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AMIR CONGRATULATES CITIZENS, RESIDENTS ON NAT'L OCCASIONS 'Appreciate the blessing of liberation'



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

On Monday, as Kuwait continued its celebrations for the 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day, a child joyfully waves the Kuwaiti flag along Arabian Gulf Street.

Greetings pour in

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated citizens and residents of the State of Kuwait on 63rd National Day and the 33rd Liberation Day, appreciating their joy on these two occasions that embodied their loyalty to Kuwait.

His Highness praised all the great efforts made by the security authorities in the Ministries of Interior and Defense and the National Guard, as well the effective participation made by other official bodies in preparing for the national celebrations, including the Permanent Committee for Celebrating National Holidays, Ministries of Information, Health,

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Opinion

We are happier this year

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

FOR the first time in many years, people in Kuwait feel they are not suffocating as they celebrate their national holidays comfortably, without restrictions, and without the interference of parliamentarians of extremism and backwardness.

This time, no one made people feel like they are not welcomed in this country. No bans were imposed on singing and playing music on this occasion, especially the songs that are dear to all of us.

Alhamdulillah, the people felt some joy, and the celebrations manifested what they harbor in their hearts for their beloved country.

Therefore, His Highness the Prime Minister today must realize that his people are lively, and want to compete with other nations, especially the Gulf ones, in terms of creativity that is outside of any restrictions imposed by extremists who never enter a place without turning it into ruin.

The people have a lot of energy that the extremist trends, the deep state, and the parliamentarians of backwardness have worked to bury by exercising all forms of oppression on them through weird laws, which made Kuwait appear as if it was several centuries behind the present time.

His Highness the Prime Minister's mission today is to work from the field to discover the latent potential of Kuwaiti youth, who at one stage reached despair.

Hence, some of them migrated to neighboring countries that made room for them to show their creativity and establish successful projects that their country was most in need of.

All of this can only be discovered through serious work, starting with achieving justice for people, preventing extremists from invading public life, and aborting the plans of the deep state.

There is no doubt that a creative leader must be present in the field, as he is a role model for his people. He must work with his ministerial team in a transparent manner, so that no parliamentarian or movement would hinder them. This leads to openness, similar to what happened in Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman where people are nothing less than the Kuwaitis.

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Kuwait reaffirms solidarity with Palestine at OIC meet

ISTANBUL, Feb 26, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture Abdul-Rahman Al-Mutairi reaffirmed that the principled, long-standing stance of the State of Kuwait under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on support to all Islamic issues at the core of which is the Palestine cause.

"The Kuwaiti leadership, government and people will continue firm support to the Palestine question the political, media and humanitarian at all regional and international levels until the Palestinian people regain their full legitimate rights, notably the

right to establish an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital pursuant to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions," Al-Mutairi pledged.

The minister made the comments in a speech to the Extraordinary Session of Islamic Conference of Information Ministers of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The event, themed "The Israeli Occupying Authority's Disinformation and Hostilities against Journalists and Media Outlets in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" was hosted in Istanbul on Saturday.



During the Kuwaiti Air Force's aerial show commemorating the 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day, an aircraft gracefully passes by the iconic Kuwait Towers. - See Page 2

Former MPs eyeing election run

Al-Saadoun praises Amir's pro-reform agenda

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: The most prominent beneficiaries of the rehabilitation stipulation in Decree No. 4/2024 on the suspension of National Assembly Election Law No. 120/2023 until Oct 1, 2024 include former MPs and parliamentary election candidates Badr Al-Dahoum, Naif Al-Merdas, Abdullah Al-Barghash, Anwar Al-Fikr, Musaed Al-Qeraifa, Ayedh Bukhousa, Khalid Naif and Khalid Shukhair, most of whom are expected to stand for the upcoming election, representing the opposition.

In addition, former Deputy National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Shohoumi and former MP Askar Al-Anzi have announced their intention to contest the next parliamentary election.

Meanwhile, sources disclosed that former Deputy National Assembly Speaker Muhammad Al-Mutair will compete for the speaker's seat in case he wins in the upcoming election.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Monday with Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on the sidelines of the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.

During the meeting, they discussed close relations between the State of Kuwait and the WHO and ways of developing various cooperative areas to serve Kuwait's health system, and upgrade and promote its capabilities by sharing relevant technical expertise. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Al-Ujairi Scientific Center announced that the third and final phase of the scorpion season, marking the concluding chapter of winter, will commence, today. The center elucidated that during these days, we bid adieu to winter without necessarily bidding farewell to the chill, marking the onset of the transition towards spring, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement, the center highlighted the distinctive feature of this period - the erratic weather patterns and temperature fluctuations oscillating between low and high.



Over 400 flapping flags adorned Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre on Sunday in a captivating scene that mirrors the joyous and euphoric atmosphere, marking the 63rd and 33rd anniversaries of Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day respectively.

'Compliance for sustainable global supply chains'

Kuwait calls for global food security at WTO

ABU DHABI, Feb 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Jo'an said on Monday that the 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) MC13 was an important opportunity to enhance the trading systems.

Minister Al-Jo'an said that the conference hosted by the United Arab Emirates, was an important opportunity to enhance the ability of the multilateral trading system to respond to challenges and crises the world has witnessed in recent years.

He stated to KUNA after the Conference, which began today and will continue until March 29, that Kuwait was committed to the multilateral trading system and was ready to work constructively with all member states for a successful conference.

Al-Jo'an called on member states to enhance participation in a manner consistent with the provisions of the World Trade Organization for the sustainability of food security and flow of global supply chains.

Al-Jo'an pointed to the role of the private sector of member states in increasing inclusive and sustainable economic growth, which was as important as the role of the governments, by intensifying its efforts to achieve more inclusive and sustainable trading system.

He added that he hoped that member countries would develop key features to provide valuable exports and create an innovative business environment for the sustainability emerging companies and entrepreneurship, which would result in more innovations and increasing intraregional exports.

The conference includes 175 delegations from OIC and observer members, private sector leaders, NGOs, and civil society representatives, which would provide the international community with the opportunity to cooperate towards a more efficient, sustainable and inclusive trading system.

Representing Kuwait in Arab Commerce Ministers preparatory meeting is Undersecretary of Ministry of Commerce and Indus-

try, Ziad Al-Najem, ahead of the 13th World Trade Organization (WTO) conference set on Monday in Abu Dhabi.

Al-Najem spoke on some of the topics discussed including the importance of maintaining food security and preventing restrictions on food products, according to a statement from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

He emphasized his gratitude to Saudi Arabia for holding the preparatory meeting and the UAE for hosting the WTO conference.

The UAE is to host the conference which will take place on Monday and Tuesday, and will cover various discussions on global rules and regulations in the world of commerce, by ministers and officials from around the world.

The WTO was founded in 1955 with the objective of overlooking and supervising global commercial rules and regulations, with a conference being held biennially to review and renew treaties that make up the global trading system.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:58 Asr 15:18
 Sunrise .. 06:17 Maghrib .. 17:45
 Zohr 12:01 Isha 19:02

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hours:
By Day: Mild and clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-30 km/h with a chance for

scattered rain later on.

By Night: Rather cold to cold and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate easterly wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	21	15
Kuwait Airport	23	12
Abdaly	21	11
Jahra	21	12
Salmiyah	18	14
Nuwaisib	21	13

HH Amir, PM congratulate Estonia

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable of congratulations to President of Estonia Alar Karis on his country's national day, wishing him good health, further progress and prosperity for Estonia and its friendly people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah has also sent a cable of congratulations to President of Estonia Alar Karis on his country's national day.

Cooperative Republic of Guyana

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has sent a cable of congratulations to Dr. Mohamed Irfan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, on his country's national day. His Highness the Amir wished President Irfan Ali good health, the republic and its people progress and prosperity. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah has also sent a cable of congratulations to Dr. Mohamed Irfan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, on his country's national day.

Message from Pakistani ambassador

ON behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, it gives me immense pleasure to extend sincere felicitations on the auspicious occasion of 63rd National Day of the State of Kuwait to the leadership and the people of Kuwait. I would also like to convey my best wishes for the good health and well being of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

I am glad to share that Pakistan and Kuwait celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in the year 2023. To commemorate this historic milestone, a 'joint logo' and a 'postal stamp' were



Malik Muhammad Farooq

launched by the two countries. This is a testament to the strength and depth of the excellent relationship and bonds of brotherhood between the two countries. It is our earnest desire to further solidify the mutually beneficial relations in all spheres of cooperation.

I am confident that these excellent bilateral relations will achieve new milestones in the years ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Pakistan's strong commitment and support to the brotherly State of Kuwait. In the spirit of friendship, I extend my best wishes for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of Kuwait.

Long live Pakistan-Kuwait friendship.

Ambassador Malik Muhammad Farooq



A Kuwaiti folklore troupe performing the Ardha dance at the Youm Al-Bahar Village.

KUNA photo

Folklore troupes mark Kuwait national days

Celebrating the country's 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day, Kuwaiti folklore troupes performed the traditional Ardha Dance at Youm Al-Bahar Village on Sunday, catching the eyes of large numbers of citizens and residents.

The attention-grabbing scene, which reflects how much they cherish the dear nation, is part of wide-scale official and unofficial cel-

ebrations nationwide.

Youm Al-Bahar traditional village showcased the utmost expressions of patriotism for the nation during Kuwait's National Days, through its cultural and folk heritage, embodying the Kuwaiti spirit.

The village represents Kuwait's maritime legacy and history in diving and travel, hosting events that evoke reverence among Ku-

waitis while displaying the country's culture and history to visitors from around the world.

Some of the expressions seen include the Kuwaiti national teams wearing traditional attire of their ancestors, performing folk dances, waving flags, singing patriotic songs, and children joining in by cheering with flags and females wearing the colors of the Kuwaiti flag. (KUNA)

Kuwait Air Force show draws huge crowd of citizens, expats at Towers

Caracal, Eurofighter, F-18 aircraft part of event

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: On the occasion of the national holidays, the Ministry of Defense presented an air show by the Kuwait Air Force on Monday afternoon in front of the Kuwait Towers amid a large presence of citizens and residents. An exhibition was also held that brought together all the Kuwaiti army units to inform the public about the tasks and duties of the armed forces.

In a related context, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Defense Colonel Hamad Jassim Al-Saqr confirmed the participation of Caracal aircraft from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior, as well as the Eurofighter and F-18 aircraft in the air show.

In a press statement, Colonel Al-Saqr said, "We extend our highest congratulations and blessings to the shrine of His Highness the Amir of the country Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and to the citizens and residents of this good country.

Through this air show, we remember the sacrifices of our righteous martyrs during the invasion, especially the members of the armed forces who provided the finest examples of redemption, sacrifice, and defense of the homeland."

Colonel Al-Saqr explained that the exhibition affiliated with the Ministry of Defense was attended by military officers from various units of the Kuwaiti army.

A group of weapons, equipment and capabilities of the armed forces was displayed at the exhibition, along with details about each equipment and weapon, and the tasks of the armed forces.

He highlighted the participation of a large number of citizens and residents in the Ministry of Defense's exhibition that was held opposite the Kuwait Towers on February 25 and 26.

Colonel Al-Saqr prayed that Almighty Allah will continue to protect Kuwait, its Amir and its people from all evil and harm.



The three aircraft during a flypast at the Kuwait Towers.

Photo by Mohammad Morsi

French Gulf War vets mark Kuwait fest

Families mark event on Gulf Street

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): The activities of the National holidays began Sunday morning with the participation of the ministries, government institutions and public associations, with performances and popular songs.

The Gulf Street's atmosphere was filled with joy and happiness which embodied the special memories of this day for Kuwait and its history.

Amid a large public presence of peoples of different ages and nationalities, the Arabian Gulf Street witnessed various activities to celebrate the national days, which spread the spirit of patriotism.

Crowds of families celebrate the national holidays today in which Kuwait gained its independence and announced the beginning of a new era.

Google celebrates

Google celebrated Kuwait's 63rd National Day on Sunday by decorating its main page with the Kuwaiti flag.

The Kuwaiti flag takes over Google's main page, flying high with a green frame and a sky blue background and the word "Google" beneath it in red and white, inspired by the flag.

By clicking on the image, the webpage is redirected to a page that contains informa-

tion on Kuwait's National Day and a variety of archives from different sources on the anniversary, linked to Kuwait's values of belonging, loyalty, sacrifice and giving.

Kuwait celebrates the 63rd Independence Day and 33rd Liberation Day on Sunday and Monday.

French veterans

The French veterans of the Gulf war held a symbolic ceremony on Saturday marking the 33rd anniversary of the Kuwait Liberation Day, in the presence of the Kuwaiti Ambassador in Paris Mohammad Al-Jadaie.

The ceremony was held at the Arc de Triomphe square near the torch of the unknown soldiers in Paris. Kuwaiti and French flags were hoisted at the ceremony.

In a statement to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Jadaie expressed his country's appreciation for the role played by France in liberating Kuwait, saying that the French participation reflected the depth of the bilateral relations.

Al-Jadaie renewed thanks and gratitude of the State of Kuwait for the "courageous" French stances in supporting Kuwaiti rights and defending its independence and sovereignty during the Iraqi invasion.

The ceremony was also attended by a number of French military officials and US officials.

'Intensify probe into school brawl'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani recently issued a directive to continue the investigation into the quarrel between a student and outsiders at a secondary school for girls in Jahra Educational District, reports Al-Rai daily.

When he visited the school, Al-Adwani was briefed on the incident. He also inspected the administrative building of the district and was informed about the progress of the work there. He then stressed the need to strictly implement regulations and laws, affirming the ministry will never be lenient in dealing with those proven to have committed violations.

Meanwhile, official spokesperson of the ministry Ahmed Al-Wahida confirmed that the necessary steps have been taken to expand the investigation into the above-mentioned incident. He added the investigation report will be submitted soon to pave way for taking legal action.

Al-Wahida said the ministry coordinated with its Interior counterpart, particularly in asking the assistance of female police officers to ensure the safety of everyone. He emphasized that the ministry is keen on strictly applying the regulations to protect the students, employees and other individuals in the educational sector.



The house where the Kuwaiti resistance fought with the Iraqi invaders till their martyrdom.

KUNA photo

Qurain Martyrs Museum hoists national flag on 'National Days'

By Khaled Al-Jales

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum held Saturday a flag-hoisting ceremony, as part of activities launched by Kuwait National Museum marking the 63rd National Day and the 33rd Liberation Day.

The ceremony included inaugurating an exhibition titled "between peace and war" by plastic artists Fahad Al-Najjar and showcasing items of heritage Expo 965 team, in the attendance of Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar and assistant secretary general for NCCAL arts sector MUSAED Al-Zamel as well as acting assistant secretary general for monuments Mohammad bin Redha.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Jassar said paying attention to the QMM is one of the council's top priorities as a historical landmark and a key symbolism of Kuwaitis'

resistance during the brutal Iraqi invasion.

The exhibition involves some non-traditional portraits to tell about the battle of Kuwaitis that took place on February 24 1991, in defense of their homeland, he added.

Meanwhile, Al-Najjar said he documents history and events through these portraits during the Iraqi invasion to be told by a generation after generation using some techniques.

The Kuwait National Museum continues celebrations on national days at the QMM and other museums for a week.

In a wonderful panoramic scene, lights are spreading everywhere at night, on the eve of celebrations of Kuwait's 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day. Streets, trees and buildings are decorated with colored-flags and lights in an amazing scene that captured eyes and hearts of people. Such atmospheres were created to give joy and happiness to those visiting areas during the national celebrations.

In a related context, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant-General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf confirmed that the number of reports and accidents on Jaber Bridge had decreased by 80 percent due to the efforts exerted by the security services and law enforcement.

He affirmed that the security plan had resulted in a decrease in such reports.

In a statement to reporters during his tour of the Jaber Bridge security point on February 25, Lieutenant General Al-Nawaf said, "A total of four cases of throwing balloons were caught."

He revealed the interaction from parents in the awareness messages issued by the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior and various media outlets, due to which the cases have become fewer.

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Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah with Dr. Fatima Al-Salem.

KUNA photo

Deputy PM visits KUNA

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah visited on Saturday the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) headquarters.

During his visit, the Deputy Premier held talks with the Agency's Director General Dr. Fatima Al-Salem, the Deputy Director General for the Administrative, Financial and Communications Affairs Mohammad Al-Manna'i and a number of the Agency's officials and employees.

Sheikh Fahad talks with Dr. Al-Salem addressed important issues, in the ministries of defense and interior, which will be presented on KUNA platforms and accounts soon. (KUNA)

Revelers kept in check first time

'No water balloons, foam sprayers'

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: Based on instructions from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Fahad and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Salem Al-Nawaf, the Ministry of Interior succeeded in securing celebrations during the national holidays by imposing strict security measures to prevent the use of water guns and water balloons.

The ministry set security points throughout the Gulf Street, Kabd, Jaber Bridge, Bneider, and Khairan, led by the assistant undersecretaries of the ministry, headed by Major General Hamed Al-Dawas, Abdullah Saffah, Abdullah Al-Rajab, and Yousef Al-Khadda, and deployed patrol teams to secure these

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Having connections outweighs academic qualification for job'

"PREVIOUSLY, academic certificates and qualifications were fundamental for securing a good job and societal status. However, the landscape has shifted significantly due to various factors," columnist **Fawaz Ahmad Al-Hamad** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"Having connections often outweighs high academic qualifications in job acquisition today. This trend poses challenges, especially amidst current economic difficulties.

"A concerning outcome of this shift is the increasing number of unemployed individuals with university degrees, reflecting a lack of effective government employment strategies.



"Rather than Fawaz Al-Hamad addressing crucial issues like unemployment, much attention is diverted towards less impactful demands and projects favored by certain segments, neglecting broader societal needs.

"Addressing unemployment requires a multifaceted approach, including diversifying income sources, attracting foreign investment, optimizing industrial lands, and revising relevant laws. Unfortunately, some members of the National Assembly overlook these critical projects, exacerbating the unemployment crisis due to the absence of a coherent government vision.

"Unemployment not only destabilizes individuals but also threatens social cohesion and family structures. Without jobs, recent graduates face idle time, which may lead to detrimental behaviors like substance abuse and crime, further eroding societal fabric. Hence, prioritizing job creation is imperative for safeguarding social stability and family cohesion.

"The current paradigm emphasizes networking and influence over academic qualifications for job seekers, highlighting the prevalence of nepotism and corruption.

"To combat this, the government must enforce transparent recruitment processes, devoid of favoritism or discrimination, ensuring fair opportunities for all citizens.

"While acknowledging the value of academic degrees and various professions in societal development, it's crucial for the government and the National Assembly to articulate a comprehensive development vision with clear objectives and timelines. This will facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation of progress towards sustainable growth.

"In conclusion, while academic credentials remain esteemed, the contemporary job market prioritizes connections over qualifications. Addressing unemployment requires concerted efforts, transparent recruitment practices, and a coherent development vision to ensure equal opportunities and societal progress."

Also:

"We want democracy, but its outcomes are undemocratic, and here lies the trap that no one wants to see and even enjoys falling into every time, with the isolation of historical national and commercial political movements, and the decline in the number of independent professional politicians, coinciding with the decline in the level of education and the spread of certificates that testify to nothing but ignorance or deception of the bearer," columnist **Fahad Al-Bassam** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"Our parliamentary elections, especially in the last legislative terms, have produced for us nothing but classes that, by nature and their educational and functional composition, do not believe in democracy, and are required at the same time to monitor, legislate, and defend democracy, which they see as merely a peace, and to fight corruption, which is essentially its secretions and results. With such types of outputs, change for the better will be closer to science fiction than reality.

"A soldier who is accustomed to receiving orders, implementing them, and giving them to others will not accept differences, discussion, and other opinions easily, and given his limited practical experience outside the scope of his job, he is unable to present new and useful ideas other than pursuing the thieves he sees everywhere with the state apparatus.

"His thinking is often dominated by an atmosphere of conspiracies and tar-

getting by enemies, and anyone who disagrees with him is necessarily promotes a malicious plan, which is why his suggestions and statements will not deviate from this scope, and the examples are clear before you.

"As for the honest cleric, it is assumed that he wants the afterlife, and such a man will not know how to build and manage a state that requires technical and administrative expertise and competencies, nor will he be able to accept the tricks and filth of the world of politics.

"However, if he is enveloped in religion, like most of them, then he will not be satisfied with sabotaging the state in the name of religion, but rather he will distort the image of religion, at the same time, like killing two birds with one stone, and it will only find relief by monitoring people's breathing and quarantining it instead of reading budgets and Audit Bureau reports, as that is what satisfies its electoral bases and guarantees its continuity in representing the people.

"The efforts of the above brothers are crowned with unlimited support from their fellow graduates of defamed universities who have the confidence of a degree without its knowledge, and they have a strong lobby in the street that supports them from their academic colleagues, and with them you will only find a repetition of slogans and the insertion of the word "people" and "nation" into every sentence along with words of challenge and exclusion and treasure, there are no numbers, no ideas, and no need at all.

"However, if someone is creative and proposes distributing the money for the general purpose of the state, after all this, shuffling the playing cards and "bread of chandeliers" and redistributing them will not bring anything new.

"The same pictures and numbers will come, but in different hands, and the result is the same. The best and most difficult thing is to move the soil, stir it, and wait for the results after at least two decades. Otherwise, we will continue to "scrape" indefinitely."

