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# KUWAIT AND QATAR PLEDGE TO FORTIFY ECONOMIC, DEFENSE TIES

## Historic bond ... united front



Amiri Diwan photo  
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani during the official talks.



Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani bestowed the highest national decoration, the Founder Sword, upon His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, symbolizing the esteemed relations between the two nations.

## Illicit transfers shake exchanges in Kuwait

### Black market exploits currency swings

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20:** Over the past year, exchange companies suffered from illegal "black market" money transfer activity on some currencies, especially the Egyptian pound and the Indian rupee, especially in light of the large fluctuations in their exchange rates, which led to the erosion of about 41.3 % of their profits during 2023.

The profits of 32 Kuwaiti exchange companies,

oversen by the Central Bank and members of the Kuwaiti Union of Exchange Companies, have dwindled to approximately 25.2 million dinars, marking their lowest levels in three years. This decline contrasts sharply with the 2022 figures, which stood at 43 million dinars, following a peak of 45 million dinars in 2021 and 36.3 million dinars in 2020.

According to banking sources cited by Al-Seyassah, the fluctuation of exchange rates has provided opportunities for illicit parties to exploit, resulting in money transfers at inflated prices and operating outside the purview of banking regulations. Consequently, this trend has hampered the revenues of exchange companies.

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### Jawhar unlikely to run

## Former MP applauds Council's stand

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20:** Former MP Meteb Al-Raathan has praised the official statement of the Council of Ministers denying the alleged intention to amend the Election Law in order to limit the rights to vote and stand for elections to those who hold the Kuwaiti citizenship in accordance with Article One of the Nationality Law.

Al-Raathan asserted that the statement foiled the racist attempts to divide the society. He stressed the need for the next legislature to take the necessary legislative steps to specify only one citizenship category to prevent discrimination among the people of Kuwait.

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Calls for global intervention

## Kuwait reaffirms support for Palestinians at 'peace forum'

CAIRO, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Tuesday underlined his country's broad support for the Palestinians, saying that such backing would remain firm and unwavering.

"We reiterate Kuwait's firm stance in its support for the Palestinians across regional and international levels," the Kuwaiti minister told an Egypt-hosted international forum on peace, sponsored by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, emphasizing that such support would persist until Palestinian statehood aspirations come to fruition.

He deplored the "transgressions" committed by Israeli forces against the Palestinian people, urging the international community to intervene and put an end to the violence, saying that his ministry showcases support for the Palestinians through

the myriad of platforms at its disposal.

On the objective for the gathering, the Kuwaiti minister said it aims to promote the principle of peace towards national development and prosperity, citing Kuwait's UN-bestowed moniker of "humanitarian center" in recognition of its commitment to "enhancing peace" on a global level.

He went on to speak of Kuwait's unflinching belief in the notion of peace, which includes, but is not limited to, cultural pluralism and co-existence, pointing out that such factors are often inextricably linked to development and prosperity.

The two-day gathering in the Egyptian capital brings together heads of state and prominent lawmakers from around the region, in addition to renowned politicians and journalists alike.

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Amiri Diwan photos  
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah alongside the Qatari Amir during an official reception at the Qatari Amiri Diwan on Tuesday, marking his state visit to Qatar.

### Qatari Amir honors Kuwait Amir with Founder Sword

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA):** A joint statement released on Tuesday after talks between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani put much emphasis on the "historic bond" shared between the two Gulf Arab neighbors.

His Highness the Amir congratulated Sheikh Tamim on Qatar's assumption of the presidency of the 44th session of the Supreme Council of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

His Highness the Amir also congratulated Sheikh Tamim, expressing sincere pleasure for Qatar's victory at the Asian Cup 2023.

Moreover, His Highness the Amir lauded the positive reactions to the Doha 2023 Horticultural Expo, and the Qatari efforts made that contributed to achieving its desired goals, which will benefit the region and the world as a whole.

The two sides praised the growth of trade and bilateral investments between Kuwait and Qatar, as the volume of trade exchange between the two states until October 2023 reached USD 1.94 billion, and they stressed the importance of expanding the horizons of cooperation and economic partnership between them.

They also welcomed the Kuwaiti and Qatari investors and companies expanding their business in the two countries and taking advantage of the opportunities available in the giant projects taking place in all sectors.

Further, the two sides expressed their aspiration to hold the sixth session of the Kuwaiti-Qatari Joint Higher Cooperation Committee scheduled to be held in 2024 in the capital, Doha, and to work on implementing the agreements, memorandums of understanding and joint programs that were agreed upon.

Both sides affirmed their keenness



Amiri Diwan photo  
His Highness the Amir waves farewell as he concludes his state visit to Qatar.

to strengthen defense cooperation in all fields and develop strategic partnerships to protect the security and stability of the two countries and the region.

They also praised the level of security cooperation and coordination existing between the two countries and stressed their desire to enhance cooperation in topics of common interest, including combating crimes in all aspects.

Regarding the GCC work process, the two sides touched on the outstanding achievements it has achieved in response to the aspirations of the citizens of the GCC countries towards greater interdependence, cooperation and integration.

They stressed the importance of maintaining the cohesion, solidarity and unity of the GCC countries and intensifying efforts to complete the components of economic unity and the joint defense and security systems, in a way that guarantees the stability of the countries.

The two sides discussed the latest regional developments and their repercussions on Arab-Arab relations, regional security and stability, and stressed the importance of the Republic of Iraq's re-

spect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait, and adherence to bilateral and international pledges and agreements and all relevant UN resolutions, especially Security Council Resolution No. 833 (1993).

Security Council Resolution No. 833 (1993), which was passed accordingly, the demarcation of the land and sea borders between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq, and the importance of completing the demarcation of the maritime borders between the two countries beyond maritime mark 162.

Moreover, the two sides also stressed the importance of Iraq's commitment to the agreement regulating maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah signed between Kuwait and Iraq on April 29, 2012, which entered into force on December 5, 2013, after its ratification by both countries and was jointly deposited with the United Nations on December 18, 2013.

Both sides agreed on rejecting the Iraqi side's unilateral cancellation of the security swap protocol signed in 2008 and its map approved in the joint plan to ensure the safety of navigation in Khor Abdullah signed between the two sides on December 28, 2014, which included a clear and specific mechanism for amendment and cancellation.

Kuwait and Qatar went on to give their backing to the works of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which provides assistance and support to Iraqis, in addition to efforts aiming to identify the remains of "Kuwaitis and third-country nationals." The two sides also stressed that Al-Durra Field is located entirely within the maritime borders of the State of Kuwait, affirming that its natural resources are shared between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

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**IRBIL:** The Kurdistan regional government announced, Tuesday, that it will be allowing citizens of 53 countries, Kuwait included, to enter the region of Kurdistan in Iraq without needing to obtain a prior visa.

According to an official statement, Kurdistan's Ministry of Interior declared that the citizens could obtain an electronic visa at the border using their passports to enter the region. (KUNA)

**RAMALLAH:** The Israeli occupation force executed nine massacres against families in Gaza Strip, killing 103 Palestinians and injuring 142 others in the past 24 hours, according to Palestinian health officials.

In a statement on Tuesday, the officials said that the new massacres raised the death toll of 137 days of attacks to 29,195 and injuries to 69,170.

In a separate statement, the officials said that there are still 118 patients in Nasser Hospital, after evacuating 18 others. (KUNA)



Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed  
Kuwait's skyline lights up with the colors of the national flag in preparation for National Day and Liberation Day celebrations.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 05:04 Asr ..... 15:15  
 Sunrise... 06:23 Maghrib .. 17:41  
 Zohr ..... 12:02 Isha ..... 18:58

# Local

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

## Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Warm and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

**By Night:** Rather cold to cold with light to moderate northwest-

erly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

**Station** **Max Exp** **Min Rec**  
 Kuwait City 24 14

Kuwait Airport 24 10  
 Abdaly 25 09  
 Jahra 25 12  
 Salmiyah 23 16  
 Nuwaisib 25 12  
 Wafra 25 11

## Cabinet Session

### Decision to stop appointments revoked

## Nat'l celebrations, Amir's visit to Qatar discussed

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): The cabinet held its weekly session on Monday and was briefed at the outset of His Highness the Amir's upcoming visit to the State of Qatar and Kuwait national celebrations.

A cabinet press release noted the ministers held their weekly meeting at Seif Palace, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

After the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Shereeda Al-Mousherji, said the cabinet was informed of the decision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to revoke the decision to stop appointments, promotions, and transfer of employees in all state agencies, issued on December 5, 2023, effective from the date of its issuance.

The ministers were also informed of the departure of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation

to the State of Qatar.

On the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of Kuwait National Day and the 33rd anniversary of Liberation Day, the Council of Ministers extended their sincere congratulations to His Highness the Amir and to the Kuwaiti people, asking the Allah Almighty to protect Kuwait, its leadership and its honorable people from all harm.

The ministers also paid tribute to Kuwaiti martyrs of 1990.

On the anniversary of the founding of the Saudi Kingdom, which comes on February 22nd each year, the cabinet extended its sincere congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and to Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, praising the great achievements made by the Kingdom towards progress and prosperity, noting on the close ties that bind the leadership and peoples of the two countries.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah chairs the meeting.



Ministers attending the cabinet session.



The cake-cutting ceremony.

KUNA photo

### Kuwait embassy marks Rome celebration

## Italian official praises Kuwait's role in regional, global stability

ROME, Feb 20, (KUNA): Vice President of Italian Chamber of Deputies Giorgio Mule, stressed importance of State of Kuwait's role as a strategic ally and a factor of regional and global stability.

This came during Mule's participation as the guest of honor, representing the Italian Republic, in Kuwait Embassy in Rome's celebration of the 63rd Independence Day and 33rd Liberation Day, on Monday.

Mule, in his speech, said that Italy looked forward to Kuwait contribution to reaching a solution that ends the tragic situation of the Palestinian people in Gaza, as he also praised the close Italian-Kuwaiti relations.

Mule stressed importance of the cooperation and friendship at the geopolitical level, as Italy and Kuwait are allies in promoting constructive dialogue from a multilateral perspective of their common vision, and their concern over the global destabilization resulting from these conflicts and the risks of potential expansion, referring to the aggression in Gaza strip.

He also affirmed the need "to never stop fighting for peace, justice, and defending basic human rights, saying, "Italy and Kuwait are considered a factor of stability and moderation in the region and the world."

"We trust your contribution to finally reaching a solution that puts an end to the current tragic conditions in the Gaza Strip within mutual respect between the parties concerned, Mule said.

He noted to the development witnessed in bilateral cooperation that goes beyond the political, military, commercial and investment fields, leading to the signing of a memorandum of dialogue that raises the

level of relations to a strategic partnership.

Mule also praised the role of Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani and Kuwaiti diplomacy in the development of relations.

In a statement to KUNA, on this occasion, Vice President Mule considered participation in celebration of Kuwaiti national holidays "an important day that contributes to renewing the outstanding relations existing between Italy and Kuwait," adding "the Italian presence in Kuwait is not limited to the level of advanced military cooperation between them."

Mule consider Kuwait a country that truly achieves stability in the Middle East through diplomatic action on the Palestinian issue, with the conviction that the solution to the conflict lies in the two-state solution.

Kuwait, remains and will remain a strategic partner for Italy in terms of protecting security and preserving peace for its ongoing joint programs between the two countries, he said.

On his part, Ambassador Al-Qahtani in his speech praised the level of Kuwaiti-Italian relations, as this year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

He recalled with pride and gratitude the Italian government and people stand with Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in 1990, and its participation with brotherly and friendly countries in its liberation in 1991.

The close relations between the two countries have grown over the past 60 years, during which they witnessed great development in various defense and investment fields that contributed to supporting and deepening bilateral Kuwaiti-Italian relations, Al-Qahtani said.

## Martyr's Office wing opened in 'Bait Al-Othman' Museum

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Director General of the Martyr's Office Salah Al-Aufan and the Deputy Director of the Bait Al-Othman Museum Hussein Al-Qattan inaugurated the Martyr's Office wing in the Bait Al-Othman Museum after its renovation on the occasion of the National holidays.

The wing includes pictures of martyrs from 1961, martyrs of the Iraqi invasion, and the martyrs of duty.



Al-Aufan

In a press statement, the Director General of the Martyr's Office Salah Al-Aufan explained that the wing of the Martyr's Office has pictures of the martyrs of Kuwait from the time of independence in 1961 until the present day. They include the following:-

1. Martyrs before the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait - 153 martyrs from Arab wars, explosion of popular cafes, of explosion of the Amir's convoy, hijacking of Jabriya plane, soldiers of duty and terrorist operations
2. Martyrs during the Iraqi invasion and

martyrs of captivity - 968 martyrs, and martyrs after the Iraqi invasion - 208 martyrs.

The Martyr's Office also sponsors military martyrs during duty, and martyrs of natural disasters and general exceptional incidents approved by the Council of Ministers

The Martyr's Office provides care for the father, mother, spouse and children of the martyrs.

Al-Aufan revealed that the number of martyrs has reached 1,329 martyrs to date.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Director General of the Bait Al-Othman Museum, Hussein Al-Qattan, explained that the museum is a shrine for school students and includes many artefacts and objects of Kuwaiti heritage. It has wings for the Amiri Diwan and for the Martyr's Office, which has been caring for the children of martyrs since 1961.

The Bait Al-Othman Museum participates in Kuwaiti holidays and opens its doors to the public for them to view the museum's collections that express Kuwait's maritime and land heritage and history.

The museum embodies the old Kuwaiti house with all its belongings, including clothes, furniture, tools and documents that reveal the lives of the people of Kuwait in olden times. It tells the history of the country across generations and gives the visitor a comprehensive picture of the history of this country.

## 'Kuwait keen to join global efforts in battle against human peddling'

Foreign Ministry organizes training session

By Ali Al-Rashidi

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Human Rights Department have scheduled a training session for members of the Permanent National Committee on the Implementation of the National Strategy to prevent human trafficking and migrants smuggling on February 20 and 21.

On the sideline of the session, Kuwait's Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Plenipotentiary Minister Saad Al-Muhaini told KUNA that the organization of a crucial training session was a response to the country's need to collaborate with international organizations to battle human trafficking and migrants smuggling.

He added that the training session aimed to enhance the Permanent National Committee's work mechanisms by fostering the exchange of experiences and gaining access to the experiences of other countries in our regional environment.

Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice for Legal Affairs and member of the Permanent National Committee on the Implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants, Raya Al-Rashidi confirmed that the training session was part of the Committee's extensive efforts over the past few years.

The training session, according to Al-Rashidi, aimed to improve the skills of national cadres and Permanent National Committee members and to identify the international framework for implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The training session is the second that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has hosted this year in collaboration and coordination with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

**New Uzbek envoy:** Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received credentials of the newly assigned Ambassador of Uzbekistan to the State of Kuwait Ayoub Khan Yunnosof, during a meeting at the Foreign Ministry's headquarters on Tuesday.

The foreign minister wished the new ambassador success in his new assignment, hoping to see further elevation of the bilateral relations between the two nations.

## Kuwait's supportive stand praised by Palestinian FM

By Hatem Al-Saqli

THE HAGUE, Feb 20, (KUNA): Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs Riyadh Al-Maliki spoke highly of Kuwait's supportive stances towards Palestine question on the state and popular levels.

"The long-standing support offered by the State of Kuwait to Palestine is honorable and unparalleled. We are proud of the exemplary relations with Kuwait," told KUNA at reception hosted on Monday by Kuwait Embassy in the Netherlands to celebrate Kuwait's national days.

The celebrations of Kuwait's 63rd National Day and 33th Liberation Day coincide with the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Palestine, he noted.

"Both countries have been keen on pushing the friendly relations in all areas to new heights since 1964," the Palestinian minister went on.

Al-Maliki, now on a visit to the Netherlands to attend the hearings of the International Court of Justice of a case on the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The State of Palestine brought the case to the ICJ on the grounds that the UN General Assembly approved a resolution on and advisory opinion by the court regarding the nature of actions by the Zionist entity on the occupied territories, he noted.

On the ICJ deliberations on the case, Al-Maliki said "Palestine has offered a verbal presentation at the ICJ today - the first such a move that will be followed by presentations by 53 countries and three international organizations in the coming days."

"This is a historic moment and the Palestinian people have been waiting for the outcome of this case over the past 75 years."

"We pin high hopes on the court to rule against the illegal occupation and force the UN member states on implement the court ruling," he pointed out.

He added that today's hearings are excluded from the Gaza genocide case brought to the court by South Africa.

On his part, Kuwait Ambassador to the Netherlands Ali Al-Thafeiri congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the government and people of Kuwait on the national days.



Undersecretary at the Ministry of Defence Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah visits the Engineering Corps HQ.

### Incubator for youth: MoD official

## 'Engineering Corps nat'l role vital'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): A Defence Ministry official stressed on Tuesday the importance of engineering corps' national role encompassing, commending both its civilian and military personnel.

Undersecretary at the Kuwait's Ministry of Defence (MoD) Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah said during his visit to the facilities engineering sector's celebration on the occasion of its 50th anniversary that "the facilities engineering corps was an incubator for the initiatives and creativity of Kuwaiti youth".

He praised some of the figures who had a significant role in this division, including the late Sheikh Engineer Sabah Nasser Al-Saud Al-Sabah who established many projects to serve the Ministry of Defence and provide

the right environment for its members.

On his part, the Assistant Undersecretary for Military Facilities Engineering Corps Brigadier Engineer Salah Nasser thanked all the participants in the celebration for their dedication in this engineering corps and he wished for further developments and flourishing in this vital sector.

His Highness the late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah issued on February 19, 1974 - when he was minister of defence - Ministerial Decision No. 187/73 establishing the Department of Engineering for Facilities to specialize in all engineering and technical works to meet all the needs and requirements of the Ministry of Defence's military and civil sectors.

### UK envoy hails ties with Kuwait

## 'Britain in Kuwait' fair opens

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis praised the Kuwaiti-British relations, describing it as close.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of the opening of the "Britain in Kuwait" exhibition as part of the 11th British Week in the State of Kuwait held under the patronage of Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, the ambassador affirmed that the year 2024 is a special milestone in the United Kingdom's relations with Kuwait.

She said, "We are celebrating the 125th anniversary of the inauguration of official diplomatic relations between the two countries. The world has changed dramatically since the signing of the Friendship Agreement in 1899.

There are many points of stability and strength between Kuwait and Britain, most notably the commercial relations, which is evident in the Trade Week exhibition that was organized with the support of the Business and Trade Department of the embassy, as we are two maritime trading countries.

Trade ties have long been an essential element in supporting bilateral relations between the two countries, as the volume of trade exchange between the two countries in 2023 reached about 5 billion British pounds annually (about 2 billion Kuwaiti dinars).

British companies operate across a range of sectors in Kuwait, bringing a number of familiar products and services to the local market, and also contributing to supporting Kuwait in its pursuit of achieving the goals set out in New Kuwait 2035 vision.

This year's celebrations of the 125th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-British partnership will provide a wonderful platform to develop our trade ties further, with goods and

services designed to meet the needs of the present and the future.

Commercial relations began early specifically when pearls and postal delivery were considered important. Until now, some of the most beautiful cars in the world, Islamic art and personal security have become part of our commercial relations. The United Kingdom and Kuwait are proud to do business with each other."

The ambassador highlighted the additional measures that have enhanced trade exchange between the two countries, including the issuance of the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), and the free trade agreement between the United Kingdom and Kuwait, which is under negotiation.

She also highlighted the role played by the Direct Investment Promotion Authority in enhancing trade cooperation between Kuwait and Britain, expressing confidence that trade relations will continue to grow and prosper.

Ambassador Lewis concluded by thanking the distinguished attendees and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad for his presence and participation in the opening of the two countries' trade exhibition, in which about 26 Kuwaiti-British companies participated.

Meanwhile, Ahmed Ismail Behbehani, the Chairman of the organizing committee for the British Trade Fair in Kuwait 2024, expressed his gratitude for the patronage and presence of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad for the opening of the British Trade Fair in Kuwait in its 11th session.



Belinda Lewis

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Stable gov't is crucial for the country's development drive'

"We mentioned in a previous article that one of the reasons for the disruption of development in Kuwait is the frequent change of ministers, to the point where the minister is unable to bring about any development in his ministry, or implement his government work program before he quits or is shown the door," columnist **Mubarak Fahd Al-Duwailah** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Al-Duwailah

"This happens to the point that Kuwait is considered one of the countries in the world that changes governments the most! Perhaps this is the reason why we see that the country's problems have not been solved for several years, such as paving the streets and not launching infrastructure development projects for a long time, the last project was in 2017, and there are other reasons.

"Some were accusing the National Assembly of obstructing development, through its strict monitoring of ministers, to the point where every minister was afraid to 'thread a needle'. This is not true, as the construction of bridges and tunnels does not require the approval of the National Assembly, and the establishment of solar energy stations in the desert does not require a decision from the National Assembly.

"The National Assembly and the development of electronic government also does not require the National Assembly. The important thing is that these achievements are according to the correct standards.

"The country needs stability at all levels: stability in the formation of the government that makes the minister secure its future, stability in the National Assembly that makes the representative think right, and stability among the senior officials who manage the country's institutions and implement development programs, and all of this is not incompatible with continuous development.

"Today, not only the minister is unstable, but the undersecretary, the assistant undersecretary, and even the director to the head of the department are all unstable, and all of them have been working on assignments for many years. How do you expect them to develop their work and improve their performance?"

"The country needs a 'revolution'. Yes, it needs a development movement in appointments and in tools. Yes, tools. Many work management tools cause disgusting bureaucracy, which hinders achievement.

"Today we need to destroy the documentary cycle that leads to lethargy, inactivity and laziness of the employee. The book it takes a week to move from room to room on the same floor, while in e-government it only needs a "button" to move the book in a second.

"Today we need to do more than theorize, as many of the Council of Ministers' decisions remain locked in drawers without anyone to implement them.

"In the nineties, when I was a member in the National Assembly, I proposed to the president to prevent MPs from entering the ministries, because most of their intermediaries either violated the system or violated the rights of others, but the wave was the opposite of this trend, and the proposal did not succeed.

"Today is the appropriate time to represent it or think about it, in the hope that it will make the representative devote himself to the task of legislation and oversight, and let the official devote himself to the task of his work, and what appears to be that he has upset the representatives, and what a shame from the interrogation!"

**Also:**

"It has become clearly visible since the Al-Aqsa Flood operation on October 7, that the Ukrainian war has been marginalized to a very large extent at the level of global and media attention, as well as in the West. Regarding the latter, the truth is that the war in Gaza only revealed the declining level of Western support for Ukraine that already existed, not to mention the declining level of support after the Gaza War," columnist **Dr Dana Al-Enezi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"To delve deeper into the reasons for the decline in Western military support for Ukraine; some key poignant facts that were clear even before the Russian

invasion of Ukraine need to be made clear. The first fact, which in our opinion is the most important, is that Russian President Putin took the decision to invade while being completely certain that Europe and the United States would be completely unable to defeat his forces in Ukraine.

"This would require pushing NATO to the front line in exchange for a "confirmed" Russian nuclear response, even if it was a tactical one. This is certainly an absolutely unlikely scenario on the part of the West, especially the United States.

"The second fact revolves around the West's own perception of the Russian threat. It can be said, despite the consensus of the West, that after the invasion of Ukraine, Russia has become an imminent threat to them, especially to Europe.

