



basketball

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Opinion

Your Highness the Prime Minister, prosecute the corrupt and negligent

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE State of Kuwait ranks 85th globally in the Corruption Perceptions Index. This means that the oversight bodies in this country have underperformed.

During the oath-taking session, when His Highness the Amir rang the alarm bell in his speech regarding the situation in the career aspect, and held the Council of Ministers and the parliament responsible for tampering with job appointments, there is no doubt that things have gotten out of hand in the state institutions, that illegal practices influenced the executive decisions, and sabotage became the norm of operation in the country.

This can only be solved by serious and radical reform, and definitely not through "let bygones be bygones", because this principle is what caused the spread of direct and indirect corruption, and transformed institutions into parliamentary farms and electoral funds, and led to illicit enrichment of ministers and senior officials.

It is as if the state is a piece of cake, and any corrupt person has the right to waste his share of it without being held accountable.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, corruption not only involves embezzlement from public finances, maximizing the costs of tenders by two or three times their actual value, or delaying the completion of projects in an effort to increase profits through executive orders.

Rather, the greatest corruption is appointing unqualified people in executive positions, especially those with false certificates, and giving these people the nail and hammer to issue decisions that negatively affect society as a whole.

This is what the Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef spoke about when he stressed that Kuwait is being deprived of expertise due to foolish decisions, including the one that prevents a resident who has reached the age of sixty from renewing his residency.

Likewise, other decisions and laws indicate the foolishness in dealing with the country's affairs, under the slogan of reforming the so-called demographic structure, and other things that burden the citizens and residents, which results in the citizens moving to other countries to implement their projects, while the residents end up leaving the country.

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AMIR COMMENDS KUWAIT'S OPERATIC PRESTIGE



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized and attended the national operetta (Story of a Homeland) at the Bayan Palace stage on Monday.

Patriotism echoes at Bayan Palace

KUWAIT CITY, March 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized and attended the national operetta (Story of a Homeland) at the Bayan Palace stage on Monday.

The operetta was attended by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the President of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Head of the Court of Cassation, Judge Dr. Adel Majed Boursesli, and senior State officials.

The event started with tunes of the National Anthem echoing across the hall. Then, students presented diverse artistic shows depicting the State of Kuwait's history, its birth, the solidarity of the Kuwaiti people, and performances about His Highness the Amir Speech that sets guidelines for loving the dear homeland.

His Highness the Amir was awarded a memorial present before he departed the venue amid much applause by the attendees.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Monday appreciation cables to Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, and Chairperson of the Kuwaiti Voluntary

Amir to UAE on state visit

KUWAIT CITY, March 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the accompanying delegation will head to the UAE on March 5, Tuesday, on an official state visit.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to the UAE is another important milestone in the history of bilateral ties, said an Emirati diplomat on Monday.

Speaking to KUNA, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi affirmed that the visit by His Highness Sheikh Mishal -- the first as the Amir of Kuwait -- would help bolster ties on all different levels.

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2 women among 42 first-day filers

Media center ready: Info Ministry

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: A total of 42 citizens, including two women, filed their applications to stand for the 2024 National Assembly election on Monday -- the first day of the period specified for the filing of candidacies.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
Former Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun is spotted at the Election Affairs General Department within the Interior Ministry, submitting his candidacy on the first day of the specified filing period.

Following is a breakdown of first-day registrants per constituency:

First Constituency: 11 men

Second Constituency: 10 men

Third Constituency: seven men and two women

Fourth Constituency: seven men

Fifth Constituency: five men

Former Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun was the first to file his candidacy at the Election Affairs General Department in the Interior Ministry.

He pointed out that although the people are now bored of the repetitive election since 2020, they are aware of their essential role in electing pro-reform representatives. He said the 2023 Assembly had unprecedented achievements, including the approval of the legislative agenda in coordination with the government. He added such coordination resulted in the ratification of the most important bills, some of which were submitted by the government.

He went on to say it was the first time in Kuwait's parliamentary life that a block of 48 MPs agreed on the legislative agenda to cover the entire parliamentary year. He stated the people proved their capability to choose their representatives well when the latter willingly abandoned their personal interests for the sake of public interests. He believes the citizens will once again choose their representatives well in order to continue the legislative and monitoring tasks and approve the previous legislative agenda or agree on a new one.

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Government spent KD 1.5bn on economic projects in 9 months

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Ministry of Finance data revealed that the government spent about 1.5 billion dinars on projects and economic affairs during the first 9 months of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, representing 52.5% of the total 2023-2024 budget allocations for those projects, which amounted to 2.9 billion dinars, leaving about 1.1 billion dinars of the approved amount remaining.

The data showed that expenditures made on various development projects amounted to 1.9 billion dinars, representing 32.2% of the estimated expenditures, while the government spent about 10.1 million dinars in

economic aid to foreign parties, representing 9.2% of the appropriations estimated at approximately 110.2 million dinars.

The government's expenditures on the oil and gas sector during the first 9 months of the fiscal year 2023-2024 amounted to about 688.7 million dinars, or 82.4% of the total cost estimated at about 835.5 million dinars, while expenditures on the electricity sector amounted to about 258.3 million dinars, or 40% of the estimated amount. About 639 million dinars, while about 947 million dinars were spent on fuel and energy, representing 63.9% of the total estimated 1.4 billion dinars.

NewsWatch

RIYADH: The foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states reaffirmed Sunday that Al-Dorra oilfield is entirely located in Kuwait's territorial waters and the natural wealth in the adjacent submerged divided area between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia belongs solely to both countries.

Wrapping up their 159th regular meeting in Riyadh, the ministers stressed that the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have full right to manipulate the natural resources of the divided zone pursuant to the rules of the international law and the existing bilateral agreements. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry emphasized on Monday that an immediate ceasefire in Gaza before Ramadan was a necessity, as to allow enough humanitarian aid to reach to the people of Gaza.

The meeting between minister Shoukry and the Senior Coordinator of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs and Reconstruction in the Gaza Strip, Sirged Kaag, said Ambassador Ahmed Abu Zaid, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Director of the Public Diplomacy Department in a statement. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: The Lebanese resistance fighters early on Monday aborted a bid by Israeli occupation troops to infiltrate across the borders to the Lebanese side of the frontier territories, said the official National News Agency (NNA).

The occupation troops were hit with rockets when they tried to sneak into the Lebanese side near the village of Rmaish, the NAA said citing a resistance statement. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court on Monday restored Donald Trump to 2024 presidential primary ballots, rejecting state attempts to hold the Republican former president accountable for the Capitol riot.

The justices ruled a day before the Super Tuesday that states cannot invoke a post-Civil War constitutional provision to keep presidential candidates from appearing on ballots. That power resides with Congress, the court wrote in an unsigned opinion. (AP)



Amiri Diwan photo
Performers during the national operetta (Story of a Homeland) at the Bayan Palace stage.

Day by Day

THE policies that restricted visitors to Kuwait under the pretext of preserving the demographic structure and protecting oil income, enforced for 20 or 30 years, have had negative consequences for Kuwait's development and prosperity.

The focus on maintaining a specific demographic structure, which limited the influx of visitors and immigrants, ultimately led to stagnation in growth and budget deficits.

This approach was short-sighted and detrimental to Kuwait's progress.

Overall, there is need for a reassessment of past policies and a shift towards more inclusive and progressive approaches to economic and social development.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:52 Asr 15:20
Sunrise .. 06:10 Maghrib .. 17:49
Zohr 12:00 Isha 19:06

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Warm with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-30 km/h.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

with light variable wind to light to moderate northerly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	25	17

Kuwait Airport	25	13
Abdaly	25	14
Jahra	26	14
Salmiyah	22	17
Nuwaisib	27	14
Wafra	27	12

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

No 'vote-buying' or substitution in poll

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: At a time the political arena is preparing for the 2024 National Assembly election, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusef Al-Sabah has stressed the need to take precautionary and security measures to ensure the success of the electoral process and for the citizens to exercise their right to vote with ease, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Sheikh Fahad Yusef affirmed that the Ministry of the Interior will strictly deal with the substitution and vote-buying phenomena. "We will be vigilant and hold accountable all those who will violate the law. We will apply the zero-tolerance policy in this regard," the minister asserted.

He reiterated that the ministry will strictly apply the law on everyone and pursue violators. "We will not allow abuses or violations to disturb the electoral process," he warned.

He stated that the ministry has prepared an integrated plan for the election that will be held on April 4.

Regarding his meeting with the Director of the Central System for Remediating the Status of Illegal Residents (CSRSIR) Saleh Al-Fadala, the minister confirmed that the meeting was a friendly and coordination visit and no mechanism was adopted, emphasizing the need to address the Bedoun issue.



Sheikh Fahad

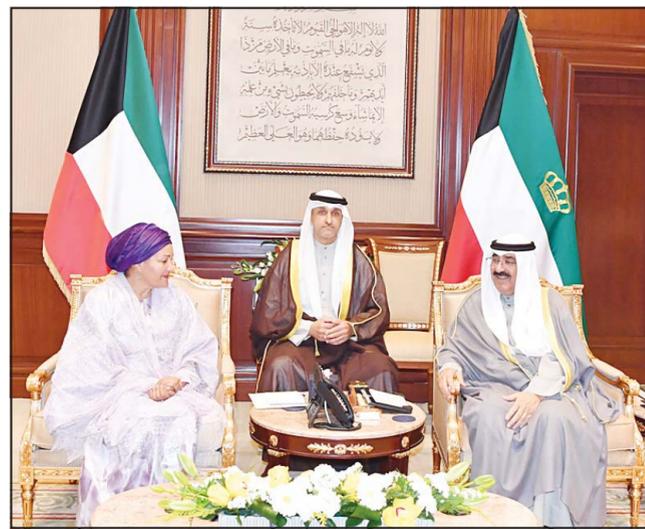


His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah meets the UN Deputy Secretary General.

PM receives UN Dep. Sec. Gen.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, with attendance of Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, received at Bayan Palace on Monday Amina J. Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and her delegation. The meeting was

attended by the head of the prime minister's diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dekheel, the UN Secretary General's Representative and the Resident Coordinator in the State of Kuwait Ghada Al-Taher, and the assistant foreign minister for international organizations Abdulaziz Saud Al-Jarallah. (KUNA)



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in talks with the UN Deputy Secretary General.

HH the Amir receives United Nations Deputy Sec. General

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Amina J. Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and her delegation. State officials attended the meeting. (KUNA)

Multiple leadership posts to be filled in Ramadan month

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Several officials will be appointed in various State agencies during the holy month of Ramadan, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a reliable source.

The source confirmed to the daily that the process of filling up vacant leadership posts will be according to an integrated plan with new regulations that keep pace with the current stage.

The source explained this move aims to give competent nationals a chance to prove their leadership capabilities, especially those with relevant experience and have the ability to expedite the completion of projects.

While hinting on the possibility of amending the regulations for appointment to leadership positions, the source affirmed that the Council of Ministers has instructed each minister to submit a work plan for a period of four years, with a clear mechanism for its implementation and with the participation of the officials who will be appointed; stressing that each plan will be evaluated.

The source also touched on the length of service of existing officials, unveiling the plan to replace them; while an advanced mechanism will be put in place for promotions in State agencies according to productivity, in addition to the implementation of plans and projects.

The source also enumerated several conditions for appointing officials, most notably competence and presentation of development plans. He emphasized that functional and professional experiences are the top criteria and the bases for selecting officials. He said priority will be given to those with experience from within the entities themselves.

The source said the vacant leadership positions will be filled in batches. He revealed some ministers were surprised when they found out that their units have no officials, which hindered work and achievement. He affirmed the Civil Service Commission (CSC) will soon put in place the required amendments in appointing officials, promotions and others.

The source stated that the current ministers have the right to nominate others or keep them in accordance with the new standards, conditions and selection principles (each minister according to his desire). He cited a government approach to change the mechanism for nominating officials who meet the conditions and pass the tests; indicating the number of individuals that each minister will nominate in his department could be reduced, unlike the current practice of each minister nominating three individuals.

5-yrs for Hashash in 'Hospitality' case

KPA ex-head wins moral damages

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The Criminal Court yesterday sentenced Adel Al-Hashash to 5-year imprisonment with hard labor for harming the funds of the Ministry of Interior through food meals for security personnel.

The Ministry of Interior had referred this case after finding out that there was an intentional damage to public funds by supplying meals to the police.

Al-Hashash had denied this charge after he was brought from prison, stressing that he held the position of public relations director and had several departments under his supervision, and that he knew nothing about this charge.

It is noteworthy that the accused is serving a prison sentence in the Ministry of Interior Hospitality case, after the Court of Cassation increased the penalty against him by sentencing him to life imprisonment instead of 15 years, and imposing a fine of KD 113 million.

Moral damages: The Kuwait Football Association (KFA) has been obligated to pay Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad KD 1,710,317 as well as KD 30,000 as compensation for the moral damages he suffered.

The Kuwait Football Association had filed a complaint with the Public Prosecution against Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad, stating that he committed financial violations and harmed the Kuwait Football Association during the period from 2010 until 2016 when he headed the association.

Court to hear ex-PM's request: According to informed sources, the Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Sultan Bouresli, has set the upcoming Sunday session to look into the request submitted by the former prime minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak to invalidate the Army Fund ruling.

The request is in relation to the case of the Army Fund, in which the Criminal Court of Cassation decided to abstain from pronouncing punishment on the former Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and an employee of the Ministry of Defense, provided that they adhere to good conduct.

It also ruled to impose a combined fine of KD 22.8 million on Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and others for the charges leveled against them.

The court also ruled to imprison six other defendants, including former Minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah, to seven-year imprisonment each with hard labor.

They were obliged to return KD 88.4 million, and were fined KD 176 million, bringing the value of the fines stipulated in the ruling to more than KD 111.2 million, without counting the fines imposed on Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah and others. The court acquitted one defendant in the case.

The Public Prosecution had appealed the ruling of the Court of Ministers to acquit the defendants of all charges against them in the case before the Court of Cassation, and demanded that they be punished and obligated to return the amounts. This is based on the background of the report submitted to the Permanent Investigation Committee in the Minister's Court by the late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad when he was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

The aforementioned committee charged the defendants with seizing the funds of the Army Fund of the Ministry of Defense and facilitating the seizure in front of others, but the defendants maintained that the facts attributed to them were incorrect.

Judge steps down: Head of the Criminal Court Circuit Judge Navef Al-Dahoum has decided to step down from the trial of the individuals - a ruling family member and two Bedoun residents - who are accused of setting fire to the house of Judge Sultan Bouresli, and ordered that it be referred to the president of the court to determine another circuit.

The officers of the Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Capital Investigation Department and the Anti-Financial Crimes Department, arrested from a livestock pen in Kabd two Bedoun residents, with a history of drug abuse, for deliberately setting fire to one of Judge Bouresli's vehicles.

One of the defendants is registered in cases of robbery of a money transportation vehicle and a similar incident in 2004, and was released from prison two years ago."

The two defendants stated during the investigations that they used a motorcycle in their operation, the color of which they changed from red to black to hide their identities.

Diplomats shaping image of Kuwaiti nation in UN forum

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Kuwait's permanent delegation to the United Nations (UN) is characterized by remarkable diplomatic activity, as each member is responsible for some diplomatic and political works in various committees and councils at the UN, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The young Kuwaiti diplomats at the delegation's headquarters handle many files and issues; including political, economic, social, humanitarian, climate and many other issues in which Kuwait has been active over the years through international forums, most notably the UN.

Aside from Kuwait's permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, there are five diplomats who shape the image of Kuwait in the UN forum to embody the country's foreign policy formed through several pillars, most notably the humanitarian, economic, social, legal, cultural, health and Kuwaiti mediation aspects.

The daily visited the headquarters of the permanent delegation in New York City and met the five diplomats who talked about the mechanism of their work.

Badr Al-Daihani, the official responsible for the Second Committee in the General Assembly concerned with economic and climate affairs and files in the Security Council, says that part of Kuwaiti diplomatic activity at the UN is a reflection of the role of various Kuwaiti institutions in dealing with issues raised in international forums.

Regarding his work in the second committee, Al-Daihani explained that many of the issues that the world is facing now represent challenges related to economic and climate aspects; such as poverty, development, climate change, environment, artificial intelligence and others. He said the Kuwaiti diplomatic activity includes highlighting Kuwait's role and achievements in these areas.

He revealed the delegation's tasks include cooperating with different regional groups and delegations of other countries, especially the Gulf countries, to emphasize the efforts of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in handling issues including the environmental framework and development of Kuwait, other GCC countries, League of Arab States and Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Regarding the economic aspects, Al-Daihani stressed that Kuwait is distinguished globally in this field, citing the oldest sovereign fund established in 1953 in Britain. He said this considered the third largest sovereign fund, which constitutes part of the distinction of Kuwaiti economic policy. He added Kuwait is distinguished in the second committee due to the role of Kuwait Fund for Development, which contributed to financing development projects in various countries with a large total of contributions.

On the Palestinian issue, Al-Daihani confirmed "it is one of our main issues, because it affects one of the principles of Kuwaiti foreign policy -- lack of respect for international law, international humanitarian law, sovereignty of states, and the principles and provisions of the UN Charter. Kuwait adopted this issue in all UN committees, in addition to its activity in the Security Council.

On the other hand, Wafiq Al-Mulla stated that supporting women is one of Kuwait's priorities, particularly in recent years. She pointed out that women are the foundation of society and the presence of a female element in any diplomatic mission improves the country's image before the international community by giving a message that there is no discrimination between genders and these are constitutional principles.

Al-Bannai

Al-Mulla

Al-Daihani

Other Voices

HH PM's mission impossible

By Ahmad alsarraf

We have reiterated this message numerous times, and we will continue to emphasize it as long as we draw breath: the advancement of the state is inexorably linked to embracing modernity and adopting enlightenment as our guiding principles.

As articulated by Professor Muhammad Al-Rumaihi and Professor Tawfiq Al-Saif, among others, it is impossible for our government to have it both ways -- to embrace modernity while clinging to outdated traditions.

Those who attempt to straddle both worlds, seeking to modernize while simultaneously preserving old identities, are akin to those who wish to have their cake and eat it too. Ultimately, they will fail in both endeavors.

Tradition and modernity, as perceived by these individuals, are not mere labels we apply to different lifestyles, nor are they optional add-ons to be incorporated into existing frameworks. Clinging to tradition and venerating the antiquated wisdom of the past will not safeguard our future, nor will it maintain our current standing. Rather, it will inevitably lead to our defeat across all arenas.

Therefore, modernity, by its very nature, entails more than just superficial changes or incremental improvements to existing systems. It necessitates the gradual displacement of traditional practices, as the elements of modern life cannot coexist along-

side their traditional counterparts. In the face of life's challenges, our societies must choose between tradition and modernity -- they cannot occupy the same space simultaneously.

The internal conflict witnessed in our societies -- where the majority clamor for modernity yet fear abandoning tradition -- is deeply troubling. Many are torn between the necessity of embracing modernity and the reluctance to relinquish traditional beliefs and customs deeply ingrained in their souls. This inner turmoil manifests as contradictory behaviors, with individuals oscillating between embracing modernity by day and reverting to tradition by night.

Observing this phenomenon over decades, it becomes evident that we, as nations, are often incapable of confronting reality or speaking the truth.

Examples abound, illustrating how individuals within the same religious framework exhibit contradictory behaviors, striving to maintain a religious facade in public while leading a completely different life behind closed doors. This dichotomy leads to a double life, characterized by modernity during the day and tradition at night, encompassing not only behaviors but also values and convictions.

This internal conflict between modernity and tradition is unique to our societies, particularly among Muslims and Arabs.

The solution lies in embracing the principles of a civil state -- one that upholds modernity without forsaking tradition. Without this fundamental shift, achieving the objectives outlined in previous articles -- and indeed, the mission of His Highness the Prime Minister -- will remain an arduous task.

□ □ □

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Husband kidnaps daughters: wife

Student run over going to school

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: A student from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Secondary School in the Farwaniya Educational District, died yesterday morning, after being run-over by an expatriate motorist while on his way to school, reports Al-Anba daily.

