previous success against Al-Shabab, having defeated them 2-1 in the first division. Despite the point difference with league leaders, Al-Salmiya has shown a commendable level in recent competitions, remaining unbeaten in the league since the tenth round, with their last loss against Al-Arabi with two unanswered goals.

Al-Shabab, with 14 points, looks to recover from a significant setback, having suffered a 1-4 loss to Al-Fahaheel in the Amir's Cup preliminary round. At the league level, they secured a valuable victory against Kazma with an unanswered goal in the fourteenth round.

Al-Qadisiya finish sixth in the second West Asian Volleyball Championship



KUNA photo

Qadisiya defenders team up to block a shot.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MUSCAT, Feb 11: Al-Qadisiya Club's volleyball team secured the sixth position at the conclusion of the Second West Asian Volleyball Championship held in the Omani city of Sohar. In the match to determine the fifth and sixth places, they faced a defeat yesterday against Al-Seeb of Oman in three clean rounds. The contest took place in the main hall of the "Sohar" Sports Complex as part of the competitions to determine rankings from fifth to eighth in the tournament, which featured 10 participating teams. The championship concluded with the final match between Al-Kuwait and Al-Rayyan of Qatar.

Al-Seeb of Oman claimed the fifth spot, while Sohar of Oman secured the seventh place after defeating Banyayas of the Emirates, who settled for eighth place. Al-Ibtisam of Saudi Arabia

VOLLEYBALL

clinched the ninth position by winning against Shabab Al-Hussein of Jordan, resulting in the Jordanian team finishing in tenth place.

Notably, in the previous edition of the tournament held in the Jordanian capital, Amman, last year, Al-Rayyan of Qatar emerged as the champions, with "Al-Kuwait" as the runner-up, and "Al-Shorta" of Qatar securing the third position.

Williams does it again with 2 saves in shootout as South Africa finish third



DR Congo's Simon Banza (right), challenges South Africa's Siyanda Xulu during the African Cup of Nations third place soccer match between South Africa and DR Congo, at the Felix Houphouët-Boigny in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. (AP)

Congo beaten 6-5

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Feb 11, (AP): South Africa captain Ronwen Williams did it again with two penalty saves in the shootout to beat Congo 6-5 on penalties for the Bafana Bafana to finish third at the Africa Cup of Nations.

Their match had ended 0-0 after normal time. No extra time was played.

Williams, who made four penalty saves in the quarterfinal win over Cape Verde, saved Chancel Mbemba's fifth penalty for Congo to keep his team in the match, then saved Meschack Elia's effort to win it.

Teboho Mokoena hit the left post with South Africa's first penalty before both teams' players scored until Mbemba was poised to win it. Williams guessed correctly and saved in the bottom left corner.

It ensured the Bafana Bafana won

SOCCER

without creating a clear goal-chance in regular time.

"This was an exhausted team today, of South Africa," coach Hugo Broos said before pointing to his team's difficult schedule. "We were not fresh. But when you see the mentality in that group, they fight for it till the last second of the game. There were players who nearly fell from fatigue but still weren't done."

Congo forward Silas Katompa Mvumpa had the best early chance when he only had the goalkeeper to beat, but Williams reacted well and was able to pounce on the ball at Silas' feet.

The Leopards went on to create the better opportunities. Williams got down early to thwart Simon Banza early in the second half. Silas missed another great opportunity in the 65th, and Fiston Mayele went just wide in the final minute of normal time. Yoane Wissa fired the last good chance to the right and wide in stoppage time.

"Congo was better than us, Congo had more chances than us. But again if you fight for it like

Al-Fahaheel kick off Handball League campaign with easy win

Kuwait Club begin title defense against Al-Arabi

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Today marks the conclusion of the first week of the General Handball League "Al-Damj" at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, featuring two exciting matches. At five in the evening, defending champions Kuwait Club will face Al-Arabi, followed by a clash between Kazma and Al-Qadisiya at 7:00 pm.

Al-Fahaheel kicked off its campaign with an easy 28-14 victory over Al-Tadamon. Sulaibkhat and Al-Nasr played to a thrilling tie of 35-35, while Al-Salmiya narrowly triumphed over Al-Yarmouk 30-29. As a result, Al-Fahaheel and Al-Salmiya lead with two points each, while Al-Sulaibkhat and Al-Nasr earned one point each. Yarmouk and Al-Tadamon are yet to score.