"The decision to reform and achieve development ... After the sovereign decision was made to dissolve the National Assembly, with His Highness the Amir - may Allah protect him, issuing the decree in the interest of Kuwait, everyone must stop talking or disrupting the process," Major General **M. Faizal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Kuwait is above everyone else, and HH the Amir is the head of authorities, no one can challenge him constitutionally.

"Now, there is an urgent need for solidarity and support, not separation and rivalry. The country is going to hold fresh National Assembly elections soon. We must choose the strong and honest person who fears for his homeland, protects its interests, and respects the Constitution and the law, not someone who exploits the country's interests, violates the laws, undermines social justice, and does everything that harms society for the sake of his own interests. Here, I wish to clarify that not everyone does that, just some.

"Development needs political stability, everyone coming together to implement projects, and crossing thorny barriers to reach safety.

"HH the Prime Minister needs support, not skepticism or belittlement. He must be patient in order to change the scene. He must also take firm and significant decisions, the first of which is to address the problem in the streets and end with imposing the law on everyone, regardless of their status.

"Just as the government has responsibilities, the citizen is also obligated to achieve correct citizenship in deed, not in word.

"Optimism is required to embrace the achievements and put the train on the right track for the identity project of the new State of Kuwait, and on the regional and international maps in all fields. Such tasks are easy if there is cooperation, and minds and hearts are united in the interest of the nation.

"We greet His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him, and the Kuwaiti people on the occasion of the National and Liberation days.

"We ask Allah to protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of harm, and to maintain security and stability in our beloved country.

"May God have mercy on our righteous martyrs."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Kuwait Air Force and Coalition jets fly over the burning oil wells in Kuwait during the liberation war for Kuwait in 1991. All the oil wells were set on fire by the retreating Iraqi forces. KUNA photo

Kuwaitis on national days recall freeing nation from Iraq's claws

GCC countries role wins praise for hosting Kuwaitis

By Anna Al-Shemari

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): On the occasion of the national days, the Kuwaiti people recall with pride their resistance of the 1990 blatant Iraqi aggression and their unity with the sagacious leadership to restore the homeland's sovereignty and freedom.

Echoes of "Allahu Akbar" chants on February 26, 1991, still resonate until the present days. In this glorious day, the "Desert Storm" liberation operation was launched and resulted in the historic event, the liberation of Kuwait.

At the political level, the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, at the time, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, played a major role in rallying Arab and international support for the Kuwaiti legitimacy to defend the national rights.

The Kuwaiti people remember the prime role of the GCC countries that gave Kuwait all types of support and hosted Kuwaiti citizens. Moreover, among the great memories was the historic stance by the late US president George Bush (senior) who pledged to restore Kuwait's independence and succeeded in persuading the US Senate to employ military might to free the country from the occupation claws, on January 21, 1991.

The Kuwaitis continue to eulogize the martyrs who sacrificed their blood for Kuwait's sake during the flagrant aggression and participation of sisterly and friendly countries in the liberation of the country.



Securitymen patrolling on foot on the Gulf Road maintaining order in a cordial atmosphere during the celebrations to mark Kuwait's National and Liberation Days. KUNA photo

'Sleepless Eyes' share joy with people

Kuwaiti security personnel, known as "Sleepless Eyes", on Sunday shared joyfulness with citizens and residents in Kuwait over the country's ongoing celebrations marking the 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day.

They have deployed everywhere nationwide in a highly

commended effort to provide security protection to everyone in the country and to resolutely and immediately respond to any misconduct or law-breaking.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's National Day celebrations prevailed throughout Al-Shaheed Park, in the heart of the capital, with its

picturesque views and delightful activities that brought joy to the visitors on this national occasion.

Kuwait's flags fluttered, while patriotic songs were sung in celebration of the 63rd National Day and the 33rd Liberation Day, creating an enjoyable atmosphere for all attendees. (KUNA)



A Patriot missile system on display near the Kuwait Towers. KUNA photo

Defense Ministry displays hardware in celebration

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): Units of the Ministry of Defense took part in the celebrations marking the national days, amid cheers by jubilant nationals and residents of the country.

The forces paraded armored vehicles, took part in exhibition booths, a brass band as officers briefed the crowds about the military vehicles.

As to the air show originally set today, it was delayed to Sunday due to weather conditions.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah has called for dealing firmly with any violator of the environment protection law and perpetrators of negative behavior during celebrations of national days.

This call was made on Saturday by Sheikh Fahad during his inspection tour of check points deployed nationwide to secure the public celebrations of the 63rd anniversary of the Independence Day and the 33rd anniversary of the Liberation Day on Sunday and Monday respectively. He urged the security personnel to show patience and share the joy of the dear occasions with citizens and residents. He, however, stressed the firmness in applying the law to violators. Acting Minister of the Interior commended the security personnel's efforts and plan to secure the celebrations, calling on "everyone to cooperate with the security personnel".

Balloon, water gun sellers arrested

Cars with modifications seized

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior reported that the Public Security, Traffic, and Operations Sector responded to four - what the ministry called "stray" - incidents involving reckless behavior during the national days celebrations, reports *Al-Qabas* daily.

The suspects involved were referred to the Environmental Police, while several vehicles found violating security and safety regulations were impounded and towed to the Mol garage.

Furthermore, individuals engaged in the unauthorized sale of balloons and water pistols, items prohibited during the celebra-

tions as per the list issued by the Ministry of Interior, were arrested and handed over to the Environmental Police for necessary legal actions.

The statement added, the General Traffic Department also seized a few vehicles because the owners had made some modifications in violation of the GTD laws and were towed to the Ministry garage.

The Ministry reiterated its commitment to firm and immediate action against any violations of the law or negative behaviors during national celebrations. Any individual found violating the instructions issued by the Ministry of Interior during such events will be referred to the appropriate authorities for legal proceedings.



Global diplomats send warm greetings to Amir, people

Kuwaiti embassies, consulates mark country's National Days

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's embassies in a number of countries have held celebrations to mark the 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day.

In Stockholm, the Kuwaiti Embassy held a reception attended by the Director General of the Global Affairs Department at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dag Juhlin-Dannfelt, Deputy Speaker of the Swedish Parliament Julia Kronlid and several other Swedish officials as well as Arab and foreign ambassadors accredited in Stockholm.

Speaking at the event, Acting Chargé d'Affaires at the Kuwaiti Embassy Counselor Abdullah Abu Shaiba extended his warmest congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the government and people of Kuwait.

He remembered with great pride and honor "the martyrs who wrote with their pure blood the most wonderful epics of sacrifice for the dear homeland".

Counselor Abu Shaiba added that the development and achievements achieved by the State of Kuwait at all levels earned it great appreciation and respect from the international community.

He expressed best wishes for further progress, prosperity and security for Kuwait and its people under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In Pretoria, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of South Africa Salem Al-Shibli held a large reception to mark the national days.

The ceremony was attended by senior officials of the South African government, heads and representatives of Arab and foreign diplomatic missions accredited in Pretoria, and a group of social and political figures, businessmen and staff of the Kuwaiti embassy.



Kuwait embassy in Bulgaria celebrate Kuwait's 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day. KUNA photo

In statements to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Shibli extended his warmest congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the government and people of Kuwait on the dear occasions.

Achievements

He boasted that the achievements that Kuwait made since independence had earned it the respect of the entire world, boosted its status on the international stage, helped it have distinguished relations with all countries based on mutual respect.

In Nouakchott, the Embassy of the State of Kuwait held a function to mark the national occasions.

The guests were received by Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Mauritania Badah Al-Dosari and other embassy staff members.

During the ceremony, a documentary film was screened highlighting the bilateral cooperation relations between Mauritania and Kuwait, which extend over more than five and a half decades.

The Mauritanian government was represented at the ceremony by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Dr. Mohamed Salem Ould Marzoug, Minister of Economy Abdessalam Ould Mohamed Salah and several other senior officials.

Also attended were Arab and foreign ambassadors accredited to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, leaders of Mauritanian political parties and economic and cultural figures.

The Embassy of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina stated in a statement to KUNA that it held a reception on these occasions, attended by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Security, ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions.

Ambassador of Kuwait Dhaher Al-Kharinj observed a moment of silence at the start of the event in remembrance of Palestinian martyrs who fell in the ongoing Israeli occupation war on the Gaza Strip.

Humanitarian

He stated that Kuwait, as it celebrates national days, does not forget its pioneering role towards just humanitarian issues.

He lauded strong relations between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ambassador Al-Kharinj extended his warmest congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the government and people of Kuwait.

He expressed his sincere wishes for

further progress, prosperity and security for Kuwait and its people under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In London, the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the British capital, held a reception on the dear occasion. Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador of Kuwait to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Bader Al-Awadhi expressed his sincere thanks for the efforts made by the United Kingdom and all friendly countries to liberate Kuwait. He hailed the efforts exerted to strengthen relations and cooperation between the two countries in all fields, especially the endeavors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the British Parliament, political parties, and economic and intellectual institutions.

He pointed to the 125th anniversary of the launch of the Kuwaiti-British partnership, stressing that the two countries have made numerous achievements over the past year. The Ambassador highlighted the successful visits of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the United Kingdom, the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Kuwaiti Investment Office in the capital, London, and the launch of the strategic dialogue. He

pointed to the strong cooperation between the two countries in the cultural field, represented by the presence of ten thousand students in the United Kingdom, and in the health and defense fields.

The ceremony was attended by several UK lawmakers, dignitaries, lords and barons, and political, military, economic, cultural and Islamic leaders as well as Arab and foreign diplomats. He emphasized Kuwait's support for the efforts aimed at reaching a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. "I extend my greetings to our people in Gaza and we support all efforts to immediately ceasefire and alleviate their suffering," he said. In Washington, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the United States Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah, held a large reception to celebrate the national days. The ceremony was attended by a large number of senior officials in the US government, heads and representatives of Arab and foreign diplomats, and a group of social and political figures, businessmen and staff of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington. In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah extended her warmest congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government and people of Kuwait on the dear occasions. She expressed her great pleasure and pride in the progress and prosperity achieved by the State of Kuwait since its independence. "In light of the current regional and international challenges, we must not forget the sacrifices and achievements that shaped the story of building our dear homeland.

A homeland that only accepts being in the ranks of developed countries and a people represented in all its sects and components that only accepts to live free and independent," Ambassador Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah said. She pointed out that Kuwait has made great achievements in all domains since independence which "earned it the respect and appreciation of the entire world and created an international status for it that is reflected in the distinguished relations it has with all countries of the world".

"The large and distinguished attend-

ance at today's ceremony shows the growing relations between Kuwait and the United States," he said. In Brasilia, the Embassy of the State of Kuwait to Brazil held a reception Wednesday on the occasion of Kuwait's celebrations of the 63rd National Day and the 33rd anniversary of Liberation Day. The ceremony was attended by a number of Brazilian government officials, members of the Senate and Representatives, representatives of Arab and foreign diplomatic missions in Brazil, and a number of media figures and dignitaries.

Congratulations

Speaking to the audience, the Ambassador Talal Rashid Al-Mansour extended congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on the dear occasions. In Abu Dhabi, the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the United Arab Emirates held a function to mark the national days. The event was attended by a number of high-level UAE officials, led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, and Arab and foreign diplomats. In a statement to KUNA during the ceremony, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UAE, Jamal AlGhunaim, extended his highest congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on these occasions. Al-Ghunaim praised the close and historical relations between the two brotherly countries, Kuwait and the UAE, at all political, economic and social levels, describing them as a distinguished model and expressing wishes for progress and prosperity for the two countries.

The celebration was also attended by official figures, including Minister of State Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar, Ali Al Hashemi, Advisor for Religious and Judicial Affairs at the UAE Ministry of Presidential Affairs, Sheikh Rashid bin Nasser Al Nuaimi, representatives of the Federal Council, a number of sheikhs and heads of diplomatic missions in the United Arab Emirates.

Greetings sent to Brunei on national day

His Highness Amir congratulates Japan's Emperor on his birthday

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Emperor of Japan Naruhito on his birthday on Friday, wishing him a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for his country.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Emperor of Japan Naruhito on his birthday.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad on Friday sent a cable of congratulations to King of Brunei Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah on his country's national day, wishing him a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for his country.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad sent a cable of congratulations to King Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah on his country's national day.

Al-Babtain cultural foundation holds forum

World leaders 'urged' to do everything in their power to spread justice, peace

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

CAIRO, Feb 26: The activities of the 3rd World Forum for the Culture of Peace, which was held by the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation under the title "Just Peace for Development" and under the patronage of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt Abdul Fattah el-Sisi, was held from February 20 to 22.

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation called on world leaders everywhere to do everything in their power to spread justice and peace, which is a right for all humanity, and a right that encompasses all human rights.

He extended his sincere appreciation and gratitude to President el-Sisi for his generous sponsorship of the forum, as well as to the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and the Supreme Council of Culture for their fruitful cooperation, which was one of the most important reasons behind the success of the forum.

Recommended

Meanwhile, the Board of Trustees of the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation, during its 45th meeting recently, decided to recommend Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Mohammed Abdulaziz Al-Babtain as the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Furthermore, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain said the foundation will continue to follow in the path that his late father began in caring for poetry and poets, and serving the Arabic language, supporting translation and training centers and manuscript verification, consolidating the principles of dialogue among civilizations and spreading the culture of just peace in a way that serves countries and people, as well as pledging to harness his time and effort and everything he learned from his father to preserve his great legacy.

He stressed that his father had devoted his money, time, and tireless effort to

serving humanity, which is one of his great messages that they learned from childhood.

Al-Babtain said, "We will continue to implement his message and realize his dream, the details of which carry all the words of culture, goodness and peace", praying to the Almighty to grant him success in carrying out this great task that falls upon him.

Awareness

Meanwhile, the forum affirmed that the Palestinian issue is considered the central issue in the awareness of the Arab nation and its support is a national duty. It recommended pushing for the unification of the Palestinian house and liberating the Palestinian discourse from regional influences that harm the issue, as well as strengthening the condemnation of the genocide against the Palestinian Arab people that has been taking place in recent months in the Gaza Strip in front of the world.

It highlighted the need for real political development, contemporary will, and harnessing modern technology for the service of the general public, stressing that the spearhead of a just peace is qualitative and enlightened education that must keep pace with the times. Hence, paying attention to generations and providing qualitative education with an open approach is tantamount to "an absolute obligation".

The forum stressed that the economy is a leader for development and the role of the private sector in advancing it is vital, due to which it is necessary to pay attention to economic legislation that stimulates this diversity and control it by enhancing the culture of saving and investment and harnessing it to serve the general public.

It also stressed the pivotal role of culture in light of the prevailing atmosphere today, which is clouded by misleading public opinion and throwing it into conflicts that fragment society and incite intolerance and hatred, the offspring of which is extremism and violence. Therefore, an open and tolerant culture that accepts others and believes in dialogue must be encouraged.




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Envoys pose for a photo with HE Miguel Jose Moro Aguilar.

Spanish Embassy organizes evening of music

Eduardo Fernández brings to Kuwait ... Spanish blend of piano repertoire

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: The Spanish Embassy in Kuwait, in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters recently orchestrated a momentous evening of music as part of the Al-Qurain festival at the Abdelhusain Abdel Redha Theater in Salmiya with the renowned Spanish piano soloist Eduardo Fernández.

Fernández who has obtained great success in important concert halls such as the Berlin Philharmonie, St. Petersburg Philharmonia, Shanghai Oriental Art Center, Beijing National Centre for the Performing Arts and Philharmonie Luxembourg, performs regularly in prestigious Spanish venues such as the Bilbao Euskalduna, Sevilla Teatro de la Maestranza as well as Teatro Monumental, Teatro Real and Auditorio Nacional in Madrid.

He was introduced to the audience, by none other than the Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait HE Miguel Jose Moro Aguilar.

The Spanish envoy said, Fernández who has played all over the world, but never in the Middle East, believes he is privileged to come here and play in front of the Kuwait audience a unique blend of captivating Spanish piano repertoire from the 19th and 20th centuries.

On stage Fernández not only mesmerized the audience but also fostered a profound interaction in this culturally rich setting. Through his music, Fernandez beautifully bridged the worlds of Arab heritage and Latin America, connecting the diverse civilizations that have flourished throughout history, particularly highlighting the shared history with Andalusian Arabs.

It was a moment of true cultural resonance, where writers and musicians alike found inspiration in the intricate tapestry of Spain's past, reflecting the crossroads between different worlds.

The event was attended by several envoys of various countries accredited to Kuwait and dignitaries. Awarded the Spanish National Radio Culture Prize (Premio Ojo Crítico), Eduardo Fernández is one of the finest pianists of his generation, distinguishable in particular by the depth, maturity and singularity of his interpretations.

Highly praised as a concert soloist, Fernández has worked with the Spanish National



Fernández on piano.

Orchestra, RTVE Orchestra (Spanish Radio and Television), Madrid Symphony Orchestra, City of Granada Orchestra as well as the ORCAM Orchestra (Comunidad de Madrid).

Fernández, who has a PhD in Humanities, Arts and Education, is one of the best pianists of his generation has collaborated with conductors including Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Víctor Pablo Pérez, François López-Ferrer, José Ramón Encinar, José Miguel Pérez-Sierra and Antoni Ros Marbà. His love of chamber music has led to partnerships with musicians such as the Athenäum Quartet, Lina Tur Bonet, Robert Silla, Alvaro Octavio, Eduardo Raimundo and Yuval Goltubovich. Appearances at festivals include Granada, SMR Cuenca, Musika-Música and Piano aux Jacobins.

His recordings have met with critical acclaim by the most prestigious magazines. He has recorded 'Iberia', 'Brahms Op. 117, 118 & 119', 'Chopin/Schumann', 'Paús: Works for Piano' and 'Scriabin: The complete Preludes', for record labels such as Warner, Naxos or Centaur. Since 2020 he records for BIS Records, having already released 'Zimmermann: Complete Works for piano', album nominated to the ICMA Awards. His next recording project will cover all the Scriabin Etudes. After his successful recording of Iberia, Eduardo Fernández has been hailed by Fanfare Magazine as "Alicia de Larrocha's successor".

We are

Continued from Page 1

However, their governments worked to achieve renaissance, and their leaders were aware of every ins and outs. Through a Board of Grievances, they treated people with justice, as is the practice in most countries of the world.

This office needs a team of honorable people who are known only to His Highness the Prime Minister and take the grievances to him without any personal considerations.

If one of its members disagrees with anyone who is thrown into prison, it is not a security apparatus. Rather, it is supposed to work on studying everything it comes across with transparency.

The first goal of any country is to enhance economic mobility through social stability, as is the case in the Emirates, which opened its doors to all people.

For instance, Dubai Airport alone was ranked as the busiest airport in the world last year. It achieved a record passenger movement of about 87 million. The share of the national product from tourism in the UAE amounted to USD 40 billion. On the other hand, this share of the Saudi national product amounted to about USD 87 billion, which was achieved because of openness and field follow-up by the leaders of those two countries.

Kuwait has all the qualifications that allow it to compete in this field, provided it works to exploit its wealth in modern infrastructure and tourism projects either on the islands or in the entire country, implement long-awaited projects, and ensure the provision of services similar to other countries, instead of investing in global financial markets that yields only crumbs. It must also get rid of the authority of extremists who are only interested in investigating intentions. All of these require a firm decision and determination to implement.

'Appreciate the

Continued from Page 1

Education, Higher Education and the General Fire Force, Kuwait Municipality, and other relevant bodies, in addition to the extensive media coverage.

His Highness called on citizens to appreciate the blessing of liberation that Allah almighty bestowed on Kuwait, remembering with pride the honorable martyrs who gave their lives in defending this precious land.

His Highness also sent a greeting of appreciation and reverence to his brothers the leaders of Gulf and Arab countries, for sharing the joy of Kuwait's national holidays, representing the depth of the bonds of relations between them and Kuwait.

His Highness expressed gratitude for their heartfelt sentiments, and prayed to Allah Almighty to preserve the dear homeland and perpetuate its security, safety and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has received cables of congratulations from senior sheikhs and local officials on the 63rd anniversary of the National Day and the 33rd Anniversary of the Liberation Day.

MEW to complete appointment measures of chosen candidates

Former minister blamed for lack of job grades

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is currently preparing the list of employees nominated by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) before the issuance of the decision to suspend the appointment, transfer, promotion and secondment of employees in the public sector in order to complete the appointment procedures, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed that the ministry is facing a problem in the appointment of 700 employees previously nominated by the CSC due to the lack of job grades; affirming Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr Salem Al-Hajraf is working hard to address the issue.

Sources clarified the candidates who started working without receiving an appointment letter already have job grades and their appointment letters will be issued soon for them to receive their salaries, reiterating that "the problem lies in the candidates who do not have job grades. If the problem is not solved, these candidates have to wait until the budget for fiscal 2024/2025 is approved at the beginning of April."

Sources added the ministry asked its finance counterpart to allocate exceptional job grades in November last year but its request was rejected. They blamed the former minister for the lack of job grades.

In another development, Al-Hajraf joined the Ministry of Electricity and Water employees in their celebration of the national holidays. The Public Relations and Media Department in the ministry organized the event in the lobby of the main office recently.

Al-Hajraf expressed his happiness over celebrating the national holidays with the employees, while conveying his greetings for the political leadership and all employees in the ministry on this occasion.

