



HH Amir to usher in Kuwait festivities with flag-hoisting



Amiri Diwan photos
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman during an official reception ceremony for HH the Amir. Inset: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman honoring His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the King Abdulaziz Medal.

Saudi Crown Prince honors HH Amir with King Abdulaziz Medal

RIYADH, Jan 30, (KUNA): On behalf of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud awarded the King Abdulaziz Medal to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a gesture of recognition and appreciation. His Highness, along with an official delegation, visited Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud at Arqa Palace on Tuesday, with the presence of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

Saudi King Salman extended a warm welcome to His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation. The visit focused on highlighting the longstanding ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Concurrently, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud hosted a banquet in honor of His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation.

Leading the Kuwaiti side, His Highness the Amir engaged in of-

icial talks at Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud, who also serves as the Prime Minister and head of the Saudi delegation. The discussions encompassed various issues, including strengthening the existing partnership, fostering cooperation to support Gulf Cooperation Council member countries, and addressing common interests. Both leaders exchanged perspectives on regional and international challenges and shared insights into ongoing developments and collaborative efforts.

Following the state visit, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the official delegation departed from Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. HH the Amir was seen off by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud and several senior state officials.

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KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (KUNA): A flag-hoisting ceremony will be held at Bayan Palace on Wednesday under the patronage and in presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, launching nationwide celebrations to mark the country's national festivals.

This year's celebration of the 63rd anniversary of the National Day and the 33rd anniversary of the Liberation Day ushers in a fresh era and honorable march under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, who has recently taken the helm in succession of the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to lead the country to new horizons of development and progress.

The Kuwaiti people cherish this dear national flag-hoisting occasion, reminiscing the great accomplishments made in all fields and domains and reiterating loyalty and belonging to the dear homeland.

The official flag of Kuwait had seen several changes before its current shape was decided pursuant to an Amiri Decree issued on September 7, 1961, hoisting it on the buildings of all state bodies and agencies for the first time on November 24, 1961, in grand countrywide celebrations.

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Opinion

Aspiration builds countries

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IT is easy to declare any geographical area with a group of people as a state, but it is difficult to succeed and sustain such a declaration, because this is the task of leaders who defy difficulties and endure hardship to achieve their aspirations, which essentially are the aspirations and ambitions of their people.

In this regard, the American bestselling writer Joel Osteen said, "Do not change your nature to please them, do not change your voice to please them, do not violate your principles to agree with them, and do not pretend to gain their satisfaction."

There is no doubt that this principle is implemented by leaders with a vision through which they seek to achieve the basic elements of their state's strength. This requires uniting and mobilizing the people to achieve scientific power in order to direct resources to the productive sectors so that they serve the ultimate goal, which is state leadership.

However, this requires imposing strict standards that qualify officials for this task, starting with approving laws that reinforce unitary social pacts, as there is no distinction between any. Everyone should realize that they are equal in rights and duties, which leads to a clear national identity of the state.

Therefore, the decision-maker's first task is to take into consideration the obstacles in his country's development process. If the laws are retrogressive, he should work to amend them and approve modern legislation that is in line with the global developments and serves his people for greater openness in the future. He should also build a solid industrial base that serves the independence of the state and the people, and create a food security system that does not depend on the outside world.

Nonetheless, the most important element in the success of leaders in achieving their ambitions remains the selection of the most qualified individuals in the right positions so that they do not become a stumbling block in the institution. It is known that bad currency drives out good currency, and the infection of corruption spreads quickly in institutions.

If there is no accountability and belief that the job is a national mission, not an honor, and if the job is assigned to an inappropriate person as a result of favoritism and "wasta", which has been happening in Kuwait for over the past decades, then this leads to the failure of institutions.

Likewise, to achieve renaissance, leaders must look at the countries that preceded theirs, learn from them, take what is good, and work to develop it.

Unfortunately, this did not happen in our country. Instead, an appointment rule was adopted for flooding institutions with a huge number of counterfeits, and granting them social and financial privileges in exchange for certificates that experience has proven that they obtained through bribery. Also, their technical qualifications were not investigated, which led to an uncommon phenomenon in the world, which is the prevalence of forgery of even the simplest matters.

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Day by Day

IT is said, "What goes around comes around," whether good or bad. It will eventually come back to you. Therefore, it is advisable to do good if you want good to return to you.

It is often said that the cleanliness of the body is of little value if tongues and hearts are dirty. Are we in a revolving world, and are we in a midst of filthy tongues and hearts?

The wolf is frank and does not smile at his victims, unlike humans who wear smiles on their faces and carry knives behind their backs.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Kuwait's CPI climbs 4 points

Positive leap

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Kuwait Transparency Society says Kuwait's ranking has improved by four points in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for the year 2023 from 42 points to 46 points, resulting in an increase in its global ranking by 14 places.

Its ranking has risen to fourth place in the Gulf and Arab world, achieving its best improvement since 2015.

In a press statement on the results of the CPI 2023 issued by Transparency International, the society explained that Kuwait's high score is due to the contents of the lofty speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, which had a great impact in affirming the political leadership's keenness to adhere to the Constitution and preserve the sanctity of public funds, and his absolute faith in the judiciary's impartiality.

Hence, a final ruling was issued in the case of the so-called "Army Fund" which has preoccupied the local arena since 2019.

Kuwait has lived through an unprecedented stage of government-parliamentary cooperation in order to move forward with national reform through an agreement on a legislative map that is the first in Kuwaiti parliamentary history.

The measures taken by the government in approving many reforms in the electoral process, including approving the decree to regard civil ID as a register of voters, and the decree for redrawing electoral constituencies and approving the law of the High Electoral Commission, which will have an important role in reforming the electoral system. The government also adopted in its work program institutional governance.

The society called on government agencies to adhere to the national framework and guide for governance, and activate the role of the Financial Investigation Unit after issuing a decree for appointing its head in 2021 and transferring its affiliation from the Minister of Finance to the Minister of Interior.

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PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah presides over the Cabinet's weekly session at Seif Palace.

Cabinet lauds anti-terror op

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (KUNA): The Cabinet held its weekly session Monday evening and highlighted various issues, among them the Interior ministry's successful operation of halting a terror cell plot to launch attack on Shiite worship sites.

A cabinet press statement said, the ministers held their weekly meeting at Seif Palace, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. After the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Shereeda Al-Mousherji, stated the cabinet was informed of the departure of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation on Tuesday, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The ministers later were briefed in details by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, about the arrest and thwarting of a plan by a terrorist cell that intended to target places of worship.

The security operation was managed by the Interior Ministry, and represented by the State Security Service, who foiled the attack and arrested members that belong to a terrorist organization, and referred them to Public Prosecution to take legal action against them.

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MoFA photo
Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets with the Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer at the ministry's headquarters. The Foreign Minister hailed the KRCS' great contributions, projects and activities in and outside Kuwait that aim to serve noble humanitarian goals, and appreciated its fervent efforts to deliver humanitarian, medical and relief aid to affected people around the world, and to promote Kuwait's global status.

12 MPs seek probe into Malaysian Fund

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Abdul Rahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: MP Ahmed Lari has confirmed that the National Assembly is moving to support the brothers in Gaza and Palestine as part of the Islamic, national and humanitarian duty since the Al-Aqsa Flood operation occurred.

In a press statement, he pointed out that the lawmakers met and issued a statement urging everyone to exercise their role towards this principled issue. "Since the beginning of this tragedy until today, Kuwait has not stopped playing the required role, whether at the level of the State, the people or civil society organizations," he added.

He called on the government, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to request an emergency session of the Human Rights Council to discuss the Israeli violations against the Palestinian people, referring to the issuance of a parliamentary statement in this regard signed by 36 representatives.

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Domestic labor market faces new crisis: expert

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: According to the domestic labor affairs expert Munir Al-Osaimi, the domestic labor market in Kuwait is going through a stifling crisis, especially after the issuance of random and non-practical government decisions, in the wake of the Ministry of Commerce's recent decision to reduce the cost of recruiting domestic workers to KD 750, including the flight ticket, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He said this problem reflects negatively and directly on all Kuwaiti families, and has caused severe financial damage to recruitment office owners and employees in this vital sector, which gains its importance from the fact that it serves the Kuwaiti families.

In a press statement, Al-Osaimi warned of the emergence of a new crisis, which will cast its shadow on the domestic labor market in Kuwait.

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'Education decline' on agenda

12 MPs seek probe into Malaysian Fund

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Abdul Rahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi says the tremendous development in artificial intelligence (AI) applications in the health sector is a radical transformation that carries with it unlimited potential to improve the quality of life, as digital health, led by artificial intelligence, has become an essential pillar for developing health systems and dealing with contemporary medical challenges.

In a speech he delivered yesterday during the inauguration of the 16th International Conference of the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences, representing the conference sponsor His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Dr. Al-Awadhi affirmed the importance of prevention and treatment with high efficiency and acceptable cost.

He explained that the conference will be held this year under the title of "Artificial Intelligence... Promoting health and achieving the purposes of Islamic Sharia". It is an opportunity to reflect on how these technologies can be directed towards serving humanity and achieving the goals of Islamic Sharia.

Artificial intelligence, with its enormous potential, holds the promise of enhancing public health and preserving lives, offspring, money, mind, and religion, which are the noble goals that the holy law seeks to preserve.

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NewsWatch

NEW DELHI: India's naval forces rescued an Iranian-flagged fishing vessel hijacked by Somali pirates and freed its 19-member Pakistani crew off the east coast of Somalia, a navy statement said Tuesday.

The rescue operation was the third this week involving Somali pirates and came a day after India's forces freed another Iranian fishing vessel named Iman and its 17 crew members from Somali pirates in the same waters. On Saturday, the Seychelles' defense forces and coast guard rescued six Sri Lankan fishermen whose vessel had been hijacked by Somali pirates. (AP)

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed that his country does not want conflict with Iran, affirming the US will continue to defend their bases in the Middle East.

"The attacks that have taken place since October on our forces, on our personnel in both Iraq and Syria, have been conducted by groups that are aligned with Iran, and indeed are supported by Iran, funded by Iran, equipped by Iran," Blinken said in a joint press conference with Secretary General of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Jens Stoltenberg. (KUNA)

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that there will be no military withdrawal from Gaza or the release of thousands of jailed militants, two key demands of Hamas in ongoing indirect cease-fire talks.

During an event in the occupied West Bank, he once again vowed that the war will not end without "absolute victory" over Hamas.

"We will not end this war without achieving all of our goals," he said. "We will not pull out the Israeli military from the Gaza Strip and we will not release thousands of terrorists." (AP)

'AI's role vital in healthcare'

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

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:17 Asr 15:03
 Sunrise .. 06:39 Maghrib .. 17:24
 Zohr 12:01 Isha 18:44

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild with light to moderate northeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for light fog forming at night.

Weather

By Night: Rather cold to cold with light variable wind to light to moderate northerly wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear and a chance for light fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	20	16
Kuwait Airport	22	15
Abdaly	23	12
Jahra	22	14
Salmiyah	20	16
Nuwaib	22	17
Wafra	22	12

FM hails 125 years of 'exceptional' Kuwait-UK ties

Top diplomats, officials attend reception at UK embassy

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (KUNA): The Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya affirmed on Tuesday that Kuwait was proud of its strong historical and exceptional relations with United Kingdom, and that his country would seek all venues to bolster ties.

This came during Minister Al-Yahya's reception of the British Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden who is visiting Kuwait to launch the year of the Kuwaiti-British Partnership 2024.

Minister Al-Yahya stated that this visit came within the framework of the commemoration of the 125th anniversary since the signing of the Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement in 1899.

Believing in the importance of reviving and celebrating this historical event, both governments signed an agreement to declare 2024 the Year of Kuwaiti-British Partnership during the visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, then Crown Prince, to the United Kingdom last August.

The exceptional relations between the two nations has flourished over more than a century and branched out to include all fields, it was established through the historical and honorable positions of the two countries and through mutual solidarity and continues cooperation.

The minister recalled with gratitude the positions of British solidarity with Kuwait to ensure the independence and sovereignty of Kuwait, like the British position on the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Minister Al-Yahya pointed out that the Kuwait Investment Office's 71-year presence in London contributed to the economic support for both countries and became one of the most important and largest sovereign funds worldwide.

He added that the number of Kuwaiti students on scholarships to study in the United Kingdom reached record levels, about 9,500 students, as the United Kingdom is one of the first major destinations for Kuwaiti students.

At the end of his statement, Minister Al-Yahya said that the two nations are committed to continuing broaden and strengthen the bilateral relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom for more developments at all levels.

MoD lauds ties with UK

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah underscored the longstanding and strategic Kuwaiti-British relationship, marked by consistent cooperation, particularly in security and defense.

In a press statement released Tuesday, MoD quoted Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Sabah as saying, after his participation in the ceremony at the British Embassy marking the 125th anniversary of diplomatic ties between both sides, that the Kuwaiti-British bilateral relations are founded on partnership, friendship, and collaboration across various domains, particularly in security, defense, investment, culture, and education.

Ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration in the defense sector, particularly in education and joint military training, highlight the exceptional military relationship between both nations, he explained.

Assistant Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti MoD Sheikh Dr. Shamayel Ahmad Khaled Al-Sabah attended the celebration along with several military officers from the UK.

Yesterday, the British Embassy hosted a reception to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the establishment of historical ties between both countries, which was attended by senior officials from both sides, and several heads of diplomatic missions.

Amiri Diwan lauds ties

Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said on Monday that the State of Kuwait takes great pride in its exemplary relations and cooperation with the United Kingdom.

"The exemplary historical relations keep growing under the sovereign care of the political leadership of Kuwait, at the core of which is His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," he said in a speech to a celebration marking the 125th anniversary of the relations.

The function, held by the British Embassy, gathered visiting UK Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State in the Cabinet Office Oliver Dowden and Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as heads of diplomatic missions in Kuwait.

Affairs Sheikh Mohammad said the two countries decided to declare 2024 a year of the Kuwait-UK partnership as per a memorandum of understanding signed in last August 29 during the visit to the United Kingdom by His Highness the Amir - the then crown prince.

"The relationship keeps growing and deepening thanks to the historic stances and solidarity in all areas, particularly when it comes to the protection of Kuwait's security and stability, and the promotion of the prosperity of both countries," the minister noted.

"The state-to-state and people-to-people exchanges also add momentum to the friendly relations," he added.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah noted that economic cooperation between both countries has seen milestones since the establishment of the Kuwait Investment

Office (KIO) in London more than seven decades ago.

KIO turned to be one of the world's biggest sovereign funds with volume of investments amounting to nearly USD 300 billion in Europe and the two Americas, including USD 40 inside the UK, he said, noting that the Kuwaiti investments helped create up to 150,000 jobs in the UK so far.

On the other hand, the British companies are active in the State of Kuwait in collaboration with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) in such areas as information technology, insurance, and the oil and gas industry, he noted, adding that the British investments amount in value to KD five million (nearly USD 16.2 million).

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah recalled UK's supportive stances of Kuwait right to protect its security and independence since 1920, including during the incidents of 1961 and the honorable stance against the Iraqi brutal invasion of 1990.

On his part, the UK Deputy Prime Minister expressed pleasure for designating 2024 a year of Kuwait-UK partnership, saying that the partnership is one of the most important sources of strength and resilience of both sides in the face of challenges.

The diplomatic relationship doesn't tell the whole story as the two countries a friendship spanning over 125 years since the signing of the UK-Kuwait agreement, Dowden added in a similar speech to the celebration.

Meanwhile, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis said the relations between both nations made headway in various fields, in economy, politics, culture and society.

Recalling the milestones of 1961 and 1991 in the defense and security cooperation, she said the decades-long partnership has other wonderful aspects.

Ambassador Belinda added that Kuwait offered great contributions to the UK.

'Partner, important ally'

The State of Kuwait is a close partner and an important to Britain, said visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State in the Cabinet Office Oliver Dowden late Monday.

Speaking to KUNA on his visit to commemorate 125 years of Kuwaiti-British diplomatic ties, Dowden affirmed that the close relationship between the ruling families of Britain and Kuwait had continued to feed and strengthen the exceptional ties linking both nations.

The strength of the decades-long relations between the UK and Kuwait was exemplified in the British participation in the operations to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion, he affirmed.

The British official also reflected keenness on meeting Kuwaiti officials including His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and others during the celebrations to mark 125 years of diplomatic relations.

In 2024, several Kuwaiti-British functions would be held to commemorate the decades-long diplomatic ties, Dowden said, who revealed that his current visit to the State of Kuwait would be exploring opportunities to expand ties on all possible domains especially cybersecurity and investments.

The UK has much to offer in terms of investments due to the secure and stable economic atmosphere, Dowden pointed out, adding that Britain was also eager to share its expertise in the military and security fields in addition to cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.

The British official also said that this year would be witnessing the launch of the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), which Kuwaitis would be able to use by February 22 to ease travel procedures and stay in the UK.

In regards to the situation in the region, namely the Gaza Strip, the British official displayed his country's commitment to reach a ceasefire there and enabling the entry of humanitarian aid and release of hostages.

If all parties acted in good faith, a permanent ceasefire could be reached and from there, a two-state solution could be implemented, he said.

UK For. Sec. hails ties

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron welcomed the 125th anniversary celebrations of Kuwaiti-British partnership, commending the longstanding bilateral diplomatic ties.

This came during the Annual Arab Ambassadors Reception, held last Monday by the Conservative Middle East Council (CMCE) under the patronage of Kuwait Embassy in the UK, where they welcomed 125th anniversary celebrations of Kuwaiti-British partnership.

Cameron expressed gratitude to Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Bader Al-Awadhi for sponsoring the reception, and commended the historical Gulf-Middle East-British ties, stressing CMCE's role in bringing UK politicians and the region's leaders together.

Regarding the war against Gaza, he stressed the importance of providing humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza, noting that he appointed a special envoy during his visit to the Middle East last week to find out the reasons preventing aid from reaching the afflicted throughout the week, especially water and electricity.

He explained that the next step should be a ceasefire that lasts for years, finding a peaceful political solution by working with partners and allies to guarantee a better future for both sides, and establishing a Palestinian State.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah during his participation in the British Embassy's celebration of the 125th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations.



KUNA photos of leadership at the British Embassy's celebration of the 125th anniversary of the establishment of relations between the two countries.

Kuwait, UK discuss boost ties in cyber-security field

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (KUNA): Head of Kuwait National Cyber Security Center Eng. Mohammad Bouarki met with Oliver Dowden, UK's Deputy prime minister, Monday, to discuss boosting cooperation in cyber security and exchange experiences to develop IT infrastructure.

NCSC-KW released a statement after the meeting where both sides discussed the relationship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom that goes 125 years back.

They stressed the importance of cooperation in qualifying national employees and strengthening partnerships in the academic field, which contributes to developing the skills and capabilities of the human element and achieving a secure cyberspace to protect state institutions.

According to the statement, this visit came within the framework of (cybersecurity) efforts to enhance cooperation with friendly countries in relevant fields and an embodiment of the level of cooperation and strategic relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom.

Kuwait's Amir state visit to Saudi epitomizes close ties

By Khaled Al-Shimmari

RIYADH, Jan 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's inaugural visit since taking office will be to Saudi Arabia, a choice selection that a number of Saudi journalists hailed as a testament to the breadth of bilateral relations.

It is only apropos that His Highness Kuwait's Amir has chosen Riyadh as his first destination for a foreign trip since taking office, Saudi-based Akath newspaper's chief editor Jamil Al-Thayabi told KUNA, underlining such relations as based on a "mutual consensus" on issues ranging from political to social matters.

Riyadh and Kuwait are bound by "historic and brotherly" relations thanks in part to their "in-

tertwin" fates, he added, citing such proximity as instrumental in ushering in development and prosperity in the two Gulf Arab neighbors.

Echoing his sentiments, Muafek Al-Nuwaisir, the chief editor of Saudi Makkah newspaper, agreed that His Highness the Amir's visit to the kingdom on Tuesday encapsulates the amity between the two countries, saying he was sanguine that the visit would set in motion more progress in relations.

The chief editor of Arab Middle East International Zaid bin Kama and Saudi political analyst Munif Al-Harbi both agreed that the visit by the Kuwaiti Amir would pay dividends in terms of pushing forward a number of bilateral agreements, all of which would prove beneficial to the wider region.



Members of the jury and officials for the event.

14th Int'l Invention Fair (ME) kicks off in Kuwait next Sunday

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (KUNA): Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the 14th International Invention Fair in the Middle East (IIFME) will kick off in Kuwait Sunday February 4th with the participation of 40 countries.

In a press statement, Chairman of the Kuwait Science Club and the Organizing Committee of IIFME Talal Al-Kharafi said that the four-day event will bring together a plethora of the most regional and international scientific and inven-

tion organizations.

He hailed His Highness the Amir's patronage of the fair as a clear evidence on the Kuwaiti leadership's unlimited support to science and scientists.

Head of the IIFME fair Jury David Farooqi stated that 40 Arab and foreign countries that have submitted more than 200 inventions to the jury.

Twenty one Kuwaiti inventors are taking parting in the event with 14 inventions, rep-

resenting several scientific bodies, namely the Kuwait University and the Kuwait Research Institute, Scientific Center, Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity and others, he noted.

He added that the jury comprises about 60 academics and specialists in all scientific fields.

The IIFME's first edition was held in 2007, and since then it has been raising the bar higher to become one of the largest specialized exhibition of inventions in the Middle East.

Antigua, Barbuda send felicitations

Japan emperor congrats HH Amir

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday a cable of congratulations from the Japanese Emperor Narohitu on His Highness' power assumption.

The Japanese Emperor, in the cable, wished His Highness the Amir success in the development of State of Kuwait and hoped he would enjoy lifelong good health.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal reciprocated with a cable to the Emperor, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the good sentiments and wished him lifelong wellness.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday a cable of congratulations from Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda Rodney Williams for assuming the top office.

Williams wished His Highness the Amir good health, and further progress and prosperity for his country and people.

His Highness the Amir sent a cable to the president, expressing his utmost appreciation for the kind words, wishing him long-lasting health.

Also, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Tuesday a phone

call from his Kosovan counterpart Donika Gervalla, congratulating him on his new post.

Gervalla expressed her best wishes and success for the minister and looked forward to joint work that contributes to strengthening and enhancing relations between the two countries.

National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun said that the swearing-in of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as Deputy Amir, in the extraordinary session Monday, established a new precedent in the country's history.

During the session, dedicated to swearing-in the Deputy Amir, Al-Saadoun mentioned in a speech that he attempted to review all precedents, but found no similar instances, clarifying that the Amiri Decree appointing His Highness the Prime Minister as Deputy Amir outlined two key points.

The first point, detailed in article one of the decree, indicated that the appointment remained valid throughout the periods of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's absence from the country.

CSC ends services of experts in Education

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has informed Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani about its decision to stop utilizing the services of certain employees, indicating that their last day at work is on Jan 31, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the commission's circular stating: "With reference to Decree number 1/2024, Your Excellency is kindly requested to instruct those concerned to work on the following: end the services of retirees or non-retirees whose expertise were previously sought outside the official working hours, other than their original workplaces. The last day of seeking assistance from those mentioned in the previous item shall be on Jan 31, 2024."

Meanwhile, the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani recently issued a decision to stop the registration and enrollment of Kuwaiti students in the bachelor's program specializing in human medicine at Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), reports Al-Anba daily.

The decision stipulates that every contradicting text shall be cancelled and this should be applied on the date of issuance, indicating the competent authorities must be aware of it and act accordingly.

Chilly nights in Gaza swamp and 'mind-boggling' silence

"IT'S winter, and the sun sets swiftly, turning the sky into densely packed clouds carrying abundant cold water, sometimes even snow. In this season, some of us adapt to the changing temperatures, while others complain about the cold winds and rain. Winter elicits varied responses, with some cherishing the season's charm, while others long for the warmth of summer, even amid power cuts and scorching urban heat," columnist **Khawla Matar** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Amongst these seasonal considerations, a poignant contrast emerges in Gaza. Winter there is not just about chilly nights; it brings darkness, no electricity, water scarcity, communication breakdowns, and a struggle for basic necessities."

"Since October 7th, life in Gaza has been marked by deprivation, causing hardship beyond the temporary inconveniences we complain about. While we contemplate skiing or desert trips, the children of Gaza face the harsh reality of seeking food and water, running from bombs, and coping with the challenges of displacement."

"As some of us plan European sojourns to experience winter's chill with cozy coats, the people of Gaza sift through the rubble, seeking remnants of life amid war's devastation."

"The global indifference to their plight becomes even more starkly evident during this season. The freezing rain transforms their makeshift shelters into swamps, and their struggle for survival intensifies under the constant threat of war."

"Winter serves as a metaphor for the ongoing conflict in Palestine, where war and oppression persist even as nature adds its own adversities."

"The people of Gaza face relentless challenges, and their suffering is exacerbated by the indifferent attitudes of some and the relative silence of others. As we see images of warm clothes on billboards in nearby cities, Gaza's reality is starkly different – remnants of homes, shattered lives, and the continuing struggle for survival."