Educational sources said the student was hit on the street opposite Al-Shaddadiya University, noting that while he was crossing the street. The motorist says was unable to control his car. The driver of the car has been detained for interrogation.

The director of the Farwaniya Educational District, Muhammad Al-Ajmi, was present at the school since the early morning to follow up on the incident. The Ministry of Education, on its website, mourned the death of

the student.

'Man kidnaps daughters': Police have issued an arrest warrant against an unidentified expatriate born in 1987, who is said to have left the country with his two daughters (one-year-old and 3 years old), reports Al-Anba daily.

The wife of the expatriate has filed a case with the Maidan Hawalli police station accusing the man of kidnapping her daughters.

In her complaint she said, when she returned home she did not find her husband and daughters and when she called the man on the phone, he reportedly said, he is leaving the country and that the plane is about to take off.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Kudos to minister for gearing up to resolve issue of bedoun

"SINCE Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef began his work at the Ministry of Interior, he has been working seriously in performing his national duties towards Kuwait. In a step towards correcting the course, he met with the head of the Central Agency for Addressing the Situations of Illegal Residents (bedoun), Saleh Al-Fadala, and Sheikh Al-Yousef was keen to discuss the issues of "illegal residents with the head of the Central Agency, Al-Fadala, for direct information on the agency's efforts in investigating everything related to demographics," columnist **Abdul Mohsen Muhammad Al-Husseini**, wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Al-Fadala and his staff met in the Central Agency to collect all matters related to the case, and the Central Agency dealt with many matters of a humanitarian nature, as it provided this group with all the requirements of living, including accommodation, provision of subsistence, and assistance in their admission to government schools and free treatment in the health centers in Kuwait.



Al-Husseini

"Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Defense and Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, was keen to discuss various opinions related to addressing the issue and the necessity of resolving this issue in accordance with constitutional laws and preserving the demographic structure.

"As long as Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef has begun his efforts with the head of the Central Agency, Saleh Al-Fadala, who has made a great effort and completed comprehensive reports that will benefit the Ministry of Interior when it sets out to address the problem, he will reach the desired results by resolving this issue.

"It is not a local problem, but rather there are many countries that are suffering. This problem is not limited to Arab countries, but there are similar issues in the United States of America, France, Britain, and Germany.

"Therefore, we show the citizens that Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, who took the first step, is serious about finding satisfactory solutions while taking care of the humanitarian issue.

"I hope that the state will help and assist the Minister in preventing those who try to interfere in matters related to such an issue, and that everyone who tries to mediate in paying those who do not deserve them will be prevented. These are essential matters for Minister Al-Yousef to carry out his work without interference from any party.

"We wish success for the endeavors of Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, who has rolled up his sleeves in directing the path towards correcting the course.

"There is an old saying: "When you live to make others happy, God will send you someone who will make you happy. Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?"

Also:

"We do not know whom to believe and who to lie to. The West is upset and expresses its annoyance at the Houthi operations against its ships, despite the doubts surrounding their purpose," columnist **Talal AbdulKarim Al-Arab** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The West's ongoing bombing of numerous Houthi sites, as asserted by their claims and acknowledged by the Houthis, fails to deter the latter's operations, presenting a puzzling scenario. Despite America's condemnation of every attack and its threats of retaliation at a suitable time and place, quoting statements from regional governments and militias, questions arise regarding the West's true intentions toward the region.

"It was the West that hindered the Arab coalition from liberating Hodeidah and facilitated Iran's access by arming and training its proxies, in-

cluding the Houthis. The West is well aware that Iran is the mastermind behind the planning, management, and orders given to its agents.

"Despite Iranian agents' hostile actions against America and Israel, which often seem like propaganda maneuvers, they claim to be the champions against aggression on Gaza and the liberators of Jerusalem, despite Jerusalem's innocence of their actions. Their attacks on American bases have met with surprising silence and patience from the United States, prompting criticism from American politicians who question the government's reluctance to respond promptly.

"If the attacks from puppet militias were genuine acts of rebellion against their benefactor, America would be the architect of its own downfall in the region. America's fatal mistakes, such as overthrowing the Shah and installing the sectarian regime of the mullahs, bear significant consequences. The US Congress officially revealed America's financial support for the establishment of Iranian forces in Iraq in 2020.

"America allowed Iran's blatant political and military interference in four Arab capitals, even influencing the appointment of ministers and presidents. It begs the question whether it would have been wiser for America, the West, and the world to support the Arab coalition instead of submitting to Houthi militias and sectarian factions that sow chaos wherever they go, possibly even rebelling against their patrons.

"It remains unclear why the West tolerates these attacks without striking at the heart of the issue: the decision-making center orchestrating weapons and orders for the Houthis. Is there a hidden agenda at play? We urge our ally, America, to reconsider its actions. The current submissive stance in the face of these insulting attacks raises doubts about its true intentions and its commitment to countering the supposed threats posed by its adversaries."

□ □ □

"Intentional concept ... Whenever a citizen speaks or writes about the issue of citizenship, and exposes the counterfeiters, some political orators and others appear to us with comments that have nothing to do with the issue, comparing it to the theft of public money and mentioning some names related to it," Kuwaiti citizen **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Certainly, they know that theft occurs daily involving some citizens in its various forms and ways. If we accept the concept of those with bright minds far from reason and logic, we can conclude that even murders and road accidents are related to national identity. Therefore, I say to the honorable brothers: Do not take the people of the monastery lightly. With your empty statements, please do not compare or relate national identity to any other topic.

"Less than a month ago, a friend asked me: Did you know that this device revealed a lot of misfits to us and they are reasonable people? So, I told him to ask for guidance for them and do not gloat over anyone. Two days ago, one of the participants sent me a brother's comment on my last article on WhatsApp, in which he translated wishes for a coup, so I said in my mind: What my first friend said a month ago was true.

"The Kuwaiti airlines may replace the series -- which the traveler watches at his second stop before completing the episodes -- with Arab, foreign and children films, which would be more enjoyable for the traveler.

"My advice to anyone who likes to criticize the authors of articles is to pay attention to his criticism before sending it, because some people mix water with oil, and their comments go to others, instead of the author of the article. Thus, he has sinned against others without knowing it. My advice to him is to replace the pen with a brush."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**



Local media personalities are awarded certificates of appreciation.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

'Dabbling with mobile phones while driving may cause accidents, death'

Call for joint efforts to mitigate traffic incidents

By Mansour Sultan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, underscored the necessity of collective endeavors to mitigate traffic accidents, particularly those stemming from drivers using mobile phones while driving on roads, which often result in significant loss of life.

Addressing attendees at the inauguration of the 37th Unified Gulf Traffic Week, held under the theme "Driving without a phone," Lieutenant General Al-Nawaf emphasized the societal responsibility shouldered by companies, private entities, and the media in supporting such initiatives and disseminating their objectives.

He conveyed the regards and appreciation of Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, the Prime Deputy Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, commending their backing for traffic safety endeavors.

Gratitude

Major General Yousef Al Khadda, the Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs, expressed gratitude for the backing of Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef and Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf toward the traffic safety cause. He stressed the significance of this year's theme highlights curbing accidents triggered by mobile phone usage while driving, and extended appreciation to sponsoring entities and media channels for their efforts in raising awareness and mitigating traffic mishaps.

Concluding the ceremony, Lieutenant General Salem Al-Nawaf and Major General Yousef Al-Khadda honored the entities endorsing the Traffic Week initiatives and the media for their contributions to the event's success.

Furthermore, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf convened with Judge Dr. Hatem Ali, the Regional Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, at the Ministry of Interior.

This meeting occurred alongside Al-Nawaf's participation in the inauguration of a training workshop focused on the role of first responders in identifying, safeguarding, and aiding victims of human trafficking, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The workshop is scheduled to take place from the 3rd to the 4th of the current month.

Victim's car rammed

20, 15 years in jail upheld for 'killers'

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by a lower court which sentenced two individuals to 20-year and 15-year imprisonment respectively for killing a young citizen by colliding with his vehicle and causing it to overturn on Subbiya Road.

According to the case files, the family of the young man who died in a traffic accident on Subbiya Road had presented pictures that he had taken with his phone prior to the collision, which they said showed the driver of the "Jeep Wrangler" and his friend stealing his vehicle.

The brother of the deceased stated to the security authorities that he found pictures on his brother's phone, specifically in the SnapChat application, which showed the incident that occurred prior to the accident and in front of a grocery store located at the end of the Jaber Bridge. It proved that his brother's vehicle was stolen and that he was subjected to an intentional collision.

His family explained that the victim left his vehicle running and went to a grocery store. He was shocked when an individual got out of a "Wrangler" driven by another individual, got into his vehicle, and drove away with it. He immediately stopped a vehicle with a family inside, and asked the driver to help him catch up with the thief.

The driver followed the accused until the latter noticed that he was being chased. The thief stopped the vehicle, jumped out, and waved a knife at them before getting into the Wrangler. The victim took his vehicle and went on his way, but the suspects returned and followed him.

The victim ended up using the road in the opposite direction to go to the nearest security point, and made two calls to the Operations Room, but the suspects persisted in chasing him and deliberately rammed his vehicle several times dangerously, eventually causing it to overturn, which resulted in the victim's death.

Nod to liquid industrial waste treatment plant

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The Kuwait Municipality has greenlit a proposal by the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) to designate a plot measuring 4,779 square meters in the Sabhan Industrial Area for the construction of a liquid industrial waste treatment facility, reports Al-Rai daily.

As part of its approval, the municipality has outlined certain conditions. It mandates that any adjustments to the site's layout must not exceed the specified area and should not disrupt existing infrastructure services or violate regulatory standards during the installation process.

Moreover, the municipality has emphasized the necessity for the Public Authority to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the project's environmental and social impact. This evaluation must gain approval from the Environment Public Authority. Additionally, the municipality underscores the importance of providing ample parking spaces for licensed activities within the site's boundaries, as outlined in the architectural plans submitted for review and approval by the Roads Department (Regulation Department).



Fire brigade at the site of the fire.

4 adults, child hurt in fire

The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said five people (four adults and one child) were injured when a house in Qusour caught fire, re-

ports Al-Anba daily. The daily added, the five people who were trapped inside the house, were handed over to the paramedics. They were treated for asphyxiation. The cause of the fire is not known.

Traders blame shortage, demand

No let up in prices of sheep

By Abdel Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Amidst concerns regarding monopolistic practices and market shortages, sheep prices in Kuwait have remained elevated, with expectations of heightened demand during the upcoming month of Ramadan. Despite reports of an incoming shipment aimed at bolstering supply and potentially mitigating prices, market conditions have largely remained unchanged.

Sheep vendors have confirmed that prices have remained stable, ranging from 100 to 160 dinars per head depending on the breed and age of the animal. Specifically, Al-Naimi sheep are priced between 120 and 160 dinars, while Shafali sheep range from 100 to 130 dinars.

As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, carcass prices have also seen an increase. Despite leaks from government sources about the impending arrival of new sheep shipments, prices have not seen significant impacts. Market traders attribute the seasonal rise in carcass prices to the anticipated demand during Ramadan and the subsequent Eid

Al-Adha celebrations. Fahd Al-Arbash, Chairman of the Restaurants, Cafes, and Food Supplies Union, announced the arrival of new shipments of live sheep from various countries, including Iran and Jordan, aimed at alleviating the current shortage in Kuwait. He expressed optimism that the influx of sheep would lead to a decrease in prices and help mitigate monopolistic practices in the market.

Acknowledging challenges in the market, including limited import options and monopolistic behavior, Al-Arbash emphasized the need for broader access to livestock import licenses and increased support for local breeders. He also called for stricter monitoring of illegal activities in the market and urged the Ministry of Commerce to consider adding fresh meat, such as chicken, to the ration card.

Additionally, commercial sources revealed the arrival of a new shipment comprising 37,500 Australian sheep, expected to further alleviate market shortages and potentially lower prices in the coming days. Despite recent fluctuations, market observers anticipate a notable decrease in livestock prices in the near future.

83 cars, 66 bikes impounded

25,607 citations issued in 1 week

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The General Traffic Department issued 25,607 traffic citations and impounded 83 vehicles and 66 motorbikes in the last seven days.

According to the weekly statistics of the General Traffic Department, 32 people were referred to the traffic custody, 54 wanted vehicles were seized, 54 juveniles were referred to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving vehicles without a driver's license, 12 were arrested for violating the residency law and ten people without any identity documents, 16 wanted persons were seized, and 1,283 minor accidents and 377 serious accidents were dealt with.

□ □ □

16 cars sold in auction: The Ministry of Interior has announced that the number of

violations for which the block was lifted reached 3,850; while 46 vehicles and 18 bicycles were released from the garage for impounded vehicles as part of the activities of the Unified Gulf Traffic Week with the slogan, "Driving Without a Phone", at the Traffic Awareness Exhibition in Khiran Mall, reports Al-Anba daily.

Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the Unified Gulf Traffic Week Brigadier General Nawaf Al-Hayan disclosed that the public awareness exhibition at the Avenues Mall started on Sunday and this will continue until Thursday. He said the exhibition is open from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm throughout the specified period.

On the other hand, the General Traffic Department (GTD) at the ministry on Sunday sold 16 vehicles, the latest of which is a 2019 model, in a public auction at the sales center in Al-Ardiya Al-Harafiya.

His Highness condoles with Tanzania over demise of ex-president

HH Amir condoles with Canada over former PM's demise

Written test set for applicants of supervisory posts in Municipality

KPC eyes evaluation panels for middle leadership promotions

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: A total of 64 candidates are scheduled to sit for a written test on Tuesday, which is a part of the process to fill 12 supervisory positions in the municipality.

The test will be carried out in three sittings - from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm, and from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. It will be held in the meeting room on the fifth floor of the building of the municipality's director general.

The municipal committee responsible for test applications of applicants for supervisory positions stated in a circular sent to the various sectors and departments of the municipality that 64 candidates out of a



Above: Some photos from the opening ceremony of the Month of Francophonie. Photos by Ihab Qurtal

Opening ceremony held of Month of Francophonie

Ambassador praises level of French language education in Kuwait, a sign of strong relations

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The French Ambassador to Kuwait Claire Le Flecher revealed that the French language has become the third language taught in Kuwait, which is a sign of the strong and lasting relations between the two countries.

She indicated that there are approximately 40,000 cumulative learners in the public and private schools combined, there are approximately 12,000 students studying French to obtain a baccalaureate degree each year and there are approximately 500,000 French speakers in Kuwait today.

The ambassador said, "In this regard, I would also like to thank all the inspectors in the six governorates of this country, who supervise the work of 1,000 male and female teachers working in public

secondary schools."

In her speech during the opening ceremony of the Month of Francophonie Sunday evening at the Marina Hotel, she said, "We are meeting again on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the new edition of the Month of Francophonie in Kuwait in an exceptional atmosphere, as Kuwait is very Francophone-loving and French-speaking.

This is thanks to all of your efforts, led by His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. He is the spiritual father of Francophonie in Kuwait, and he was the one who initiated the first movements in its favor in the eighties. For this reason, the Council for the Promotion of Francophonie in Kuwait unanimously chose him as an honorary president.

There are more than 250 million people who speak French every

day. Nearly 370 million people are able to express themselves in French and through this language that we share.

There are therefore very broad possibilities to enhance communication between residents, who represent many open windows in the world, but there are also opportunities to build what tomorrow's world will be made of.

It holds shared universal values, and calls for peace, universal access to education, participatory economics and sustainable development.

Kuwait understood this situation very early and focused on teaching the French language since 1966, when the French language was introduced into the school system.

Since then, without any interruption, high school students in the first and final literary classes study the French language every year."

total of 70 applicants for the written exams met all the requirements to fill supervisory positions in financial and administrative sector oversight, transportation and public facilities oversight, advertising licenses oversight, municipal services licenses oversight, and food and markets oversight sectors.

In a related development, the Farwaniya Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting Saturday headed by Khaled Mufleh Al-Mutairi, approved three items out of five on its agenda.

These items were:-

1. The request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to allocate sites for open basins to collect rainwater, open water channels, underground water connections, and rainwater drainage paths around the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak residential area.

2. The proposal presented by a member Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding buildings and land in Grenada next to the residential area.

3. The request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to expand the Ishbiliya Cooperative Society located in the center of the Ishbiliya suburb.

The committee referred to the executive branch the development and reorganization of the properties located in the exhibition area in South Khaitan shown on the cadastral plans No. M/25877 and M/35583 in order to establish a project titled "The business Lagoon".

The committee recommended developing the Kabd Road extending from the Sulaiyia Bridge to Kabd through coordination with the Ministry of Public Works, PART, and the Ministry of Finance.

Meanwhile, the oil sector is waiting for the formation of evaluation committees for largest number of middle leadership promotions, including team leaders and managers, at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries; after the resumption of promotions, appointments, transfers and secondments in the public sector, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the sector.

Sources told the daily that oil companies are currently identifying vacant team leader and managerial positions in preparation for the formation of the evaluation committees.

Asked about the promotion to other leadership posts like chief specialist, sources confirmed they are promoted to the highest grade and there is a competition for each vacant director or chief position.

Sources reiterated that the first phase of filling up vacant leadership positions will be at the level of managers, and then the team leaders. Sources expect the evaluation results within this month, indicating the formation of the interview committees will be impartial under the supervision of officials in and outside the corporation.

In the meantime, the personal interviews for applicants to supervisory positions in cooperative societies have started, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources said these applicants passed the initial screening and messages were sent to them regarding the date of their interview.

Sources revealed that members of the Candidate Selection Committee include officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs, representatives of the Union of Cooperative Societies, and heads of the concerned cooperative societies. Sources said the interviews are conducted in the Cooperative Control Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs.

KUWAIT CITY, March 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of condolences to the Governor General of Canada Mary Simon on demise of the former prime minister Brian Mulroney.

His Highness the Amir recalled the deceased traits and his honorable support for the State of Kuwait that contributed to its liberation in 1991.

He also expressed solace to the former prime minister's family.

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

also sent a cable of condolences to Canada's Governor General Mary Simon on demise of the former PM Mulroney.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent Monday a cable of condolences to President of Tanzania, Samia Suluhu Hassan, on the demise of former president, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, expressing solace to the deceased's family.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President Samia Suluhu Hassan, on the demise of former president, Mwinyi.



Dr Laurence Anthony speaking at the first LSBC in Kuwait. KUNA photo

Focus on AI and corpus perspectives

KU, KFAS hold first linguistics studies 'biennial' conference

By Zaina Al-Ayoub

KUWAIT CITY, March 4, (KUNA): The first Linguistics Studies Biennial Conference (LSBC), co-organized by Kuwait University and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) kick-started Monday focusing on current trends in Applied Linguistics research through Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Corpus perspectives.

In an opening speech, Dr. Mohammad Al-Enezi, LSBC co-chair, recognized the distinguished participant speakers and attendees, saying this conference is the first of its kind in Kuwait that would hopefully invigorate local researchers and students in their studies.

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Al-Enezi said the conference included workshops in relation to Artificial Intelligence and linguistics.

He also provided the definition of corpus linguistics, which is the study of a collection of texts that pattern and study language through computerized data.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Laurence Anthony (Waseda University, Japan) gave a detailed presentation on the use of AI in corpus linguistics.

"Generative AI platforms, such as ChatGPT, can deliver original answers utilizing corpus linguistics including syntax and semantics to provide cohesive sentences in English," added Dr. Anthony.

Meanwhile, guest speaker Dr. Sandrine Peraldi (University College Dublin, Ireland) presented "Let's wrap this up, shall we Designing and examining a multimodal corpus of professional online meetings."

She detailed the importance of virtual communication through platforms like Zoom and Teams, underlining the challenges between face-to-face communication and online meetings.

Dr. Peraldi's research highlighted the increased successful utilization of non-verbal gestures, as a new form of corpus linguistics, in virtual meetings and communication.