He said the anniversary of the liberation is like an annual wedding in Kuwait, in which all the people of this generous country participate. He implored Allah to continue blessing this country with security and safety.

On the other hand, sources revealed the ministry's revenues reached KD324.340 million dinars from April 1 to Dec 31, 2023 (eight months); clarifying that the revenues in the month of December alone reached KD28.730 million. Sources said these revenues are fees for electricity and water services provided to customers, pointing out that the fees for such services are collected through the customer affairs offices in all governorates, as well as the electronic services provided by the Customer Affairs Sector to ease the completion of transactions for both the citizens and expatriates.

Sources added the sector provides 17 services; 10 of which are related to invoices like online payment, requesting payment of a facility or building bill, installments for restructured debts and others; in addition to seven other services such as the meter services, including



Kuwait's pavilion in Muscat International Book Fair celebrates national days.

KUNA photo

Kuwait's pavilions at Doha Expo and Muscat Int'l Book Fair mark nat'l days

DOHA, Feb 26, (KUNA): Kuwait pavilion at Doha Expo 2023 held a function to mark the 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day of Kuwait on Sunday.

The celebration, which gathered a number of Qatari government officials, Kuwaiti diplomats and environment activists, aims to enhance public awareness about the importance of environment protection, Director General of Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) Samira Al-Kandari said.

At the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the State of Kuwait is keen on implementing the development vision "New Kuwait 2035" which gives precedence to the sustainable development and active participation in relevant events, she said in a speech to function.

The participation in Doha Expo provides a great opportunity to share the experiences of other countries in the combat against desertification and the latest technologies in promoting sustainable agricultural development, Al-Kandari pointed out.

On the Kuwaiti pavilion, she said it showcases the Kuwaiti horticultural experiments and the projects to combat against desertification.

The Greenhands Environmental Team and Al-Sadu Weaving Cooperative Society - a non-profit organization, as well as folklore teams are taking part in the pavilion to shed light on Kuwait's efforts to protect environment and conserve national heritage, she went on.

Since opening, the pavilion has seen 25 workshops and lectures organized in collaboration with the Kuwaiti government and non-government organizations.

The pavilion attaches great importance to public awareness about environmental issues with a view to delivering practical, scientific facts to the public and the new generation, Al-Kandari added.

Praising the fraternity between Kuwait and Qatar, she thanked the Qatari leaders and people for facilitating the organization of the Kuwaiti pavilion.

On his part, Bader Al-Dafa, the Commissioner General of Doha Expo 2023, praised Kuwait's experience in promoting sustainable development and green farming across the developing countries.

He noted that Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) plays an important role in funding agricultural projects and employing innovative technological solutions in farming in several countries.

The participants in the Expo, from the public or private sectors, have a chance to build partnerships in agricultural and horticultural areas, he added.

Doha Expo 2023, the first international horticultural exhibition in Qatar, the Middle East and North Africa, opened on last October 2 and will conclude on March 28, 2024.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti pavilion participating in the 28th Muscat International Book Fair is decorated with Kuwaiti flags to celebrate its national days in conjunction with the exhibition period. The owners of Kuwaiti publishing houses and writers who are participating in the exhibition were keen to celebrate Kuwait's national days through this beautiful gesture that carries the highest meanings of love, loyalty and belonging to the homeland, even if they were far from the country.

registering a meter under the name of a new customer, canceling meter registration to leave the facility, and paying and refunding meter deposits among others.

Sources affirmed the ministry is working towards the digital trans-

formation of all its services in line with the directives of the Council of Ministers, especially the Customer Affairs Sector, to make it easier for customers, particularly those residing in new and remote areas on one hand, and the collection of pay-

ments for electricity and water bills on time on the other hand. Sources added the sector is keen on achieving the largest percentage of revenues estimated in the budget for the current fiscal year within the next four months.

912 granted Amiri Pardon

MEW undersecretary amends circular on Ramadan timings

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: The Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Maha Al-Asousi issued an administrative circular for amending administrative circular No. 5/2024 regarding setting the official work hours during the month of Ramadan for the Hijri year 1445.

The circular stipulates that administrative circular No. 5/2024 should be withdrawn from the date of its issuance and should be considered as if it did not exist.

It clarified that the ministry's official working hours during the month of Ramadan will be from Sunday to Thursday, with flexible working hours. Employees are allowed to report for work anytime between 8:30 am to 10:30 am but they can leave only after completing four and a half hours of work. This is without prejudice to the 15-minute grace period at the beginning or end of the shift, in addition to the 15-minute grace period scheduled for female employees at the end of the shift. All exemptions granted to employees will be suspended during the month of Ramadan.

The circular indicated that shift workers who hold technical or administrative positions will continue as it is, and all workers are considered to be in a state of emergency and on call around the clock.

Amiri Pardon: A total of 912 inmates were granted pardon in accordance with the directive of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement, the Public Relations and Security Media General Department at the Ministry of Interior disclosed that the beneficiaries of Amiri Decree No. 25/2024 include 214 inmates eligible for immediate release; while the rest are eligible for commuted sentences and exemption from the payment of fines and bail amounts, in addition to judicial deportation. The Amiri Pardon is part of the celebration of the 63rd National Day.

According to the department, the Correctional Institutions and Sentence Implementation Sector implemented the decree on Thursday; indicating this is the fruit of the concerted efforts of the Amiri Diwan, Public Prosecution and Interior Ministry.



Formal Invitation to Attend The Investment Dar Company's Creditors' Meeting Regarding Preventive Settlement Proposal No. 6/2023

The Investment Dar Company cordially invites its esteemed creditors to a meeting dedicated to the discussion of the proposed preventive settlement, which has been submitted to the Bankruptcy Department. This pivotal meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 10:00 AM. It will take place in the designated location by the Bankruptcy Department in Kuwait, at the New Hawally Courts Complex, 9th Floor, Conference Room Number (A9076).

The agenda includes the presentation of the final preventive settlement plan developed by Investment Dar, upon which the creditors will have the opportunity to cast their vote for acceptance or rejection.

We kindly request that creditors ensure to bring a letter from the authorized signatory of their respective entities. This letter should enumerate the names of the delegates appointed to attend the meeting.

To facilitate the organization of the event, we ask that this letter be forwarded to the Investment Dar Company via email at hussam@inv-dar.com no later than two days prior to the meeting date. Additionally, please bring the original letter with you on the day of the meeting.

All creditors are finally requested to visit the Bankruptcy Department to receive the final preventive settlement proposal that is to be presented during the meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Board of Directors
Investment Dar Company

World News Roundup

Europe

Sunak criticizes lawmaker's attack on Khan: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Monday that a Conservative lawmaker was wrong to say the mayor of London is controlled by Islamists, and also denied that the governing party tolerates anti-Muslim prejudice.

Sunak is under pressure to condemn Islamophobia after the comments by Lee Anderson, who was suspended from the Conservative Party group in Parliament on Saturday for comments about Mayor **Sadiq Khan**, amid growing tensions within British politics.

Anderson, a pugnacious populist, claimed Islamists had "got control" of Khan and the city of London. Khan is Muslim, and a member of the opposition Labour Party.

"These comments weren't acceptable, they were wrong," Sunak told BBC radio on Monday. "Words matter, especially in the current environment where tensions are running high and I think it's incumbent on all of us to choose them carefully."

Asked whether his party has an Islamophobia problem, Sunak said: "No, of course it doesn't." (AP)



Khan

Denmark closes probe into Nord Stream blasts: Denmark on Monday joined Sweden in closing its investigation into the 2022 explosions that damaged the Nord Stream gas pipelines, with authorities saying they concluded there was deliberate sabotage but "not the sufficient grounds" to pursue a criminal case.

Danish authorities said the probe "has been both complex and comprehensive." Copenhagen police, which carried out the investigation jointly with the Danish security service, said they were not able to provide further comments.

The underwater detonations on the Nord Stream gas pipelines, which were built to carry Russian natural gas to Germany, occurred in international waters but within Swedish and Danish economic zones. Sweden earlier said that a state actor was the most likely culprit. (AP)

Russia seeks to imprison Orlov for nearly 3 yrs: The Russian authorities on Monday sought a prison sentence of nearly three years for a veteran human rights advocate who spoke out against the war in Ukraine.

The prosecution demanded that Oleg Orlov, 70, be convicted of "repeatedly discrediting" the Russian army and sentenced to two years and 11 months in prison, in a retrial after he was earlier ordered to pay a fine. In a move that underscored how little tolerance President Vladimir Putin's government has for criticism of its invasion of Ukraine, the prosecution appealed the fine, seeking a harsher punishment.

The charges against Orlov, co-chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights group Memorial, came after he posted on Facebook an article he wrote denouncing the invasion of Ukraine. He has rejected the case against him as politically motivated. (AP)

Ukrainian troops pull back again: Ukrainian troops have pulled out of a village in the east of the country, an army spokesman said Monday, as Russian forces make their advances in manpower and ammunition tell on the battlefield at the start of the war's third year.

The latest setback for Kyiv's soldiers was in the village of Lastochkyne, where they fell back to nearby villages in an attempt to hold the line there, Dmytro Lykhovii, a spokesman for one of the Ukrainian troop groupings, said on national television.

Lastochkyne lies to the west of Adivivka, a suburb of Donetsk city that the Kremlin's forces captured on Feb. 18 after a four-month battle. The outnumbered defenders were overwhelmed by Moscow's military might, and Ukraine chose to pull out its troops and mount a defense elsewhere. (AP)

'Delays in promised aid costing lives': Half of all Western military support promised to Ukraine fails to arrive on time, complicating the task of military planners and ultimately costing the lives of soldiers in Russia's war, Ukraine's defense minister said Sunday.

Rustan Umerov, speaking at the "Ukraine. Year 2024" forum in Kyiv, said each delayed aid shipment means Ukrainian troop losses and underscored Russia's superior military might.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later told attendees at the event that 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in action since Russia launched its full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022. It was the first time that Kyiv has confirmed the number of its losses. (AP)

Navalny's body handed over to his mother: The body of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been handed over to his mother, a top aide to Navalny said Saturday on his social media account.

Ivan Zhdanov, the director of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, made the announcement on his Telegram account and thanked "everyone" who had called on Russian authorities to return Navalny's body to his mother.

Earlier on Saturday, Yulia Navalnaya, Navalny's widow, accused President Vladimir Putin of mocking Christianity by trying to force his mother to agree to a secret funeral after his death in an Arctic penal colony. (AP)

Election reinforces authoritarian leader's rule: Belarusian authorities on Monday announced preliminary results from parliamentary and local elections in which only candidates loyal to the country's authoritarian leader were allowed to compete and the opposition called for a boycott.

The vote further cemented the 30-year rule of President Alexander Lukashenko, who declared his intention to seek another five-year term in a presidential election next year.

Most candidates belonged to the four officially registered parties: Belaya Rus, the Communist Party, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Party of Labor and Justice, all of which support Lukashenko's policies. The Central Election Commission said 73% of the country's 6.9 million eligible voters cast ballots, filling all 110 seats in the national parliament, 51 of which went to Belaya Rus, and 12,514 seats in local councils. (AP)

Corruption casts shadow over Portugal poll: The official two-week campaign period before Portugal's early general election began on Sunday, with the country's two moderate mainstream parties once again expected to collect the most votes but with the expected rise of a populist party potentially adding momentum to Europe's drift to the right.

The center-left Socialist Party and center-right Social Democratic Party have alternated in power for decades. But they are unsure of how much support they might need from smaller rival parties for the parliamentary votes needed to form a government after the March 10 vote.

Corruption scandals have cast a shadow over the ballot. (AP)

Kurz convicted of false statements: Former Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz was convicted Friday of making false statements to a parliamentary inquiry into alleged corruption in his first government. He was given an eight-month suspended sentence.

The verdict at the Vienna criminal court followed a four-month trial. The case marked the first time in more than 30 years that a former Austrian chancellor had stood trial.

The case centered on Kurz's testimony to an inquiry that focused on the coalition he led from 2017, when his conservative Austrian People's Party formed a coalition with the far-right Freedom Party, until its collapse in 2019. (AP)



US Republican presidential candidate and former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley speaks at a campaign event on Feb 25, in Troy, Mich. Haley says it's not 'the end of our story' despite Donald Trump's easy primary victory in South Carolina. (AP)

Politics

US president, Utah's gov call for less bitterness

Haley stays in race despite Trump SC win

TROY, Michigan, Feb 26, (AP): US Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley says it's not "the end of our story" despite Donald Trump's easy primary victory in South Carolina, her home state where the onetime governor had long suggested her competitiveness with the former president would show.

Defying calls from South Carolina Republicans to exit the race, Haley traveled Sunday to Michigan, which holds its primary on Tuesday. In the less than 24 hours following her Saturday night loss to Trump, Haley's campaign said that she had raised \$1 million "from grassroots supporters alone," a bump they argued "demonstrates Haley's staying power and her appeal to broad swaths of the American public."

Powerful

But with Sunday also came the end of support for Haley's campaign from Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of the powerful Koch network.

In a memo first reported by Politico and obtained by The Associated Press, AFP Action senior advisor Emily Seidel wrote that, while the group "stands firm behind our endorsement" of Haley, it would "focus our resources where we can make the difference," redirecting spending toward US Senate and House campaigns and away from Haley's presidential bid.

"Given the challenges in the primary states ahead, we don't believe any outside group can make a material difference to widen her path to victory," Seidel wrote.

AFP Action had endorsed Haley's campaign in November, promising to commit its nationwide coalition of activists - and virtually unlimited funds - to helping her defeat Trump, with door knockers fanning out across early-voting states and sending out dozens of mailers on her behalf.

With his win Saturday in the first-in-the-South contest, Trump has now swept every primary or caucus on the GOP early-season calendar that awards delegates. His performances have left little maneuvering room for Haley, his former UN ambassador.

"I have never seen the Republican

Biden summons congressional leaders to WH to talk Ukraine and govt funding

WASHINGTON, Feb 26, (AP): US President Joe Biden will convene the top four congressional leaders at the White House on Tuesday to press lawmakers on passing an emergency aid package for Ukraine and Israel, as well as averting a looming government shutdown next month, according to a White House official.

The top four leaders include House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

During the meeting, the president will discuss the "urgency" of passing the aid package, which has bipartisan support, as well as legislation to keep the federal government operating through the end of September, said the White House official, who was granted anonymity to discuss a meeting not yet

publicly confirmed. The Republican-led House is under pressure to pass the \$95 billion national security package that bolsters aid for Ukraine, Israel as well as the Indo-Pacific. That legislation cleared the Senate on a 70-29 vote earlier this month, but Johnson has been resistant to putting up the aid bill for a vote in the House.

"This is one of those instances where one person can bend the course of history. Speaker Johnson, if he put this bill on the floor, would produce a strong, bipartisan majority vote in favor of the aid to Ukraine," Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, said Sunday on ABC's "This Week." Sullivan stressed that Ukrainians need weapons and ammunition to fend off Russian forces, and that in his personal conversations with the speaker, he "has indicated that he would like to get the funding for Ukraine."

Party so unified as it is right now," Trump said in a victory night celebration in Columbia.

Haley insists she is sticking around even with the growing pressure to abandon her candidacy and let Trump focus entirely on Democratic President Joe Biden, in a 2020 rematch.

Also:

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Utah Gov Spencer Cox disagree on many issues but they were united Saturday in calling for less bitterness in politics and more bipartisanship.

"Politics has gotten too personally bitter," said Biden, who has practiced politics since he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1972. "It's just not like it was." The Democratic president commented while delivering a toast to the nation's governors and their spouses at a black-

tie White House dinner in their honor. Biden said what makes him "feel good" about hosting the governors is "we have a tradition of doing things together. We fight like hell, we make sure that we get our points across. At the end of the day, we know who we work for. The objective is to get things done."

Cox, a Republican and chairman of the National Governors Association, preceded Biden to the lectern beneath an imposing portrait of Abraham Lincoln above the fireplace in the State Dining Room.

The Utah governor said the association "harkens back to another time, another era, when we did work together across partisan lines, when there was no political danger in appearing with someone from the other side of the aisle and we have to keep this, we have to maintain this, we cannot lose this," he said.

his own sense of justice while circumventing the law."

The commission could have issued a reprimand, censure or suspension without pay, but its decision said it had "ample grounds" for immediately removing Adrian from the bench in western Illinois' Adams County.

In October 2021, Adrian had found then 18-year-old Drew Clinton of Taylor, Michigan, guilty of sexual assaulting a 16-year-old girl during a May 2021 graduation party. (AP)

Migrants released at bus stop: Hundreds of migrants were dropped off Friday at a San Diego bus stop instead of at a reception center that had been serving as a staging area because it ran out of local funding sooner than expected, showing how even the largest city on the country's southern border is struggling to cope with the unprecedented influx of people.

Migrants who previously had a safe place to charge phones, use the bathroom, eat a meal and arrange to head elsewhere in the U.S. were now left on the street as migrant aid groups scrambled to help out as best they could with makeshift arrangements.

Border Patrol buses carrying migrants from Senegal, China, Ecuador, Rwanda and many other countries arrived outside a transit center. Migrant aid groups said they would be bused from there to a parking lot where they could charge their phones and get a ride to the airport. (AP)



This Feb 26, 2023 file photo shows migrants wrapped in blankets captured on their boat capsized in the early morning at a short distance from the shore in Steccato di Cutro, in the Italian southern tip, killing at least 94 people. Survivors and family members of the victims are converging in the area for a commemoration on Feb 26, on the first anniversary of the disaster. (AP)



Adrian



Riley

America

Town shaken by killing: The killing of a nursing student in Georgia who was out running has shaken the university town of Athens.

Laken Hope Riley, 22, who was studying nursing at Augusta University, went out for a run Thursday morning. After a friend told police she had not returned, officers immediately began a search and found her body on the University of Georgia campus in a forested area near Lake Herrick that includes trails popular with runners and walkers.

Emergency medical responders determined she died before officers found her. University of Georgia Police Chief Jeff Clark said the cause of death was blunt force trauma, but he did not elaborate.

Jose Ibarra, 26, was taken into custody for the slaying of Riley on Friday, police said. (AP)

Kansas man pleads guilty: A Kansas man has pleaded guilty to smashing into a Kansas City, Missouri, patrol car last year and killing an officer, his K-9 partner and a pedestrian.

Jerron Lightfoot of Tonganoxie, Kansas, pleaded guilty Friday to two counts of involuntary manslaughter and admitted speeding through a red light before the crash, according to the Kansas City Star. Officer James Muhlbauer, 42, Jesse Eckes, 52, and Champ the dog were all killed.

Lightfoot told the judge that he got lost that night last February while he was driving back toward Kansas.

Prosecutors have said Lightfoot was traveling at least 85 mph just before the collision. As part of a plea agreement, prosecutors agreed to recommend no more than 10 years in prison, though Assistant Prosecutor Lauren Whiston said she anticipated that Lightfoot's lawyers would ask for a much more lenient sentence when the 20-year-old returns to court in April. (AP)

Judge removed from bench: An Illinois judge who sparked outrage by reversing a man's rape conviction involv-

ing a 16-year-old girl has been removed from the bench after it held a three-day hearing in Chicago in November on a complaint filed against Adrian.

Its decision says Adrian "engaged in multiple instances of misconduct" and "abused his position of power to indulge



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, (left), Andrew Haines, Chief Executive and Board member of Network Rail and Anna Weeks, (right), Principal Programme Sponsor of Network Rail, look at a map on the bonnet of a car as they visit a location on the site of the future Haxby railway station near York, England on Feb 26. Sunak and Transport Secretary Mark Harper have confirmed that Yorkshire and the Humber will receive a £947 million funding boost from April 2025 through the Local Transport Fund to improve transport connections. (AP)

Lat/Am

Leaders meet Henry

Bolsonaro supporters stage big rally in Brazil

SAO PAULO, Feb 26, (AP): Supporters of former Brazil president **Jair Bolsonaro** staged a huge rally jamming a main avenue in Brazil's biggest city Sunday to defend him against legal challenges that could put him in jail.

The far-right leader said in a speech that he seeks "pacification to erase the past," taking a more conciliatory tone than when he was in office.

Bolsonaro is seeking to show his base is resilient as he is being investigated by federal police over his alleged role in the Jan. 8, 2023, attacks on government buildings by his supporters over his election loss. He wants the dozens of people still in jail for those incidents to get pardons.

Bolsonaro is also accused of illegally receiving jewels from Saudi Arabia during his presidency.

His supporters filled blocks of the city's Paulista Avenue. Independent observers from a research group at the University of Sao Paulo estimated 185,000 people joined in. Brazil's military police put the crowd size even bigger.

Many of the participants complained Bolsonaro is being persecuted by Brazil's Supreme Court and claimed President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva unfairly won his narrow victory in the 2022 election.

Bolsonaro denied that he and his supporters attempted a coup when rioters assaulted government buildings a year ago.

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Caribbean leaders meet with Haiti PM: Caribbean leaders met with embattled Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry on Sunday to talk about his country's unrelenting gang violence, with one top official noting that his continued presence as head of government remains a main stumbling block to progress.

Bahamian Foreign Minister Fred Mitchell told The Associated Press that opposition leaders and other groups in Haiti oppose Henry as prime minister, even as the regional trade bloc known as Caricom keeps trying to help change the country's situation.