"It is a plea for recognition of the plight of the people of Gaza, a call for empathy amid the global narrative of warmth and festivity. Winter in Gaza is not just a season; it's a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle for human rights, dignity, and a life free from conflict."

Also:

"With the prevailing political and administrative models, achieving economic reform and diversifying income sources seems unattainable. The recent account sheds light on the fear and intimidation experienced by senior politicians, including ministers, in the face of inquiries from conservative representatives or bold Twitter rhetoric," columnist **Hassan Al-Issa** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Faisal Khaja, an owner of an artistic activities company primarily staffed by Kuwaitis, faced an abrupt ban on public concerts in solidarity with Gaza, disrupting his scheduled events."

"Seeking clarification from Information Minister Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi on the ban's duration, Faisal received a vague response. The impact on individuals, private institutions, and their employees dependent on timely payments is substantial."

"While public sector employees enjoy regular salaries, those in the private sector, who bear the burden of employment, face uncertainty."

"Despite the initial ban lasting forty days, the minister remains unresponsive, leaving individuals and institutions hostage to bureaucratic inertia."

"The ban on parties, ostensibly in solidarity with Gaza, appears more as a clumsy maneuver than a genuine expression of grief."

"The minister's reluctance to engage with concerns reveals a systemic issue -- leading ministers lack the courage to respond to criticism, legislative comments, or social media."

"The inability of these ministers to engage in rational discourse or respond effectively to representatives' objections raises questions about their suitability for their roles; the fear and apprehension displayed by these leaders in the face of criticism suggest a lack of confidence and an inability to navigate the political landscape. The need for a more open and accountable approach in Kuwait's political realm is evident."

"Terrorist cells! In the State of Kuwait, by the grace of the generous Allah, every citizen and expatriate is guaranteed freedom of expression and worship according to the provisions of the Kuwaiti Constitution, and whoever does not like the situation in the country can leave safely. Therefore, it is very difficult for the thought of extremism, 'takfirism' and its attachments to spread among us, so what the ISIS, its extremist ideology and its 'Takfiri' approach have done to the State of Kuwait? We utter these words in view of the statement of the Ministry of Interior that an ISIS cell consisting of three Tunisians was arrested, along

with Kuwaitis whose number was not revealed. They were referred to the Central Prison pending investigation. This is the content of the mysterious statement of the ministry!" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Within a decade, or in our modern history with terrorism, the 'Jazeera Lions Cell' of Sunni extremists was discovered. We saw them with our own eyes on television, as well as the 'Abdally Cell' of Shiite extremists. We even saw the storage of weapons. Both cells were released through the recent Amiri pardon. Before the death of our HH the late Amir, may Allah have mercy on him, even those who were sentenced to life imprisonment were pardoned. No one dared to object out of respect for our HH the late Amir, may Allah have mercy on him!"

"Now, it is said that the discovered cell is from the Tunisian brothers, who are basically a few. Where did they come from? Who brought them into the country and in what capacity? It is impossible that they were parachuted from the sky, especially since we neither saw the cell on television nor what you are hiding from us, considering the cell members intend to blow up Shiite mosques in Kuwait. I am not saying Shiites, because every country has its own characteristics. In this country, we are all Shiites and we are all Sunnis, united by love for the homeland, and loyalty to it in general. We do not judge the deviants of Al-Qaeda!"

"The important questions that the Kuwaiti street is searching for an answer to are: Where did our Tunisian brothers come from? How did they enter the country? How did they carry out their terrorist activity? Who supports them in Kuwait? Where did they hide?"

"All of these questions need answers. The ordinary Kuwaiti citizen must hear the answers, unless this harms the investigation, or the pursuit of other cells -- active or dormant!"

"It is difficult for the Kuwaiti people to take the issue as it stands. It is also difficult for them to be convinced about an ambiguous issue."

"Finally, we, as citizens, are required to be directly concerned about the terrorists issue. When a Shiite mosque is bombed, the Sunni neighbor is affected, and vice versa."

"What do these extremists want from us? Who among us have embraced terrorism? What do the terrorists want from us and our country?"

"If the information is correct, then the person who fell into the trap is much bigger than the bird, or there are other things that they do not want us to know, especially since we did not see the raid operation, similar to what happened with the 'Abdally Cell' and what came before it. We are looking for someone who will tell us something that makes sense. I think this is our right...Good."

"We are not concerned about what is happening in the corridors of the Ministry of Public Works -- whether one minister leaves and another comes, or an agent retires and another takes his place. We neither care about the inspection tours conducted by every new official who comes to this ministry nor the name of the minister who left and the name of the one who took over," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"What really matters for us as citizens is rebuilding the roads in our country. I do not say repairing the roads, as repair is no longer useful, because the situation has worsened and repair has been delayed for a long time. This happened after we believed the lie of international companies for three lean years. Our roads have become traps where cars overturn, while the potholes are, to say the least, fatal, claiming lives and properties, not to mention the flying gravel."

"Perhaps, the Abdally and Salmi roads are the best evidence, as the matter has reached the point of accidents leading to deaths due to the poor condition of the roads and the large number of potholes. The condition has become unpleasant, up to the point that we are now afraid to go out as we might fall into a pothole due to which the car will overturn or being hit by road users who avoid the potholes!"

"Frankly speaking, we are the ones who end our troubles with the roads, not the minister, an agent or even the ministry's office, and definitely not the municipal office -- the one with the famous story in the history of the Municipality! The important thing is bitumen."

"Those concerned should know that the general condition of the roads in the country is no longer tolerable. Even the bridges are ruined and have many potholes. The worst thing is that the potholes are not treated, they are rather left as they are until they become a graveyard for cars. There are no teams to undertake immediate repairs or rescues. What can be saved? We no longer see the sign that says: 'Road Work Ahead'."

"The important questions are: Do senior officials use roads other than the ones we use, so they do not feel what we feel? Do they avoid the bridges on the Fourth and Second Ring Roads? Do they not visit Abdally on the weekend? Do they have a country other than ours, which we love dearly? Is it reasonable for a lover to neglect his beloved...Good?"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



A Kuwaiti citizen buys a sheep.

'Slaughter of female sheep ban leads to rise in prices'

Decision ill-considered: Al-Wasidi

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The livestock market does not need a new fuse to ignite prices, as the decision that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued in the middle of this month to ban the slaughter of female sheep led to a remarkable price hike, reports Al-Rai daily.

The decision, which aims to preserve livestock in the country and stabilize prices, backfired as the price of sheep increased due to Article Two, which prohibits the slaughter of female sheep unless they are old, injured or sick according to a certificate issued by the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAAFR); especially since the prices already increased as the holy month of Ramadan is fast approaching.

The daily's staff visited Safat and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh to personally look into the prices and ask for the opinion of the people in this regard.

Badr Nasser Al-Shammari, a citizen, disclosed that he purchased a 'rakhla' (local female sheep) at a price of KD120; but the slaughterhouse refused to slaughter the sheep in view of the ministry's decision in this regard, so he had to return the sheep to the owner. He got his money back, but he felt disappointed as he did not achieve his goal. He then called on the ministry to reconsider the decision.

Another citizen, Badr Al-Ali, pointed that "prices are high even before Ramadan, so how much high could be prices during the holy month? Prohibiting the slaughter of female sheep is an ill-considered decision, because 60 percent of the imported live sheep are females, which are imported

for consumption, not for breeding."

Abu Dawoud, also a citizen, urged the ministry to reconsider its decision or exclude the imported female sheep as their prices are suitable for the consumers. He warned: "Continuing the implementation of the decision will raise prices further, as we are now approaching the month of Ramadan. In addition, the local product does not cover 20 percent of the market's need for live sheep. The current prices of imported Al-Naimi range from KD130 to KD170, and from KD100 to KD130 for Al-Shafali; while the prices of local sheep are higher by at least KD30."

Meanwhile, Head of the Kuwait Society for Livestock and Food Security Jamal Al-Wasidi expressed his rejection of the decision No. 8/2024 issued by the former minister of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Al-Aiban, stipulating not to slaughter female livestock that have not reached the age of production, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Wasidi said this decision is ill-considered, as the livestock breeders would have to bear additional costs because they were unable to sell their female livestock.

He called on the Ministry of Finance to increase subsidies to KD ten million and include filler feed among them.

Regarding the parallel issue of feed prices, Al-Wasidi said they are somewhat acceptable.



Al-Wasidi



Firemen at the site of collapse.

Four injured in padel court ceiling collapse

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: A distressing incident occurred in Salmiya as the roof of a padel court collapsed, resulting in four individuals sustaining injuries. The incident unfolded on Tuesday afternoon, prompting the swift response of General Fire Force teams from the Salmiya and Search and Rescue Centers, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to a blog post shared by the fire force on the "X" platform, the teams efficiently managed the aftermath of the roof collapse at Kirby, one of the prominent padel courts in the vicinity. The teams successfully cleared the debris, marking a crucial step in the emergency response.

The report confirmed that four individuals were injured as a result of the incident. The injured parties were promptly attended to by medical emergency services after being extricated from the site.

'Valuable' sheep picked up

Jewelry worth KD 8,000 snatched from expat's flat

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: An unidentified Kuwaiti, born in 1971, has filed a complaint with the Al-Ashqaniya Police Station, alleging the theft of three sheep from his Abdali farm. The reported value of the stolen livestock is estimated at 1,000 dinars, as per the Al-Anba daily.

Jewelry stolen: Following directives from the Deputy Public Prosecutor, a forensic evidence team has been deployed to investigate the theft of gold jewelry valued at over 8,000 dinars belonging to an expatriate family, reports Al-Anba daily.

The incident involved forced entry into the apartment located in Hawally, Block 6, Al-Muthana Street.

A complaint at the area police station has been filed by the head of the family, an expatriate, born in 1989.

He said the theft occurred while he was away with his family, suggesting the suspect may be someone known to the family and knew where the valuables and money were kept.

'Don't carry liquor': Customs officers at the Nuwaiseeb port have arrested an unnamed individual for attempting to smuggle two bottles of alcohol. The suspect, arriving from an undisclosed Gulf country, had concealed the booze bottles under the passenger seat of the car, reports Al-Anba daily.

30 illegals, 20 criminals held; 600 citations issued

Return of security checkpoints on key roads

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: In adherence to the directives issued by the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, emphasizing the need to intensify security and traffic efforts nationwide, authorities recently conducted comprehensive campaigns to apprehend violators and maintain law and order. The objective was to sternly address any threat to the country's security and uphold traffic regulations. The operations, overseen by Major General Abdullah Al-Rajaib, Assistant Undersecretary of Public Security, Major General Yousef Al-Khuda, Director of the General Traffic Department, and Brigadier General Fares Al-Qahtani, Director of the General Department of Rescue, were executed in various regions, reports Al-Rai daily.

Conducted over a six-hour period, beginning at eleven o'clock in the evening and concluding at dawn, the campaigns focused on key areas such as Jaber Al-Ahmad, Saad Al-Abdullah, Kairouan, and the Second Ring Road. The deployment of patrols and estab-

lishment of security checkpoints were key components of the strategy, aimed at ensuring continuous security presence and preventing any potential disruptions to the safety of citizens and residents.

During the operations, 30 individuals were apprehended for violating residency laws, while over 20 others faced charges related to drug possession, abuse, and imprisonment sentences. A total of 600 traffic violations were issued to reckless drivers, and judicially wanted vehicles were seized. Additionally, six vehicles failing to meet security conditions were subjected to a block.

The campaigns involved the strategic distribution of security personnel across various regions, with Public Security patrols covering Jahra Governorate and joint efforts from the General Department of Rescue and the General Traffic Department in the capital and Jahra. The "Rasid" device played a crucial role in the identification of wanted individuals and violators, expediting the process and allowing authorities to



Traffic police checking documents of a motorist.

issue violations promptly through the Sahl application.

Security sources emphasized that these campaigns aim to safeguard citizens and residents, acting as a deterrent to anyone contemplating actions that may destabilize security or violate the law. The initiatives align with the directives of the senior leadership within the Ministry of Interior, with a commitment to maintaining daily operations to ensure the country's overall security.

Minister queried

MP: How secure are we?

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Amidst the ongoing preparations to address both local and international security challenges, and in light of recent news regarding the increased use of offensive military actions, exemplified by the attack on an American base on the Jordanian-Syrian border, MP Badr Al-Mullah raised crucial questions directed at Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Mullah sought clarity on the existence of specialized systems within the Ministry of Interior, particularly in land and sea border security, for detecting intruders on and under land and water borders. Additionally, he inquired about the presence of systems against drones (cat1 or cat2) within the General Administration of Coast Guard and the General Administration of Border Security.

The MP also sought information on the number of boats purchased since 2013, including details on the companies involved in manufacturing, supplying, and maintaining these boats. Al-Mullah requested specifics on the committee overseeing the radar system project's second phase, including the names of its head and members, the number of external visits, and participating companies.

Highlighting concerns about financial and administrative violations in the tender for Turkish-made boats, Al-Mullah requested the contract value, reasons for invalidity, and relevant reports from the Audit Bureau and investigation committees. He questioned whether interceptor boats from the American company Tampa had been recently procured, seeking details on the concluded contract, committee members, the local company involved, and the field trial report.

Further inquiries were made regarding foreign visits to private factories manufacturing military boats since 2013. Al-Mullah asked for details on the committee overseeing the exercise of qualifying companies specialized in manufacturing, supplying, delivering, and guaranteeing (15) multi-mission military cruisers, emphasizing concerns about limiting competition and the impact on tender prices.



Sheikh Fahd

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Minister extends support for charitable activities in Kuwait

'Help Your Muslim Brother' Committee launches 48th charity bazaar



Minister Sheikh Firas Al-Malik Al-Sabah patronizes opening of charity bazaar.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The 'Help Your Muslim Brother' Committee, which is affiliated to the International Islamic Charitable Organization, recently opened its charity bazaar under the slogan, "Kuwait Al-Khair", with the patronage and presence of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Malik Al-Sabah at St. Regis Kuwait Hotel, reports Al-Anba daily.

This is the 48th edition of the bazaar that features products made by Kuwaiti hands, characterized by a sophisticated taste reflecting the preferences of girls and women in the Kuwaiti society; including jewelry, handicrafts, furnishing, sheets, shields, gowns, wraps, shawls, home accessories, tableware, perfumes, silverware, and traditional and popular foods.

In a statement to reporters, Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah affirmed his unwavering support for charitable activities in the country. He praised the efforts of those engaged in charitable activities.

He stated: "I was honored to open the charity bazaar organized by the committee. We thank them for the tremendous efforts they exerted to

organize such an event. While looking at various sections of the bazaar, I witnessed the joy of supporting national youths in organizing successful projects. I wish them good luck and more success."

Meanwhile, Chairperson of the committee Nasiba Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa disclosed the bazaar has been going on for many years and the regulars now come with their grandchildren and third-generation participants, as they are raised in charitable work.

She disclosed that she explained during her cordial conversation with Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah that the committee is raising generations to do good, and this is natural, because the Kuwaiti people have been built on the love for goodness and giving even before the discovery of oil. She pointed out there are many models in history, as the people of this land love to give.

She added: "We carried out this task, thanks to Allah, first and foremost, and then thanks to the upbringing of previous and current generations. We invite everyone to visit the bazaar to personally witness the efforts of our youths. This work is for you and it remains

through your contributions. Whatever you offer is for Allah, and then for all of us in this good country."

She revealed the visiting hours for the bazaar are from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, indicating it continues until Tuesday. "Every year, we are waiting for everyone. Our goal is to establish charitable works in Kuwait. Thanks to Allah, Kuwait is one of the first countries in the field of charitable and humanitarian work throughout the world. Our Amir is the Amir of humanity, as per the testimony and evaluation of the people," she added.

Talking about the committee's achievements and projects, Al-Mutawa said: "We have more than one project, but our focus now is covering the tuition fees and other expenses of students in Kuwait."

In addition, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Muhammad Al-Mutair praised the efforts of the female members of the committee. He affirmed the importance of their role in volunteer work and extending a helping hand to others, indicating this gives distinction to Kuwait and embodies the act of giving through charitable work.

Farmers Union seeks more support to enhance agricultural production

Government pledges KD 8-10 million in aid

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Head of the Kuwait Farmers Union Jaber Al-Azmi affirmed that the union is currently exerting a lot of efforts and will coordinate with the government soon to increase the support for Kuwaiti farmers from KD 10 million to KD 25 million due to the increase in the number of farms, which

ranges from 8,000 to 10,000 farms.

In an exclusive statement to Al-Seyassah, Al-Azmi explained that increasing support will help Kuwaiti farmers increase productivity to a greater extent, especially since coordination is now being made to export Kuwaiti agricultural products to the markets of neighboring countries as a result of the current surplus in Kuwaiti agricultural products, such as tomatoes, which are sold for 50 fils per kilo. Increasing support will compensate many farmers who were exposed to crises as a result of the lack of firmness in displaying the Kuwaiti ag-

ricultural products.

The government, which responded to the union's demands to increase support for farmers from KD 8 million to 10 million, hopes that it will extend a helping hand to farmers and raise the value of support in light of the high costs of agriculture, especially since they are no longer sufficient.

Al-Azmi said, "The country will witness a renaissance in all fields during the era of Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah's presidency of the government due to his experience and sophistication. Therefore, the government will stand with Kuwaiti farmers and eliminate all obstacles to which they are exposed."

Chairman urges compassion

Patient Aid Fund celebrates 45th year journey with new Ramadan campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Patient Aid Fund Association Dr Muhammad Al-Sharhan has affirmed everyone's keenness to benefit from the holy month of Ramadan and its spiritual gifts, which prompt people of faith and charity to give more to deserving people during such blessed days, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Sharhan said in a press statement on the occasion of the launching of the new Ramadan campaign under the slogan, "Our Success: A 45-Year-Old Journey", that the health conditions experienced by patients who cannot afford medicines require everyone to continue making an effort to meet the patients' needs.

He added: "Thanks to Allah Almighty and the support of benefactors and charitable people, we were able to provide humanitarian support for patients in need inside the country through the management of local and external activities, through which we provided more than KD120 million for more than three million cases for 45 years."

Meanwhile, Member of the Board of Directors and Head of the Public Relations and Media Department at the Association Walid Al-Rabiah asserted that the Association's humanitarian giving journey, which has exceeded 45 years, confirms the authenticity of goodness among the people of Kuwait.

New center aims to streamline processes

KU, Interior Ministry inaugurate CSC at the Sabah Al-Salem University City

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Kuwait University inaugurated the Citizen Service Center in the Sabah Al-Salem city university, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, as part of the university's commitment to its community role, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Mishari Al-Harbi, Acting Director of Kuwait University, emphasized the importance of providing comprehensive services to all university members, including faculty, students, and employees, during a press statement at the opening.

Dr. Al-Harbi highlighted that the new center aims to streamline processes, save time, and reduce efforts. He expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Interior for their ongoing cooperation and for establishing the center in Sabah Al-Salem University City.

Dr. Fayeze Al-Dhafiri, Acting Secretary-General of the University, echoed similar sentiments, stating that the services offered by the center complement existing facilities at the university, including medical services and fire stations. He emphasized the university's collaboration with various state ministries to address challenges faced by Kuwait University employees.

Dr. Al-Dhafiri reiterated the university's commitment to providing a comprehensive range of services to students, faculty, and staff across its facilities.

Brigadier Saad Al-Hamlan, Director

General of the General Administration of Citizen Service Centers at the Ministry of Interior, explained that the collaboration with Kuwait University aligns with the directives of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

The directive emphasizes the swift establishment of citizen service centers throughout the country. Al-Hamlan detailed the services provided at the center, including transactions related to the General Administration of Residence Affairs and the General Traffic Administration, such as vehicle and license renewals, as well as transactions related to the Sentences Enforcement Department.

He highlighted the online capabilities of the center, catering to the diverse needs of the university's members, including students, faculty, and administrators, as well as citizens and residents.

Acting Director of the University's Security and Safety Department, Yousef Al-Khamis, affirmed that the center will offer a centralized location for faculty, students, and employees to access a range of services. He underscored the center's role in facilitating transactions for Kuwait University employees and improving accessibility for the elderly and individuals with special needs across various regions of Kuwait.

University organizes tours for freshman

KU accepts 47 non-Kuwaiti students

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (Agencies): Kuwait University announced that 47 foreign students are accepted at their own expense at KU for the second semester of 2023/2024.

In a press statement, dean of admissions and registration of Kuwait University Dr. Fadel Aziz said that 47 high-school graduates are accepted at KU in College of Business Administration at their own expense from different nationalities university in accordance with admission rules.

Aziz stated, foreign students were accepted based on their desire and according to the required number of students accepted at College of Business Administration.

He revealed that they were also accepted according to KU policy for 2023-24 semester, which allowed non-Kuwaiti students into any of the undergraduate majors of their choice in line with the percentages attained at their high-school level.

The high-school grade must not be equivalent or less than Kuwaiti students who are admitted to the same major, he indicated.

He added, the university would send phone messages for all admitted students and the major that they accepted in. The admission approval will be (online) via <http://portal.ku.edu.kw/admission> Access to the Admission



Students during the tour.

System website charges are KD 10.

Meanwhile, during the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024, the Academic Guidance Department at Kuwait University's Deanship of Student Affairs arranged field tours for new students in Al-Shaddadiya, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These ongoing tours, scheduled until the week's conclusion, aim to acquaint students with essential regulations beneficial for their academic journey. Additionally, they provide insights into the colleges within the Sabah Al-Salem University City and their facilities.

Dr. Jassim Al-Hamdan, the Acting Dean of Student Affairs, highlighted the department's commitment to prioritizing awareness among new students about

the university system and the diverse services it offers to enrich students' lives comprehensively.

He highlighted the university's commitment to the student, considering them the focal point of the educational process and stressed that the university seeks to build and refine students' integrated personalities by providing a conducive university environment.

He encouraged students to follow the instructions provided by the Guidance Department through social media and to take advantage of the services and activities offered by the university, including the rare specialization program and the student employment program. These initiatives allow students to utilize their free time for activities that enhance their knowledge and skills.

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LOCAL



His Highness the Amir arrives in Saudi Arabia on state visit.

Amiri Diwan photo

Aspiration builds

Continued from Page 1

This is why the medical sector, for example, as well as the education and services sectors, failed, and the projects turned into a gateway for personal gain and plunder.

On the other hand, some leaders of the countries of this region were more aware of these scourges, and decided to put in place strict legislation regarding those who hold any task or position so that they would not fall into its trap because they were determined to reach the forefront through constant work to achieve the renaissance of their countries that were below zero. Today, they occupy the highest ranks in all indicators.

These people had aspirations and determination, and did not violate their principles to suit the whims of groups, blocs, parliamentarians, or even social components.

What Kuwait wants is not only aspirations, as dreams alone do not build a nation, but it is the determination to achieve the leading edge, which is not difficult if the intentions are sincere.

The officials should get rid of favoritism, quotas, and compromises that have made our country one of the bottom countries. Everyone must realize that history is a merciless judge.

Cabinet lauds

Continued from Page 1

The ministers praised efforts exerted by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the Acting Minister of the Interior, and all commanders of the Ministry of the Interior, including efforts by the security services to complete the task.

On a different front, the Cabinet reviewed recommendation by the Ministerial Economic Affairs Committee regarding draft laws on connecting the budgets of ministries and government departments, including draft laws regarding connecting the budgets of attached bodies, and draft laws regarding connecting the budgets of independent institutions for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

In this regard, the Council of Ministers reviewed a visual presentation presented by the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr. Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, and officials of the Ministry of Finance regarding the aforementioned draft laws, in compliance with the text of Article (140) of the Constitution, and the Council of Ministers decided to approve the draft laws and submit them to His Highness the Amir, in preparation for referring them to the National Assembly.

The cabinet also expressed thanks and appreciation for the great efforts made by the Minister of Finance, the employees of the Ministry of Finance, and the relevant government agencies to prepare draft laws.

Meanwhile, the cabinet praised Kuwaiti handball team's qualification for the 2025 World Cup, scheduled to take place in Croatia, Denmark and Norway.

In this regard, the ministers were briefed by Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Daoud Maarafie, regarding the disbursement of financial rewards to the players for their efforts that culminated in achieving this achievement.

On another front, the cabinet listened to an explanation presented by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya about the current developments in the political field, including Arab and international arenas.

The cabinet expressed the State of Kuwait's welcome of the decision by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued last Friday, which called on the Israeli occupation to take all the measures to prevent the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people.

For its part, the Council of Ministers praised the step taken by the friendly Republic of South Africa in submitting that lawsuit, renewing its demands.

The cabinet also expressed deep concern regarding the decision of some donor countries to stop their aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), stressing in this regard on the important humanitarian and vital role played by the agency in providing services and meeting the basic needs of approximately 5.7 million Palestinian refugees.