Additionally, Kuwaiti speakers Dr. Yousef Al-Bader, Dr. Eiman Al-Sharhan, and Dr. Bashayer Al-Otaibi presented "Numerical hyperbole in Kuwaiti Arabic: a corpus-based study of exaggeration." Kuwaiti speakers "invent their own terms for large, indefinite numbers, akin to English's 'zillion' or 'gazillion,'" with "dabalat" (doubles) and "ahlen" (two hellos), indicating the numerous potential inventiveness of the speakers, added Dr. Al-Bader and Dr. Al-Sharhan.

Researchers from the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), visiting professors outside Kuwait, members of the academic staff, and students participated and attended the two-day conference.

PADA starts receiving new applications

PAHW, MoE sign agreement on handing over five schools in Mutlaa Housing City

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and Ministry of Education have signed an agreement on handing over the keys of five schools in N9 suburb in Mutlaa Housing City in the presence of the concerned ministry officials, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed these schools include a kindergarten, primary school for boys, middle school for boys, middle school for girls and high school for girls. Sources confirmed that coordination between PAHW and the ministry is continuing for the handover of more schools soon.

On the other hand, Chairman of Mutlaa Housing City Committee Khaled Al-Anzi told the daily that the residents in the city expressed happiness over the handover of schools from PAHW to the ministry, considering a large number of families relocated to the city recently.

This is in response to the demand that the residents presented during their recent visit to the Government Performance Monitoring Agency headed by Sheikh Ahmed Al-Mishaal who responded positively to such a demand.

On behalf of the residents in the city, Al-Anzi thanked the concerned parties that responded to the demand of the residents, which resulted in the opening of schools and other facilities in the area.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) on Sunday started receiving applications to open the educational and rehabilitation files of new students for academic year 2024/2025, reports

Al-Anba daily.

The authority disclosed that it will continue receiving such applications at its headquarters during official working hours until June 27 without the need for an appointment.

Following are the application conditions:

■ The student must be of Kuwaiti nationality or have a Kuwaiti mother.

■ The student must present a disability proof certificate issued by PADA.

■ The age of the student on Sept 15 - the start of the academic year - must not be less than three years old for nursery and 21 years old for rehabilitation.

Required documents:

■ A special form for opening the educational and rehabilitation files written in clear handwriting.

■ A copy of the disability proof certificate.

■ A copy of the birth certificate.

■ A copy of the civil identification card of the student.

■ Two copies each of the parents' civil identification cards.

■ A copy of the mother's original nationality if the student is non-Kuwaiti.

■ Two recent photos of the student.

■ A copy of the academic certificate for the previous academic year.

■ Medical and psychological reports, and results of the most recent intelligence test.

Kuwait hosts technical workshop on progress and challenges of 4th SDG

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Ali Dashti, the Acting Secretary-General of the Kuwait National Commission for Education, Science, and Culture, announced the organization of a technical workshop focusing on the progress, gaps, and challenges related to the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reports Al-Jarida daily.

This workshop was conducted in collaboration with the Arab Education Bureau for the Gulf States, the Arab Center for Research and Studies, and with the participation of education experts from UNESCO Regional Center for the Gulf States and Yemen. Dashti explained that the workshop was initiated as a follow-up to a 2015 meeting during the World Education Forum, where over 160 government delegations and 160 ministers of education

and higher education participated.

During this meeting, it was decided that all participating countries must submit a report on their progress towards achieving the SDGs. The purpose of the workshop was to equip national cadres with the necessary skills to prepare the national report specifically focusing on the fourth SDG, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

This initiative underscores Kuwait's commitment to advancing education and contributing to the global effort towards achieving the SDGs. By collaborating with regional and international partners, Kuwait aims to address challenges and bridge gaps in education, ultimately working towards a future where quality education is accessible to all segments of society.



Managing Editor of the Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at Kuwait University, Sheikha Suhaila Fahd Al-Malek Al-Sabah.

CITRA launches national initiative in bid for developing digital skills

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) recently spearheaded the Kuwait National Initiative for Developing Digital Skills, hosting a comprehensive training program at Sabah Al-Salem University City (Al-Shaddadiya) in the Central University Library building, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The program, spanning three days, was tailored for leaders and supervisors within the government sector, aiming to equip them with essential skills in cloud technology and data management, while also familiarizing them with Google Cloud products.

Designed as part of the broader Kuwait National Initiative for Developing Digital Skills, the training program aimed to provide participants with foundational knowledge about cloud technology and highlight

the significance of effective data management. By enhancing participants' understanding and proficiency in Google Cloud products, the initiative sought to bolster their capacity to leverage technology within their respective work environments, thereby facilitating digital transformation across the country.

The training program not only offered valuable insights and practical skills but also provided participants with free licenses to obtain professional certification, further empowering them to drive digital innovation and efficiency within their organizations.

This initiative underscores Kuwait's commitment to fostering a digitally adept workforce and advancing its digital infrastructure in alignment with global technological trends.

Your Highness

Continued from Page 1

There is no doubt that this tampering with appointments has made Kuwait repulsive of everything, starting with investments and capital flight abroad, all the way to the tailors' crisis. It did not take into account the direct and indirect losses for the national economy.

Most of the 380,000 Kuwaitis working in the public sector are administrators, and are not the craftsmen and professionals that the country needs. Half of the residents of Kuwait are domestic servants and drivers. This is what has deprived us of the productive workforce and paralyzed the country's development.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, there should be accountability for all those who caused this tampering with appointments, that is if there is a serious reform process. All those who made these foolish and fraudulent decisions should be tried; otherwise corruption will continue.

There must be clear and strict criteria for appointments, and work should be done like in other countries. There must be a secret agency directly linked to the Prime Minister that provides honest reports about the individuals who are chosen to fill any position, and that there should be no recruitment based on nepotism.

Over the past three decades, we have seen what favoritism and quotas have done, even in appointing ministers and undersecretaries, and not just in regular jobs. This must be tackled; otherwise it will be like someone blowing on a broken pipe.

2 women

Continued from Page 1

Other candidates who applied on the first day include former MP Badr Al-Dahoum who believes this will be the first time that the election is conducted without cases or dismissal of candidates, owing to the latest Election Law. He thanked HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah for returning the rights to the deserving.

Meanwhile, MP Ali Al-Daqabasi filed his candidacy in the Second Constituency. He previously stood for election in the Fourth Constituency, so he clarified that he transferred to the Second Constituency where he has a bigger chance of winning since several new residential areas were established in this constituency.

Former MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa filed his candidacy as well, stressing that his legal position is clear; while he vehemently denied the rumor that he will be dismissed later.

Former MP Hamad Al-Matar applied in the Second Constituency representing the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM). He emphasized the need for political stability in order to ratify the necessary legislation, including his bill on the comprehensive development of education.

Former MP Saadoun Hammad applied in the Third Constituency. He commented on the allegation that he used his parliamentary seat to provide services to certain citizens. He asserted the MPs are required to serve all citizens, but some MPs provide services only to their relatives, while he serves and helps any citizen regardless of their constituency or area.

Moreover, the registration of candidates will continue for 10 days — March 4 to March 13, 2024 and the election will be held on April 4, 2024.

The media center designated for National Assembly 2024 elections' candidacy registration is prepped and ready for the use of media outlets, stated an Information Ministry official.

Assistant Undersecretary, Lafi Al-Subaei, spoke to KUNA while at the Department of Elections Affairs on Monday, saying that the center is equipped with the necessary tech and equipment, and that it aims to facilitate the work of media personnel in cooperation with the Interior Ministry.

The Information Ministry announced that media outlets wishing to cover elections can register via a QR code. The Ministry has thus far received more than 380 requests.

The Department of Elections Affairs began receiving prospective candidates for 18th legislative term Monday morning, and will continue to do so until March 13.

Amir commends

Continued from Page 1

Work Center Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In the cables, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation for their efforts in preparing and organizing the national operetta (Qissat Watan) which was done by the Ministry of Education, under His Highness' patronage, for the national holidays' celebrations of 2024.

His Highness the Amir praised the high artistic level of the operetta and its embodiment of love, loyalty, and devotion for the homeland, and the distinguished performance of the students, which contributed to its success and its beautiful production.

Meanwhile, Minister of Information, Culture and Chairperson of the Permanent Committee for celebrating national days, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, on Monday expressed deep satisfaction at the honoring attendance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of the operetta "Story of a Homeland," at Bayan Palace theater.

Attendance of this national activity by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, senior sheikhs and state officials mirror the operetta's messages of amity and national values, he said in a statement to KUNA.

The operetta embodied national values, the national unity and solidarity and amicable relationship between the leadership and the people of Kuwait, minister Al-Mutairi said, thanking all authorities that participated in organizing the event namely the ministry of education.

Government spent

Continued from Page 1

Government expenditures on street lighting amounted to about 721.8 thousand dinars, or 90.2% of the amount estimated at about 800 thousand dinars.

The data showed that the government collected 333.8 thousand dinars in revenue from taxes and fees, at a rate of 64.4% of the total estimated revenues, while the revenues collected from the disposal of non-operating assets amounted to 4.3 million dinars, at a rate of 4.6% of the estimated value of 95 million dinars.

The data revealed that the Ministry Finance was able to collect about 131.5 million dinars in revenue during the 9 months, representing 39.4% of the total estimated revenues amounting to 160 million dinars.

The data showed that the state's general budget achieved revenues amounting to 15.44 billion dinars in the first 9 months of the current fiscal year 2023/2024, while the total expenditures and commitments of the state during the same period amounted to about 17.17 billion dinars, which resulted in a deficit of 1.72 billion dinars.

Amir to

Continued from Page 1

He revealed that Kuwait was an important partner to the UAE, revealing that the volume of commercial exchange reached in 2023 around KD 3.733 billion (USD 12.13 billion).

The Ambassador said that the signing of the agreement to avoid double taxation and financial evasion in the beginning of this year was a step that would encourage mutual investments and help boost private ventures.

There are many venues to expand relations commercially, he indicated, alluding to Abu Dhabi Ports group and Kuwait's efforts to open a cargo maritime route that would facilitate travelers and goods transport.

On tourism, Ambassador Al-Neyadi indicated that there were 382,000 visitors from Kuwait to the UAE in 2023, noting that the number of tourists from the UAE to Kuwait had increase over 50,000 last year.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti diplomats in the United Arab Emirates said that the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the UAE represented an important milestone in Kuwaiti-Emirati ties and in the Gulf cooperation Council (GCC).

Kuwait takes part in 'Int'l Congress for Social Responsibility' in Bahrain

'Redoubling effort to achieve community partnership vital'

BHRAIN, March 4, (KUNA): A delegation from the State of Kuwait participated in the 4th edition of the International Congress for Social Responsibility, which was held in the Kingdom of Bahrain under the theme "Adopting and developing legislation and laws that enhance the applications of social responsibility in Arab countries."

The delegation from Kuwait, representing various entities concerned with social responsibility, stressed the importance of redoubling the effort to achieve community partnership, which would lead to advancement, sophistication and progress in all fields.

In this regard, the Managing Editor of the Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at Kuwait University Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Malek Al-Sabah said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that she is happy to attend this international conference that is concerned with social responsibility and to be honored with the International Compliance Award for Social Responsibility Practices.

She expressed her appreciation to the leadership, government and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain for hosting this event, which was held by the Regional Network for Social Responsibility.

Strengthening

Sheikha Suhaila Al-Sabah affirmed the importance of strengthening the concept of responsibility and spreading this culture at the state level.

She stressed the need to adopt the concept of partnership and social responsibility, which has become an urgent necessity as it contributes to the cohesion and interdependence of societies, and positively affects their success and progress.

Meanwhile, Head of the Takaful Society for Prisoner Care in the State of Kuwait Musaad Mandani explained that this society was founded in 2005 and began as a committee of the Islaah Charitable Society in the year 2000. It serves prisoners with civil, criminal, and financial cases, and directly serves their families in Kuwait. This work aims to restore the prisoner's freedom so that he can return again to society to achieve family cohesion and contribute to raising children.

He said, "On this day, the strength of societies is measured by their family cohesion. The society has achieved many very great goals in this regard. From the time of its inception, we have exceeded 30 cases, which has helped reduce pressure on the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior through this society that serves the societal and governmental side."

Also, the Kuwait International Ambassador for Humanitarian Diplomacy and Deputy Head of the Permanent Mission of the OIC to the United Nations - Geneva/Switzerland Bader Al-Mutairi revealed that his participation in this international conference is represented by his selection to chair one of the discussion sessions and his submission of a scientific research paper related to enhancing integrity and combating corruption in the State of Kuwait as a model for the Arab countries and the Islamic world, as well as the Arab countries.

Contribute

Al-Mutairi, who is a doctoral researcher and academic in law and political economy, stressed that he participated in this brief paper, which is his doctoral dissertation, so that the audience can contribute to it and highlight the lengthy measures that the State of Kuwait has taken and still needs to take in this aspect to enhance integrity and transparency in participation.

He indicated that this is not his first participation, as he previously chaired the first congress held in the Kingdom of Morocco in Rabat in 2019, where he was honored with a certificate of scientific competence, adding that he was also honored this time, along with a group of colleagues, with an international certificate of compliance in social responsibility in societies.

Furthermore, a member of the Kuwaiti Teachers Society Abdullah Al-Kandari said Kuwait's participation in this event is aimed to strengthen and stimulate community partnership.

He highlighted its importance and positive impact on individuals and communities.

Al-Kandari expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the regional network for organizing this



A photo from the 4th International Congress for Social Responsibility in Bahrain.

KUNA photos

PAHW hosts Chinese team to boost housing co-op

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: On Sunday, the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) Eng. Rashid Al-Enezi and its leaders received a delegation from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of the Chinese embassy in Kuwait.

In a press statement, PAHW explained that the visit of the Chinese delegation was aimed to strengthen the relationship between the two countries and enhance joint cooperation in the fields of construction and housing.

During the meeting, the Chinese delegation exchanged views with the PAHW leaders on the investment projects proposed by PAHW, ways to develop them, and take necessary steps to enhance the building development process and use alternative energy for the construction of residential cities.

The two parties discussed mat-

ters related to the development of residential cities, infrastructure projects, public buildings, and other items that could benefit citizens who submitted housing applications.

There was a discussion about activating the memorandum of understanding between Kuwait and China for housing development and project financing based on the terms of the memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries.

For this purpose, joint work teams will be formed, mutual visits will be organized, technical information will be shared, and specialized organizations and bodies will be encouraged to provide consultations to contribute to preparing a strategy for developing housing projects in Kuwait, determining their financial feasibility, facilitating the exchange of experience, financing, developing and managing housing projects, basic data, expertise, studies and consultations related to housing development.

Meanwhile, sources from

PAHW affirmed that the authority has started working on allocation requests from June 2007, adding that the allocation decisions will be sent gradually according to seniority if all deficiencies are completed.

They attributed this procedure to the accumulation of a large number of applications, indicating that the previous applications are still absorbing the upcoming available distributions.

The sources called on those concerned to quickly complete the shortcomings in order to receive the decision on allotment.

In addition, PAHW announced that it will distribute reserve cards for the South Saad Al-Abdullah City project, the 16th batch of the N4 suburb on Monday, March 4 from 9:00am at the authority's theater, until the reserve cards run out.

The distribution priority will be for those who applied before June 30, 2006, provided that the original civil ID of the person concerned is presented in addition to the allocation decision.

Society confirms its readiness for Ramadan

KRCS launches 'Help Palestine' donation campaign

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has confirmed its readiness for the holy month of Ramadan by launching the food baskets project for fasting people in Palestine under the slogan, "Help Palestine", reports Al-Jarida daily.

Secretary General of KRCS said the Society continues its efforts in food, medical and other fields in Palestine, especially the Gaza Strip; in line with the lofty humanitarian message and the

approach of the State of Kuwait, its leadership, government and people to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians and to complete several relief projects.

Al-Barjas asserted this work is a humanitarian and fraternal duty that the people of Kuwait are keen to perform for their steadfast brothers in Palestine. She said the holy month of Ramadan is an opportunity to extend a helping hand to the Palestinians and alleviate their suffering caused by the ongoing Israeli attacks.

She explained the Iftar project will continue throughout the holy month, while stressing the importance of the support of KRCS to continue helping the Palestinians. "As part of our humanitarian duty toward our brothers and sisters in Palestine in the midst of afflictions caused by the Zionist war, the food basket project is a response to their needs through the donation campaign on the website of the Society under the slogan, "Help Palestine."

conference in its fourth edition, praising its tireless efforts in this field.

He also appreciated the role and interest of the regional network in achieving sustainable community development, and thanked them for honoring him as a representative of the Kuwaiti Teachers Society.

Also, President of the Kuwaiti Islamic Care Society Fidaa Al-Waqyan expressed her gratitude to the Kingdom of Bahrain for hosting this event.

She affirmed the importance of the International Congress for Social Responsibility, which in its fourth session aims to sustain and advance charity work.

In addition, Secretary of the Islamic Care Society Ashwaq Al-Arada expressed her appreciation to the International Congress for honoring her from the scientific aspect.

She stressed that she had focused on partnership and social responsibility in the field of charity work, in the working paper that she addressed during the discussion sessions.

Community

Al-Arada affirmed the importance of community partnership and its great impact on the development and sustainability of charity work, indicating that work in the Islamic Care Society is based primarily on the principle of participation and cooperation.

Meanwhile, the event was launched under the honorary sponsorship of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the President of the Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce Samir Nass.

In his speech during the event, Nass stressed the importance of the topic chosen by Congress in this meeting, as the current times require the adoption and development of enhanced legislation and laws for the implementation of so-

cial responsibility in Arab countries as a serious step to achieve development goals by raising the cultural, educational, economic, health and other activities related to the lives of citizens.

He praised the constructive contribution of the Regional Social Responsibility Network and its role in spreading the culture of social responsibility in the Middle East countries particularly the Arab region.

Cooperation

Nass said they are looking forward to more joint cooperation and coordination between all parties to help companies and institutions make their practices, businesses and activities responsible and compatible with sustainable development standards.

Furthermore, President of the International Congress for Social Responsibility Dr. Salah Ben Ali said the regional network, since its first launch in 2007, has been concerned with promoting the concept of "institutionalizing practices and applications of social responsibility" across its various dimensions.

He explained that it began with calling for a global day for social responsibility, and it worked to codify this proposal through communication with the United Nations system and its specialized agencies. This was followed by urging countries to develop their legislation and laws related to responsible practices through its forums, conferences, and human and institutional capacity building programs, which reached approximately 21 Arab and non-Arab countries.

Developing legislation and laws related to social responsibility helps in governing and unifying its practices, improving its outputs and returns, and defining the roles of relevant government agencies in activating it to enhance the performance of companies and civil society institutions towards social

responsibility.

It also contributes to enhancing the fulfillment of development priorities by launching specific initiatives that respond to societal needs in accordance with an ethical system.

It is worth highlighting that the event witnessed a ceremony to honor the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the honorary title of "International Ambassador for Social Responsibility" from the Regional Network for Social Responsibility.

Honored

During the event, several personalities were honored with the International Compliance Award for Social Responsibility Practices, including those from the State of Kuwait such as the honorary member of the Arab Fund for Social Responsibility Research, and the International Ambassadors for Social Responsibility Dr. Bader Malallah Al-Sheikh and Dr. Musaad Muhammad Mandani, and the International Ambassador for Humanitarian Diplomacy Counselor Bader Al-Mutairi.

As for the entities from Kuwait that won the International Compliance Award for Social Responsibility Practices for the year 2024 in the institutions category, they were Mabaret Al-Awazem, The Kuwait Teachers Society, and The Islamic Care Society.

The Scientific Competence Award in the Field of Social Responsibility for the year 2024 and the President of the Second International Conference of Social Responsibility Law Jurists was awarded to Lawyer Abdullah Al-Enezi of Kuwait for the year 2024.

Kuwaiti economist Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Turki also received an honorary professional title of "United Nations Ambassador for Community Partnership".

World News Roundup

Europe

Nursing home fire kills 4

UN rights chief urges an end to 'repression'

GENEVA, March 4, (AP) — The UN human rights chief called Monday for a quick end to the "repression of independent voices" in Russia and expressed concerns about the "persecution" of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died in prison last month.