Mitchell said the international community also questions how the country would function if Haiti's prime minister resigns or is removed, adding that "there needs to be a political solution."

In brief comments to the AP, Henry said that calls for his removal are a power grab, and that nothing will happen "unless we work together."

□ □ □

Leak of phone numbers denounced: The eldest son of Mexico's president and the governing party's presidential candidate said Saturday that their telephone numbers were published on social media and that they have received threats and insults. Both denounced the action.

The incident came a day after President Andrés Manuel López Obrador disclosed the phone number of a reporter for The New York Times, which published a story about a U.S. probe into claims that López took money from drug traffickers. López Obrador denied the allegations.

The first to report the release of his phone number was the president's oldest son, José Ramón López Beltrán, who wrote on the X platform that he considered the action "a kind of vengeance" and said it puts his family in danger.

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10 killed in road crash in Mexico: At least 10 people died Saturday from a crash between a tractor-trailer and a pick-up truck carrying passengers in north-central Mexico, authorities said.

The accident occurred in the state of San Luis Potosí, northwest of Mexico City, according to the Secretariat for Security and Citizen Protection. Among the dead were five women, four minors and a man.

An undetermined number of injured people were taken to nearby clinics, the secretariat said.

The cause of the crash was under investigation.

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Jamaican mom charged with murder: A 27-year-old woman has been charged with murder for allegedly throwing her 5-month-old daughter from a roof late last year, Jamaican police said Sunday.

Authorities said in a statement that the woman was at home with some relatives and her partner in early December when she became angry that he didn't want to immediately talk about their relationship and stormed out of a room with the baby.

Police said she then went to the building's third floor and threw the girl, named Destiny, to the concrete below. The girl was taken to a hospital, where she died, police said.

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Panama judiciary orders Martinelli arrest: Panamanian authorities ordered the arrest of former president Ricardo Martinelli, who has been holed up in the Nicaraguan Embassy since receiving political asylum from that country earlier this month.

A judge approved a requested change of Martinelli's conditional release that had stood while he appealed his 10-year sentence for a money laundering conviction, the federal judiciary said. The Supreme Court denied Martinelli's final appeal earlier this month, upholding his sentence and presumably ending his attempt at a political comeback.

□ □ □

Ex-police chief resigns as OAS representative: Léon Charles, the former chief of Haiti's National Police who was recently accused in the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, announced that he was stepping down as permanent representative of Haiti to the Organization of American States.

The announcement comes just days after a final report from a judge investigating the July 2021 killing detailed the charges against dozens of suspects including Charles. He is accused of murder, attempted murder, possession and illegal carrying of weapons, conspiracy against the internal security of the state and criminal association.

□ □ □

Parents sue gov't: The parents of two teenagers who survived a fire that killed 20 people at a high school dormitory for Indigenous girls last year have sued the government, accusing authorities of negligence.

The lawsuit is seeking more than \$50,000 for each of the two unidentified 14-year-old girls who were rescued by authorities and residents who braved the fire last May at the Mahdia dormitory near the border with Brazil, according to documents that attorneys shared with reporters.



The Djamaa El-Djazair, or Algiers Great Mosque, is seen on Feb 21, 2024 in Algiers. Begun in 2012, the Great Mosque of Algiers boasts a giant 265 meter (290 yard) minaret and a capacity for 120,000 faithful. (AP)

Algeria inaugurates Africa's largest mosque after years of political delays

Algeria inaugurated a gigantic mosque on its Mediterranean coastline Sunday after years of political upheaval transformed the project from a symbol of state-sponsored strength and religiosity to one of delays and cost overruns.

Built by a Chinese construction firm throughout the 2010s, the Great Mosque of Algiers features the world's tallest minaret, measuring at 869 feet (265 meters). The third largest mosque in the world and largest outside Islam's holiest cities, its prayer room accommodates 120,000 people. Its modernist

design contains Arab and North African flourishes to honor Algerian tradition and culture as well as a helicopter landing pad and a library that can house up to 1 million books.

The inauguration would guide Muslims "toward goodness and moderation," said Ali Mohamed Salabi, the General Secretary of world union of Muslim Ulemas.

Propagating a moderate brand of Islam has been a key priority in Algeria since government forces subdued an Islamist-led rebellion throughout the

1990s when a bloody civil war swept the country.

Algerian President Abdelmajid Tebboune inaugurated the mosque, fulfilling his promise to open it with great pomp and circumstance. The event, however, was mainly ceremonial. The mosque has been open to international tourists and state visitors to Algeria for roughly five years. An earlier ceremony was delayed.

The timing allows the mosque to officially open to the public in time to host nightly prayers during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which begins next month. (AP)

Asia

Cambodia's ruling party wins Senate election

Teo named Tuvalu's new prime minister

MELBOURNE, Australia, Feb 26, (AP): Tuvalu's former Attorney General Feleti Teo was named prime minister of the tiny South Pacific nation Monday after elections a month ago ousted the last government leader.

Teo was the only candidate nominated by his 15 lawmaker colleagues and Governor General Tofiga Vaevalu Falani declared him elected without a vote, government secretary Tufoua Panapa said in a statement.

The swearing-in ceremony for Teo and his Cabinet will be held later this week.

It was not immediately clear how the new government will affect China's influence in the country of around 11,500 people halfway between Australia and Hawaii, though one expert said he does not expect any change in diplomatic recognition, at least in the short term.

The previous prime minister, Kausea Natano, and three of his eight ministers were not reelected in the Jan. 26 election.

Natano had wanted Tuvalu to remain one of only 12 countries that have official diplomatic ties with Taiwan, the self-governed democracy that China claims as its own territory.

Natano's former finance minister, Seve Paeniu, who was considered a leadership contender, had argued for Tuvalu's relationships with both Beijing and Taiwan to be reviewed.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning urged Tuvalu to switch diplomatic recognition to China.

"We call on a handful of countries that still keep the so-called relationship with the Taiwan region to stand on the right side of history and make the right decision that truly serves their long-term interest," she said.

Nauru, another Pacific island nation, cut ties with Taiwan and restored them with China last month.

Also: PHNOM PENH, Cambodia: The long-ruling Cambodian People's Party has

US, S. Korea fly planes in interception drills after North Korea's missile tests

SOUTH KOREA, Feb 26, (AP): South Korea and the United States flew advanced stealth fighters in a joint missile-interception drill Friday over the Korean Peninsula, South Korea's air force said, an apparent response to a spate of weapons tests this year by rival North Korea.

North Korea has conducted six rounds of missile tests so far this year, most of them reportedly involving cruise missiles that typically fly at a low altitude to overcome opponents' missile defenses. Analysts say that in the event of a conflict, North Korea aims to use cruise missiles to strike U.S. aircraft carriers as well as US military bases in Japan.

Also: JAKARTA, Indonesia: Indonesia and Australia held high-level talks in Jakarta on Friday as the neighboring countries seek to strengthen security ties by signing a defense cooperation agreement in the coming months.

Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, who is set to become Indonesia's next leader, said that he and Australian counterpart Richard

Marles discussed ways of maintaining and enhancing the good relationship between the two nations.

Subianto said that Indonesia and Australia hope to sign a "very significant" defense cooperation agreement within two or three months. No details about the agreement have been provided.

SHANGHAI: Two prominent Chinese bloggers in exile said that police were investigating their millions of followers on international social media platforms, in an escalation of Beijing's attempts to clamp down on critical speech even outside of the country's borders.

Former state broadcaster CCTV journalist Wang Zhi'an and artist-turned-dissident Li Ying, both Chinese citizens known for posting uncensored Chinese news, said in separate posts Sunday that police were interrogating people who followed them on social media, and urged followers to take precautions such as unfollowing their accounts, changing their usernames, avoiding Chinese-made phones and preparing to be questioned.

won an expected landslide victory in the election for the country's Senate, the National Election Committee has confirmed.

The committee on Monday began releasing results by constituency, after earlier announcing that a provisional count showed the Cambodian People's Party won 55 of the 58 seats that were contested on Sunday. The chamber has 62 members, with two senators appointed by King Norodom Sihamoni and two others by the National Assembly, which is the lower house of Parliament.

The vote paves the way for **Hun Sen**, who is the ruling party president, to become Senate President, allowing him to hold an official position in government after stepping down last year after serving for 38 years as prime minister. He was succeeded as prime minister by his son, **Hun Manet**.

The Senate's duties are largely ceremonial, focusing on ratifying measures passed by the National Assembly. But the Senate President serves as active head of state when the king is absent from the country.



In this Feb 9, 2024, photo provided by the Imperial Household Agency of Japan, Emperor Naruhito poses for a photo at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. He turned 64 on Feb 23. Naruhito made his first speech to the nation since a deadly earthquake hit the north-central region of Koto. The ceremonial monarch expressed grief for people affected by the Jan 1 earthquake, praying for their recovery and saying he hoped to visit the region to console them. (AP)



Geingob



Ramaphosa

Africa

Journo detained in Ethiopia: A French journalist has been detained in Ethiopia while visiting the country for a recent African Union summit, his employer said Monday.

Antoine Galindo, a Paris-based correspondent for the Africa Intelligence website, was detained in the capital Addis Ababa last Thursday by plainclothes security officers, the news outlet's publisher, Indigo Publications, said in a statement.

Galindo had arrived in Ethiopia earlier this month to report on an annual African Union summit and had a visa authorizing him to work as a journalist, the statement said.

Ethiopia's government has not publicly commented on Galindo's case. According to the statement by Indigo Publications, a judge on Saturday ordered the extension of Galindo's detention until March 1.

He has been accused of "conspiracy to create chaos in Ethiopia," the publisher said and called on the authorities to release him.

"Indigo Publications is outraged by his unjustified arrest, which is also a serious attack on press freedom," the statement said. (AP)

Geingob laid to rest: Namibian President **Hage Geingob** was laid to rest in the country's Heroes' Acre cemetery on Sunday following a state funeral attended by African leaders, the German president and Princess Anne, the sister of Britain's King Charles III.

Geingob died earlier this month at the age of 82 while receiving treatment for cancer. He was Namibia's third president since it gained independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990. Before that, the southern African country was a German colony.

Geingob's widow, Monica Geingob, delivered a message at a memorial service on Saturday paying tribute to her husband's rise from humble, rural roots to be his nation's leader and a widely respected figure on the African continent.

"You were born a peasant and died a president," Geingob said at the memorial service at a soccer stadium that was filled with mourners.

At his funeral on Sunday, Geingob's coffin was draped in the Namibian flag and was

carried in a glass case on the back of a military trailer. (AP)

Australian tourist missing: An Australian tourist has gone missing in Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls National Park, home to one of the world's natural wonders, the country's parks spokesman said.

Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority spokesman Tinashe Farawo told The Associated Press that the tourist went missing in the vast rainforest on Friday.

"We have a fully-fledged team that includes the police looking for the tourist. We have deployed sniffer dogs, drones and trackers on the ground," said Farawo. He said the tourist was 67 years old but did not share further details. (AP)

ANC launches poll manifesto: South Africa's President **Cyril Ramaphosa** on Saturday highlighted the achievements of his African National Congress, which has ruled the country for all of its 30 years of democracy, as it heads into a tight race in May's election.

Ramaphosa delivered the party's manifesto to thousands of ANC supporters at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban on Saturday. The rally came as South Africa faces increasing poverty, unemployment and crime and a crippling electricity crisis.

Party supporters dressed in yellow, green and black party regalia packed the stadium and sang struggle songs praising Ramaphosa and the ANC, while others took advantage of the event to sell food, refreshments and party merchandise to the thousands attending. (AP)



Followers of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro rally to express their support for him in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024. Bolsonaro and some of his former top aides are under investigation into allegations they plotted a coup to remove his successor, Luis Inacio Lula da Silva. (AP)

Qatar to increase LNG production

Qatar announced on Sunday new expansion of the LNG project "North Field West" which it will boost capacity to 142 million tons per year, nearly 85 percent rise from current production level, Qatar's energy minister and CEO of QatarEnergy (Eng). Saad Al-Kaabi stated at a news conference.

QatarEnergy evaluated the production potential of those areas and confirmed through technical tests of the appraisal wells, proving the ability to produce significant additional quantities of gas, said Al-Kaabi.

Al-Kaabi added recent studies have shown that the North Field contains huge additional gas quantities estimated at 240 trillion cubic feet, which raises the state of Qatar's gas reserves from 1,760 trillion to more than 2,000 trillion cubic feet.

Al-Kaabi said that QatarEnergy will immediately commence the basic engineering works necessary to ensure that the planned progress is achieved according to the approved schedule for this new project, which will be called the North Field West project. (KUNA)

Iraq reopens Beiji refinery after decade shutdown

Iraq's prime minister announced Friday the reopening of the Beiji refinery, the country's largest, which had been shut down for a decade after being damaged in the battle against the Islamic State extremist group.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a statement that the refinery's return to operation will enable Iraq to meet its oil derivative needs internally, saving billions of dollars annually, which he said "will be invested in other services and aspects of the economy."

"Iraq, with its production of more than 4 million barrels per day, is still importing oil derivatives," al-Sudani said. With the reopening of Beiji, he added, "We are close to securing the country's entire needs for derivatives, no later than the middle of the year."

The oil refinery in Beiji, 250 kilometers (155 miles) north of Baghdad, has not operated since the IS seized the town as part of its blitz across much of Iraq in the summer of 2014. The facility, which previously had production capacity of more than 300,000 barrels a day, was heavily damaged in the fighting that ensued as Iraqi forces battled to retake control of the strategic site.

Much of the refinery's equipment was looted. In August, al-Sudani announced the recovery of some 60 truckloads of supplies and equipment that had been stolen from the facility, which were found in Iraq's semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region. (AP)

Market Movements

26-02-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+135.03	39,233.71	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-72.83	12,531.76
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+1,091.06	28,931.92	UAE	- DFM	-2.65	4,223.25
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+469.55	63,395.66	PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	-21.72	6,891.49

Business

Bank sets remarkable growth record of 120%

NBK-Egypt reports EGP 4.021 bln net profit for FY 2023

CAIRO, Feb 26: National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (NBK-Egypt) has announced net profits of EGP 4.021 billion (Equivalent to KWD 41.4 million) for the financial year 2023, a significant increase from the EGP 1.826 billion (Equivalent to KWD 30.7 million) reported in 2022, showcasing an impressive annual growth rate of 120.21%.

Net Operating Income stood at EGP 8.66 billion, recording a substantial increase of 87.04% from the EGP 4.63 billion recorded in 2022. In the meantime, Net Interest Income jumped by 82.51%, reaching EGP 6.99 billion compared to EGP 3.83 billion in 2022.

On the other hand, Net Operating Income (excluding interests) increased to EGP 1.67 billion in 2023, compared to EGP 0.8 billion in 2022, up by 108.75%, while Cost to Net Operating Income dropped from 37.14% in 2022 to 28.02% in 2023.

Total assets reached EGP 130.61 billion in 2023, up by 24.22% compared to the year-end balance of EGP 105.14 billion in 2022. Furthermore, the net balance of loans and credit facilities expanded to EGP 76.06 billion in 2023, reflecting a growth rate of 38.42% compared to EGP 54.95 billion recorded at the end of 2022. Moreover, customer deposits continued to grow, rising by 25.42% to reach EGP 105.93 billion in 2023, compared to EGP 84.46 billion by the end of 2022.

The Return on Average Assets (ROAA) surged from 2% at the end of 2022 to 3.4% at the end of 2023, while the Return on Average Equity (ROAE) increased from 16.9% at the end of 2022 to 30.7% by the end of 2023.

Commenting on the financial results announced by NBK-Egypt, Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, and Chairman of NBK-Egypt, said: "In 2023, NBK-Egypt achieved its highest annual profits to date, accompanied by record growth rates. This success is credited to a strong operational performance, highlighting the resilience of our financial position and the flexibility of our business model, which allows for profit generation despite operational challenges."

"At NBK - Egypt, our objective is to enhance banking transactions and elevate their quality to meet growing market demand. We pursue this goal by focusing on the advancement of our digital services, leveraging the expertise and excellence of the Group in this domain. Additionally, we aim to expand our loan portfolio for SMEs, broaden the scope of our operations, and diversify them to encompass a wider geographical reach and cater to various customer segments," Al-Bahar added.

Al-Bahar emphasized that Egypt stands as one of the key strategic markets for fostering the Group's business growth, consistently regarded as the second domestic market. Being the largest Kuwaiti investment in Egypt, the bank holds a significant presence in the Egyptian banking sector, evident in its rapid growth trajectory and strong financial performance. The Bank's positive momentum underscores its commitment to expanding further and strengthening its market position.

Al-Bahar also highlighted that the Group perceives the Egyptian market



Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, and Chairman of NBK-Egypt



Mr. Yasser El-Tayeb, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt

as a strategic long-term investment. Given that the Egyptian economy ranks among the largest in the region, it holds substantial growth potential once it regains momentum.

She further emphasized that Egypt represents a significant growth market, and that the Bank is committed to its continuous expansion. The operations in Egypt continue to be among the most profitable within the Group, boasting the highest rates of return on shareholders' equity and assets.

"As geopolitical tensions in the region subside, economic recovery efforts will receive a significant boost. By restoring confidence in the economy and currency, substantial opportunities will emerge. We maintain an optimistic outlook on future prospects, buoyed by the momentum generated from the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt's reform and exceptional measures," Al-Bahar confirmed.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt, Mr. Yasser El-Tayeb, said: "The robust financial results and key indicators serve as the most compelling evidence, showcasing the Bank's capacity to maintain growth and attain favorable business outcomes throughout 2023, notwithstanding the unprecedented challenges faced both locally and globally. These challenges include the aftermath of the Russian-Ukrainian

conflict, the Gaza war, import crises, and fluctuations in the foreign exchange rate against the Egyptian pound".

El-Tayeb emphasized that NBK-Egypt maintains a well-balanced distribution of revenues across diverse business activities. This strategic approach is coupled with efficient operational rates and risk ratios, aligning with the dual objectives of achieving growth and ensuring business sustainability. Credit for this success is attributed to the Bank's prudent policies and a sound business model, demonstrating its capability to meet customer needs.

El-Tayeb further explained that the majority of NBK's income sources in Egypt are derived from credit operations in both the corporate sector and the rapidly expanding retail banking sector. The latter has notably increased in prominence, particularly in recent years, with a very diversified credit portfolio including a wide range of businesses across various sectors ranging from large scale corporations to SMEs. Meanwhile, the retail banking portfolio is also well diversified. This solid position reflects the Bank's strength and the diversity of its revenue streams. He also highlighted that going forward, NBK-Egypt strives to further strengthen its position in retail banking by offering innovative services and products to its retail customers, in addition to continuing the horizontal growth plan by inaugurating new branches covering key locations throughout the Egyptian market.

Al-Tayeb also emphasized the Bank's firm belief in the pivotal role of technological advancements and electronic channels within the banking sector. Recognizing their significance in bolstering competitive advantages among banks, we, at NBK-Egypt have prioritized a robust expansion of our electronic banking services, making substantial investments in this area. Our ultimate goal is to provide customers with an exceptional banking experience, offering a unique facility that enables them to conduct the majority of their banking transactions conveniently, anywhere, anytime. Furthermore, we aim to encourage customers to utilize electronic means and channels for payments, aligning with the broader policy objectives of the state and the Central Bank of Egypt in this regard.

Furthermore, El-Tayeb highlighted NBK-Egypt's commitment to align its strategies with the global movement towards sustainable finance and the transition to a green economy. The Bank aims to actively support environmentally friendly projects that promote sustainability and the utilization of renewable energy sources to mitigate climate change, since sustainable financing has emerged as a fundamental mechanism and instrument for facilitating and maintaining enduring financial stability.

In terms of the bank's social responsibility, Al-Tayeb highlighted that since NBK Group entered the Egyptian market in 2007, NBK-Egypt has remained dedicated to serving the Egyptian community. This commitment is demonstrated through the support, donations, and contributions extended to numerous charitable organizations. Additionally, the Bank actively collaborates with reputable civil society institutions, establishing partnerships aimed at becoming the operational arm of the Bank's development initiatives.

WTO warns of global economic impact of war and uncertainty

'US election could impact global trade'

Economy forecasted to grow 2.2% in '24

Resilient job market and spending improve US economy, say experts

ABU DHABI, Feb 26, (AP): The head of the World Trade Organization warned on Monday that war, uncertainty and instability are weighing down the global economy and urged the bloc to embrace reform as elections across nearly half the world's population could bring new challenges.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala sought to offer some praise for her organization as it held its biennial meeting in the United Arab Emirates, even as it faces pressure from the United States and other nations.

But she was blunt about the risks ahead, as higher prices for food, energy and other essentials sting people's pockets, "fueling political frustration."

"People everywhere are feeling anxious about the future and this will be felt at the ballot box this year," she said.

Critical

None are perhaps more critical for the WTO than the U.S. presidential election on Nov. 5.

Running again is former President Donald Trump, who threatened to withdraw the U.S. from the WTO and repeatedly levied tariffs - taxes on imported goods - on perceived friends and foes alike. A Trump win could again roll global trade.

Okonjo-Iweala did not mention Trump by name, but offered a warning about attacks against multilateralism.

"The multilateral trading system, which I term a global public good since it was created 75 years ago, continues to be misconstrued some quarters and undermined," she said.