The Cabinet finally expressed the State of Kuwait's condemnation of the terrorist attack launched yesterday, Sun-

day, on a site near the Jordanian-Syrian border, which resulted in a number of deaths and injuries among American service men, affirming Kuwait's firm position in its condemnation of all terrorist acts and to work collectively to stand against such actions to achieve stability in the region and the world.

HH Amir

Continued from Page 1

While marking this great event, it is essential to recall the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's address after swearing the constitutional oath before parliament on December 20, 2023, urging people to live up to due responsibilities and maintain national unity.

All the six governorates of the country are set to hold flag-hoisting celebrations in a joyous atmosphere to commence the country's national festivals by adorning streets and buildings with the photos of His Highness the Amir and the flag of Kuwait in an amazing scene that mirrors delight and pride for both great occasions.

The Kuwaiti people, with a great sense of boastfulness, are bracing for marking the 63rd anniversary of the National Day, a day when the State of Kuwait became independent and steadily started to make hallmarks on international domains, forge close relations with Arab and friendly countries, and seek to achieve security and peace, based on its pioneering policy of tackling regional and international causes.

While celebrating the 33rd anniversary of the Liberation Day, Kuwait remembers its martyrs who had given a resounding example of sacrifice and dedication for the sake of liberating their country from the aggressor invaders.

This occasion, with its various aspects, reflects eagerness to beef up and cement bonds of national unity and togetherness, and to learn noble lessons and meanings, reminiscing the struggle of forefathers, who had sacrificed everything just to see their nation developing and prospering.

Domestic labor

Continued from Page 1

He explained that Sri Lanka is taking advantage of what is happening in Kuwait in terms of the confusion in decision-making.

Sri Lanka had issued a statement in which it set the price for the recruitment of a domestic worker to start from KD 600 dinars, and insisted on not committing to guaranteeing employment and compensating Kuwaiti offices with half the value.

Such decisions represent a clear and explicit exploitation of the restrictions on the owners of recruitment offices for domestic workers in Kuwait, especially in light of the absence of any other Kuwait-exporting countries working with Kuwait except Sri Lanka, as the rest of the countries are all suspended.

'AI's role

Continued from Page 1

The challenges and risks associated with artificial intelligence, include its unethical uses, which require the organization to seek establishing legal and health controls to ensure the use of this technology in a way that serves humanity without harm. The conference also represents an important step towards achieving these goals.

Dr. Al-Awadhi stressed the urgent need to enhance awareness about artificial intelligence and explore its potential and challenges in various health fields at a time when everyone is working to identify risks and develop strategies to deal with them through international cooperation and exchange of experiences, adding that this is especially among Islamic countries with the aim of ensuring the achievement of the purposes of Sharia.

He said the conference coincides with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences to become the medical-jurisprudential arm of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and to be a gift from the State of Kuwait to the Islamic world and all of humanity.

The minister highlighted that the organization has an independent legal personality based in the State of Kuwait, and has the right to establish centers for research and studies in the State of Kuwait and abroad.

He indicated that the organization addresses many important issues, such

as epidemiology from the beginning of Islam until COVID-19, the artificial womb, bio-printing of human organs, IVF, surrogacy, milk banks, organ transplantation, genetic engineering, cloning, genetic counseling and stem cells.

Saudi Crown

Continued from Page 1

Earlier, His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation arrived in Saudi Arabia for the state visit on Tuesday. The welcoming party included Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud, Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud (Governor of the Riyadh Region), Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad Al-Saud (Minister of State, Member of the Council of Ministers, Head of the Mission of Honor), and the Ambassador of the Saudi King to the State of Kuwait, Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud. Also present were the Ambassador of Kuwait to the Kingdom, Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and His Highness Prince Faisal bin Abdulaziz bin Ayyaf (Mayor of the Riyadh Region).

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by a distinguished delegation, including His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Duajj Khalifa Al-Malek Al-Sabah, Sheikh Salem Abdulaziz Al-Saud Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Ahmad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Sheikh Dr. Ali Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mubarak Duajj Ibrahim Al-Sabah, Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, and senior Amiri Diwan officials.

Kuwait's CPI

Continued from Page 1

The society believes that it would have been possible to achieve better results in the index if a number of cases had not occurred, namely the failure of most government agencies to implement law No. 12/2020 regarding the right to access.

It said, "There is still an absence of systems and standards of competence and merit in promotions, selecting, evaluating, and renewing officials and leaders, and weak governance applications.

The pace of achievement is slow, as we live in the last year of the approval of the National Strategy to Promote Integrity and Combat Corruption (2019/2024), the restrictions on civil society organizations, the lack of support for them, and weak faith in their role."

Regarding the requirements for improving transparency and integrity in Kuwait, the society said, "Despite Kuwait's remarkable improvement this year in the index, the real guarantees for continued progress are not reassuring.

Kuwait, despite its officials repeatedly confirming that it is undertaking reforms in order to increase transparency and integrity of transactions in the public and private sectors, activating these reforms in reality remains selective, limited, irregular, and linked to an unstable will due to weak political stability.

12 MPs

Continued from Page 1

He said: "Kuwait has been a member of the Human Rights Council since the beginning of this year. From this standpoint, we called on the government to request an emergency session of this council to discuss human rights violations in the occupied territories, especially in Gaza and the West Bank."

He asserted that the Palestinians in the abovementioned areas continue to suffer from persecution, oppression, killing, displacement, and shortage of food, medicine and all means of security, which are among the goals of the Human Rights Council established by the United Nations.

He stressed the need for Kuwait to request an emergency session and the formation of an international investigation committee, indicating that the Security Council previously formed an investigation committee last year and the committee submitted its report in mid-October 2023.

He added this report was submitted a week after the war of extermination launched by the Zionist entity on Palestine; disclosing the report talked about the past six months, which has nothing to do with the tragic conditions that the Palestinian people are currently experiencing.

CAS & PAAAFR strengthen ties with mutual data exchange deal

Partnership aims to enhance food security

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fisheries Resources (PAAAFR) for the mutual exchange of statistical information and data, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The agreement, signed at the administration's headquarters, involved the Acting Director General, Wafaa Al-Yahya, and the Acting Director General of PAAAFR, Nasser Taqi.

Al-Yahya stated that this memorandum serves to strengthen institutional cooperation, coordination, and data integration between the two entities. The collaboration is anticipated to provide additional statistical data pertaining to the agricultural sector and fisheries, contributing to informed government policies, economic development planning, and the enhancement of food security measures.

Al-Yahya emphasized the administration's ongoing efforts to establish a sustainable executive mechanism, ensuring prompt data responsiveness from government agencies and adherence to clear standards and guidelines on data quality.

Taqi, in a similar statement, high-

Plans for Al-Mutlaa City unveiled

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Chairman of Al-Mutlaa City Residents Committee Khaled Al-Anzi has revealed that Al-Mutlaa City Center will witness



Minister Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah and Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi during the tour.

the opening of the cleaning and engineering departments in N8 and N11 suburbs in the coming days, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Enezi praised the positive results of the visit of Minister of Social, Family and Child Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Saud to the city; particularly the latter's meeting with a number of the residents after the opening of the Family Care Unit, which is affiliated with the Family Care Sector in N11 suburb. He said the minister promised that the cooperative society, wedding hall, Family Care Sector and other facilities that the residents need will be established in the near future.

He added Assistant Undersecretary for Development Affairs Dr Khaled Al-Ajmi vowed that the opening of the Family Care Unit will be followed by other stages to quickly provide all the services for citizens. He affirmed that many centers affiliated with the ministry will open soon; including the family care units and community development centers.

lighted the authority's commitment since its establishment in 1983 to the development of agriculture, both in plant and animal sectors, as well as the protection and enhancement of fish wealth in the country.

He underscored the significance of inter-agency cooperation in data and information exchange, support-

ing the Statistics Department as the custodian of data in the country. This collaboration is expected to furnish accurate and updated data on the agricultural sector and fish wealth, facilitating trend analysis and strategic planning for agricultural development, increased productivity, and the achievement of food security.

its latest developments.

In their request, the abovementioned lawmakers suggested assigning the chairman and members of the committee to move to the field and review the necessary documents, as well as the movement of bank accounts, notifications, and the administrative and legal procedures related to this file at the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Financial Investigation Unit, the Money Laundering Department at the Ministry of Interior or other entities in or outside the country, if necessary. They said the committee should submit reports in this regard to the Assembly.

They also pointed out the passage of several years since the Malaysian

Sovereign Fund crime happened, the resulting serious damage to the reputation of the State of Kuwait at home and abroad, and to the failure of the concerned financial and security oversight agencies to carry out their responsibilities since the beginning of the incident of hundreds of millions of suspicious dollars entering and leaving local banks within a short period -- largest money laundering operations in modern history.

In addition, the Educational Affairs Committee will meet with Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani and the educational sector officials on Sunday to discuss the reasons for the deterioration of education.

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2.790	1.150	1.495	2.990
Lay's Chips Assorted 21gm x 12	Doritos Chips 165gm 3's	Ariel Washing Powder 2.5kg 2's + Liquid 1 Ltr	Fairy Dishwash Liquid 400ml 3s
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0.780	0.975	3.790	0.975
Hamour /kg	Seabass /kg	Indian Chilled Whole Mutton /kg	Local Kuwaiti Veal Bone-in /kg
2.890 (From 01 to 02.02.2024)	2.990 (From 01 to 03.02.2024)	3.190 (From 01 to 02.02.2024)	3.490 (From 01 to 02.02.2024)
2.990	2.990	3.190	2.990
Carrot (Australia) per kg	Tomato (Kuwait) Box	Strawberry (Mexico) 454gm packet	Blueberry (Peru) 125gm packet
0.495 (From 01 to 03.02.2024)	0.995 (From 01 to 03.02.2024)	2.995 (From 01 to 03.02.2024)	0.895 (From 01 to 03.02.2024)
0.345	0.595	2.495	0.695
iPhone 15 Pro	Apple iPhone 15 Pro 256GB	Samsung Galaxy S23 S911 256GB 5G	
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World News Roundup

Europe

Georgia PM quits

Macron starts 2-day state visit to Sweden

STOCKHOLM, Jan 30, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron was welcomed Tuesday with pomp and ceremony at the start of a two-day state visit to Sweden during which he will meet Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and the Scandinavian country's monarch, King Carl XVI Gustaf.

Macron and his wife, Brigitte, were greeted by the king in the inner courtyard of the downtown Stockholm royal castle that is the official residence of the Swedish royals. There, Macron and Carl Gustaf reviewed members of the Grenadier Guards that had lined up.

Macron noted that it had been too long since a French president visited Sweden - the last time was in 2014, when Francois Hollande traveled to the Scandinavian country.



Macron

Later Tuesday, Macron is to discuss the future of European security at a military academy in Stockholm, together with Kristersson and the king. Russia's war on Ukraine and Sweden's NATO application are likely to be on the table.

After more than a year of delays, Turkey earlier this month completed its ratification of Sweden's bid to join NATO, meaning Hungary is now the last member of the military alliance not to have given its approval. All NATO countries must agree before a new member can join the alliance.

'Deal with Italy can go ahead if approved': Albania's Constitutional Court on Monday said a deal can go ahead with Italy under which thousands of migrants rescued at sea by Italian authorities would be sent to Albania while their asylum applications are processed.

Thirty Albanian lawmakers attempted to block the deal's ratification by referring it to the court. Now the agreement signed in November between Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni can be voted on in Parliament.

The court's head, Holta Zacaj, called the deal "in line with the Constitution."

With Rama's left-wing Socialist Party holding 74 of Parliament's 140 seats, the deal is expected to pass. No date has been set for the parliamentary debate and vote.

Russian oppn figure moved to another jail: Lawyers for prominent Russian opposition figure Vladimir Kara-Murza Jr., who is serving a 25-year sentence for treason, said Tuesday that he has been transferred to another prison in Siberia and placed in solitary confinement again, for at least four months, over an alleged minor infraction.

The move comes amid unrelenting pressure on Russian dissidents at home and abroad that has intensified significantly since President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine almost two years ago.

Kara-Murza, 42, was held in a prison in the Omsk region, but his supporters said on Monday he apparently was no longer there.

Kara-Murza lawyer Maria Eismont told Russia's independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper on Tuesday that she had received a letter from him in which he said he was transferred to another penal colony in the city of Omsk and placed in a restricted housing unit for at least four months. In the letter, a copy of which his other lawyer Vadim Prokhorov posted on Facebook, Kara-Murza said that prison officials on Friday accused him of disobeying a command he said wasn't even given to him.

Charles, Kate discharged from hospital: King Charles III and his daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales, have both left a private London hospital following unrelated medical treatments that have made the health of the royal family headlines news in the United Kingdom.

The 75-year-old monarch was admitted to the London Clinic on Friday for treatment of an enlarged prostate, which Buckingham Palace described as benign. The princess, formerly Kate Middleton, has been at the hospital in central London for the past two weeks following abdominal surgery for an undisclosed condition.

Charles walked out of the clinic with his wife, Queen Camilla, at about 3 p.m. local time (1500 GMT; 10 am EST) on Monday, stopping to smile and wave to well-wishers but ignoring shouted questions from reporters. A few hours earlier, the princess' office said that she had returned home to recuperate, though she wasn't seen leaving the hospital and details about when she left weren't released.

Party agrees to end 2-yr boycott: Northern Ireland's largest British unionist party has agreed to end a boycott that left the region's people without a power-sharing administration for two years and rattled the foundations of the 25-year-old peace. The breakthrough could see the shuttered Belfast government restored within days.

After a marathon late-night meeting, Democratic Unionist Party leader Jeffrey Donaldson said Tuesday that the party's executive had backed proposals to return to the government. He said agreements reached with the UK government in London "provide a basis for our party to nominate members to the Northern Ireland Executive, thus seeing the restoration of the locally elected institutions."

London police fatally shoot a suspect: A man reportedly armed with a crossbow was fatally shot by officers in London on Tuesday as he broke into a home where he had threatened the occupants, the Metropolitan Police said.

The suspect, believed to be in his 30s, was reportedly armed and threatened people in the home in the Southwark part of the city. He was trying to break into the house when officers arrived.

When the man threatened officers who attempted to speak with him, armed police were called in. He was shot as he got inside the property. The man died at the scene after officers and paramedics tried to provide first aid.

Georgia prime minister steps down: The prime minister of the country of Georgia resigned on Monday and said he had accepted an offer to become chairman of the Georgian Dream ruling party ahead of national elections in the autumn.

"We will elect a new parliament in the fall, and Georgian Dream should prepare to win elections decisively to continue the way forward in achieving other goals," Irakli Garibashvili said in announcing he was leaving the post.



Rioters loyal to President Donald Trump rally at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021. On Jan. 28, 2024, a retired judge recommended to Illinois election officials that former President Trump's name should be removed from the Illinois primary ballot, but the decision should be left to the courts. (AP)

Politics

DeSantis still focused on Washington problems

Haley struggles to win over conservatives

CONWAY, S.C., Jan 30, (AP): For South Carolina's conservatives, deciding whether Nikki Haley's record warrants a promotion to the Oval Office seems less about her experience and abilities and more about the man standing in her way: Donald Trump.

"Ms. Haley did some fine things as governor - but Donald Trump is the man!" declared Doug Roberts, a retired electrician who came to a recent Haley rally wearing a Trump T-shirt. "Donald Trump is just not a regular man."

Haley, Trump's last major Republican rival, faces a make-or-break stretch ahead of South Carolina's Feb. 24 primary that could be Trump's last obstacle to a third consecutive Republican nomination. While Haley has talked about her comfort running in her home state, interviews with almost two dozen South Carolina Republicans since the New Hampshire primary suggest Haley is struggling to win over conservatives who backed her twice for governor but haven't soured on Trump for president.

Difficult

Debra Weiss, a 66-year-old from heavily Republican Myrtle Beach, demonstrates Haley's difficult path. Sitting among the 1,500 or so who heard Haley on Sunday at Coastal Carolina University, Weiss lauded the candidate as a "true conservative" and dismissed Trump's quips that Haley is a Democratic stand-in. Weiss criticized Trump's rhetoric generally but said she is not concerned Trump could become a convicted felon.

Most critically for Haley, though, Weiss remains undecided.

"I wonder if Nikki would have more sway in Washington without all his baggage. I want to see whether she is strong enough. We know Donald Trump is strong," Weiss said. "I hope Nikki can do it, make it close. ... But I do still love Trump."

The winner of South Carolina's Republican primary has won the nomination all but one time since 1980. This year's contest is an unusual one-on-one matchup between

a former president and a generally popular home-state figure.

Both were once launched by the same conservative primary electorate. Haley, as a state legislator in 2010, trounced older, more established candidates in a Republican primary on her way to winning two gubernatorial elections. In 2016, Trump swept South Carolina's 50 delegates after closer outcomes in Iowa and New Hampshire. It was his springboard to a dominating Super Tuesday performance that gave him an insurmountable delegate lead.

Larger

On paper, South Carolina offers the broad Republican coalition Haley has sought. It has a larger presidential primary electorate than other early nominating states; turnout was 740,000 in 2016 - almost 200,000 more than Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada combined. South Carolina has a large presence of every Republican faction: evangelicals and social conservatives; anti-tax Tea Party activists; national security hawks; business-minded traditionalists.

But Trump's campaign remains confident of another victory, with his top advisers releasing a memo Monday to supporters and media predicting a "humiliation at home" for Haley.

The pressure to convert Trump voters was evident in Haley's first South Carolina campaign swing since outlasting Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and finishing second in New Hampshire.

At two weekend rallies, Haley attacked Trump as too old, calling him "the other 80-year-old" in the race besides 81-year-old President Joe Biden. (Trump is actually 77.) She said Trump is too embroiled in "chaos and drama."

She insisted she doesn't "keep up with" Trump's legal travails but slipped in references to "four cases and ... 91 charges." She mocked him for throwing "a temper tantrum" because she has not yet dropped out and urged him again to join her on a debate stage. She hammered him as vengeful for threatening to punish anyone who

supports her: "You can't be president of the United States and not serve everyone."

The bulk of her 45-minute speech, though, mixed conservative domestic policy ideas with tough national security talk and highlights of her South Carolina record, especially in recruiting business.

Also:

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.: On the heels of a failed presidential bid, Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis finally weighed in on what he wants state lawmakers to do this year: Change Washington.

Less than two weeks after suspending his presidential campaign and less than halfway through the annual 60-day legislative session, DeSantis held a news conference Monday with cheering supporters to say he wants state lawmakers to seek US constitutional amendments to create term limits for Congress and a balanced federal budget.

But the ideas aren't new and 33 other states would have to join him, the governor acknowledged in front of a sign that read "HOLD WASHINGTON ACCOUNTABLE."

"There's actually been a lot that have done it over the years," DeSantis said of other states. "Florida has already done the term limits, about 10, 12 years ago."

Unlike most years, DeSantis largely avoided giving lawmakers a blueprint for this year's legislative session. His speech to kick it off largely sounded like a list-ditch argument to Iowa voters the week before he came in a distant second to former President Donald Trump in the first-in-the-nation caucuses.

Now that the House has already passed bills on the proposed US amendments and the Senate is on the verge of doing the same, DeSantis flew to Naples more than 330 miles (531 kilometers) from the Capitol to have his say, too.

He also attacked President Joe Biden on immigration and foreign policy but said nothing to address problems immediately facing Florida and what he'll do about them before he has to leave office in 2027.

a deadline that could have evicted nearly 2,000 migrants.

Johnson said Monday the idea is to give people more time to resettle and find work. The policy change adds 30 to 60 more days for roughly 14,000 migrants already living in the city's 28 shelters, which include warehouses and park district buildings.

Chicago has twice delayed enforcement due to weather. (AP)

Austin returns to work: Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin returned to work at the Pentagon on Monday after nearly a month's absence because of prostate cancer and met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

"At this important time, I'm glad to be back at the Pentagon," said Austin, speaking at the start of the meeting. "I feel good and am recovering well, but still recovering, and I appreciate all the good wishes that I have received thus far."

After that session, Austin went to the White House Situation Room for a meeting of the national security team to discuss the drone attack at a base in Jordan that killed three US troops and wounded several dozen others. (AP)



Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla depart The London Clinic where King Charles had undergone a procedure for an enlarged prostate, in central London, on Jan 29. (AP)



Austin

Garland

America

5 held in desert killings: The six men found dead at a remote dirt crossroads in the Southern California desert last week were likely shot to death in a dispute over marijuana, sheriff's officials said Monday as they announced the arrests of five men suspected in the violence.

Authorities discovered the bodies Tuesday in the Mojave Desert outside El Mirage after someone called 911 and said in Spanish that he had been shot, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Sgt. Michael Warrick said during a news conference.

All the victims were likely shot to death, and four of the bodies had been partially burned together, Warrick said. A fifth victim was found inside a Chevy Trailblazer, and the sixth was discovered nearby the following day, he said.

"It looks like illicit marijuana was the driving force behind these murders," Sheriff Shannon Dicus said, adding that the area is known for illegal marijuana growing operations.

The scene showed a "level of violence" reminiscent of a drug cartel, but investigators couldn't immediately confirm that cartels were involved, officials said. (AP)

Garland to undergo surgery: Attorney General Merrick Garland will undergo back surgery this weekend and delegate his duties to the deputy attorney general during the procedure, the Justice Department said Monday.

The news comes as Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin returns to work at the Pentagon following a hospitalization related to prostate cancer that was criticized for being kept secret for days.

Garland, 71, will be under general anesthesia during the back procedure on Saturday, which will last about 90 minutes and is "minimally invasive," said Xochitl Hinojosa, director of public affairs at the Justice Department. He is expected to return home the same day, she said. Garland will delegate his duties to Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco shortly before, during and for a short time after the procedure as he recov-

ers from the anesthesia, the statement said. He is expected to return to work the week of Feb. 5. (AP)

Shelter stay limits extended: Chicago will again extend its 60-day limit on shelter stays for asylum seekers, Mayor Brandon Johnson announced, just days ahead of



Multiple units from Palm Bay, Fla., and other police agencies gather along Emerson Drive and side streets on Jan 28, where a shooting occurred. Four people were dead, including a Florida man accused of shooting and wounding two police officers, authorities confirmed on Jan 29. (AP)

Lat/Am

Colombia, ELN extend cease-fire for a week: Colombia's government and the nation's largest remaining rebel group announced Monday they will extend their current cease-fire by one week, while delegates from both sides who are meeting in Cuba continue to discuss policies that could secure a longer lasting truce.

In a joint statement, the government and the National Liberation Army said they will abide by the conditions of the current cease-fire, which began in August and was set to expire Monday night.

The current cease-fire agreement says that both sides will not attack each other, and that one of the goals of the cease-fire is to "improve the humanitarian situation" of communities affected by fighting.

However, there are no provisions in the current cease-fire that stop the rebels from kidnapping civilians for ransom or from recruiting minors, two practices that have continued to take place in the last months.

The rebels meanwhile have complained that during the current cease-fire, the military has launched operations in areas under their control.

In Monday's joint statement, both sides said they will continue to discuss ways to "strengthen" the cease-fire.

Colombia's government has been pressing the rebels to stop kidnappings. Colombia's president is **Gustavo Petro**.

In October, the cease-fire between the government and the ELN entered a critical moment when a group of rebels kidnapped the parents of Luis Diaz, one of Colombia's most famous soccer players. (AP)



Petro

Police probes son of former Brazil prez: Brazil's federal police on Monday searched the home and office of Carlos Bolsonaro, the son of former President Jair Bolsonaro and a Rio de Janeiro city councilman, two days after the Supreme Court granted the warrants.

Police said in a statement that they conducted nine searches Monday as part of a broader investigation into the nation's intelligence agency and alleged spying on political opponents during Bolsonaro's term, which ended in Dec. 2022.

In a decision made public Monday, Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes said the police claim it has identified a group, of which Carlos Bolsonaro allegedly forms part, that "monitored 'political enemies' and sought information about the existence of investigations related to the children of the then President of the Republic Jair Messias Bolsonaro."

Images broadcast on TV network GloboNews showed Carlos and his father outside the latter's residence in Angra dos Reis, south of Rio de Janeiro. Police searched the former president's house for any electronic devices, including phones and laptops, belonging to Carlos. (AP)

'Judicial criminality' - Machado: Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado on Monday called the court ruling blocking her presidential candidacy last week "judicial criminality" and vowed to stay in the race, declaring that the decision embodies the ruling party's fear of having to face her at the polls.

Machado, surrounded by supporters and other opposition leaders, told reporters she expects government repression and other obstacles to increase against her and her team.

She would not explain the steps she plans to take to be allowed to participate in the presidential election, only insisting that her team continues to organize across the South American country.

"It cannot be called a sentence. It is not even an arbitrary decision. This is called judicial criminality," Machado said of Friday's ruling by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice. "If they believe that they declared my disqualification, then let them know well, they declared the end of this tyranny ... because people are clear and are not going to allow themselves to be stripped of their Oct 22 decision." (AP)

Judge seeks to interview slain prez's widow: A Haitian judge investigating the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse issued an arrest warrant for his wife late last year for failing to meet with him so he could interrogate her about the case, according to a legal document leaked late Monday that The Associated Press obtained.