Volker Türk, in a wide-ranging speech, also lamented dozens of conflicts around the world, widespread violations of human rights law that have impacted millions, and displacements caused by war, which could escalate in places like the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Sudan.

"Rarely has humanity faced so many rapidly spiraling crises," he told the Human Rights Council.

Alluding to some countries among the dozens holding national elections this year, Türk denounced "increasing restrictions" on rights defenders, journalists and "perceived critics" in India. He urged U.S. authorities to ensure that voting is universal, alluding to discriminatory policies that restricted the right to vote for people of African descent.

In the run-up to Russia's presidential elections from March 15-17, Türk said Russian authorities "have further intensified their repression of dissenting voices" and noted how some candidates "have been prevented from running due to alleged administrative irregularities."

He said Navalny's death in a Russian prison last month "adds to my serious concerns about his persecution" and noted how thousands of politicians, journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers and others have faced criminal or administrative charges for having "simply spoken their minds on social media."

Türk called for a swift and comprehensive review of all cases where people in Russia were detained for exercising fundamental freedoms, and "an immediate end to the repression of independent voices and the legal professionals who represent them."



Türk

Germany, Russia spar over leaked audio: The German government on Monday vehemently rejected allegations that Russia's leak of a conversation by high-ranking German military officers was an indication that Berlin was preparing for war against Russia.

At the same time, the government sought to contain the domestic fallout from the leak and promised a quick investigation into how it was possible that a conversation by top German military personnel could be intercepted and published.

"It is absolutely clear that such claims that this conversation would prove, that Germany is preparing a war against Russia, that this is absurdly infamous Russian propaganda," a spokesman for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters in Berlin.

Government spokesman Wolfgang Buechner said the leak was part of Russia's "information war" against the West, and that the aim was to create discord within Germany.

The 38-minute recording features military officers discussing in German how Taurus long-range cruise missiles could be used by Kyiv against invading Russian forces. While German authorities have not questioned the authenticity of the recording, Scholz said a week ago that delivering these weapons to Ukraine is not an option - and that he doesn't want Germany to be drawn into the war directly.

Russia's foreign ministry, however, on Monday threatened Germany with "dire consequences" in connection with the leak, though it did not elaborate.

Alleged IS militants in Russia killed: Six alleged members of the Islamic State group were killed in a shootout in Russia's volatile North Caucasus region, in what the country's National Anti-Terrorism Committee (NAC) described Sunday as a "counterterrorism operation."

According to a statement by the NAC, late on Saturday the six men barricaded themselves in a third-floor apartment in Karabulak, a town of about 30,000 in Russia's semi-autonomous Republic of Ingushetia. A shootout with security services followed, as surrounding streets were blocked off and residents of the apartment block evacuated to a nearby school, according to Russia's Interfax agency.

Heavy gunfire and blasts appearing to come from inside an apartment block could be heard in videos posted by Karabulak residents on social media.

The NAC did not immediately name the alleged militants, but said three of them were on Russia's wanted list and all six had been involved in violent acts, including an attack on a traffic police unit last March that killed three officers.

The local branch of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), the country's main security agency, announced at 7:30 p.m. local time on Saturday that emergency measures were being brought in the vicinity of the building due to an ongoing "counterterrorism" operation. The restrictions were lifted shortly after midday on Sunday.

Nursing home fire in Germany kills 4: Four people died and at least 21 were injured in a fire at a retirement home in Bedburg-Hau in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia early Monday, German news agency dpa reported. A firefighter and a police officer were also injured and taken to a hospital, police said.

In addition to those who were confirmed to be injured, 46 other residents were evacuated and were being examined for possible injuries, dpa reported.

The fire, which broke out during the night, has been doused, but firefighters are still working at the scene, it said. The cause of the fire is being investigated.

Indigenous women in Greenland sue Denmark: A group of Indigenous women in Greenland has sued Denmark for forcing them to be fitted with intrauterine contraceptive devices in the 1960s and 70s, and demanded total compensation of nearly 43 million kroner (\$6.3 million), Danish media reported Monday.

The group of 143 Inuit women say Danish health authorities violated their human rights when they fitted them with the devices, commonly known as coils. Some of the women - including many who were teenagers at the time - were not aware of what happened or did not consent to the intervention.

The purpose was allegedly to limit population growth in Greenland by preventing pregnancy. The population on the Arctic island was rapidly increasing at the time because of better living conditions and better health care. The small T-shaped device, made from plastic and copper, and fitted in the uterus, prevents sperm from fertilizing an egg.



US Republican presidential candidate former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley speaks at a campaign event in South Burlington, Vermont, Sunday, March 3. Haley was won the Republican primary in the District of Columbia, notching her first victory of the 2024 campaign. (AP)

Politics

Iowa Democrats forced to toss caucus

Haley gets first win in DC GOP primary

WASHINGTON, March 4, (AP) — Nikki Haley has won the Republican primary in the District of Columbia, notching her first victory of the 2024 campaign.

Her victory Sunday at least temporarily halts Donald Trump's sweep of the GOP voting contests, although the former president is likely to pick up several hundred more delegates in this week's Super Tuesday races.

Despite her early losses, Haley has said she would remain in the race at least through those contests, although she has declined to name any primary she felt confident she would win. Following her loss in her home state of South Carolina, Haley remained adamant that voters in the places that followed deserved an alternative to Trump despite his dominance thus far in the campaign.

Stake

The Associated Press declared Haley the winner Sunday night after DC Republican Party officials released the results. She won all 19 delegates at stake.

"It's not surprising that Republicans closest to Washington dysfunction are rejecting Donald Trump and all his chaos," Haley spokesperson Olivia Perez-Cubas said in a statement, noting that Haley became the first woman to win a Republican primary in history.

Washington is one of the most heavily Democratic jurisdictions in the nation, with only about 23,000 registered Republicans in the city. Democrat Joe Biden won the district in the 2020 general election with 92% of the vote.

Trump's campaign issued a statement shortly after Haley's victory sarcastically congratulating her on being named "Queen of the Swamp by the lobbyists and DC insiders that want to protect the failed status quo."

Haley held a rally in the nation's capital on Friday before heading back to North Carolina and a series of states holding Super Tuesday primaries. She joked with more than 100 supporters inside a hotel ballroom. "Who says there's no Republicans in D.C., come on."

"We're trying to make sure that we touch every hand that we can and speak to every person," Haley said.

As she gave her standard campaign speech, criticizing Trump for running up federal deficit, one rallygoer belted out, "He cannot win a general elec-

Congressional leaders come out with 6 spending bills to avoid partial shutdown

WASHINGTON, March 4, (AP) — Congressional leaders on Sunday came out with a package of six bills setting full-year spending levels for some federal agencies, a step forward in a long overdue funding process beset by sharp political divisions between the two parties as well as infighting among House Republicans.

The release of the text of legislation over the weekend was designed to meet the House's rule to give lawmakers at least 72 hours to study a bill before voting. And it's a promising sign that lawmakers will avoid a partial shutdown that would kick in at 12:01 am Saturday for those agencies covered under the bill, such as Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Transportation, Justice and others.

Congressional leaders hope to complete votes on the package this week and continue negotiations on the remaining six annual spending bills to pass them before a March 22 deadline. The price tag for the package out Sunday comes to about \$460 billion, representing less than 30% of the discretionary spending Congress looks to approve for this

year. The package still being negotiated includes defense spending.

House Speaker Mike Johnson highlighted some key policy and spending wins for conservatives, even as many of his GOP colleagues consider the changes inadequate. Some House Republicans had hoped the prospect of a shutdown could leverage more concessions from Democrats.

Overall, this year's spending bills would keep non-defense spending relatively flat with last year's bill, despite the rise in inflation, and some \$70 billion less than what President Joe Biden originally sought.

"House Republicans secured key conservative policy victories, rejected left-wing proposals, and imposed sharp cuts to agencies and programs critical to President Biden's agenda," Johnson said in a prepared statement.

Earlier this year, Johnson and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced an agreement on the top-line spending levels for this year's discretionary spending, which comes to more than \$1.6 trillion.

It's madness." That prompted agreement from Haley, who argues that she can deny Biden a second term but Trump can't.

While campaigning as an avowed conservative, Haley has tended to perform better among more moderate and independent-leaning voters.

Four in 10 Haley supporters in South Carolina's GOP primary were self-described moderates, compared with 15% for Trump, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 2,400 voters taking part in the Republican primary in South Carolina, conducted for AP by NORC at the University of Chicago. On the other hand, 8 in 10 Trump supporters identified as conservatives, compared to about half of Haley's backers.

Also: DES MOINES, Iowa: There's a lot

less fanfare for Democrats in Iowa picking their presidential nominee this year, and it's not only because Democratic incumbent Joe Biden is in the White House.

Instead of congregating for caucuses, a one-night spectacle where community members publicly signal their support for a candidate, Iowa Democrats headed to the mailbox to send in their ballot. The results will be released on Super Tuesday, a slate of primaries and caucuses across more than a dozen states.

The break with five decades of tradition follows chaos that mired the party in 2020 and the reshuffling of the Democrats' 2024 calendar to prioritize more diverse states. The fallout has disappointed Iowa party leaders and activists, with some feeling jilted by the national party.



Police and fire department personnel stand by a retirement home after a fire broke out during the night, in Bedburg-Hau in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia on March 4. Four people died and at least 21 were injured on Monday, German news agency dpa reported. (AP)



Abbott



Mayorkas

America

Masked shooters kill 4: A group of men in masks opened fire at an outdoor party in central California, killing four people and injuring three others Sunday evening, police said.

Police responded to a reported shooting around 6 pm in King City and found three men with gunshot wounds who were pronounced dead in a front yard, the King City Police Department said in a statement.

Four other people sustained gunshot wounds, including a woman who died after being transported to Mee Memorial Hospital in King City, about 106 miles (170 kilometers) south of San Jose. (AP)

Texas firefighters battle flames:

Strong winds spread flames on Sunday and prompted at least one evacuation while airplanes dropped fire retardant over the northern Texas Panhandle as firefighters worked to stop the largest wildfire in state history. Texas governor is Greg Abbott.

As of Sunday afternoon, the Smokehouse Creek fire, which has burned more than 1 million acres (404,685 hectares), was 15% contained. Two other fires that have burned a combined 180,000 acres (72,843 hectares), were 60% contained.

Authorities have not said what ignited the fires, but strong winds, dry grass and unseasonably warm temperatures fed the blazes.

A cluster of fires has burned across more than 1,900 square miles (4,921 square kilometers) in rural areas surrounding Amarillo, while the largest blaze spilled into neighboring Oklahoma.

US Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Sunday said the federal government has devoted funds, equipment and personnel to assist with battling the fires, but warned more extreme weather could be coming. "More than a million acres have burned. And we are in winter, and this is the largest fire in Texas history," Mayorkas said during a CNN interview. "We, as a country and as a world, have to be ready for the increasing effects of extreme weather caused by climate change. It's a remarkable phenomenon, and it will manifest itself in the days to come, and we have to prepare for it now." (AP)

Gunfire injures teen: A 15-year-old boy was critically injured in a shooting near Six Flags Over Georgia, a popular amusement park in suburban Atlanta, after police

exchanged gunfire with a group of people, authorities said Sunday.

Cobb County Police Department officers were assisting with crowd control near the



Norwegian Princess Ingrid Alexandra and Crown Princess Mette-Marit leave the Oslo University Hospital, Rikshospitalet, where King Harald is admitted, in Oslo, Norway, on March 4. An airplane carrying Harald arrived in Oslo on March 3, a day after he was implanted with a pacemaker while on holiday in Malaysia. Europe's oldest reigning monarch was hospitalized for an infection during a private vacation on the northern resort island of Langkawi, the royal house said last Tuesday. (AP)

amusement park's entrance on Saturday "after several fights had taken place" among people who were leaving the park, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said in a press release.

"At some point, multiple people began shooting, hitting an unoccupied CCPD marked patrol car," the statement said. "As officers identified where the shots were coming from, they ran after people who had run into the woods. During the incident, one CCPD officer fired his weapon, hitting one minor." Authorities said the 15-year-old was taken to Grady Hospital and determined to be in critical condition.

No officers were injured, according to GBI, and police recovered a handgun near the 15-year-old. The GBI is conducting an independent investigation into the shooting and will submit findings to the Cobb County District Attorney's Office. (AP)

Police horses cause traffic jam:

Drivers on an Ohio interstate came upon an unusual traffic hazard over the weekend - a pair of police horses trotting against traffic on the highway.

The two animals on the lam caused an unusual traffic jam Saturday afternoon as they wove through slowing traffic and then stopped it on Interstate 90 in the downtown Cleveland area.

Cleveland.com reports that video from the Ohio Department of Transportation showed the animals trotting on the side of the road near the unit's stables at about 12:15 pm Saturday. (AP)

Lat/Am

La Cumbre erupts

Haiti orders a 'curfew' trying to restore calm

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, March 4, (AP): Authorities have ordered a nighttime curfew in an attempt to regain control of Haiti's streets after an explosion of violence during the weekend, including gunmen from gangs overrunning the country's two biggest prisons and freeing their inmates.

A 72-hour state of emergency began Sunday night, and the government said it would set out to find the killers, kidnappers and other violent criminals that it reported escaped from prison.

"The police were ordered to use all legal means at their disposal to enforce the curfew and apprehend all offenders," said a statement from Finance Minister Patrick Boivert, who is serving as acting prime minister.



Henry

Prime Minister Ariel Henry traveled abroad last week to try to salvage support for bringing in a United Nations-backed security force to help stabilize Haiti in its conflict with increasingly powerful crime groups.

The emergency decree was issued after a deadly weekend that marked a new low in Haiti's downward spiral of violence. At least nine people had been killed since Thursday

- four of them police officers - as gangs stepped up coordinated attacks on state institutions in Port-au-Prince, including the country's international airport and the national soccer stadium.

But the attack on the National Penitentiary late Saturday was a big shock Haitians, even though they are accustomed to living under the constant threat of violence.

Almost all of the estimated 4,000 inmates escaped, leaving the normally overcrowded prison eerily empty Sunday with no guards in sight and plastic sandals, clothing and furniture strewn across the concrete patio. Three bodies with gunshot wounds lay at the prison entrance.

Roadblock

In another neighborhood, the bloodied corpses of two men with their hands tied behind the backs lay face down as residents walked past roadblocks set up with burning tires.

Among the few dozen that chose to stay in the prison are 18 former Colombian soldiers accused of working as mercenaries in the July 2021 assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. Amid the fighting Saturday night, several of the Colombians shared a video pleading for their lives.

"Please, please help us," one of the men, Francisco Uribe, said in the message widely shared on social media. "They are massacring people indiscriminately inside the cells."

On Sunday, Uribe told journalists who walked into the normally highly guarded facility, "I didn't flee because I'm innocent."

Colombia's foreign ministry called on Haiti to provide "special protection" for the men.

A second Port-au-Prince prison containing around 1,400 inmates was also overrun.

Gang gunmen also occupied and vandalized the nation's top soccer stadium, holding one employee hostage for hours, Haiti's soccer federation said.

Gunfire was reported in several neighborhoods in the capital. Internet service for many residents was down as Haiti's top mobile network said a fiber optic cable connection was slashed during the rampage.

In the space of less than two weeks, several state institutions have been attacked by the gangs, which are increasingly coordinating their actions and choosing once unthinkable targets like the Central Bank. As part of coordinated attacks by gangs, four police officers were killed Thursday.

Depart

After gangs opened fire at Haiti's international airport last week, the US Embassy said it was halting all official travel to the country and on Sunday night urged all American citizens to depart as soon as possible. The embassy said it would also cancel until Thursday all consular appointments.

The Biden administration, which has steadfastly refused to commit troops to any multinational force while offering instead money and logistical support, said it was monitoring the rapidly deteriorating security situation with grave concern.

The surge in attacks follows violent protests that turned deadlier in recent days as the prime minister went to Kenya seeking to move ahead on a proposed U.N.-backed security mission in Haiti to be led by that East African country.

Henry took over as prime minister following Moïse's assassination and has repeatedly postponed plans to hold parliamentary and presidential elections, which haven't happened in almost a decade.

Also:

QUITO, Ecuador: A volcano on an uninhabited island in the Galapagos has begun erupting, lighting up the nighttime sky as lava tumbled down its sides toward the sea.

The La Cumbre volcano on Fernandina island began erupting Saturday around midnight in what officials with Ecuador's Geophysical Institute said could be its largest eruption since 2017. The 1,476-meter (4,842-foot) volcano last erupted in 2020.

Images shared on social media taken by visitors to the Galapagos show the volcano profiled against a crimson red sky.

While the eruption posed no risk to humans, the island is home to a number of species, including iguanas, penguins and flightless cormorants. In 2019, scientists found on the island a giant tortoise not seen in more than a century and had been feared extinct.

RIO DE JANEIRO: After decades of delay and pressure, Brazil announced that it will henceforth use "favelas and urban communities" to categorize thousands of poor, urban neighborhoods, instead of the previous term "subnormal agglomerates" that was widely viewed as stigmatizing.

Starting in the 1990s, the national statistics and geography institute, known by its Portuguese acronym IBGE, began using "subnormal agglomerates" to describe places with irregular occupation and deficient public services.

The umbrella term included not just favelas - most commonly associated with dense, hillside neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro - but also a slew of other terms employed across Brazil, like grottoes, lowlands, stilted houses and more, where millions reside.



The Prime Minister of Malaysia Anwar Ibrahim inspects a guard of honor during a ceremonial welcome at Government House ahead of the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne, Australia on March 4, 2024. An increasingly assertive China and a humanitarian crisis in Myanmar are likely to be high on the agenda when Southeast Asian leaders meet in Australia for a rare summit March 4-6. (AP)

Asia

Malaysia's premier resists US pressure

Thai court drops case against Yingluck

BANGKOK, March 4, (AP): A Thai court on Monday acquitted former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, now living in exile, on charges of mis-handling funds for a government project in 2013, the latest legal victory for the powerful family of former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

The action comes shortly after Thaksin, Yingluck's brother, was released on parole for corruption-related offenses. Last year, he returned home after more than a decade of self-imposed exile, and was detained in a hospital for six months before being granted clemency because of his age and ill health.

Thaksin's release, after almost two decades of antipathy between his populist political machine and Thailand's conservative royalist ruling class, raised speculation that Yingluck also might be returning soon.

It was the latest favorable verdict for Yingluck, who was prime minister from 2011 until she was forced from office in 2014. In December last year, the same court cleared Yingluck of abuse of power in connection with a personnel transfer she had overseen.

But to return to Thailand without facing prison, she would also need a pardon from King Maha Vajiralongkorn or other form of clemency. In 2017 she was sentenced in absentia for alleged negligence in implementing a rice subsidy program that lost the government a massive amount of money, estimated to be as much as 500 billion baht (\$14 billion).

Yingluck and her supporters said she is innocent and being persecuted in an effort to dismantle Thaksin's political machine. He was toppled from power by a military coup in 2006, after being accused of abuse of power, corruption and disrespect for the country's monarchy.

The Thaksin-backed Pheu Thai Party came to power last year after a general election in coalition with military parties connected to the coups that twice removed the family from power, and Thaksin's daughter Paetongtarn has since become the party's leader and a prospective future prime minister.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: Malaysia's prime minister on Monday spoke up in defense of ties with China and complained over alleged pressure by the United States and its allies on regional nations to take sides in the West's strategic rivalries with Beijing.

Congo's minister overseeing oil and gas, Didier Budimbu, said the government is committed to protecting the environment.

Congo is home to most of the Congo Basin rainforest, the world's second-biggest, and most of the world's largest tropical peatland, made up of partially



Inmates gather inside the National Penitentiary in downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Sunday, March 3, 2024. Hundreds of inmates fled Haiti's main prison after armed gangs stormed the facility overnight. (AP)

decomposed wetlands plant material. Together, both capture huge amounts of carbon dioxide - about 1.5 billion tons a year, or about 3% of global emissions. More than a dozen of the plots up for auction overlap with protected areas in peatlands and rainforests, including the Virunga National Park, which is home to some of the world's rarest gorillas.