But even if President Joe Biden is re-elected, the United States has deep reservations over the WTO. The U.S. under the past three administrations has blocked appointments to its appeals court, and it's no

NEW YORK, Feb 26, (AP): This year looks to be a much better one for the U.S. economy than business economists were forecasting just a few months ago, according to a survey released Monday.

The economy looks set to grow 2.2% this year after adjusting for inflation, according to the National Association for Business Economics. That's up from the 1.3% that economists from universities, businesses and investment firms predicted in the association's prior survey, which was conducted in November.

It's the latest signal of strength for an economy that's blasted through predictions of a recession. High interest rates meant to get inflation under control were supposed to drag down the economy, the thinking went. High rates put the brakes on the economy, such as by making mortgages and credit card bills more expensive, in hopes of starving inflation of its fuel.

But even with rates very high, the job market and U.S. household spending have remained remarkably resilient. That in turn has raised expectations going forward. Ellen Zentner, chief U.S. economist at Morgan Stanley and president of the NABE, said a wide range of factors are behind the 2024 upgrade, including spending by both the government and households.

longer operating. Washington says the WTO judges have overstepped their authority too often in ruling on cases.

The U.S. also has criticized China for still describing itself as a developing country as it did when it joined the WTO in 2001. Washington, Europe and others say that Beijing improperly hampers access to emerging industries and steals or pressures foreign companies to hand over technology. The U.S. also says China floods world markets with cheap steel, aluminum and other products.

The WTO's member-nations will discuss a deal to ban subsidies that contribute to overfishing, extending a pause on taxes on digital media

Economists also more than doubled their estimates for the number of jobs gained across the economy this year, though it would still likely be down from the previous one.

Offering another boost is the fact that inflation has been cooling since its peak two summers ago.

While prices are higher than customers would like, they're not increasing as quickly as they were before. Inflation has slowed enough that most of the surveyed forecasters expect interest rate cuts to begin by mid-June.

The Federal Reserve, which is in charge of setting short-term rates, has said it will likely cut them several times this year. That would relax the pressure on the economy, while goosing prices for stocks and other investments.

Of course, rate changes take a notoriously long time to snake through the economy and take full effect. That means past hikes, which began two years ago, could still ultimately tip the economy into a recession.

In its survey, NABE said 41% of respondents cited high rates as the most significant risk to the economy. That was more than double any other response, including fears of a possible credit crunch or a broadening of the wars in Ukraine or the Middle East.

Yemen's Houthi rebels in the Red Sea over the conflict.

"Shipping disruptions in vital waterways like the Red Sea and the Panama Canal are a new source of delays and inflationary pressure," she said.

WTO is also hampered by its voting format, with major decisions requiring consensus - meaning countries must actively vote in favor of proposals to take effect.

"If we thought the world looked tough in mid-2022, when we were slowly emerging from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine had shaken food and energy security, we are in an even-tougher place today," Okonjo-Iweala said.

Bank supports 'Diraya' campaign

KFH underlines customers rights, regulations of dealing with banks

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: Kuwait Finance House "KFH" continues efforts to support "Diraya" financial and banking awareness campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association for the second year in a row. The campaign aims to shed light on customers' rights, rules and regulations of dealing with banks, information safety and security against intrusion, combating fraud transactions in addition to other warnings and regulations. This campaign comes as part of the bank's obligation to keep the customers informed about their rights and duties regarding banking and financial transactions and their cyber security.

The campaign discusses finance types, banking cards, awareness of customers with special needs, tips on cyber security and protection of bank accounts. Also, it provides the mechanism to lodge complaints, protect customers' rights and identify the banking sector duties and its role in enhancing and developing the national economy.

KFH contribution in the campaign comprises the dispatch of various messages on different topics related to the main components of the campaign. These messages are sent to all types of customers to suite the culture and nature of each tier. Also, messages are sent on continuous basis to employees who are considered as the second main component in the awareness triangle (customers - employees - public) who are either potential or targeted customers, thus aiming to achieve the targets of the campaign. The main targets of the campaign comprise awareness, identification of and warning against any possible risks of failing to follow safety and security instructions upon using modern technology means. Regulations include refraining from extending any information about accounts and personal transactions to any unknown parties or replying to messages from unknown sources as this would be a violation to data privacy and banking protection regulations.

KFH is keen on spreading financial education, saving and investment knowledge and customer awareness of the bank's products and services. KFH appreciates the efforts extended by the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association in organizing the Be Aware "Diraya" campaign to spread



Diraya logo

awareness in society regarding banking and financial transactions and e-banking services. Technology has opened vast business opportunities. However, several risks and challenges were also detected considering the several attempts, most of which failed, to hack customers' accounts and cause system damage. Accordingly, this situation has called for a comprehensive awareness plan and enhancement of the cyber security systems, anti-money laundering systems and prevention of other legally incriminated and suspicious activities.

KFH messages highlight the clear and defined policies placed by the Central Bank of Kuwait to supervise the lending and finance operations at banks. These policies provide that the customer shall be provided with the loan details, value and No. of instalments, settlement dates, instalment/net salary ratio and default penalties. The customer is given at least 2 days grace period to review the contract fully before signing. Once signed, a draft copy of the contract shall be given to the customer including type of loan, payment term, instalment value and profit. There are two types of loans offered to customers, consumer loan and residential loan.

According to CBK instructions, the bank is required to provide financial advice and all information concerning the finance contract and explain all details related to the finance transaction including rate of return/finance amount. No. of instalments to be paid by customer and components of each instalment before signing the contract with the customer. Customers shall be given two days period to review the contract and read the terms and conditions carefully and be aware of their rights and obligations before signing the contract.

Total revenue USD 801 million for 2023; BoD recommends cash dividend of 6 cents per share

Egypt Kuwait Holding achieves \$179 million net profit

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: EKH closed FY2023 with revenues of USD 801 million, surpassing pre-Ukraine war historical averages. Profitability remained robust in FY23, with gross profit reaching USD 358 million and a 45% margin, well above historical averages. EBITDA recorded USD 359 million, implying an EBITDA margin of 45%. EKH closed the year with a net profit margin returning to normalised levels at 27%. Attributable net income for the year amounted to at USD 179 million.

On a quarterly basis, EKH reported revenues of 213 million, marking a 6% increase over the previous quarter. This growth was propelled by a 26% increase in NatEnergy's revenues, translated into USD, and an improvement in urea prices at AlexFert compared to the lows observed in 1H23. Profitability remained resilient, ending the quarter with a 43% gross profit margin. EBITDA for the quarter reached 95 million in 4Q23, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 45%, aligning with historical averages. EKH's net income for the quarter demonstrated resilience, standing at 50 million in 4Q23, with a net income margin of 23%, consistent with the 24% recorded in 3Q23. Attributable net income for 4Q23 totaled USD 43 million in 4Q23, exhibiting an 18% increase quarter-on-quarter from the USD 36 million reported in 3Q23.

Commenting on the Group's performance, EKH Chairman Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi said: "In the face of formidable global challenges, I am pleased to announce that EKH has demonstrated remarkable resilience and strong performance throughout 2023. This success is further bolstered by solid profitability metrics, including a strong gross profit margin and EBITDA, which have contributed to impressive revenues for the year. Additionally, this achievement has led to an increased attributable net income for our shareholders."

In 2023, EKH strategically invested over USD 250 million, reinforcing our commitment to sustained growth and diversification. Our initiatives included bolstering our product and service portfolio, pursuing opportunities in new markets, and enhancing vertical integration. Additionally, we increased our stake in AlexFert to boost export sales and secure higher USD-denominated revenues.

As we reflect on our accomplishments in 2023, I wish to express sincere gratitude to Sherif El Zayat,



Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi, EKH Chairman



Jon Rokk, new CEO

Loay Jassim Al Kharafi:

- The group has invested over USD 250 million in enhancing our products and services while seizing promising opportunities in the market.
- We have successfully expanded our operational capacities, maintaining strong profitability rates, and enhancing the per-

formance of all subsidiaries.

- Our focus remains on diversifying income sources by ramping up exports and bolstering cash flows in foreign currencies.
- Regional expansions are geared towards driving growth, aligning with our sustainability strategy, and maximizing returns for our shareholders.

our outgoing CEO, who has been an integral part of our success over the years. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors. I also wish to welcome Jon Rokk as our new

CEO, who was meticulously selected for his distinguished leadership roles in various multinational companies across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. With expertise span-

ning multiple sectors, including oil & gas, petrochemicals, infrastructure, and nuclear power, Jon aligns seamlessly with the diverse business areas of EKH and our ambitions for expan-

sion and growth. Under his leadership, we are confident that EKH will continue to thrive and reach new heights. Looking forward, our strategy



Image of the primary reformer in the ammonia plant at AlexFert.



Image of the installation of marine platforms for the implementation of the phase 3B.

emphasizes integration, diversification, and resilience. Specifically, our focus is on expanding exports, enhancing foreign currency streams, and growing our regional presence to drive growth and add resilience to our business, aligning with our long-term strategy for sustainability and enhanced shareholder returns.

In line with our commitment, we are pleased to propose a dividend distribution of USD six cents per share to our esteemed shareholders at the upcoming general assembly, supported by our robust operational performance, healthy cash flows, and a resilient balance sheet," Al-Kharafi said.

On the Fertilizers front, EKH doubled formica sheets production, inaugurated a new SNF factory, and launched a state-of-the-art sulfuric acid facility, contributing to feedstock for the Group's portfolio products. At AlexFert, EKH increased ownership to over 75%, enhancing USD-denominated revenues.

In the Energy and Energy-Related Segment, NatEnergy's subsidiaries expanded installations, connecting over two million households. Meanwhile, at Kahraba, NatEnergy's power distribution and generation subsidiary, the company's successive investments over the years have increased power generation capacity to 135 MW, while on the distribution front, capacity has already passed 350 MW as of 2024, with plans for further expansion to 645 MW by 2030.

At ONS, the company's strategic plan to optimize reserve management, extend well-life, and enhance production efficiency has borne fruit. ONS expanded the concession area by 140 km², totaling 440 km². With a USD 70 million capex for Phase-3B (2023 to Q1 2024), two new wells (ATON1 + KSE2) have been drilled in the new extension area using WH platforms, ensuring the continuation of the company's operational success.

Finally, the significant contributions of Delta Insurance and Mohandes Insurance teams have played a pivotal role in ensuring the resilient performance of the companies amidst a challenging operating environment. Additionally, EKH's microfinance subsidiary, Bedyati, consistently maintained a robust bottom line.

Furthermore, the management is pleased to highlight the upcoming commencement of operations at the Nile Wood production facility in 2024, a joint venture with Homann Holzwerkstoffe GmbH that enhances the group's strategic positioning.

Egypt Kuwait Holding



Indicators of the year 2023

179 Million USD **Attributable net income**

6 Cents Per Share **Board of Directors recommended cash dividends**

801 Million USD **Total operating revenues**

1.7 Billion USD **Total assets value**

640 Million USD **Total shareholders equity**

250 Million USD **Total capital expenditure allocated for the new expansions**

818 Million USD **Total distributed cash dividends since inception of the company**



Chair of the 'European Women on Boards' and the Ambassador of the European Union to Kuwait share visionary strategies

Gulf Bank hosts panel discussion on Women's Empowerment & Leadership Skills

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: As part of its continuous efforts towards women's empowerment and promoting diversity and inclusion policies, Gulf Bank organized a podcast as part of the "Lead the Way" program titled "Own Your Career" for female executives at the Bank. The podcast guest speaker was Ms. Hedwige Nuyens, Head of the International Banking Federation and Chair of the European Women on Boards, a non-profit organization that supports women's empowerment and gender diversity in corporate boards. The podcast was moderated by Ms. May Al-Owaish, Chief Data and Innovation Officer at Gulf Bank, and hosted by Ms. Dalal Aldosari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank. Her Excellency Anne Karien, the Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Kuwait, also participated in the event, appreciating Gulf Bank's role in supporting and empowering women in leadership. This podcast marks the first collaboration between the Kuwaiti private sector and the European Union Delegation to Kuwait.

The discussion covered various topics, including women's empowerment, leadership, sustainability, increasing



A group photo of Gulf Bank leaders and employees with the guests after the panel discussion.

female participation in the financial sector, and ways to achieve greater diversity in senior leadership positions in companies and banks.

The guest speaker shared her significant experiences in promoting women's empowerment and sustainable leadership in the European Union countries, and the best global practices implemented in this context, commending Gulf Bank's achievements in empowering women.

On this occasion, Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, said: "As we continue our journey towards enhancing diversity, inclusion, and women's leadership,

we are honored at Gulf Bank to have Ms. Nuyens as a guest speaker on the 'Lead the Way' podcast under the title: 'Own Your Career,' where Ms. Nuyens shared her significant experiences with our potential women leaders at the Bank. We are a firm believer in the power of sharing inspiring stories to derive the future for women empowerment in Kuwait. At Gulf Bank, we remain dedicated to fostering diversity within our workforce, particularly in support of women's leadership at the executive management and C-suite."

She added: "We are also honored by the visit of Her Excellency Anne Karien, the Ambassador of the European Union

Delegation to Kuwait, where she shared with us her valuable insights about the European Union's efforts in promoting gender equality."

It is worth mentioning that Gulf Bank hosted a networking lunch for the founding members of the Kuwait Women Economic Empowerment Platform (KWEPP), welcoming Her Excellency Anne Karien, the Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Kuwait and Ms. Hedwige Nuyens. During the lunch, members exchanged experiences on various aspects related to women's empowerment in the private sector and how to create an inclusive and diverse work-

ing environment. Al-Hajjaj stated: "The networking lunch created a great opportunity to exchange experiences and explore opportunities on various aspects related to women's empowerment in the private sector and creating an inclusive and diverse professional landscape in Kuwait."

As part of the series of events organized by the European Union Delegation to Kuwait recently aimed at exchanging best experiences and practices on increasing women's participation in executive leadership positions in the private sector, a number of female leaders from Gulf Bank participated in a special mentoring workshop organized by the Euro-

pean Union Delegation to Kuwait for a group of Kuwaiti women leaders from various sectors to discuss the tools and knowledge necessary to excel in their professional careers, overcome challenges, and achieve their potential. Commenting on Gulf Bank's female leaders' participation in the workshop, Al-Hajjaj said: "At Gulf Bank, we are keen to select and provide the best training opportunities for our workforce, especially in refining leadership skills and professional development in various managerial and technical fields to enhance the capabilities of our employees."

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.

Company honored stars of its latest National TVC, including Voice of Kuwait, Sanaa Alkharraz

Zain reaffirms love, loyalty & belonging to Kuwait during nat'l celebrations



Zain's National TVC stars performing on-stage.



Al Kharafi and Algharabally with Zain's executive management team during the annual event.



Zain employees eagerly participated in the event to show their love for Kuwait.



Zain celebrated with the community at South Subahiya Park throughout February.



Huge crowds engaged in Zain's activities.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: Reaffirming its deep-rooted devotion to Kuwait, Zain commemorated the nation's 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day with a long list of social activities, engaging entertainment programs, and traditional performances. The company forged a direct connection with audiences of all ages, painting a vibrant picture that reflected the enduring love and loyalty of Kuwaitis towards their nation during this much-cherished season.

Zain is always eager to directly participate in the biggest national-themed events every year to underscore its deep belief in the vital role played by private sector companies, especially national ones, in sharing the joys of national celebrations with the people of Kuwait. The company considers itself an integral part in the fabric of the community in which it operates and serves.

Year after year, the local community anticipates Zain's involvement in the biggest campaigns, gatherings, and programs that celebrate the nation's holidays. Audiences across Kuwait eagerly await the unveiling of Zain's annual National TVC, which always embodies deep emotions of love, belonging, and patriotism. Through its social and creative contributions, Zain always aspires to embody the core values of its brand: Zain, a Wonderful World.

The company recently held its annual national holidays event to celebrate this much-cherished occasion with the Zain family. This year, the event was attended by Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al Kharafi, Zain Kuwait Acting CEO Nawaf Algharabally, the company's executive management team, and scores of Zain employees from across divisions and departments who were all eager to join the event to show their love for their nation.

This year's event had a special aura to it with the participation of the stars of Zain's latest National TVC for 2024, including great Kuwaiti singer Sanaa Alkharraz, dubbed the Voice of Kuwait, along with writer and poet Salem Sayar Alenzi who penned the beautiful lyrics of the commercial, and brilliant composer Sulaiman Ghannam Al Daikan whose brilliant tunes brought the TVC to life. The event was also joined by the talented young students who appeared in the commercial, who recreated the TVC's wonderful traditional dance performances on-stage for Zain employees.

During the event, Bader Al Kharafi and Nawaf Algharabally joined the stage to recognize the tremendous contributions of all the stars who made this TVC possible, at their forefront Sanaa Alkharraz who took the TVC's audience in a nostalgic journey through the years to the beautiful past. In the mind of every Kuwaiti, Sanaa Alkharraz's voice is deeply linked to the operettas of the 80's and 90's, and this truly contributed to the success of the commercial. Toward



Bader Al Kharafi and Nawaf Algharabally honor the stars of Zain's TVC: Sanaa Alkharraz, Sulaiman Al Daikan, and Salem Sayar Al Enzi.

the end of the event, poet Salem Sayar Alenzi delivered a beautiful, patriotic poem to the attendees, invigorating a sense of national unity and patriotism for all.

Zain's 2024 National TVC received wide praise and positive reaction from the local community and has surpassed 3.5 million views on YouTube as of today. The TVC was produced by Joy Productions, and its lyrics sung of Kuwait's glorious history, promoted national unity, and celebrated the nation's prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

This special celebration is one of Zain's top social programs held for employees in February of every year. The event brings together staff and senior executive management together to further strengthen the links between members of the Zain family and renew the spirit of teamwork under their united love for their nation.

The event featured many fun activities and programs that centered around celebrating Kuwait's National and Liberation Days, where the company's employees gathered in a family atmosphere filled with national pride. The event's program also included exciting competitions, prizes for winners, and a special performance by a traditional band that played wonderful traditional Kuwaiti pieces throughout the celebration.

As it does in February of every year, Zain is always eager to interact with the community by being present at the biggest events and social gatherings where Kuwaitis show their love for their nation. In such gatherings, the company finds an invaluable opportunity to share the joys of this momentous occasion with the community by presenting its very own programs.

Zain's interactive national holidays programs this year came in South Subahiya Park, which Zain sponsors in partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) in continuation of its strategic partnership with the public sector to support the nation's biggest entertainment projects, as well as in Qout Market at Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC), which Zain strategically partners in its tenth season. The programs Zain organized in South Subahiya Park and Qout Market included exciting traditional 'Artha' performances with many local traditional bands, along with several wonderful performances by the young students of Zain's National TVC, who reacted the commercial's dances to the delight of the visiting families.

Zain also presented a plethora of interactive programs and engaging activities for children and families, which all promoted national unity and planted the values of love and loyalty to one's nation from an early age. The company also distributed huge 7m Kuwait flags to visitors in an initiative to revive the old habit of raising Kuwait's flag above every house. Other activities included a weekly PlayStation tournament at the company's booth in South Subahiya Park, special offers on the latest products, and much more.

Zain is proud of its strategic partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC), which recently covered some of the nation's biggest recreational projects. Zain has found immense interest from the public sector to bring to life a number of major plans that present the best experiences to the Kuwaiti community. The company is committed to being a main partner in realizing this vision, thus reflecting the key role played by the private sector in achieving the nation's various developmental goals.

South Subahiya Park is Kuwait's latest and most anticipated theme park, and Zain was keen on being among the first of its supporters to help bring an exceptional entertainment destination to families and young people in the community. The Park covers 107,000 square meters and can welcome 10,000 visitors per day.

Zain is also proud to be among the first supporters of Qout Market throughout the past years. The event has had a huge success in the past, having gathered families, young people, and other members of the community in a wonderful atmosphere with a special focus on supporting local products and talents.

In addition, and under its strategic partnership with South Subahiya Park in collaboration with TEC, Zain held many exciting activities and competitions for visitors at SSP in collaboration with 360 FM to celebrate Kuwait's national holidays.

Zain held the fun activities at its booth in SSP, where large crowds of families, children, and young people joined to take part in the company's competitions for a chance to win special prizes. This continued for five consecutive days during the national holidays vacation, where entertainer Osama Fouda hosted the special activities and interacted with the crowds LIVE on 360 FM from Zain's booth.

Through its extended partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company, Zain has contributed to bringing the best world-class entertainment destinations to the community. This collaboration has also vitalized the local touristic, economic, and social scenes, supported local entrepreneurs and startup owners, and drove the progress of the national economy.

Week-long 'Big Nation, Big Discounts' festival

LuLu Hala February: Festive spirit, dreamy deals

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: The joyous spirit of Kuwait's National and Liberation Days echoed across LuLu Hypermarkets during the 'Big Nation, Big Discounts' Hala February campaign that runs from 21-27 February at all outlets of the hypermarket.

The week-long festival, inaugurated at Lulu Hyper Qurain outlet on 21 February by the Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate, Mahmoud Abdul Samad Bu Shahary and LuLu's top management in Kuwait, delivered an immersive experience that featured never-before deals in all categories across the aisles, including on groceries, fresh and frozen items, health and beauty products, and household items, as well as on mobiles, accessories, wearables, and gadgets.