"However, the level of seriousness of this threat varies between them. Some Eastern European countries, such as Bulgaria, do not see Russia as a great danger, but are prepared to ally with it. Southern European countries such as Spain and France see the main threat as emanating from immigration and terrorism. This means that these countries may be willing to conclude a deal with Russia at the expense of Ukraine if that would end the war or the Russian threat.

"Accordingly, two very important things became clear immediately after the invasion. The first was a clear European reluctance to get involved and impose sanctions on Russia. Second, the United States led the hesitant Western bloc to confront the invasion.

"The evidence in the matter is that in light of these data, the West has settled on the scenario of exhausting Russia militarily by supporting Ukraine, and economically by tightening sanctions. This is definitely an American effort to weaken Russia and obstruct the establishment of a strong Russian-Chinese alliance. It also appears that Russia has accepted the rules of the game that the West has accepted.

"The West strongly supported Ukraine at all levels, financially, economically, logistically, and militarily. As a result, Ukraine achieved some gains on the ground in late 2022, but soon lost those gains, which led, among other things, to a decline in Western support until it was significantly reduced with the Gaza War.

"Washington is the most important supporter of Ukraine and the locomotive of European support for Ukraine, and the Al-Aqsa flood, which posed a very dangerous threat to Israel's security, came to completely absorb American attention.

"The priority of military support has become for Israel and not for Ukraine. Basically, Ukraine does not represent major strategic importance to Washington - contrary to what many people imagine -- the major strategic importance that may require direct American intervention is focused on the strategic areas of conflict with China, specifically Taiwan and the East and West China Seas.

"This is not to mention, Washington is suffering from a difficult economic crisis, which has been evident in Congress' disagreements over military spending priorities and the new military spending law directed entirely at confronting China, which has reduced allocations for military support to Ukraine.

"Although the decline in European support was greatly affected by the decline in American support, there are other driving reasons for this decline, the most prominent of which is the exhaustion of European budgets as a result of this support, especially since they are also suffering from a major inflation crisis.

"Enthusiasm for Ukraine's achievement of a fundamental victory in the war has waned. It must be taken into account that there are major changes taking place in the West that strongly contribute to the West's division against itself and the occurrence of a rift between Europe and Washington, such as the growth of populism, the rising role of the left, and the decline of central Eastern Europe's confidence in the European Union and NATO.

"Summary of the statement: The horizon of Western support for Ukraine is not clear, and the West is in a major dilemma regarding Ukraine. In addition to daily challenges updates. Therefore, the low support for Ukraine will likely continue, along with the push from other parties, especially China, to try to end the war through a balanced settlement that saves the face of the West."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**

## Court acquits accused in Ghanem tribe by-polls

# Hearing for 'royal' in murder set for March 10

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Court of Appeals has set the session of March 10 for the hearing of the closing arguments in the murder of the young citizen, Abdulaziz Al-Zaatari, at the hands of a member of the ruling family.

During the course of the session, the psychiatrists who prepared the report on the accused confirmed that he does not suffer from any psychological disorders and is mentally sound.

Earlier, the Criminal Court had sentenced the accused to death penalty.

According to the case file, on the evening of April 10, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Gov-

ernorate had witnessed a horrific crime when a young man Abdulaziz Al-Zaatari was shot to death in front of his house.

The killer had used a protective helmet to hide his identity, and after killing the victim, he fled from the scene.

The Criminal Security Sector was able to arrest the suspect and the weapon used in the crime and referred him to the concerned authority for necessary legal measures to be taken against him.

**Verdict upheld:** The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by the Criminal Court which acquitted those accused of organizing by-elections for the Ghanem tribe in the fourth constituency, and par-

ticipating in them outside the country to choose their representatives in the 2023 National Assembly elections.

The security services had arrested the defendants in accordance with law No. 35/1962 on elections for members of the National Assembly and its amendments. The fifth paragraph of article 45 stipulates that anyone who organizes or participates in organizing by-elections or calls for them shall be punished with imprisonment for five years or less and/or a fine ranging between KD 2,000 and KD 5,000.

It is worth highlighting that the by-elections are usually held informally before the date set for the elections in order to choose one or more candidates from among those belonging to a specific group or sect.

# Around KD 200 mln worth drugs seized in 18 months, says study

'Plug legal loopholes exploited by traffickers'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: In just 18 months, starting from the beginning of 2021 until June 2022, the total value of drug seizures exceeded 200 million dinars, as revealed by a study presented by four members of the Youth Council: **Walid Khaled Al-Kandari, Abdul Rahman Khaled Al-Qasba, Latifa Saleh Al-Furaih, and Hessa Hamoud Al-Nawafi.** Titled "When Pain Meets Hope," the study linked the targeting of Kuwait's youth with drugs to the increased value of the dinar compared to neighboring countries. It was highlighted that the value of drugs in Kuwait is ten times higher than in neighboring countries, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

Surprisingly, the study indicated that only a third of the targeted quantities of drugs are seized in the country, implying that two-thirds of the quantities are entering the country illegally.

The study also pointed out that airports witness the highest rate of seizures compared to other ports, with China, Iran, and India being the top three countries from which drugs enter Kuwait.

One of the major challenges faced by societies is the significant number of young people falling into drug abuse, leading to various issues such as health problems, financial strain, family conflicts, and social issues. Drug abuse can disrupt an individual's productivity and success at work, leading to financial difficulties and ultimately contributing to poverty, increased rates of suicide or homicide, and a rise in criminal behavior. Additionally, it exacerbates health problems such as the spread of HIV. Globally, drug-related issues cost governments over \$120 billion annually, posing a serious threat to human health and well-being, undermining economic, cultural, and political foundations, and causing severe damage to economies through decreased productivity and loss of manpower.

The study highlights that the social environment plays a significant role in drug abuse and addiction, particularly when young people come from unstable families. This environment encourages drug abuse, resulting in unproductive individuals who may negatively impact the state's entity, security, and economic and social stability.

Given these challenges, the study emphasizes the importance of implementing a new policy to address gaps within state agencies responsible for combating drug trafficking. This involves amending legal loopholes exploited by drug traffickers to effectively curb the spread of drugs and achieve the strategic development goals outlined in Kuwait's national development plan and the vision of "New Kuwait" 2035.



The contraband seized

## 150 kg hashish seized

The Criminal Security Sector, through the General Administration for Combating Narcotics, apprehended two individuals attempting to transport approximately 150 kilograms of hashish into the country. The seized contraband, valued at a quarter of a million dinars, was laid out in front of the captured smugglers, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Upon interrogation, the apprehended individuals confessed to owning the confiscated narcotics with the intent to traffic and distribute them. Consequently, both suspects, along with the seized drugs, were promptly handed over to the appropriate authorities for further legal action.



A huge quantity of drugs was seized in Kuwait in the last 18 months.



Water guns ready as national holidays approach.

## Sale of water guns, foam cans banned

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: As part of the festivities on Arabian Gulf Street, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has enacted a regulatory measure, prohibiting the sale of water guns, small water-filled balloons, and foam cans throughout the national holiday season. Effective from February 20th of the current year until March 31st of the following year, this decision aims to safeguard public welfare, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The restricted items include:  
Water guns of any variety  
Small water-filled balloons  
Foam cans

Hazardous materials such as fireworks, pyrotechnic air balloons, bladed weapons, firearms, replica pistols, and self-defense tools (including swords, daggers, spears and darting implements)

Implements with pointed or sharpened ends affixed to sticks  
Thorn-tipped sticks  
Electric or non-medical shock devices  
Double-edged or partially edged knives  
Antler-handled knives  
Iron punches  
Laser, radiation, and radioactive apparatuses.



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## Car falls from bridge, 5 injured

# Shops violating rules get citations

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The head of the Emergency and Rapid Intervention Team at Hawalli Governorate Municipality Ibrahim Al-Saba'an, has issued nine citations to various establishments for either failing to renew their advertising licenses, placing goods for sale outside stores without proper licensing and issued warnings for trespassing on government property, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

These measures were taken during inspection tours in Al-Sha'ab Al-Bahri and Salmiya. Al-Saba'an emphasized the importance of compliance with municipal laws and regulations to avoid penalties, including fines that could potentially lead to administrative closures of businesses.

He urged shop owners to ensure they ad-

here to all applicable laws and regulations, promoting a safe and orderly business environment within the municipality.

**5 hurt in bizarre mishap:** The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department said in a bizarre traffic accident on the Salmi Road, Monday afternoon, 5 people who were injured, were handed over to the emergency medical personnel, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The DGFDP said the incident was dealt with by firemen from the Jahra Crafts Center vehicles accident.

According to fire sources, following the collision, one vehicle overturned, while the other fell off the bridge.

## MoE starts verification of employees' degrees

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has started verifying the academic certificates of its employees — citizens and expatriates, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Administrative Sector Faisal Al-Jutaili sent an official letter to his Public Education counterpart, stating: "With reference to the letter of the director of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) dated Nov 28, 2023; which cited the letter of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet and National Assembly Affairs regarding the final report of the committee tasked to evaluate the work of the Ministry of Higher Education and CSC with regard to the equivalency of above high school certificates, and their request to submit the data of all Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti employees who hold such certificates and those who obtained their academic qualifications from Jan 1, 2000 till date.

# Kuwaiti minister sees link between tourism growth, nat'l development

GCC tourism ministers meet in Doha



Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Sabah Nasser during the cutting of the ceremonial cake. KUNA photo

## Ambassador hails large presence of top officials

### Kuwait embassy in Saudi marks national days

RIYADH, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has praised the large presence of dignitaries and officials attending Kuwait national celebrations at the embassy, which he described as evidence of unity and interdependence of the two peoples and a reflection of the close Kuwaiti-Saudi relations.

Sheikh Sabah made the remarks to KUNA and during the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of Independence and the 33rd anniversary of Liberation Day, wishing the best for the leadership of the two countries, and security and safety upon the Kuwaiti and Saudi peoples.

The ceremony was attended by Saudi Deputy Amir of the Riyadh Region, Prince Mohammad bin Abdul Rahman, and a number of excellencies, and heads of diplomatic missions in the Kingdom.

Sheikh Sabah extended his warmest congratulations and blessings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem, and to all Kuwaiti people.

For his part, GCC Secretary General, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, who also attended the ceremony said that we witnessed a brilliant Gulf gathering at the ceremony, which

reflects on the status it holds in Saudi and Gulf countries.

Al-Budaiwi added that such presence proves a strong cohesion among Gulf countries and indicates solidarity and belief in the common destiny, expressing his wishes for prosperity to the State of Kuwait.

The ceremony held by the embassy began with the national anthem of the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, then a speech by the ambassador of the State of Kuwait, a visual presentation of Kuwaiti-Saudi relations, and the presentation of a souvenir to the Deputy Amir of the Riyadh Region as the guest of honor.

DOHA, Feb 20, (KUNA): Tourism growth is often a precursor to broad development and prosperity, Kuwait's Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has said, citing the sector as among the most pivotal sources of national income.

Thanks in part to their "rich cultural heritage" and "diverse landscapes," Gulf Arab states have the potential to morph into tourist hotspots with the ability to beguile visitors from across the globe, the Kuwaiti minister told a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - wide gathering of tourism ministers in the Qatari capital.

Any measure aiming to develop the tourism industry across GCC states enjoys the full backing of these countries' political leaders, the minister underlined, pointing out that a pan-GCC strategy to develop the region's tourism industry should keep the number of tourist arrivals in the region on an upward trajectory.

Having welcomed some 100 million visitors recently, he singled out Saudi Arabia as a regional success story in terms of tourism growth, while he acknowledged neighboring Qatar's achievement in hosting global events such as the World Cup.

Echoing the Kuwaiti minister's sentiments, the Riyadh-based bloc's chief Jasim Al-Bedaiwi said the tourism industry forms an "integral component" of economic growth and development, agreeing that the "pivotal sector" is key to national development plans.



KUNA photo  
CEO of Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, Mutlaq Al-Zayed, along with a number of officials from the Kuwaiti Federation of Industries.

## Kuwait partakes in Gulfood Expo '24 in Dubai

By Salem Al-Methen

UAE's Gulfood Exhibition 2024 for food and beverages production, kicked off on Monday at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) with the participation of Kuwaiti and worldwide companies to sell their products and expand their businesses in the global market.

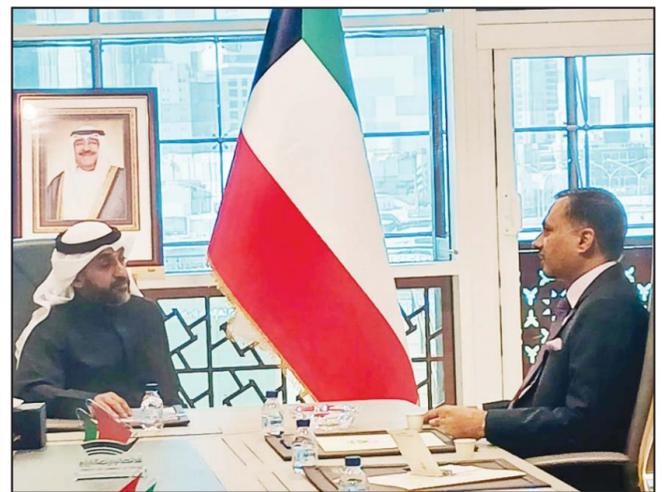
Kuwait's Consul General in Dubai and the Northern Emirates Ambassador Ali Al-Thaidy stated to KUNA on the sideline of the exhibition, that the consulate is keen on supporting Kuwaiti companies that participated in the global food exhibitions to enhance Kuwait's products and the exchange trades in this vital sector.

Al-Thaidy praised the Kuwaiti companies that participated in the exhibition including Kuwait Flour Mills and

Bakeries Company (KFMB), Americana Foods and others, which these companies contributed to providing food security and economic growth in Kuwait.

For his part, Business Development Senior Officer for Kuwait Industries Union (KIU) Ghanem Alghanem said to KUNA, that KIU's participation in the Gulfood exhibit is important considering it is one of the largest food exhibitions in the world and it helps support Kuwait's food production.

Chief Executive Officer Mutlaq Al-Zayed said to KUNA, "This participation is part of our strategy to strengthen our global presence and to familiarize the international public with our diverse products, which the exhibition is one of the world's leading food exhibitions." (KUNA)



The Indian Ambassador with the Minister of Commerce and Industry.

## Indian envoy calls on Minister AlJouan

The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Dr Adarsh Swaika called on the Minister of Commerce and Industry of Kuwait HE Abdullah Hamad AlJouan. During the interaction the Indian

envoy highlighted the growing bilateral trade ties and significant potential for strengthening bilateral economic cooperation, including investments.

## Move marks significant milestone

### Draft law to pave way on establishing new 'Public Authority of Civil Aviation'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Fatwa and Legislation Department has finalized the study and drafting of the civil aviation law, paving the way for the establishment of a new independent entity called the "Public Authority of Civil Aviation." This development represents a significant milestone in the government's legislative agenda for the seventeenth term, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to reports, the proposed law aims to create a regulatory framework that operates on economic principles and aligns with the evolving global civil aviation landscape.

Despite previous legislative efforts in Kuwait's aviation sector, there has been a persistent gap due to rapid technological advancements and global developments.

The explanatory memorandum accompanying the draft law emphasizes the importance of its approval to address these gaps and enhance civil aviation and air transport facilities.

#### Responsible

The proposed Public Authority of Civil Aviation will be responsible for managing and monitoring airports and civil aircraft, organizing air navigation services, and enforcing regulations in accordance with international and regional agreements.

The authority aims to promote and develop the civil aviation and air transport facility. It is responsible for managing, monitoring, securing and ensuring the safety of airports and civil aircraft, organizing navigation and air services, and implementing all related regulations in accordance with the provisions of international and regional agreements and relevant applicable laws in order to achieve its objectives, the authority may, in particular, with the following:

— Establish and determine the types, operation, management and maintenance of civil airports, concluding contracts and granting the necessary licenses for this.

— Design, construction, operation, management and maintenance of all navigational devices and systems, including radars of all types, navigational aids, voice and information communications of all types, meteorological services, air and ground traffic and their simulation systems.

— Ensure the safety and organization of the movement of civil aircraft, whether on the ground or around the airport, in the country's airspace, or within the borders of the region to which it is internationally committed, and coordinating with the competent authorities in organizing the movement of military aircraft.

— Taking all necessary preventive measures to maintain security and prevent the commission of acts and crimes against the security and safety of civil aviation in the country, in light of the relevant international standard rules.

— Take the necessary measures to conclude, implement and join international, regional and bilateral agreements in the field of civil aviation and represent the state in international and regional civil aviation organizations in relevant international and regional conferences and forums.

— Grant flight licenses in the state's airspace and determining its conditions.

— Regulate and supervise commercial air transport affairs in the country.

— Supervise the safety of civil aircraft and navigational aids in the country in accordance with the provisions of the Chicago Convention and its annexes, including establishing rules related to the conditions for flying over the state's territory, landing at or taking off from its airports, and conditions for transporting passengers, goods, and mail in accordance with the law, in coordination with the relevant authorities in the state.

This is in addition to determining air navigation routes and areas where navigation is prohibited, restricted or dangerous, and determine the air navigation routes that must be taken by aircraft licensed to pass through the state's territory; issuing licenses for workers in the fields of aviation safety and determining the conditions for registering civil aircraft and non-military or other state aircraft and register them.

#### Certificates

Furthermore, issuing aircraft airworthiness certificates, specifying nationality marks, and notifying the International Aviation Organization thereof and of any change occurring thereto; issuing regulations and instructions that specify the documents and conditions necessary for aircraft safety; investigating accidents and incidents involving civil aircraft and establish the necessary rules for this; issuing and updating Kuwaiti civil aviation safety activities and ensuring their compliance with the Chicago Convention of 1944 and exchanging information with international airports, and providing technical, navigational, and other assistance and services to all civil and military aircraft while they are in the state's territory, in addition to the area associated with its services internationally.

The draft law authorizes the authority to establish alone, participate in establishing, or contribute to the capital of companies related to its objectives or help achieve them, in a manner that does not conflict with its exercise of its powers in the areas of issuing licenses, certificates, and approvals related to the practice of all civil aviation activities, and the control and supervision thereof.

The authority's share in the companies it establishes, participates in establishing, or contributes to their capital may not include any in-kind share, and any action that contradicts this is considered absolutely null and void.



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'Joint military committee talks will propel ties to greater levels'

# Kuwaiti military official praises 'deep' relations with Jordan

By Abdullah Al-Mershed

AMMAN, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwait and Jordan enjoy "deep" bilateral relations across various fields, while military ties have seen the most notable growth, said a Kuwaiti military official on Monday.

More military cooperation between Kuwait and Amman has paved the way for progress in relations, Kuwaiti National Guard Major General Dr. Faleh Shujaa said in a statement after putting his signature on a bilateral military deal with Amman.

The military pact with the Hashemite Kingdom, which dates back to 2017, comprises numerous joint military drills and training courses, which allow the militaries of both nations the chance to exchange their know-how with one another, he said.

Ahead of joint military committee talks slated for Kuwait early next year, he said such gatherings are instrumental in propelling relations to greater levels.



KUNA photo  
Major-General Dr Faleh Shujaa (left), after signing the minutes of the Kuwaiti-Jordanian Military Cooperation Committee.

## Former MP

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, sources said former MP Hassan Jawhar has no intention to run for the 2024 parliamentary election. The newspaper contacted Jawhar to verify this information but he has not responded so far.

In a related development, former MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri posted on his 'X' account that some parties are targeting the Constitution and pushing for the one-man decision making structure, which has dangerous consequences. He pointed out that the Constitution specifies the tasks of each authority, which cannot be disrupted directly or indirectly.

He warned that whoever responds to such parties will be their partner in leading to the nation's instability and does not respect the people. He stated: "To those who do not respect the Constitution, I say Kuwait is not a private company managed according to their whims; away from the people. Kuwait is above all considerations. We will be gone, but the country will last forever."

In addition, the National Islamic Alliance, Islamic National Consensus, Justice and Peace Alliance and Al-Meehaq National Gathering issued a joint statement, stressing that any amendment to the Election Law must be based on the Constitution, pass through constitutional channels, and aimed at granting more freedoms and developing democracy.

These blocs called on the government to adhere to the Election Law ratified by 2023 Parliament and refrain from issuing excessive number of decrees of necessity. They asked the people of Kuwait to take the initiative, maintain a positive attitude and strengthen national unity; instead of wallowing in depression.

## Historic bond ...

Continued from Page 1

Moreover, both sides touched on the situation in Palestine and other Arab-occupied territories, expressing deep concern regarding the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

The two sides stressed the need for the international community, especially the Security Council, to assume its responsibilities to stop military operations in the Palestinian territories and protect civilians by international law and international humanitarian law, and called for pressure on Israel, the existing authority.

The occupation must stop its aggression and prevent attempts to impose forced displacement on Palestinians

from the Gaza Strip, which is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and international laws, they added.

Both sides affirmed the need to reach a just settlement of the Palestinian cause by the principle of the two-state solution as stated in the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant international legitimacy resolutions in a way that guarantees the Palestinian people their right to establish their independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Kuwaiti side praised the Qatari mediation efforts made within the framework of maintaining international peace and security, especially concerning the exchange of Palestinian prisoners and the introduction of relief aid into the Gaza Strip, and the role played by Doha in coordination with many brotherly and friendly countries, the most recent of which was Qatari-French coordination in January. 2024 to bring medicines and medical equipment into the Gaza Strip.

Regarding Yemen, the two sides stressed the importance of reaching a comprehensive political solution to the Yemeni crisis in accordance with the three terms of reference, the Gulf Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive national dialogue, and Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 2216.

On the navigation in the Red Sea, the two sides stressed the importance of maintaining the security and stability of the Red Sea region and respecting the right to maritime navigation therein per the provisions of international law and the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to preserve the freedom of global trade.

His Highness the Amir thanked Sheikh Tamim for his hospitality and warm welcome during his visit to Qatar, Showing the deep brotherly ties between the two states.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by officials, initiated a significant state visit to the Qatari capital on Tuesday. The journey began with a warm welcome from Qatari authorities, including a squadron of warplanes escorting His Highness the Amir's plane upon entering Qatari airspace.

Upon landing, His Highness the Amir was greeted by Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, along with other dignitaries such as Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

An official reception at the Qatari Amiri Diwan marked the beginning of formalities, featuring traditional Qatari Ardh dance performances and an 18-gun salute. The national anthems of both Kuwait and Qatar resonated through the

air as His Highness the Amir engaged in friendly exchanges with Qatari officials.

The core of the visit included official talks between Kuwait and Qatar, fostering discussions on fraternal relations and avenues for further cooperation. The meetings, held in a friendly atmosphere, addressed joint Gulf actions, security, and stability, emphasizing mutual interests and the latest regional and international developments.

A symbolic gesture of the distinguished relations between the two nations came to light as the Amir of Qatar presented the highest national decoration, the Sword of the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammad Bin Thani, to His Highness the Amir.

In appreciation of the visit, Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani hosted a lunch banquet, providing an opportunity for strengthened ties and continued collaboration between the two Gulf nations.

As the state visit concluded, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of appreciation to the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir thanked Sheikh Tamim for his hospitality and warm welcome during his visit to Qatar, showing the deep brotherly ties between the two states.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir expressed his gratitude to the Qatari Amir for awarding him the "Founder Sword".

His Highness the Amir wished the Qatari Amir and his country health and more prosperity.

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to Doha reflects the strong ties between the nations, said Qatari journalists.

In remarks to KUNA, some Qatari media figures stressed that the Amir of Kuwait's visit reflects the keenness of the two states' leadership for further propensity and cooperation.