The government said the 27 oil blocks available have an estimated 22 billion barrels. Environmental groups say that auctioning more land to drill would have consequences both in Congo and abroad.

"Any new oil and gas project, anywhere in the world, is fueling the climate and nature crisis that we're in," said Mbong Akiy Fokwa Tsafak, program director for Greenpeace Africa. She said Perenco's operations have done nothing to mitigate poverty and instead degraded the ecosystem and burdened the lives of communities.

Environmental activists said Congo has strong potential to instead develop renewable energy, including solar, as well as small-scale hydropower. It's the world's largest producer of cobalt, a key component for batteries in electric vehicles and other products essential to the global energy transition, although cobalt mining comes with its own environmental and human risks. (AP)

MELBOURNE, Australia, March 4, (Agencies): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday that he had no choice but to defend his country's territory in the South China Sea against what he called Chinese aggression and illegal actions in pursuit of Beijing's own territorial claims.

"It is unfortunate that despite the clarity provided by international law, provocative, unilateral and illegal actions continue to infringe upon our sovereignty, our sovereign rights and jurisdictions," Marcos told the Lowy Institute international policy think tank in the Australian city of Melbourne.

China claims sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea, which is one of the world's most crucial waterways for shipping. That has put it at odds with the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, which all maintain claims to islands, reefs and undersea resources in the region.

Also:

TOKYO: South Korea and the US kicked off a major combined military drill on Monday to reinforce deterrence against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats amid concern Pyongyang could use the

maneuvers as a pretext for provocations, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The annual Freedom Shield exercise got under way for an 11-day run amid heightened tensions over Pyongyang's continued saber-rattling, including artillery firings near the western sea border and a series of missile launches, the South Korean news agency said.

The springtime exercise marks the first one after Pyongyang, in November, scrapped a 2018 inter-Korean military accord designed to reduce tensions along the border, raising concerns of the North possibly staging provocative military demonstrations.

TOKYO: A Japanese coast guard helicopter rescued 24 fishermen as they desperately clung to the deck of a tilting, half-submerged ship being pounded by high waves Monday morning off an island chain southwest of Tokyo. One crew member thrown from the rocking ship into the rough seas before the arrival of the rescuers was found dead.

The Fukuei Maru No. 8 stalled due to an engine failure Sunday evening in the Pacific Ocean, about five hours after it departed the Yai-zu Port in central Japan en route to South America for tuna fishing, according to the coast guard statement.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's remarks came during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in the Australian city of Melbourne, where Anwar is one of nine Asian leaders attending the gathering.

"Right now, China seems to be the leading investor into Malaysia," said Anwar and insisted that Malaysians "do not have a problem with China." "We are an independent nation, we are fiercely independent, we do not want to be dictated by any force," Anwar said.

BEIJING: China's government said Monday it is eliminating an annual news conference by the premier that

was one of the rare times a top Chinese leader took questions from journalists.

Lou Qianjian, the spokesperson for the National People's Congress, said on the eve of the opening of the legislature's annual session that Premier Li Qiang would not hold a news conference at its conclusion, as it has every year since 1993.

The move appears to be in line with a diminishing of the premier's power, and that of the government bureaucracy generally, as the Communist Party and leader Xi Jinping centralize control of the nation's affairs, said Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore.



Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi appointed new chairman of Gulf Bank

The Board of Directors of Gulf Bank gathered on Monday, March 4, 2024, and unanimously elected Mr. Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as the new Chairman. Mr. Abdullateef Abdulaziz Al-Sharikh, a reserve member, was called upon to join the board, with Mr. Ali Murad Behbehani appointed as the Vice Chairman. Other members of the board include Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Al-Bahar, Mr. Abdulrahman Mohammed Al-Tawil, Mr. Omar Hamad Al Qenaee, Mr. Barak Abdulmohsen Al-Asfour, Mr. Fawaz Mohamed Al-Awadi, Mr. Abdullah Sayyar Al-Sayyar, Mr. Talal Ali Al-Sayegh, and Ms. Reem Abdullah Al-Saleh. The Board of Directors conveyed their apprecia-

tion to Mr. Jassim Mustafa Boodai, the former Chairman, for his dedicated service, reaffirming their commitment to Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, aimed at enhancing financial and operational performance, and delivering exceptional products and services to customers.

Bringing over two decades of experience in the financial and industrial sectors, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi possesses vast expertise – having assumed leadership positions in numerous local and international companies. He became a member of Gulf Bank's Board in March 2012. Presently, Mr. Al-Kharafi serves as the Vice Chair-

man and Group CEO of Zain Group in Kuwait, Vice Chairman of Zain Saudi Arabia, and Vice Chairman of Gulf Cables & Electrical Industries Group Co. (K.S.C.P.). He also holds positions as a Board Member and Chairman of the Executive Committee at Boursa Kuwait, Vice Chairman of Heavy Engineering Industries & Shipbuilding Co. (HEISCO), and Vice Chairman of National Investments Company (NIC). Furthermore, he serves as a Board Member on the Middle East Advisory Board at Coutts & Co. in the United Kingdom. Mr. Al-Kharafi has been a member of the executive committee of Mohammed Abdulmohsin Al-Kharafi & Sons (Al-Kharafi Group) and Zain Group.

Market Movements

04-03-2024

	Change	Closing pts
JAPAN - Nikkei	+198.41	40,109.23
EGYPT - EGX 30	+1,484.00	30,542.33
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+32.08	6,951.67
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+460.29	65,946.75

	Change	Closing pts
SAUDI - Tadawul	-120.61	12,434.59
UAE - DFM	-29.99	4,326.62

Business

Major spending reductions across the board

Kuwait's FY24/25 draft budget projects lower spending and large deficit

By National Bank of Kuwait

The government's draft budget for the fiscal year starting April (FY24/25) projects another large deficit, of KD5.9 billion. The deficit is smaller than the one projected for FY23/24 thanks mostly to a drop in expenditures linked to the absence of one-off items. This more than offsets a projected drop in revenues resulting from lower expected oil production, while potential new revenue-enhancing measures do not appear to be included. We expect the fiscal position to come in better than budgeted next year due to a combination of traditional below-target spending outturns and above-target oil prices. Still, this could be the ninth deficit in the past ten years, underlining the continued challenge in securing long-term fiscal sustainability. Absent fresh debt issuance or other measures, the squeeze on the government's liquid reserves will continue to grow.

Expenditures in FY24/25 are budgeted at KD24.6 billion, a drop of 6.6% on the previous year's budget. Spending on all major items was reduced: subsidies (-22% b/b to KD4.7 billion); salaries (-0.8% to KD14.8 billion); capex (-7.7% to KD2.3 billion); and other expenses (-4.7% to KD2.7 billion). As noted above, a large part of the expenditure cut is due to the absence of one-off outlays from the previous year's budget, namely around KD1 billion in arrears from unsettled subsidies related to the operation of refineries, water and power plants, while an additional KD0.5 billion in mostly non-recurring accumulated leave allowance has also been spared. Stripping these items out, budgeted spending is down a more modest 1% from the previous year. Still, this seems to represent some degree of spending restraint in view of the large projected deficit, given that pre-Covid spending was growing at an average rate of around 6% per year.

Economic Insight

In terms of the broader structure of spending, two points in the budget are worth highlighting: the continued dominance of wages and subsidies and the ongoing decline in capex. First, the share of wages and subsidies has steadily risen over the last few years and has now reached an elevated 79.4% of all estimated spending, with wages alone accounting for 60.4%, which is its highest share in recent years. While subsidy payments can be volatile due to changing energy prices, the rigidity of subsidy programs and overall wage spending means that significant savings are more likely to come from more discretionary items, i.e. the "allowances" and "bonuses" categories of employee compensation, which instead have witnessed a notable increase over recent years, or on capital expenditures.

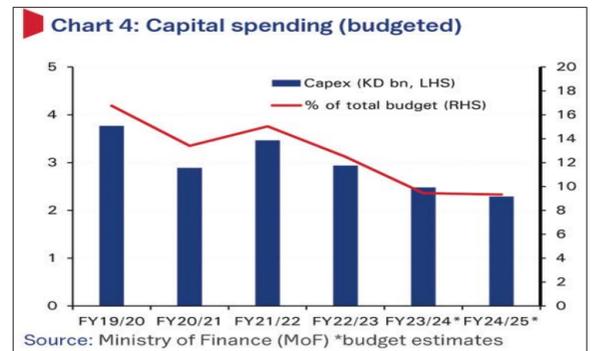
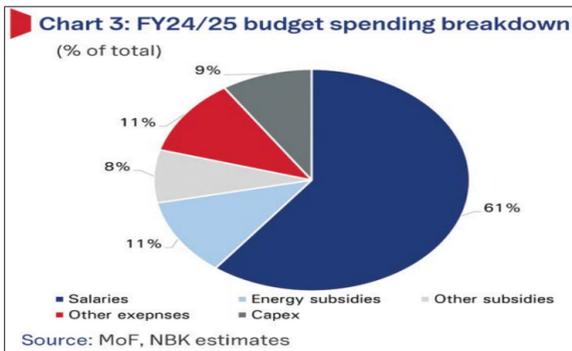
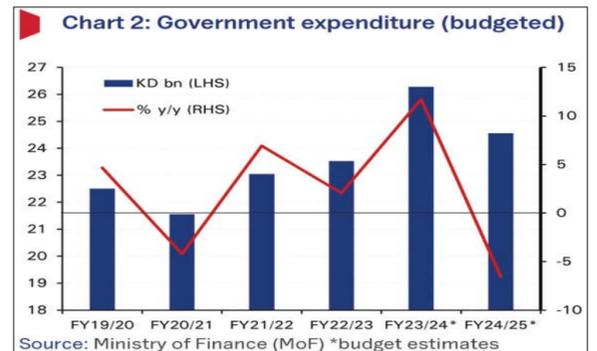
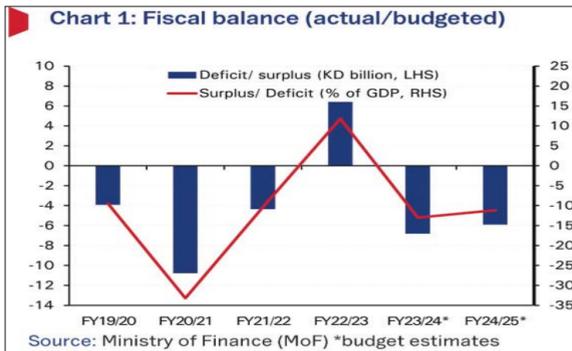
Secondly and relatedly, the targeted cut in capex is the third decline in a row, following cuts of 15-16% per year in FY22/23 and FY23/24. Moreover, actual capital spending has come in around 70-80% of the budget targets over the last few years, bringing government capex as a share of GDP down to a low of 3.7% in FY22/23. This is below regional peers and will need to be lifted if the government is to realize its project-intensive work-plan. We do note, though, that the government is putting greater stock in tapping the private sector, including through PPPs, and potentially off-balance sheet style investments through the proposed Ciyada fund, to help meet its expansive development plan.

On the other side, revenues are projected to decline to KD18.7 billion (-4.1% y/y) including oil receipts of KD16.2 billion (-5.4% b/b), with the authorities taking a customarily conservative view on oil prices (averaging \$70/bbl) and estimating lower b/b oil production (to 2.55 mb/d from 2.68 mb/d) in line with Kuwait's OPEC+ production cut obligations. That said, reaching the average production level forecast in the budget would only look likely if current output cuts of 135 kb/d through Q1 2024 (January 2024 production was at 2.4 mb/d) are quickly reversed, which, based on current estimates of oil market demand-supply balances, may be optimistic. Meanwhile, non-oil revenues are projected to increase to KD2.4 billion (+5.7%), representing 13% of total revenues. While details have not yet been released, these include revenue from corporate taxes, customs duties, property rents, water and electric fees, income from hospitals, and other government fees and penalties. Growth in non-oil receipts penciled in for FY24/25 is close to its historic average, implying no introduction of fresh revenue measures in this budget.

Limited impact on economic growth seen; spending restraint part of broader reform package needs

In terms of the budget's impact on the economy, our initial take is that it looks broadly growth-neutral, with spending cut but from a very high base and with the key salaries segment (which would be influential in driving consumer spending) down least of all. Meanwhile, the projected trimming in capital spending is the smallest in three years – and could also be interpreted as a more realistic target given the degree of underspending in previous years. Finally, we note that the draft budget is subject to revision, and spending has in the past often been pushed upwards before final approval.

Clearly, however, the underlying spending restraint in the draft budget reflects the need to address persistent fiscal deficits and the government's warning in its recent four-year work agenda update that the funding gap could, if unaddressed, spiral to KD45-60 billion in aggregate over the next five years



	Closing Account		% y/y		% of budget		Budget		% y/y	
	FY22/23	FY23/24*	FY22/23	FY23/24*	FY22/23	FY23/24*	FY23/24	FY24/25*	FY23/24	FY24/25*
Revenues	28.8	23.5	54.7	-18.4	81.3	82.8	19.5	18.7	-16.8	-4.1
Oil Revenues	26.7	21.2	64.6	-20.6	79.9	81.0	17.2	16.2	-19.5	-5.4
Non-oil Revenues	2.1	2.3	-12.4	9.5	99.0	99.9	2.3	2.4	10.6	5.7
Total Expenditures	22.4	25.8	-2.4	15.2	105.0	101.9	26.3	24.6	11.7	-6.6
Current Expenditures	20.4	23.6	0.1	15.7	100.9	100.8	23.8	22.3	15.6	-6.4
Salaries	13.0	---	-1.8	---	101.1	---	14.9	14.8	13.7	-0.8
Subsidies	4.4	---	-2.7	---	100.4	---	5.9	4.7	34.7	-21.5
Other expenditures	3.0	---	14.4	---	100.7	---	2.9	2.8	-4.0	-4.7
Capital Expenditures	2.1	1.8	-18.4	-14.3	139.9	137.8	2.5	2.3	-15.6	-7.7
Budget Balance (Surplus/Deficit)	6.4	-2.2	---	---	---	---	-6.8	-5.9	---	---
KEC oil price (\$/bbl)	97.1	84.0	20.3	-13.5	-17.6	83.3	70.0	70.0	-12.5	0.0
Oil production (mb/d)	2.69	2.65	5.9	-1.5	1.5	101.1	2.68	2.55	-1.8	-4.85

Source: MOF, *signifies draft or estimate

given the ballooning wage and subsidy bill and the overdependence on oil receipts. While control of spending is more straightforward and quicker in the near term than introducing new revenue streams, the work plan also references moves to reprice fees for government services and property leases, reform subsidies and introduce corporate and excise taxes. Near-term liquidity pres-

ures at the General Reserve Fund have eased due to the large fiscal surplus recorded in FY22/23 (due to exceptionally high oil prices) and transfers from the oil sector, but the government is also keen to avoid difficulties resurfacing through passage of the draft law on 'liquidity management tools', which would facilitate debt issuance.

OPEC+ extends supply cuts amidst oversupply concerns

Kuwait maintains voluntary production cuts

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The OPEC+ coalition has reached an agreement to prolong existing supply cuts until the middle of the year to prevent an oversupply, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily quoting Bloomberg said the analysts foresee a continuation of voluntary production cuts until the second quarter of 2024, anticipating a sustained commitment to these measures. The extension of voluntary cuts by Kuwait, amounting to 135,000 barrels per day, will persist until the end of the second quarter, maintaining production at 2.41 million barrels per day until June 2024.

Dr. Imad Al-Ateeqi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, stated that this decision aligns with other OPEC+ members' efforts and aims to support market stability.

He noted that these additional reductions will be gradually reinstated in accordance with market conditions, emphasizing Kuwait's cooperation within the OPEC+ framework.

Al-Ateeqi highlighted Kuwait's previous voluntary reduction of 128,000 barrels per day announced in April 2023, which will persist un-

KPC declares liquefied gas prices

KUWAIT CITY, March 4, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Sunday the new prices of liquefied petroleum gases (propane) and (butane) for March.

KPC, in a statement to KUNA, re-

vealed that one metric ton of propane gas would be USD 630, while one metric of butane would be USD 640.

Liquefied petroleum gases, propane and butane, are used in petrochemical industry, in addition to other uses such as cooking and heating.

til the end of December 2024. This additional cut underscores the collective precautionary measures taken by OPEC+ nations to uphold oil market stability and balance.

Regarding oil prices, Brent crude is nearing its fair value of approximately \$85 per barrel, with the potential for escalation above \$100 in the event of heightened Middle East conflicts, according to Bloomberg Intelligence. Recent estimates suggest a shift in price expectations, with several investment banks revising their forecasts upwards. Despite OPEC+ production cuts, oil prices have remained around \$80 per barrel due to increased supplies from non-member producers and geopolitical tensions in the region.

Geopolitical risks, including conflicts in the Middle East and disruptions to oil shipments, have begun influencing oil prices, counteracting concerns over weak economic prospects and declining demand.

Bloomberg Intelligence's projections for oil prices consider various factors such as geopolitical risks, inflation expectations, refining margins, inventory levels, and market sentiment.

As OPEC+ gradually reduces production cuts, any decline in spare production capacity could lead to a panic-driven rise in oil prices. Currently, OPEC+ has about 6.4 million barrels per day of spare production capacity, mainly held by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Under the existing OPEC agreement, production cuts are set to total 3.66 million barrels per day starting April.

OPEC anticipates robust demand growth, particularly in Asia, while the International Energy Agency expects slower growth. Despite challenges posed by rising production from non-member countries and economic uncertainties, OPEC+ remains committed to stabilizing the oil market.

Company commits to global environmental efforts

PIC focuses on emissions reduction

KUWAIT CITY, March 4, (KUNA): Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) places issues such as safety and health among the priorities in its quest to limit emissions and attain sustainability, said the Chief Executive Officer Nadia Al-Hajji.

Al-Hajji, in a statement released on Monday marking the second safety week themed "together toward carbon neutrality," said the company had succeeded in executing a lot of ventures aimed at overhauling the operations and cutting emissions.

The company is keen on protecting the environment and safety of the workers, Al-Hajji said, indicating that light would be shed on these efforts during the week-long activity.

Meanwhile, Hamad Al-Subaiee, the Deputy CEO,

affirmed the significance of the "safety week" because it is linked to a crucial issue of increasing global interest, amid intensified efforts to fight the "greenhouse" emissions and stop the damage inflicted on the environment by various human activities.

He added that the company has organized the activity in line with its commitment to His Highness the Amir's directions that the State of Kuwait should partake in the international community's efforts to limit the phenomenal climatic change.

PIC is a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and is a petrochemical industry leader in Kuwait and throughout the Middle East, and a growing leader worldwide. It boasts of 58 years of experience in the chemicals industry.

Concentration of liquidity among small and liquid companies

Mixed trend in Kuwait stock market in Feb despite positive price movements

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: In February, the stock market exhibited a mixed trend compared to January, with positive movements observed in all price indicators. The primary market index, main market index, and general market index all saw increases, signaling overall growth. Additionally, the main market 50 index experienced a modest rise, reports Al-Jarida daily.

However, despite the positive price indicators, there was a decrease in the absolute liquidity of the stock market in February compared to January. Total liquidity declined by approximately 20.9%, with the average daily trading value also dropping by around 3.4%.

Analysis of liquidity trends since the beginning of the year revealed that a significant portion of liquidity was concentrated among relatively small and liquid companies. These companies, numbering 12 in total, accounted for a substantial portion of the stock mar-

ket's liquidity, despite representing a small percentage of the total market value of listed companies.

Distribution of liquidity between the first and main markets favored the first market in February, with approximately 74.9% of the stock market's liquidity allocated to it. This distribution highlights a concentration of liquidity among certain companies within the first market.