The warrant is dated Oct 25 and signed by Judge Walther Voltaire, who is overseeing an ongoing investigation into the killing that occurred at Moïse's private residence, where authorities say a group of heavily armed men shot him a dozen times and injured his wife, Martine Moïse.

The one-page warrant contains little detail except to say that authorities are seeking to interview Martine Moïse about the case. It does not state nor suggest any involvement.

Martine Moïse could not be immediately reached for comment, and a spokesman for an attorney of hers based in Florida said he was trying to reach the attorney. (AP)

Crackdown on armed environmental agents: Haiti's government on Monday announced a crackdown on a state environmental department whose heavily armed agents have grown more powerful in recent months and were blamed for violent clashes with police last week.

The government ordered all workers with the National Agency for Protected Areas to report themselves to the nearest office of the Ministry of the Environment so they can be registered.

Authorities also announced that no armed environmental agents are allowed to circulate within towns or cities, without exceptions, "in order to improve the security climate of the country and to bring peace and tranquility for all Haitians."

The crackdown comes almost a week after the administration of Prime Minister Ariel Henry announced the restructuring of the National Agency for Protected Areas given what it called "serious problems of institutional dysfunction." (AP)

Ex-Peruvian intelligence chief pleads guilty: The controversial intelligence chief of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori on Monday pleaded guilty to charges in the 1992 massacre of six farmers who were accused of being members of a rebel group, taken from their homes by soldiers and executed in the town of Pativilca.

Vladimiro Montesinos, 78, pleaded guilty to charges of homicide, murder and forced disappearance, for which prosecutors are seeking a 25-year-sentence. The former spy chief's defense is hoping that the sentence will be reduced due to Montesinos' willingness to cooperate with Peruvian courts.

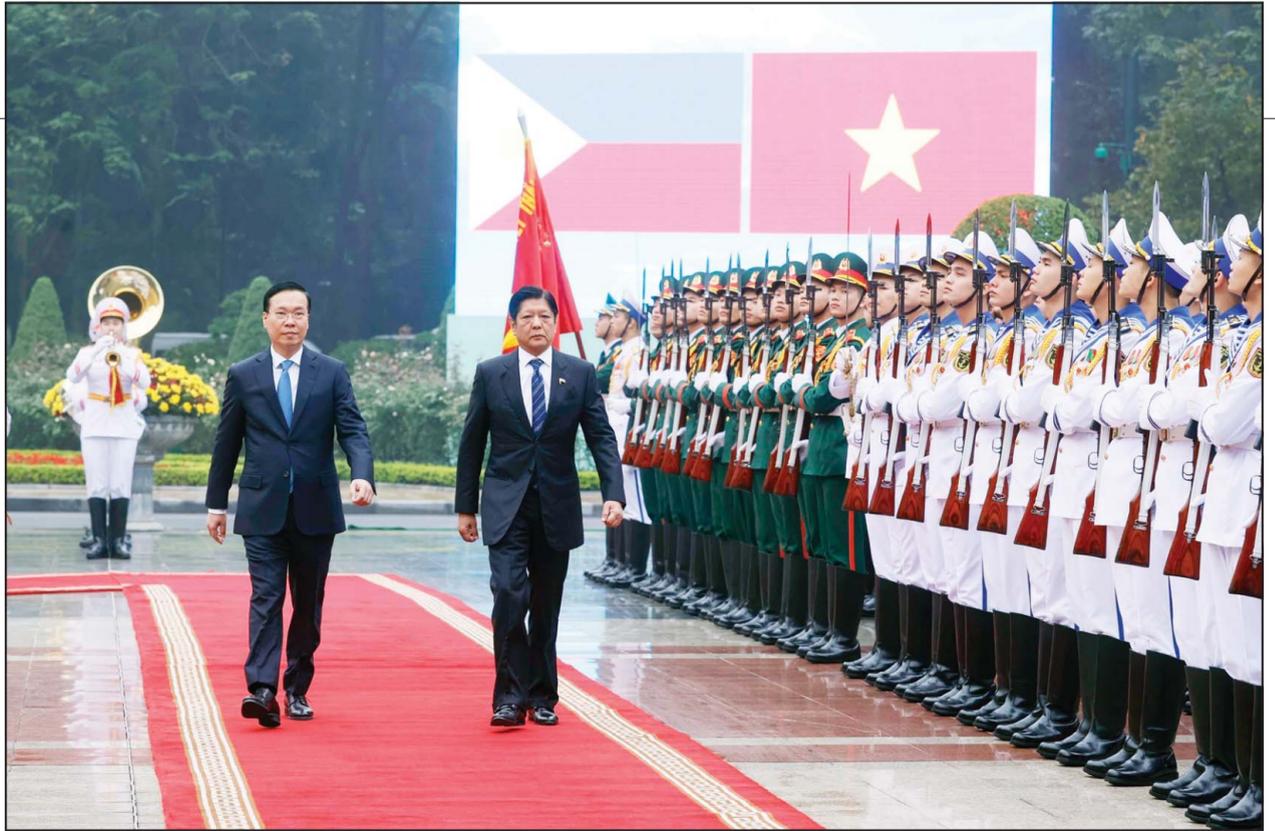
Montesinos has been in prison since 2001, charged with numerous counts of corruption schemes and human rights violations. A former army officer and lawyer who defended drug traffickers in the 1980s, he became the head of Peru's intelligence services during the Fujimori administration in the 1990s. (AP)

Bahamas pushes to reduce violence: Authorities in the Bahamas say they are cracking down on crime after the U.S. Embassy issued a security alert warning that the archipelago has reported at least 18 slayings so far this year.

The number of reported killings rose to 19 over the weekend, with police holding a news conference on Sunday to talk about recent operations that led to the seizure of weapons, ammunition and drugs. None of the killings have targeted any foreigners.

The US Embassy said that most of the crime has occurred on the islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama, with "retaliatory gang violence" behind most of the killings.

"Murders have occurred at all hours, including in broad daylight on the streets," it said in a statement last week. (AP)



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (right), and Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong inspect honor guards during a welcome ceremony in Hanoi, Vietnam on Jan 30. Marcos is on a visit to Hanoi to boost the bilateral relation with the fellow Southeast Asian nation. (AP)

Asia

NKorea fired cruise missiles: Seoul

Manila, Hanoi agree to cooperate on Sea

HANOI, Vietnam, Jan 30, (AP) — The Philippines and Vietnam signed an agreement Tuesday on preventing and managing incidents in the disputed South China Sea during Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s visit to Hanoi.

Several countries, including the Philippines and Vietnam, are locked in maritime disputes with China over its claims of sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea, one of the world's most crucial waterways for shipping, and high-seas faceoffs between Chinese and Philippine ships have intensified over the past year in the contested waters, fueling fears of a wider conflict.

The Philippines and Vietnam agreed Tuesday to increase coordination on maritime issues and work to promote trust and confidence, the Philippine government said in a statement.

They didn't release details about what actions they would take under the agreement.

"Vietnam remains the sole strategic partner of the Philippines in the ASEAN region," Marcos said during a meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart, Vo Van Thuong, referring to the regional grouping of Southeast Asian nations.

He added that while maritime cooperation was the "foundation" for this partnership, relations between the two nations had expanded.

The two countries also signed a deal on Tuesday for Vietnam to supply the Philippines with 1.5 million to 2 million metric tons (1.6 to 2.2 million U.S. tons) of rice each year at affordable prices.

Vietnamese rice accounts for 85% of imported rice in the Philippines and the two countries agreed to create a framework for ensuring stable supplies. A rice shortage last year, exacerbated by climate change and some major producers halting exports, resulted in prices soaring globally including in the Philippines.

Marcos, who arrived in Hanoi on Monday, also met with Pham Nhat Vuong, Vietnam's richest man and the chairman of the sprawling conglomerate Vingroup, which runs the electric vehicle company VinFast.

VinFast said after the meeting it would open an EV business network in the Philippines and that the investment would start later this year.

VinFast's plans to expand in the Philippines are part of its goal of selling EVs in 50 markets worldwide. It is exporting EVs to the US and also building a \$4 billion EV factory in

TOKYO, Jan 30, (AP) — Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stressed Tuesday he was determined to make a clear break from money politics as he renewed an apology for the latest major corruption scandal in the governing party, which has eclipsed his key policies such as strengthening the military and Japan's alliance with the United States.

His policy speech had been due last week when the new parliamentary session opened, but Kishida broke with tradition and instead faced an intensive session on the scandal first.

Kishida said he must admit that factions in the Liberal Democratic Party seemed to work for money and favors rather than policy, and he promised to lead reforms. "I humbly regret, and made a determination to have policy groups make a complete break from money and personnel affairs," he said.

Kishida gave no further explanation about the scandal or how the money was spent. Opposition lawmakers have pressed for him to disclose details.

Kishida said he needed to regain public trust, citing challenges including a deadly earthquake on New Year's Day and the economy.

Kishida pledged to "further expand and deepen" the Japan-US relations, which he called the lynchpin of Japan's diplomatic policy, including by meeting President Joe

Biden on a state visit to Washington in April.

Also:

HONG KONG: Hong Kong began public consultation on a local National Security Law on Tuesday, more than three years after Beijing imposed a similar law that has all but wiped out dissent in the semi-autonomous city.

The new law could expand the government's ability to prosecute residents for offenses like collaborating with foreign forces to influence legislation or "publish misleading statements," and to close down civil society organizations. Some of its provisions threaten criminal prosecutions for acts committed anywhere in the world.

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Malaysia charged a former minister on Monday with failing to declare assets, the latest step in a corruption probe that's targeting several people connected to a former prime minister.

Former Finance Minister **Daim Zainuddin**, who left office more than 20 years ago, is a key ally of ex-Prime Minister **Mahathir Mohamad**. Both argue that the probe is politically motivated and that prosecutors have ignored potential corruption among allies of the current government.

North Carolina, where production is slated to begin this year. It has also said it will build factories in Indonesia and India.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: North Korea fired multiple cruise missiles into waters off its western coast Tuesday in its third launch of such weapons this month. South Korea's military said, as the North continues to flaunt its expanding arsenal of weapons designed to overwhelm its rivals' defenses.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the South Korean and US militaries were analyzing the launches that were detected around 7 am. It did not immediately provide more details, including the number of missiles fired,

how far they flew, and whether they were launched from land or sea.

The launch followed tests on Jan 24 and Jan 28 of the Pulhwasal-3-31 cruise missile North Korea says is designed to be fired from submarines.

Following the second launch, North Korean leader **Kim Jong Un** reiterated his goal of building a nuclear-armed navy to counter what he described as growing external threats. It's not yet clear if that water launch Sunday was conducted from an actual submarine or an underwater barge.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, after Kim accelerated his weapons development to an unprecedented pace while issuing provocative nuclear threats against the **United States**, South Korea and **Japan**.



African National Congress President Cyril Ramaphosa, addresses supporters at the Mbombela, South Africa, Stadium on Jan 13. The ruling party celebrated the 112th anniversary of its establishment ahead of national elections, expected to be the toughest since it came to power in 1994. (AP)



Mandela



Zuma

Africa

ANC suspends Zuma: South Africa's ruling party suspended former President **Jacob Zuma** on Monday after he gave his backing to a new political party for this year's national elections.

The decision by the African National Congress is another sign of the feud between Zuma and his successor, current President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The announcement followed weeks of intrigue over whether the ANC would act against Zuma, who led the ANC from 2007-2017 and was president of Africa's most advanced economy from 2009-2018.

Zuma said at a press conference in December he would be voting for the newly formed MK Party, and his decision to turn his back on the ANC was because of Ramaphosa's leadership. Zuma later said he aimed to keep his ANC membership.

The name of the new political party also ruffles the ANC. MK is an abbreviation for uMkhonto we Sizwe, the name of the now-defunct ANC military wing formed by **Nelson Mandela** in 1961 to fight the apartheid system of white minority rule in South Africa.

The ANC said Zuma's conduct in campaigning against it was "irreconcilable" with the party's constitution, adding that "Zuma and others whose conduct is in conflict with our values and principles will find themselves outside the ANC."

Ramaphosa rose to power promising to clean up the ANC and took over the presidency after Zuma, 81, was forced to step down in 2018 amid allegations of corruption. Zuma is currently on trial and faces multiple charges relating to a multi-billion-dollar arms deal the South African government signed with French arms company Tales more than 20 years ago, when he was a deputy president. (AP)

Dozens presumed dead: The majority of the 50 passengers aboard a wooden boat that capsized on a lake in eastern Congo are presumed to be dead, a local official said.

The boat crossing Lake Kivu was also carrying 20 bags of cement and likely sank Sunday due to being overloaded, said Mustafa Mamboleo, an official with South Kivu province.

Mamboleo said 10 people survived and three bodies had been found, and the search continued for about 37 people.

Deadly boating accidents occur frequently in Congo, where crews often overload small wooden vessels. Earlier in January, 22 people died on Lake Mai-Ndombe. Last April, six were killed and 64 went missing on Lake Kivu.

Maritime regulations often are not ad-

hered to, Daniel Lwaboshi, director of Congo's Public Riverways Authority, said Monday on state television, adding that another primary driver of such accidents is

overloading. (AP)

Two fishing boats rescued: Indian and



Indonesian police arrest three Mexicans after a Turkish tourist was wounded in an armed robbery in Bali, Indonesia on Jan 30. Indonesian police said Tuesday they have arrested three Mexicans for alleged robbery on the resort island of Bali that left a tourist from Turkey badly wounded. (AP)

Seychelles forces separately rescued Monday two fishing vessels hijacked by Somali pirates and freed 23 crew members from Iran and Sri Lanka, both countries said in statements.

The Seychelles' defense forces and coast guard rescued six Sri Lankan fishermen whose vessel was hijacked by Somali pirates two days earlier while the Indian navy said it freed 17 crew members in an Iranian fishing vessel that was hijacked by pirates off the east coast of Somalia.

The Seychelles Défense Forces Special Forces and coast guard "led a successful operation to regain control of a Sri Lankan vessel hijacked by armed Somali pirates," the president's office said in a statement.

The three hijackers were arrested, and the fishermen and their boat were safe and being taken to the Seychelles, according to Susantha Kahawatta, a top official in the Fisheries Department of Sri Lanka. He said the Sri Lankan envoy to the Seychelles told him of the successful rescue operation.

The hijacking came two weeks after Sri Lanka said it would join a US-led operation to protect merchant vessels sailing in the Red Sea against attacks by Yemen-based Houthi rebels. Other suspected hijackings in waters off Somalia have raised concern that Somali pirates have resumed activity a decade after they caused chaos in international shipping. (AP)

oil price up

The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by USD 1.60 to USD 85.31 per barrel on Monday as opposed to USD 83.71 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

The price of Brent crude went down by USD 1.15 to USD 82.40 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate dropped by USD 1.23 to settle at USD 76.78 pb. (KUNA)

USD stable

The exchange rate of the US Dollar against the Kuwaiti dinar stabilized on Tuesday at KD 0.307 while the Euro fell to KD 0.333 compared to yesterday's prices, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) on Tuesday.

The CBK revealed in its daily bulletin that the exchange rate of the British pound rose to KD 0.390, the Swiss franc rose by 0.20 percent to KD 0.356 and the Japanese yen to KD 0.002. (KUNA)

13 foreign and Arab companies complete 15 projects in Kuwait

The "Modon" group disclosed that Kuwait has seen the implementation of 15 real estate and construction projects by 13 foreign and Arab real estate companies between April 2006 and August 2022. The cumulative investment for these projects amounted to approximately \$3.6 billion, with an average project cost of \$237 million, reports Al-Seyassah daily. In a recent report, the group

noted that 2023 did not witness the initiation of any new foreign investment projects in Kuwait's real estate and construction sector. The last project initiated was "XZero City" by the Emirati real estate development group URB in August 2022, to build 30,000 homes and environmentally friendly service facilities. Foreign investments in Kuwait's real estate sector were

diversified across three main activities, with construction leading with 8 projects, followed by professional services activities with 5 projects, and transportation and storage. The investing companies were from various countries, including the Emirates (4 companies), India (3 companies), Australia (2 companies), and one company each from the United States, Switzerland, China, Luxem-

bourg, Qatar, and Singapore. On the other hand, Kuwaiti companies invested around \$32 billion in 64 real estate projects abroad between 2003 and 2023, averaging \$500 million per project. The majority of these investments (75%) were directed towards the construction sector, followed by the marketing and sales sector at 23.4%, and business services with one company.

Market Movements

30-01-2024

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+38.92	36,065.86	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-266.84	11,985.97
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+1,119.51	30,347.30	UAE	- DFM	-2.16	4,168.43
				PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-8.67	6,622.01
				PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-852.00	61,907.38

Business

Overall property price index inches up in Q4

Commercial deals boost Q4 real estate sales, offsetting residential decline

By National Bank of Kuwait

Real estate activity ended last year on a more positive note, with sizeable deals in the commercial segment combining with a stable residential segment to lift total sales in Q4. Our overall property price index inched up in Q4 on rising valuations for investment buildings, which offset a decline in residential sector prices. Activity in the real estate market in 2023 overall was weak, dragged down by elevated interest rates, still-high residential prices, and more attractive returns in alternative assets classes. Prospects for 2024 seem more positive, however, with bank lending to the real estate sector picking up momentum, Fed interest rate cuts on the horizon and government efforts to address challenges in the residential market gaining traction.

Aggregate real estate sales in Q4 2023 registered the highest quarterly growth rate since Q2 2022 (+13.6% q/q) to come in at KD771 million. This was driven by big ticket commercial sales in the Kuwait City and Al-Ahmedi governorates, an increase in investment sector sales as well as a deceleration in the rate of decline in residential sales (46% of total sales). However, in year-on-year terms, activity in Q4 was down on the same quarter in 2022, though, at -8.3%, the drop was less acute than the -16.3% y/y recorded in Q3. For the year as a whole, 2023 saw the steepest decline (-22%) in sales since 2020 to reach KD2.8 billion, with double-digit declines observed in all sectors.

Residential sales fell in Q4 2023 (-0.4% q/q) for a fourth consecutive quarter, to KD353 million. But the drop was marginal, helped by demand ticking up from the summer lull: the volume of transactions increased at the fastest pace (+9.5% q/q) in more than two years. On a yearly basis, residential sales declined by a steeper 27%, though this was also a reflection of Q4 2022's high base. Last year's overall decline in residential sales could be attributed to weaker sentiment given still-high home and plot prices, relatively elevated interest rates, lagging project plans for re-development of inner-city areas, and the deferral of buying decisions due to the expected interest rate cuts by the Fed, given that this could subsequently lead to lower interest rates in Kuwait.

On the other hand, sales in the investment sector posted positive growth for the second consecutive quarter (+8.6% q/q) to reach KD231 million. Sales (and transaction volumes) in October nearly doubled on September's, with big deals in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate. Alongside the uptick in activity has been an expansion in bank lending to the real estate sector since Septem-

ber. The appetite for real estate investments looks to be recovering despite high interest rates, with a more positive outlook partly shaped perhaps by draft government amendments in the new residency law that could facilitate increased uptake by expatriates, the predominant users of apartments.

Finally, commercial sales were also supportive of overall sales in Q4 2023, with KD187.1 million worth of transactions (+68% q/q; +105% y/y). The increase was mainly due to large deals in Kuwait City/Qibla (KD77.6 million) and Al-Ahmedi governorate/Sabah Al-Ahmad coastal area (KD68.2 million).

Real estate prices fall on declining residential prices

The real estate price index, which is based on Ministry of Justice weekly transaction data, declined by -1% q/q as residential prices dropped (-4.3% q/q) on the back of falls in the prices of residential homes and plots in most governorates. However, investment sector prices rose 3.5% q/q due to higher building prices (+5.7% q/q), especially in Kuwait City and in Al-Ahmedi governorates. On a year-on-year basis, the real estate price index inched up by 1.7% from the previous quarter's decline of 0.7%, with the rise in investment prices (+5.4% y/y) more than offsetting the decline in residential prices (-1.0% y/y). Overall, the composite real estate price index increased by 1.8% in 2023, a much slower rise than the 7.7% gain in 2022, and this is largely a reflection of the muted gain in residential sector valuations.

Rising existing housing applications

Separately, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) ramped up its plot disbursement efforts during Q4 2023, distributing around 3,030 residential plots under the housing welfare program, according to announcements published on its website. This is a notable improvement on the 1,955 or so plots delivered in the previous quarter. PAHW tendered two infrastructure development contracts in Al-Salmi area (Al-Jahra governorate) for 3,345 houses while signing off on another for the South Sa'ad Al-Abdullah residential project. Meanwhile, the volume of housing loans disbursed by the Kuwait Credit Bank surged by 32% q/q to KD155 million in Q4 though approved government plot loans witnessed a notable decline (-26%), while remaining robust compared to historical averages. For 2023, the ratio of government plot loan disbursements to approved loans rose to 86% (74% in 2022), pointing to strengthening construction activity in the residential sector. However, the outstanding balance of applications for government housing continued to rise in Q4

	Weight (100=2019)	q/q					y/y				
		4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23	4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23
RE price index	100	-3.3	0.5	-0.6	2.8	-1.0	5.2	4.7	1.3	-0.7	1.7
Investment	45.5	-3.4	2.1	-0.5	0.1	3.5	0.3	0.3	3.5	-1.7	5.3
Apartment	7.2	4.9	-1.1	-1.0	2.5	-2.7	3.4	3.9	3.5	5.4	-2.3
Building	69.9	-4.1	2.7	-0.5	-1.1	5.7	-1.7	-1.6	3.0	-3.1	6.9
Plot	22.9	-3.5	0.9	-0.2	4.3	-2.9	8.4	7.3	5.4	1.3	1.9
Residential	54.5	-3.2	-0.7	-0.6	4.8	-4.3	9.2	8.4	-0.3	0.2	-1.1
Home	62.4	-1.0	0.3	-1.9	3.9	-3.5	11.8	15.5	2.2	1.2	-1.3
Plot	37.6	-5.5	-2.0	0.9	6.0	-5.2	6.4	1.1	-3.0	-1.1	-0.7

Source: Ministry of Justice, NBK calculations

* The NBK real estate price index is based on a dataset of real estate transactions available at the Ministry of Justice website. The index is calculated on a quarterly basis by type of real estate for all governorates. The methodology is based on a fixed-weight Laspeyres type with the base year 2019.

	Quarterly Average		Quarterly Sales/ Transactions					Change in 4Q23, %	
	2022	2023	4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23	q/q	y/y
Sales (KD million)	907	709	840	714	672	678	771	13.6	-8.3
Residential	482	357	480	363	358	354	353	-0.4	-26.5
Investment	275	224	269	254	200	212	231	8.6	-14.2
Commercial	151	127	91	96	114	111	187	67.9	105.3
Number of transactions	1,473	1,074	1,368	1,085	1,029	1,045	1,137	8.8	-16.9
Residential	1,091	760	982	760	729	740	810	9.5	-17.5
Investment	342	285	364	306	280	254	300	18.1	-17.6
Commercial	40	29	22	19	20	51	27	-47.1	22.7
Average transaction Value (KD '000)	616	660	614	658	653	649	678	4.4	10.4
Residential property	442	470	489	478	491	479	436	-9.1	-10.9
Investment	803	787	738	831	715	836	769	-8.1	4.1
Commercial	3,745	4,348	4,142	5,061	5,704	2,185	6,929	217.1	67.3

Source: Ministry of Justice, NBK calculations

2023, reaching about 95,281 (+4.6% q/q).

Housing initiatives to pick up pace in 2024

Real estate activity could pick up slightly in 2024, helped by 2023's low base and the possible cuts in interest rates later in the year that could support credit demand. High real estate prices, especially in the residential sector, and delays in the redevelopment of inner-city areas such as Jleeb Al-Shyokh could, along with heightened regional geopolitical risks and global macroeconomic uncertainties, act as a dampener to ac-

tivity. However, the passing of the residential cities law (July 2023) and the 'white land' law (November 2023), which should empower the private sector to take on a more prominent role in resolving the housing crisis and accelerate the development of unused land, respectively, are welcome moves aimed at addressing supply-side constraints. Demand meanwhile could be boosted over the medium term by the eventual pushing through of the mortgage law (financing law) that remains currently in draft form.

Stock market outlines 12 reviews across three global indices

Boursa Kuwait receives recognition for institutional sustainability commitment

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Boursa Kuwait has been honored for its commitment to institutional sustainability and for its dedicated operations in collaboration with local and international organizations, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Boursa Kuwait remains dedicated to giving back to society and contributing to a better future through sustained efforts in social responsibility and sustainable development. The stock exchange actively addresses critical social issues such as education, healthcare, and environmental preservation, showcasing a comprehensive and diverse approach towards societal responsibility and commitment to service.

Nasser Mishari Al-Sanousi, Head of the Marketing and Corporate Communications Department at Boursa Kuwait, praises the company's commitment to corporate sustainability principles.