Editor-in-chief of Qatari Al-Sharq newspaper, Jaber Al-Harami, said that Kuwait Amir's visit to Doha is a great opportunity to boost the historical ties that bind the two countries.

He also noted that the talks between the two leaders would push for more cooperation and coordination between both countries.

Furthermore, he affirmed that the visit of His Highness the Amir to Qatar is an authentic, inherited part of a series of mutual visits between the two ruling families since ancient times.

The visit is conclusive evidence of the strength and stability of Kuwaiti-Qatari relations, which in turn reflected in the diplomatic positions in terms of the political approach in various circles, whether Gulf, Arab, Islamic, or international, he added.

# Exercise, healthy diet vital in bid to overcome diabetes

DDI organizes Gulf conference

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Around 75 percent of individuals in Kuwait do not exercise in the manner recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), reports Al-Anba daily quoting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the Medical Sector at Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) and consultant in diabetes, endocrinology and therapeutic nutrition Dr Dabaa Al-Uzairi.

In a statement to the daily on the sidelines of the opening of the Gulf Conference on Nutrition and Physical Activity organized by the Institute recently, Al-Uzairi emphasized the need to raise public awareness on the benefits of the research and studies on nutritional trends and exercise. She said the conference tackled the latest recommendations and results of global research and studies about nutritional trends and exercise and its effects on controlling diabetes. "For the first time in the Arabian Gulf, we are evaluating a conference that monitors the importance of nutrition and exercise," she disclosed.

The Omani Diabetes Association, Bahrain Diabetes Association, Metabolic Center for Combating Obesity and Diabetes in Qatar, Saudi Nutrition Society and Emirates Nutrition Society are among the participants in the conference.

Al-Uzairi pointed out many people are engaged in sports activities, which is the best way to protect oneself against diabetes, which can be prevented by up to 58 percent or if a person suffers from diabetes, he can overcome it through exercise and a healthy diet.

She said the conference highlighted recommendations for sports practitioners, as many of them who join health clubs could be exposed to inappropriate diets or use of nutritional supplements, especially if they suffer from diseases such as diabetes or kidney problems. She asserted the conference is unique, because it obtained accreditation from all Gulf countries.

She added: "We tried to unify all recommendations by specialists, whether doctors or nutritionists. Dasman Diabetes Institute is using many researches related to diabetes and exercise, which have been published in international journals."

On the other hand, Chairperson of the Organizing Committee for the conference and clinical nutrition specialist at the Institute and the Amiri Hospital Jumana Al-Kandari revealed: "Over the past six years, we have organized successive conferences on therapeutic nutrition, but this year the conference represents the first of its kind for several reasons, the most important of which is the presence of Gulf diabetes associations and it is also considered a specialized conference in precise sports nutrition."

Al-Kandari added that a research conducted by the Institute proved that the health condition of people with Type 2 diabetes improves once they exercise for a certain period and lose 10 percent of their weight. "This means there is a very close relationship between exercising, diabetes and general health. The most important risk factor for diabetes is obesity, particularly if fats are concentrated in the belly."



Al-Qabas photo  
Ahmed Al-Bazzaz

## 1st Kuwaiti, Gulf citizen to participate

Kuwaiti and Marine Club free diving champion, Ahmed Hussein Al-Bazzaz, is currently in Russia where he is undergoing intensive training in preparation for his participation in the World Ice Diving Challenge Championship from Feb 24-25 in Vladivostok, Russia, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Bazzaz revealed this is his first time to participate in the world championship, which is considered one of the most difficult sports tournaments in the global diving field. He explained the temperature reaches 15 degrees below zero at a time a diver

dives as far as he can through a circular opening that allows him to descend into the water or diving in ice with a thickness of more than 40 centimeters, and for a specific navigation distance according to numbered holes placed over long distances.

He said the process of communicating with him remains limited to a rope that pulls him out from under the ice. He affirmed that his pride in participating stems from the fact that he is the first Kuwaiti and Gulf citizen to participate in this tournament, stressing he is raising the Kuwait flag.

## Dean announces duration for partial withdrawal of courses

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAEET) has announced the partial withdrawal period for college students enrolled in the second semester of 2023-2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The students are advised to complete their partial withdrawals electronically between February 27 and March 4, ensuring compliance with the commission's registration regulations, which mandate maintaining a minimum of 12 academic units after withdrawal.

In a related announcement, the Deanship unveiled the schedule for distributing certificates to female graduates of the College of Technological Studies across all specializations. Distribution will occur today and tomorrow, from 9 am to 12:30 noon.

For male graduates specializ-

ing in fields such as power train, refrigeration and air conditioning, petroleum engineering, chemical engineering, laboratories, manufacturing, and welding, certificate distribution will commence tomorrow at Hall No. 7 in Adailiya, followed by distribution for other specializations the subsequent day.

The College of Health Sciences will distribute certificates over two days, starting tomorrow and continuing the day after, at the college's registration department.

Additionally, the Deanship announced that certificate distribution for graduates of the College of Business Studies, across all majors and genders, will extend until the day after tomorrow, from 9 am to 12:30 pm.

Lastly, graduates of the College of Nursing are advised to collect their certificates until noon today at the college's registration department.

## Illicit transfers

Continued from Page 1

Data from the Central Bank of Kuwait underscores this downturn, revealing a consecutive annual decrease of 41.3 percent in the net profits of exchange companies during 2023, attributed to rising expenses and operational burdens coupled with declining revenues.

In 2023, exchange companies reported a net profit of 25.29 million dinars, significantly lower than the 43.09 million dinars recorded in 2022. The increase in expenses, totaling 54.87 million dinars, up by 10.22% compared to the previous year, contributed to this decline. Administrative and banking expenses amounted to 44.09 million dinars, with bank interest reaching 945.4 thousand dinars and allocations totaling 8.66 million dinars, alongside 1.17 million dinars in other expenses.

Despite these challenges, revenues from exchange activities increased by approximately 13.68% to 80.16 million dinars in 2023, albeit lower than the 92.87 million dinars recorded in 2022. At the end of December 2023, the total assets of exchange companies operating in Kuwait reached about 298.1 million dinars, up from approximately 283.3 million dinars in December 2022.

## Kuwait reaffirms

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit said on Tuesday that scars of the Israeli occupation's premeditated annihilation inflicted in Gaza will probably remain visible for decades to come.

Marks of the Israeli intentional destruction inflicted in Gaza Strip by the Israeli occupation that has wiped out all living fundamentals will probably remain visible for decades to come as a testimony to the ugliness of the perpetrated crime and the world's failure to stop the aggression, he said.

Abul-Gheit, speaking at the Arab Sustainability Day 2024 celebration that kicked off at the Arab League headquarters, indicated in a statement that the event coincided with very distressing events in the occupied territories where the occupiers have been employing all their powers to liquidate the Palestinian cause.

"In this context, I note the perpetrated carnage caused by the Israeli occupation in Gaza eliminating all bases of life will remain standing, may be for decades ahead .. and will be a testimony to the ugly crimes and the world's inability to stop the aggression," he said.

He reiterated rejection of a planned Israeli plan to invade Rafah in southern Gaza that became the last refuge for more than 1.5 million Palestinians who had fled from the hellish aggression and annihilation in the other regions in the strip.

## Ministry of Commerce and Industry



### RECALL INFORMATION



Mazda CX-90 M.Y. 2024

#### RECALL REASON

Mazda Motor Corporation has decided to conduct a recall campaign on certain CX-90 vehicles. While driving, the customer may feel a sudden increase of effort when steering the vehicle. Sudden and unexpected change of steering effort while driving may increase the risk of a crash.

#### REMEDY

The worm gear friction force may be excessive which results in increased force required to turn the steering wheel. Re-apply grease to the gear teeth. Replace the spring engaging the worm gear with an improved part. The improved spring will reduce the spring force to the worm gear in the steering assembly.

#### CONTACT

Kuwait Automotive Imports Co.  
Mazda Service Center - Shuwaikh  
Hotline: 2226 2426 | www.mazda.com.kw

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46 and47)of no.(39/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

## Ministry of Commerce and Industry



### RECALL INFORMATION



Mazda CX-60 M.Y. 2023 and 2024

#### RECALL REASON

Mazda Motor Corporation has decided to conduct a recall campaign on certain CX-60 vehicles. While driving, the customer may feel a sudden increase of effort when steering the vehicle. Sudden and unexpected change of steering effort while driving may increase the risk of a crash.

#### REMEDY

The worm gear friction force may be excessive which results in increased force required to turn the steering wheel. Re-apply grease to the gear teeth. Replace the spring engaging the worm gear with an improved part. The improved spring will reduce the spring force to the worm

#### CONTACT

Kuwait Automotive Imports Co.  
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## World News Roundup

## Europe

**'Foreign aid delays making life very difficult':** Delays in weapons deliveries from Western allies to Ukraine are opening a door for Russian battlefield advances, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says, making the fight "very difficult" along parts of the front line where the Kremlin's forces captured a strategic city last weekend ahead of the war's two-year anniversary.



Zelenskyy

Zelenskyy and other officials have often expressed frustration at the slowness of promised aid deliveries, especially since signs of war fatigue have emerged. European countries are struggling to find enough stocks to send to Kyiv, and US help worth \$60 billion is stalled over political differences. That appears to be playing into the hands of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Even so, more help is heading Ukraine's way, as Sweden announced Tuesday its biggest aid package so far and Canada said it was expediting the delivery of more than 800 drones.

Zelenskyy, in his daily video address late Monday, said Russia has built up troops at some points along the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line, apparently aiming to pounce on any perceived defensive weaknesses.

"They (the Russians) are taking advantage of delays in aid to Ukraine," he said after visiting the command post in the area of Kupiansk, in the northeastern Kharkiv region, on Monday.

He said Ukrainian troops keenly felt a shortage of artillery, air defense systems and long-range weapons.

Ukrainian forces withdrew from the strategic eastern city of Avdiivka at the weekend, where they had battled a fierce Russian assault for four months despite being heavily outnumbered and outgunned. (AP)



**Navalny's mother appeals to Putin:** The mother of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny appealed Tuesday to President Vladimir Putin to intervene and turn her son's body over to her so she can bury him with dignity.

Lyudmila Navalnaya, who has been trying to get his body since Saturday, appeared in a video outside the Arctic penal colony where Navalny died on Friday.

"For the fifth day, I have been unable to see him. They wouldn't release his body to me. And they're not even telling me where he is," a black-clad Navalnaya said in the video, with the barbed wire of Penal Colony No. 3 in Kharp, about 1,900 kilometers (1,200 miles) northeast of Moscow.

"I'm reaching out to you, Vladimir Putin. The resolution of this matter depends solely on you. Let me finally see my son. I demand that Alexei's body is released immediately, so that I can bury him like a human being," she said in the video, which was posted to social media by Navalny's team.

Russian authorities have said the cause of Navalny's death is still unknown and refused to release his body for the next two weeks. (AP)



**Assange starts final UK legal battle:** Julian Assange's lawyers began their final UK legal challenge Tuesday to stop the WikiLeaks founder from being sent to the United States to face spying charges, arguing that his actions had exposed serious criminal actions by US authorities and were "of obvious and important public interest."

Assange himself was not in court. Judge Victoria Sharp said he was granted permission to come from Belmarsh Prison, where he has been held for five years, but had chosen not to attend. Assange's lawyer, Edward Fitzgerald, said the 52-year-old Australian was unwell.

Assange has been fighting extradition for more than a decade, including seven years in self-exile in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London and the last five years in the high-security prison.

He has been indicted on 17 charges of espionage and one charge of computer misuse over his website's publication of classified US documents. US prosecutors say Assange helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, putting lives at risk.

To his supporters, Assange is a secrecy-busting journalist who exposed US military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. (AP)



**'Falkland valued part of British family':** British Foreign Secretary David Cameron on Monday toured battle sites of the Falklands War during a visit meant to underline that the Falkland Islands are a "valued part of the British family."

The visit by Cameron - the first British foreign secretary to make the trip to the South Atlantic archipelago in three decades - came amid renewed calls by Argentina for negotiations over the contested territory.

Cameron said he hoped that the islands would wish to remain part of the British "family" forever.

"As long as the Falkland Islands want to be part of the UK family they are absolutely welcome to be part of that family and we will support them and back them and help protect and defend them absolutely, as far as I'm concerned, for as long as they want," he said. "And I hope that's for a very, very long time, possibly forever."

The politician was taken on a helicopter tour of the islands and stopped at two battle sites in the 1982 Falklands War. He also visited a cemetery and paid respects to the war dead. (AP)



**Car crash in southern Serbia kills 3 migrants:** A car crash in southern Serbia has killed three migrants and injured 11 others, and the driver was detained for suspected people smuggling, police in the Balkan country said on Tuesday.

The 43-year-old Serbian driver had no driver's license and was among those injured in the crash, according to a police statement.

The accident occurred late Monday in southern Serbia, near the border with North Macedonia. Both countries lie on the so-called Balkan land route used by migrants trying to reach western Europe.

A video on state RTS television showed a smashed white car being taken away from the scene. The report said the vehicle swerved off the road at a high speed.

The accident illustrates the dangers migrants face on their journeys after fleeing war or poverty in their home countries in the Middle East, Africa or Asia. Migrants usually turn to people smugglers to take them over the borders without authorization. (AP)



**'Bullet-riddled body may be Russian':** Spanish police said Tuesday they suspect the bullet-riddled body of a man found in an eastern town is that of Russian defector Maksim Kuzminov, who flew a Russian army helicopter on his escape across the front lines last year.

Andrii Yusov, a representative of Ukrainian military intelligence, confirmed to local media that the former Russian pilot had died in Spain, but didn't provide details.

Spain's Civil Guard said they found false documents on a body discovered Feb. 13 in the entrance to a residential complex in La Cala, near the eastern port city of Alicante.

They said the documents identified the man as a 33-year-old Ukrainian, but police now believe it could be Kuzminov.

Kuzminov defected last year by flying into Ukraine in a Mi-8 army helicopter with the help of Ukrainian intelligence. (AP)



**Group claims attempted parcel bomb attack:** An anarchist group on Monday claimed responsibility for last week's attempted bomb attack against a senior judge in Greece, raising fears of a resurgence of violence by radical militants.

Explosives experts defused the parcel bomb that was placed at a courthouse in the northern city of Thessaloniki and addressed to the judge.

In an online post, a previously unheard of group, called Armed Response, claimed responsibility for the attempted attack. It named the judge it had targeted and vowed to step up attacks against the judiciary in solidarity with jailed fellow militants.

"Just as easily as the parcel bomb reached her office, our bullets can find their target," the statement said. (AP)



US Republican presidential candidate former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley speaks at a campaign event on Feb 19, in Greer, SC. (AP)

## Politics

## GOP not shy about wanting ex-prez approval

## Haley sharpens contrasts with Trump in SC

COLUMBIA, SC, Feb 20, (AP) - Nikki Haley is using the closing days of her South Carolina Republican primary match up with Donald Trump to hone her argument that she is the lone remaining candidate who can unite Americans, despite the former president's electoral wins thus far and his popularity in her home state.

It's a tall order for Haley as South Carolina prepares to vote on Saturday. Trump's 2016 primary win helped cement his front-runner status, and he boasts support from all of the state's top elected leaders and all but one of its congressional Republicans.

But Haley has maintained that her ability to stick it out in the race, having outlasted a dozen also-ran candidates, means that she's in it for the long haul. Her amped-up fundraising could keep her going despite her earlier losses to Trump.

Part of Haley's argument is her continued showcase of her foreign policy know-how, having served as Trump's United Nations ambassador for two years, as more and more of her campaign appearances feature areas in which she says she would have acted differently than her former boss.

## Broadcast

"I will absolutely put the hammer on our NATO countries that they do have to carry their weight, but you do that behind closed doors," Haley said Sunday during a town hall on Fox News with John Roberts, broadcast from a venue in downtown Columbia, South Carolina.

It was a reference to Trump's warning to NATO allies during a campaign rally earlier this month that he "would encourage" Russia "to do whatever the hell they want" to countries that are "delinquent" - nations that in his view are not doing their part in that alliance. NATO's leader said Trump's attacks on long-standing international alliances and foreign aid could undermine security and put American and European forces at risk.

"We should make sure we tell our partners it's in their best interest to hold their own weight," Haley said Sunday. She said "Trump did it by saying he was going to encourage Putin to invade our

allies. That's the wrong way."

She sharpened those comments during a Monday morning campaign stop in the central South Carolina city of Sumter, home to an Air Force base as well as many military veterans. She said Trump is "siding with a thug" in Vladimir Putin, whom she called "a dictator who killed his political opponents."

It's an argument she makes in a new television ad, part of a \$6 million advertising flurry Haley has released in the final weeks of the campaign across her state.

In "Unite," which begins airing Monday and was shared before its launch with The Associated Press, Haley argues she is the only choice among the remaining candidates who can handle disputes with foreign leaders in a way that will keep America on solid footing abroad.

## Divided

"When your enemies think you're weak, your leader must be strong," a narrator says, over images of foreign leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping and Putin. "When your country is divided, your president must unite us."

The ad argues that Haley "provided moral clarity during our darkest hours," over headlines from coverage of the racist slaying of nine Black parishioners at a Charleston church in 2015, during Haley's second term as South Carolina governor. "What's next? That's up to you."

Saying Sunday - as she has throughout her campaign - that she's "OK being the underdog now," Haley has been firm in saying that she has never lost a race and believes voters will see her as the right choice to shift away from the "chaos" she says follows Trump. She also frequently notes that, while Trump has won the earliest contests, she has been ascendant, pointing to the shrinking margins between her totals and Trump's in the Iowa and New Hampshire contests.

But over the weekend, Haley also began making an appeal to South Carolinians who typically vote in Democratic primaries, for Saturday's vote, a mes-

sage she also echoed during campaign events on Monday.

She noted that anyone who didn't vote in the Feb. 3 Democratic primary - which attracted under 5% of eligible voters statewide - can vote in this one, as she bid for crossover support from people who want to cast a vote against Trump.

## Also:

**HARRISBURG, Pa:** Since he became the single biggest force in Republican politics nearly a decade ago, Donald Trump has figured prominently in US Senate races, using his massive public platform and loyal base of support to shape which GOP incumbents run for reelection and which contenders get nominated.

This year, with control of the US Senate on the line, would-be nominees in the Senate battlegrounds of Arizona, Montana, Michigan, Nevada and Ohio are endorsing Trump in the GOP presidential primary, campaigning for him or otherwise seeking his approval.

But that's not happening in Pennsylvania, where an awkward dance between likely partners at the top of the ticket seems all but certain to continue until the music stops in November.

There, the likely Republican nominee, David McCormick, and Trump seem to be ignoring each other. Theirs is a complicated relationship that Democrats say is fraught with danger for McCormick and pollsters say makes his uphill climb against an entrenched incumbent much steeper.

"It's a fascinating relationship to observe," said Christopher Borick, director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Allentown. "They're not a natural fit in terms of their policy positions, their rhetorical styles and, of course, given Trump's support of one of McCormick's opponents in 2022, there is a history. And how do you navigate that becomes the question."

McCormick - a wealthy ex-hedge fund CEO and onetime senior official in President George W. Bush's administration - has no major primary opposition, is popular with party brass and doesn't need Trump's fundraising help.



Long Beach Fire Department Ocean-side lifeguards load hundreds of sandbags to protect homes at the Peninsula in Long Beach, Calif on Feb 19. Another wet winter storm swamped California with heavy rainfall on Monday, flooding the runways at a regional airport and leading to several rescues on swollen rivers and creeks. (AP)



Prummell



Muncy

## America

**Deputy rescues infant:** A Florida sheriff's deputy says he was just doing his job when he quickly came to the aid of a mom and her toddler and infant children in a car crash and performed chest compressions on the infant until the baby resumed breathing.

Charlotte County Deputy Sgt Dave Musgrove's heroics the night of Feb 8 were captured on body camera footage.

The deputy was traveling on a state highway near Englewood when a motorcycle passed him at an estimated speed of over 100 mph (160 km), the sheriff's office said in a Feb. 16 news release. Seconds later, a camera in the deputy's vehicle captured a flash of light as the motorcycle crashed into another vehicle.

Upon arriving at the scene, Musgrove opened a rear passenger door and pulled the toddler from a booster seat. He flagged a passerby and handed the child to him and then went back to the car.

"The actions of Sgt Musgrove are to be commended," Sheriff Bill Prummell said in a statement. "His poise and calm demeanor in a scene of chaos and tragedy ultimately saved the life of a beautiful child." (AP)



**Eleven suspects arrested:** Eleven suspects have been arrested in an investigation into illegal drugs allegedly delivered by drones into a federal prison in southern West Virginia. Another man under investigation who fled officers was later found dead, authorities said.

McDowell County Sheriff James Muncy said his office was contacted in November by officials at the medium-security Federal Correctional Institution, McDowell in Welch to help with increased drone use in the area. In December, the sheriff's office started receiving multiple tips about drone deliveries.

Muncy said in a statement Friday that the arrests were made from mid-December through early February. The charges included introduction or attempts to introduce contraband into a correctional facility, possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance, unlawfully operating a drone, terroristic acts and felony conspiracy.

Muncy didn't say what drugs were allegedly flown into the facility or whether any of those arrested are inmates there. (AP)



**Student held on murder charges:** A

student was arrested Monday on murder charges over the shootings of two people who were found dead in a dorm room last week at the University of Colorado-Colo-rado Springs, police said.

The Colorado Springs Police Depart-



Britain's Princess Anne, (left), talks to school children during her visit to knife crime community group Off The Streets, in Wellingborough, England on Feb 16. (AP)

ment said they arrested Nicholas Jordan, 25, without incident on two counts of first-degree murder. Jordan was a student at the school at the time of the shooting, said university spokesperson Jenna Press.

The victims were identified as Celie Rain Montgomery, 26, and Samuel Knopp, 24, a student at the university about 69 miles (111 kilometers) south of Denver. Montgomery was not currently enrolled.

After getting an arrest warrant, the police's motor vehicle theft unit found Jordan in a car and the tactical enforcement unit took him into custody in Colorado Springs, police announced on the social media platform X. (AP)



**Wet winter storm hits Calif:** Another wet winter storm swamped California with heavy rainfall on Monday, flooding the runways at a regional airport and leading to several rescues on swollen rivers and creeks.

The Santa Barbara airport, on the state's central coast, closed Monday after as much as 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain had fallen in the area by noon, covering the runways with water.

"Commercial flights have been canceled, general aviation operations are paused, and the Terminal is closed," airport officials said in a statement posted on social media. "For info about specific flights, please contact your airline directly." (AP)

Lat/Am

Ex-PM indicted

El Salvador's Bukele wins 'supermajority'

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador, Feb 20. (AP): El Salvador President Nayib Bukele and his New Ideas party have won the supermajority the leader needs in Congress to govern as he pleases, electoral officials announced Monday.

The announcement comes after a painstaking vote counting process, which has raised the hackles of electoral watchdogs and the country's weak opposition, who cite irregularities.

Bukele handily won re-election Feb. 4 with 84.7% of the vote. What had remained up in the air was if Bukele's New Ideas party would be equally as successful in legislative elections. On Monday, officials announced that New Ideas won 54 seats of the 60 congressional seats. Allied parties won an additional three seats.



Bukele

Despite not having the final results, the leader had already declared victory in the presidency and in the congress the night of the election, saying "El Salvador has broken all the records of all democracies in the entire history of the world." "Never has a project won with the number of votes we have won today," Bukele said. "It is literally the highest percentage in all of history."