However, there was a positive development in liquidity distribution compared to the previous year, with the main market's share increasing in February 2024. This shift indicates a more balanced distribution of liquidity between the Premier and Main markets compared to the previous year.

Overall, while price indicators showed positive movements, the stock market experienced a decrease in liquidity in February, with notable concentration among certain companies and markets.

GCC index surges to a 16-month high led by a broad-based rally

Kuwait's All Share Index records a gain of 2.4 pct

By Kamco Invest

Positive sentiments across financial markets globally pushed GCC market index to the highest level since November-2022 during the third week of February-2024. The MSCI GCC index remained elevated by the end of the month and closed after receding marginally in the last week with gain of 4.2%. The positive performance came despite three out of seven exchanges in the GCC witnessing declines during the month. The monthly gains also fully offset the declines during January-2024 resulting in a YTD-2024 gain of 3.3% for the MSCI GCC Index.

Saudi Arabia was the best performing market during the month with a gain of 7.1% followed by Qatar and Dubai with gains of 3.8% and 3.4%, respectively. Kuwait's All Share Index also showed a gain of 2.4%. On the decliner's side, Bahrain reported the biggest decline during the month (-3.0%) followed by Abu Dhabi and Oman with relatively smaller declines. In terms of YTD-2024 performance, Kuwait topped the GCC chart with a return of 9.1% followed by Dubai and Saudi Arabia with returns of 6.1% and 5.5%, respectively. On the other hand, the decline in the Abu Dhabi benchmark for the second consecutive month steepened the YTD-2024 fall to 3.4%.

The sector performance for the GCC showed a broad-based growth in all sectors with the Insurance index at the top with a gain of 19.5% followed by Consumer Durable & Apparel and Healthcare indices with gains of 12.6% and 11.4%, respectively. Large-cap sectors like Energy and Banks showed low-single digit gains of 3.5% and 3.8%, respectively. Healthcare and Insurance also featured in the top 5 sectors by YTD-2024 performance with double-digit returns. In terms of trading activity, value traded during February-2024 declined m-o-m but remained elevated at the second-highest level in 21 months.

Boursa Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait was up for the fourth consecutive month during February-2024. However, unlike the previous month, the gains during the month was mainly led by large-cap stocks. The Premier Market Index outperformed other indices on the exchange with a gain of 2.5% to close at 8,159.0 points. The Main Market Index witnessed a monthly gain of 1.9% while the Main 50 index was up 0.6%. The All-Share Market Index reported a monthly growth of 2.4% and closed at 7,440.6 points.

Monthly gains in February-2024 further strengthened the exchange's YTD-2024 gains making it the best performing market in the GCC with the All Share Index up by 9.1%. YTD-2024 gains were mainly buoyed by Main Market Index which was up 9.3% followed by Premier Market Index and the Main 50 Index with gains of 9.1% and 8.6%, respectively.

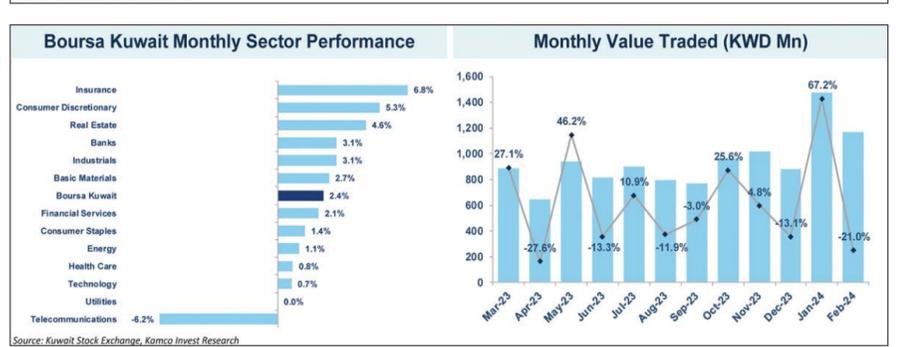
The sector performance chart for the month showed positive performance for most of the sectors barring the Telecom sector. The Insurance index topped the monthly sector performance during February-2024 with a gain of 6.8% followed by Consumer Discretionary and Real Estate indices with returns of 5.3% and 4.6%, respectively. On the decliner's side, the Technology index witnessed the biggest decline of 6.2% during the month.

In the Insurance sector, most of its constituent stocks reported gains. Within the sector, shares of Warba Insurance more than doubled followed by 25.3% gain in shares of Kuwait Reinsurance. Gains in the Consumer Discretionary sector came mainly on the back of 192.0% surge in shares of PAPCO. In the Banking sector, seven out of nine banks reported gains in February-2024 reflecting strong quarterly earnings. FY-2023 profits for the nine banks that reported earnings reached KWD 1.5 Bn as compared to KWD 1.1 Bn in FY-2022, up by 28.7%.

In terms of monthly stock performance, PAPCO topped the chart with a gain of 192.0% followed by The Energy House Co. and Wethaq Takaful with gains of 139.0% and 104.6%, respectively. On the decliners side, Ooredoo Kuwait topped with a fall of 18.4% followed by Dalqan Real Estate and First Takaful Insurance with the declines of 13.1% and 12.1%, respectively. Trading activity declined during the month as compared to the previous month. Total volume of shares traded during February-2024 decreased by 25.1% to 4.7 Bn shares as compared to 6.2 Bn shares during January-2024. Value traded also declined by 21.0% to reach KWD 1.2 Bn during February-2024 as compared to KWD 1.5 Bn during the previous month. KFH topped the monthly volume chart at 280.9 Mn traded shares followed by Arzan Financial and Kipco with 277.0 Mn and 226.6 Mn traded shares, respectively. In terms of value traded, KFH topped with KWD 221.8 Mn worth of traded shares during the month followed by Int'l Financial Advisors and NBK at KWD 68.2 Bn and KWD 67.6 Mn worth of traded shares, respectively.

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Monthly Val Traded (USD Bn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	8,159.0	2.5%	9.1%	144.6	3.8	14.1	0.9	2.7%
Kuwait - Main 50 Index	5,957.0	0.6%	8.6%					
Kuwait - Main Market Index	6,086.1	1.9%	9.3%					
Kuwait - All Share Index	7,440.6	2.4%	9.1%					
Saudi Arabia	12,630.9	7.1%	5.5%	2,983.9	49.7	21.4	2.5	2.8%
Abu Dhabi	9,254.8	(2.7%)	(3.4%)	708.9	5.1	19.9	2.8	1.7%
Dubai	4,308.8	3.4%	6.1%	197.8	2.2	8.9	1.3	4.0%
Qatar	10,474.9	3.8%	(3.3%)	165.8	3.1	12.1	1.4	4.8%
Bahrain	2,005.4	(3.0%)	1.7%	92.8	0.03	7.2	0.7	8.6%
Oman	4,554.9	(0.2%)	0.9%	23.1	0.3	12.2	0.7	4.7%
Total GCC				4,316.9	64.1	18.4	2.2	2.9%

Monthly Indicators	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Premier Market Index	7,821.7	7,912.5	7,494.7	7,809.3	8,060.9	7,695.2	7,520.8	7,142.7	7,291.7	7,477.0	7,959.5	8,159.0
Monthly % Change	(3.1%)	1.2%	(5.3%)	4.2%	3.2%	(4.5%)	(2.3%)	(5.0%)	2.1%	2.5%	6.5%	2.5%
Main 50 Index	5,593.1	5,644.1	5,365.8	5,375.0	5,574.1	5,634.2	5,710.1	5,277.4	5,361.0	5,487.4	5,919.2	5,957.0
Monthly % Change	(1.9%)	0.9%	(4.9%)	0.2%	3.7%	1.1%	1.3%	(7.6%)	1.6%	2.4%	7.9%	0.6%
Main Market Index	5,500.8	5,606.4	5,440.8	5,463.6	5,630.1	5,692.6	5,717.4	5,396.0	5,453.5	5,569.7	5,973.1	6,086.1
Monthly % Change	(0.9%)	1.9%	(3.0%)	0.4%	3.0%	1.1%	0.4%	(5.6%)	1.1%	2.1%	7.2%	1.9%
All Share Market Index	7,050.8	7,142.5	6,786.8	7,029.8	7,253.8	7,005.8	6,886.7	6,531.8	6,653.8	6,817.3	7,268.4	7,440.6
Monthly % Change	(2.7%)	1.3%	(4.8%)	3.4%	3.2%	(3.4%)	(1.7%)	(5.2%)	1.9%	2.5%	6.6%	2.4%
Market Cap (KWD Mn)	45,130	43,989	40,228	41,615	42,939	41,580	40,877	38,830	39,577	40,496	43,170	44,363
P/E (X) - TTM	16.72	14.10	13.10	13.41	13.85	13.30	13.40	13.12	13.32	13.39	13.27	14.13
P/BV (X) - TTM	1.09	0.80	0.79	0.82	0.85	0.80	0.80	0.77	0.78	0.79	0.88	0.93
Dividend Yield (%)	3.59%	2.76%	2.97%	2.88%	3.01%	3.10%	3.10%	3.30%	3.00%	2.95%	2.80%	2.67%
Volume (Mn Shares)	2,554.4	2,131.3	2,986.1	3,444.8	4,354.4	3,706.0	3,412.4	3,648.8	3,983.1	3,387.7	6,242.0	4,677.0
Value (KD Mn)	889.3	643.9	941.2	815.9	904.8	796.8	772.5	970.2	1,017.3	883.8	1,477.9	1,167.5
Trades ('000)	181.3	151.3	209.3	169.7	218.3	228.0	204.6	255.1	236.5	176.0	341.5	275.6



4th-straight wkly surge marked

Average 'long-term' US mortgage rises to 6.94%

LOS ANGELES, March 4, (AP): The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate rose for the fourth consecutive week, another setback for prospective homebuyers just as the spring homebuying season gets going.

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage rose to 6.94% from 6.90% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.65%. The average rate is now just below its highest level since mid-December, when it was 6.95%.

When mortgage rates rise, they can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, limiting how much they can afford in a market already out of reach for many Americans. They also discourage homeowners who locked in rock-bottom rates two or three years ago from selling.

Rates have been creeping higher in recent weeks as reports showing stronger-than-expected inflation at the consumer and wholesale levels and the economy stoked worries among bond investors that the Federal Reserve will wait until later this year before it begins cutting interest rates. A closely followed inflation report on Thursday showed prices across the country rose pretty much as expected last month.

Investors' expectations for future inflation, global demand for U.S. Treasuries and what the Fed does with interest rates can influence rates on home loans.

Despite the recent increase, the average rate on a 30-year mortgage is still down from the 23-year high of 7.79% it reached in late October.

The pullback in rates in November and December helped lift sales of previously occupied U.S. homes by 3.1% in January versus the previ-

ous month to the strongest sales pace since August.

Still, the recent uptick in rates is an unwelcome shift for would-be homebuyers just as the spring homebuying season ramps up.

"The recent boomerang in rates has dampened already tentative homebuyer momentum as we approach the spring, a historically busy season for homebuying," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist. "While sales of newly built homes are trending in a positive direction, higher rates and elevated prices continue to pose affordability challenges that may leave potential homebuyers on the sidelines."

Competition for relatively few homes on the market and elevated mortgage rates are limiting house hunters' buying power on top of years of soaring prices.

Already there are signs that the rise in rates in recent weeks has had an impact on home sales.

Contract signings on U.S. homes fell 4.9% in January from the previous month and were down 8.8% from a year earlier, the National Association of Realtors said Thursday. The report is a barometer of future home purchases as there's typically a lag of a month or two between a signed contract and a completed sale.

Meanwhile, home loan applications have declined for three consecutive weeks, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association.

Homeowners seeking to refinance got some good news this week. Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loans, declined this week, pulling down the average rate to 6.26% from 6.29% last week. A year ago it averaged 5.89%, Freddie Mac said.

China's manufacturing activity contracts

Manufacturing in China contracted for a fifth consecutive month in February, according to an official survey of factory managers released Friday, reflecting persistent weakness in the economy ahead of annual legislative meetings where officials are expected to boost policy support.

The official purchasing managers index, or PMI, fell to 49.1 in February from 49.2 the month before. The PMI is on a scale up to 100 where 50 marks the cutoff between expansion and contraction.

The manufacturing PMI has fallen in ten of the past eleven months, rising only in September. February's reading comes in spite of Beijing's recent measures to shore up the economy, including reducing a lending rate that benchmarks home loans and cutting banks' reserve requirements to boost lending.

A separate survey by financial news outlet Caixin found that manufacturing PMI edged up from 50.8 to 50.9.

"We think it makes sense to average across both PMIs to gauge conditions in industry," Capital Economics' Huang Zichun said.

"On this basis, the headline manufacturing reading remained un-

changed at 50.0 and is in line with factory activity holding steady last month," she said.

As this year's Lunar New Year holidays - a weeklong national holiday - also fall in February, the readings could also be skewed by this period as factories are typically inactive.

Meanwhile, the non-manufacturing PMI, which measures activity in sectors such as services and construction, rose to 51.4 from 50.7 in January. The reading is the highest since September last year, and is likely attributed to the surge of consumption around the Lunar New Year holidays.

Beijing is expected to focus on fiscal measures to boost the economy at the upcoming National People's Congress (NPC) meetings which open on March 5, as it seeks to boost consumption, investment and instill more confidence in its stock market.

Following a brief surge in the economy post COVID-19, the world's second-biggest economy has been grappling with an uneven recovery amid a property crisis and a slowing economy.

China is also expected to release its annual GDP growth target at the NPC. (AP)

US jobs market is hot, but the 'layoffs' keep coming

Economic environment shifting

Annual congress convenes

Beijing seeks ways to revive slowing economy & salvage property market

BEIJING, March 4, (AP): It's clear that China's efforts to build confidence in its slowing economy will top the agenda of its ceremonial national legislature, which convenes Tuesday in Beijing.

What remains unclear is how the ruling Communist Party can navigate toward stronger, sustained growth as China's workforce is aging, relations with Washington are fraught, and housing construction - a main driver of the economy - is in crisis.

Hopes for a strong, consumer-led recovery after severe anti-virus controls ended in late 2022 have not been fulfilled. Local governments are mired in trillions of dollars of debt and direct investment by foreign companies in China fell by about 80% last year.

As more than 5,000 leaders from across China are gathered in Beijing for the year's biggest political events, the mood on the streets and in financial markets remains glum.

That's in contrast to official messaging as the country marks 75 years

from the People's Republic founding in 1949.

"We are confident of consolidating and enhancing the recovering and growing trend of the economy," the party newspaper People's Daily wrote in a commentary Saturday.

"We are fully capable of turning pressure into a driving force, accumulating and turning advantages into victorious trends and steering the advance of the great ship of the economy while braving wind and waves," it added.

For videographer Wang Tao, the question is what the leadership will do about jobs. At 41, he's struggling to find work in a labor market where companies tend not to hire anyone over 35.

"At first I thought it was difficult only for older people like me, but later I found out that many young people ... are having a hard time finding work," Wang said. "The general employment situation is grave."

The congress endorses decisions already made by top leaders, providing

a platform to publicize government plans and instruct officials on what they should do back home.

China's most powerful leader in decades, Xi Jinping, will preside. He has installed loyalists in top posts to strengthen the party's control over the economy and society. Xi, 70, is in his third five-year term as party general secretary and may hold that post for life.

Premier Li Qiang is expected to announce an official economic growth target when the National People's Congress convenes Tuesday in Beijing's ornate Great Hall of the People. State media suggest it will be about 5%, on par with last year's 5.2% growth.

Many economists are forecasting much slower growth of 4% or less. In 2022, it dipped to 3%, the second-lowest level since at least the 1970s.

Li's annual work report will include plans for "promoting high-quality development and advancing Chinese modernization," the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Levi's

Levi Strauss & Co. is slashing its global corporate workforce by 10% to 15% in the first half of the year - as part of a two-year restructuring plan that seeks to cut costs and simplify its operations, the denim giant said. The layoffs on the same day Levi's unveiled a proposed 10-year extension to the naming rights for Levi's Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers, in a \$170 million deal.

Sony

Sony will cut about 900 jobs in its PlayStation division, or about 8% of its global workforce, citing changes in the industry as a reason for the restructuring. "The industry has changed immensely, and we need to future ready ourselves to set the business up for what lies ahead," Sony Interactive Entertainment CEO Jim Ryan said in a blog post. The job cuts will occur in the Americas, Japan, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Asia Pacific region. In London, the PlayStation Studio will completely close.

Electronic Arts

Electronic Arts is cutting about 5% of its workforce, or approximately 670 employees. The video game maker said in a regulatory filing that its board approved a restructuring plan that includes the layoffs, as well as closing some offices or facilities. The Redwood City, California, company had 13,400 workers globally as of March 31, 2023, according to a filing. CEO Andrew Wilson said the layoffs would

be largely completed by early next quarter.

Microsoft

Microsoft is laying off some 1,900 employees in its gaming division, according to an internal company memo. The job cuts - which represent about an 8% reduction of Microsoft's 22,000-person gaming workforce - arrive just over three months since the tech giant completed its \$69 billion purchase of video game maker Activision Blizzard.

Riot Games

Video game developer Riot Games, which is behind the popular "League of Legends" multiplayer battle game, is trimming 11% of its staff. The company, which is owned by Chinese technology giant Tencent, said 530 jobs were being eliminated.

Twitch

Twitch, which is owned by Amazon, is cutting more than 500 jobs in a bid to save on costs. The video streaming platform's CEO Dan Clancy said in an email to employees that even with cost cuts and growing efficiency, the platform "is still meaningfully larger than it needs to be given the size of our business."

UPS

UPS will cut 12,000 jobs and hinted that its Coyote truck load brokerage business may be put up for sale. The Teamsters in September voted to approve a tentative contract agreement with UPS, including pay raises for

full- and part-time union workers and the creation of 7,500 full-time jobs. The job eliminations are anticipated to be among management roles and contractors, the company said.

Vice

Vice Media plans to lay off several hundred employees and no longer publish material on its Vice.com website, the company's CEO said in a memo to staff. Vice filed for bankruptcy last year before being sold for \$350 million to a consortium led by the Fortress Investment Group. Once a swashbuckling media company geared to a younger audience, New York-based Vice was valued at \$5.7 billion in 2017.

Los Angeles Times

The Los Angeles Times said it was laying off at least 115 employees - more than 20% of the newsroom - one of the largest staff cuts in the newspaper's 143-year history. The announcement came after the LA Times Guild walked off the job to protest the imminent layoffs, the institution's first ever newsroom union work stoppage.

Snap

The owner of Snapchat is cutting approximately 10% of its worldwide workforce, or about 530 employees, the latest tech company to announce layoffs. Snap Inc. said in a regulatory filing that it currently estimates \$55 million to \$75 million in charges, mostly for severance and related costs. It expects the majority of the costs to be incurred in the first quarter.

Bank committed to investing in and developing national banking leaders

KFH celebrates graduates of Harvard Executive Development Program



Zeyad Abdullah Al Omar and Mohammed Al-Musalam with the program graduates.

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: KFH recently honored a group of its employees who successfully completed the Harvard Executive Development Program. This program is part of the "Kafa'a" initiative, a collaboration between the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwaiti banks, which aims to train and prepare national employees through the Institute of Banking Studies (IBS).

A ceremony was held to honor the individuals, hosted with the support of the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of the IBS, Basel Ahmed Al-Haroon. Other attendees included KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah Al Omar, KFH Executive Manager Talent Management, Mohammed Al-Musalam, along with representatives from Kuwaiti banks and several other officials.

The Harvard Executive Development

Program, titled "Navigating the Future: Leading Financial Institutions in an Era of Innovation and Transformation," aims to enhance the skills of executive leaders in the banking and financial industry. The program focuses on key areas such as the impact of the increasing popularity of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investments, the significance of utilizing modern tools like artificial intelligence and machine learning, data-driven risk management, and the potential of FinTech in driving successful digital transformation.

The 6-day program delved into key topics like fostering innovation for organizational change, enhancing communication and leadership skills in challenging situations, and promoting collaboration and unity among diverse talents. Each day featured top-level meetings and engaging sessions led by Harvard Business School faculty.

KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah Al Omar, congratulated KFH employees who graduated from the Executive Leadership Development Program in collaboration with Harvard Business School.

He emphasized KFH's commitment to cultivating a new generation of national banking leaders. These leaders will be equipped with the necessary skills to uphold KFH's reputation and spearhead progress within both KFH and the Islamic banking sector.

"KFH's leading position in Kuwait and its global standing as the second-largest Islamic bank require a skilled workforce that can adapt, innovate, and evolve in the dynamic banking landscape. To enhance skills, improve the work environment, and boost productivity, actively sharing knowledge and expertise with each manager's team is essential," Al Omar said.

Shaping digital future and fostering strong relationships with next generation of digital leaders

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait sponsors IDRAK Hackathon event

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is pleased to announce its platinum sponsorship of the IDRAK Hackathon event at Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center. The event brought together students, parents, and industry professionals at the Amiri Diwan Theater.

Endorsed by the National Cybersecurity Center, Ministry of Education, and American University of Kuwait, ABK's sponsorship underscored the Bank's unwavering commitment to corporate social responsibility and nurturing future digital talent. Speaking about the Bank's participation, Afrah Alarbash, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK, said, "Our engagement in educational initiatives for the digital generation reflects our dedication to fostering positive societal impact."



Al Arbash

The event provided an excellent platform for ABK to connect with young, skilled high school individuals. Alarbash highlighted, "We are thrilled to have supported young minds who share our passion for innovation and dedication to digital advancement. This event has reinforced our conviction in the potential of young talent in Kuwait."

This event provided an opportunity to showcase the technological expertise present in the country and the importance of keeping pace with digital transformation. Alarbash affirmed that ABK is eager to leverage its resources to contribute to such initiatives alongside partners, such as IDRAK, and others in the market.

Throughout the sponsorship, ABK had the opportunity to engage directly with students and parents, forging meaningful connections within the community.



Announcing the first place winning team.



Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait team.

Alarbash expressed, "Our presence at the event exemplifies our commitment to shaping a digital future and



Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait team.

fostering strong relationships with the next generation of digital leaders."

The Hackathon event witnessed enthusiastic interactions and knowledge exchange. ABK's support at the event reaffirmed its pivotal role in the digital field and its dedication to guiding and empowering the future generation of digital innovators.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services.

ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 45 branches.

This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services.

Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

Unforgettable evening of eloquence, courage, and triumph

Toastmasters Division H steals show with annual speech contest



Photos during the Toastmasters Division H annual speech contest.



By Suhaan Abdul Munaf

Toastmasters Division H hosted a spellbinding Annual Speech Contest on March 1, 2024, at the elegant Best Western Plus in Salmiya. The event, adorned with the theme "Taming Your Fear," unfolded as an unforgettable evening of eloquence, courage, and triumph.

Key Highlights:

Chief Judge: The Distinguished Toastmaster Dr. Mohammed Makhlof, self-development trainer and oral surgery specialist, presided as the Chief Judge, bringing his wealth of experience to ensure fair judgment.

Contest Chairs: TM Biji Gittens, TM Elvis Noronha, TM Lavanya Loganathan, and TM Santanita Mergulhao orchestrated the event seamlessly, ensuring a smooth flow and captivating atmosphere.

Chief Guests: The event was graced by esteemed Chief Guests, including Distinguished Toastmaster Seham Mohamed from Kuwait, Distinguished Toastmaster Mona AIOqab, and Distinguished Toastmaster Yasser Alqashar from Bahrain.

Keynote Speaker: Distinguished Toastmaster Ola Rasheed delivered an inspiring keynote address, setting the tone for the evening's theme.

Steering the ship with finesse and flair, DTM Rajesh Venugopal assumed the pivotal role of Master of Ceremonies. With a distinguished background as a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM), Rajesh brought his seasoned expertise and charismatic presence to elevate the event to new heights.

Contest Results:

Evaluation Contest Winners:
1st Place: TM Hanan Haloush
2nd Place: TM Alka Kumra
3rd Place: TM Nasreen Sheikh
International Speech Contest Winners:
1st Place: TM Hanan Haloush
2nd Place: TM Alka Kumra
3rd Place: TM Areej Jaafar
Table Topics Contest Winners:
1st Place: TM Sindumol Thomas
2nd Place: TM Areej Jaafar
3rd Place: TM Hanan Haloush
Humorous Contest Winners:
1st Place: TM Hanan Haloush
2nd Place: TM Priyadarshan Reddy
3rd Place: TM Nasreen Sheikh

Event Chair: Division H Director TM Mohamed Shiraz, as the Event Chair, contributed to the success of the event with the support of whole toastmasters, ensuring it was an evening filled with memorable moments.

The Division H Annual Speech Contest 2023-24 was a testament to the participants' courage, eloquence, and dedication to "Taming Your Fear." The winners not only claimed trophies but left an indelible mark on the audience, making it a night to remember in the Toastmasters community.

Fifth graders portrays global harmony

DPS stuns audience with 'Around the World in a Day' showcase

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Fahaheel Al Watanieh Indian Private School (DPS), Kuwait, set the stage for an unforgettable experience on Monday, 29th January 2024, as it displayed the theme "Around the World in a Day" for its eagerly awaited middle school Annual Day celebration by grade five students. The event was a dynamic and magnificent one, enchanting all in attendance with its grandeur and lively atmosphere.

The Annual Day was graced by distinguished dignitaries including the Chief Guest, His Excellency Mr. Chitem Tenzin, the Ambassador of Bhutan and the Guest of Honor, Dr. Susovana Nair, a renowned medical oncologist along with the special guest, Ms. Fatma Al Baluchi from the Ministry of Education

The enthralling sequence of events commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by distinguished guests, followed by an address from the Principal Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, to the assembled parents and faculty in the auditorium. The atmosphere was charged with excitement and anticipation as the attendees eagerly awaited to see the cultural extravaganza put up by their wards. The event showcased the rich tapestry of cultures and traditions from around the world, taking the audience on a mesmerizing journey through countries such as France, Scotland, Japan, India, and the Middle Eastern region.

The festivities commenced with a lively and melodious French song performed by students adorned in vibrant attire reflecting the colours of the French flag. It was fascinating to witness their performance in a foreign language. The musical segment demonstrated their talent through renditions of French songs, encapsulating the essence

of French music. Mesmerizing the audience with tales of Scotland's beauty and heritage, complemented by the enchanting display of high-

land dance and marching, all adorned in traditional Scottish attire with kilts and the stirring melodies of bagpipe music. The haunting tunes of bagpipes and the rhyth-

mic cadence of drums, evoking imagery of Scotland's misty highlands and transporting spectators to a distant realm.

Following this, the audience was thrilled to transition to Japan, where the serene beauty of the country and its vibrant culture and traditions were showcased. The stage ignited with a high-energy warm-up routine inspired by Japan's fitness culture, Tabata. Accompanied by lively music resonating through the auditorium, students presented a sequence of dynamic stretches and exercises, highlighting the advantages of Tabata training for holistic fitness.

Next, the stage illuminated another facet of Japan with the enchanting realm of Japanese tradition through a captivating Fan Dance performance. Adorned in intricate Kimono robes, students elegantly traversed the stage, each movement an homage to the artistry and poise of Japanese culture, leaving an indelible impression on all spectators.

Following was a celebration of India's Folk Tradition with a Bollywood blend, paying homage to Indian Cinema. The award-winning song "NatuNatu," renowned for its catchy lyrics, was the ideal backdrop for students to showcase their talent. From vibrant group choreography to soulful solo performances, they captured the essence of Indian cinema, immersing the audience in the enchanting realm of Bollywood. As the performance peaked, their voices harmonized in unison, celebrating the spirit of unity and patriotism that unites the nation, India.

The program concluded with a celebration of Gulf culture, where the anchors effectively conveyed the essence of the Arabian Peninsula, highlighting its beauty and ancient traditions.



Photos from the event.

Mullen's portrayal of a divided nation in 1943 draws parallels to today

By Bruce DeSilva

It's 1943, a quarter century after the armistice that ended the so-called Great War, and Americans are once again fighting in foreign lands, battling the ascending Empire of Japan in the Pacific and confronting Germany's Afrika Corp along the southern rim of the Mediterranean Sea.

The country had been divided over whether to enter the war. Isolationists opposed sacrificing American lives to save the democracies of Western Europe. And thousands of Nazi sympathizers openly trumpeted support for Adolf Hitler. Japan's sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 unleashed a patriotic fervor that seemed to settle the question, but in some quarters, opposition to the war still ran deep.

In Boston, a city long torn by ethnic and religious hatreds, antisemitism, racism and xenophobia ran rampant. Yankee Protestants despised the city's teeming population of Irish immigrants. And the Irish saw no reason why

their adopted country should come to the aid of England, which had long oppressed their ancestral land.

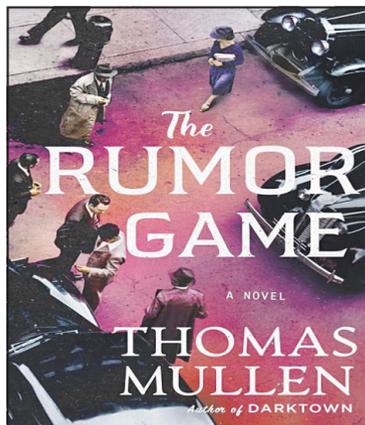
Such is the setting for Thomas Mullen's "The Rumor Game," a disturbing yarn about a divided, rumor-riddled nation that offers apt but unstated parallels to present-day America.

The plot is driven by Anne Lemire, a young reporter for the Boston Star, and Devon Mulvey, an FBI agent assigned to protect war production from infiltration and sabotage.

Lemire writes the Rumor Clinic, a column debunking the flood of Nazi propaganda and other destructive rumors flooding the city. Among them, a rumor that Jews had manipulated America into the war, spawns violent attacks in Jewish neighborhoods by Irish gangs.

Meanwhile, Mulvey struggles to unravel a mystery that includes a murder and the theft of military rifles from a Boston munitions plant.

Both are obstructed by the Irish-dominated Boston police, the pro-Nazi Christian League and federal officials who think left-wing agita-



This cover image released by Minotaur shows 'The Rumor Game' by Thomas Mullen. (AP)

tors pose a greater threat. Eventually, Mulvey, an Irish Catholic, and Lemire, raised Catholic but born Jewish, join forces as their investigations merge. To their dismay, both discover evidence of venality and violence in their own families.

Mullen's novel, his eighth, draws heavily on research, as evident by the historical sources cited in an author's note. The tale begins as a slow burn and then races at a breakneck pace to a dramatic conclusion.

The Boston settings, from its docks and factories to its ethnic neighborhoods, are vivid. The writing is tight, and most characters are well-drawn. The lone misstep is a doomed romance between Lemire and Mulvey, which lacks credibility and adds little to the plot.

Bruce DeSilva, winner of the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Award, is the author of the Mulligan crime novels including "The Dread Line." (AP)

Books

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Timothee Chalamet, foreground left, and Austin Butler in a scene from 'Dune: Part Two.' (AP)

Film

Sci-fi epic brings global debut to \$178.5 million

'Dune: Part Two' storms box office

NEW YORK, March 4, (AP) — Movie theaters were looking for a savior and "Dune: Part Two" is delivering on the promise. Armed with sandworms, big screen spectacle and the star power of Timothee Chalamet, Denis Villeneuve's science fiction epic stormed the North American box office this weekend earning \$81.5 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Internationally, it earned \$97 million, bringing its global debut to \$178.5 million.

"Denis made a really extraordinary and special film and it's been really exciting to see people respond," said Mary Parent, a producer on both "Dune" films and chairman of worldwide production at Legendary. "It was made for the big screen and it feels like it's being received as a cinematic event."

It's the first major hit of 2024, and one that was sorely needed by exhibitors. Although there have been holdovers from December that have continued to earn, like Warner Bros.' "Wonka" (also starring Chalamet) and Sony's romantic comedy "Anyone But You," the box office is in a bit of a drought. In the first two months of 2024, no films have crossed \$100 million domestically. The highest earning movies have been "The Beekeeper," "Bob Marley: One Love" and "Mean Girls."

"Dune 2" rode a wave of great reviews (94% on Rotten Tomatoes) into a marketplace that was essentially free of competition. Warner Bros. released it in 4,071 locations in the U.S. and Canada, where audiences across the board gave it the highest PostTrak marks and an A CinemaScore. According to exit data, men accounted for 59% of opening weekend ticket buyers and 64% were over the age of 25. The sequel was primarily financed by Legendary and its production budget, previously reported to be in the \$122 million range, is closer to \$190 million.

"It really captured the marketplace," said Jeff Goldstein, Warner Bros. president of domestic distribution. "It's a cultural moment globally."

Premium large format screens like IMAX and 70mm accounted for 48% of the opening weekend business. It marked a March record for IMAX,

which made up \$18.5 million of the overall take. Villeneuve filmed the movie using IMAX cameras. Unlike "Oppenheimer," it was shot on digital, but with the extra time with the strike delay they were able to make film prints as well and the film format is proving a popular draw for audiences.

"Our most iconic film locations are virtually sold out for weeks," said IMAX CEO Rich Gel-fond.

The \$81.5 million debut is also a record for its director Villeneuve, and stars Chalamet, Austin Butler and Rebecca Ferguson.

Originally planned for an October 2023 release, Warner Bros. bumped the movie to March amid the Hollywood strikes that would have prevented its starry cast from doing the promotional circuit. The global promo tour has been on hyperdrive for about a month, driving conversations with buzzy interviews, the viral sandworm-inspired popcorn bucket and eye-popping fashion moments from the stylish young cast — peaking with Zendaya's silver cyborg showstopper (vintage Mugler) in London. They've made stops in Mexico City, South Korea, Abu Dhabi and New York City.

"We worked very hard to be ready for that (original) date but we very much felt that, especially with this incredible cast, that it was worth waiting for," Parent said.

Goldstein added that there was "a lot of debate" over whether or not to release it during the strikes but they knew that they needed the cast to "fully realize the movie."

"You don't make movie stars any place other than theaters," Goldstein said. "Cinemas, on the big screen with the big sound and that shared experience makes a big star, or show the talent of a big star anyway."

The first "Dune" opened under complicated conditions in October 2021. It was one of the last films of Warner Bros.' divisive plan to simultaneously debut its major movies in theaters and on its streaming platform. And yet it still earned over \$40 million in its first weekend and went on to gross over \$400 million worldwide.

"Denis Villeneuve is up there with Christopher Nolan as a filmmaker whose name alone inspires people to go to the movie theater," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore.

This weekend, he added, "moves the needle in a big way."

Going into the weekend the box office was down about 20% from the same point last year (when "Avatar: The Way of Water," a 2022 release, was lifting everything). The closest equivalent this year is "Wonka," still a hit, but not as big as "Avatar 2." After the "Dune" weekend, the deficit will be closer to 13%.

"It shows how important one movie can be to the overall health of the industry," Dergarabedian said. "But this is not a one-hit wonder for March. It's a momentum business. Now we're going to get the wind back in the sails as we head further into March, April and the summer movie season."

Warner Bros. is one of those studios that will be back in short order with another big film, in "Godzilla x Kong" at the end of March, followed by "Furiosa" in May, the "Beetlejuice" sequel in September and the "Joker" sequel in October.

"This is our year," Goldstein said. "Exhibitors are fighting for their lives but we can be clever and collaborative with them to keep our business relevant to audiences."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Dune: Part Two," \$81.5 million.
2. "Bob Marley: One Love," \$7.4 million.
3. "Ordinary Angels," \$3.9 million.
4. "Madame Web," \$3.2 million.
5. "The Chosen: Season 4, Episodes 7-8," \$3.2 million.
6. "Migration," \$2.5 million.
7. "Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba - To the Hashi," \$2.1 million.
8. "Wonka," \$1.7 million.
9. "Argylle," \$1.4 million.
10. "The Beekeeper," \$1.1 million.

DUBAI: An Iranian singer who won a Grammy presented by U.S. first lady Jill Biden has been sentenced to more than three years in prison over his anthem supporting the 2022 protests over the death of Mahsa Amini.

Shervin Hajipour posted on Instagram on Friday, the same day that Iran held its parliamentary election, what appeared to be part of the judgment against him.

It said Hajipour received a three-year, eight-month sentence on charges of "propaganda against the system" and "encouraging people to protest." The court issued its sentence in part because it found he hadn't properly expressed regret over publishing the song.

It also imposed a two-year travel ban and ordered him to create a song about "U.S. crimes," as well as make posts about those crimes online.

Hajipour thanked his lawyers and his agent for their support.

"I will not mention the name of the judge and the prosecutor so that they don't get insulted and threatened, because insults and threats are not in the religion of humanity," he wrote. "Finally, one day we will understand each other. Until then."

Hajipour already had served some prison time, but was out on bail pending the court's decision. It was unclear if he had already reported to serve his sentence.

Iranian state-run media, focused on the election Friday, didn't note Hajipour's sentence. Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York didn't respond to a request for comment.

Hajipour's song "Baraye," or "For" in English, begins with: "For dancing in the streets," "for the fear we feel when we kiss." The lyrics list reasons that young Iranians posted online for why they had protested against Iran's ruling theocracy after Amini's death in September 2022, allegedly for not wearing her mandated headscarf to the liking of security forces.

The protests quickly escalated into calls to overthrow Iran's clerical rulers. A subsequent security crackdown killed more than 500 people, with more than 22,000 detained.

Jill Biden awarded Hajipour the Grammy's new song for social change special merit award during the ceremony last year.

"This song became the anthem of the Mahsa Amini protests, a powerful and poetic call for freedom and women's rights," Biden said at the ceremony. "Shervin was arrested, but this song continues to resonate around the world

with its powerful theme: Women, life, freedom."

Hajipour's sentencing comes as other activists, journalists and artists have faced arrest, imprisonment and harassment since the demonstrations. Among those imprisoned is Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi.

The New York-based Center for



Hajipour



Biden

Human Rights in Iran condemned Hajipour's sentencing Friday, and demanded Iran immediately release him from the sentence.

"This blatant violation of Shervin's rights to free speech and expression is a grave injustice and a clear affront to human rights principles," the center said. "His imprisonment serves as a chilling

reminder of the ongoing repression faced by artists, activists and dissenting voices in Iran."

PEN America similarly criticized Iran for ordering Hajipour to prison as well as sentencing rappers and others over their music critical of the government in Tehran.

"Shervin Hajipour's sentencing is another awful attempt to sup-

press the independent voices who channel the demands of the Iranian people for basic freedoms," said Julie Trébaud, director of PEN's Artists at Risk Connection. "The Iranian government fears the power of music to give hope and inspire citizens to dream of a better and more equitable future for all." (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024

People & Places



Valentino



Valentino



Valentino



Valentino



Valentino

Fashion

PARIS: The gilded salons of a grand 18th-century townhouse were the hallowed venue for Valentino's latest fashion display on Sunday - an ode to black. This monochromatic collection gleamed and glistened under crystal chandeliers amid myriad textures and materials, inspired by great artists such as the French master of black, Pierre Soulages.

Moons away, in the shadowy expanse of an icy-cold industrial warehouse crisscrossed by disused iron tracks and raw concrete surfaces, Alexander McQueen's shivering guests huddled under blankets, buzzing with an air of electric anticipation. Because this wasn't just another fashion show: it marked the first page of a new chapter for a house steeped in an iconoclastic history - and the debut of new creative director Sean McGirr.

Here are some highlights of fall-winter ready-to-wear collections: Designer Pierpaolo Piccioli said he "approached black as a canvas, a starting point on which to build ... silhouettes that could move while looking for lights around, to soak them in and reflect them."

The couturier was fascinated by the color's contradictions - used for uniform and individuality, representing sobriety and exuberance, lacking light yet soaking up reflections. It evoked the philosophy of Soulages, who died in 2022.

Thus, with a tinge of Valentino's 1980s heyday and glamor, all-black looks sauntered by as daywear and evening merged indistinguishably owing to the color's intense allure.