To commemorate Kuwait's 63-year history of independence, 63 unique discounts were available throughout the week, and 600 trolley loads of purchases were offered free to lucky customers for five days from 22-25 February. While the 'Brand of the Week' initiative, and the 'Hala Digital Shopping' festival introduced customers to a diverse range of branded products at attractive prices, the 'Deal of the Day' offered a special price discount on various select items on each day of the festival.

LuLu Hala February also celebrated local products with a Kuwait Fresh Produce Market that offered fresh, high-quality local produce, and products proudly made in Kuwait. The shopping festival also saw a buying spree in the garments, footwear, and ladies' handbag section where a 'Buy 2, Get 1 Free' offer was underway from 14 February to 9 March. Additionally, a special 'Buy 1, Get 1 Free' offer on garments, footwear and ladies' handbags was available only from 22-26 February.

Aside from the jaw-dropping discounts during the week-long 'Big Nation, Big Discounts' festival, LuLu Hypermarket fos-



Pictures at LuLu Hypermarkets as they celebrated Kuwait's National and Liberation Days with the 'Big Nation, Big Discounts' Extravaganza.



tered a sense of community through large cutouts and displays of Kuwaiti monuments. One display that grabbed every shoppers attention was a replica of the iconic Kuwait Towers made from over 17,000 milk and fruit juice tetra-packs, sponsored by the local firm KDD.

As part of the festivities marking National and Liberation Days, young voices rendered patriotic songs during the Kuwait Arabic Schools Patriotic Songs Competition, where students from several schools proudly showcased their musical talents in celebration of the nation. Winning teams earned top honors, while all participating schools received

consolation prizes, ensuring everyone felt included and appreciated.

Aspiring young artists also had the chance to shine at the Hala February Theme Drawing Contest, held at the Qurain outlet. Divided into Sub-Junior, Junior, and Senior categories, the contest encouraged participants to express their creativity around the themes of Kuwait's National and Liberation Days. Each category saw talented winners receive amazing prizes, celebrating their artistic expression and patriotism.

A traditional Kuwaiti Sword Dance, special Kuwaiti drama and entertainment shows, and a 'Hala Kuwait' performance by

a troupe of talented kids, as well as several Kuwaiti flag themed mascots, kept the entertainment quotient flowing throughout the festival period. And, if you felt hungry during the festivities, there was a special Arabic Food Festival complete with food stalls and sampling counters that ensured nourishment to ensure the enjoyment never ceased.

The annual LuLu Hala February festival has evolved from being just a shopping bonanza to an occasion to celebrate the essence of Kuwait, through displays of national pride, community zeal, and most of all by sharing the joy of the occasion with family and friends.

'Past Lives,' 'American Fiction' are big winners at Independent Spirit Awards

SANTA MONICA, California, Feb 26, (AP): Celine Song's quiet romance "Past Lives" won two of the biggest awards at the Film Independent Spirit Awards Sunday afternoon, including best feature and best director. Other big winners were Cord Jefferson's comedic satire "American Fiction," with Jeffrey Wright winning for lead performer; and Alexander Payne's "The Holdovers," which won prizes for Da'Vine Joy Randolph and Dominic Sessa.

The 39th edition of the show was held Sunday in a beachside tent in Santa Monica, California, and streamed live on IMDb and Film Independent's YouTube channels and X accounts.

"Thank you so much for letting me share what it feels like to be human, to love and be loved, and thank you for loving our film," Song said in accepting the directing prize.

Her film was among the top nominated at the show, alongside "May December," which won only one award (for Samy Burch's first screenplay) and "American Fiction," which fared better.

Wright won for playing a frustrated author who becomes wildly successful by writing something he hates in "American Fiction."

"You go to these awards shows, you kind of grow tired of them," Wright said. "And then you get one, and it kind of changes the vibe a little bit."

He noted that it was made independently because "nobody wanted to finance it."

The Spirit Awards sit firmly within the larger Hollywood awards season, which culminates with the Oscars on March 10. But with a budget cap of \$20 million for nominees, the show celebrates films that sometimes go un-

heralded, or at least under-nominated, at the bigger shows.

"Welcome to the Film Independent Spirit Awards, also known as the bisexual Oscars," host Aidy Bryant said. Bryant called it "the only place in the world where \$20 million is like no money."

Randolph continued her sweep of the broader season, winning best supporting performance for playing the grieving cook Mary Lamb in "The Holdovers." Not 24 hours ago, right across town, she also picked up the best supporting actress award at the SAG Awards.

"Independent films are the beating heart of our industry, and they are worth fighting for," Randolph said. She did, however, wish that they might have been able to afford heated seats while filming in Boston in the winter.

Randolph beat out the likes of Anne Hathaway ("Eileen"), Charles Melton ("May December") and Sterling K. Brown ("American Fiction") for the prize. The Spirit Awards switched to gender neutral acting awards in 2022. The first awards were given at the 2023 show.

Her co-star, Sessa, later won the breakthrough prize.

"I promise it's not all downhill from here," Sessa said, thanking his high school acting teachers.

Last year, "Everything Everywhere All At Once" swept the Spirit Awards before going on to do the same at the Oscars. But this year, many top Oscar contenders - including "Oppenheimer," "Barbie" and "Killers of the Flower Moon" - would not have qualified.

Kaouther Ben Hania's film "Four Daughters," which is nominated for the corresponding Oscar, won best documentary. And Justine Triet's "Anatomy of a Fall," also nominated for best picture at the

Oscars, won best international feature over "The Zone of Interest."

"Los Angeles has a special place in my heart. It's the city of John Cassavetes and Gena Rowlands," Triet said. "Without discovering them at their films at the age of 20, I wouldn't have had the desire to make my own films and I wouldn't be here today."

The Cassavetes ethos actually has its own award, honoring a film made for under \$1 million. That prize went this year to "Fremont," about an Afghan translator working for a Chinese fortune cookie factory.

The show had some unexpected background noise, from one man with a loudspeaker conducting a pro-Palestine protest outside the tent that lasted for some time.

"We are at the beach, and people are celebrating their freedom of speech," Bryant said. The shouting outside disrupted Jim Gaffigan's tribute to "Jury Duty" and many more winners' speeches. Comedian Jimmy O. Yang, speaking from the stage to present the best cinematography award, assumed it was a heckler outside.

Later, "Fremont" filmmaker Babak Jalali said he was sure that what was being said outside the tent was much more important than anything he had to say.

The Spirit Awards also honor television. Netflix's "Beef" won best new scripted series and Ali Wong picked up best lead performance.

Nick Offerman won best supporting performance in a new scripted series for his turn in "The Last of Us." And 11-year-old actor Keivonn Montreal Woodard also won the breakthrough performance award for a new scripted series for "The Last of Us," giving his acceptance speech in American Sign Language.

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Kenneth Branagh, from left, David Krumholtz, Emily Blunt, Alden Ehrenreich, Robert Downey Jr., Josh Hartnett, Cillian Murphy, Casey Affleck, and Benny Safdie accept the award for outstanding performance by a cast in a motion picture for 'Oppenheimer' during the 30th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards on Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. (AP)

Film

'The Bear,' 'Spider-Verse' among early winners at Producers Guild awards

'Oppenheimer' keeps devouring top prize

BEVERLY HILLS, California, Feb 26, (AP): With two weeks to go before the Oscars, "Oppenheimer" looks unstoppable.

Director and producer Christopher Nolan's tale of the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer and the birth of the atomic age won the top prize Sunday at the 35th Producers Guild of America Awards - a frequent predictor of Oscar best picture winners - the night after doing the same at the Screen Actors Guild Awards.

"Oppenheimer" won the PGA's Darryl F. Zanuck Award for Outstanding Producer of Theatrical Motion Pictures over the exact same set of 10 nominees up for best picture at the March 10 Academy Awards, including "Barbie," "Poor Things" and "Killers of the Flower Moon," whose director, Martin Scorsese, was honored Sunday for his concurrent career as a producer.

The Zanuck Award winner has gone on to take the best picture Oscar for five of the past six years, and 12 of the past 15, including last year with "Everything, Everywhere All at Once."

From the stage at the Ray Dolby Ballroom in Hollywood, in the same complex where the Academy Awards will be held at the Dolby Theatre, Nolan thanked his fellow producer Charles Royen for giving him "American Prometheus," the book that led to "Oppenheimer," and "starting a chain reaction that's spread all over the world."

Earlier in the show, Robert Downey Jr. called it "the highest-grossing film about theoretical physics yet made."

Downey on Saturday won best supporting actor at the SAG Awards, where "Oppenheimer" also won best ensemble, part of an awards season sweep that also included wins at the Golden Globes and Directors Guild Awards.

"Succession" and "The Bear" took the top television prizes at the PGA Awards after doing the same at the SAG Awards and last month's Emmy Awards.

"Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse," nominated for the animated feature Oscar, won the PGA's animated motion picture award. Its predecessor, "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse," won the Academy Award.

Scorsese joined Tom Cruise, Steven Spielberg and Kevin Feige as winners of the David O. Selznick award for an outstanding body of work as a producer of motion pictures.

Scorsese said the first film he remembers seeing, at age 4, was the Selznick written and produced "Duel in the Sun."

Condemned

"It was condemned by the Catholic church, and my mother wanted to see it," Scorsese told the audience. "She said, 'The kid likes westerns, I'm taking him.'"

Scorsese said "the very first impact of classic Hollywood cinema starts right there for me. Slashes of color, movement, the landscapes, stunning set pieces."

He called them "Proustian sense memories" of early cinema.

"I was frightened by them," he said, "and thrilled."

The 81-year-old said he was grateful for the privilege of getting to spend his life exploring "beauty that's at the core of what we all strive to do."

Scorsese-produced films include his own "Hugo," "The Wolf of Wall Street," "Silence" and "Killers of the Flower Moon," along with dozens of films for younger directors including Spike Lee's "Clockers," the Safdie brothers' "Uncut Gems" and Joanna Hogg's "The Souvenir."

Other career achievement awards went to producers Charles D. King and Gail Berman.

King became the first Black winner of the PGA's Milestone Award, whose previous winners include

Walt Disney, Clint Eastwood and George Lucas, for historic career contributions to the motion picture industry.

King was lauded for leaving his job as a Hollywood agent in 2015 to found MACRO, a media company dedicated to amplifying the voices of black artists and other people of color.

The company has produced films including 2016's "Fences" starring Denzel Washington and Viola Davis, who won an Oscar for the role, and 2021's "Judas and the Black Messiah," for which King was personally nominated for an Oscar as a producer.

King thanked "our ancestors who kicked down doors, made sacrifices and blazed a trail for me to be able to do what I'm blessed to do."

Berman, the only woman to have held the top job at both a major film company and television network, was given the Norman Lear Achievement Award in Television. Berman was the driving force behind the creation and airing of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," whose star, Sarah Michelle Gellar, presented her the award.

"Not a single person on this earth was interested in buying that television show," Berman said. "But I just couldn't ignore my gut telling me there was something unique there."

The PGA announced an initiative during the show that seeks to provide healthcare coverage for its member producers who are not covered other ways. Members of the actors and writers guilds have long used the unions for health insurance.

"Producers deserve to be covered," PGA Co-President Stephanie Allain said.

The effort involves asking production companies, including major studios and streamers, to include contributions to producers' health coverage on its production budgets.

Film companies Blumhouse, Legendary and King's MACRO already have signed on.

Features

PARIS: French actor **Judith Godrèche** called on France's film industry to "face the truth" on sexual violence and physical abuse during a live broadcast Friday of the Cesar Awards ceremony, France's version of the Oscars.

"We can decide that men accused of rape no longer rule the (French) cinema," Godrèche said.

Godrèche was invited to speak on sexual violence at the ceremony after actors alleged they were teenage victims of sexual abuse by directors decades older than themselves, shining a light on the repulsive underside of the country's industry.

"Is it possible that we are able to face the truth?" Godrèche said during an emotional speech to a hushed audience.

"With the same moral strength that we use to be creative, let's have the courage to say out loud what we know quietly," she said, and added later, "The power seems to be waning."

The audience stayed silent until the end of her appearance, but then erupted into thunderous applause in a standing ovation.

Her speech comes as French cinema is expected to shine next month at the Oscars ceremony with **Justine Triet's** courtroom drama "Anatomy of a Fall."

Triet on Friday became the second female film director in the Cesar Award's 49-year history to win the best director award for "Anatomy of a Fall," which also won best film, original screenplay, actress for **Sandra Huller**, supporting actor and editing.

Godrèche, 51, is well known to French cinemagoers. She recently accused two film directors of rape and sexual abuse while she was a teenager. She formally filed a complaint earlier this month, the Paris prosecutor said.

She is accusing film director **Benoit Jacquot**, with whom she had a six-year relationship that started when she was 14, of rape and physical abuse. Jacquot, a prominent director in France, is 25 years her senior.

She is also accusing another film director, **Jacques Doillon**, of sexual abuse while he was 15. Doillon is 28 years older than her.

Both Jacquot and Doillon have denied the allegations.

Speaking on France Inter radio earlier this month, Godrèche said that she was never attracted to Jacquot, "but I ended up with him, in his bed, and I was his child wife." Godrèche and Jacquot met in 1986 on the set of his film "The Beggars." "I was indoctrinated, it was as if I'd joined a cult," she said. The relationship was marred by violence, confinement and control,



Godrèche



Jacquot

she said. Hours before the ceremony, French cultural minister **Rachida Dati** criticized the country's cinema for "collectively turning a blind eye for decades" to sexual violence. She hailed Godrèche's courage to speak out and for sharing her traumatic experience. Judith Godrèche has spoken of her pain in simple terms, Dati

said. "She said, I was a child. You saw everything and no one said anything," the cultural minister said in an interview with The French Film magazine. She added: "This should be the beginning of profound soul searching for French cinema." "There is no impunity in the name of art," Dati said. "Creative freedom is total, but we are not

talking about art here, but about a crime against a child," she added. "Having a sexual relationship with a child under 15, is a crime." Godrèche had previously spoken about her relationship with Jacquot, without naming him, in an autobiographical television show called "Icon of French Cinema" that was released in December. (AP)

People & Places



This image provided by Kino Lorber shows Ichraq Matar, Eya Chikhaoui, Henda Sabri, Nour Karoui, Tayssir Chikhaoui in the movie *Four Daughters*, filmed in Tunisia. The film about a Tunisian family and the radicalization of two teenage daughters who joined the Islamic State is up for one of the most prestigious film awards in the world. (AP)

Music

Potential risk

Disputed Hotel California lyrics pages 'just felt thin'

NEW YORK, Feb. 26, (AP) — When Christie's was offered the chance to sell 13 pages of draft lyrics to the Eagles' "Hotel California" in 2015, auction house executive Tom Lecky was "super excited."

But red flags started waving when seller **Craig Inciardi** said he had gotten them from a writer who worked with the band decades earlier on a never-published biography.

"It just felt thin, to me, and it felt like there was potential risk," Lecky testified Friday at a criminal trial surrounding the handwritten pages. Yet he later acknowledged that after leaving Christie's, he inquired again about potentially arranging a deal for the pages. "I'm a salesman," Lecky explained.

Lecky testified for prosecutors at the trial of Inciardi, Glenn Horowitz and Edward Kosinski, three collectibles professionals who at various points had pages from the massive classic rock hit "Hotel California" and other songs from its eponymous album. The 1976 disc is the third-biggest seller in U.S. history.

Prosecutors and Eagles co-founder Don Henley say the writer had stolen the pages.

The defendants are accused of covering it up to fool auction houses and fight Henley's demands for the documents' return.

Kosinski, Inciardi and Horowitz have pleaded not guilty to charges including conspiracy to criminally possess stolen property. Their lawyers say the men rightfully owned the documents, weren't out to deceive anyone and were just trying to deal with legal threats from a regretful rock star who'd let the pages go.

Documents

Inciardi and Kosinski bought the documents from Horowitz, a prominent rare-book dealer. He had purchased them from the writer, Ed Sanders. Sanders hasn't been charged with any crime and hasn't responded to phone messages seeking comment on the case.

Inciardi, then a curator at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, brought the "Hotel California" pages to Lecky in late 2015.

Handwritten in felt-tip pen on yellow legal-style pads, "this was a great early version, this working out of ideas right on the page," Lecky recalled on the witness stand Friday.

"As a fan of culture and literature and history, it's just an obvious thing to be excited about," Lecky said, and it seemed "highly marketable."

He and Inciardi agreed to set a price that would net the sellers at least \$700,000 in a potential private transaction, according to a document shown in court.

But Lecky knew a key question would be provenance, an auction-world term for an item's bona fides and source.

He didn't know at the time that Henley had objected to a prior auction listing for other "Hotel California" pages from the same cache. But Lecky said he started to worry when Inciardi emailed him that the provenance was Sanders.

"Having someone work on a book made me think, 'OK, they have access to papers' ... that doesn't necessarily mean the archive is being given," Lecky testified.

After a discussion including Inciardi and a Christie's lawyer, he said, the auction house decided not to broker a sale. The pages went back to Inciardi.

"My opinion was that we didn't have sufficient provenance information to be able to successfully market it to somebody," Lecky said Friday.

Nevertheless, Lecky gave the manuscript another thought after he left Christie's in 2016 to run his own rare-book business.

When Inciardi expressed interest in staying in touch, Lecky emailed him: "Do you still have Hotel California? I might have one idea we can discuss."



Inciardi



Justine Triet poses in the winners room with Cesar Awards during the 49th Cesar Award ceremony, in Paris, Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024. (AP)



Depardieu



Bacallao

Variety

PARIS: French actor **Gérard Depardieu** faces another complaint of sexual assault, this time from a movie decorator who alleges he groped her during filming in 2021.

In the complaint to the Paris prosecutor's office, she accuses the 75-year-old **Depardieu** of sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexist insults, her Paris lawyer, **Carine Durrieu Diebolt**, said Monday.

The 53-year-old decorator alleges that Depardieu grabbed her and kneaded her during filming for "Les Volets verts," which translates as "The Green Shutters," the lawyer said. Other people intervened to stop the alleged assault, the lawyer added.

Two lawyers for Depardieu did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment, and their offices said they weren't available to talk by phone.

Depardieu was handed preliminary rape and sexual assault charges in 2020 following allegations from actor **Charlotte Arnould**. Durrieu Diebolt is representing Arnould in that case.

Depardieu has also been accused by more than a dozen other women of harassing, groping or sexually assaulting them.

Depardieu denies wrongdoing. In an open letter in October, he said: "I have never, ever abused a woman."

Durrieu Diebolt said that the statement was traumatic for her client and led her to file suit against him. (AP)

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico: Peter Anthony Morgan, lead singer of the popular reggae band Morgan Heritage that he founded with four siblings, died Sunday at 46, his family said.

The family asked for privacy and thanked people in advance for their love and support. The statement posted on social media did not share a cause of death.

Jamaican Prime Minister **Andrew Holness** wrote on the X social media platform that his "heart is heavy" over the news. He called Morgan's death a "colossal loss" for Jamaica and reggae music.

Morgan, known as "Peetah," was a son of renowned Jamaican reggae singer **Denroy Morgan**.

Film

Documentary tackles Tunisia's open wound

'Four Daughters' story is Oscar nominee

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 26, (AP) — Olfa Hamrouni doesn't know much about her granddaughter; not her favorite toy nor food — is it the pasta the child's mother loves, or something else?

The Tunisian grandmother doesn't even let her mind go there. "I don't want to know. What for but more heartache?" she said.

For now, she just fights for 8-year-old Fatma. The child has spent virtually all her life with her mother and aunt — Hamrouni's eldest daughters — raised in detention in Libya, where the women wound up after leaving home as teenagers and joining Islamic State group extremists.

The real-life story of Hamrouni and her children is the focus of "Four Daughters," an Academy Award nominee for best documentary feature film. On camera, there are many layers to Kaouther Ben Hania's film: It's about the radicalization of two teenage girls; an intimate portrait of a chaotic, and often dysfunctional, family life; and reflections on generational trauma, patriarchy, motherhood and adolescence.

Off camera, it's more than just one family's tale.

The names change, the details vary, but the nightmare is familiar to some others in Tunisia, where at one point many left to join militant groups, including the Islamic State, in conflict zones abroad. Militants have also struck at targets in Tunisia. Today, families like Hamrouni's are living reminders of that complex legacy, the unresolved issues and difficult questions persisting years later.

"It's ... an open wound in my country," said actor Henda Sabri, who appears in the film as Hamrouni in some scenes. "As long as we don't talk about it, then we're not going to heal."

Hamrouni hopes the film's high profile will boost her advocacy for her daughters to be repatriated from Libya, where they had been sentenced to prison, and stand trial in their home country. In Tunisia, as in other countries, some people have been suspicious and fearful of returnees for security reasons.

Hamrouni wants Fatma freed from the confines of her existence. "What fault is it of hers? She hasn't chosen her father or mother."

Ben Hania, who wrote and directed the film, echoed the demands. "We're trying hard to push the Tunisian government," she said. "A country is responsible for its citizens."

The film experiments with format. Hamrouni and her youngest daughters, Eya and Tayssir, appear as themselves. Besides Sabri, actors play Ghofrane and Rahma, the daughters who left, as Ben Hania reconstructs the family's past in search for clues for their radicalization. (The film offers theories but no concrete motives, especially with the real Ghofrane and Rahma imprisoned in Libya.) In some scenes, the actors reenact key moments alongside family members; in others, they question, challenge or reflect. Ben Hania said her role as a filmmaker is to understand and analyze, not judge.