Now - with the vote actually certified - the supermajority effectively gives the self-described "world's coolest dictator" even firmer control of all three branches of government.

The 42-year-old leader is massively popular in El Salvador due to his war on the country's gangs, which resulted in a sharp drop in violence. But Bukele has also been accused of undemocratic moves, including carrying out an electoral reform that critics say stacked the vote in favor of his New Ideas party, particularly in legislative and local elections.

Last year, the congress passed electoral reforms that reduced the number of seats in the unicameral chamber to 60 from 84, a move expected to favor New Ideas.

Measures

Bukele needs Congress to continue emergency measures approved month-to-month for his gang crackdown. Previously, the leader clashed with opposition parties in Congress blocking his initiatives, even showing up to congress with armed military officers. "Now, he doesn't need any other party," said Eduardo Escobar, a lawyer with the nongovernmental organization Citizen Action who explained that before the election Bukele would at least have to pull on support from allied parties.

Congressional control will also potentially allow him to alter the constitution - which bans leaders from holding consecutive terms - to stay in power.

While constitutional lawyers argue it's illegal to make such changes, Bukele already sparked controversy by running for reelection. His party's majority in congress and a friendly court they stacked allowed him to dodge the constitutional ban.

In an interview with the Associated Press earlier this month, Bukele's vice president left the possibility of seeking a third term open if the country's constitution is changed.

New Ideas' grip on congress could also allow the leader to address the country's slowing economy and rising poverty rates. It will also permit the party to boot out critical voices from courts, and a number of other government offices.

But electoral observers and critics continue to raise alarm about the process it took to get there.

The vote count has become a subject of scrutiny after a number of irregularities and glitches resulted in the collapse of the system transmitting results. Because of the chaos, El Salvador's electoral body called for a manual count of the legislative election votes and part of the presidential votes.

Also:

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti:** A judge in Haiti responsible for investigating the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse has indicted his widow, Martine Moïse, ex-prime minister Claude Joseph and the former chief of Haiti's National Police, Léon Charles, among others, according to a report obtained Monday.

The indictments are expected to further destabilize Haiti as it struggles with a surge in gang violence and recovers from a spate of violent protests demanding the resignation of current Prime Minister Ariel Henry.

Dozens of suspects were indicted in the 122-page report issued by Walther Wesser Voltaire, who is the fifth judge to lead the investigation after previous ones stepped down for various reasons, including fear of being killed.

Charles, who was police chief when Moïse was killed and now serves as Haiti's permanent representative to the Organization of the American States, faces the most serious charges: murder; attempted murder; possession and illegal carrying of weapons; conspiracy against the internal security of the state; and criminal association.

Meanwhile, Joseph and Martine Moïse, who was injured in the attack, are accused of complicity and criminal association.

Charles could not be immediately reached for comment, and Martine Moïse's attorney did not return a message for comment.

Meanwhile, Joseph, the former prime minister, shared a statement with The Associated Press accusing Henry of "undermining" the investigation and benefiting from the president's death.

**CARACAS, Venezuela:** Venezuela's government and opposition doubled down on their respective defense and condemnation of the detention of a prominent human rights attorney, evidencing once more their vastly different interpretations of an agreement to work on conditions for a free and fair presidential election this year.

The deal, signed in October with the blessing of the United States government, binds both sides to promote a political and social climate favorable to a peaceful election. But while Attorney General Tarek William Saab showed the nation maps, laptops, cellphones and other items he said link attorney Rocio San Miguel to an alleged plot to destabilize the country, the representatives of a faction of the opposition pointed to the arrest as the latest example of escalating repression.

Their assertions came as the Norwegian diplomats guiding the negotiations between the government of President Nicolás Maduro and a US-backed opposition group met with both sides in the capital, Caracas, an unusual step in a years-long process where official meetings have always taken place in neutral territory.



A Chinese Coast Guard ship is docked near a China Customs building in Xiamen in southeast China's Fujian province on Dec 26, 2023. Taiwan on Feb 20 protested China's boarding of a tourist boat, as tensions rise around the Kinmen archipelago, which lies a short distance off China's coast but is controlled by Taiwan. (AP)

Asia

Putin gave Kim Russian-made car: NKorea

Taiwan protests after China boards tour boat

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Feb 20. (AP): Taiwan on Tuesday protested China's boarding of a tourist boat, as tensions rise around the Kinmen archipelago, which lies a short distance off China's coast but is controlled by Taiwan.

Taiwanese media reported the King Xia, carrying 11 crew and 23 passengers, was boarded by the Chinese coast guard for about 32 minutes on Monday. Taiwan's coast guard escorted the boat back to Kinmen, and it then continued its sight-seeing voyage.

Ocean Affairs Council Minister Kuan Bi-ling told journalists at the legislature on Tuesday that the incident "hurt the feelings of our people, created panic among the people, and was not in the interest of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait," referring to the 160 kilometer- (100 mile)-wide waterway that separates mainland China from Taiwan, a self-governed island that Beijing claims as its own territory.

Tensions

Premier Chen Chien-jen said Taiwan was seeking to lower tensions in the area, which have escalated as China increased military activities following Taiwan's election of an independence-leading president in January.

"We hope that this matter can be resolved properly," Chen said. "We hope that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait will adopt a rational, reciprocal, and cooperative approach to maintain the security of the waters between Kinmen and (the Chinese port city of) Xiamen and allow people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to communicate in a more healthy and orderly manner."

China is stepping up patrols in the waters off the coast of Kinmen and its associated islands, days after two Chinese fishermen drowned while being chased by the Taiwanese coast guard, which accused the boat of trespassing.

Taiwan's coast guard said a boat carrying four people was fishing about one nautical mile away from Kinmen, which Taiwan has claimed as a restricted area largely for military purposes, and capsized during a chase. Relatives of the deceased arrived on Kinmen to preside at traditional funeral services and to bring their cremated remains home. The two survivors were also sent back to mainland China, according to Taiwan's official Central News Agency.

China blamed Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party for the fisher-

men's deaths. It also said that there was no such thing as "restricted" waters.

A spokesperson for the Chinese coast guard said Sunday that its Fujian division will regularly monitor the waters off the southern coast of Xiamen - within view of Kinmen - to strengthen maritime law enforcement.

China's Foreign Ministry declined to answer questions on the matter, saying it was not a "diplomatic issue," in a reflection of Beijing's refusal to recognize Taiwan as a independent political identity with its own legitimate governing organs.

Fishermen from both Taiwan and China regularly sail that stretch of water, which has seen a rise in tensions as the number of Chinese vessels - including sand dredgers and fishing boats - have notably increased in the area.

Kinmen residents have complained of both the noise and sound pollution from the vessels, as well as losses to their livelihood in fishing.

Taiwan split from China during the 1949 civil war, but Beijing continues to regard the island of 23 million and its outlying islands as Chinese territory and has been ramping up its threat to achieve that by military force if necessary.

In addition to piling diplomatic, political and military pressure on Taiwan, China is seen as seeking to bring Kinmen into its orbit, along with Taiwan-controlled island group of Matsu, which lies off the Chinese coast to the north. Taiwanese forces based in the area have fired at drones sent over from the mainland in what is seen as a hybrid civilian-military effort to sow fear and undermine support for Taiwan's government.

China regularly sends warplanes and navy ships into areas surrounding the island. In the 24 hours leading up to 6:00 a.m. on Tuesday, 24 military aircraft and eight ships were detected operating around the island, Taiwan's Defense Ministry reported, adding that 11 of the planes crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait. It said Taiwan scrambled jets, dispatched ships and put land-based missile defenses on alert, all standard responses to what has become a near-daily show of force between the sides.

Also:

**SEOUL, South Korea:** Russian President Vladimir Putin has gifted North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a Russian-made car for his personal use

in a demonstration of their special relationship, **North Korea's** state media reported Tuesday.

The report didn't say what kind of vehicle it was or how it was shipped. But observers said it could violate a U.N. resolution that bans supplying luxury items to North Korea in an attempt to pressure the country to abandon its nuclear weapons.

Kim's sister, **Kim Yo Jong**, and another North Korean official accepted the gift Sunday and she conveyed her brother's thanks to Putin, the Korean Central News Agency said. **Kim Yo Jong** said the gift showed the special personal relationship between the leaders, the report said.

North Korea and **Russia** have boosted their cooperation significantly since Kim traveled to Russia last September for a summit with Putin. During Kim's visit to Russia's main spaceport, Putin showed the North Korean leader his personal Anrus Senat limousine and Kim sat in its backseat.

**TOKYO:** Ukrainian Prime Minister **Denys Shmyhal** said on Tuesday that his country needs long-range missiles and other ammunition to end **Russia's** invasion, and said he expects a U.S. aid package that's stalled in Congress to come through, speaking at a news conference the day after he attended a conference in Tokyo on reconstructing **Ukraine**.

Ukraine has modern equipment, training soldiers and fighting at NATO standards and that "European countries and the **United States** are supporting us, absolutely," Shmyhal said.

But, he said, the country needs more long-range missiles for air defense against Russia on the frontline, Shmyhal said.

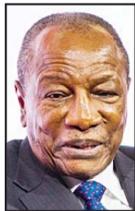
"Unfortunately, now they prevail in the air and unfortunately this leads to some consequences from the frontline, but I should say that we have no refusals from our partners to supply military equipment to Ukraine," he said.

In many western countries, military support for Ukraine is facing pushback over growing costs as the war approaches the two-year mark.

The United States has provided Ukraine with about \$111 billion, largely in weapons but also equipment and humanitarian assistance, and a new aid package of \$95 billion is stalled in Congress after passing the Senate.



Attorney General William Saab stands over items he presents as evidence related to the arrest of human rights lawyer and activist Rocio San Miguel, accused of allegedly plotting to kill President Nicolas Maduro in Caracas, Venezuela on Feb 19. (AP)



Conde



Camara

Africa

**Guinea's military dissolves gov:** Military leaders in Guinea have dissolved the government without explanation, saying they will appoint a new one, the president's secretary general said.

Gen **Amara Camara**, in a video address on Monday night, added that daily business would continue as usual under the deputy secretary generals until a new government was formed.

The West African nation has been led by a military regime since soldiers ousted President **Alpha Conde** in 2021. The West African regional bloc known as ECOWAS has pushed for a quick transition back to civilian rule and elections are scheduled for 2025.

Ibrahima Sory Bangoura, chief of staff of the armed forces, said Monday that members of the dissolved government had to return their vehicles and passports as soon as possible. Their bodyguards also had to end their service and the ministers' bank accounts were frozen, he added.

Col Mamadi Doumbouya, who leads the country, overran the president three years ago, saying he was preventing Guinea from slipping into chaos and chastised the previous government for broken promises.

However, since coming to power he's been criticized for being no better than his predecessor. (AP)

**Morocco intercepts boat:** The Moroccan navy said it intercepted 141 people attempting to traverse the Atlantic Ocean as migration from West Africa to Spain's Canary Islands has spiked since the beginning of the year.

Morocco's Royal Armed Forces said in a statement Sunday it was able to rescue all passengers on a boat off the coast of the Western Sahara, a disputed territory with a coastline that Morocco has controlled since 1975.

It said the 141 people all came from sub-Saharan Africa and likely embarked more than a week earlier from Mauritania - Morocco's southern neighbor and the primary point of departure for migrants attempting to reach Spain's Canary Islands.

The interception was the largest that Moroccan authorities have reported this year.

The Canary Islands are roughly 62 miles (100 kilometers) from Morocco's Atlantic coast but pirogues - the wooden vessels migrants often use to cross - often launch from as far south as Gambia, from where the journey can take up to 10 days, according to the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (AP)

**Ethiopia rejects allegations:** Ethiopia's government dismissed allegation its soldiers massacred scores of civilians last month in the country's restive Amhara re-

gion as the West is demanding an investigation into the killings.

A rebellion broke out in Amhara - Ethiopia's second-biggest province - last year

when the government moved to dissolve regional forces and absorb them into the federal army. Later, rebels captured several towns across the region before retreating to the countryside.

Rights monitors have documented a range of human rights abuses by government forces during the conflict, including alleged extra-judicial killings.

Ethiopia's state-appointed human rights commission says at least 45 civilians were killed by troops in the Amhara town of Merawi following clashes with a local militia in January. Another national rights body put the death toll at over 80. Both organizations said the killings included shootings that occurred during house-to-house searches.

Government spokesperson Legesse Tulu on Thursday told the local language service of German broadcaster Deutsche Welle that there was fighting in Merawi but insisted the military "did not target any civilians."

Legesse said soldiers entered civilian homes to conduct searches after the fighting and acted in "self-defense" when "they were fired upon again" by armed elements.

"Not only would civilians never be targeted, even surrendering combatants would not be killed," Legesse said.

The United Kingdom urged a full investigation into events in Merawi, a day after the European Union called for a probe and dialogue to resolve the conflict in Amhara.

Authorities have cut the internet in Amhara and in some locations there is no phone service, making it difficult to verify events. (AP)



Leon Charles, (left), Director General of Haiti's Police leaves a room after a news conference at police headquarters in Port-au-Prince, on July 14, 2021. Charles gave an update on the investigation of the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. A judge investigating the July 2021 assassination of President Moïse issued a final report on Feb 19 that indicts his widow, Martine Moïse, ex-prime minister Claude Joseph and the former chief of Haiti's National Police, Charles, among others. (AP)

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| PHILIPPINES | - PSEI    | +56.05      | 6,854.66  | PAKISTAN | - KSE 100   | -7.77   | 60,496.61 |

# Business

## KFH pioneers responsible finance and UN SDG support

# Kuwait Finance House releases its third sustainability report

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has released the third edition of the Sustainability Report for the year 2022. The purpose of the report is to enhance transparency, accountability, and communication with all stakeholders. The report highlights KFH's performance according to global Economic, Environmental, Social, and Governance (EESG) key indicators, in addition to a range of sustainability topics.

It also covers KFH's (ESG) performance and initiatives towards creating positive social and environmental impacts, its approach to responsible financing, and efforts to support the United Nations (UN) SDGs as well as promoting sustainable growth and adherence to Islamic finance principles.

On this occasion, KFH Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq said that KFH has achieved remarkable advancements in putting the Group's sustainability strategy into action.

He added that KFH has made impressive progress in establishing frameworks, governance policies, sustainability standards, and environmental considerations within a relatively short period, noting that these efforts align with the launch of programs and initiatives in the banking sector of Kuwait.

Al Marzouq stressed KFH's keenness to ensure that its regulations and frameworks pertaining to sustainability align with the international standards and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, KFH has placed a high priority on creating a wide range of comprehensive and diversified programs that cater to the needs and expectations of stakeholders and market demands.

He explained that KFH has integrated sustainability with its digital transformation strategy by making substantial investments in the latest technology within the financial industry. The objective was to promote financial inclusion by broadening the availability of banking accounts, services, and products, as well as offering digital solutions to customers and meeting market needs. Additionally, the strategy aimed to streamline operational costs while improving the overall quality of services provided.

He added that the pioneering shift towards adopting the concept of sustainable banking has yielded favorable outcomes for the Bank. This is evident in the increase in KFH customers' utilization of digital services, which affirms the Bank's digital dominance at the banking sector level in a highly global and competitive environment.

### Sustainable Finance

Al Marzouq affirmed KFH's distinctive position in leading sustainability through Green Sukuk, saying that KFH Capital, the Group's investment arm, successfully arranged the issuance of USD 350 million sustainability sukuk for Kuveyt Türk, the first of its kind issued by an Islamic financial institution. It is also the first tier 2 sustainability sukuk issuance transaction globally. Proceeds will be used to finance sustainability projects of green and social projects.

### Acquisition & Growth

On a different front, Al Marzouq stated that the regional global expansion of KFH's network, thanks to the acquisition of Ahli United Bank (AUB), provides strong support for the Group's activities and operations, in addition to the expansion of innovative services and products the Bank offers on a wider scale.

He said that the Bank's profitability and socially responsible investments are both positively influenced by its geographical reach. KFH recorded the highest quarterly profit in the Group's history and the highest in the Kuwaiti banking sector following the acquisition of AUB. These profits play a significant role in the continuation and expansion of various forms of sustainable development.

### Community Contributions

Al Marzouq explained that KFH remains committed to the concept of generating shared value to guarantee true sustainability for stakeholders while upholding its high standards in community contributions.

"KFH's CSR activities include supporting the Institute of Banking Studies and the strategic partnership with Coded Academy. Also, KFH launched a set of awareness messages on banking services and products in sign language to reach out to people with hearing disabilities, in addition to appointing a fully trained staff in sign language in 6 bank branches, to assist customers to complete their financial transactions," added Al Marzouq.

Al Marzouq thanked shareholders, customers, employees, stakeholders, and all partners for their trust and support of our institution, confirming that KFH will continue focusing its efforts on achieving overall sustainability and innovative sustainable solutions in all communities within its wide network.

He pointed out that through strategic investment and appropriate partnerships, KFH will strengthen its leading position and growth opportunities as the largest bank in Kuwait and the second largest Islamic financial institution in the world.

### Qualitative Achievements

KFH Acting Group CEO, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood said that KFH has achieved significant milestones and made substantial progress in its sustainability strategy, primarily due to its distinctive model that integrates core Islamic banking practices with a focus on sustainability.

Al Rushood added that KFH's unwavering dedication in this regard is



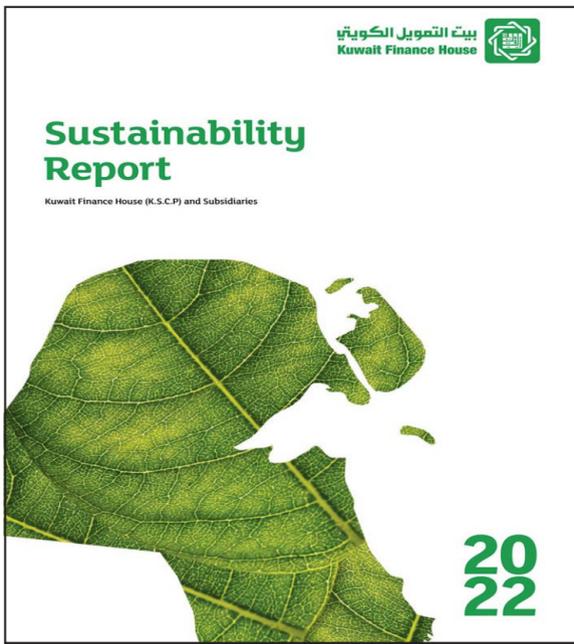
KFH Chairman – Hamad Al Marzouq



KFH Acting Group CEO – Abdulwahab Al Rushood

**Al Marzouq:** KFH achieved remarkable advancement in putting the Group's sustainability strategy into action

**Al Rushood:** KFH has a distinctive model that integrates core Islamic banking practices with a focus on sustainability.



KFH Sustainability Report 2022

geared towards prioritizing sustainability for all and creating an ideal and sustainable work environment within the Bank. These efforts also bolster an all-encompassing infrastructure to harmonize social and economic progress, protect the environment, adhere to sustainable development goals (SDGs), and enhance the well-being of communities.

Through its socially responsible investments (SRIs), Al Rushood mentioned that KFH maintained its commitment to sustainability and expanded its portfolio of Green Finance products for both the retail and corporate fronts.

He noted that KFH was the first bank in Kuwait to receive the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS – Gold Level Certificate for KFH Auto; the first eco-friendly showroom that is compliant with sustainability standards.

Al Rushood added that KFH also maintained its strategic alliances with multiple government and private organizations as part of its (Keep it Green) initiative, which was introduced to integrate all its sustainability efforts and adhere to governance and environment standards. Additionally, KFH actively backed various environmental initiatives, including a partnership with Kuwait Scientific Center to implant coral reef in Qaruh Island, in addition to many environment preservation projects such as the beach cleaning and afforestation

campaign in collaboration with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs, as well as a campaign launched as part of (Keep it Green) in the Assima Mall for recycling plastic bottles.

### Innovative Solutions

Al Rushood pointed out that KFH's success is epitomized by its adoption of innovative and environmentally conscious solutions, as well as strategic collaborations and social endeavours. These efforts emphasize the Bank's dedication to sustainability and its consistent commitment to environmental preservation as it forges ahead.

He mentioned that KFH's sustainability initiatives take account of global standards and incorporate digital and smart solutions, while also promoting awareness through resource-efficient practices. These high-quality efforts underpin KFH's commitment to enhancing its leadership in social responsibility across its daily operations while also enhancing the Group's overall efficient performance.

Al Rushood emphasized that KFH's efforts are not limited to the environmental sphere. The sustainability strategy development project is based on comprehensive steps through which the economic, social, and environmental impacts are measured at the operational, business continuity and developmental levels.

He added: "The significant and rapid leaps taken by KFH to enhance the sustainability concept across the banking sector confirms its pioneering role and high capacity to capitalize on it, while fulfilling its socially conscious role at the same time."

He said that KFH's sustainability strategy also focuses on upgrading the digitalization process of its corporate banking services and automating the credit operations and financing activities, in addition to consolidating the Group's brand and offering an added value to shareholders, customers and stakeholders.

He pointed out that KFH sets itself apart through its KFH Go smart branches by aligning its digital transformation efforts with sustainability and staying up to date with cutting-edge techniques and top-tier standards. This also involves embracing innovation in digital banking solutions and enhancing the experience for customers seeking convenient and prompt banking services.

### Financial Inclusion

Al Rushood stated that KFH's commitment to sustainability aligns with its digital transformation strategy, which is founded on several pillars such as the integration of Artificial Intelligence, collaboration with Fintech enterprises, and the development of a robust system infrastructure alongside adaptable and smart solutions to enhance the overall banking journey for customers.

He went on to say that the endeavours and applications in the digitalization field have encompassed various aspects, including e-payments, online account opening, instant card printing and issuance in addition to device performance development, selling and buying gold, and branchless banking.

As a testament to the effectiveness of KFH's sustainable digital efforts, Al Rushood revealed that the annual growth rate for using digital financial solutions via KFHonline surged to over 32% in 2022. This surge highlights the high calibre and efficiency of the services offered on mobile and other KFH online platforms.

### Green Finance

Al Rushood explained that in recent years, KFH, through its Board's Governance and Sustainability Committee, opted to accelerate the incorporation of green finance, digital products, and services in addition to environmental and community-conscious practices as modern tools in the banking industry and integrate them into KFH's operations.

He indicated that the general direction of KFH focuses on enhancing the issuance of Green Sukuk and green finance products at the retail and corporate levels.

### Nurturing employees

Al Rushood said that KFH has invested in the young cadres through its (Forsah) training program, expanded the financial inclusion for the financing services, and consolidated its initiatives for woman empowerment. Consequently, women now hold prominent posts in various business divisions within KFH.

In this respect, he noted that KFH inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UNDP to facilitate the exchange of knowledge on sustainability. This collaboration led to the establishment of a training program for the executive management, aimed at enhancing their sustainability capabilities and fostering greater awareness within the organization.

He confirmed that KFH is moving ahead equipped with a well-defined strategy along with clear performance indicators to track the Bank's sustainability progress, saying that it is essential to stress that the importance of the sustainability strategy development projects shown in its enhancing of profitability, growth, and performance efficiency, as well as in promoting the ability to meet evolving market trends and customers' needs. It also solidifies our standing as a world leading Islamic financial institution.

It is worth noting that KFH is the first bank at the local and Islamic sector levels to issue a sustainability report, highlighting its efforts in the sustainable development arena, covering economic growth, natural resources conservation, environmental protection, and social development.