In today's matches, the encounter between Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi promises fierce competition, given recent team developments. Kuwait Club has renewed contracts with na-

tional coach Haitham Al-Rashidi and Qatari professionals Frankis Marzo and Angel Hernandez. They have also added goalkeeper Mohamed Bouyabes to compensate for the absence of injured goalkeeper Hassan Safar. With players like Hussein Al-Moussawi, Hussein Al-Kandari, and

HANDBALL

Fawaz Al-Shammari, Kuwait Club aims for a strong start to defend the title they've held for the past 11 years.

On the other side, Al-Arabi, coached by national team coach Ahmed Foulad, seeks to showcase a strong performance. The team, known as "Sons of Mansouriyah," boasts experienced players like the Tunisian duo Osama Jaziri and Osama Hosni, along with bstars Mehdi Khan and Abdullah Mustafa. The roster includes Saud Al-Duwaihi, Ahmed Al-Farhan, Haider Dashti, Muhammad Ghazanfar, and Ali Al-Moussawi.

The second match is equally cru-

cial as Al-Qadisiya and Kazma, two top teams in the league, face off. The "Orange" team, led by former Serbian coach Bozo Rodrić, features the Tunisian duo Anwar bin Abdullah and Muhammad Farad, goalkeeper Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri, and Jadid Lamshari Taha. Meanwhile, the "Yellow" team, coached by Macedonian Zoran Katsarotovic, is led by Montenegrin professional Vladan Lipovina and includes Salman Al-Shamali, Muhammad Jassim, Mahmoud Ali, and Abdullah Al-Hajraf.

Both teams are eager to secure their first points in the league with a strong showing in their initial appearances.

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Alessandro Bastoni sealed the match late on as Inter moved seven points above second-place Juventus. The Bianconeri can cut the gap to four points with a win at home to relegation-threatened Udinese on Monday but will then have played a match more than Inter.

Roma remained a point behind fourth-place Atalanta after De Rossi's first loss. The former Roma player had won all three of his matches as coach after replacing the fired Jose Mourinho.

The Nerazzurri were without coach Simone Inzaghi on the bench in Rome

Champions League knockout stage starts

City and Madrid again looking best in Europe

LONDON, Feb 11, (AP): The Champions League narrative is so often about Manchester City and Real Madrid.

The past two champions of Europe were the only teams to sweep through the group stage with six wins. They also are first in action Tuesday when the most prized competition in club soccer resumes in the round of 16.

Man City is away to a Copenhagen team playing in the knockout stage for the first time in 13 years and Madrid is at Leipzig for the first leg.

The two teams favored to lift the trophy warmed up with comfortable wins Saturday and goals from signature players.

SOCCER

Erling Haaland confirmed his return to form after a foot injury with both goals in Man City's 2-0 win over Everton, his first since Nov. 28 when Leipzig was beaten 3-2 in their Champions League group.

Haaland has a Premier League-leading 16 goals and Madrid's Jude Bellingham has a La Liga-best 15 after also scoring twice in a 4-0 rout of second-place Girona, which is owned by the same Abu Dhabi group as Man City.

But Bellingham has an ankle injury, having asked to be substituted Saturday, and is a doubt to face Leipzig. At the same time Madrid was imperious in its domestic title-chasing clash. Bayern Munich was falling to an embarrassing 3-0 loss at Bayer Leverkusen in its own table-topping game.

Bayern now trails Bundesliga leader Leverkusen by five points and its run of 11 league titles is at risk again after barely holding on to the trophy on the last day last season.

The 2020 Champions League winner visits Lazio on Wednesday with its aura dimmed despite Harry Kane's 28 goals this season and coming through the group stage unbeaten for the sixth straight year.

Also Wednesday, Paris Saint-Germain hosts Real Sociedad, which was



Real Madrid's Rodrygo controls the ball during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Girona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

the surprise winner of a group ahead of last season's beaten finalist Inter Milan.

PSG is the in-form team though it was edged for first place in a tough group won by Borussia Dortmund.