He highlights Boursa Kuwait's receipt of prestigious awards from global magazines and publications, underscoring the significance the company places on institutional sustainability and environmental responsibility.

The stock exchange has achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification for its building, a notable accomplishment signifying its dedication to responsible and sustainable development.

The certification, awarded by the US Green Building Council, acknowledges the efficiency of energy use, water conservation, waste treatment, and overall environmental performance within the building.

In collaboration with the Middle East Investor Relations Association, Boursa Kuwait continues to enhance the investor relations sector and promote international best practices in corporate governance within the Kuwaiti capital market.

Mohammed Saud Al-Osaimi, the stock exchange's CEO, emphasizes the importance of developing human resources, especially in the finance and capital markets industry.

Boursa Kuwait is honored with two awards at the third annual Sustainable Finance Awards by Global Finance magazine. Recognized for exceptional achievements in social responsibility and sustainability projects, Boursa Kuwait receives the "Distinguished Financial Leadership in Sustainable Communities Award in the Middle East for 2023" and the "Leadership in Sustainability Transparency in the Middle East for 2023" award.

The Kuwait Stock Exchange is awarded the "Best Sustainable Corporate Governance in Kuwait" for 2023 by The European magazine, highlighting its commitment to sustainability and responsible corporate governance. Boursa Kuwait maintains consistent communication with the global investment community, ensuring their needs for the Kuwaiti capital market are met. The stock exchange focuses on adopting international standards, emphasizing transparency, and facilitating ease of access for investors, particularly in the elite "Premier Market."

Market liquidity rises to 56.3 mln dinars

Boursa Kuwait sees 0.33% drop in second consecutive session

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: For the second consecutive trading session, the primary indices of the Boursa Kuwait encountered downward pressure yesterday, leading to a 0.33 percent decline in the general market index. It concluded at 7307.24 points, marking a decrease of 24.33 points, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The liquidity in the market increased to 56.3 million dinars compared to yesterday's 50 million dinars. The trading activity encompassed 194.3 million shares, involving 12,495 transactions and featuring 125 listed shares. Among these, 43 shares recorded gains, 67 experienced losses, and 15 remained unchanged.

Simultaneously, the Premier Market Index witnessed a 0.43 percent decrease, losing 34.94 points and closing at 8,014.99 points. The liquidity level for this index reached 32.8 million dinars. The trading volume amounted to 97.2 million shares traded through 6,615 deals, involving 31 listed shares. Out of these, seven showed gains, 20 incurred losses, and four remained unchanged.

In contrast, the Main Market index gained 0.06 percent, or 3.30 points, closing at 5968.48 points. Liquidity reached

awarded the "Best Sustainable Corporate Governance in Kuwait" for 2023 by The European magazine, highlighting its commitment to sustainability and responsible corporate governance.

Boursa Kuwait maintains consistent communication with the global investment community, ensuring their needs for the Kuwaiti capital market are met. The stock exchange focuses on adopting international standards, emphasizing transparency, and facilitating ease of access for investors, particularly in the elite "Premier Market."

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: From the end of February onwards, the Kuwait Stock Exchange has outlined a schedule of 12 reviews spanning three global indices -- Morgan Stanley, FTSE Russell, and Standard & Poor's -- throughout the

current year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These reviews hold the potential to attract additional foreign liquidity or witness liquidity exits, thereby impacting market weights and the positioning of listed companies.

Each of the three global indices will undergo four reviews, and specific dates for decision announcements and implementation have been outlined.

It is worth noting that approvals for upgrades on Fridays, recognized as trading days in global markets, will be applied in Kuwait on the last trading day of the same week, which falls on the preceding Thursday.

Investor interest is particularly heightened for FTSE Russell's announcement scheduled for August. This announcement is expected to unveil the annual review of markets eligible for the Advanced Emerging Markets Club.

Kuwaiti non-oil exports fall to 254.4 mln dinars

April records decline in exports to 27 mln dinars

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry indicates a significant decrease in the total value of Kuwaiti non-oil exports by 29.6%, amounting to 106.9 million dinars.

This decline is observed from 361.3 million dinars in the first 11 months of 2022 to 254.4 million dinars in the same period of 2023. The number of certificates of origin for these exports also witnessed a decrease, falling by about 18.2% from 26,309 thousand certificates in the 11 months of 2022 to 21,517 thousand certificates in the corresponding period of 2023.

Kuwait exports its non-oil industrial products to six groups, including Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Arab countries, European continent countries, African continent countries, Asian continent and Australia countries, and American continent countries.

The export data showed fluctuations throughout 2023. Exports decreased from 2.2 thousand certificates worth 21.78 million dinars in January to 2.1 thousand certificates worth 17.89 million dinars in February. They rose in March to 2.48 thousand certificates worth 28.8 million dinars, followed by a decline in April to 1.65 thousand certificates worth 27 million dinars.

Non-oil exports continued to fluctuate in subsequent months, reaching the lowest point in June with 1.6 thousand certificates worth 18 million dinars and the highest point in August with 2,012 thousand certificates worth 31.1 million dinars. The data also indicates a drop in September to 1.7 thousand certificates worth 17.9 million dinars, a rise in October to 2.04 thousand certificates worth 25 million dinars, and a subsequent fall in November to 1.76 thousand certificates worth 21.08 million dinars.

Minister honors 125 years relation

Britain's Kuwait Investment Office celebrates enduring cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Kuwait Investment Office in London is recognized as one of the world's most influential sovereign funds, boasting an estimated investment activity of approximately \$40 billion within the United Kingdom, reports Al-Jarida daily.

During a speech at the British Embassy ceremony commemorating the 125th anniversary of historical relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, conveyed the State of Kuwait's pride in its enduring historical ties and outstanding cooperation with the United Kingdom.

The event, attended by key dignitaries including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Office Affairs Oliver Dowden, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and various diplomatic representatives, highlighted the deep significance of the bilateral relationship.

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah underscored the attention and care given to this relationship by the political leadership, particularly by His Highness the Emir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad. Moreover, he emphasized the designation of 2024 as the year of the Kuwaiti-British partnership, following the signing

of a memorandum of understanding on August 29, 2023, during His Highness the Emir's official visit to the United Kingdom.

Regarding economic cooperation, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah pointed out the pivotal role of the Kuwait Investment Office, which, at 71 years old, has become one of the most important and largest sovereign funds globally.

The KIO's current investment activity is estimated at an average of \$40 billion within Britain, contributing significantly to the economies of both countries. Kuwaiti investments in the United Kingdom have led to the creation of approximately 150,000 jobs.

Sheikh Al-Abdullah also highlighted the cooperation between British companies and the State of Kuwait, facilitated by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, with investments reaching around 5 million Kuwaiti dinars (approximately 16.2 million US dollars) in areas such as information technology, insurance, oil, and gas.

Reflecting on historical support, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah acknowledged the United Kingdom's consistent stance in guaranteeing Kuwait's independence and security since 1920, through events like the 1961 agreement and the honorable position during the Iraqi invasion in 1990.

Overall, Kuwait's total exports, including oil and non-oil, during the first nine months of 2023 decreased by 18.7% to a value of 4.4 billion dinars. This decline is from 23.82 billion dinars in the first nine months of 2022 to 19.35 billion dinars in the same period of 2023. The data further reveals an increase in re-exported products by 25.7%, reaching about one billion dinars.

Regarding imports, Kuwait experienced a 7.5% increase in the first nine months of 2023, amounting to 602.4 million dinars. This is a rise from 8.04 billion dinars in the same period of 2022 to 8.643 billion dinars in 2023. Consequently, the Kuwaiti trade balance surplus declined from 15.78 billion dinars in the first nine months of 2022 to 10.716 billion dinars in the same period of 2023.

BUSINESS

EU eyes Russian assets to help Ukraine

European Union nations have decided to approve an outline deal that would keep in reserve the profits from hundreds of billions of dollars in Russian central bank assets that have been frozen in retaliation for Moscow's war in Ukraine, an EU official said.

The tentative agreement, reached late Monday, still needs formal approval but is seen as a first step toward using some

of the 200 billion euros (\$216 billion) in Russian central bank assets in the EU to help Ukraine rebuild from Russian destruction.

The official, who asked not to be identified since the agreement was not yet legally ratified, said the bloc "would allow to start collecting the extraordinary revenues generated from the frozen assets ... to support the reconstruction of Ukraine."

How the proceeds will be used will be decided later, as the issue remains mired in legal and practical considerations.

There is urgency since Ukraine is struggling to make ends meet, and aid plans in the EU and the United States are being held back over political considerations including whether allies will continue helping Ukraine at the same pace as they did in the first two years of the war. (AP)

Italy's Meloni opens Africa summit

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni opened a summit of African leaders on Monday aimed at illustrating Italy's big development plan for the continent that her government hopes will stem migration flows and forge a new relationship between Europe and Africa.

Two dozen African leaders, top European Union and United Nations officials and representatives from international lending institutions were in Rome for the sum-

mit, the first major event of Italy's Group of Seven presidency.

Italy, which for decades has been ground zero in Europe's migration debate, has been promoting its development plan as a way to create security and economic conditions that will create jobs in Africa and discourage its young people from making dangerous migrations across the Mediterranean Sea.

Meloni, Italy's first hard-right

leader since the end of World War II, has made curbing migration a priority of her government. But her first year in power saw a big jump in the numbers of people who arrived on Italy's shores, with some 160,000 last year.

The government's plan, named after Enrico Mattei, founder of state-controlled oil and gas giant Eni, seeks to expand cooperation with Africa beyond energy but in a non-predatory way. (AP)

Will the issue get worse?

Houthi attacks in the Red Sea are idling car factories

Aramco to keep its maximum crude capacity at 12 mln b/d

Rising oil prices tied to supply concerns

RIYADH, Jan 30, (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's oil giant Aramco said Tuesday it was directed by the kingdom's Energy Ministry to maintain its maximum sustainable crude capacity at 12 million barrels a day (b/d), and not to keep boosting it to 13 million b/d.

The company's maximum sustainable crude capacity is decided by the State, Saudi Aramco said in a press release, carried by the Saudi official news agency, adding that it would update its capital spending guidance when its full-year 2023 results are announced in March.

Saudi Aramco is a state-owned energy and chemical company. It carries out the exploration, production and processing of crude oil and natural gas in the kingdom.

Meanwhile, the oil prices experienced were uptick yesterday amid growing apprehensions about fuel supplies in the aftermath of a missile striking a fuel tanker operated by Trafigura in the Red Sea. This surge occurs concurrently with a decline in Russia's exports of refined petroleum products, attributed to ongoing repairs at several refineries that have been targets of drone attacks, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Brent crude futures saw a 31-cent increase, reaching \$83.86 per barrel, with the session's peak hitting \$84.80. Simultaneously, US West Texas Intermediate crude rose by 25 cents, reaching \$78.26 per barrel.

Trafigura, a commodity trading company, stated that it was evaluating security risks before embarking on new trips in the Red Sea,

Real estate giant owes over \$300 billion

China Evergrande has been ordered to liquidate

HONG KONG, Jan 30, (AP): A Hong Kong court ordered China Evergrande, the world's most heavily indebted real estate developer, to undergo liquidation following a failed effort to restructure \$300 billion owed to banks and bondholders that fueled fears about China's rising debt burden.

Judge Linda Chan said Monday it was appropriate for the court to order Evergrande to wind up its business given a "lack of progress on the part of the company putting forward a viable restructuring proposal" as well as Evergrande's insolvency.

China Evergrande Group is one of the biggest of a series of Chinese developers that have collapsed since 2020 under official pressure to rein in surging debt the ruling Communist Party views as a threat to China's slowing economic growth.

But a crackdown on excess borrowing has tipped the property industry into crisis, making it a drag on the economy, as scores of other developers ran into trouble, their predicaments rippling through financial systems in and outside China.

Global financial markets were rattled earlier by fears an Evergrande liquidation could cause global shockwaves. But Chinese regulators said the risks could be contained. Only a few billion dollars of Evergrande's debt was owed to foreign creditors.

It's unclear how the liquidation order will affect China's financial system.

Evergrande's Hong Kong-traded shares plunged nearly 21% early Monday following the extinguishing of a fire on a tanker attacked by the Yemeni Houthi group the day before.

While initial supply disruptions



Residents walk through a partially shuttered Evergrande commercial complex in Beijing, Monday, Jan. 29, 2024. Chinese property developer China Evergrande Group on Monday was ordered to liquidate by a Hong Kong court, after the firm was unable to reach a restructuring deal with creditors. (AP)

day before they were suspended from trading. But Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng index was up 0.9% and some property developers saw gains in their share prices.

China's largest real estate developer, Country Garden, initially gained nearly 3% but was flat. Sunac China Holdings rose 2.4%.

The Shanghai Composite index dropped 0.9% while Shenzhen's A-share index fell more than 2%.

Evergrande gained a reprieve from the Hong Kong court in December after it said it was attempting to "refine"

which peaked in June 2022 - according to the central bank's preferred gauge - at 7.1%. But data released Friday showed that over the past six months, inflation has fallen all the way back to the Fed's 2% annual target level. In the past three months, year-over-over inflation that excludes volatile food and energy costs has dropped to just 1.5%.

Yet Fed officials are expected to wait for at least a few months, to try to build confidence that inflation has been truly beaten, before they start reducing rates.

Christopher Waller, an influential member of the Fed's governing board, sounded a note of caution in a recent speech.

"Inflation of 2% is our goal," he said. "But that goal cannot be achieved for just a moment in time. It must be sustained."

Waller has previously referred to having been "head-faked" on inflation. On more than one occasion, when initial government reports had indicated that inflation was falling, subsequent revisions to the data showed that price increases actually remained high. In his speech, Waller mentioned the government's upcoming revisions of inflation data, to be released on Feb. 9, as a report he will be watching closely.

It's possible that inflation could stay undesirably high, especially if the economy remains strong, which could cause the Fed to leave rates unchanged. Fed officials have said that as long as the economy stays healthy, they can take time before cutting rates.

Average paychecks are still increasing at about 4% to 4.5% annually, and apartment rental prices are still rising faster than they did before

a new debt restructuring plan of more than \$300 billion in liabilities. It could appeal the ruling.

Fergus Saurin, a lawyer representing an ad hoc group of creditors, said Monday he was not surprised by the outcome.

"The company has failed to engage with us. There has been a history of last-minute engagement which has gone nowhere," he said.

Saurin said that his team worked in good faith during the negotiations. Evergrande "only has itself to blame for being wound up," he said.

"With oil tankers associated with the US and UK now facing the risk of attacks, the market is likely to reassess the risks related to supply disruption."

WASHINGTON, Jan 30, (AP): Car factories have idled in Belgium and Germany. Spring fashion lines are delayed at a popular British department store. A Maryland company that makes hospital supplies doesn't know when to expect parts from Asia.

Attacks on ships in the Red Sea are delivering another shock to global trade, coming on top of pandemic-related logjams at ports and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Houthi rebels in Yemen, seeking to stop Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza, are attacking cargo ships plying the waters connecting Asia with Europe and the United States, forcing traffic away from the Suez Canal and around the tip of Africa. The disruption is causing delays and driving up costs - at a time when the world has yet to vanquish a resurgence of inflation.

"What's happened right now is short-term chaos, and chaos leads to increased costs," said Ryan Petersen, CEO of the supply chain management company Flexport. "Every ship that gets rerouted has 10,000 containers on it. It's a lot of emails and phone calls getting made to replan each of those container journeys."

Adding to the bedlam in global shipping is what Petersen calls a "double whammy": Passage through another crucial trade corridor - the Panama Canal - is restricted by low water levels caused by drought. And shippers are in a rush to move goods before Chinese factories shut down for the Feb. 10-17 Lunar New Year holiday.

The threat grows considerably the longer the war in Gaza drags on. Disruption to Red Sea trade lasting a year could surge goods inflation by up to 2%, Petersen says, piling on pain while the world already struggles with higher prices for groceries, rent and more. That also could mean even higher interest rates, which have weakened economies.

For now, Man & Machine in Greater Landover, Maryland, is awaiting a shipment from Taiwan and greater China. It's been one setback after another for the company, which makes washable keyboards and accessories for hospitals and other customers.

Founder and CEO Clifton Broumand usually gets a shipment of components about once a month, but the latest delivery, which departed Asia four weeks ago, is delayed. The normal route - three weeks via the Suez Canal - has been shut down by the Houthi attacks.

Rerouting to the Panama Canal didn't work either - the shipment was stymied there by the drought-related mess. Now, it might have to cross the Pacific to Los Angeles and come by truck or train to Maryland. Broumand has no idea when the products will arrive.

"It's annoying, and it's interesting. I think our customers, everybody understands. This is not like, 'Why

didn't you plan this?' - who knew?" he said. "We call our customers and say, 'Hey, it's going to be delayed. This is why it is.' Nobody likes it, but it's not going to kill anybody, it's just another frustration."

Other industries are seeing similar hassles.

Electric carmaker Tesla has to shut down its factory near Berlin from Monday to Feb. 11 because of shipment delays. The Chinese-owned Swedish car brand Volvo idled its assembly line in Ghent, Belgium, where it makes station wagons and SUVs, for three days this month while waiting for a key part for transmissions.

Production at a Suzuki Motor Corp. plant in Hungary stopped for a week because of a delay in getting engines and other parts from Japan.

The British retail chain Marks & Spencer warned that the turmoil would delay new spring clothing and home goods collections that were due in February and March. Chief executive Stuart Machin said the Red Sea trouble was "impacting everyone and something we're very focused on."

Roughly 20% of the clothes and shoes imported into the U.S. arrive via the Suez Canal, said Steve Lamar, CEO of the American Apparel & Footwear Association. For Europe, the impact is even bigger: 40% of clothes and 50% of shoes traverse the Red Sea.

"This is a crisis that has global implications for the maritime shipping industry," Lamar said.

As of Jan. 19, Flexport says, almost 25% of global shipping capacity is being or will be diverted from the Red Sea, adding thousands of miles and a week or two to trips.

The cost of shipping a standard 40-foot container from Asia to northern Europe has surged from less than \$1,500 in mid-December to nearly \$5,500. Getting Asian cargoes to the Mediterranean is even costlier: almost \$6,800, up from \$2,400 in mid-December, according to the freight booking platform Freightos.

But things could be worse. At the height of supply chain backups two years ago, it cost \$15,000 to ship a container from Asia to northern Europe and nearly \$14,200 to take one from Asia to the Mediterranean.

"In terms of supply chain disruptions, we're not even close to what was happening during the pandemic," said Kathryn Russ, a University of California, Davis, economist.

In 2021 and 2022, American consumers, stir-crazy from COVID-19 lockdowns and armed with government relief checks, went on a spending spree, ordering furniture, sports equipment and other goods. Their orders overwhelmed factories, ports and freight yards, leading to delays, shortages and higher prices.

Things are different now. After that supply chain mess, shipping companies expanded their fleets. They have more ships to cope with shocks.

Economy still growing at a healthy pace

Inflation has slowed: Now the Fed faces 'expectations' for rate cuts

WASHINGTON, Jan 30, (AP): Chair Jerome Powell will enter this week's Federal Reserve meeting in a much more desirable position than he likely ever expected: Inflation is getting close to the Fed's target rate, the economy is still growing at a healthy pace, consumers keep spending and the unemployment rate is near a half-century low.

A year ago, most economists had envisioned a much darker outlook. As the Fed raised interest rates at the fastest pace in four decades to fight high inflation, most economists warned of a recession, possibly a painful one, with waves of layoffs and rising unemployment. Even the Fed's own economists had projected that the economy would sink into a recession in 2023.

The unexpectedly rosy picture - one that's sure to be subject to heated debate in the 2024 presidential race - may have left some Fed officials saddled by uncertainty. With their frameworks for assessing the economy upended by the pandemic and its aftermath, it's hard to know whether the economy's healthy conditions can endure.

"It almost feels like what we saw in the second half of last year was too good to be true," said Nathan Sheets, chief global economist at Citi and a former Fed economist. "When things are too good to be true, you want to try to scratch the surface and say, how durable is this?"

Some Fed officials have raised similar questions and expressed caution about their next moves. When they last met in December, the Fed's 19 policymakers who participate in interest-rate decisions said they expected to cut their benchmark rate three times this year. Yet the tim-

ing of those rate cuts, which would lead to lower borrowing costs for consumers and businesses, remains uncertain.

Most economists say they expect the first rate cut to occur in May or June, though a cut at the Fed's March meeting is not off the table. The timing of rate cuts will almost certainly be the top issue at the Fed's two-day meeting, which ends Wednesday. The Fed is all but sure to announce after the meeting that it's leaving its key rate unchanged at about 5.4%, where it's stood since July, its highest point in 22 years.

The central bank's consideration of rate cuts will take place against an intensifying presidential campaign as President Joe Biden seeks re-election with the economy a polarizing issue. Rate cuts have the potential to provoke an attack from former President Donald Trump, who nominated Powell to be Fed chair but later publicly criticized him for raising rates during the Trump presidency and demanded that he lower them.

At a news conference last month, Powell said: "We don't think about politics. We think about what's the right thing to do for the economy."

On Wednesday, the Fed's policymakers could signal that they're close to cutting rates by adjusting the language in the statement they issue after each meeting. In December, the statement still suggested that the officials were willing to consider more rate increases. Removing or altering that language in next week's statement would signal that they're shifting to a new approach, focused on rate cuts.

The Fed's aggressive streak of 11 rate hikes, beginning in March 2022, was intended to tame inflation,

Companies say disappointed

Amazon's bid to buy iRobot called off amidst a 'pushback' in Europe

LONDON, Jan 30, (AP): Amazon called off its purchase of robot vacuum maker iRobot on Monday, blaming "undue and disproportionate regulatory hurdles" after the European Union signaled its objection to the deal.

The companies said in joint statement that they were disappointed but mutually agreed to terminate the acquisition. The deal faced antitrust scrutiny on both sides of the Atlantic, but most strongly in Europe, where regulators investigating competition concerns had been expected to issue a final decision by Feb. 14.

Amazon will pay the maker of the circular-shaped Roomba vacuum a previously agreed termination fee of \$94 million, iRobot said in a separate announcement, which also disclosed that it would lay off about 31% of its staff and see its CEO depart.

Shares of iRobot tumbled as much as nearly 19% on news of the canceled deal. In 2022, Amazon announced that it would buy the Bedford, Massachusetts-based company for \$1.7 billion in cash. But the value of the deal fell 15% after iRobot incurred new debt.

The European Commission, the European Union's executive arm and top antitrust enforcer, told Amazon last year of its "preliminary view" that the iRobot acquisition would hurt competition in the industry.

"Our in-depth investigation preliminarily showed that the acquisition of iRobot would have enabled Amazon to foreclose iRobot's rivals by restricting or degrading access to the Amazon Stores," Margrethe Vestager, the commission's

competition chief, said Monday.

The investigation raised fears that Amazon would have been able to "delist or not list rival robot vacuum cleaners," reduce their visibility on its marketplace, limit access to "commercially attractive product labels" like Amazon's Choice, or make it costlier for iRobot's rivals to advertise and sell their products, she said in a statement.

It would have been "economically profitable" for Amazon to shut out rivals, limiting competition and leading to higher prices, lower quality and less innovation, she said.

British antitrust regulators cleared Amazon's purchase in June, but it still faced scrutiny in the U.S. by the Federal Trade Commission, which filed a landmark antitrust lawsuit against the online retail giant last year.

David Zapolsky, Amazon's general counsel, lashed out at regulators and said consumers would lose out on "faster innovation and more competitive prices."

"Mergers and acquisitions like this help companies like iRobot better compete in the global marketplace, particularly against companies, and from countries, that aren't subject to the same regulatory requirements in fast-moving technology segments like robotics," he said.

He added that "undue and disproportionate regulatory hurdles discourage entrepreneurs, who should be able to see acquisition as one path to success, and that hurts both consumers and competition - the very things that regulators say they're trying to protect."



Photos during the Indian Embassy in Kuwait commemoration of 'Republic Day' in honor of the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution.

Ambassador expresses gratitude to all stakeholders in elevating relations

India remains committed to strengthening India-Kuwait ties

Beats, Bites & City Lights

Experience Sintofo's new culinary celebration of life at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Say goodbye to the hush of traditional dining and welcome a new era of culinary flair at the iconic Asian restaurant Sintofo at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya—where every evening celebrates life, flavour and the city's vibrant pulse.

Revamping itself on the top floor of Four Seasons Kuwait City hub, Sintofo is a stylish modern gathering spot with a hip, high club-like vibe. The epitome of urban chic, this thoroughly modern dining room will be fusing beats, bites and city lights each evening until late into the night, creating a pulsating gathering point for the city's creative energy.

Sintofo's vibrant transformation is a toast to the vivacity of urban life, bringing an energy that's all about living life out loud. It's a celebration of shared laughter over signature dishes, stories that flow as easily as the mocktails, and moments as memorable as the cuisine.