# Kuwait's Al-Zour Refinery faces significant production cutback

Output falls by 175,000 barrels

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Oil industry sources disclosed the underlying causes behind the current decrease in production at Al-Zour Refinery, which has seen a reduction from its maximum capacity of 615 thousand barrels per day to 440 thousand barrels.

Sources told Al-Seyassah that these factors converge to shape the current scenario. Firstly, the seasonal decline in demand due to the conclusion of the Winter season in many countries worldwide is a recurring phenomenon, prompting a reduction in oil consumption during this period each year.

Secondly, ongoing tensions in the Red Sea have escalated shipping costs for refined oil, necessitating a reduction in production at Al-Zour Refinery to mitigate the impact of high shipping expenses.

Thirdly, the proliferation of new refineries, such as the Kuwaiti-Omani Duqm refinery, which refines 230 thousand barrels per day with Kuwait's 65 percent stake, has contributed to a surplus of refined products.

Additionally, refineries in India, China, Mexico, Venezuela, and Nigeria are supplying substantial quantities of refined oil. The recent commencement of production at the Nigerian Dangote refinery, owned by Africa's wealthiest businessman, with a capacity of 650 thousand barrels

## Collaboration boosted refining operations

# KIPIC launches Kuwaiti heavy oil refining at Al-Zour Refinery

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) has initiated the reception and refining of Kuwaiti heavy oil, specifically Eocene and South Ratqa, in the third crude oil distillation unit at Al-Zour Refinery, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Operating independently with a capacity of 120 thousand barrels per day, this process is conducted in close collaboration with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's global marketing sector, Kuwait Airways, and Kuwait Oil Company.

Abdullah Fahad Al-Ajmi, the official spokesperson for KIPIC, underscored the refinery's capability to handle heavy oil autonomously across all three distillation units. This operational flexibility eliminates the necessity of mixing heavy oil with Kuwaiti oil slated for export, aligning seamlessly with the strategic plan

refined per day, is expected to reshape refined oil supplies, particularly for African countries, reducing dependence on Gulf countries.

Lastly, Al-Zour Refinery's production reduction follows the completion of its trial period to operate at full capacity, having initially produced 410 thousand barrels per day before reaching its maximum output.

outlined by the Global Marketing Sector at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

Al-Ajmi emphasized that this achievement signifies a continuation of Al-Zour Refinery's endeavors to efficiently refine heavy oils, yielding high-quality products such as low-sulfur diesel, jet fuel, naphtha, and fuel oil. Beyond bolstering Kuwait's economy, this approach maximizes the value derived from its oil revenues by avoiding the sale of raw oils on global markets.

He lauded the dedication of the teams at Al-Zour Refinery for their tireless efforts in achieving this milestone, highlighting the collective expertise and commitment to overcoming challenges inherent in the oil industry. This accomplishment serves to enhance Kuwait's refining sector, positioning it for sustained success in the global market.

Despite these challenges, Al-Zour Refinery remains a key player in the production of various derivatives including kerosene, petrochemical naphtha, jet fuel, low-sulfur fuel oil, and very low-sulfur diesel. It is poised to continue supplying the Asian and European markets, maintaining its status as a significant global refinery.

## Oil price rises to \$82.53 pb

# KNPC 'extends' bidding deadline for new Al-Mutla'a fuel depot assignment

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) has announced an extension of the bidding deadline for the anticipated New Al-Mutla'a Fuel Depot Project, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Initially slated for submission by February 13, the new deadline has been pushed back to April 30. This development was disclosed by MEED, a renowned business intelligence platform, providing insights into the project's scope and background.

The New Al-Mutla'a Fuel Depot Project is a comprehensive initiative encompassing various aspects. It involves the establishment of new pumping facilities at the Mina Al-Ahmadi and Shuaiba refineries, the installation of cross-country pipelines, the construction of a local market depot, the implementation of safety and fire-fighting systems, and the erection of storage tanks, as reported by Al-Qabas daily.

MEED's previous reports highlighted the project's progress, noting significant delays since its inception in 2013. The UK-based Wood Group

completed revised front-end engineering and design work in December 2021, following the refurbishment of the Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery as part of the \$16 billion Clean Fuels Project. Originally finalized in 2015, this phase underwent revisions to align with the refinery's refurbishment.

The completion of units under the Clean Fuels Project in September 2021 marked a significant milestone for KNPC. This transformative project merged and modernized the Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi refineries, substantially enhancing production capacity and efficiency.

### Also:

**KUWAIT CITY:** The price of Kuwaiti crude oil rose 20 cents to reach USD 82.53 on Monday, compared with USD 82.33 last Friday, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation Thursday.

In international markets, Brent crude futures rose nine cents to reach USD 83.56 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 30 cents to reach USD 79.49 pb.

## ALAFCO finalizes landmark agreement with Macquarie

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Extraordinary General Assembly of the Kuwait Aircraft Purchase and Lease Finance Company (ALAFCO) convened recently, endorsing amendments to the agreement for the sale of 53 aircraft from its portfolio, along with associated lease contracts, initially approved in December 2022, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The assembly further sanctioned the inclusion of 23 new aircraft from ALAFCO's portfolio, along with associated lease

contracts, in the agreement. This comprehensive deal, to be finalized with Macquarie Group at a base price of \$1.115 billion, marks a significant milestone for the company.

Informed sources revealed to the Arab World News Agency (AWP) that upon the approval of these amendments, ALAFCO is poised to divest all 76 of its aircraft assets to Macquarie, pending the resolution of certain regulatory matters.

Notably, these regulatory issues pertain to economic concen-

tration and necessitate approval from the Kuwaiti Competition Protection Agency. The company has already initiated the requisite procedures and is now awaiting regulatory clearance.

Furthermore, the assembly empowered the Board of Directors to formulate a strategic vision for the company's future post-completion of the aircraft sale procedures. This forward-looking approach underscores ALAFCO's commitment to adapting and thriving in the evolving aviation landscape.

### Argentina's poverty levels hit 57%

Poverty levels skyrocketed to 57.4% of Argentina's 46 million people in January, the highest rate in 20 years, according to a study by the Catholic University of Argentina.

The findings quickly unleashed accusations between Argentina's former Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and the government of President Javier Milei, who came to power announcing a series of shock measures aimed at tackling the country's severe crisis. About 27 million people

in Argentina are poor and 15% of those are mired in "desperation," meaning they cannot adequately cover their food needs, according to the study released over the weekend.

The UCA's social debt observatory is considered an independent and prestigious research space whose reports on poverty cover a larger geographical area than those conducted by Argentina's national statistics agency, INDEC. It also applies a methodology that addresses the problem with a more mul-

tidimensional approach and its findings are seldom questioned by politicians and economists. According to the center's latest report, the increase in poverty levels in January was partly due to the devaluation of the Argentine peso applied by the Milei government shortly after taking office on Dec. 10.

This resulted in an increase in the price of the country's basic basket - which includes food, services and non-food goods - and the basic food basket. (AP)

### Cryptocurrency mkt value exceeds \$2 trl

The value of the cryptocurrency market exceeded two trillion dollars during Thursday's trading, with the price of Bitcoin rising to more than \$52,000, supported by investors' interest in this type of asset after the launch of Bitcoin traded funds in January, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Bitcoin increased by 0.14% to \$51,864.51 at 10:46 AM Makkah time after rising to more than 52,000 during trading. Ethereum rose by 0.39% to \$2,774.33, and Ripple also rose 1.45% to 54.78 cents.

CoinGecko platform data showed that the value of the cryptocurrency market rose to \$2.04 trillion, exceeding the \$2 trillion barrier for the first time since April 2022, with the volume of trading over the past 24 hours increasing by 31.59% to \$97.4 billion.

Zach Bandall, Director of Research at Grayscale Investments, said in a statement to Bloomberg that the recent rise in the price of Bitcoin reflects the strength of net flows into cryptocurrency traded funds in the American market.

### Economic growth accelerates and inflation fades

# Consumer sentiment in the US edges higher

WASHINGTON, Feb 20, (AP): A measure of consumer sentiment ticked higher this month, after soaring in December and January, underscoring that Americans are starting to feel better about the economy after several years of gloom.

The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index, released Friday, ticked up to 79.6 in February, from 79 in January. The small gain followed two months of sharp increases that were the largest in more than 30 years. How Americans feel could impact the presidential race this year, which will likely focus heavily on President Joe Biden's economic record.

Still, consumer sentiment remains 6% below its long-run average after the worst spike in inflation in four decades pushed up the cost of groceries, rent, gas, and other necessities, frustrating many consumers.

"The fact that sentiment lost no ground this month suggests that consumers continue to feel more assured about the economy, confirming the considerable improvements in December and January," said Joanne Hsu, director of the consumer survey. "Consumers continued to express confidence that the slowdown in inflation and strength in labor markets would

continue."

Improving consumer confidence can often lead to greater spending, which can support economic growth. Since the pandemic, however, consumer spending has been mostly healthy even when measures of sentiment were quite low.

#### Economic

Lael Brainard, a top White House economic adviser, in a statement Friday credited the brightening outlook to "the increase in real wages, wealth, business creation, and job opportunities" that have occurred during Biden's term. "Consumer expectations for business conditions over the next five years rose to the highest level since December 2020," she added.

In recent weeks, most economic data has been positive, and has indicated that the economy is still growing, employers are hiring, and inflation is coming down. Growth reached 3.3% in the final three months of last year, much better than economists had forecast. Consumer prices rose just

2.6% in December compared with a year ago, according to the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation measure, though the better-known consumer price index picked up a bit in January.

There has been a clear partisan gap in how Democrats and Republicans perceive the economy, and it has intensified in the past decade. In February, sentiment among Democrats was 34 points higher than for Republicans.

Yet the small gain in sentiment this month came from Republicans, whose confidence measure rose to 65 from 56.3. There was a tiny gain among independents, from 74.6 to 76.6, and a drop among Democrats, to 98.4 from 101.7.

Other measures of confidence have also shown clear improvement this winter. A daily survey by Morning Consult has increased 7% since the end of November.

And a quarterly measure of CEO confidence by the Conference Board reached 53 in the first three months of this year, the first time it has topped 50 - when more CEOs are optimistic than pessimistic - in two years.

### ABK expands its private 'banking' services in branches across Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced the expansion of its Private Banking services across several branches in Kuwait. This endeavor aims to better serve customers and enhance their overall banking experience, thus exemplifying the Bank's dedication to providing convenient top-tier services.

The newly designated branches are spread across various governorates in the country with Al Jabriya and Al Shaabbranch in Hawalli; Kaifan branch in Al Farwaniya; Al Andalus branch in Al Jahra; and Al Adan branch serving customers in both Al Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates. These additions complement the existing head office branch, providing customers with widespread access to the ABK's Private Banking services.

This strategic move underscores ABK's commitment to welcoming cus-



Behbehani

#### Mohammed Behbehani

This effort underscores the Bank's ongoing commitment to delivering the highest levels of privacy and comfort for Private Banking transactions

tomers with strong financial capabilities to its growing family, catering to their unique needs and offering a banking experience that aligns with the highest standards as well their lifestyle.

On this occasion, Mohammed Behbehani, Head of Private Banking at ABK, said, "This effort underscores the Bank's ongoing commitment to delivering the highest levels of privacy and comfort,

with a focus on transactions starting from KD 300,000 and above."

Priority is given to Private Banking customers to conduct their transactions at these branches, with dedicated relationship managers readily available to promptly and efficiently address their banking requirements. Additionally, special appointment scheduling is provided to ensure streamlined and expedited transaction completion upon their branch visit.

Behbehani continued, "ABK offers personalized consultations on investments, delivered by a highly experienced wealth and investment management team. This advisory service extends to offering valuable insights on prominent investment opportunities in Kuwaiti and global markets."

#### Delivering

He added, "The Bank remains committed to delivering the best offers and discounts in collaboration with leading companies across various sectors, while facilitating transactions through alliances with reputable concierge companies in the Kuwaiti market."

Moreover, Private Banking customers are eligible for all types of credit cards with exemption from annual renewal fees, underscoring the Bank's dedication to staying attuned to the evolving needs and preferences of its high-net-worth clients.

ABK is focused on continuous service and product development to ensure client satisfaction and consistently provide added value throughout their partnership. This, in turn, will contribute to enhancing the Bank's competitive position in the banking sector.

Looking ahead, ABK is dedicated to further expanding its branch network to accommodate the needs of its Private Banking customers, reaffirming its commitment to delivering exceptional service that attracts more clients to bank with ABK.

## TikTok faces EU scrutiny for possible 'breaches'

LONDON, Feb 20, (AP): The European Union said Monday it is investigating whether TikTok has broken the bloc's strict new digital rules for cleaning up social media and keeping internet users safe.

The European Commission, the EU's executive branch, said it has "opened formal proceedings to assess" whether TikTok has breached the Digital Services Act, which took effect last year.

The DSA is a sweeping set of regulations designed to keep internet users safe online, including requirements to make it easier to flag harmful or illegal content like hate speech, give users alternatives to algorithmic recommendations and ban ads targeted at children.

The commission is focusing on whether TikTok is doing enough to curb "systemic risks" stemming from its design, including "algorithmic systems" that might stimulate "behavioral addictions." It said measures including age verification tools to stop minors from finding "inappropriate content" might not be "reasonable, proportionate and effective."

"The protection of minors is a top enforcement priority for the DSA. As a platform that reaches millions of children and teenagers, TikTok must fully comply with the DSA and has a particular role to play in the

protection of minors online," Thierry Breton, the EU's internal market commissioner, said in a press release. "We are launching this formal infringement proceeding today to ensure that proportionate action is taken to protect the physical and emotional well-being of young Europeans."

TikTok has "pioneered features and settings to protect teens and keep under 13s off the platform, issues the whole industry is grappling with," the company said in a statement. "We'll continue to work with experts and industry to keep young people on TikTok safe, and look forward to now having the opportunity to explain this work in detail to the Commission."

The commission is also investigating TikTok's privacy measures for minors, its transparency on advertisements, and whether it's giving researchers access to data.

The EU has deemed nearly two dozen of the biggest online and social media platforms including TikTok, as ones that deserve the highest level of scrutiny under the DSA and hefty fines if they fail to comply. The bloc is already investigating Elon Musk's X, previously known as Twitter, for breaches including failure to curb the spread of illegal content.

## Al Ghais proud of a US study on OPEC's mkt-assuring messages

Group's chief calls for harnessing all energy resources

Interview by Mohammad Al-Mutairi

CAIRO, Feb 20, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Haitham Al-Ghais has underscored, Tuesday, the significance of a recently-released US Federal Reserve's study praising OPEC's explicit communications' message namely those intended to safeguard the oil market stability.

Al-Ghais, in his capacity as the OPEC chief, boasted of this study that had been released by the US central bank, lauding OPEC's forecasts and data, not only the technical and predictions and reports, but also the assuring and explicit messages to the markets.

These factors contribute to restoring stability to the oil markets in terms of supply and demand "and this is a significant issue," he said noting that the organization has been seeking market's stability, and not influencing the oil the prices.

#### Demand

The oil rates are set by the global market, and OPEC's prime goal is balancing the demand and supply for sake of stability and investments' growth that is helpful for bolstering the global economy, in general, Al-Ghais said in the special interview with the Kuwaiti news agency during EGYPTES 2024 energy conference and exhibition, patronized by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

Affirming his satisfaction of the US Federal Reserve's study, Al-Ghais stated that the praise was not solely addressed to him in person, but to all the OPEC staff who diligently work for issuing the annual, monthly and weekly reports that contain long-term forecast until the year 2045.

"We are pursuing the address to the world that needs all types of energy amid the environment preservation and the necessity of investment in technology for cutting emissions," he said, affirming that all OPEC member states have been investing in this technology.

He called for harnessing all energy resources including the renewable energy and abstaining from dependence on a single source, given the global economic and population growth.

The world will need more investments in the oil and gas sectors upon which it had counted during the past years, with emphasis on decreasing the emissions, he said. However, he cautioned that the world cannot count solely on the renewable energy.

"There will be growth in the renewable energy," he however acknowledged, indicating that Egypt



Part of the launch of the activities of the Egypt International Energy Conference and Exhibition.

## OAPEC eyes environment-friendly energy supplies, says Al-Loughani

By Mohammad Al-Mutairi

CAIRO, Feb 20, (KUNA): The Secretary General of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) Jamal Essa Al-Loughani stressed the importance of balancing transition to clean, sustainable energies against securing traditional energy supplies in a more responsible environment-friendly way.

Speaking to KUNA on Monday on the sidelines of Egypt Energy Show (EGYPES 2024), he said this year's edition of the annual event has shifted focus from petroleum matters to an encompassing energy theme covering the challenges, solutions and transformations, including the efforts to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions in the oil industry.

Al-Loughani, of Kuwait, extolled Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi for sponsoring the high-profile gathering being held on February 19-21 under the theme of "Driving Energy Transition, Security and Decarbonization."

is among the pioneering states in developing this energy in addition to the gas industry. "It has become among the largest producers following the new discoveries (of the gas) in the recent years," he said, adding that there "is consensus" with the energy ministry officials in Egypt that there should be no dependence on a sole source, considering the population growth.

He indicated at a statistical report predicting that by 2030, there will be rural-to-urban migration, thus new cities will be built across the globe. This forecast movement

Egyptes-2024 brought together a large number of ministers, senior officials in charge of the oil sector from the Arab region and beyond, and representatives of international organizations such as OPEC, OAPEC, the African Union and the World Bank, and CEOs of major energy corporations, he noted.

"The large number of attendees gives momentum to the policy-driven technical discussions on energy security and its implications on environment," Al-Loughani said, noting that OAPEC seizes this opportunity to send a message in this regard.

In a panel discussion of the conference, he talked about three axes; first, the importance of the role of OAPEC member states in the global energy market as main source of fossil fuels, renewable energy and decarbonization.

Second, the need of massive investments to meet the mounting demand for energy and the efforts of OAPEC members in this regard;

Third, the possibility of reaching the target of net zero emissions by 2050 through better manipulation of clear energy technologies, phasing out fossil fuels, and transition to renewable energies.

On the fringes of the conference, Egyptian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Tareq Al-Molla held talks with Secretary-General of OPEC Haitham Al-Ghais on cooperation between Egypt and the Organization in the field of training.

They also discussed the mechanism of the global oil market, according to a press release from the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources.

Al-Ghais, of Kuwait too, stated OPEC's desire to enroll more workers of Egyptian energy sector in its internship programs and train them at its headquarters in Vienna.

EGYPES 2024 gathered nearly 35,000 participants from 120 countries and representatives of more than 40 energy companies.

would involve some 600 million people worldwide.

Cairo alone is populated by 23 million people and the world will need to build "26 new Cairo," he forecast, metaphorically, questioning whether the world will be able to depend on the renewable, wind and solar energies alone. Therefore, he called for harnessing all types of energies in tandem with encouraging investments in the renewable energy.

He also indicated in this respect that this approach has been adopted by OPEC member states, namely

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and many other states. "These oil producing states no longer depend on the oil only, and this something we are proud of in OPEC and encourage it."

Al-Ghais called for preserving the environment sustainability, an objective aspired for by the oil and gas producing and non-producing states.

On cooperation between OPEC and OPEC+ member states, Al-Ghais said that this cooperation has distinguished since OPEC+ saw the light in 2017.

## Surpassing one million views on social media platforms within days of its launch

# stc releases its 2024 Kuwait National and Liberation Days TVC

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, launched its latest television commercial (TVC) in celebration of Kuwait's upcoming National and Liberation Days. The production comes as part of stc's National Days campaign, which features a range of activities, programs, and special promotions held during the month of February.

stc indicated in a statement that celebrating Kuwait's National Days alongside the people of Kuwait is a special time of the year. In this regard, the Company annually introduces a creative concept for the TVC as a contribution to the people of Kuwait. This year, the production titled, "الكويتي مازال" aimed to blend tradition with modernity by showcasing Kuwait's persistence in progressing. The concept and execution of the production was done by Together Production, with Sine Agency as the production house. The production featured the well-known singer Bader Al-Shaeebi, lyricist and composer Ali Bougheith, under the direction of Shamlan Al-Nassar and the director of photography Amin Shamsuddin. Distribution was handled by Ali Al Matrouk, mastering done by Montadhar Al-Zayer, and Dr. Ali bin Hussein who was the stylist for the production.

### Production

Focusing on the importance of progression and sustainability, the production featured several influential figures that have played a role in empowering the community, especially the younger generation. Following its long-standing commitment to sustainability, coupled with its extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, the TVC aimed to reflect the values that stc stands by along with the importance of these activities in nurturing and empowering entrepreneurs, innovators, and the younger generation. stc's support towards these segments can be witnessed through its 'weyak' entrepreneurial initiative as well as other programs the Company has launched, organized, or sponsored. In terms of sustainability, stc invited influential Kuwaiti personality, Youssef Al-Omran, also known as "Bu Jarrah", a well-known advocate for sustainability, as well as other influencers and supporters to be featured in the production as well.

Considering its support towards the local sports community, stc's TVC also showcased Kuwait's National Handball team who marked a significant achievement by qualifying for the World Cup after a 15-year absence after securing the fourth position in the 21st Asian Handball Championship.

Additionally, the Kuwaiti award-winning inventor



Artist Bader Al-Shaeebi with the work team from stc.



An artistic shot that combines the heritage and civilization of Kuwait.



Artist Bader Al-Shaeebi in an artistic shot from the advertisement.

Jenan Al Shehab, along with media influencers Alia Ahmad, Jenan Al Zaid and Ali Najm were featured in the TVC considering their roles as influencers who encour-



A group of influential media figures who appeared in the advertisement.

age the importance of knowledge, achievements, and other aspects that drive progression and innovation. Such values run closely to those of stc and the Kuwaiti society.

stc also hosted an exclusive family gathering for stc employees at its headquarters in Olympia Towers. The event was a celebration of Kuwait national holidays and a way for employees to unwind, and bond with each other. The event was filled with excitement and energy, as employees participated in various games and competitions. The highlight of the event was the broadcasting of stc's latest National Day TVC to the employees that was met with great enthusiasm and received positive feedback from employees.

### Celebration

Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc said, "We would like to congratulate His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God protect and preserve him, on the celebration of Kuwait's National and Liberation Days. Through its role as a digital pioneer, stc is committed to contributing to Kuwait in various ways, whether it is through driving sustainable practices, educating members of the community, empowering local initiatives and innovators, or supporting the sports community, amongst others. During celebratory occasions, such as the national holidays, stc is proud to showcase its love, devotion, and patriotism towards the people of Kuwait and the country."

In her comments on the TVC, AlJasem expressed that the positive feedback generated from the public regarding the concept behind the production reflects the values that stc holds closely to its heart when dedicating a message of appreciation to the people of Kuwait. When it comes to Kuwait, stc will spare no effort to reflect the true appreciation and sense of attachment it holds to the country of Kuwait.

AlJasem added, "We dedicate this production to the people of Kuwait. We are proud to celebrate amongst the Kuwaiti population on this special occasion and greatly believe in the private sector's role to spread a positive impact. In line with our mission to provide unwavering support to the local community and the people of Kuwait, stc will continue to participate in and implement initiatives that will leave a long lasting and beneficial impact for the future generations."

AlJasem concluded by expressing her sincere appreciation to Together Production and Sine Agency as well as her appreciation to director Shamlan Al-Nassar and director of photography Amin Shamsuddin for their collaborative efforts in conceptualizing and producing the TVC, as well as the singer Bader Al-Shaeebi and song writer and composer Ali Bougheith, and all those who played a role in the production process.