Tumultuous

In the film and the family's telling, the daughters grew up with little in a tumultuous home. Dad was largely absent and drank too much; mom was overburdened and harsh.

Hamrouni, in the film, is fixated on preserving her daughters' sexual purity for marriage. She's quick to hurl insults and accusations and to punish perceived or real infringements — a waxed leg, a diary entry about a first kiss — with severe beatings.

There was some rebellion, a gothic phase, a guy with a motorcycle. Then the changes that swept Tunisia following the Arab Spring pro-democracy movement more than a decade ago brought another transformation as different currents, including hard-liners and extremists, jockeyed for influence. A preaching tent popped up in the family's neighborhood.

Ghofrane and Rahma, whose mother says grew up with only basic religious knowledge, were introduced to austere interpretations. Their radicalization fur-

ther deepened — in the film, Rahma is said to have whipped younger sisters for skipping or delaying prayers, self-flagellated for such things as gossiping, and daydreamed about stoning a woman who had sex outside of marriage.

When Ghofrane left nearly a decade ago, Hamrouni, according to the film, sought police help to stop Rahma from following. She accuses the police of doing little.

The family crumbled. Hamrouni grieved the departed daughters and worried about the remaining ones. One, a child at the time, adored Rahma and had absorbed her sisters' beliefs. The other, Eya, was unraveling.

The younger girls were placed in a government facility, which they credit with helping them rebuild their lives. But outside, the family says, life was hard and neighbors and relatives shunned them.

Mohamed Iqbel Ben Rejjeb of the Rescue Association of Tunisians Trapped Abroad said some who found themselves in similar situations disowned family members who left, sometimes to protect those who remained from the fallout. Others fight for the repatriation of loved ones. Some don't know whether their relatives are dead or alive.

He said his organization doesn't defend Tunisians with blood on their hands but advocates for the rehabilitation of others and, especially, for the rescue and reintegration of children taken by parents to conflict zones or born there. But he also says that Tunisia may lack sufficient capabilities and argues that authorities often appear to be dragging their feet.

He and other activists are particularly concerned for the children's rights and futures. Inaction, they warn, can prove perilous.

"The normal place for children is ... the extended family, the school," said Mostafa Abdelkebir, head of the Tunisian Observatory for Human Rights. "After spending long periods in prisons and camps ... they'll resent society, become ticking bombs."

He and his siblings formed Morgan Heritage in 1994, and the band won a Grammy for best reggae album in 2016 for "Strictly Roots."

One of his brothers, **Roy "Gramps" Morgan**, moved to Tennessee, where he aimed to introduce Nashville to reggae.

"If you follow reggae music and country

music, it's a lot of storytelling," Morgan told The Associated Press in 2018. "In reggae we tell the story of people suffering." (AP)



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Lily Gladstone, center, in a scene from "Killers of the Flower Moon." (AP)

HAVANA: Juana Bacallao, a renowned Cuban singer and cabaret diva who still performed until recently, has died. She was 98.

Bacallao died Saturday after spending several days at a hospital in Havana, according to a statement from Cuba's Ministry of Culture. Officials didn't say why she was hospitalized.

Bacallao was known for her husky voice, risque personality and being unpredictable, clad in wigs and extravagant costumes. She performed at the famed Tropicana club in the 1940s and '50s and sang alongside artists like **Nat King Cole**.

"I will never retire. I will only stop once death has come for me," she said in a 2010 interview with The Associated Press.

Born **Neri Amelia Martínez Salazar**, she was sent to a Catholic boarding school after becoming orphaned at 6 years old.

She was discovered as a teenager while singing as she cleaned homes and was given the moniker "Juana Bacallao," becoming a sensation in Cuba's cabaret scene. (AP)

Opening new route to psychiatric treatments

AI maps psychedelic 'trip' experiences to regions of the brain

By Galen Ballentine
Harvard University

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

For the past several decades, psychedelics have been widely stigmatized as dangerous illegal drugs. But a recent surge of academic research into their use to treat psychiatric conditions is spurring a recent shift in public opinion.

Psychedelics are psychotropic drugs: substances that affect your mental state. Other types of psychotropics include antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications. Psychedelics and other types of hallucinogens, however, are unique in their ability to temporarily induce intense hallucinations, emotions and disruptions of self-awareness.

Researchers looking into the therapeutic potential of these effects have found that psychedelics can dramatically reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, PTSD, substance abuse and other psychiatric conditions. The intense experiences, or "trips," that psychedelics induce are thought to create a temporary window of cognitive flexibility that allows patients to gain access to elusive parts of their psyches and forge better coping skills and thought patterns.

Precisely how psychedelics create these effects, however, is still unclear. So as researchers in psychiatry and machine learning, we were interested in figuring out how these drugs affect the brain. With artificial intelligence, we were able to map people's subjective experiences while using psychedelics to specific regions of the brain, down to the molecular level.

Every psychedelic functions differently in the body, and each of the subjective experiences these drugs create have different therapeutic effects. Mystical type experiences, or feelings of unity and oneness with the world, for example, are associated with decreases in depression and anxiety. Knowing how each psychedelic creates these specific effects in the body can help clinicians optimize their therapeutic use.

To better understand how these subjective effects manifest in the brain, we analyzed over 6,000 written testimonials of hallucinogenic experiences from Erowid Center, an organization that collects and provides information about psychoactive substances. We transformed these testimonials into what's called a bag-of-words model, which breaks down a given text into individual words and counts how many times each word appears. We then paired the most commonly used words linked to each psychedelic with receptors in the brain that are known to bind to each drug. After using an algorithm to extract the most common subjective experiences associated with these word-receptor pairs, we mapped these experiences onto different brain regions by matching them to the types of receptors present in each area.

We found both new links and patterns that confirm what's known in the research literature. For example, changes in sensory perception were associated with a serotonin receptor in the visual cortex of the brain, which binds to a molecule that helps regulate mood and memory. Feelings of transcendence were connected to dopamine and opioid receptors in the salience network, a collection of brain regions involved in managing sensory and emotional input. Auditory hallucinations were linked to a number of receptors spread throughout the auditory cortex.

Our findings also align with the leading hypothesis that psychedelics temporarily reduce top-down executive function, or cognitive processes involved in inhibition, attention and memory, among others, while amplifying brain regions involved in sensory experience.

The U.S. is going through a profound mental health crisis that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet there have been no truly new psychiatric drug treatments since Prozac and other selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, the most common type of antidepressants, of the 1980s.

Our study shows that it's possible to map the diverse and wildly subjective psychedelic experiences to specific regions in the brain. These insights may lead to new ways to combine existing or yet to be discovered compounds to produce desired treatment effects for a range of psychiatric conditions.

Psychiatrist Stanislav Grof famously proposed, "psychedelics, used responsibly and with proper caution, would be for psychiatry what the microscope is to the study of biology and medicine or the telescope for astronomy." As psychedelics and other hallucinogens become more commonly used clinically and culturally, we believe more research will further illuminate the biological basis of the experiences they invoke and help realize their potential. (AP)



Grof

Kuwaiti surgical team breaks new ground in aortic aneurysm repair with laser technology

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital celebrates success



This image provided by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)/Takara Tomy/Sony Group Corporation/Doshisha University shows an image taken by a Lunar Excursion Vehicle 2 (LEV-2) of a robotic moon rover called Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, on the moon. (AP)

Japan's moon lander survives second weeklong lunar night

TOKYO, Feb 26, (AP) — Japan's first moon lander responded to a signal from Earth, suggesting it has survived a second freezing weeklong lunar night, Japan's space agency said Monday.

JAXA called the signal, received late Sunday night, a "miracle" because the probe was not designed to survive the lunar night, when temperatures can fall to minus 170 degrees Celsius (minus 274 degrees Fahrenheit).

The craft, Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM,

made a "pinpoint" touchdown on Jan. 20, making Japan became the fifth country to successfully place a probe on the moon. But the probe landed the wrong way up, with its solar panels initially unable to see the sun and had to be turned off within hours.

SLIM regained power on the eighth day after its landing, when it got the sun. For several days, SLIM collected geological data from moon rocks, before going back into hibernation in late January to wait out another lunar night.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26, (KUNA): Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital announced, Monday, the success of a Kuwaiti surgical team's local and regional medical achievement in enlarged abdominal aortic aneurysm repair using endovascular laser fenestration.

Dr. Adel Al-Ali, head of the catheterization and interventional radiology unit at the hospital, told KUNA, the medical team treated a complex aortic aneurysm by using laser technology to create holes in the kidneys to irrigate them and add stents in place of the holes.

The Fenestrated Endovascular Aortic Repair procedure, Dr. Al-Ali explained that this required high-level laser technical skills and a renowned medical team, who hold certifications from the United States and Canada, to perform with the utmost precision.

The conventional alternative to this new laser procedure is an open abdominal surgery that was not suitable to the high-risk patient, Dr. Al-Ali said.

Conventional

He pointed out the conventional procedure was available for cardiac (heart) catheterization through purchasing stents with the exact patient measurements, explaining the stents are made-to-order and are only available after six to 12 weeks.

Some patients, however, require immediate medical intervention.

Dr. Al-Ali added there are few facilities equipped to perform this la-



Members of the surgical team who made the local and regional medical achievement.

ser procedure, therefore it taking place in Mubarak Hospital speaks volumes of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health who strives to provide the best and latest technology and medicine for its patients.

The surgical team that lead

this achievement consisted of Vascular Surgery Consultant Dr. Abdullah Al-Fawaz, Dr. Adel Al-Ali, Catheterization and interventional radiology Consultant Dr. Hussain Jeraq, Anesthesiologist Dr. Fatima Dehrab, and Intensive Care Consultant Ali Malik.

Diabetes research study evaluating new approach to helping patients

BOSTON, Feb 26, (Business Wire): A new Diabetes research study is available in Santa Clarita, Calif., to evaluate a non-drug procedure that may help improve blood sugar without increasing medicines or insulin.

Current treatments that aim to lower blood sugar to a healthy level are unsuccessful for many patients, but medical researchers are discovering new potential ways to help people with type 2 Diabetes.

The combination of Diabetes and obesity significantly increases one's risk of heart attacks, stroke, liver disease, kidney disease, and other serious health problems. Current treatments that aim to lower blood sugar to a healthy level are unsuccessful for many patients, but medical researchers are discovering new potential ways to help people with type 2 Diabetes.

The REVITALIZE 1 study from Fractyl Health will assess if an investigational procedure known as duodenal mucosal resurfacing (DMR) can help address a range of health problems caused by Diabetes. The DMR procedure targets the inner lining of the duodenum (a portion of the small intestine) and uses heat to remove the thickened or diseased lining so the body can regrow a new, healthy lining capable of potentially helping to



Current treatments that aim to lower blood sugar to a healthy level are unsuccessful for many patients, but medical researchers are discovering new potential ways to help people with type 2 diabetes. (Business Wire)

control blood glucose, improve insulin resistance, and improve control of Diabetes without needing to take more medicines or insulin.

"For many people living with Diabetes, controlling blood glucose levels is a difficult journey," said Dr. Sina Tebi,

Principal Investigator at Care Access - Santa Clarita. "The possibility of using a simple medical procedure to help these patients is the reason why we're excited to offer this research study to our community."

The study is now enrolling for adults

ages 21 to 70 with type 2 Diabetes and BMI of 24 to 40 kg/m². To learn more, contact Care Access at (351) 222-5112.

Care Access opened its doors in Santa Clarita in collaboration with local community leaders and healthcare providers seeking to make clinical studies more easily accessible to patients. The local setting provides residents of Santa Clarita and surrounding communities the option to participate in clinical studies close to home.

About Care Access

Care Access is a global clinical research company helping to accelerate the future of medicine. With a global network of over 200 research sites, Care Access supports research studies conducted by 14 of the top 15 biopharmaceutical companies. In addition to its proven track record of globally top-enrolling sites, Care Access partners with new-to-research communities and establishes high-quality research site infrastructure locally to expand access to clinical trials and increase representation.

For research sponsors, Care Access offers three core services: (1) global network of research sites, (2) community screenings to expand a study's reach, and (3) on-demand staffing, space expansion, and training services to support all research sites on a study.

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Jokic has 3rd straight triple-double, Nuggets top Warriors



Golden State Warriors forward Trayce Jackson-Davis, left, and Denver Nuggets guard Christian Braun (0) compete for possession of the ball during the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, in San Francisco. (AP)

Suns burn Lakers

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb 26, (AP): Nikola Jokic had 32 points, 16 rebounds and 16 assists for his third straight triple-double and 18th of the season after his long buzzer-beater against Golden State sealed the last meeting, leading the defending champion Denver Nuggets past the Warriors again in a 119-103 victory Sunday night.

Jokic hit a Stephen Curry-like 40-footer as Denver rallied for a 130-127 win at Chase Center on Jan. 4, then topped Curry and Co. to sweep the four-game season series. On Sunday, Jokic shot 13 for 24 on the way to his 122nd career regular-season triple-double.

Klay Thompson scored 23 points all in the first half and Curry overcame a slow start missing his first seven 3-point tries before finishing with 20 points - all but four scored in the second half. He hit his only 3 with 3:26 left in the third in a 1-for-10 performance from deep. The two-time MVP passed both Dwyane Wade (23,165) for 32nd place and Adrian Dantley (23,177) for 31st on the NBA's scoring list.

Jamal Murray scored 27 points and Aaron Gordon 17 in the Nuggets' seventh consecutive victory against the Warriors and 10th in 11 and also their fifth in a row on Golden State's home floor since a 113-102 defeat on March 10, 2022.

Suns 123, Lakers 113

In Phoenix, Grayson Allen scored 24 points, Kevin Durant added 22 and Phoenix pulled away late in the fourth quarter to beat Los Angeles.

Allen and Royce O'Neale hit 3-pointers on back-to-back possessions to put the Suns up 116-104 with three minutes left. Jusuf Nurkic added 18 points, 22 rebounds and seven assists.

The Lakers trailed by 20 points late in the first quarter, but slowly cut the deficit to 92-90 by late in the third. Phoenix responded with the next six points and didn't trail in the fourth.

LeBron James led the Lakers with 28 points on 12-of-19 shooting and also had 12 assists. Anthony Davis had 22 points and 14 rebounds.

Four Phoenix starters scored at least 20 points and the Suns had a 51-34 rebounding advantage. Devin Booker scored 21 points and O'Neale added 20. Bol Bol had 11 points in 24 minutes off the bench.

Bucks 119, 76ers 98

In Philadelphia, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 30 points, Damian Lillard added 24 and Milwaukee won in Doc Rivers' return to Philadelphia.

Rivers was fired by Philadelphia after last season. He coached the 76ers from 2020-23, never getting past the second round of the playoffs, and Sunday was 12th game since taking over in Milwaukee.

Antetokounmpo also had 12 rebounds and nine assists. Tyrese Maxey had 24 points for Philadelphia. They have dropped eight of 12 games since losing reigning MVP Joel Embiid to a left knee injury.

Thunder 123, Rockets 110

In Houston, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 36 points and Chet Holmgren added 29 to lead Oklahoma City past Houston.

The Thunder won their fifth straight to move back into a tie with Minnesota for the Western Conference lead.

Fred VanVleet and Jabari Smith Jr. had 20 points apiece for the Rockets in

the first of consecutive games between these teams. Alperen Sengun added 19 points and 12 rebounds, while Smith led the team with 17 rebounds.

The teams meet against Tuesday night in Oklahoma City.

Kings 123, Clippers 107

In Los Angeles, De'Aaron Fox scored 33 points, Domantas Sabonis had his NBA-leading 20th triple-double and Sacramento handed Los Angeles its first two-game losing streak since December.

Sabonis finished with 17 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists. Harrison Barnes added 22 points for the Kings, who won their third in a row.

Norman Powell led the Clippers with 21 points in his first start of the season in place of Paul George, who sat out with a sore left knee. Kawhi Leonard added 20 points, as did James Harden, who made all 10 of his free throws to go with eight assists.

Hornets 93, Trail Blazers 80

In Portland, Ore. Nick Richards had 21 points and 10 rebounds and Charlotte took advantage of Portland's horrible 3-point shooting.

BASKETBALL

Portland was 3 of 32 from 3-point range, with two of the makes coming in the final minutes. The Trail Blazers missed 23 in a row at one point in dropping their eighth straight to fall to 15-41.

Miles Bridges added 18 points and 10 rebounds for Charlotte, and Brandon Miller had 17 points. The Hornets improved to 15-42.

Deandre Ayton led Portland with 26 points and 19 rebounds. He was 11 of 16 from field, while the Trail Blazers shot 34.7% overall from the field.

Pacers 133, Mavericks 111

In Indianapolis, Myles Turner scored a season-high 33 points, Tyrese Haliburton had 17 points and 10 assists and Indiana beat Dallas to snap the Mavericks' seven-game winning streak.

Luka Doncic finished with 33 points, six assists and six rebounds for Dallas. Kyrie Irving added 29 points and six rebounds.

Indiana to shoot 56% and make 14 3-pointers.

Hawks 109, Magic 92

In Atlanta, Dejounte Murray had 25 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds, finishing just short of his first triple-double of the season, and Atlanta beat Orlando to snap a three-game skid.

Murray helped offset the loss of All-Star guard Trae Young, who will undergo surgery on his left hand Tuesday and will be re-evaluated in four weeks.

Franz Wagner had 19 points to lead for Orlando, with Paulo Banchemo missing his first game of the season because of an illness.

Cavaliers 114, Wizards 105

In Washington, Jarrett Allen had 22 points and 12 rebounds, Caris LeVert added 18 points and 12 boards and Cleveland beat Washington to avoid its first three-game skid since December.

Evan Mobley added 21 points and Donovan Mitchell had 16 points in his return after missing the first two games following the All-Star break with an illness.

Jordan Poole scored a season-high 31 points for Washington. The Wizards have lost 11 straight to fall to 2-12 under interim coach Brian Keefe.

Bulls 114, Pelicans 106

In New Orleans, Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and 13 rebounds and Chicago beat New Orleans to sweep the season series.

Patty triumphs at home in Thailand

PGA Tour rookie Knapp wins Mexico Open

VALLARTA, Mexico, Feb 26, (AP): PGA Tour rookie Jake Knapp lost a four-shot lead in seven holes and then held it together with a remarkable short game Sunday, closing with an even-par 71 to win the Mexico Open at Vidanta and earn a trip to the Masters.

Knapp said he still sends a text after each round to his grandfather, who died last year, and this message might require a lot of detail.

He didn't hit a fairway until the eighth hole and found only two the entire round. The former UCLA player never lost the lead, but twice allowed Sami Valimaki of Finland to catch him.

They were tied with six holes to play until Knapp took over, getting up-and-down on four of the next five holes, one of them for birdie. It wasn't easy until the end.

Another big par save on the par-3

17th gave him a two-shot lead going to the par-5 18th at Vallarta Vidanta. Valimaki, needing eagle to have a chance, hit his drive down the right side, off a cart path and it nestled next to a boundary fence. He had to take a penalty drop, effectively ending his chances. Valimaki made par for a 69.

Knapp, who finished at 19-under 265, won in his fifth start of his rookie season. Along with winning \$1,458,000 and moving into the top 10 in the FedEx Cup, the 29-year-old Californian is headed to the Masters and PGA Championship. He also gets into the remaining five \$20 million signature events.

In Chonburi, Thailand, Local favorite Patty Tavatanakit closed with a 5-under 67 and held off a hard-charging Albane Valenzuela of Switzerland for a one-shot victory in the Honda LPGA Thailand.

Tavatanakit was coming off a Ladies European Tour victory last week in Saudi Arabia. She hit a superb approach for an easy birdie on the final hole to finish at 21-under 267. It was her first LPGA title since winning the ANA Inspiration in 2021 for her first major.

Valenzuela had a 63, including six birdies on the back nine, to finish alone in second.

Sei Young Kim of South Korea, the 2020 Women's PGA Championship winner, closed with a 65 and tied for third with Hye-jin Choi (66).

Asian tour

Carlos Ortiz ran off seven birdies in a nine-hole stretch in the middle of his round and closed with a 7-under 65 to win the International Series Oman by four shots on the Asian Tour.

The field had 21 players from LIV

Golf, and they occupied five of the top six spots in Oman.

Louis Oosthuizen, going for his third straight win in a tournament recognized by the Official World Golf Ranking, had a 69 to finish second. Joaquin Niemann (67) finished alone in third.

Ortiz began the week with a double bogey and did not drop a shot over the final 71 holes. It was his first victory worldwide since he won on the Mexican Golf Tour a year ago.

In Nairobi, Kenya, Darius van Driel captured his first European tour title in the Magical Kenya Open when he closed with a 4-under 67 for a two-shot victory.

Van Driel, who had to regain his tour card through Q-school last year, started the final round at Muthaiga Golf Club tied with Manuel Elvira of Spain. Van Driel made eagle on the par-5 10th with a 30-foot putt to take his first lead. He

GOLF

held steady down the stretch and closed with a final birdie to win by two.

Nacho Elvira had a 66 and tied for second with Joe Dean (67). Manuel Elvira (70) finished another shot back in a tie for fourth.

PGA tour champions

Ricardo Gonzalez of Argentina made four straight birdies on the back nine and closed with a 3-under 70 for a one-shot victory in the Trophy Hassan II in a tournament that ended Saturday.