A View That Vibrates with Energy

Every night at Sintofo is elevated with panoramic 12-metre-high views of the city and the Arabian Gulf through a dazzling wall of windows. The visual feast is enriched by custom furniture from Kyoto artisans, a striking ShouSugi Ban (charred wood) counter intricately inlaid with hand-hammered brass, and stunning water drop glass pendants from the creative minds at London-based DHLiberty Lux. The restaurant also plays host to arresting bespoke artworks by renowned Kuwaiti artist, Abdullah Bukhameen.

All Hail Chef Wattana Lai-On

Driven by the same fiery creativity as Kuwait City, Sintofo's culinary maestro, Chef Wattana Lai-On leads the team with an enormous sense of flair and fun, inherited from his mother alongside her talent in the kitchen. This early experience launched a dazzling 25-year career that has inspired him to share the vibrant Asian food scene worldwide and present a menu at Sintofo that is as kind to the planet as it is pleasing to the palate.

A Celebration of The Senses

Chef Wattana Lai-On's signature dishes include: the zesty Yellow Tail Carpaccio with jalapeno, green chilli, and lecheteigre dressing; the adventurous Blow-Torched Roll with flame-kissed maki, succulent tuna and salmon, and a drizzle of creamy mayo and teriyaki; and



Sintofo restaurant

the indulgent Luxury Bite with tender Wagyu Beef, rich foie gras, the finest caviar and truffle shavings.

Diners can also enjoy dim sum delights from the crisp, verdant burst of Exotic Vegetables Crystal Dim Sum to the pillowy richness of the Shitake Mushroom Bao and the subtle smokiness of the Duck Gyoza, all expertly crafted in the traditional style.

Vegans will feel equally at home with culinary masterpieces like the bold and spicy Mapo Tofu, delicate and earthy Cha Soba, and the velvety but refreshing Mango Pudding by Chef Thierry Pappilier.

Diners with a sweet tooth will also love The Zen Rock, featuring a lush manjaricremieux, tangy cranberry, warm and spicy ginger confit, chocolate crumble, refreshing galangal ice cream, and whisper-light meringue.

Christopher "Boom" Verzosa, Mixology Magician

Christopher "Boom" Verzosa isn't just a mixologist; he's a magician, celebrating life in all its flavours, just like Sintofo. Look out for his signature Spice It Up Mocktail, which skillfully blends the zesty spirit of Southeast Asia with subtle additions of pandan leaf, spices and a hint of chilli to create an experience that pairs perfectly with the lively exotic flair of Sintofo's Asian cuisine.

Sintofo invites diners to immerse themselves in a celebration of life, flavour and Kuwait City's vibrant pulse

from 5:00 pm until midnight every day except Sunday.

To be one of the first to experience the new-look Sintofo, contact 2200 6000

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait Monday evening celebrated the 'Republic Day' to mark the 75 years since introducing the Indian Constitution.

In his address to the distinguished guests from Kuwait, colleagues from the Diplomatic Corps and members of the media fraternity, Ambassador HE Dr Adarsh Swaika, expressed his gratitude to 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, for their unwavering support in fostering the robust India-Kuwait partnership.

The chief guest of the evening was Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. "The diamond jubilee of our Republic Day," he said, "is a historic milestone since the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950 which encapsulates the principles of equitable development, democracy, pluralism, and secularism, reflecting the core values of our nation. Unity in diversity is ingrained in our traditional ethos, making our Constitution a living document that responds to the evolving needs of time, a source of pride for all Indian citizens worldwide."

He went on to say, India's recent developmental strides have garnered international attention and in this area highlighted key facets -- largest and stable democratic regime; world's most populous country, with 65% of the population under 35; 5th largest economy, poised to become the 3rd by 2027-28; DP of USD 3.75 trillion, with USD 776 billion in exports last year; preferred foreign investment destination, attracting USD 615 billion in the last 9 years; jumped 79 positions in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings in 5 years; boasts the world's largest working population and lowest manufacturing costs; 3rd largest startup ecosystem with 111 unicorns valued at USD 350 billion; global pharmacy hub, 4th largest installed capacity of renewable power; aiming for a USD 1 trillion digital economy by 2025; looking ahead to India@2047, our vision includes a USD 32



HE Dr Adarsh Swaika, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait.

trillion economy, the world's 3rd largest, with an average annual real GDP growth of 7.6% and a per capita income growing nine-fold to approximately USD 22,000.

"Our bilateral ties with Kuwait are historical and robust, with trade and people-to-people connections forming the foundation. We value the leadership's commitment to this relationship, witnessing diversification in our trade and growing investment cooperation. The strong Indian community in Kuwait, around one million strong, acts as a vital bridge between our nations, contributing significantly to our special partnership," he added.

The Ambassador also expressed his gratitude to all stakeholders involved in elevating India-Kuwait relations.

Celebrate this season of love with the 'Heart to Heart' jewellery collection from Malabar Gold & Diamonds

WELCOMING the season of love, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally has launched the 'Heart to Heart' jewellery collection in their over 340 showrooms across 13 countries. The elegant array of adornments from the world-renowned jeweller comprises of over 200 heart-shaped designs with prices starting from just KWD 65 that makes a perfect gifting option. Furthermore, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is also giving away branded Kenneth Cole & Anne Klein watches with every purchase of diamond jewellery from the Heart-to-Heart collections. The limited-edition collection and offers can be availed across all showrooms of Malabar Gold & Diamonds until the 14th of February.

Giving customers a wide range of options to choose from, the brand has incorporated numerous light weight & elegant designs in necklaces, pendants, bangles, bracelets, earrings & rings into the 'Heart to Heart' collection. With options available in both 18K Gold & Diamonds, the brand has gone out of its way to ensure that the gifting needs of the entirety of its customer base are met.

"It is a well-accepted fact that the gift of jewellery is one among the most pristine and thoughtful gifts that one can present. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always strived to be the perfect gifting partner for jewellery lovers and as we step into the season of love, customers need not look further than our new Heart-to-Heart collection to find a gift that manages to express all your emotions. With a low starting price point and a free branded watch with every diamond jewellery purchase from the limited-edition collection, we have made it easier and more lucrative than ever to convey your love this season", commented Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

In addition to the elegant array of jewellery, Malabar Gold & Diamonds also has a wide range of collections in gold, diamond & precious gem jewellery for those suited for the varied preferences of its multi-ethnic customer base.

Editor's Note
Malabar Gold & Diamonds was established in 1993 and is the flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate.

With an annual turnover of \$5.2 billion, the company currently ranks as the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally and today has a strong retail network of 340 outlets spread across 13 countries in addition to multiple offices, design centers, wholesale units, and factories spread across India, Middle East, Far East, the USA, the UK, Canada & Australia. The group, owned by more than 4,000 shareholders, has more than 21,000 professionals from over 26 countries working towards its continued success. Malabar Gold & Diamonds also features an online store www.malabargold-anddiamonds.com providing cus-

tomers the opportunity to purchase their favorite jewelry at any time and on any day from the comfort of their homes.

The group also operates MGD - Lifestyle Jewellery, a retail concept offering trendy and light weight jewellery that represents the independent and the modern woman through its designs and collections.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) has been the primary commitment of the group since

its inception. The key ESG focus area of Malabar Group are Health, Housing, Hunger Free World, Education, Environment and Women empowerment. Integrating the principles of responsibility and sustainability into its core business, Malabar Group periodically strengthens its ESG goals to remain a socially conscious and responsible organization. The group contributes 5% of its profit to such initiatives in the same country of operation.



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'Martyr!' explores the quest for meaningful existence

Iranian-born Akbar chronicles the youthful poet's life

NEW YORK, Jan 30, (AP): A martyr is someone willing to die for a cause. It is a provocative title for any book, let alone one by an Iranian American author. But as Kaveh Akbar so ably demonstrates in his debut work of fiction, he is after a different kind of martyrdom, one that involves sacrificing everything for his art. Or, as the novel's hero puts in "Martyr!": "I just want to write an epic. A book. Something about secular, pacifist martyrs. People who gave their lives to something larger than themselves. No swords in their hands."

The novel begins as Cyrus, age 27, is getting sober. We soon learn about his parents: His mother, Roya, was killed aboard an Iranian jetliner accidentally shot down by the U.S. over the Arabian Gulf when Cyrus was still a baby. His father, Ali, who raised him alone after emigrating to America to work in a Midwest chicken factory farm, died when he was in college.

As he emerges from addiction, Cyrus has been employed in a series of dead-end jobs, mostly dreaming of capturing "the hidden voice ... beneath the mundane." ("Cyrus was a good poet when he wrote, but he rarely actually wrote.") Then one night, at an open mic in his Indiana college town, Cyrus shares with his friends his new idea for a writing project - a book about martyrdom, "people who at least tried to make their deaths mean something."

Soon he is en route to New York with Zee, his lover and best friend, to meet Orkideh, an Iranian artist with terminal cancer who has moved into the Brooklyn Museum to stage her final performance - death. Naturally, Cyrus has to meet her, and secrets are revealed.

A modern take on the age-old story of a young person's moral and psychological education, "Martyr!" is told in chapters that move back and forth in time, narrated from the perspectives of the central characters. Some voices are more convincing than others.

A few episodes, including a dream sequence between Roya and the cartoon character Lisa Simpson, fall flat.

But overall, it is an extraordinary work of art, one of the best sobriety stories since Mary Karr's "The Liars' Club," reminiscent of Zadie Smith and Anthony Veasna So in its rich evocation of immigrant lives. The glue that holds it together is Cyrus's determination to write the novel we are reading: a contemporary exploration of how to make one's life and death truly matter. For Cyrus, it can only mean one thing - becoming a writer.

Also:

NEW YORK: Million-selling author **Yuval Noah Hariri** has another grand theme for his next book: Information.

Hariri's "Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI" will be published Sept. 10 by Penguin Random House. Hariri is known for such broad and accessible historical works as "Sapiens" and "Homo Deus."

"We're living through the most profound information revolution in human history, but we can't understand it unless we understand what has come before," Hariri said in a statement Tuesday.

"Nexus" doesn't argue that understanding the past enables us to predict the future. My goal is to show that by making informed choices, we can still prevent the worst outcomes. Because if we can't change the future, then why waste time discussing it?"

Hariri's books have sold more than 45 million copies worldwide and have been translated into dozens of languages, according to Penguin Random House. The publisher is calling the book "a revelatory framework with which to consider the complex relationship between information and truth, bureaucracy and mythology, wisdom and power."

In a statement Tuesday, Penguin Random House Global CEO **Nihar Malaviya** called the new book "a brilliant historical framework to understand this moment and, crucially, to think about what we might do, before it's too late."

Books

Variety



Olivia Rodrigo performs on NBC's 'Today' show at Rockefeller Plaza on Friday, Sept. 8, 2023, in New York. Olivia Rodrigo is vying for the 'Album of the Year' Grammy award for her album 'GUTS.' (AP)

Music

SZA, Swift and Bridgers top the Grammy list

Who will win on music's big night

LOS ANGELES, Jan 30, (AP): Women lead the major categories at the Grammys this year - names like SZA, Taylor Swift, Victoria Monét, Phoebe Bridgers, Olivia Rodrigo and Brandy Clark top the list.

But who will take home music's most coveted trophies on Feb. 4?

Associated Press Music Writer Maria Sherman and Entertainment Writer Jonathan Landrum Jr. break down the close races for Grammy glory.

Album of the Year: "World Music Radio," Jon Batiste; "the record," boygenius; "Endless Summer Vacation," Miley Cyrus; "Did You Know That There's A Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd.," Lana Del Rey; "The Age Of Pleasure," Janelle Monáe; "GUTS," Olivia Rodrigo; "Midnights," Taylor Swift; "SOS," SZA

Sherman: The level of talent here is out of this world ... If Taylor Swift wins for "Midnights," she will become the first artist in Grammy history to win the top prize four times. It would be a news-breaking moment, but I'm not sure I see it in the tea leaves. Instead, they're spelling out "S-O-S."

Of the above list, no album has received near total critical acclaim as SZA's "SOS." She seems like the most obvious choice - no disrespect to the other nominees.

Landrum: Initially, Swift's "Midnights" first came to mind, but then my heart interjected with SZA's "SOS." But after thinking over this a little longer, I couldn't forget about "World Music Radio" by Jon Batiste - a multi-genre performer who stunningly claimed victory in this same category in 2022. That year, he surprisingly overcame favorites such as Swift, Billie Eilish, Lady Gaga, Olivia Rodrigo and Justin Bieber who had more commercial success. So it's not too far-fetched of an idea that Batiste has a bona fide chance here. SZA seems like the obvious choice, but I'm rolling with Batiste on this one.

Record of the Year: "Worship," Jon Batiste; "Not Strong Enough," boygenius; "Flowers," Miley Cyrus; "What Was I Made For?," Billie Eilish; "On My Mama," Victoria Monét; "vampire," Olivia Rod-

rigo; "Anti-Hero," Taylor Swift; "Kill Bill," SZA

Landrum: Just like Victoria Monét's young daughter, my little girl sings the chorus of "On My Mama" more often than any other tune out today. I've seen this song - which was born while Monét struggled with postpartum depression - breathe joy into people's lives during car rides and parties.

I put this on my mama: Monét's track will be the cream that rises to the top of this category.

Sherman: Looking at the 2024 nominations as a whole - Victoria Monét is the second-most nominated (alongside Phoebe Bridgers and just behind SZA). I believe this is hers for the taking.

But just to play devil's advocate: I could see a world where the academy awards Swift for "Anti-Hero," largely because I'm not so confident "Midnights" will get shine - but it seems to me that Monét will win.

Song of the Year (songwriter's award): "A&W," Jack Antonoff, Lana Del Rey and Sam Dew; "Anti-Hero," Jack Antonoff and Taylor Swift; "Butterfly," Jon Batiste and Dan Wilson; "Dance The Night," Caroline Ailin, Dua Lipa, Mark Ronson and Andrew Wyatt; "Flowers," Miley Cyrus, Gregory Aldae Hein and Michael Pollack; "Kill Bill," Rob Bisel, Carter Lang and Solána Rowe; "vampire," Daniel Nigro and Olivia Rodrigo; "What Was I Made For?," Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell

Sherman: This category is filled with performers the Recording Academy loves to award: Jon Batiste, Taylor Swift, and Billie Eilish, particularly. (And, conversely, artists it loves to nominate but not award: both Lana Del Rey and Miley Cyrus have yet to receive a Grammy. I'd like to see that change.) My gut says this one will go to Eilish - if her "Barbie" hit "What Was I Made For?" isn't awarded record of the year.

Landrum: It's hard for me to disagree. I believe Miley Cyrus could have a shot to win her first-ever Grammy with "Flowers." But I feel like "What Was I Made For?" was made for this songwriter's award. Chalk this one up to another sibling Grammy win for

Eilish and her brother, Finneas.

Best New Artist: Gracie Abrams; Fred again.; Ice Spice; Jelly Roll; Coco Jones; Noah Kahan; Victoria Monét; The War And Treaty

Landrum: Last year, jazz artist Samara Joy unexpectedly reigned supreme in a wide-open category. But this year, there's one runaway winner: Victoria Monét.

Yes, it's a loaded category with standouts Jelly Roll, Ice Spice, Coco Jones, and The War and Treaty. But despite these worthy candidates, there's one thing that separates Monét from the pack: Unlike other nominees, the "On My Mama" singer is nominated in all three main categories (album, record and song of the year). I think that holds major weight in her favor. It's her time here.

Sherman: Can I leave this one with, "Ditto"?

Best Pop Solo Performance: "Flowers," Miley Cyrus; "Paint The Town Red," Doja Cat; "What Was I Made For?," Billie Eilish; "vampire," Olivia Rodrigo; "Anti-Hero," Taylor Swift

Sherman: No doubt, these are all hits in their own way. My sense is this one will go to Swift or Rodrigo. As much as it pains me to say it, I don't see a world where voters choose Doja Cat or Miley Cyrus over those two pop powerhouses, and I think Eilish's "What Was I Made For?" sweep will be reserved for the main songwriter category. I'd love to see a Cyrus win, but I've been burned before!

Landrum: I definitely believe Cyrus has a very good chance of claiming the top spot, but I feel like this is where Swift will make her mark. The trophy could very well be handed to Eilish or Rodrigo, but it's hard for me to envision "Anti-Hero" being shut out - especially after Swift's exceptional year.

Best Rap Performance: "The Hillbillies," Baby Keem Featuring Kendrick Lamar; "Love Letter," Black Thought; "Rich Flex," Drake & 21 Savage; "Scientists & Engineers," Killer Mike Featuring André 3000, Future And Eryn Allen Kane; "Players," Coi Leray

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Features

ARABO TIMES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024

LOS ANGELES: Movie theaters and audiences settled for seconds this weekend. With no new wide releases on the schedule, a mob of holdovers sustained the North American box office, which was led by "The Beekeeper" in its third week of release.

Amazon MGM Studios' **Jason Statham** actioner earned \$7.4 million to take the No. 1 spot, according to studio estimates Sunday. It was down only 14% from the previous weekend and brings its running domestic total to \$42.3 million. Globally, it has crossed \$100 million.

Paramount's "Mean Girls" musical, which is also in its third weekend, was close behind, with \$7.3 million. The movie has now earned \$60.8 million in North America.

In third place, Warner Bros.' "Wonka" added \$5.9 million in its seventh weekend as the **Timothée Chalamet**-led musical inches closer to \$200 million domestic. It's currently at \$195.2 million in North America and \$552 million globally.

Rounding out the top five were Universal and Illumination's "Migration," with \$5.1 million, which pushed it over the \$100 million mark domestically, and Sony's romantic comedy "Anyone But You," with \$4.8 million, bringing its total to \$71.2 million.

This was the first moviegoing weekend following Oscar nominations. While many top contenders are already available to watch in the home, including "Oppenheimer," "Barbie," "Killers of the Flower Moon" and "The Holdovers," several films still in theaters got sizable boosts from the buzz. Amazon and MGM's "American Fiction," nominated for five awards, including best picture and best actor for **Jeffrey Wright**, got a 65% bump in its seventh week, with \$2.9 million in ticket sales.

Searchlight's "Poor Things," nominated for 11 Oscars, including best picture, best director and best actress for **Emma Stone**, got a 43% boost from last weekend with an estimated \$3 million. The **Yorgos Lanthimos** film has now earned \$51.1 million globally. (AP)

NEW YORK: Two men accused of killing Run-DMC's **Jam Master Jay** were both close to the trailblazing DJ, but were driven by "greed and revenge" over a failed drug deal when they ambushed him at his recording studio more than 20

years ago, prosecutors argued as the men's trial began Monday.

In opening statements in **Brooklyn** federal court, Assistant US Attorney **Miranda Gonzalez** laid out the prosecution's case that **Karl Jordan Jr.**, the hip-hop star's godson, and **Ronald Washington**, a childhood friend, killed the 37-year-old in 2002 after they



Statham



Chalamet

were cut out of a lucrative cocaine deal. Both men have pleaded not guilty.

While the case languished for almost two decades until Jordan and Washington were arrested in 2020, becoming one of the hip-hop world's most elusive mysteries, Gonzalez told jurors that they would hear from eyewitnesses

who were in the studio that night, and that the pair confessed their involvement to others.

"Each defendant was proud that they had taken down Jam Master Jay and got away with it," she said.

Washington's lawyer **Ezra Spilke**, however, argued the case was held together with "tape and

glue" and declared that prosecutors have "no clue" who killed Jay, who was born **Jason Mizell**.

"This case is about 10 seconds, 21 years ago," he said. "It's a blink of an eye, a generation ago."

The men face at least 20 years in prison if convicted. The government has said it would not seek the death penalty. (AP)

People & Places

Music

SZA's 'Kill Bill' favored

Mike's song stands out in rap category

Continued from Page 11

Landrum: Kendrick Lamar and his cousin Baby Keem won this category last year. But I don't see the family duo coming away victorious this time for their song "The Hillbillies." I feel that way about Drake and 21 Savage's "Rich Flex," which is a certified banger.

But in the rap world, the biggest wave over the past year in this category was created by Killer Mike's "Scientists & Engineers" featuring Future, Eryn Allen Kane and Andre 3000 of the legendary hip-hop duo OutKast. The standout song



SZA

was so well crafted with Future's hoarse vocals, Kane's superb crooning and fine verses delivered by Mike and Andre 3000 - who has lately released more flute music than rap.

But when Andre 3000 - also known as 3 Stacks - blessed us with his lyrical expertise, we all listened closely. I believe voters heard him and everyone else

loud and clear as well.

Sherman: "Scientists & Engineers" is the clear standout, in my opinion, but I'd love to give a shoutout to Coi Leray's "Players." It's the Grandmaster Flash's "The Message" interpolation for me, and that song was totally ubiquitous for a period - but likely not for the Grammys.

■ **Best Country Solo Performance:** "In Your Love," Tyler Childers; "Buried," Brandy Clark; "Fast Car," Luke Combs; "The Last Thing On My Mind," Dolly Parton; "White Horse," Chris Stapleton

Sherman: The Recording Academy might be doing something clever with the Dolly Parton nomination, and in a year where new country music performers are seeing success with all-genres audiences, "The Last Thing on My Mind" is a song she's performed numerous times throughout her career. She reimagined the song for a Doc Watson tribute album in 2023, the same year she released her debut rock 'n' roll album, "Rockstar."

That said, I'd like to see a Brandy Clark win. She's tied with the likes of Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus with six nominations, and I think it is her time to finally take home a trophy.

Though I could see a sweep for Luke Combs' cover of the Tracy Chapman classic "Fast Car" as well. It allowed him to dominate the Country Music Awards last year.

Landrum: It would be fitting if Parton slipped in as a nominee and won. I think being mentioned in this group proves this legendary singer is as relevant as ever. I mean, Parton was very impressive at her Thanksgiving halftime performance at a Dallas Cowboys-Washington Commanders football game last year. She stole the show.

But I think the real competition is between Stapleton and Combs - whose "Fast Car" should have a little more steam to slightly pull away.

■ **Best R&B Performance:** "Summer Too Hot," Chris Brown; "Back To Love," Robert Glasper Featuring Sir & Alex Isley; "ICU," Coco Jones; "How Does It Make You Feel," Victoria Monét; "Kill Bill," SZA

Landrum: This is a tough call. In my opinion, it's a three-woman race between SZA, Monét and Coco Jones. There's strong appeal with Monét's silky "How Does It Make You Feel?," which has classic vibes written all over it. Jones' "ICU" was so impactful that even Justin Timberlake jumped on the remix. But all indications point toward SZA's revenge anthem "Kill Bill" to win. Her lead single helped propel "SOS" into elite status, and her track is the only one in this category that's nominated for both record and song of the year. I'd be surprised if the trophy goes elsewhere.

Sherman: "I might kill my ex / Not the best idea..." but writing "Kill Bill" certainly was. This one is SZA's - no question about it.

■ **Best Música Mexicana Album (Including Tejano):** "Bordado A Mano," Ana Bárbara; "La Sánchez," Lila Downs; "Motherflower," Flor De Toloache; "Amor Como En Las Películas De Antes," Lupita Infante; "Génesis," Peso Pluma

Sherman: Regional Mexican music - a catch-all term that encompasses mariachi, banda, corridos, norteño, siereño and other genres - has had a remarkable year. And yet, it was overlooked by the academy, in many ways.

However, if the Grammys are meant to reflect a kind of all-genres cultural consensus, then this one should no doubt go to Peso Pluma. For many people around the globe - and certainly in America - he's the reason they know about the genre.

But he's no shoe-in. There are a lot of incredible women in this category, including the American mariachi band Flor de Toloache and Lupita Infante, granddaughter of the legendary actor and singer Pedro Infante.

Landrum: Whew, I feel your pain. Many in the rap community have complained over the years about voters being "out of touch" from the culture. It's definitely worth addressing.

Here's my predicted winner in this category: Peso Pluma is undoubtedly the most popular artist. He'll probably win. But if we're talking about the artist with the best album in this category, then this should really be handed to either Lila Downs or Ana Bárbara.

Between them, I'm choosing Bárbara. Downs' vocals were a phenomenal force meshed with traditional Mexican instruments. It was beautiful harmony. But I'm leaning toward Bárbara's "Bordado A Mano" because it's the most well-rounded album, featuring two songs with two of Mexico's biggest artists: Vicente Hernandez and Christian Nodal. It bridges the gap between the old and new school. With Bárbara's soothing voice, I never felt like skipping to the next track.



Luke Combs performs during CMA Fest 2022, June 11, 2022, in Nashville, Tenn. Luke Combs is vying for Grammy Award in Best Country Solo Performance category for his song 'Fast Car'. (AP)

Obituary

A giant of Native American literature

Pulitzer Prize winner Momaday dies

NEW YORK, Jan. 30, (AP) - N. Scott Momaday, a Pulitzer Prize-winning storyteller, poet, educator and folklorist whose debut novel "House Made of Dawn" is widely credited as the starting point for contemporary Native American literature, has died. He was 89.