Seeking to enhance their banking experience and give them more luxury and peace of mind

## NBK offers complimentary limo ride for private and privilege banking customers



A group photo of the Bosch and Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial teams.

### AAW, Bosch celebrate 45 years of partnership in Kuwait

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW), celebrated today 45 years of partnership with Bosch Home Appliances at the company's headquarters. The event was attended by Bosch Middle East CEO, Mr. Tomas Alonso, AAW Deputy CEO, Mr. Khalid Faisal Al Mutawa.

Bosch Middle East CEO, Mr. Tomas Alonso said: "AAW, the exclusive distributor of Bosch products in Kuwait, has served as an outstanding representative for our brand. Their dedication and expertise have played a key role in contributing to our leadership position in the Kuwaiti market. We are confident that this successful partnership will continue to thrive and bring even more innovative and advanced home appliance solutions to the customers in Kuwait."

AAW Deputy CEO, Mr. Khalid Faisal Al Mutawa said: "Over the past 45 years, AAW and Bosch have

shared a journey, driven by a mutual commitment to quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction. This partnership has enabled us to offer our customers a wide range of cutting-edge home appliances that enhance their lives. We are incredibly proud of what we achieved together in serving households in Kuwait and look forward to further strengthening our collaboration with Bosch in the years to come."

Bosch is a German manufacturer of home appliances and one of the leading companies in the sector worldwide. The company's product portfolio spans the entire spectrum of modern household appliances, extending from stoves, ovens, and extractor hoods to dishwashers, washers and dryers, refrigerators and freezers, and small appliances (Consumer Products) such as vacuum cleaners, coffee machines, electric kettles, and many more.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seeks to enhance customer banking experience by providing the best exclusive offers and exceptional benefits that suit their different segments. In this context, the bank has announced providing complimentary limo ride for Private and Privilege Banking Customers.

According to the offer valid from 22 February to 2 March 2024, Private and Privilege Banking Customers can avail a complimentary one-time limo ride through Q'go Concierge by calling their designated number 1888125.

This service from NBK is one of the many services provided by "Q'go Concierge" including fast-track check-in, extra luggage allowance, free baggage delivery, hotel offers and Umrah packages, in addition to cash delivery of up to KD 10,000. It also features Messenger Services including renewing and applying for ministry documentation, business special consultation and set-up, airport transportation, limo service, and airport Meet & Assist in Kuwait.

Speaking on this offer, Nora Al-Najjar, Manager, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said, "At NBK, we always strive to provide our customers with the best benefits and services



Nora Al-Najjar



Complimentary Ride flyer

to enhance their banking experience. We also seek to be always closer to them by providing exceptional offers that offer them more

luxury and peace of mind."

"We are well aware of our customers' preferences, as we maintain close communication with them through various channels. This goes in line with our keenness to maximize their benefit from the services, special offers and exceptional rewards that we carefully tailor to fit the lifestyles and needs of their different segments and ages," she added.

It is worth mentioning that over the past years, NBK was able to maintain top-notch Privilege Banking services, and is always striving to offer customers an even more innovative banking experience.

NBK provides Premium Banking Customers with an exclusive array of services, including: a dedicated relationship manager for our Privilege Customers and a Personal Banking Officer for our Thahabi Customers taking care of all customer's banking needs. It also provides them with access to Premium Banking lounges, diverse investment solutions including: SmartWealth and Watani Brokerage, Family Banking package, Premium Banking Teller Services which grants them priority in making their transactions in a quick and easy way, in addition to card home delivery service, priority status when contacting NBK Call Center on 1801801 available 24/7.

## Louis Vuitton tops the global powers of luxury goods 2023 list by Deloitte

# Malabar Gold & Diamonds attains 19th rank as top Indian int'l jewellery brand

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The most coveted Global Powers of Luxury Goods 2023 report released last week saw the luxury giant Louis Vuitton topping the list. The annual report, published by Deloitte ascertains the top players in the global luxury goods sector and ranks the top 100 brands operating in the sector based on annual sales figures, brand value and other factors. Global brands including Kering SA, The Estee Lauder companies, Chanel, Hermes, etc. are among the top 10 luxury retailers in the report.

Indian brand Malabar Gold & Diamonds attained the 19th rank on the global list, becoming the top-ranking debutant and the highest-ranked Indian international brand.

The extensive retail presence of the brand across 13 countries in Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia has been a major contributing factor to securing this prestigious position.

Alongside Malabar Gold & Diamonds, various distinguished In-



Malabar Gold & Diamonds logo

dian watch and jewellery brands have also secured positions within the Top 100 rankings.

Titan Company Ltd was ranked 24th, while Kalyan Jewellers and Joy Alukkas were ranked 46th and 47th respectively. Senco Gold & Diamonds and Thangamayil jewellery

were the other Indian brands that made it to the list, with a ranking of 78 and 98 respectively.

France emerged as the foremost hub for luxury, boasting seven companies within the Top 100 list and collectively contributing to nearly a third of sales.

This comprehensive report, which is compiled based on data available in the public domain, examines and ranks the top 100 largest brands operating in various luxury goods sectors such as jewellery, watches, cosmetics & hand bags based on annual sales figures, brand value and several other factors.

The report also provides detailed insights into the luxury goods market, including trends, challenges, digital innovations, impact of Millennial & Gen Z demography, emphasis on sustainability and other opportunities, providing a key insight into the sector's performance last year.



Israwal Miraj special program audience.

## TMA conducts Israwal Miraj special program

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: In the Name of The Almighty, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful.

Tamil Nadu Muslim Association (TMA), conducted Israwal Miraj special program on 08.02.2024 (Thursday) evening, in Masjid Al Kabir complex.

The event started at 6 pm with the recitation of Noble Quran by Br. Muhammad Azharuddin. Br. Shahul Haameed delivered the welcome address, followed by Janab. Sharfuddin Sufi's keynote address.

The children's circle of TMA mesmerised the audience by singing an inspiring Islamic Nashed. Br. V.S. Muhammad Ameen, the editor of Samarasam Magazine, conveyed a thought



Recitation of Noble Quran.

provoking account of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Historic Journey of Isra and Mi'raj.

After the Isha prayers, a discussion was held on the theme of Reading, where each speaker shed light on various aspects of Reading such as, Basics

of Reading, Methods of reading and Impacts of reading. In which Br. Muhammad Faiyaz Br. Jameem & Br. Niaz shared their views.

Narrating the reality of the Palestinian War, a stage play was enacted by the team including children who conveyed the emotions realistically. After which Br. V.S. Muhammad Ameen brought forth the present warfare facts and statistics. The audience actively interacted with the speaker during the question and answer session.

As the event came to a close the President of TMA, Br. Abdul Wahab gave the closing remarks. Over 230 people, including women and children participated in this auspicious event.

# Richard Roper charms and surprises with 'This Disaster Loves You'

BY Rob Merrill

Richard Roper, whose debut novel "Something to Live For" (2020) featured a character seeking the aspiration of the title, is back with "This Disaster Loves You," about another man whose story is not quite what it seems.

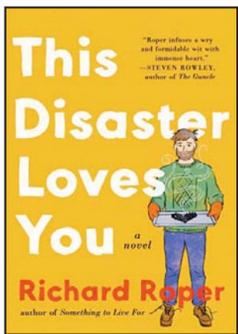
Brian owns a pub on the English coast, purchased with his wife more than a decade ago. He worked at a London insurance agency before that, while his wife, Lily, edited a magazine.

They bought The County Arms in Thrupstone, U.K., in

2007, refurbished it, and as the online review that prefaces the book says, turned it into a "charming pub" with "lovely wine and local beers, too."

The story opens in 2017 with Brian waking up, alone, in the apartment above the pub, and we learn that Lily disappeared seven years ago. No note, didn't take her phone, just vanished.

From then on it's a pretty rapid back-and-forth between the present and the past, as we are treated to the major beats of Brian and Lily's relationship, beginning with their meet-cute in 1995 on Prim-



This cover image released by Putnam shows "This Disaster Loves You" by Richard Roper. (AP)

rose Hill, to their happiest days as young lovers in London and then owners of their "dream pub."

When Brian reads a series of Tripadvisor reviews from someone called PinkMoon-Lily1970 and traces them back to the time of Lily's disappearance, he sets off on an adventure. The goal, of course, is to find Lily, but it naturally becomes a voyage of self-discovery as well.

Roper writes fluid, readable prose, as charming as The County Arms: "In the flush of youthful love, there I was removing half a Twix

from between the pages of an A to Z street map and feeling like the luckiest man in the world," is how Roper describes the first time Brian rode in Lily's white Renault Clio. Or Brian's inaugural meeting of Lily's parents, Forbes and Verity, who inhabit a different level of British society:

"I found myself making lots of nervous jokes about how I wouldn't know what fork to use with my quail at dinner, and how we should have brought a bottle of the '52 with us rather than the '58."

As Brian's search for Lily takes him from Bath to Stonehenge to other places worthy of online reviews, he meets a fellow traveler named Tess, a New Zealander separated from her husband after 22 years.

Tess provides someone for Brian to open up to and allows Roper to deftly change the tone of the book. By the end, all the details of Brian and Lily's story are satisfyingly filled in, and we're dropped off as readers back at The County Arms, which just might earn another five-star review again in the future. (AP)

## Variety



Members of The Eagles, from left, Timothy B. Schmit, Don Henley, Glenn Frey and Joe Walsh pose with an autographed guitar after a news conference at the Sundance Film Festival, Jan. 19, 2013, in Park City, Utah. On Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, an unusual criminal trial is set to open over the handwritten lyrics to the band's classic rock blockbuster 'Hotel California'. (AP)

## Music

Welcome to the 'Hotel California' case

# Eagles' classic handwritten lyrics on trial

NEW YORK, Feb 20, (AP) — In the mid-1970s, the Eagles were working on a spooky, cryptic new song.

On a lined yellow pad, Don Henley, with input from band co-founder Glenn Frey, jotted thoughts about "a dark desert highway" and "a lovely place" with a luxurious surface and ominous undertones. And something on ice, perhaps caviar or Taittinger - or pink Champagne?

The song, "Hotel California," became one of rock's most indelible singles. And nearly a half-century later, those handwritten pages of lyrics-in-the-making have become the center of an unusual criminal trial set to open Wednesday.

Rare-book dealer Glenn Horowitz, former Rock & Roll Hall of Fame curator Craig Inciardi and memorabilia seller Edward Kosinski are charged with conspiring to own and try to sell manuscripts of "Hotel California" and other Eagles hits without the right to do so.

The three have pleaded not guilty, and their lawyers have said the men committed no crime with the papers, which they acquired via a writer who'd worked with the Eagles. But the Manhattan district attorney's office says the defendants connived to obscure the documents' disputed ownership, despite knowing that Henley said the papers were stolen.

Clashes over valuable collectibles abound, but criminal trials like this are rare. Many fights are resolved in private, in lawsuits or with agreements to return the items.

"If you can avoid a prosecution by handing over the thing, most people just hand it over," said Travis McDade, a University of Illinois law professor who studies rare document disputes.

Of course, the case of the Eagles manuscripts is distinctive in other ways, too.

The prosecutors' star witness is indeed that: Henley is expected to testify between Eagles tour stops. The non-jury trial could offer a peek into the band's creative process and life in the fast lane of '70s stardom.

At issue are over 80 pages of draft lyrics from the blockbuster 1976 "Hotel California" album, including words to the chart-topping, Grammy-winning title cut. It features one of classic rock's most recognizable riffs, best-known solos and most oft-quoted - arguably over-quoted - lines: "You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave."

Henley has said the song is about "the dark under-

belly of the American dream."

It still was streamed over 220 million times and got 136,000 radio spins last year in the U.S. alone, according to the entertainment data company Luminate. The "Hotel California" album has sold 26 million copies nationwide over the years, bested only by an Eagles' greatest hits disc and Michael Jackson's "Thriller."

The pages also include lyrics from songs including "Life in the Fast Lane" and "New Kid in Town." Eagles manager Irving Azoff has called the documents "irreplaceable pieces of musical history."

Horowitz, Inciardi and Kosinski are charged with conspiracy to possess stolen property and various other offenses. They're not charged with actually stealing documents. Nor is anyone else, but prosecutors will still have to establish that the documents were stolen. The defense maintains that's not true.

### Interactions

Much turns on the Eagles' interactions with Ed Sanders, a writer who also co-founded the 1960s counterculture rock band the Fugs. He worked in the late '70s and early '80s on an authorized Eagles biography that was never published.

Sanders isn't charged in the case. A phone message seeking comment was left for him.

He sold the pages to Horowitz, who then sold them to Inciardi and Kosinski.

Horowitz has handled huge rare book and archive deals, and he's been entangled in some ownership spats before. One involved papers linked to "Gone With the Wind" author Margaret Mitchell. It was settled.

Inciardi worked on notable exhibitions for the Cleveland-based Rock Hall of Fame. Kosinski has been a principal in Gotta Have It! Collectibles, known for auctioning celebrities' personal possessions - so personal that Madonna unsuccessfully sued to stop a sale that included her latex briefs.

Henley told a grand jury he never gave the biographer the lyrics, according to court filings from Kosinski's lawyers. But defense lawyers have signaled that they plan to probe Henley's memory of the time.

"We believe that Mr. Henley voluntarily provided the lyrics to Mr. Sanders," attorney Scott Edelman said in court last week.

Sanders told Horowitz in 2005 that while working on the Eagles book, he was sent whatever papers he wanted from Henley's home in Malibu, California, according to the indictment.

Then Kosinski's business offered some pages at auction in 2012. Henley's attorneys came knocking. And Horowitz, Inciardi and Sanders, in varying combinations, began battling around alternate versions of the manuscripts' provenance, the indictment says.

In one story, Sanders found the pages discarded in a backstage dressing room. In others, he got them from a stage assistant or while amassing "a lot of material related to the Eagles from different people." In yet another, he obtained them from Frey - an account that "would make this go away once and for all," Horowitz suggested in 2017. Frey had died the year before.

"He merely needs gentle handling and reassurance that he's not going to the can," Horowitz emailed Inciardi during a 2012 exchange about getting Sanders' "explanation" shaped into a communication" to auctioneers, the indictment says.

Sanders supplied or signed off on some of the varying explanations, according to the indictment, and it's unclear what he may have conveyed verbally. But he apparently rejected at least the dressing-room tale.

Kosinski forwarded one explanation, approved by Sanders, to Henley's lawyer. Kosinski also assured Sotheby's auction house that the musician had "no claim" to the documents and asked to keep potential bidders in the dark about Henley's complaints, the indictment says.

Sotheby's listed the "Hotel California" song lyrics in a 2016 auction but withdrew them after learning the ownership was in question. Sotheby's isn't charged in the case and declined to comment.

Henley bought some draft lyrics privately from Gotta Have It! for \$8,500 in 2012, when he also began filing police reports, according to court filings. Defense lawyers claim Henley found starstruck prosecutors to take up his cause instead of pursuing a civil suit himself.

The DA's office worked closely with Henley's legal team, and an investigator even yearned for backstage passes for an Eagles show - until a prosecutor said the idea was "completely inappropriate," Kosinski's lawyers said in court papers.

# Features

## ARAB TIMES

ARAB TIMES, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024

**LAS VEGAS:** Duane "Keffe D" Davis, the former Los Angeles-area gang leader charged with murder in the 1996 killing of hip-hop legend Tupac Shakur in Las Vegas, is due back in court Tuesday.

Prosecutors and defense attorney Carl Arnold are expected to provide an update on the case following Clark County District Judge Carli Kierny's ruling last month that Davis could be freed to house arrest on \$750,000 bail ahead of his trial currently scheduled to start June 3.

But Kierny said Davis first must demonstrate during what is known as a "source hearing" that his bail money was legally obtained before he can be released from custody. Kierny on Tuesday could schedule the hearing if she is notified that Davis can afford to post bail.

A spokesperson for Arnold's law firm declined comment Thursday on Arnold's behalf.

Davis' former lawyers argued that he should be freed from jail because he is in poor health after battling cancer. They also downplayed the credibility of former gang members as witnesses against Davis.

Davis, 60, is originally from Compton, California. He is the only person still alive who was in the car from which shots were fired in September 1996 at a traffic signal near the Las Vegas Strip, killing Shakur.

Davis was arrested in September outside his home in suburban Henderson. He pleaded not guilty in November to first-degree murder and has remained jailed at the Clark County Detention Center in Las Vegas. If convicted, he could spend the rest of his life in prison. (AP)

**LONDON:** The Associated Press won the best documentary prize at the British Academy Film Awards for Ukraine war documentary "20 Days in Mariupol," produced with PBS' "Frontline."

Filmmaker Mstyslav Chernov admitted the accolade made him feel conflicted.

"It's a huge honor. It's a huge responsibility," the Ukrainian journalist said after winning the trophy Sunday at London's Royal Festival Hall. "This is not about us. This is about Ukraine and about the people of Mariupol." Chernov and an AP team spent

three weeks in the Ukrainian port city as it was besieged by Russian forces in early 2022, documenting at huge personal risk the devastating toll on civilian and capturing enduring images of the war.

Chernov arrived in Mariupol one hour before Russia began its bombardment, along with photographer Evgeniy Maloletka and field producer Vasilisa



Tupac



Chernov

Stepanenko. The images and stories they captured - the death of a 4-year-old girl, freshly dug mass graves, the bombing of a maternity hospital - unflinchingly documented the grim, relentless realities of the siege.

The work of Chernov, Maloletka, Stepanenko and Lori Hinnant last year won the Pulitzer Prize for public service, and the film has won

numerous accolades, including a Directors Guild Award. It is nominated in the best documentary category at the March 10 Academy Awards, the first-ever Oscar nomination for the 178-year-old AP.

Almost two years since Russia's invasion, Ukrainian cities continue to be bombarded, with Russia claiming over the weekend to have captured the eastern city

of Avdiivka after a long, grinding battle.

"Cities get occupied and destroyed and our work represents what is happening to Ukraine now," Chernov said.

He said the story of Mariupol "is a symbol of struggle and a symbol of faith. Thank you for empowering our voice and let's just keep fighting." (AP)

## People & Places



Dancers of the Warszawianka ensemble of the University of Warsaw dance Poland's national polonaise dance in 18th century costumes during dress rehearsal in Warsaw, Poland, on Feb. 8, 2024. Once banned by rulers dispatched from Moscow, Poland's stately polonaise dance that nurtured the country's spirit even through the dark years of its partition is now honored by the United Nations' education and culture agency, UNESCO. (AP)

### People

#### Outstanding war coverage

## New York Times wins George Polk Awards

NEW YORK, Feb. 20, (AP) — The New York Times was honored Monday with George Polk Awards for Foreign Reporting and Photojournalism for its coverage of the war between Israel and Hamas.

Photographers Samar Abu Elouf and Yousef Masoud captured "gripping and unforgettable images" as they chronicled the conflict from its opening hours on Oct.

7 until they escaped from Gaza two months later, said Long Island University, which presents the annual prizes, in a statement. The Times also relied on longtime freelance journalists in Gaza and imagery developed by its visual investigations team to document the extent of the Israeli bombardment and its impact on civilians.

They were among Polk Awards winners announced Monday in 13 categories. In all, five of the prestigious journalism prizes were for coverage of the Israel-Gaza and Russia-Ukraine wars. The winners will be honored in April as the university marks the 75th anniversary of the awards.

"Given the significance of this year's program we sensed a special imperative to honor work in the tradition of George Polk," said John Darnton, curator of the awards, which were created in 1949 in honor of the CBS reporter who was killed while covering the Greek civil war. "As horrific as the outbreak of war in the Middle East and the ongoing fighting in Ukraine were, they provided us with no shortage of magnificent reporting, done at great peril, from which to choose."

Awards also went to journalists who delved into the business practices of Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, the ethics of U.S. Supreme Court justices and New York City's black market for temporary license plates.

#### Exposure

This Osher and Julia Cardy of The Gazette of Colorado Springs won the State Reporting award for their exposure of a family court system that relied on unqualified parental evaluators and returned young children to abusive fathers, leading to four deaths in a two-month period. The reporting led to changes in state law and an ongoing criminal investigation.

Joshua Kaplan, Justin Elliott, Alex Mierjeski, Brett Murphy and the staff of ProPublica won the National Reporting award for revealing questionable gifts to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas from wealthy donors and the court's lack of a meaningful approach to policing ethics.

The 2023 Sydney Schanberg Prize went to Rolling Stone's Jason Motlagh, who embedded himself with rival gang lords in Haiti. That prize was established by journalist Jane Freiman Schanberg to honor long-form investigative or enterprise journalism and comes with a \$25,000 award.

Other winners included the staff of Reuters for reports on Musk-owned companies including SpaceX, Neuralink and Tesla, and Luke Mogelson of the New Yorker for reporting from Ukraine. In the medical reporting category, Anna Werner of CBS News and the KFF Health News team of Brett Kelman, Fred Schulte, Holly K. Hacker and Daniel Chang won for two entries focused on the Food & Drug Administration's regulation of medical devices. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and ProPublica were co-winners in that category for an investigative series on contaminants in breathing machines and an ensuing cover-up.

As part of the 75th anniversary celebration, Long Island University is inviting all previous recipients to an April 12 luncheon in Manhattan where 16 journalists will be honored as "George Polk laureates."



Elouf



Seth Meyers attends the American Museum of Natural History's Museum Gala in New York on Nov. 30, 2023. Meyers celebrates his tenth year hosting 'Late Night with Seth Meyers.' (AP)



Marley



Ben-Adir

### Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** People had been coming to Ziggy Marley and his family for years with ideas about how to turn reggae icon Bob Marley's life into a movie. But it never felt quite right, until a few years ago when they decided to be the instigators.

"It was just a feeling," Ziggy Marley said of getting his father's life on screen in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "We explored it without knowing that we definitely wanted to do it because we needed to make sure that the people we did it with was the right people. People who respected what we wanted to do, the culture, the authenticity that we wanted."

This time, he said, they found the right partners. But it was a gamble for everyone: For Paramount Pictures and the other producers, wanting to do right by Bob Marley's story, his music and his message and worried what would happen if they didn't; For Kingsley Ben-Adir stepping into the shoes of an icon; For the family and friends who mined their memories for the more intimate story; And for a director, Reinaldo Marcus Green, who had to bring it all together and make it sing.

Early signs suggest that for moviegoing audiences, it worked. "Bob Marley: One Love" has only been in theaters for a few days, but it is already making waves at the box office. On its first day alone, it made \$14 million in North America, a record for a midweek Valentine's Day debut. Though critics have been mixed, ticket buyers responded with enthusiasm giving the \$70 million film the highest marks in exit polls.

"It's such a rewarding validation of the thing that we set out to do," said Mike Ireland, the co-president of Paramount Motion Picture Group. "The audience is the ultimate arbiter of every movie and everything you put into the world. And to have them respond in that way? It's just fantastic."

The film focuses in on a specific period

### UNESCO

#### From aristocratic balls to UNESCO recognition

## Poland's 18th century dance garners honors

WARSAW, Poland, Feb. 20, (AP) — Once banned by rulers dispatched from Moscow, Poland's stately polonaise dance that nurtured the country's spirit even through the dark years of its partition is now honored by UNESCO.

This 18th century dance has been performed from aristocratic balls to village celebrations, inspiring composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach and Frederic Chopin. It still figures prominently in big national occasions, pre-graduation balls and weddings.

On Dec. 5, this living tradition was enshrined into the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a "form of joint celebration," which "commemorates important moments in family and community life and symbolizes cooperation, reconciliation and equality."