The French champion - with Kylian Mbappé in the last few months of his contract - is unbeaten in all competitions for three months.

The first-leg games continue Feb. 20 when Inter goes to Atletico Madrid and PSV Eindhoven hosts Dortmund. On Feb. 21, Napoli hosts Barcelona and Porto hosts Arsenal.

Second-leg games are played from March 5-13. UEFA draws pairings for the quarterfinals and semifinals on March 15.

This Champions League has even more at stake. Four more entries must be decided for the 2025 Club World Cup, the FIFA event relaunching at the end of next season with 12 European teams in the lineup of 32.

The Club World Cup rebrand sees a month-long tournament - a group stage and 16-team knockout bracket - played every four years in June-July, starting in 2025 in the United States. FIFA will pay tens of millions of dollars in prize money.

Lazio close in on top four

Inter win at Roma to end De Rossi's perfect record

MILAN, Feb 11, (AP): A sublime second-half performance from league leader Inter Milan saw it win 4-2 at Roma in the teeming rain and end Daniele De Rossi's perfect record.

Goals from Gianluca Mancini and Stephan El Shaarawy had given Roma the lead at halftime following Francesco Acerbi's opener for Inter. But the Nerazzurri turned things around immediately after the break with a strike from Marcus Thuram, who also scored an own-goal from new Roma defender Angeliño.

after he picked up his fifth yellow card of the season in last weekend's win over Juventus.

The suspended Inzaghi watched from the stands as his team took the lead in the 17th minute - with the help of a former Inter player.

Former Nerazzurri forward Romelu Lukaku headed away an Inter corner but only as far as Acerbi, who headed it into the back of the net.



Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez (left), and Roma's Dejan Huijsen vie for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Roma and Inter Milan at Rome's Olympic stadium. (AP)

However, Roma leveled in the 28th minute when a free kick was floated over the top and Mancini headed it into the bottom right corner from close range.

And Roma turned the match around on the stroke of halftime as a counter-attack sent El Shaarawy sprinting into the area and he unleashed a shot which hit the crossbar and the left post before also bouncing off the right post and going in.

But Inter took control right at the start of the second half as it immediately demonstrated its potential.

Thuram teeped home Matteo Darmian's cross four minutes after the break and appeared to have fired Inter ahead with an almost identical goal seven minutes later - this time from Henrikh Mkhitaryan's cross - but it was Angeliño who got the final touch.

Benjamin Pavard also hit the post for Inter before Bastoni's late goal, his first in more than two years.

Lazio forward Ciro Immobile scored his 200th Serie A goal to help his team to a 3-1 win at relegation-threatened Cagliari and to close in on the top four in the Italian league.

It was Cagliari's fourth straight loss and left Claudio Ranieri's team in penultimate position, albeit only a point from safety.



Al-Yarmouk player makes a goal attempt against Al-Salmiya.

my players did today, I think they deserve it and I'm very proud of them," Broos said.

It was the last game of the tournament played in the Félix-Houphouët-Boigny Stadium, whose surrounding streets are home to several thousand noisy bats.

South Africa star Percy Tau missed the match with an injury. Broos said before it that the "game should not be played." He had wanted to play in the final on Sunday.

South Africa lost to Nigeria, and Congo lost to Ivory Coast in the semifinals.



West Ham's Mohammed Kudus (left), is tackled by Arsenal's Leandro Trossard during the English Premier League soccer match between West Ham United and Arsenal at the London Stadium in London. (AP)

Sports

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'Significant accomplishment for Gulf and Arab soccer'

HH the Amir congratulates Qatar on Asian Cup victory

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah conveyed his heartfelt congratulations to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani through a cable, expressing genuine joy over Qatar's triumph in the Asian Cup (AFC) Qatar 2023 final.

In his message, His Highness the Amir commended the exemplary sportsmanship exhibited by all participating teams and praised the outstanding performance of the Qatari team, which ultimately led to their success in the tournament. His Highness Amir emphasized that winning such a prestigious event is a significant accomplishment for Gulf and Arab football, underscoring the elevated standard of sportsmanship achieved.