Gonzalez got into the field by finishing among the top four on the European Legends Tour last season. The victory gives him PGA Tour Champions membership for the first time.

Thomas Bjorn closed with a 69 to finish one shot behind.

Two-time major champion Angel Cabrera, in his first PGA Tour Champions event since he was released from two years in prison for gender violence, shot 70 and tied for 27th.

Other tours

Bronte Law made up an eight-shot deficit by closing with a 9-under 64 for a three-shot victory in the Lalla Meryem Cup in Morocco on the Ladies European Tour. Pauline Roussin-Bouchard (71) finished second. Maria Fassi, the 36-hole leader, closed with a 76. ... Bjorn Akesson shot 4-under 68 for a one-shot victory over Lee Slattery in the Nelson Mandela Bay Championship. The tournament was co-sanctioned by the Challenge Tour and the Sunshine Tour. ... Altin van der Merwe won the inaugural Africa Amateur Championship in a three-way playoff against Christiaan Maas and Ivan Verster. Kyra van Kan had an easier time, going wire-to-wire in the Africa Amateur Women's Invitational to win by nine shots.

Multan beat Quetta in PSL

Van der Dussen's ton goes in vain

LAHORE, Pakistan, Feb 26, (AP): Rassie van der Dussen's 50-ball century went in vain against Peshawar Zalmi as two-time defending champion Lahore Qalandars lost their fifth straight game in Pakistan Super League cricket on Sunday.

The South African finished unbeaten on a swashbuckling 104 off 52 balls for Lahore in a high-scoring thriller. It wasn't quite enough as Peshawar won by eight runs with Lahore chasing for the first time this season.

Earlier, table-topping Multan Sultans rounded off their home leg by handing Quetta Gladiators a first defeat.

Multan put up 180-4 on the back of half-centuries by Reeza Hendricks (72) and captain Mohammad Rizwan (51). Then fast bowlers Mohammad Ali and David Willey took three wickets each as Quetta was restricted to 167-9 and lost by 13 runs.

Ali is the leading wicket-taker in the tournament with 13. He and Willey struck in the powerplay before Quetta captain Rilee Rossouw, with 30, and Pakistan batting sensation Khawaja Nafay, 36, dragged them back into the game with a 62-run stand.

Rossouw fell to a brilliant low catch by Khushdil Shah in the covers and Nafay was caught off a slower Ali delivery as Quetta's chase slumped to 124-5 in the 15th over.

Earlier, Multan was sent in to bat and Hendricks scored his third half-century in five games.

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Golden State Warriors guard Gary Payton II, right, shoots while defended by Denver Nuggets forward Aaron Gordon, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, in San Francisco. (AP)

NOTICE February 22, 2024

Mr. Przemyslaw Wojciech Ziolk, son of Mr. Zbigniew Marian Ziolk, citizen of the Republic Of Poland, resident of Wiejska 1 B, 32005, Niepolomice, Poland and Mrs. Nikita Vincent Lewis, daughter of Mr. Vincent Lewis, citizen of India, resident of H. no. 119, Rothery, Marul Marushi Road, Andheri E, Mumbai-400059, India, and currently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of their intended marriage under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may submit it to the undersigned in accordance with the procedures prescribed by law/rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. This can be communicated via email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / messages / phone calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125)

(Harit Shelat)
Second Secretary (Community Affairs)
and Marriage Officer,
Embassy of India, Kuwait,
Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in



Left to right photos from the Porsche Club Kuwait festival.

Valuable prizes offered to winners

ABK sponsors Porsche Club Kuwait festival

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is proud to announce its sponsorship and official partnership of the 2024 Porsche Club Kuwait festival. This partnership is in line with the Bank's commitment to social responsibility, focusing on supporting sports and entertainment activities that engage with diverse customer segments in Kuwaiti society, showcasing the Bank's wide range of products and services.

The festival, held in Kuwait Motor Town, was attended by notable figures including Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz, the German Ambassador in Kuwait, officials from Porsche headquarters, Porsche Kuwait, members of the Porsche Club Kuwait, and representatives from other Arab countries. The festival celebrated the 70th anniversary of Porsche Kuwait's partnership with Porsche International and featured a race, rare and special edition Porsche vehicle showcases, and various engaging activities for audiences of all ages.

At the festival, ABK hosted an interactive booth with exciting ac-



Mr. Sager Albenali, Acting Chief Communications Officer

Sager Albenali
ABK is committed to strengthening its presence across all customer segments in society

tivities and competitions, offering valuable prizes to winners. ABK staff were on hand to provide information on the Bank's products, services, and tailored campaigns, catering to the diverse needs of all customer segments.

Sager Albenali, Acting Chief

Communications Officer at ABK, emphasized the Bank's commitment to sponsoring successful community initiatives in line with ABK's evolving corporate social responsibility framework.

He said, "The Porsche Club Kuwait Festival enjoys significant popularity and active engagement among car enthusiasts. ABK's participation in this event was an opportunity to showcase our special banking products, tailored to the diverse needs of all market segments."

Albenali further emphasized that the values of Porsche Club Kuwait align with those of ABK, focusing on raising community awareness, safe driving practices, and providing comfort and safety measures while adapting to evolving customer needs.

He concluded, "ABK is committed to strengthening its presence across all customer segments in society by participating in successful events and partnering with influential organizations, such as Porsche Club Kuwait. Congratulations to hosting such an engaging event."

ISA 'clinches' title in a thrilling finale

IBAK's third edition of Chairman's Cup concludes



Winners pose with fans after the awarding ceremony.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: The Indian Badminton Association Kuwait (IBAK) successfully conducted the 3rd edition of Chairman's Cup at its Salwa Gym (Saad Al Awzi School) on 22nd & 23rd Feb 2024. In a fitting finale to this year's Chairman's Cup 2024, the best team was left holding up the Winner's trophy crushing five other competitive teams with players drawn from across different clubs in Kuwait. The final witnessed the prodigious talents across the badminton community in Kuwait with youngsters stealing a thunder over many accomplished and established seniors. Defending champions, "IBAK Torpedoes" who have made it the finals for three consecutive years ended up as the runners-up of this year's edition. It was indeed a battle of nerves between both the teams where at the end Team ISA lofted the trophy with a 3-2 lead.

BADMINTON

This tournament consisted of 6 teams - IBAK Torpedoes, IBAK Arrows, IBAK Chargers, Team 5.30, IBCK and ISA and was played in a round robin format. Each tie had 5 matches, 1 Professional Men's Doubles, 1 Advanced Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, 1 Above 50 Men's Doubles and a Mixed Doubles. 4 teams out of 6 teams advanced into the knockout stage.

During the final battle while IBAK Torpedoes took the lead by winning the Professional Men's Doubles in a hard-fought nail-biting thriller over their spirited younger opponents. The most consistent pair of Team ISA's advanced doubles ran in to stiff opposition from their lesser fancied opponents with the match going into 3 games and producing yet another nail biting thriller which kept the crowds enthralled throughout, thus levelling the scores to 1-1. The third match of the final tie, the Women's Doubles was won by Team ISA. IBAK Torpedoes fought back to win the Above 50 Men's doubles. Team ISA sealed victory by winning the decider match of the tie, the Mixed Doubles.

IBAK Arrows failing to the IBAK Torpedoes and Team 5.30 to Team ISA respectively in the Semi-Finals. IBAK Chairman's Cup 2024 Teams standings - 1. Team ISA - Winner. 2. IBAK Torpedoes - 1st Runner Up. 3. Team 5.30 - Semi Finalist. 4. IBAK Arrows - Semi Finalist

The Chairman's Cup 2024 prize distribution was done by Dr Manimara Chozhan - Chairman IBAK along with other IBAK committee members. Top 100 badminton players who practice across different clubs in Kuwait, participated in this tournament.

IBAK is committed to improve to badminton in Kuwait. As part of this efforts, IBAK will be concluding Master's Cup 2024 on 11th and 12th April 2024. IBAK can be reached on www.ibakwt.org or ibakcommittee@gmail.com



Participants pose for a group photo before proceedings start.

Bima FC secures title

Indonesians forge bonds through soccer in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 26: Indonesian migrant workers in Kuwait have successfully revived their annual activities, centered on a friendship-driven football league during the winter season. The journey of organizing this event was marked by significant challenges, but the Indonesian Futsal Association in Kuwait, driven by goodwill, managed to overcome uncertainties with support from various entities, including the Indonesian Embassy in Kuwait, Bank Rakyat Indonesia,



League winners Bima FC.



One of the teams preparing for action.

SOCCER

the Indonesian Diaspora Forum in Kuwait, Ridwan Kopi Indonesia, Cita Rasa Culinary Archipelago, Laziz MU in Kuwait, and prominent figures within the Indonesian community.

The event unfolded safely and seamlessly at the Abu Sahil Abu Halifah Sport location every Friday, spanning five weeks from January 19, 2024, to February 23, 2024, from 7 am to 11 pm local time. Five teams participated in this year's football league, namely

RDWN FC, Garangan FC, NUSRA FC, PPK Syabab FC, and Bima FC.

The league commenced with an opening ceremony graced by the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Kuwait, Mrs. Lena Maryana Mukti, and the Republic of Indonesia's labor attaché to Kuwait, Mrs. Ratna Sari Dewi. The closing ceremony, representing the political function minister counselor and head of chancery, was conducted by Mr. R. A Arief, with the social and cultural aspects illuminated by Mrs. Osrinikita Zubhana, the First

Secretary for Information and Socio-Cultural Affairs.

Both the opening and closing ceremonies were meticulously organized by the Chief Executive of Activities, Mrs. Indrit, with Mr. Yahya serving as the chairman of the Indonesian Futsal Association in Kuwait, assisted by other committee members. The league's events featured the singing of the national anthem, Indonesia Raya, led by Ogik G. R., prayers by Hasan Haidarullah, and documentation by Ryan and Rahmat.

This year's league employed a points system, with goal differences determining rankings in case of tied points. The winners were announced, with Bima FC securing the first place, earning a prize of 200 KD along with rotating trophies, regular trophies, and gold medals. RDWN FC claimed the second position, receiving a prize of 160 KD, a regular trophy, and a bronze medal, while NUSRA FC secured the third spot, earning a prize of 120 KD, a regular trophy, and a silver medal. The top scorer,

Captain Azis, was awarded a prize of 20 KD.

In addition to these prizes, all participating teams and supporters were presented with certificates by the committee as a token of appreciation. The spirit of unlimited sportsmanship was emphasized throughout the league program, echoing a memo of unity and camaraderie. The event also extended its heartfelt wishes for Kuwait's Independence Day on February 25-26, 2024.



Left to right some of the winners celebrating at the end of the tournament.





Real Madrid's Rodrygo (right), attempts to kick the ball past Sevilla's Djibril Sow during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Sevilla at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain. Real won 1-0. (AP)

Sports

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India claim series victory over England

Hosts win fourth test by five wickets

RANCHI, India, Feb 26, (AP): India took an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series against England by winning the fourth test by five wickets on Monday.

Chasing 192 to win, India lost five wickets for 36 runs to slip to 120-5 but Shubman Gill and Dhruv Jurel put on a sixth-wicket partnership of 72 to get the hosts over the line.

It was the first test series defeat for England under captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum.

India's victory was set up on Sunday's third day when England collapsed to 145 all out, as the tourists surrendered the initiative after having taken a 46-run lead from the first innings.

England had won the first test in Hyderabad by 28 runs. India responded by winning the second test in Visakhapatnam by 106 runs, and then the third test in Rajkot by 434 runs. The fifth test will be played in Dharamshala from March 7.

"It has been a hard-fought series without a doubt and to come on the right side of it after four tests feels so good," said India skipper Rohit Sharma.

"A lot of challenges were thrown at us but we responded pretty well. We were quite composed in what we wanted to achieve and what we wanted to do on the field. The youngsters have

worked hard to be here at this level and it is encouraging to see them perform like this."

India resumed Monday on 40 without loss. Sharma completed his half-century and seemingly had set his team on course for victory, before England snared three wickets to keep their hopes alive of achieving a dramatic turnaround.

Sharma shared an 84-run opening stand with Yashasvi Jaiswal, before the latter was spectacularly caught by 41-year-old James Anderson off Joe Root for 37 to give the tourists a much-needed breakthrough.

Jaiswal's wicket sparked a mini-collapse as India went from 84-0 to 100-3 inside nine overs as England sniffed a chance of victory.

CRICKET

Left-arm spinner Tom Hartley had Sharma caught behind in the 26th over for 55. It was initially judged as a stumping but, on review, the television umpire also detected an edge from the batter as keeper Ben Foakes held on to a sharp catch.

Off-spinner Shoaib Bashir then had Rajat Patidar caught at short leg for a six-ball duck as India lost its second wicket in eight deliveries.

India went to lunch at 118-3 but the slide continued after the break.

Ravindra Jadeja (4) was caught first ball on the resumption of play. He hit a low full toss off Bashir straight to mid-on. Next ball, Sarfaraz Khan was caught at short leg.

Jurel (39 not out) denied Bashir the hat-trick and then bedded down for a match-winning partnership with Gill.

The 24-year-old Gill was watchful and intent on not taking any risks. He only scored his first boundary after 119 deliveries.

The two batters grew in confidence as they spent time at the wicket, with England's spinners beginning to toil.

Gill (52 not out) hit two sixes to reach his sixth test half-century and brought a swift end to an enthralling match. Jurel, who also scored a crucial 90 in the first innings, was named player of the match in only his second test. "I play according to the demands of the situation," he said.

"In the first innings we needed to get runs as well and it was vital because we had to bat last. In both innings I was involved in important partnerships, so credit to all those who stayed with me and helped add vital runs."



India's Shubman Gill plays a shot on the fourth day of the fourth cricket test match between England and India in Ranchi, India. (AP)

Omani Club bids to host 'prestigious' Gulf Club Cup Winners Championship



Kuwait Club and Maliha players battle for the ball.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al/Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Feb 26: The Omani Club of Oman has officially applied to host the 41st edition of the Gulf Club Cup Winners Championship in March 2025, seeking approval from the Gulf Handball Committee. Younis Al-Azzan, the head of the Omani delegation in the ongoing Gulf Club Championship, expressed the club's desire to organize this prestigious event in the Sultanate next year, revealing that the Gulf Committee has

HANDBALL

granted initial approval for the hosting.

Commending the successful organization of the current edition (40) by Al-Arabi Club and Qatar's warm hospitality, Shabib Al-Hajri, a member of the Gulf Handball Committee, acknowledged that such efficiency is expected from the people of Qatar. Al-Hajri emphasized the significance of the notable teams participating in the tournament, anticipating fierce competition, particularly in the upcoming

rounds.

In recent tournament action, Al-Kuwait secured a well-deserved victory over Maliha from the UAE, finishing with a score of 32-28 (first half, 16-13). This win earned Al-Kuwait the first two points in the second group, which also includes Al-Rayyan Clubs of Qatar and Al-Shabab of Bahrain. The Gulf Championship for the handball cup champion clubs, hosted by Al-Arabi, will continue until March 5.

In the first group, today's matches will feature Al-Dair Al-Bahraini facing Amman of Oman at four in the afternoon, followed by Burgan meeting Al-Arabi of Qatar at six in the evening. The matches are scheduled to take place at Al-Duhail Sports Hall.

Burgan, having suffered a loss against Al-Dair Al-Bahraini the day before with a score of 25-27, aims to recover and secure a spot in the semi-finals despite the challenging task ahead. The team is grappling with a lack of cohesion, with the departure of nearly nine players from the previous season and coach Saeed Hegazy recently taking charge after the conclusion of foreign player participation and delays in the arrival of professionals.



Liverpool's manager Jurgen Klopp lifts the trophy next to Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk as the team celebrates winning the English League Cup final soccer match between Chelsea and Liverpool at Wembley Stadium in London. (AP)

Manager is targeting more after winning League Cup

Liverpool's Klopp Last Dance is off to a flying start

MANCHESTER, England, Feb 26, (AP): Jurgen Klopp's last dance at Liverpool is off to the perfect start.

Klopp steps down as manager at the end of the season and looks determined to go out on a high.

Having collected his eighth trophy with the Merseyside club on Sunday - beating Chelsea 1-0 to win the English League Cup - he is targeting another three before he walks away. The Premier League title, FA Cup and Europa League are still within reach in what could be a glorious finale.

"We know it's that last hurrah and we just want to give our all for him. We always did, but now when the finishing line is in sight it adds that extra emphasis," said defender Joe Gomez after Sunday's win at Wembley. "It's special and hopefully it's the first of a few we can get this year."

References to Klopp's "Last Dance" have started to trend on social media, likening his Liverpool farewell to Michael Jordan's final year with the Chicago Bulls. Jordan won his sixth NBA championship with the Bulls in 1998, which inspired the recent documentary series, The Last Dance.

Now Liverpool fans are savoring their final moments with Klopp, who was hired in 2015 and went on to transform a sleeping giant of English soccer into one of the most dominant forces in Europe again.

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Supporters carried flags and banners with messages of thanks to their outgoing manager as they made the short walk from Wembley Park tube station to the stadium. Singing loudly, it was a party atmosphere long before kick off and they are hoping for one long party before finally saying goodbye.

"It has been a bit sad for everyone, but I think everyone now thinks we're going to push on and do even better than we would have done (this season)," Liverpool fan Nick Knight told The Associated Press. "It was a shock, but probably the right way to do it...I think he's gone out his way."

Occasions like Sunday have become commonplace under Klopp.

He ended Liverpool's 30-year wait for the English league title in 2020 and has won a full set of major trophies including the Champions League, FA Cup, Club World Cup and European Super Cup in a little over eight years.

Not that he is dwelling on that impressive record. "I couldn't care less about my legacy. I'm not here to create one," Klopp said Sunday. "As a manager of a football club, you are there to do the job actually."

Liverpool fans showed their appreciation long after the final whistle as they serenaded Klopp and his players on the field.

"It's not a problem if the manager leaves or whatever, if these people would leave - our supporters - that would be a problem," Klopp said. "But as long as they are the way they are,

Kuwaitis shine in German Open Squash Championship

MUNICH, Feb 26: Kuwaiti national squash team players showcased remarkable performances at the recently concluded German Open Championship.

In the (Under-15) category, Abdullah Hani clinched the top spot by defeating Irish competitor Christine Druckmolly with a convincing 3-0 victory.

In the Under-17 category, Khaled

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Al-Fawzan secured the ninth position, while Fahad Al-Ghais claimed the 11th spot.

Moving to the (Under-19) category, Abdul Rahman Al-Sanea, Abdul Rahman Al-Maghrabi, and Jassim Al-Gharib achieved commendable rankings, securing the 22nd, 28th, and 32nd places, respectively.

Meshaal Al-Sharqawi, the head of the delegation, expressed praise for the Kuwaiti team's overall performance in



Abdullah Hani prepares to return a shot to an opponent.

the tournament. He specifically commended Abdullah Hani's outstanding achievement, highlighting his flawless performance throughout the competition, where he remained undefeated in all rounds.

another Premier League title since.

Erik ten Hag is its fifth permanent manager in that time, with the Dutch coach facing a battle to even secure a top-four finish this season.

Finding someone to fill Klopp's shoes is a daunting task.

"You cannot replace him, you've just got to look at what he's brought to the club. It's not going to happen," Liverpool fan Rob Ferguson told The Associated Press.

Nick Knight added: "He was the first one who brought Liverpool any success in my lifetime so he was huge for me."

His father, Andrew, said: "I think he means everything (to Liverpool). Within a few weeks or months of him arriving it was obvious they were a perfect fit and the type of football he played - high energy, playing to the final whistle - it was everything as a Liverpool fan you wanted to see."



Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson (left), challenges for the ball with Liverpool's Ibrahima Konate during the English League Cup final soccer match between Chelsea and Liverpool at Wembley Stadium in London. (AP)

Messi scores, Miami 'draws' with Galaxy

CARSON, Feb 26, (AP): Lionel Messi scored in the second minute of second-half injury time off a pass from Jordi Alba, and Inter Miami salvaged a 1-1 draw with the LA Galaxy on Sunday night.

Dejan Joveljic scored in the 75th minute for the Galaxy, who were close to delivering a surprising early-season blow to Messi and his new MLS powerhouse before the Argentine superstar worked another bit of magic with LA down to 10 men.

After executing a give-and-go pass sequence with Alba, his longtime Barcelona teammate, Messi slid forward and chipped a shot into the roof of the net above Galaxy goalkeeper John McCarthy.

The goal electrified the raucous crowd at Miami's first road game of the season. Thousands of fans wore Messi shirts among the 27,642 in attendance - a record for a Galaxy regular-season match at their suburban stadium.

Inter Miami is a major betting favorite to dominate MLS this season after uniting Messi

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and Luis Suárez alongside fellow ex-Barca stars Sergio Busquets and Alba. Miami won its season opener at home last Wednesday, but was frequently outplayed by the rebuilding Galaxy four days later in Messi's first appearance against the club that once employed Inter co-owner David Beckham.

The Galaxy are famous for the type of high-profile veteran signings amassed by Miami in the past year, but the LA club is rebuilding without big names this time.

The young Galaxy applied more consistent offensive pressure than the league's new showcase team, racking up 23 shots to Miami's 11 while repeatedly generating chances in the box. Miami responded with physical defense, but couldn't put together a consistent attack despite Messi's playmaking up front.

After generating better chances and controlling possession for much of the night, the Galaxy finally broke through late in the second half.