Poland's Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which petitioned for the dance's inclusion into UNESCO's list, said its initiative was met with huge public support.

"Thousands of people on Facebook and on other social media were supporting the (UNESCO) entry," Joanna Cicha-Kuczynska of the ministry's Department of Monuments Protection, told The Associated Press.

She said there is a huge community, including entire families, that dance the polonaise and pass the tradition on. Performed in pairs, it is led by the first and most prominent pair which improvises various figures, such as raising joined hands to form bridges under which other dancers can pass.

"The most important in the polonaise is that the whole group can dance the choreography, and among the personal features the most important are the dignity of the men

and the ethereal nature of the women," said Marcin Pracki, a dancer of the Warsaw University's Dance Theater "Warszawianka."

Another "Warszawianka" dancer, Monika Fiugajska, said the dance's simplicity is its strength.

"It is a very simple dance, the simplest among our national dances but at the same time it has an exceptional soul and one can express emotions in it in an exceptional way," Fiugajska said.

This slow-paced procession dance evolved from a folk form called the "walking dance." By the 18th century, under the French name of "Polonaise" - or Polish - it was widely danced among European nobility and opened royal balls.

#### Polonaise

In his 1773 book "The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces," British musician Charles Burney described the polonaise as being very popular across Saxony and especially at the court in Dresden where Poland's elected king Augustus II The Strong had introduced it decades earlier.

Having inspired some of the greatest classical composers including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Pyotr Tchaikovsky, the polonaise remains timeless, still opening the Vienna Opera Ball in carnival season.

"Undoubtedly, the polonaise merits being on the UNESCO list of world heritage because it is a dance with not only Polish but an international tradition, it is a generally recognized ballroom dance," said Szymon Paczkowski, a musicology professor at the University of Warsaw.

Paczkowski said you don't need

to be a good dancer to participate - a slightly bent one knee at the right bent suffices.

During Poland's more than a century of partition by neighboring Russia, Prussia and Austria, the polonaise expressed longing for the lost homeland, especially among the exiles and emigres such as Chopin, who had emigrated to Paris. It was banned on territories that Russia took over.

The polonaise has become the opening dance at high school pre-graduation balls. Poland's post-World War II communist authorities banned it from schools - because of its aristocratic and patriotic connotations - but students revived the tradition by the late 1960s.

Gabrysia Kosmal, 19, was among the students at Warsaw's Mikolaj Rej high school who performed the polonaise this month.

"It is an exceptional moment, because you know, there happen to be conflicts among classmates, not everyone gets along with everyone, but we immerse in the music, dance together, it is a magical moment," Kosmal said.

The polonaise is also a staple during national anniversaries, including the Nov. 11 Independence Day celebrations, when people are invited to dance in the streets with officials.

Natalia Bernat, an 18-year-old student who took part in a massive street dance in the central city of Lodz last month, said the polonaise brings people together at a time when the community needs it most and she believes "it's worth it to cultivate this tradition."

The leader of the Lodz street dance, Janusz Wielgosz, who donned a historical outfit for the occasion, said the polonaise is about beauty.

in Bob Marley's life, from 1976 to 1978. During that time of political turmoil in Jamaica, the reggae legend survived an assassination attempt, produced his seminal

album "Exodus" in an 18-month exile in London, was diagnosed with cancer and returned to Jamaica to reunite with his family and stage the famous "One Love"

concert.

"I'm a movie guy," multi-Grammy winner Ziggy Marley said. "My selfish goal was to have a movie that had entertainment and action. I said to them, 'I don't want a boring movie.' And this period of time was the most active and entertaining."

The story and script were derived from stories from Ziggy Marley and the legend's widow, Rita Marley, played in the film by Lashana Lynch, and others who knew him well. They shot on location in the U.K. and Jamaica, where they worked with locals in front of and behind the camera, where many had personal or at least second-hand ties to Bob Marley.

For Green, one of the biggest challenges of a film like "One Love" was getting the patois language right and making it feel real without watering it down. They were, he said, essentially making a foreign language movie but without subtitles. It's just one of the crucial ways that their largely Jamaican cast and crew added texture and legitimacy to everything.

"We cast, I would say, 98% Jamaicans," Green said. "We have real musicians as well. It creates that authentic feeling. It doesn't feel like you're watching actors trying to play music. You have real music by real musicians." (AP)



This image released by AMC shows Danai Gurira as Michonne, from 'The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live.' (AP)

Microbiome revolution

**MRM Health initiates a clinical research in Parkinson's Disease**

GHENT, Belgium, Feb 20, (BUSINESS WIRE): MRM Health, a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company, announced today that it has received regulatory and ethics committee approval to start an observational, cross-sectional clinical trial to study the role of the small intestinal microbiome in Parkinson's Disease (PD) and to identify PD-specific microbial and metabolic fingerprints in small intestinal fluid and blood. The clinical research is being conducted in close collaboration with Nimble Science and the University of Calgary, Canada.



Dr Martino

The clinical study is expected to enroll up to 100 subjects, including an age-matched healthy volunteer cohort. The trial will run in Calgary Parkinson's Research Initiative (CaPRI) with Dr. Davide Martino and is registered on ClinicalTrials.gov with number NCT06003608.

MRM Health develops rationally-designed consortium therapeutics through its proprietary CORAL® technology, comprising well-characterized commensal strains, selected and optimized to tackle key disease-driving mechanisms with enhanced potency, resiliency, and engraftment. MRM Health's breakthrough, scalable and standardized cGMP manufacturing platform enables the manufacturing of complete consortia as a single drug substance, which is designed to overcome historical limitations of microbiome therapy and establish a new standard for effective consortia therapeutics development. MRM Health recently obtained positive phase 2a clinical data with MH002 in Ulcerative Colitis and has an ongoing clinical study in Pouchitis. In addition to its clinical programs in Inflammatory Bowel Diseases and the program in Parkinson's Disease, the Company has preclinical programs in autoimmune disorders and in metabolic diseases, being developed through a partnership with IFF Nutrition Biosciences.

**Unexplored**

We are excited to collaborate with Nimble Science and the Calgary Parkinson's Research Initiative on this project and to use the innovative SIMBA capsule to sample the small intestinal content. We expect that the data generated in this study will provide unique insights into the composition of the small intestinal microbiome, which is so far largely unexplored, and its connection to the pathophysiology of Parkinson's Disease. It will feed into our existing program and enable us to fine-tune and accelerate the development of novel Live Biotherapeutic Products for the treatment of this progressive, neurodegenerative disease.

"There is a high unmet medical need for safe and effective treatments for this seriously debilitating disease, and novel therapeutic modalities will be very welcomed by patients and caregivers, especially if they are disease modifying. This observational study is expected to help generate novel hypotheses to potentially impact the pathophysiology of Parkinson's Disease and provide disease modifying therapy."

"We are emboldened to use our Small Intestine MicroBiome Aspiration (SIMBA) system to gather more data in order to better understand the role of the microbiome in the small intestine of Parkinson's

Disease patients. Performing the study in collaboration with MRM Health will enable the integration of multi-omic data from the SIMBA capsule with additional 'omics data.'"

The SIMBA system is a single-use, ingestible passive capsule that allows for the non-invasive sampling of small intestinal contents. It is designed to open and absorb intestinal content after having passed the acid stomach environment and to mechanically seal before passing into the large bowel. It has distinct markers built in to allow radiographic tracking of its passage throughout the GI system. The SIMBA capsule was developed and validated by Nimble Science and has already shown its promise in retrieving specific small intestine material in previous studies.

**Innovative**

MRM Health is a clinical-stage biotech developing innovative therapeutics for inflammatory, CNS and metabolic diseases. The Company's most advanced program, MH002, is in preparation for pivotal clinical development in Ulcerative Colitis, upon obtaining positive clinical results in a phase 2a clinical trial, and is being evaluated in the orphan disease indication Pouchitis. MRM Health leverages its proprietary disruptive CORAL® technology platform to design microbiome-based biotherapeutics, based on disease-focused specific combinations of 5 to 10 live gut bacteria, and to optimize them for faster onset-of-action and increased potency and robustness. A significant differentiator is the ability to manufacture these consortia as single drug substance in a single standardized, scalable, and highly cost-effective process. In addition to the program in Inflammatory Bowel Diseases, MRM Health has ongoing preclinical programs in Parkinson's Disease and Spondyloarthritis, and partnered programs with IFF in Type 2 Diabetes and NAFLD.

Nimble Science is a digital health company delivering first-in-class at home capsule based small intestinal fluid biopsy and multi-omic microbiome data capabilities via its SIMBA™ GI Health platform. Nimble's SIMBA™ capsule has been clinically validated to collect an uncontaminated sample from the deepest and previously inaccessible regions of the small intestine - housing one of the most bioactive and critical microbial environments. Nimble's technology, ease of administration and actionable health data insights are unparalleled in comparison with competing solutions, and Nimble has been actively partnering with industry leaders around the world to empower breakthrough health innovation spanning pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and consumer health R&D programs.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive, irreversible brain disorder that causes unintended or uncontrollable movements, such as shaking, stiffness, and difficulty with balance and coordination. Symptoms usually begin gradually and worsen over time. Current treatment aims to manage the symptoms and improve the quality of life for patients. Medications like levodopa and dopamine agonists can help alleviate motor symptoms by replenishing dopamine levels in the brain. There is still a high remaining unmet need for new therapies and interventions to improve the management of Parkinson's disease and enhance the overall well-being of affected individuals. No disease-modifying treatment is available to date.

**Quasar with a black hole devouring a sun daily**

**Astronomers uncover universe's brightest object**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida, Feb 20, (AP): Astronomers have discovered what may be the brightest object in the universe, a quasar with a black hole at its heart growing so fast that it swallows the equivalent of a sun a day.

The record-breaking quasar shines 500 trillion times brighter than our sun. The black hole powering this distant quasar is more than 17 billion times more immense than our sun, an Australian-led team reported Monday in the journal Nature Astronomy.

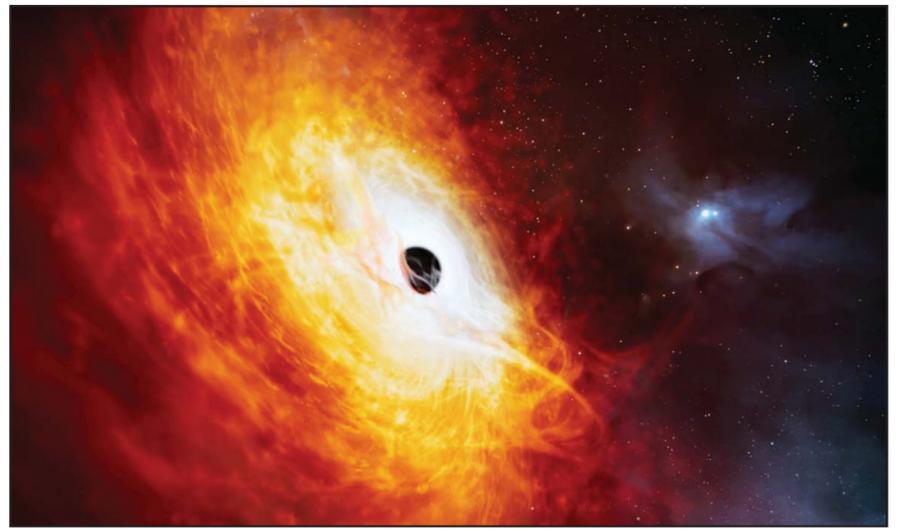
While the quasar resembles a mere dot in images, scientists envision a ferocious place.

The rotating disk around the quasar's black hole - the luminous swirling gas and other matter from gobbled-up stars - is like a cosmic hurricane.

"This quasar is the most violent place that we know in the universe," lead author Christian Wolf of Australian National University said in an email.

The European Southern Observatory spotted the object, J0529-4351, during a 1980 sky survey, but it was thought to be a star. It was not identified as a quasar - the extremely active and luminous core of a galaxy - until last year. Observations by telescopes in Australia and Chile's Atacama Desert clinched it.

"The exciting thing about this quasar is that it was hiding in plain sight and was misclassified as a star previously," Yale University's Priyavada



This illustration provided by the European Southern Observatory in February 2024, depicts the record-breaking quasar J0529-4351, the bright core of a distant galaxy that is powered by a supermassive black hole. The supermassive black hole, seen here pulling in surrounding matter, has a mass 17 billion times that of the Sun and is growing in mass by the equivalent of another Sun per day, making it the fastest-growing black hole ever known. (AP)

Natarajan, who was not involved in the study, said in an email.

These later observations and computer modeling have determined that the quasar is gobbling up the equivalent

of 370 suns a year - roughly one a day. Further analysis shows the mass of the black hole to be 17 to 19 billion times that of our sun, according to the team. More observations are needed to

understand its growth rate. The quasar is 12 billion light-years away and has been around since the early days of the universe. A light-year is 5.8 trillion miles.

**South Korean doctors walk out to protest medical training push**

**Strike causes surgery cancellations**

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 20, (AP): South Korean trainee doctors collectively walked off their jobs Tuesday to protest a government push to recruit more medical students, triggering cancellations of surgeries and other medical treatments at hospitals.

The Health Ministry urged them to return to work immediately, saying they must not endanger the lives of patients to fight the government.

As of Monday night, more than half of the 13,000 medical interns and residents in South Korea had submitted resignations, according to the Health Ministry, and 1,630 left their work sites. None of the resignations have been accepted so far.

More junior doctors are expected to follow suit. Under a decision made by their association last week, trainee doctors at the country's five major hospitals were supposed to walk off collectively on Tuesday.

At the center of the dispute is a recent government announcement that universities would admit 2,000 more medical students starting from next year, from the current 3,058. The government says it aims to add up to 10,000 doctors by 2035 to address what it calls a shortage of doctors exacerbated by the country's fast-aging population.

South Korea's doctor-to-patient ratio is among the lowest in the developed world, particularly in essential but low-paying professions like pediatrics and emergency departments, and in rural areas.

Many doctors rejected the plan,

saying that schools won't be able to handle so many new students and that the funding is more urgently needed to raise medical fees. Some argue that having too many doctors could also lead to unnecessary medical treatments due to increased competition.

"Because of a bungled policy that ignores reality on the ground, I can fold up my dream of becoming a specialist in the pediatric emergency department without any regrets," Park Dan, head of the Korean Intern Residents Association, wrote on Facebook on Monday, after submitting his resignation to Seoul's Severance Hospital. "I have no intention of returning to work."

**Public support**

The doctors' protests have failed to generate public support, with a survey suggesting about 75% of South Koreans support the government's push to train more doctors. Their critics argue that doctors are mainly worried their incomes would drop if there were more doctors.

"I think trainee doctors are fighting for their own interests," said Seo Hong Soon, a 74-year-old housewife, speaking on Tuesday near Seoul National University Hospital. "We want them to remember the Hippocratic oath and make concessions. We hope they will put their duty before money."

Most of South Korea's 13,000 trainee doctors work at its 100 teaching hospitals, assisting senior doctors during surgery and treating inpatients. If their walkouts are prolonged or joined by senior doctors, that could cause disruptions at those hospitals and in South Korea's overall medical service, observers say.

South Korea has a total of 140,000 doctors. The Korea Medical Association said Monday it plans to hold rallies to support the trainees but hasn't

**Kuwait's Dr. Huda Al-Foderi has been 'appointed' as chief of SWAAC ELSO**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health announced that the Head of Anaesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Management Departments, Dr. Huda Al-Foderi, has been chosen as chief of South West Asia and Africa, Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (SWAAC ELSO).

In a statement on Tuesday, Dr. Al-Foderi expressed her pride and appreciation in holding the position, feeling honored to represent Kuwait in the organization.

The Extracorporeal Life Support service, "Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation" (ECMO) is considered one of the latest services provided in intensive care for critically ill patients, and the ECMO Center at Al-Adan Hospital offers a course approved by ELSO.

ECMO is used through connecting the patient to an external artificial lung device through fine catheters that are inserted into the arteries and veins of heart failure patients and acute respiratory syndrome.

Dr. Al-Foderi was chosen for



KUNA photo  
Dr. Huda Al-Foderi

this position due to her influential role in the organization through her membership, and her chairmanship of the training committee during the previous years.

ELSO is considered a global non-profit organization concerned with providing medical training for ECMO centers worldwide, which have qualified more than 300 doctors, nurses, and technicians.

determined whether to launch strikes.

At Seoul's Asan Medical Center, a nurse said it's unclear how long senior doctors could keep performing surgeries and other treatments without the assistance of junior doctors. The nurse, who requested anonymity citing the sensitivity of the issue, said that trainees typically handle skin incision and disinfection during surgeries at the direction of senior doctors and manage data on hospital computers.

She said her hospital plans to delay

admissions for some cancer patients and to release inpatients early. Other Asan hospital officials said Tuesday that an unspecified number of junior doctors didn't come to work but noted some were still working. They said the hospital is rearranging planned surgery schedules based on the conditions of patients.

Vice Health Minister Park Min-soo said authorities have received 34 public complaints related to the walkouts, 25 of them over the cancellation of surgeries.

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## The deceased scored West Germany's goal in the 1990 World Cup final

# Andreas Brehme, a former Germany international dies at 63

BERLIN, Feb 20, (AP): Andreas Brehme, who fired West Germany to the 1990 World Cup title with the only goal in the final against Diego Maradona's Argentina, has died. He was 63.

Brehme's partner Susanne Schaefer confirmed his death in a statement to Germany's dpa news agency on Tuesday. Schaefer said Brehme died "suddenly and unexpectedly" in the night from a cardiac arrest.

### OBITUARY

"One of Germany's greatest and best players of all time, German football owes him a lot," German soccer federation president Bernd Neuen-dorf said.

Former teammates and others paid tribute to the player who was known affectionately as "Andi" Brehme, a star of German soccer in the 1980s and 1990s.

"I can't believe it at all. The news of Andreas' sudden death makes me incredibly sad," national teammate Rudi Völler said. "Andi was our World Cup hero, but for me he was much more. He was my close friend and companion to this day. I will miss his wonderful love of life."

Karl-Heinz Rummenigge played

with Brehme at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico.

"Andi was a great team player, very loyal and dependable. His love of life was contagious and it makes me so sad that he had to leave us at 63," Rummenigge said.

Kaiserslautern, which won its last Bundesliga title in Brehme's final season before his retirement in 1998, said it was "deeply saddened" by his unexpected death. Brehme played for the Red Devils for 10 seasons over two stints. The Bundesliga win came after promotion as second-division champion and Brehme also won the German Cup with Kaiserslautern in 1996.

The Hamburg-born Brehme, who played mostly as an attacking left back, will always be associated with West Germany's 1990 World Cup triumph.

He scored in the semifinal against England, which West Germany eventually won on penalties, and his late penalty decided the final against Argentina. Winning the title brought a wave of national celebrations across Germany, which was in the process of reunification after the fall of the Berlin Wall the year before.

Brehme's title-winning goal in Rome was celebrated a short distance away at Inter Milan, the Italian club



he was playing for at the time as part of a formidable German trinity including national teammates Jürgen Klinsmann and Lothar Matthäus. As captain, Matthäus would normally have taken West Germany's penalty in the final, but the No. 10

broke his boots in the first half and didn't feel confident as his replacement boots were too big.

"It was a smart decision to let Andreas Brehme take the penalty," Matthäus later said. "Someone has to step up. And for us, it was a case of who-

ever was feeling confident," Brehme said in a FIFA interview in 2017. "The main thing is that the penalty goes in and we become world champions."

Brehme acknowledged the penalty decision was "dubious" though that didn't stop him from tucking away the spot kick against the previously unbeatable Argentina goalkeeper Sergio Goycochea in the 85th minute. West Germany had dominated the game but found Goycochea in inspired form.

"That night at the Olimpico, facing up against Sergio Goycochea, a fearless goalkeeper who had already kept out Donadoni and Aldo Serena at the San Paolo, Brehme opted to take with his right (boot). A placed effort, almost caressed towards goal: he zipped it along the floor, right into the bottom left, unstoppable," Inter wrote on the club website.

Brehme, who wheeled away and jumped in celebration, had already helped Inter to the Serie A title in 1989. He would go to win the UEFA Cup with the club two years later.

"A magnificent player, a true Interista. Ciao Andy, forever a legend," said Inter, which announced that it would wear black armbands during its Champions League match against Atlético Madrid later Tuesday.

Brehme also won the Bundesliga with Bayern Munich in 1987.

"I am incredibly sad about this shocking news," Bayern honorary president Uli Hoeneß said. "None of us will ever forget Andreas Brehme, because he was more than a goal in the World Cup final in Rome. We've lost a great person and a loyal friend."

Brehme played 86 international games for West Germany and unified Germany. He also played for Real Zaragoza in Spain before rejoining Kaiserslautern for his second stint.

Brehme went into coaching after winning the Bundesliga with Kaiserslautern, first with the same club, which he led to the semifinals of the UEFA Cup in 2001, and then second-division Unterhaching. His last coaching role was at Stuttgart as assistant to coach Giovanni Trapattoni in the 2005-06 season.

Brehme's death comes the month after that of his friend Franz Beckenbauer, who coached the World Cup-winning team in 1990.

"As a young boy I had, like probably every boy in Germany had, a Franz Beckenbauer poster hanging above my bed," Brehme told dpa last month. "Later, he became my boss and I could work with him. And in the end we became close friends. So I have a lot to thank Franz for."

## Lahore lose a 2nd successive home home

### Quetta 2 for 2 after PSL win over Lahore

LAHORE, Pakistan, Feb 20, (AP): Quetta Gladiators clinched a second win from two Pakistan Super League matches by defeating scrappy defending champion Lahore Qalandars by five wickets on Monday.

Unheralded Khawaja Nafay showed plenty of confidence against the star-studded pace attack of Lahore. Nafay defied the likes of Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf by hitting three sixes and four boundaries. He flicked Fakhar Zaman to the fine leg boundary for the winning runs and an unbeaten 60 off 31 balls.

Quetta romped to 188-5 with five balls to spare after Lahore's 187-7.

Lahore lost a second successive home home after dropping three catches.

Lahore opening batter Sahibzada Farhan, dropped on 44, made 62 off 43 balls but it was a breezy unbeaten 45 off 17 balls by Jahandad Khan, who was promoted at No. 5, which



propelled them. Jahandad claimed the momentum in the death overs by hitting four sixes and three boundaries. Jahandad upped the ante when he smacked

AbRAR Ahmed for three sixes in the leg-spinner's last over which went for 23.

Quetta made a brisk start to its chase thanks to Jason Roy, 24 runs, and Saud Shakeel, 40. Roy was dropped twice as they combined for 69, another scintillating opening stand after their century partnership against Peshawar.

### CRICKET

Both batters fell in successive overs after dominating the power-play. Zaman Khan clean-bowled Shakeel with a yorker and Roy swiped wildly at spinner Raza's short ball that hit the middle stump.

Lahore part-time wicketkeeper Farhan had another lapse in the field when he dropped former Quetta captain Sarfaraz Ahmed off the first ball he faced from Rauf.

## Girona lose to Bilbao, miss the chance to 'cut' into Real's lead



Real Madrid's Luka Modric (centre), challenges for the ball with Rayo's Alvaro Garcia during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Rayo Vallecano and Real Madrid at the Vallecas stadium in Madrid, Spain, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024. (AP)

### Catalan side go down 2-3

MADRID, Feb 20, (AP): Second-placed Girona missed a chance to cut into Real Madrid's lead of the Spanish league when it lost to Athletic Bilbao 3-2 on Monday.