Momaday died Wednesday at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, publisher HarperCollins announced. He had been in failing health.

"Scott was an extraordinary person and an extraordinary poet and writer. He was a singular voice in American literature, and it was an honor and a privilege to work with him," Momaday's editor, Jennifer Civate, said in a statement. "His Kiowa heritage was deeply meaningful to him and he devoted much of his life to celebrating and preserving Native American culture, especially the oral tradition."

"House Made of Dawn," published in 1968, tells of a World War II soldier who returns home and struggles to fit back in, a story as old as war itself: In this case, home is a Native community in rural New Mexico. Much of the book was based on Momaday's childhood in Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico, and on his conflicts between the ways of his ancestors and the risks and possibilities of the outside world.

"I grew up in both worlds and straddle those worlds even now," Momaday said in a 2019 PBS documentary. "It has made for confusion and a richness in my life."

Despite such works as John Joseph Mathews' 1934 release "Sundown," novels by American Indians weren't widely recognized at the time of "House Made of Dawn." A New York Times reviewer, Marshall Sprague, even contended in an otherwise favorable review that "American Indians do not write novels and poetry as a rule, or teach English in top-ranking universities, either. But we cannot be patronizing. N. Scott Momaday's book is superb in its own right."

Like Joseph Heller's "Catch-22,"

Momaday's novel was a World War II story that resonated with a generation protesting the Vietnam War. In 1969, Momaday became the first Native American to win the fiction Pulitzer, and his novel helped launch a generation of authors, including Leslie Marmon Silko, James Welch and Louise Erdrich. His other admirers would range from the poet Joy Harjo, the country's first Native to be named poet laureate, to the film stars Robert Redford and Jeff Bridges.

"He was a kind of literary father for a lot of us," Harjo told The Associated Press during a telephone interview Monday. "He showed how potent and powerful language and words were in shaping our very existence."

Over the following decades, he taught at Stanford, Princeton and Columbia universities, among other top-ranking schools, was a commentator for NPR, and lectured worldwide. He published more than a dozen books, from "Angle of Geese and Other Poems" to the novels "The Way to Rainy Mountain" and "The Ancient Child," and became a leading advocate for the beauty and vitality of traditional Native life.

Language

Addressing a gathering of American Indian scholars in 1970, Momaday said, "Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves." He championed Natives' reverence for nature, writing that "the American Indian has a unique investment in the American landscape." He shared stories told to him by his parents and grandparents. He regarded oral culture as the wellspring of language and storytelling, and dated American culture back not to the early English settlers, but to ancient times, noting the procession of gods depicted in the rock art at Utah's Barrier Canyon.

"We do not know what they mean, but we know we are involved in their meaning," he wrote in the essay "The Native Voice in American Literature."

"They persist through time in the imagination, and we cannot doubt that they are invested with the very essence of language, the language of story and myth and primal song. They are 2,000 years old, more or less, and they remark as closely as anything can the origin of American literature."

In 2007, President George W. Bush presented Momaday with a National Medal of Arts "for his writings and his work that celebrate and preserve Native American art and oral tradition." Besides his Pulitzer, his honors included an Academy of American Poets prize and, in 2019, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

Momaday was married three times, most recently to Barbara Glenn, who died in 2008. He had four daughters, one of whom, Cael, died in 2017.

He was born Navarre Scott Momaday, in Lawton, Oklahoma, and was a member of the Kiowa Tribe. His mother was a writer, and his father an artist who once told his son, "I have never known an Indian child who couldn't draw," a talent Momaday demonstrably shared. His artwork, from charcoal sketches to oil paintings, were included in his books and exhibited in museums in Arizona, New Mexico and North Dakota. Audio guides to tours of the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of the American Indian featured Momaday's avuncular baritone.

After spending his teens in New Mexico, he studied political science at the University of Mexico and received a master's and Ph.D. in English from Stanford. Momaday began as a poet, his favorite art form, and the publication of "House Made of Dawn" was an unintentional result of his early reputation. Editor Fran McCullough, of what is now HarperCollins, had met Momaday at Stanford and several years later contacted him and asked whether he would like to submit a book of poems.

Momaday did not have enough for a book, and instead gave her the first chapter of "House Made of Dawn."



Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for his groundbreaking novel 'House Made of Dawn,' appears at his home in Santa Fe, N.M., on Nov. 13, 2019. Momaday died Jan. 24 at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, publisher HarperCollins announced. He had been in failing health. He was 89. (AP)



Milo



Cher

Variety

LOS ANGELES: A judge on Monday rejected Cher's request that her adult son be put into a court conservatorship controlling his money.

The Oscar- and Grammy-winning singer and actor had argued in a petition that 47-year-old Elijah Blue Allman's large payments from the trust of his late father, rocker Gregg Allman, are putting him in danger because of his struggles with mental health and substance abuse.

But Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Jessica A. Uzcatemgi was not convinced that a conservatorship was urgently needed and declined the petition, though she will still consider a larger, long-term conservatorship at a hearing in March.

Cher observed the hearing remotely. She appeared on a large screen in the courtroom throughout, but did not take part in the arguments.

Allman was in the courtroom with his attorneys, who acknowledged his previous struggles but argued that he is in a good place now, attending meetings, getting treatment and reconciling with his previously estranged wife. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Elon Musk's social media platform X has blocked some searches for Taylor Swift as pornographic deepfake images of the singer have circulated online.

Attempts to search for her name without quote marks on the site Monday resulted in an error message and a prompt for users to retry their search, which added, "Don't fret - it's not your fault."

However, putting quote marks around her name allowed posts to appear that mentioned her name.

Sexually explicit and abusive fake images of Swift began circulating widely last week on X, making her the most famous victim of a scourge that tech platforms and anti-abuse groups have struggled to fix.

"This is a temporary action and done with an abundance of caution as we prioritize safety on this issue," Joe Benarroch, head of business operations at X, said in a statement.

Unlike more conventional doctored images that have troubled celebrities in the past, the Swift images appear to have been created using an artificial intelligence image-generator that can instantly create new images from a written prompt.

After the images began spreading online, the singer's devoted fanbase of "Swifties"

quickly mobilized, launching a counteroffensive on X and a #ProtectTaylorSwift hashtag to flood it with more positive images of the pop star. Some said they were reporting accounts that were sharing the deepfakes. (AP)

ITALY: Sandra Milo, an icon of Italian cinema who played a key role in Federico

Fellini's "8½" and later became his muse, died Monday, her family said. She was 90.

Milo, noted for her distinctive high-pitched voice, died in her sleep at home in Rome, surrounded by her family and beloved dogs Jim and Lady, according to a statement from the family carried by state-run RAI television.



Jack Huston, (left), Lulu Wang, Brian Tee, Nicole Kidman and Sarayu Blue attend the premiere of 'Expats' at the Museum of Modern Art on Sunday, Jan. 21, in New York. (AP)

"Ciao Diva!" the Venice Biennale posted on social media, calling Milo an "unforgettable and versatile" actor both in comedy and drama.

Born Elena Salvatrice Greco, Milo had her break in Roberto Rossellini's 1959 film "Il generale Della Rovere (General Della Rovere)." She went onto star with some of the greats of Italy's post-war film industry, including Alberto Sordi and Marcello Mastroianni, with whom she appeared in the Oscar-winning "8½." (AP)

LONDON: A lawyer for Prince Harry asked a judge Monday to order the publisher of the Daily Mirror tabloid to pay nearly 2 million pounds (\$2.5 million) for a portion of the legal fees spent to prove that Mirror Group Newspapers invaded his privacy by hacking his phone and using unlawful means to dig up scoops on him.

The Duke of Sussex was awarded 140,000 pounds (\$178,000) in damages last month after the judge found that phone hacking was "widespread and habitual" at Mirror newspapers and executives at the papers covered it up.

The award was only a fraction of the sum he sought, but represented a major victory in his legal crusade against the British media. It is only one of several cases he has pending against tabloid publishers as he bucked his family's longstanding aversion to litigation and in June became the first senior member of the royal family to testify in court in over a century. (AP)

The Conversation

Promoting health or pursuing profits?

Nonprofit hospitals fall short on community obligations

By Jonathan Wynn, UMass Amherst
and Daniel Skinner, Ohio University

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

Does living near a hospital make you more likely to get the health care you need?

Even though the federal government requires nonprofit hospitals to regularly assess the health needs of their surrounding communities and publicly post a plan to address those concerns, many people living nearby struggle to get basic health care.

We are a political scientist and an urban sociologist who study how hospitals interact with and shape the communities in which they are located. As we explain in our book, "The City and the Hospital," most top-ranked hospitals in the US aren't doing enough in this regard.

Despite living in the shadow of world-class medical facilities, people residing in these communities often have poor health.

We call this the paradox of medically overserved communities.

Many nonprofit hospitals amass revenues in the millions and even billions. This economic power, coupled with their stated missions to take care of their local community, positions most of them well to benefit the neighborhoods surrounding their campuses.

Urban hospitals tend to be centrally located; residents of these city centers tend to be low income, and many of them are disproportionately Black and Latino. Using census data, we found that the neighborhoods around our case sites were, overall, less white, had lower household incomes, lower property values and greater vacancy rates than the rest of their cities. They also had worse health.

Populations

To better understand how hospitals serve local populations, we and our colleague, medical sociologist Berkeley Franz, conducted over 200 interviews.

We spoke with local residents, hospital administrators, business owners and health care advocates. Our conversations focused on three American hospitals: the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, Hartford Hospital in Connecticut and the University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora. Like these three, about half of US hospitals are nonprofits.

In all three cities, these neighborhoods had lower rates of health insurance compared with citywide and national averages. And so, when looking at a map, these neighborhoods might appear to have greater access to health care than, for example, those living in rural communities. This is not the case.

We found that Americans residing in a census tract next to those three hospitals were actually more likely to be in poorer health than their fellow city dwellers.

We examined 12 key health conditions, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and mental illness. Local residents were faring worse than city averages 64% of the time and worse than national averages 80% of the time.

Nonprofit hospitals get tax exemptions because the Internal Revenue Service recognizes that the promotion of health is a charitable mission that serves the public good. Because for-profit hospitals pay all applicable taxes, they are not subject to these IRS requirements.

Nonprofit hospitals save billions every year in federal, state and local taxes. But they are required to spend some of their money to provide what the government

calls "community benefit."

How much should these hospitals spend?

Until now, the authorities have not specified an amount or percentage of a hospital's revenues or profits. The IRS test for community benefit is vague. It requires that hospitals make "investments" that are "broad enough to benefit the community" and must "serve a public rather than a private interest."

Although providing charity care isn't the only contribution hospitals make to their communities, it's an important one. And in 2020, when the question was last looked at closely, nonprofit hospitals' charity care totaled US\$16 billion - during a year when they got \$28.1 billion in tax breaks.

Some hospitals do little to nothing to meet this goal. The US Government Accountability Office, a government watchdog, found 30 nonprofit hospitals that got tax breaks in 2016 despite reporting no spending on community benefits at all.

And although hospitals are required to report their community benefit activities to the IRS every three years, the government agency "was unable to provide evidence that it did so because it did not have a well-documented process to ensure those activities were being reviewed," the GAO said in 2023.

People living near hospitals complained, as you might expect, about blaring sirens, helicopters and traffic. We also heard confusion over hospitals' responsibilities toward their local community.

Local residents often told us they expected more from hospitals than other neighborhood institutions. As Mansfield Frazier, a Cleveland community advocate, put it, the Cleveland Clinic is "not in the business of making widgets. They're in the business of promoting health."

On the other hand, hospital administrators at the three hospitals we studied insist that they spend generously to improve their local communities. One Cleveland Clinic administrator, for example, lamented, "There are some people who think it is our job to repair potholes on their streets."

Research

In terms of "how well hospitals invest in community health," a health-focused think tank, the Lown Institute, graded our three hospitals as average: Hartford Hospital earned a B grade, and the University of Colorado Hospital and the vaunted Cleveland Clinic both earned a C.

The American Hospital Association has responded to these assessments by criticizing Lown's methods and data. Most notably, it accuses Lown of "cherry-picking," insisting that delivering "life-saving treatments" and educating newly graduated physicians should be considered part of "community benefit." Such activities are generally not considered part of hospitals' broader nonprofit obligations because they are paid for the medical care they deliver and the physicians they train.

Residents of the three neighborhoods where we conducted our research often noted their local hospital's prominence. But they also said they felt unwelcome there, using words like "behemoth," "intimidating" and "imposing" when describing them.

They also told us they were upset when the hospitals purchased neighborhood homes and other buildings and razed them for new facilities. In Hartford, residents pointed to an example of how the hospital bought a family-run funeral home that had catered to the local Latino community and then turned it into a parking lot. (AP)

Safety nets under pressure – community health centers struggle to meet demands

Centers juggle growing roles and limited resources

NEW YORK, Jan 30, (AP) — Elisa Reyes has come to Plaza del Sol Family Health Center for doctor's appointments for more than a decade. Though she moved away a while ago, the 33-year-old keeps returning, even if it means a two-hour roundtrip bus ride.

That's because her two children see the same doctor she does. Because when she's sick, she can walk in without an appointment. Because the staff at the Queens clinic helped her apply for health insurance and food stamps.

"I feel at home. They also speak my language," Reyes said in Spanish. "I feel comfortable."

Plaza del Sol is one of two dozen sites run by Urban Health Plan Inc., which is one of nearly 1,400 federally designated community health centers. One in 11

Americans rely on these to get routine medical care, social services and, in some cases, fresh food.

The clinics serve as a critical safety net in every state and US territory for low-income people of all ages. But it's a safety net under stress.

Since 2012, community health centers have seen a 45% increase in the number of people seeking care - and they've opened more and more service sites to expand their footprint to more than 15,000 locations.

Many centers are short-staffed and struggling to compete for doctors, mental health professionals, nurses and dentists. Leaders also told The Associated Press that funding is an ever-present concern, with the months-long debate over the

federal budget making it all but impossible for them to plan and hire for the long term.

Inequities

Despite that, the centers are trying to improve their communities' health and access to primary care in the face of inequities that start well before a patient steps into an exam room.

Community health centers have been around, in some form, for decades, and they are largely what remains to serve a community when urban and rural hospitals close or cut back.

Dr. Matthew Kusher, Plaza del Sol's clinical director, said there are things that prescriptions can't change, like stopping the spread of flu and COVID-19 when people live in apartments with one family per room and it's impossible to quarantine.

"What we provide here is only 20% of what goes toward somebody's health," Kusher said. "Their health is more driven by the other factors, more driven by the poverty, and the lack of access to food or clean water or healthy air."

Nine in 10 health center patients live at or below 200% of the federal poverty line, according to the US Health Resources and Services Administration. Beyond that:

- In 2022, nearly 1.4 million health center patients were homeless.
- One in five was uninsured.
- Half were on Medicaid.
- One in four was best served in a language other than English; about 63% were racial or ethnic minorities.

"We confront these disparities head-on in the communities that need it the most," said Dr. Kyu Rhee, president of the National Association of Community Health Centers. "We have a workforce that works nonstop, diligently and is resilient and diverse - that represents the people they serve. And that trust is so essential."

Plaza del Sol's specialty case manager Yelisa Sierra said she frequently fields questions about people needing clothes, food or shelter. Lately, the clinic serves many newly arrived migrants. She wishes she had a better answer to the question she hears most: Where can they find work?

"It's not only a medical need, it's emotion," said Sierra, sitting in a cramped office off the bustling waiting room. "They need to have a person that listens. Sometimes, it's just that."

Fifty years ago, Dr. Acklema Mohammad started as a medical assistant in Urban Health Plan's first clinic, San Juan Health Center. She has cared for some families across three generations.

"It's so gratifying to work in this community. I'm walking through the door, or I'm walking down the street, and I'm getting hugs," she said. "All along, 'Oh Dr. Mo! You're still here!'"

Staffing is Mohammad's biggest worry. Many pediatricians retired or left for other jobs after the worst of the pandemic. It's not just about money, either: She said job applicants tell her they want quality of life and flexibility, no weekends or long hours.

"It's a big job and it's a big issue because we have so many sick children and so many sick patients," Mohammad said, "but we don't have enough providers to take care of them."

Former pediatricians are sometimes picking up virtual visits to provide relief, she said, and telehealth helps, too.

When patients can't do telehealth, El Nuevo San Juan Health Center tries to bring care to them instead. About 150 elders get at-home visits, said Dr. Manuel Vazquez, Urban Health Plan's vice president of medical affairs who oversees the home health program.

There are times when the home visit isn't covered, but the team does it anyway, without getting paid. "We said, 'No. We need to do this,'" he said.



Jeffrey Reed, who experienced persistent sinus infections and two bouts of pneumonia while using a Philips CPAP machine, poses with the device at his home, Oct. 20, 2022, in Marysville, Ohio. (AP)

Safety and quality priorities

Sleep apnea machine maker halts sales in US amid recall

WASHINGTON, Jan 30, (AP) — The company behind a global recall of sleep apnea machines said Monday it will stop selling the devices in the US, under a tentative agreement with regulators that could cost the manufacturer nearly \$400 million.

Device maker Philips has recalled more than 5 million pressurized breathing machines due to risks that their internal foam can break down over time, leading users to inhale tiny particles and fumes while they sleep.

The company first announced the problem in mid-2021, but efforts to repair or replace the machines have dragged on for years, frustrating patients in the US and other countries.

The Dutch manufacturing giant said it has agreed to a consent decree with the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Justice. The deal has not yet been finalized and will have to be approved by a US judge. Philips executives disclosed the tentative agreement during a quarterly earnings update.

Under the agreement's terms, Philips would continue servicing previously sold machines in the US, but couldn't sell new ones until it meets corrective actions laid out by the FDA. Company executives said they have set aside \$393 million for operational changes and upgrades needed to comply.

The company promised it would put "safety and quality at the center of everything we do with a greater level of accountability," Philips CEO Roy Jakobson told analysts and investors.

The FDA's website warns patients that the risks of ingesting the sound-dampening foam could include headache, asthma, allergic reactions and more serious problems. In November, the agency issued a new warning that the machines can overheat, in rare cases causing fires.

The agency said it cannot comment on Philips' announcement until a final agreement is "signed and filed with the court."

In 2022, the FDA took the rare step of ordering Philips to step up its outreach to customers about the recall including "clearer information about the health risks of its products." At the time, the agency estimated only about half the people in the U.S. with affected machines knew they had been recalled.

Customers trying to obtain refunds or new or refurbished devices from the company have reported months of delays.

Most of the recalled devices are continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, machines. They force air through a mask to keep passageways open during sleep. The company has also recalled certain lines of ventilators and other breathing devices.

Untreated sleep apnea can cause people to stop breathing hundreds of times per night, leading to dangerous drowsiness and increased heart attack risk. The problem is more common in men than women, with estimates ranging from 10% to 30% of adults affected.

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SPORTS

Bucks coach Doc Rivers debuts with 113-107 defeat to Nuggets

Nets thrash Jazz 147-111

DENVER, Jan 30, (AP): Nikola Jokic spoiled the Milwaukee coaching debut of Doc Rivers by recording his 14th triple-double of the season as the Denver Nuggets surged by the Bucks 113-107 on Monday night.

Jokic finished with 25 points, 16 rebounds and 12 assists, while Jamal Murray added 35 points in helping Denver gain separation during an 8-0 run late in the game.

BASKETBALL

Rivers was lured out of his role as an analyst to take over for first-year Bucks coach Adrian Griffin, who was fired after 43 games and a 30-13 record. He watched his new squad squander an early 13-point lead, fall behind by as many as nine and surge back before Aaron Gordon ended the comeback by blocking Damian Lillard's layup with 24.7 seconds remaining.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 29 points and 12 rebounds for the Bucks, who began a five-game trip.

Nets 147, Jazz 111

In New York, Ben Simmons had 10 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds in his return from a 38-game absence, Mikal Bridges added 33 points and Brooklyn routed Utah. Simmons hadn't played since Nov. 6 because of a pinched nerve in his lower back. The No. 1 pick in the 2016 draft played 18 minutes off the bench, made all five shots and likely would have had a triple-double if not for a minutes restriction.

Cam Thomas added 25 points for the Nets, who rolled to their highest point total of the season, had 41 assists on their 54 field goals and made 21 3-pointers. They have won two straight after losing seven of their previous eight.

Keyonte George scored 21 points for the Jazz. They were trying to match an NBA record by scoring 120 points for a 12th straight game, but didn't help their chances by committing 17 turnovers that the Nets turned into 27 points.

Timberwolves 107, Thunder 101



Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) picks up a loose ball in the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets, Monday, Jan. 29, 2024, in Denver. (AP)

In Oklahoma City, Anthony Edwards scored 27 points and Minnesota beat Oklahoma City to take sole possession of the top spot in the Western Conference.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Rudy Gobert added 12 points and 17 rebounds for Minnesota, which had lost three of five.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 37 points and Jalen Williams added 20 for the Thunder, who lost their second straight after a five-game win streak. The teams split their four meetings this season.

There were 11 lead changes in the fourth quarter. A two-handed dunk by Edwards in traffic put the Timberwolves up 101-97, and Minnesota led by at least four the rest of the way.

Suns 118, Heat 105

In Miami, Eric Gordon scored 23 points, Devin Booker had 22 and Phoenix handed Miami its seventh consecutive loss.

Kevin Durant scored 20 and Bradley Beal had 19 for the Suns, who are 8-2 in their last 10 games and swept the Heat for just the second time in the last 17 seasons.

Jimmy Butler scored 26 points for Miami, which was 24-16 and fifth in the Eastern Conference just two weeks ago. The Heat are now 24-23 and three games behind Indiana in

the loss column for the sixth and final guaranteed playoff berth. It's the first seven-game skid for Heat coach Erik Spoelstra.

Cavaliers 118, Clippers 108

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell had 28 points and 12 assists and Jarrett Allen extended his double-double streak to 15 straight games, leading Cleveland past Los Angeles.

Allen finished with 20 points and 17 rebounds. Isaac Okoro added 17 points - all in the first half - as the Cavs held off a late Clippers comeback and ended L.A.'s winning streak at five. Cleveland is 10-1 since Jan. 3.

Knicks 113, Hornets 92

In Charlotte, N.C. Jalen Brunson scored 32 points, Donte DiVincenzo added 28 and New York kept rolling without the injured Julius Randle, beating Charlotte for its seventh straight victory.

Josh Hart chipped in with 12 rebounds, eight points and seven assists for the Knicks, who entered with the fourth-best record in the Eastern Conference.

Celtics 118, Pelicans 112

In Boston, Jayson Tatum scored 12 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter and Boston rallied past New Orleans.

The victory snapped a two-game skid at home for Boston, which started the season 20-0 at TD Garden.

Jaylen Brown added 22 points and 11 rebounds. Jrue Holiday had 20 points and Derrick White finished with 17.

Kings 103, Grizzlies 94

In Memphis, Tenn., Domantas Sabonis had a career-high 26 rebounds along with 20 points, De'Aaron Fox scored 23 points and Sacramento rallied past Memphis.

Sabonis finished 10 of 11 from the field and had 16 rebounds in the first half, a Kings record for rebounds in a half since the franchise moved to Sacramento in 1985. His previous career best was 25 rebounds for Indiana on Nov. 29, 2021 against Minnesota, and he surpassed it with 27.5 seconds left - part of a stout defensive performance by the Kings to close out the game.

Mavericks 131, Magic 129

In Dallas, Luka Donic had 45 points and 15 assists and Tim Hardaway Jr. added 36 points as Dallas beat Orlando.

The duo accounted for 54 of Dallas' 70 points in the second half, including 27 of the team's 35 in the fourth quarter.

Rockets 135, Lakers 119

In Houston, Jalen Green scored 34 points and Alperen Sengun added 31 as Houston beat Los Angeles.

LeBron James, Anthony Davis and D'Angelo Russell scored 23 points apiece for the Lakers, who had won two in a row, capped by a 145-144 double-overtime victory over Golden State on Saturday.

Trail Blazers 130, 76ers 104

In Portland, Ore., Jerami Grant scored 27 points and Portland took advantage of Joel Embiid's absence to rout Philadelphia.

Malcolm Brogdon added 24 points and nine assists for the Trail Blazers, who lost four of their previous five games. Rookie guard Scoot Henderson scored 22.

Wizards 118, Spurs 113

In San Antonio, Kyle Kuzma had 18 points and 11 rebounds, Daniel Gafford added 16 points and 13 boards, and Washington rallied past San Antonio to win consecutive games for the first time this season.

The Wizards improved to 2-1 since coach Wes Unseld Jr. was moved to the front office and replaced on an interim basis by Brian Keefe.



Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker (1) is defended by Orlando Magic guard Anthony Black (0) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024, in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

'Rashford owns up for his actions'

Reynolds' Wrexham 'bow' out of FA Cup in 4th round

BLACKBURN, England, Jan 30, (AP): Ryan Reynolds and Wrexham missed out on the chance of a showdown with Newcastle after losing to Blackburn 4-1 in the FA Cup on Monday.