His Highness the Amir also expressed immense pleasure for the outstanding success of the tournament

hosted by Qatar from January 12th to February 10th. His cable acknowledged that this achievement mirrors the advanced status of the sisterly State of Qatar and reflects the comprehensive development and progress

SOCCER

the Arabian Gulf state has achieved across various domains under the sagacious leadership of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad. His Highness wished enduring well-being, progress, and prosperity to Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim, his Father Sheikh Hamad, and the entire Qatari Royal Family.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir extended congratulations to Jordan's King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein in a separate cable, expressing sincere felicitations on Jordan's team securing the second position in the AFC Qatar 2023 fi-



Qatar's team lift the trophy after winning the AFC Asian Cup final match between Qatar and Jordan at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

nal. His message acknowledged the high sportsmanship demonstrated

ing their achievement as a historic milestone in Jordanian soccer. His Highness wished King Abdullah II well-being and further progress and prosperity for Jordan under his wise leadership.

Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing joy for the victory of the Qatari football team. Additionally, he conveyed congratulations to Jordan's King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein for Jordan's team securing the runner-up position.

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmad Al-Saadoun, extended congratulatory cables to lawmakers in Qatar and Jordan for their achievements in the AFC Football Cup 2023. He praised Qatar's national team victory and congratulated Jordan for securing the second place

in the tournament. Al-Saadoun's cables were addressed to the Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, Hassan Al-Ghanim, and to Jordanian Senate President Faisal Al-Fayez and House of Representatives Speaker Ahmad Al-Safadi.

Jassem Al-Budaiwi, the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), also congratulated Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on the Qatari team's victory in the 2023 Asian Football Cup. Al-Budaiwi commended Qatar's sporting triumph and highlighted the nation's successful hosting of the tournament, emphasizing its contribution to Qatar's position as a hub for international sporting events. The Secretary General also lauded Qatar's achievements, including the successful organization of the 2022 FIFA World Cup and its support for the development of sports on regional and global scales.

Dominant Arsenal keep pressure on title rivals

Rice returns to haunt West Ham as Gunners power to 6-0 win

LONDON, Feb 11, (AP): Declan Rice marked his return to former club West Ham by scoring a brilliant long-range strike and setting up two first-half goals in Arsenal's 6-0 win in the Premier League that saw Bukayo Saka gain some redemption on Sunday.

Rice was jeered relentlessly by many West Ham fans clearly still unhappy that he chose to move to Arsenal for a reported 105 million pounds (then \$138 million) in July. By the time he was substituted in the 67th, the England midfielder had helped to condemn his first club to one of its worst-ever losses.

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West Ham conceded four times in a 10-minute spell before halftime, with Rice's set-piece deliveries assisting headed goals by Arsenal center backs William Saliba and Gabriel Magalhães. Home fans were seen leaving the Olympic Stadium in the hundreds before the halftime whistle.

Saka had been another of the first-half scorers, along with Leandro Trossard, and the England winger added the fifth in the 63rd minute.

Saka's last appearance at West Ham saw him miss a penalty, when Arsenal was leading 2-1, in a costly 2-2 draw that sparked the team's end-of-season implosion and led to Manchester City retaining the league title. He received dreadful racist abuse after that spot-kick failure, too.

Rice delivered the final blow by curling in a shot from 25 yards (meters), to which he responded by holding up his hands in a signal that he wasn't celebrating the goal. He was almost immediately substituted - and even got some applause from the West Hams still in the ground.

The resounding win for Arsenal came a day after victories for title rivals Liverpool and Man City, and massively improved the goal difference of Mikel Arteta's team. Arsenal is in third place, behind second-place City only on goals scored and two points adrift of Liverpool.

Bruno Guimaraes scored two goals including a 66th-minute winner as Newcastle beat Nottingham Forest 3-2.

The Brazil midfielder intercepted a pass out from the back and curled home a finish from the edge of the area to settle an entertaining game at the City Ground.

Guimaraes put Newcastle in front by volleying in a deep cross from Kieran Trippier in the 10th minute but Anthony Elanga raced through the middle of the visitors' defense to latch onto a pass by Morgan Gibbs-White and equalize in the 26th.

Fabian Schar restored the lead in the 43rd, adding to his double at Aston Villa last week, only for Forest to draw level for a second time through Callum Hudson-Odoi's deflected strike.