The Catalan side could have re-

### SOCCER

duced the gap to three points but was sunk by an Alex Berenguer double and an Iñaki Williams goal and remained six adrift of Madrid.

It was another stumble for a side that matched Madrid blow for blow

in the first half of La Liga. After going more than three months without defeat Girona has taken just one point from its last nine.

The poor run included a 4-0 defeat to Madrid on Feb. 10.

Alex Berenguer put Athletic ahead in the second minute when he skillfully turned the home defense and fired home a left-foot shot from outside the box.

Viktor Tsygankov equalized four minutes into the second half for Girona, but Berenguer finished superbly seven minutes later to give Athletic the lead again.

Williams made it 3-1 when he took advantage of poor defending and scored with a low shot in off the post.

Eric Garcia got the second for Girona with 15 minutes remaining

when he stooped to head in a wicked cross from Alex Garcia.

But although they pushed hard in the final minutes, the visitors could not equalize again.

The result opened up a nine-point gap between Athletic in fifth and Real Sociedad in sixth.

Athletic was only two points behind fourth-placed Atletico Madrid and an automatic spot in the Champions League.

"Of course we're going to dream about the Champions League," Williams said. "We're taking it step by step, as we've been quietly saying. We're working and pushing ourselves to the max so that the success makes the noise."

### 'Bazball' here to stay

## McCullum urges England to stay positive

RAJKOT, India, Feb 20, (AP): England's "Bazball" approach isn't going anywhere.

Questions have again been raised about the merits of the attacking, front-foot style preferred by coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes in the wake of England's 434-run loss to India in the third test.

It was England's largest defeat in runs since 1934.

Yet McCullum isn't for changing, with his team still in with a chance of winning the five-match series at 2-1 down.

"The positivity and confidence within the environment needs to remain," McCullum said. "If we do that, we give ourselves the best opportunity with the talent we possess to bounce back. That messaging that comes from myself and the skipper will never change regardless of how we're going."

"I don't want our guys to ever doubt themselves, otherwise we go back to where it was beforehand."

Before McCullum became coach, England had won one of its previous 17 tests. Since his arrival, England has won 14 of 21 tests - many of those victories coming in breathtaking fashion.

Former England captain Nasser Hussain wrote in the Daily Mail that the team might need to tweak its approach, saying that "Bazball is not attack, attack, attack - occasionally, you must absorb pressure."

"When you start retreating a little bit on what you've done before and what you've said you're trying to achieve, you're literally living and dying every day by your results and that's not what this team is about," McCullum said. "This team is

### CRICKET

about trying to keep pushing the game forward, to try and entertain and ultimately win. It didn't work this time around but you can only do that by providing an environment where the guys feel safe and feel they can take on the world."

McCullum downplayed concerns about Joe Root, England's star batter, who has yet to reach 30 in this series. Root was out to a reverse ramp in the third test.

"Joe will be fine," McCullum said. "It's a great compliment to be in a funk after three test matches.

He just has to keep backing himself and wait for the luck to turn his way.

"The fact he's missed out in three tests, does that surely not just mean that he's closer to getting a big score? It's Joe Root. Crickey. I mean, seriously? The law of averages suggests he'll fill his boots in the next two tests."

Stokes said ahead of the series that he would only play as a batter as he looks to preserve his fitness after knee surgery late last year. However, he has opened the door to resuming bowling competitively for the first time since last summer's Ashes.

McCullum said he might have to intervene.

"Ben is clever," McCullum said. "He won't bowl unless he thinks he's legitimately able to bowl. The problem would be if he starts getting into a spell and then he can't get out of the spell."

"If he does get that bit between his teeth, let's see where the danger lies and try and pull him away from it. But it's good that he's actually getting into a state where he thinks he might bowl."

The fourth test starts on Friday in Ranchi.

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Organizers led by Mohammed Al-Qattan and Ahmed Al-Majed pose for a group photo after the press conference.



A file photo of participants taking part in Gulf Bank 642 Marathon.

### The largest sports event held in the heart of Kuwait City

## Ninth Edition of Gulf Bank Marathon set to kick off on March 2

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: In its commitment to supporting sustainability initiatives in the community, Gulf Bank has once again, extended its annual invitation to athletes, beginners, and all sectors of society to take part in the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon on Saturday, 2 March, 2024. This event is one of Kuwait's most significant sports and social events, distinguished by its worldwide acclaim.

The Gulf Bank Marathon this year offers a range of categories designed to accommodate participants of varying athletic levels. These encompass a 5-kilometer race for walking or running, a 10-kilometer running race, and a half marathon covering 21 kilometers. Eligibility spans from ages 11 and up for the 5-kilometer race, ages 16 and above for the 10-kilometer race, and ages 18 and older for the half marathon. It is worth mentioning that the 42-kilometer race has been excluded from this year's event and replaced by a special race designed for children aged 3 to 9 on February 29, 2024.

The Gulf Bank Marathon stands as the largest sports event held in the heart of Kuwait City, guiding runners through the scenic landmarks of Kuwait. Notably, the Gulf Bank Marathon is the sole marathon in Kuwait accredited by "World Athletics" with the prestigious "Road Race Label" designation and listed among international marathons by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS). Moreover, participants in the marathon have the chance to accumulate points and qualify for the "AbbottWMM Wanda Age Group World Rankings," granting them entry into the world championship for age groups over 40 years old.

#### MARATHON

##### Promoting Community Well-being

During yesterday's press conference announcing the launch of the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, Mr. Mohammad Al-Qattan, the General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "We are thrilled to witness the return of the marathon for running enthusiasts. Its postponement from November 2023 to March 2, 2024, was due to unexpected regional and local circumstances. We are committed to ensuring that the Ninth edition of the marathon will be outstanding. It remains the largest local sports event held annually in the heart of Kuwait City, attracting thousands of athletes."

He highlighted that the Gulf Bank Marathon goes beyond being a one-day race; it serves as an invitation to transform one's approach and lifestyle, aiming for sports to become ingrained routines and essential components of everyday life. He emphasized that the marathon represents an initiative aimed at addressing the rising rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart diseases, which pose significant threats to society. This highlights the need for increased focus on sports and lifestyle adaptations.

Al-Qattan emphasized that the marathon is a social sporting event aimed at bringing together individuals and families from all segments of society, a role that Gulf Bank always values in all its activities. This stems from the bank's distinctive position in integrating sustainability principles into the community, as part of its 2025 strategy.

He added: "Our commitment at Gulf Bank, to annually sponsor the marathon, originates from our position as one of the largest private sector institutions dedicated to promoting sustainability across society, the economy, and the environment. This dedication is evident through thoughtfully chosen initiatives aimed at reforming approaches and fostering societal progress."

##### A Success Story of Growth and Community Engagement

Mr. Ahmed Al-Majid, COO at Suffix, a company specializing in sports event management, ex-

#### ■ Mohammad Al-Qattan:

"We are thrilled to witness the return of the marathon for running enthusiasts, and are committed to ensuring that the Ninth edition of the marathon will be outstanding."

■ "The marathon goes beyond being a one-day race; it serves as an invitation to transform one's approach and lifestyle."

■ "The marathon represents an initiative aimed at addressing the rising rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart diseases, which pose significant threats to society."

#### ■ Ahmed Al-Majid:

"We are honored to continue our partnership with Gulf Bank in organizing this distinguished social sports event."

■ "We encourage everyone to register and take part in the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, to immerse themselves in one of the most exciting days of the year!"

pressed his pride, stating, "We are honored to continue our partnership with Gulf Bank in organizing this distinguished social sports event, which achieves success year after year, amidst increasing local and regional participation."

He emphasized, "As we aim to raise the bar for sporting events in the region by organizing exceptional sports activities, we encourage everyone to register and take part in the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, to immerse themselves in one of the most exciting days of the year!"

Commenting on the significant increase in the number of participants in the Gulf Bank Marathon, Al-Majid stated, "The Gulf Bank Marathon started with only 400 participants in its inaugural edition. Before the pandemic, it attracted nearly 10,000 participants, totaling 57,600 participants across the previous Ninth editions. Additionally, the marathon consistently involves over 500 volunteers annually."

He highlighted the record-breaking attendance of the previous marathon edition, with 11,000 participants, among them 2,000 runners from outside Kuwait, representing approximately 107 Arab and foreign nationalities.

Furthermore, he added, "In an effort to showcase local talent, we partnered with Kuwait University students to craft medals for the Gulf Bank Marathon winners, an event ranked among the top 100 sporting events globally."

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading 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.

## Al-Qadisiya, Kuwait Club, Al-Arabi & Kazma brace for Super Cup semifinals showdown

Teams grappling with significant player absences

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: Al-Qadisiya, Kuwait Club, Al-Arabi, and Kazma clubs are intensifying their final preparations for the upcoming Super Cup semi-final matches scheduled for tomorrow.

#### SOCCER

The matchups will feature the teams in white and yellow, and green and orange, with the ultimate showdown slated for the 26th of this month.

As the four clubs gear up for the crucial encounters, they are grappling with significant player absences. Al-Qadisiya faces the absence of team captain and center back Khaled Ibrahim due to a muscle injury. However, the medical staff has indicated that Ibrahim could participate in the Super



Ibrahim and Al-Shatti are the most notable absences from Al-Qadisiya team.

Final if the Yellows qualify. Faisal Al-Shatti, Muhammad Khalil, and Abdulaziz Wadi are also sidelined for the team.

Al-Qadisiya is banking on a strong performance against Kuwait Club to reclaim the team's glory lost in the last two matches, especially since their de-

feat to Al-Arabi in the semi-finals of the Amir Cup.

In Kuwait Club's camp, goalkeeper Abdul Rahman Kamil is nearing a return to official matches as his qualifying program approaches completion. The technical staff, led by Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul, is working on preparing Kamil and the Congolese Mbinza for the upcoming clash against Al-Qadisiya.

Kuwait Club is set to welcome back Amr Abdel Fattah, who missed the Al-Fahaheel match due to suspension in the league championship. Meanwhile, Yassin Al-Khanisi remains absent due to injury.

Kazma is facing the challenge of missing Shabib Al-Khalidi, a key player, due to a muscle injury. His participation appears doubtful, with a consensus on the need for careful preparation to avoid aggravating the injury.

In Al-Arabi, Badr Tariq joins the list of injured players, alongside Saif Al-Hashan, Hassan Hamdan, and Sultan Al-Anazi. Bosnian coach Darko is considering seeking assistance from Abdul Rahman Al-Dhafiri, who was absent from recent matches due to Darko's strategic vision.

### Season ticket sales are up 15% this season

## MLS kicks off with all eyes on Messi & Co. at Miami

WASHINGTON, Feb 20, (AP): Messi Mania returns to Major League Soccer as Lionel Messi embarks on his first full season with Inter Miami.

But this year, there's a twist. Inter Miami signed Luis Suarez in the offseason, reuniting the two close friends. The pair, along with former Barcelona teammates Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets, have made Miami THE team to watch heading into the Major League Soccer's 29th season.

"Inter Miami offered me a nice opportunity to dream of winning the club's first MLS title, to play with big players, who everybody knows, and adapt to my new team and club," Suarez said. "I am motivated by that challenge."

But with Messi, Suarez and the rest of Inter Miami set to open the season at home on Wednesday night against Real Salt Lake, MLS is in the middle of a labor dispute with its referees.

The Professional Referees Organization, which manages MLS referees, announced Saturday that it will lock out match officials after they rejected a proposed collective bargaining agreement just days before the start of the season.

PRO said it had reached a tentative agreement last weekend with the Professional Soccer Referees Association. But the union said nearly 96% of its members voted to reject it.

That means there will likely be replacement refs officiating matches for the foreseeable future.

The lockout casts a shadow on the start of an intriguing MLS year. Messi will have a full season to work his magic. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner arrived in Miami midway through last season, boosting ticket sales, jersey sales and Apple TV (the league's media partner) subscriptions.

He helped Miami to a trophy in the first season of the Leagues Cup tournament with Liga MX. But he couldn't quite make enough difference to push the team into the playoffs after Miami's slow start. Miami finished 9-18-7 last season, in 14th place in the Eastern Conference.

While Miami has the celebrities, the Columbus Crew showed last season they have the skills, winning the MLS Cup final 2-1. The Crew have their own star in Colombian forward Cucho Hernandez, a game changer who was named the championship game's MVP.

In addition to Suarez, the league welcomed some other big international names in the offseason, includ-

ing Bundesliga veteran Emil Forsberg, who was signed by the New York Red Bulls, French goalkeeper Hugo Lloris with LAFC, Croatian forward Petar Musa with Dallas, and Belgian forward Hugo Cuypers with Chicago.

While Suarez is 37 and his knees are giving him more trouble, he still had 27 goals and 17 assists with Brazilian club Gremio last season. He'll play with Messi, Alba and Busquets for the first time since all four were with Barcelona in the 2019-20 season.

"One of the motivations for me coming here was to reunite with them," Suarez said after his first practice in Miami. "But more than anything, we are very ambitious, very professional and we are committed to showing the young talented Inter Miami players that your age doesn't matter, what matters is the commitment you have on and off the field."

MLS Commissioner Don Garber outlined some of the league's successes in an interview last week with The Associated Press.

Season ticket sales are up 15% this season over the same time last year, overall league sponsorship revenue is up 17% while club revenue is up 15%, and merchandise sales are up 44% over this time last year.

Is that the "Messi Effect?" Absolutely. It's a sign that MLS is becoming a destination league.

"I think that this will put MLS on a different trajectory that started when Beckham came to MLS and had us part of the global conversation," Garber said about Messi's stint in the league. "And who knows what that's going to look like years from now? But certainly we're in a different position today than we had been, with Messi in our league."

MLS is already a proving ground young international players.

#### SOCCER

Among the newcomers are Gabriel Pec, a 22-year-old Brazilian with the LA Galaxy, Argentine forward Agustin Ojeda, 19, of NYFC and LAFC's David Martinez, an 18-year-old winger from Venezuela.

Others promising players include center back Tomas Aviles, 20, at Inter Miami, teammate Benjamin Cremaschi, 18, who has a shot at making the U.S. Olympic team, and Real Salt Lake's Fidel Barajas, just 17.

And of course the reigning Young Player of the Year, Atlanta United's Thiago Almada, who was on Argentina's winning 2022 World Cup squad and is just 22.

The Columbus Crew won their third

overall MLS Cup with the victory over LAFC. FC Cincinnati won the Supporters Shield going away with 69 points, while St. Louis City finished atop the Western Conference in the team's first season.

LAF's Denis Bouanga won the Golden Boot for most goals with 20.

Cincinnati's Luciano Acosta was named the league's Most Valuable Player with 17 goals and 14 assists. He also won Goal of the Year for his clinical right-footed goal after running through a series of Charlotte FC defenders in a September match.

This season is slightly unusual compared to recent years in MLS in that there are no expansion teams kicking off in 2024. Major League Soccer's explosive growth has seen it rise from 19 teams just a decade ago. But don't fret, San Diego FC joins next season as the league's 30th team.

There's also going to be lots of attention on soccer in coming years, which will no doubt boost the league.

This year the United States is hosting the Copa America Tournament for the first time since 2016, and just the second time in the history of the tournament.

The FIFA Club World Cup will be held in the United States next year with an expanded field of 32 teams. The next year the U.S. hosts the World Cup with Mexico and Canada.



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) vies for the ball with Newell's Old Boys midfielder Pablo Perez (8) during the first half of a friendly soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)



Napoli's Cyril Ngonge (front center), during a training session in Castel Volturno, near Naples, Italy, Feb. 20, 2024. SSC Napoli will face FC Barcelona for a Champions League, round of sixteen first leg, soccer match on Wednesday. (AP)

# Sports

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## Kuwait Club youth handball team crowned champions



Kuwait Club youth handball team celebrates with the league Cup.

### Al-Qurain face Al-Tadamon

**Khaled El Anzi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 20: The Kuwait Club Youth Handball team secured the league championship with a triumphant victory over Al-Salmiya in the final round, concluding with a score of 28-21. This win propelled their**

#### HANDBALL

**points to 19, claiming the top spot. Yarmouk settled for second place with 18 points.**

In a ceremony attended by the Secretary of the Handball Federation, Qayed Al-Adwani, the Kuwait Club was officially crowned with the League Cup.

The ceremony also featured the presence of Fawaz Al-Rudaini, Assistant Director of the Game at the Kuwait Club, and the administrator, Faisal Al-Enezi.

Fawaz Al-Rudaini commended this achievement, dedicating it to the club's president, board members, and fans. He emphasized the commitment to nurturing youth teams, aiming to establish a robust foundation for future first-team success.

Meanwhile, the Handball League's third round will see two matches today. At five in the evening, Al-Qurain will face Al-Tadamon at 5:00 pm, and at seven in the evening, Al-Sahel will compete against Kazma at 7:00 pm. These matches will take place at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex hall.

Al-Qurain, entering the match with one point, aims to overcome Al-Tadamon, currently at the bottom of the standings without a point. Kazma, with 4 points, will play against Al-Sahel. This match holds significance for the Orange team.

## Calzona 'takes' over Napoli 48 hrs before facing Barca

ROME, Feb 20, (AP): If Francesco Calzona didn't already know most of Napoli's players, it might be an impossible task: He became coach of the defending Serie A champion 48 hours before facing Barcelona in the Champions League.

But Calzona knows Napoli through and through. He was an assistant to Maurizio Sarri with the Partenopei from 2015-18 and was on Luciano Spalletti's staff in 2021-22.

Under Sarri, Calzona was credited with coming up with the idea of Dries Mertens' highly successful move to a false 9 position. Then with Spalletti, he helped to lay the foundation for

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Napoli's run to the Serie A title.

Calzona left before the title run when former Napoli captain Marek Hamsik - who still holds the club appearances record with 520 - suggested he take over as the coach of Slovakia's national team.

In Calzona's first job as a head coach, Slovakia successfully qualified for the European Championship.

Now the 55-year-old Calzona will direct a club for the first time and his debut could hardly come in a bigger match, with Barcelona visiting Stadio Diego Armando Maradona on Wednesday in the first leg of the Champions League last 16. While he was announced on Monday, Calzona's first training session in charge at Napoli didn't come until Tuesday.

Calzona, who will also continue as Slovakia coach, faces a big challenge with Napoli on a five-match winless run in all competitions - which led to its second coaching change of the season. Walter Mazzarri was fired on



Yousef Al-Baidan, the Director General of the General Sports Authority, presents award to Faisal Al-Rajhi.

### Al-Rajhi honored

Yousef Al-Baidan, the Director General of the General Sports Authority, presented the accolade to athlete Faisal Al-Rajhi for securing the bronze medal at the Asian Para Games. Additionally, Al-Rajhi earned qualification to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Despite his absence from the ceremony where players were honored, held in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Monday after only 12 league matches, the same duration that Rudi Garcia lasted at the start of the season.

Having spent most of his coaching career under Sarri, whom he met when he was a coffee salesman in Tuscany, Calzona deploys more of an attacking style than Mazzarri.

### Chelsea target Brighton again to bring in head of recruitment

## Glasner watches Palace denied win by late Everton equalizer

LIVERPOOL, England, Feb 20, (AP): New Crystal Palace coach Oliver Glasner watched from the sidelines as his side was denied a win at Everton by a late equalizer in the English Premier League.

Glasner was appointed just hours before the 1-1 draw after Roy Hodgson resigned due to health issues earlier in the day.

The former Eintracht Frankfurt coach signed a deal to June 2026 but Hodgson's assistants Paddy McCarthy and Ray Lewington led the team at Goodison Park.

Glasner watched a scrappy encounter that was brightened by Jordan Ayew's sizzling strike from just outside the box 20 minutes into the second half.

However, just when it looked like Palace would win for the first time since January, Amadou Onana equalized for Everton. With six minutes remaining, he got up highest in a crowded penalty box to head home Dwight McNeil's corner.

The result was welcomed by both sides, who are struggling near the foot of the league table.

#### SOCCER

Everton has not won in eight games but the draw lifted it out of the relegation zone on goal difference. It has 20 points, the same as Luton, which fell to 18th.

Palace has won only two of its last 14 matches, one of which was against bottom club Sheffield United. It has not kept a clean sheet since Nov. 4.

Hodgson, 76, was blamed by some fans for the poor run but as speculation over his future mounted last week he became ill at a training session and was hospitalized. He has since been released but his poor health prompted the former England coach to resign.

"I understand, given recent circumstances, it may be prudent at this time for the club to plan ahead," Hodgson said.

His replacement, an Austrian who led Eintracht to the Europa League title in 2022, is expected to be in the dugout for Palace's next match, against second-to-last Burnley on Saturday.

Chelsea has targeted English Premier League rival Brighton once again to strengthen its technical staff.

Brighton said on Tuesday its head of recruitment, Sam Jewell, was placed on leave after accepting a new position at Chelsea.

Jewell took up the role with Brighton in 2022 following the departure of Paul Winstanley, who also moved to Chelsea to become its co-sporting director.

### Kuwait's Al-Dhefiri clinches gold at Asian indoor games

TEHRAN, Feb 20, (KUNA): Kuwaiti athlete Ibrahim Al-Dhefiri secured the gold medal in the 800m race at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championship in Tehran, Iran. Al-Dhefiri dominated the competition, completing the race in an impressive one minute and 46 seconds. The



KUNA photo  
Gold medalist Ibrahim Al-Dhefiri.

#### ATHLETICS

silver medal went to Iranian runner Subhan Ahmadi, while the bronze was awarded to Qatari Abubaker Abdalla.

This event marked the 11th edition of the Asian Indoor Athletics Championship, which was first held in Tehran in 2004. Taking place biennially, this year's championship featured the participation of 26 Asian countries and was held in February.

Other Brighton staff who have joined Chelsea in recent years include Graham Potter, who lasted six months as manager before being fired, and his assistant Bruno Salter, who was the interim manager after Potter's departure.

Chelsea also spent nearly \$250 million on signing goalkeeper Robert Sanchez, defender Marc Cucurella and midfielder Moises Caicedo from Brighton inside the last two years.

Jewell, the son of former Premier League manager Paul Jewell, joined Brighton in May 2016 as

the recruitment manager for the men's under-21 side and became the emerging talent manager in March 2019.

He continued the work of Winstanley as Brighton's head of recruitment, with the club having established a strong reputation for its scouting network in Europe and South America.

"Sam has now commenced a period of gardening leave," Brighton said. "We thank him for his long service to our club."

Brighton is three points and three spots ahead of 10th-placed Chelsea in the standings.

### Best of the Rest

#### Qualifier moved to Jeddah:

The first of two Olympic qualifying games between Japan and North Korea in women's soccer, to determine a berth in this year's Paris Olympics, has been moved from North Korea to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the Asian Football Confederation has announced.

The governing body of soccer in Asia moved the match after Japanese officials said there too few flights to North Korea for its fans.

The match is to be played on Saturday in Saudi Arabia with the game in Tokyo set for Feb. 28. (AP)

#### Gasset becomes OM coach:

Jean-Louis Gasset is back in a coaching job less than a month after getting fired by Ivory Coast.

The veteran Frenchman was appointed as Marseille's new coach on Tuesday, the replacement for Gennaro Gattuso. Terms of the deal were not revealed.

Looking for a jolt in the middle of a mediocre season, the 1993 European champion announced Gasset's appointment a day after parting ways with Gattuso. (AP)



Everton's Ben Godfrey (front right), attempts a header on goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Crystal Palace at the Goodison Park stadium, in Liverpool, England. (AP)