The Welsh club's Hollywood co-owner might have been dreaming of a mouth-watering fifth-round clash against the English Premier League team when Andrew Cannon put Wrexham up 1-0 in the 19th-minute at Ewood Park.

But the fourth-division team was brought to earth by second-division Blackburn.

Sammi Szmodics and Sam Gallagher scored in the 32nd and 34th. Szmodics struck again in first-half stoppage time. Sondre Tronstad notched the fourth goal.

SOCCER

"It's a great lesson for us. Against better quality players, you've got to be switched on all the time or you get punished, and they punished us tonight," Wrexham manager Phil Parkinson said. "We'll regroup and we'll concentrate on a terrific second part of the season in the league."

Blackburn manager Jon Dahl Tomasson is a former Newcastle striker and can look forward to a reunion with his old team.

And Szmodics is targeting a cup giant-killing in the next round.

"Chuffed to get through and into the next round, looking forward to Newcastle," he said. "We feel like we can beat anyone here on our day."

Wrexham's priority is to secure a second successive promotion and move up to division three. It is second in the standings and five points behind first-placed Stockport with a game in hand.

Also:

Manchester United said **Marcus Rashford** had "taken responsibility for his actions" after he was reportedly seen in a Belfast night spot last week and later reported himself ill.

The club confirmed on Monday it dealt with a "disciplinary matter" regarding the England striker.

Rashford was left out of his team's 4-2 win against Newport in the FA Cup on Sunday, with United saying he was too ill to take part.

Afterward, manager **Erik ten Hag** said he would deal with the forward following his reported activities in the week leading up to the match.

"Marcus has taken responsibility for his actions. This has been dealt with as an internal disciplinary matter, which is now closed," United said on Monday. It did not say if he had been fined.

Rashford will be available for selection when United plays **Wolves** in the English Premier League on Thursday.

Russian figure skaters are set to get Olympic bronze ahead of Canadians

GENEVA, Jan 30, (AP): Despite the disqualification of Kamila Valieva in a doping case, the Russian figure skating team still stands to finish on the podium and get bronze medals from the 2022 Beijing Olympics behind the United States and Japan.

The Americans moved into the gold medal position in the team event and Japan has been upgraded to silver from bronze. The demoted Russians drop into third place, one point ahead of Canada even after being stripped of the points the then-15-year-old Valieva earned on the ice.

The International Skating Union published an amended standings from the Beijing competition on Tuesday that removed Valieva's maximum 10 points from each of her two events but did not add an extra point to the other teams below her.

The proposal by the ISU is likely to provoke fresh legal action at the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which on Monday disqualified Valieva from the 2022 Olympics and other events, and banned her for four years until December 2025.

Russian Olympic officials said Tuesday they will appeal to regain the Olympic title, arguing that ISU rules mean sanctions against Valieva "cannot be the basis for reviewing the results of the team event."

A second challenge at CAS could come from fourth-place Canada because the rest of the field did not have their points increased by the ISU following Valieva's disqualification.

"Skate Canada strongly disagrees with the

ISU's position on this matter and will consider all options to appeal this decision," the country's figure skating body said in a statement Tuesday.

The final decision on awarding medals is for the International Olympic Committee, which the ISU said was consulted before amending the results as the event organizer.

"The ISU is in close contact with the International Olympic Committee and the relevant ISU member federations in regard to the implementation of this decision," the governing body said Tuesday.

OLYMPICS

The unprecedented turmoil of canceling the medal ceremony at the Olympics has tested the rules of figure skating's team event, which debuted at the 2014 Sochi Games. The Russians and Canadians traded gold and silver at the first two editions.

In the newly updated Beijing result, Canada still gets eight points out of 10 from the women's short program and free skate sections, where its skater was Madeline Schizas. Japan still gets nine points each for originally finishing second to Valieva - Wakaba Higuchi in the short program and Kaori Sakamoto in the free skate.

Canada's overall point total remained at 53 while the Russians' tally dropped from 74 to 54 - enough for the bronze medals for everyone on the team except the disqualified Valieva.

Gut-Behrami wins WC 'giant slalom'

SAN VIGILIO DI MAREBBE, Italy, Jan 30, (AP): Lara Gut-Behrami won a World Cup giant slalom by a large margin on Tuesday and trimmed Mikaela Shiffrin's lead in the overall standings to 95 points with the American out injured.

Gut-Behrami beat Alice Robinson of New Zealand and Olympic champion Sara Hector, who tied for second, by 1.09 seconds on the steep Erta course at the Kronplatz resort.

Shiffrin crashed in a downhill on Friday in nearby Cortina d'Ampezzo and avoided major injury after hitting the safety nets at high speed but was still banged up and hasn't raced since. Shiffrin led Gut-Behrami by 420 points before she crashed.

SKIING

Gut-Behrami won a super-G in Cortina on Sunday and extended her advantage atop the giant slalom standings following GS wins in Soelden, Austria, and Killington, Vermont, at the start of the season.

With her 42nd career victory, Gut-Behrami moved level with Anja Parson in sixth place on the all-time women's victory list. Among Swiss women, only Vreni Schneider has more wins with 55.

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SPORTS

Rakitic ends 2nd stint with Sevilla to join Al Shabab

SEVILLE, Spain, Jan 30, (AP): Ivan Rakitic is the latest soccer player to leave Europe for Saudi Arabia, moving from Spanish club Sevilla to Al Shabab.

Sevilla announced the deal on Tuesday, ending the Croatian's stint with the club after 323 appearances over two separate periods.

Financial details of the move were not immediately available.

The 35-year-old Rakitic played for Sevilla from 2011-14 before being sold to Barcelona, where the midfielder stayed until returning in 2020.

Rakitic is the player with the second most official appearances in the current Sevilla squad, after Jesús Navas. He is the international player with the most appearances for the club, and the only one to have surpassed the 300-game mark.

Rakitic helped Sevilla win two Europa League titles, in 2014 and 2023.

SOCCER

"Everyone at the club would like to thank Ivan Rakitic, one of the most decorated and loved players in our history, for all his effort and dedication over the years, and wish him every success in the future," the club said in a statement.

Sevilla is struggling this season and sits just outside the relegation zone in the Spanish league. It has only one win in its last 16 league games and is coming off elimination in the quarterfinals of the Copa del Rey.

The club's next match is at Rayo Vallecano in the Spanish league on Monday.

Belgium international Yannick Carrasco, a former Atletico Madrid midfielder, joined Al Shabab last year.

Many top players have left Europe for lucrative deals with Saudi clubs, including Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar and Karim Benzema.

Bayern Munich is in talks to bring forward the signing of Spain winger Bryan Zaragoza amid an injury crisis, the club said Tuesday.

Bayern agreed last month to sign Zaragoza at the end of the season from Spanish club Granada, but forwards Serge Gnabry and Kingsley Coman have both been injured since then.

"He will definitely be a Bayern player in the summer," Bayern sporting director Christoph Freund said. "We're in talks to see whether it's possible to bring him to Munich earlier. There are always three parties involved. We'll have to see what happens in the coming days."

Freund was speaking at the presentation of right back Sacha Boey, who

was signed Sunday from Galatasaray in a deal potentially worth more than 35 million euros (\$38 million). Boey's arrival means more options for coach Thomas Tuchel in a defense which has also been strained by injuries and players going on international duty.

The 22-year-old Zaragoza has scored six goals in 21 games for Granada in the Spanish league this season.



Players challenge for the ball during the Amir Cup game.

Clubs strive for glory in the quarter-finals of Amir Cup

Al-Kuwait face Al-Tadamon challenge

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The initial phase of the Amir's Cup competition unfolded without surprises, with clubs demonstrating consistent performance not only during the tournament but throughout the entire season. Although most matches in this round didn't witness significant results, Al-Fahaheel's 4-1 victory over Al-Shabab provided a noteworthy exception. This outcome is characteristic of cup matches, where the emphasis is often on winning with minimal effort rather than achieving a multitude of goals.

For clubs that haven't secured titles or aren't actively engaged in local competitions, Amir's Cup

SOCCER

serves as a crucial opportunity to make their mark in history. They enter these matches with full determination, striving to prove their capability to win and create a transformative moment or surprise that alters the course of events.

This round proceeded without major controversies or disruptions, mirroring the atmosphere of league matches. The seasoned teams comfortably advanced to the quarter-finals, with differing perspectives on whether their qualification was easily earned or hard-fought.

In the upcoming quarter-finals, the defending champion Kuwait Club faces a significant challenge against Al-Tadamon, setting the stage for a special encounter given their previous edition's intense battle. Al-Arabi is set to confront Al-Nasr, recalling a league defeat they suffered earlier. Al-Qadisiya, despite previous league victories over Al-Fahaheel, remains cautious due to the latter's strong performance in previous cup encounters. The clash between Kazma and Al-Salmiya promises to be the most compelling, with both teams eyeing the title despite their less convincing performances this season.

As the journey through the Amir's Cup continues, these intriguing matchups add an element of excitement and anticipation to the competition.

Kuwaiti Sporty Academy stars in Sixth Int'l Friendship Football Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Kuwaiti Sporty Academy emerged as the champions in the Sixth International Friendship Football Championship hosted by the United Arab



Sporty Academy player displays his award.

Emirates.

Nasser Badr Bilal, the talented star player from Sporty, garnered multiple awards during the tournament. Born in 2014, Bilal was recognized by the organizers as a promising Kuwaiti talent, possessing both football skills and intelligence that could propel him to stardom in the global football arena.

SOCCER

The tournament management arranged a closed training camp and organized several matches featuring teams from Emirati and Kuwaiti academies. Notably, the Sporty Club Academy fielded two teams, as did the Hattrick Academy from the Emirates. Additionally, the Kuwaiti Sporty Club was represented by two teams.

In its sixth edition, the tournament administrators commended the abundance of talented players, emphasizing the importance of fostering competition among budding talents in Gulf stadiums. The aim is to unearth a significant number of young stars who could potentially become the core of future teams and clubs.

Al-Baidan announces completion of sports infrastructure plan

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: The Director General of the General Sports Authority, Yousef Abdullah Al-Baidan, has affirmed the completion of the Authority's plan regarding sports facilities and infrastructure. This comprehensive plan is set to be incorporated into the government's work program following approval from the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Daoud Marafie. The initiative encompasses the development of various sports stadiums and closed halls tailored for both individual and group games. Additionally, a new law for sports professionalism, aligned with global sports advancements, is included in the

plan. During his on-site inspections

at Sulaibikhat Stadium, Al-Baidan addressed concerns raised on



The Director General of the General Sports Authority, Yousef Abdullah Al-Baidan, inspecting the facility.

Minister Marafi's vision unveiled

Kuwait Handball League set for exciting season

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Following the directives of the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Daoud Marafi, the General Sports Authority has announced the scheduling of handball league matches for the 2023-2024 season at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Hall. Additionally, the hall will be designated for the training of the national handball team.

This decision aligns with Minister Marafi's commitment to the national team, expressed during their reception at the airport after securing qualification for the 2025 World Cup. The pledge included overcoming previous obstacles, providing the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Hall for national team training, organizing a league for them, and supporting the handball game to further enhance Kuwait's achievements in sports.

Previously, the General Sports Authority communicated with the Handball Federation to arrange league matches at the old Federation hall in Daiya. The anticipated start date for the handball league is February 6, with a possibility of



Burgan Club new recruit Semedo received by officials.

a slight delay for the federation to prepare the hall. The schedule for the "Super" tournament may also be adjusted accordingly.

In other news, Burgan Club has signed Semedo as their second professional player, following the acquisition of Egyptian Mustafa Bashir. Semedo's arrival was confirmed by the game director, Ab-

delaziz Naguib. The team's roster is now complete, including experienced and young players, both free agents and those on loan. Notable members include goalkeepers Salman Kamal, Abdullah Al-Halwaji,

HANDBALL

and Abdulaziz Al-Tattan, along with players Youssef Daif, Ahmed Murad, Abdulrahman Al-Anazi, Salem Al-Qaryan, Youssef Haidar, Jarrah Khairallah, Nasser Al-Dosari, Hamad Al-Sagr, Hussein Al-Sayegh, and Abdulaziz Al-Najdi.

Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel Club has secured Algerian Mohamed Masoudane as the coach for their first team.

Kuwaiti equestrian expert lauds the progress, potential of young riders

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30: Kuwaiti international expert, Lama Ahmed Abdel-Al, affirms that the equestrian sport in Kuwait boasts a substantial group of young male and female riders actively engaging in the introductory stages at heights of 70 and 90 cm. These budding riders are poised to play a pivotal role in advancing Kuwaiti equestrianism.

EQUESTRIAN

Expressing gratitude, Lama Abdel-Al acknowledges the support from private companies and sponsors for equestrians, along with the ongoing backing from the General Sports Authority, which remains a primary driver in the development of Kuwaiti equestrianism.

Highlighting the recent progress in Kuwaiti equestrian sport, particularly in show jumping, she notes the presence of numerous competitive riders across the initial, intermediate, and advanced stages. However, she emphasizes the need for additional support, given the high costs associated with acquiring horses



Kuwaiti international expert Lama Abdel-Al.

and organizing training camps in European countries.

Lama Abdel-Aal expresses her joy in participating in the management of "The Stadium" show jumping championship. Notably, this championship marks a significant milestone as the first event held on Marina Beach, attracting the participation of over 500 male and female riders.

Haaland to return for Man City after nearly 2 months out with foot injury

De Rossi's Roma revival continues with win over Salernitana

ROME, Jan 30, (AP): Daniele De Rossi's dream start as the Roma boss continued when they earned a second straight win by 2-1 over Salernitana in Serie A.

De Rossi took over from manager Jose Mourinho on Jan. 16 and won his first game against Verona four days later.

His second win came thanks to second-half goals from Paulo Dybala and Lorenzo Pellegrini. The capital club rose three places in the standings to fifth.

Dybala put the visitors ahead in the 51st minute from the penalty spot after Giulio Maggiore fouled Gianluca Mancini.

Pellegrini doubled Roma's lead 15 minutes later when he took advantage of poor defending. The Salernitana defense left him unmarked at the far post and he tapped home a cross from Rick Karsdorp.

Grigoris Kastanos pulled one back with a header four minutes later but Salernitana fell to a fourth consecutive league defeat.

The Salerno-based club has not beaten Roma since 1999 and it remained on the bottom of Serie A, five points behind second-to-last Empoli.

Borja Mayoral moved to the top of the Spanish league scoring chart with his 14th of the season as Getafe beat Granada 2-0.

The goal made Mayoral level with co-leaders Jude Bellingham of Real Madrid and Artem Dovbyk of Girona.

Former Manchester United forward Mason Greenwood put the visitors up 1-0 after 20 minutes. Greenwood found space between a line of defenders and cheekily lobbed goalkeeper Augusto Batalla from just inside the box. The ball may have taken a deflection on the way in.

Mayoral's goal 15 minutes later was even more fortunate as Batalla slipped in possession, allowing Mayoral to steal the ball in front of goal and tap it into the empty net.

Myrto Uzini missed a penalty for Granada 14 minutes into the second half on an unhappy night for the league's second-to-last club. The result left Granada five points ahead of last-placed Almeria.

Getafe remained in 10th, two points behind Las Palmas.

Erling Haaland is available again for Manchester City after nearly two months out with a foot injury, manager Pep Guardiola said Tuesday.

The Norway striker will return to the squad for City's English Premier League game at home to Burnley on Wednesday.

Guardiola didn't say whether Haaland would start the match at Etihad Stadium.

"For the first time, he is back," Guardiola said. "Two months out is a long time but he feels good ... apparently tomorrow he will be with all of us."

The 23-year-old Haaland's last game was at Aston Villa on Dec. 6, since when he has suffered with stress on the bone of his foot.

Guardiola has managed the minutes of Kevin De Bruyne since the playmaker's return from his own long-term injury - a hamstring problem that required surgery and a five-month absence.

De Bruyne has made three straight appearances as a substitute but Guardiola said Haaland, the top scorer in the league last season, might not need to be eased back so carefully.

"One was muscular and surgery, he (Haaland) was stress on the bone, so it's a completely different approach," Guardiola said. "But of course, step by step."

Guardiola also said defenders Manuel Akanji and John Stones were available after injuries and in contention for City, which is in second place in the standings and five points behind Liverpool having played one game fewer.



Uzbekistan supporters cheer before the Asian Cup Round of 16 soccer match between Uzbekistan and Thailand at Al Janoub Stadium in Al Wakrah, Qatar. (AP)

Sports

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Uzbekistan set up showdown with Qatar

Thailand out

AL-RAYYAN, Qatar, Jan 30, (AP): Abbasbek Fayzullayev fired Uzbekistan into the quarterfinals of the Asian Cup after beating Thailand 2-1 on Tuesday.

Victory in the Round-of-16 match at Al Janoub Stadium set up a clash with host and defending champion Qatar.

Uzbekistan has never won the Asian Cup, but this is the fifth time in the last six tournaments it has advanced to the quarterfinals. Its best performance was the semifinals in 2011, when the Asian Cup was last staged in Qatar.

SOCCER

Azizbek Turgunboev put Uzbekistan ahead in the 37th. Controlling Diyor Kholmatorov's diagonal pass on his chest, he volleyed low past Thailand goalkeeper Patiwat Khammai.

Thailand equalized through Supachok Sarachat's curling effort from outside the box in the 58th.

But it took just seven more minutes for Uzbekistan to regain the lead with what proved to be the decisive goal from Fayzullayev, who struck from distance to beat Khammai.

Uzbekistan plays Qatar on Saturday at Al Bayt Stadium.



KUNA futsal team pose for a group photo before proceedings against Kuwait University.

KUNA photo

KUNA futsal team qualifies for Ministries League semifinals

Kuwait News Agency's (KUNA) futsal squad secures historic qualification for the Ministries and Public Entities Futsal League semi-finals, marking the first time in the league's history. The

achievement comes after a hard-fought 6-4 victory over Kuwait University (KU).

This notable entry into the playoffs is a significant milestone for the KUNA team, showcasing their

pro prowess and determination in the Ministries League. Joining them in the semi-finals from Group B is the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) team.

Group B also features formi-

dable contenders such as the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), Kuwait University (KU), and the Ministry of Education.

The KUNA team's success

underscores their rising prominence in futsal, and their journey through the Ministries League playoffs promises exciting matchups and intense competition. (KUNA)



Uzbekistan's Azizbek Turgunboev vies for the ball with Thailand's Suphant Mueanta during the Asian Cup Round of 16 soccer match between Uzbekistan and Thailand at Al Janoub Stadium in Al Wakrah, Qatar. (AP)

Kessié scores the winning penalty

Ivory Coast edge Senegal on penalties to reach Afcon quarters

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Jan 30, (AP): It's party time in Ivory Coast.

Frank Kessié scored the winning penalty for the host nation to knock out defending champion Senegal from the Africa Cup of Nations last 16 in a penalty shootout on Monday.

It was Kessié's second successful spot kick of the match after going on as a substitute to equalize for 1-1 in normal time with his 86th-minute penalty in Yamoussoukro.

Senegal defender Moussa Niakhaté missed the titleholder's third penalty in the shootout, but all five of the home team's penalty takers scored to win 5-4 and set off joyful celebrations in Charles Konan Banny Stadium and beyond. Players danced on the field and supporters danced in the stands.

Kuwait confirms participation in 2025 Asian Winter Games

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 30, (KUNA): Fehaid Al-Ajmi, the President of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, declared Kuwait's active participation in the 2025 Asian Winter Games hosted in Harbin, China. Scheduled for February 2025, the Kuwaiti delegation is set to compete in five diverse winter sports: ice hockey, curling, snowboarding, speed skating, and a figure skating showcase.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Ajmi highlighted the significance of Kuwait's participation in these five Winter Olympic Games, emphasizing the country's prominent role as a member of the Asia Olympic Council, headquartered in Kuwait. Kuwait's involvement in the Winter Games holds substantial importance, making it a key contender in the Asian conti-

ment and the second-strongest globally, following the Winter Olympics.

Al-Ajmi outlined the Winter Games Club's dedication to preparing Kuwaiti athletes for the championship, ensuring they deliver outstanding performances and strive for victory. The club is committed to nurturing the skills and capabilities of the participating players to enhance Kuwait's standing in winter sports on the international stage.

Harbin, China, secured approval from the 42nd General Assembly of the Asia Olympic Council in Bangkok last July to host the 2025 Asian Winter Games. Looking ahead, the tenth edition of the Asian Winter Games is scheduled to take place in Trojena, Neom, Saudi Arabia, in 2029.

well," Faé said.

Faé's team will next face Mali or Burkina Faso, who play their last 16 match on Tuesday.

Senegal was the only team to win all of its group games and arguably looked like the strongest contender.

"We made the match complicated for ourselves," Senegal coach Aliou Cissé said. "Disappointed with the result for my players and for our people because we came to win this Africa Cup ... It's a shame that we lost the thread having opened the score. But in victory as in defeat, you have to remain dignified, and I'm proud of my players."

Ryan Mendes scored a late penalty for Cape Verde to make the quarterfinals after topping Mauritania 1-0.

Mendes scored from the spot in the 88th minute after Mauritania goalkeeper Babacar Niasse brought down substitute Gilson Benchimol, who was through on goal after a defensive mistake.

It was Mauritania's first ever Africa Cup game in the knockout stage. The Lions of Chinguetti defeated Algeria 1-0 last week for their first ever win on their third appearance in the tournament.

Cape Verde made a better start but failed to really trouble Niasse.

Roberto "Pico" Lopes marshaled the Blue Sharks' back four and produced an important tackle to stop Sidi Bouna Amar with Mauritania's best chance of the first half in the 42nd.

Souleymane Anne had an even better chance midway through the second half, but he was unable to make the most of Sidi Amar's through ball.

Cape Verde finished strongly as the Mauritians tired from their exertions. Ibrahima Keita was their second player stretched off in the 80th after Omaré Gassama in the first half.



Ivory Coast's Serge Aurier (right) in action against Senegal's Sadio Mane during the African Cup of Nations Round of 16 soccer match between Senegal and Ivory Coast, at the Charles Konan Banny Stadium in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast. (AP)

Malcom comes up with the decisive goal

Messi and Inter Miami lose to Al-Hilal in 7-goal thriller

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 30, (AP): Lionel Messi and Inter Miami kicked off their tour of Saudi Arabia by losing to Al-Hilal 4-3.

The Major League Soccer team is playing two games in the oil-rich kingdom as part of its preseason preparations, but even Messi could not inspire it to victory in Riyadh.

SOCCER

While Messi got on the score sheet with a second-half penalty, Malcom came up with the decisive goal to win the match in the 88th.

Al-Hilal had been strongly linked with a move for Messi when he left Paris Saint-Germain and became the most sought-after free agent in the sport last year.

He ultimately opted for a move to the United States to join David Beckham's Miami and quickly led the team to its first trophy, the Leagues Cup.

He and Miami will be hoping for even more success in his first full season and, the preparations include an extensive tour with stops in Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and Japan.

A potential showdown with Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nasser on Thursday is the most anticipated match.

Former Newcastle and Ful-



Inter Miami's Lionel Messi (left), fights for the ball with Al Hilal's Ruben Neves during the Riyadh Season Cup soccer match between Inter Miami and Al Hilal at Kingdom Arena Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

ham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic put Al-Hilal ahead in the 10th minute and Abdullah Al-Hamdan doubled the lead three minutes later.

Another of Miami's superstar signings, Luis Suarez, pulled one back but Al-Hilal's two-goal advantage was restored in the 44th by Michael.

Messi's moment came in the 54th, and a minute later David Ruiz evened the score.

Just when Miami looked to have a draw, Malcom came up with the winner.

SOCCER

Street parties broke out in Abidjan, where car drivers honked their horns and soccer fans danced, cheered and blew loud vuvuzelas. Fans watching the game on large screens in in Treichville, Abidjan screamed, jumped up and down, and hugged each other. Some ran for the sake of running. Some cried tears of joy. Others shook plastic chairs above their heads.

The hosts got off to a bad start when Habib Diallo took Sadio Mané's speculative cross on his chest and fired the ball inside the top left corner in the fourth minute.

Mané was booked shortly afterward for a studs-up tackle on Ibrahim Sangaré, and TV replays showed he was fortunate to receive just a yellow card.

The Elephants pushed hard for an equalizer with Seko Fofana leading the charge, but the team lacked a Didier Drogba-type striker to really cause problems for the excellent Senegalese defense.

The host got its break when Senegal 'keeper Edouard Mendy conceded a late penalty for missing the ball and bringing down Nicolas Pépé. Referee Pierre Ghislain Atcho initially felt there was no foul but changed his mind after a VAR check. Kessié scored from the spot to keep the Elephants in the tournament.

Ivory Coast barely qualified for the knockout round thanks only to results in other groups. It also fired its coach and tried unsuccessfully to hire another.

Interim coach Emere Faé, a former Ivory Coast midfielder, got off to a good start.

"Given where we come from, conceding this very early goal could have sunk us. My players reacted