Forest stayed two points and two places above the relegation zone but, like third-to-last Everton, was recently charged with breaching the league's financial regulations and could yet be facing a points deduction.



Bukhamseen, Hayat and Al-Hazami in the middle of the Grand Prix champions.

Saudi rider emerges as champion

Kuwait's Al-Kharafi 'clinches' third place in international show jumping championship

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait's national team rider, Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi, secured a notable third place in the prestigious Grand Prix round of the "KIB The Stadium" three-star international show jumping championship. The event, organized by the "SAFEX" company and sponsored by Kuwait International Bank, concluded at Marina Beach.

Competing in the challenging Grand Prix race at a height of 150 cm, a qualifying event for the World Cup, Al-Kharafi delivered an outstanding performance. He claimed the third spot with a time of 53.87 seconds and four penalty points, marking an impressive achievement in the current season's most significant equestrian race. Saudi international rider Abdullah Al-Sharbatly emerged as the Grand Prix champion, securing first place without penalty points with a time of 51.63 seconds aboard his horse "Quincy 230." Khaled Al-Mubti, also from Saudi Arabia, secured second place and earned an official qualification for the World Cup.

Abdullah Al-Awadi, representing Kuwait, finished in fourth place, followed by riders Ghazi Al-Jariwi, Abdullah Al-Roudhan, Anaz Al-Anaz, Hamad Al-Hajri, Fawaz Rashid, Abdullah Al-Fares, Madi Al-Khamis, and Sayed Adnan Al-Alawi.

The award ceremony was attended by Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice

Chairman and CEO of Kuwait International Bank, Masoud Johar Hayat, President of the Kuwait Equestrian

SHOW JUMPING

Federation, and Ahmed Suleiman Al-Hazami, CEO of SAFX.

Reflecting on the challenging Grand Prix round, Sharbatly noted the difficulty of the long second

round and revealed his strategic focus on achieving a fast time to secure an advanced position. Expressing gratitude for his success, Sharbatly mentioned that he and his colleague Khaled Al-Mubti are leading the Arab League. He added that despite his absence due to injury in the last period, he currently holds second place after participating in three rounds, while other riders took part in four rounds.



KUNA photos Al-Fatat Club silver medalists in the Team Kumite category.

Salwa Al-Sabah and Al-Fatat Clubs excel at Arab Women Clubs Games

ABU DHABI, Feb 11, (KUNA): Kuwaiti female athletes from Salwa Al-Sabah and Al-Fatat clubs achieved remarkable success on Saturday, clinching four medals in athletics and Karate at the ongoing Arab Women Clubs Games in the Emirate of Sharjah. The prestigious event, featuring participants from various Arab countries, witnessed outstanding performances from Kuwaiti athletes.

Al-Fatat Club secured a silver medal in the Team Kumite category, thanks to the impressive contributions of Dalal Al-Saeed, Asrar Al-Jassim, Salama Al-Sultan, and Loujain Al-Sultan. Meanwhile, Salwa Al-Sabah Club showcased their prowess in athletics, securing three medals - one silver and two bronze. Dana Al-Azmi, Maryam Al-Farhan, and Haya Al-Rifai excelled in shot put, triple jump, and the 5,000-meter race, respectively.

The 2024 Arab Club Games for Women, now in its seventh edition, commenced on February 2 in Sharjah. Over 550 players from 63 teams repre-



Dana Al-Azmi one of the excelled athletes.

senting 15 Arab countries are participating in the competition. Organized by the Sharjah Women's Sports Foundation, the prestigious event is set to continue until the 12th of this month.

Maxwell ton lifts Australia to victory

ADELAIDE, Australia, Feb 11, (AP): Glenn Maxwell blasted a record-equaling century as Australia beat West Indies by 34 runs on Sunday and took an unassailable 2-0 lead in its three-match Twenty20 series.

Maxwell smashed an unbeaten 120 off 55 balls, with eight sixes and 12 fours, and shared a 92-run

stand with Tim David (31 off 14 balls) to propel Australia to 241-4 and the highest T20 international score at Adelaide Oval.

"We're extremely lucky to have (Maxwell) in our team," Australia captain Mitch Marsh said. "He's a match winner, game changer and people come to watch him."