Signature house looks were reimagined with a modern flair - think a voluminous black rosette adorning a sleeve, or the delicate tease of skin beneath tiered silk, not to mention sporty A-line skirts accented with tubular ruffles.

Though feathers, leathers, sequins, and lace provided subtle textural tensions, they did not provide quite enough of a lift to stop the collection from falling into the danger of such one-color-themed shows: Feeling one-note.

Nevertheless, the series of gowns that ended collection were a sublime study in chicness, such as one exquisite sheer chiffon floor-sweeping gown. Delicate baubles peppered were poetically dotted upon it like a constellation of black stars.

The pressure was palpable for McGirr, the relatively unknown 35-year-old Dublin-born designer, to unveil in this debut a vision and identity after 14 illustrious years of Sarah Burton. Burton, who parted ways with McQueen last season, had woven her narrative into the brand's darkly romantic ethos after its visionary founder's sudden, tragic death, leaving big shoes to fill.

Tagged "Rough opulence" and intent on "unveiling the animal within," McGirr's first foray resonated with the core tenets laid down by Alexander McQueen: a fusion of Gothic allure,



Valentino



Mugler



Mugler



Mugler



Valentino



Mugler

a provocation, an ode to historical fashion, and the brand's hallmark of dramatic tailoring.

The show unfurled with a model emerging from the shadows in a sinisterly twisted black laminated dress that seemed to swallow her hands whole - a striking image of constriction that reappeared throughout the collection.

This binding theme was echoed in cords winding around slim-legged jeans and robust boots morphing into horses' hooves, trailing tails, and ominous

broad leather coats.

However, designs occasionally verged on the obvious, with pattered historic Renaissance sleeve gowns

and bulky "car tire"-like knitwear lacking the subtlety associated with his predecessor. Though the collection sparkled with promising moments of audacity, McGirr prioritized a play-it-safe approach over the risk of a misstep by pushing the envelope. Perhaps this debut may have benefitted from being presented in a less pressurized, lower-octane, and more intimate format?

Nonetheless, amid the collection's somber reflections, a surprising undercurrent of delight and whimsy surfaced, most notably through the stirring melody of his compatriot Enya's "Sail Away" filling the air. It infused

the space with a buoyant optimism subtly echoed in McGirr's oft-playful creations.

Mist-filled theatrics left Mugler's guests in awe during the Sunday night spectacle, with dramatic staging that included cascading curtains, strobe lights and smoke machines to evoke drama.

Layers of curtains fell in the re-vamped Lycee Carnot school atrium, watched by VIPs such as Brooklyn Beckham, where models utilized shadows and light to enhance already striking looks.

Asymmetry, skin and corsetry were everywhere. Since his debut, designer Casey Cadwallader's approach has been starkly sexy, challenging conventional fashion ideals

with a hard exploration of the human form. This fall was no exception.

Bras atop bare torsos paired with oversized black tuxedos. Mini dresses that clung to the

body had loose, fluttering bands at the hem. Themes of concealment were prevalent, with sheer fabrics revealing nipples and strategically placed fabric sections only just providing modesty.

The American designer continues to make significant waves in the Paris fashion world.

This season again, he championed inclusivity, showcasing models of every ethnicity, size (including several plus-sized models), and a broad age range, highlighted by the radiant 63-year-old Farida Khelfa in a show-stopping, brilliantly vivid red fringed poncho-dress.

Cadwallader's presentations are known as events that blend performance, art and fashion, incorporating digital elements to create engaging shows that resonate with a contemporary audience, ensuring that Mugler is once more a dynamic player in today's fashion conversation. (AP)

PARIS

Style

Endocrinologist from global health system offers wellness tips

Expert shares four diabetes-management strategies for Ramadan

CLEVELAND, March 4: Many people with diabetes are able to fast safely and enjoy the full spiritual, physical and mental health benefits of Ramadan, provided they are medically cleared and take some necessary precautions, says an expert from global health system Cleveland Clinic.



Dr. Hasan A Husni

"Alongside spiritual practices, charitable endeavors and spending time with loved ones, people with diabetes can focus on improving their health during Ramadan," says endocrinologist Hasan A. Husni, M.D. "Lifestyle factors such as a poor diet, carrying excess weight, smoking and lack of exercise can all have a negative impact on blood sugar and insulin levels, making diabetes more difficult to manage. Ramadan provides an ideal opportunity to focus on adopting a healthier lifestyle that reduces or eliminates these diabetes risk factors, while also reducing cholesterol levels and improving cardiovascular health."

Dr. Husni says that, ideally, these individuals should visit their diabetes management team well in advance of Ramadan to ensure they are medically fit to fast. "During this consultation, their care team can advise them on medication adjustments needed while fasting, how to make healthier food choices, how to monitor blood sugar levels, and in which circumstances they may need to break their fast."

Fasting not only alters the timing of meals; it can also affect sleeping patterns, circadian rhythms, dietary habits, physical activity, and many other things, Dr. Husni points out. He recommends planning ahead using the following four strategies for optimal health during Ramadan.

1. Monitor blood sugar vigilantly

While fasting, people with diabetes are at greater risk for the dangers of very high or low blood sugar levels, and dehydration, says Dr. Husni. Another serious complication is diabetic ketoacidosis, a life-threatening condition that occurs when the body does not have enough insulin to use sugar for energy, so it breaks down fat instead, releasing ketones that build up and cause the blood to turn acidic.

To reduce these risks, it is important to monitor blood sugar regularly, says Dr. Husni. "If you want to minimize the need for finger pricking, a continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) device can be used. This small, temporary and wearable device has a sensor under the skin that measures glucose levels 24 hours a day, and is typically replaced by the wearer every 10-14 days, or as needed."

2. Recognize warning signs

Individuals need to know the warning signs of high or low blood sugar, and when they need to break their fast in a medical emergency, Dr. Husni says. Signs

of low blood sugar include shakiness, sweating, nausea, fatigue, a headache, and an irregular or quickened heartbeat, among others. Symptoms of high blood sugar include blurred vision, frequent urination, a headache and increased thirst and/or hunger.

If any of these symptoms appear, the individual should immediately test their blood sugar, Dr. Husni advises. The fast will need to be broken if blood glucose is lower than 3.9 mmol/l (70 mg/dl) or higher than 16.7 mmol/l (300 mg/dl), although some people may need to break their fast at different blood glucose levels depending on their age and overall health, so this should be discussed with their diabetes management team.

3. Eat wisely

Some individuals can gain weight during Ramadan due to various factors including being less active, indulging in carbohydrate-rich foods at iftar, or snacking throughout the non-fasting hours. Dr. Husni adds that when breaking their fast, people often eat quickly, which can lead to overeating as it takes 15 to 30 minutes for the satiety signal to reach the brain.

"It is advisable for individuals to work with a nutritionist who is experienced in diabetes to determine their daily calorie needs for weight loss or maintenance, as the case may be.

On this basis, they can create a sustainable meal plan or strategy that ensures the individual is getting the correct balance of macronutrients - proteins, fats and carbohydrates - at suhoor and iftar. Generally, we recommend patients consume around 40% to 50% of their daily calorie intake at iftar; around 30% to 40% at suhoor; and the remainder as a snack at night," says Dr. Husni.

"Drinking adequate amounts of water during non-fasting hours and limiting intake of caffeine-based or sugary drinks are also important," Dr. Husni adds. "This is particularly true in areas with hot climates or long daylight hours, where the risk of dehydration and diabetic ketoacidosis is greater."

4. Get moderate exercise

Dr. Husni points out that among the many benefits of exercise are that it helps to regulate blood sugar, control weight, and support cardiovascular health, but adds that individuals should discuss their exercise plan with their healthcare team.

He explains, "During Ramadan, exercise should be undertaken carefully, particularly if the individual takes insulin, putting them at higher risk of having low blood sugar when they exercise. We generally recommend walking as a safe way to exercise, preferably after iftar."

Dr. Husni concludes, "Ramadan is the perfect time to transition to healthy habits that an individual can build on once the fasting period is finished, to enjoy long-term benefits."

Could days of 'springing forward' be numbered?

Neurologist and sleep expert explains downside to borrowed hour of daylight

By Beth Ann Malow

Vanderbilt University

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

As people in the U.S. prepare to set their clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 10, 2024, I find myself bracing for the annual ritual of media stories about the disruptions to daily routines caused by switching from standard time to daylight saving time.

About one-third of Americans say they don't look forward to these twice-yearly time changes. And nearly two-thirds would like to eliminate them completely, compared with 17% who aren't sure and 21% who would like to keep moving their clocks back and forth.

But the effects go beyond simple inconvenience. Researchers are discovering that "springing ahead" each March is connected with serious negative health effects, including an uptick in heart attacks and teen sleep deprivation. In contrast, the fall transition back to standard time is not associated with these health effects, as my co-authors and I explained in a 2020 commentary.

I've studied the pros and cons of these twice-yearly rituals for more than five years as a professor of neurology and pediatrics and the director of Vanderbilt University Medical Center's sleep division. It's become clear to me and many of my colleagues that the transition to daylight saving time each spring affects health immediately after the clock change and also for the nearly eight months that Americans remain on daylight saving time.

Americans are split on whether they prefer permanent daylight saving time or permanent standard time. But a growing number of states are supporting permanent standard time.

However, the two time shifts - jolting as they may be - are not equal. Standard time most closely approximates natural light, with the sun directly overhead at or near noon. In contrast, during daylight saving time from March until November, the clock change causes natural light to be present one hour later in the morning and one hour later in the evening according to clock time.

Morning light is essential for helping to set the body's natural rhythms: It wakes us up and improves alertness. Morning light also boosts mood - light boxes simulating natural light are prescribed for morning use to treat seasonal affective disorder.

Although the exact reasons why light activates us and benefits our mood are not yet known, this may be due to light's effects on increasing levels of cortisol, a hormone that modulates the stress response, or the effect of light on the amygdala, a part of the brain involved in emotions.

Adolescents also may be chronically sleep-deprived due to school, sports and social activities. For instance, many children start school around 8 a.m. or earlier, which means that during daylight saving time they get up and travel to school in pitch darkness.

The body of evidence makes a good case for adopting permanent standard time nationwide, as I testified at a March 2022 Congressional hearing and argued in a recent position statement for the Sleep Research Society. The American Medical Association recently called for permanent standard time. And in late 2022, Mexico adopted permanent standard time, citing benefits to health, productivity and energy savings.

The biggest advantage of daylight saving time is that it provides an extra hour of light in the late afternoon or evening, depending on time of year, for sports, shopping or eating outside. However, exposure to light later into the evening for almost eight months during daylight saving time comes at a price. This extended evening light delays the brain's release of melatonin, the hormone that promotes drowsiness, which in turn interferes with sleep and causes us to sleep less overall.

Because puberty also causes melatonin to be released later at night, meaning that teenagers have a delay in the natural signal that helps them fall asleep, adolescents are particularly susceptible to sleep problems from the extended evening light. This shift in melatonin during puberty lasts into our 20s.

Geography can also make a difference in how daylight saving time affects people. One study showed that people living on the western edge of a time zone, who get light later in the morning and later in the evening, got less sleep than their counterparts on the



Astronauts, front row from left, pilot Michael Barratt, commander Matthew Dominick, second row from left, cosmonaut Alexander Grebenkin, and mission specialist Jeanette Epps leave the Operations and Checkout building for a trip to Launch Pad 39-A, Sunday, March 3, 2024, at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla. (AP)

Four new astronauts head to Int'l Space Station for six-month stay

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., March 4, (AP): Four astronauts headed to the International Space Station on Sunday where they will oversee the arrivals of two new rocketships during their half-year stint.

SpaceX's Falcon rocket blasted off from Kennedy Space Center, carrying NASA's Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt and Jeanette Epps and Russia's Alexander Grebenkin.

The astronauts should reach the orbiting lab on Tuesday. They will replace a crew from the U.S., Denmark, Japan and Russia, who have been there since August.

"When are you getting here already?" space station commander Andreas Mogensen asked

eastern edge of a time zone. This study found that western-edge residents had higher rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and breast cancer, as well as lower per capita income and higher health care costs. Other research has found that rates of certain other cancers are higher on the western edge of a time zone.

Scientists believe that these health problems may result from a combination of chronic sleep deprivation and "circadian misalignment." Circadian misalignment refers to a mismatch in timing between our biological rhythms and the outside world. In other words, the timing of daily work, school or sleep routines is based on the clock, rather than on the sun's rise and set.

Congress instituted year-round daylight saving time during World War I and World War II, and once again during the energy crisis of the early 1970s. But the popularity of year-round daylight saving time fell from 79% to 42% after it went into effect in January 1974, largely due to safety concerns about children going to school in the dark.

The idea at that time was that having extra light later into the afternoon would save energy by decreasing the need for electric lighting. This idea has since been proved largely inaccurate, as heating needs may increase in the morning in the winter, while air conditioning needs can also increase in the late afternoon in the summer.

After World War II, designating the start and end dates for daylight saving time fell to state governments. Because this created many railroad scheduling and safety problems, however, Congress passed the Uniform Time Act in 1966. This law set the nationwide dates of daylight saving time from the last

via X, formerly Twitter, after three days of delay due to high wind. SpaceX Launch Control termed it "fashionably late."

There was almost another postponement Sunday night. A small crack in the seal of the SpaceX capsule's hatch prompted a last-minute flurry of reviews, but it was deemed safe for the whole mission.

The new crew's six-month stay includes the arrival of two rocketships ordered by NASA. Boeing's new Starliner capsule with test pilots is due in late April. A month or two later, Sierra Space's Dream Chaser, a mini shuttle, should arrive. It is for delivering cargo to the station, but not passengers yet.

Sunday in April until the last Sunday in October. In 2007, Congress amended the act to expand the period in which daylight saving time is in effect from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November - dates that remain in effect today.

But the Uniform Time Act does allow states and territories to opt out of daylight saving time. Arizona and Hawaii are on permanent standard time, along with Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and American Samoa.

As of March 2024, 17 states have passed laws to adopt year-round daylight saving time. But federal law requires that they need to wait for Congress, and in some cases also neighboring states, to act. More than two dozen states introduced legislation related to the clock change in 2023, but no laws were passed.

Meanwhile, proposed legislation and resolutions for permanent standard time have increased from 15% in 2021 to 37% in 2024.

In March 2022, the U.S. Senate passed the Sunshine Protection Act in a bid to make daylight saving time permanent. But the House did not move forward with this legislation. Florida Sen. Marco Rubio reintroduced the bill on March 1, 2023, but this bill has not progressed.

The spike in activity among states seeking to break from these twice-yearly changes reflects how more people are recognizing the downsides of this practice. Now, it's in the hands of legislators to decide whether to end the time shift altogether and to either choose a full year of having clocks more aligned with the sun or to artificially extend the day for more than half the year, for better or for worse.

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SPORTS



Multan Sultans' Usman Khan plays a shot during the Pakistan Super League T20 cricket match between Karachi Kings and Multan Sultans, in Karachi, Pakistan. (AP)

Sultans in playoffs

Multan score 20-run victory over Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan, March 4, (AP): Usman Khan hit the fastest century so far in this season's Pakistan Super League to lead Multan Sultans into the playoffs with a 20-run win over Karachi Kings on Sunday.

Multan continued its dominant run in Pakistan's top Twenty20 domestic competition, securing its sixth win in seven games. It tops the standings with 12 points. Fifth-place Karachi has just two wins from six games.

Pakistan-born Usman, who now plays for the United Arab Emirates, smashed 106 not out off 58 balls after reaching his ton in 56 deliveries. Captain Mohammad Rizwan contributed 58 in Multan's imposing 189-3 after choosing to bat first.

CRICKET

Karachi never looked a threat before reaching 169-7 in 20 overs and losing its third straight home game. Skipper Shan Masood got clean bowled for 36 off 29 balls by the tournament's leading wicket-taker, Usama Mir (2-29). Leg-spinner Mir stretched his wickets tally to 15. Fast bowler Mohammad Ali, who took 1-40, has 14.

Usman and Rizwan exploited wayward Karachi bowling and shared a second-wicket stand of 148 off 93 balls.

Rizwan was caught at mid-off soon after completing his half century before Usman reached his ton with a pulled six against Mir Hamza in the last over.

Karachi's overseas signings Tim Seifert (1) and James Vince (7) both fell inside the batting power play.

Shoaib Malik top-scored for his team with 38 before holing out at long off in the 12th over and Karachi had plenty of soft dismissals in the run-chase.

Celtics rout Warriors for 3rd-biggest winning margin in franchise history

Knicks dispose off Cavaliers

BOSTON, March 4, (AP): Jaylen Brown scored 29 points, Jayson Tatum had 27 on his 26th birthday and the NBA-leading Boston Celtics had the third-largest winning margin in franchise history, drubbing the weary Golden State Warriors 140-88 on Sunday.

Payton Pritchard added 19 points to help Boston extend its season-best winning streak to 11. The Celtics who set an NBA record with their third win this season by 50 points or more. They led by a franchise-record 44 points at halftime and pushed it to 51 early in the third quarter before coach Joe Mazzulla went to his reserves.

The Celtics led by a franchise-record 44 points at halftime and pushed it to 51 early in the third quarter before coach Joe Mazzulla went to his reserves.

Stephen Curry didn't play the second half and finished with a season-low four points for Golden State, his fewest since he had three points in 16 minutes on March 16, 2022 at Boston - a game he departed with a foot injury.

Curry was 2 of 13 from the field Sunday and missed all nine of his 3-point attempts, including consecutive airballs in the opening quarter.

The Warriors had won 11 of 13, including the first three of their East Coast trip that included three games in four days and a difficult trip to Toronto in which they sat on a tarmac for hours overnight.

Knicks 107, Cavaliers 98

In Cleveland, Josh Hart had a triple-double, Donte DiVincenzo scored 28 points and New York regrouped to beat Cleveland after losing All-Star guard Jalen Brunson in the first minute with a left knee injury.

Hart finished with 13 points, 19 rebounds and 10 assists in helping the Knicks cope for one night without Brunson, their latest starter to get hurt.

Brunson was hurt on New York's



Oklahoma City Thunder forward Jalen Williams drives past Phoenix Suns center Jusuf Nurkic (20) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, March 3, 2024, in Phoenix. (AP)

first possession. Coming off a screen on the left side, Brunson rose for a jump shot near the foul line when he appeared to feel pain on lift off. He shot an air ball and landed before stumbling and dropping to the floor near the 3-point line in obvious discomfort.

Sam Merrill and Jarrett Allen scored 18 apiece for the Cavs, who played without leading scorer Donovan Mitchell (sore knee) and top sub Caris LeVert (elbow).

Thunder 118, Suns 110

In Phoenix, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 35 points and Oklahoma

City beat Phoenix to take the Western Conference lead, rebounding after blowing a 24-point lead.

Jusuf Nurkic broke the Suns' franchise record with 31 rebounds, the most in an NBA game in 14 years. He also had 14 points - and five of Phoenix's 21 turnovers. The Suns played without star guard Devin Booker after he sprained his right ankle late in a loss to Houston on Saturday night.

BASKETBALL

Oklahoma City improved to 42-18 to take a half-game lead over Northwest Division rivals Denver and Minnesota in the Western Conference. The Thunder had won six in a row before losing Thursday night at San Antonio.

Bradley Beal scored 31 points for Phoenix.

Clippers, Timberwolves 88

In Minneapolis, Kawhi Leonard had 32 points and the Los Angeles Clippers beat Minnesota in a physical and defensive game between two of the top four teams in the Western Conference.

Norman Powell matched a season-high with 24 points, and Paul George

added 15 points, but shot just 5 of 16 from the field and was 3 of 11 from 3-point range.

The Clippers played without Russell Westbrook after he fractured his left hand in a home victory over Washington on Friday night. Ivica Zubac returned after missing two games with an illness.

Anthony Edwards scored 27 points for Minnesota. The Timberwolves lost back-to-back games for just the third time this season.

76ers 120, Mavericks 116

In Dallas, Tobias Harris scored 28 points, Tyrese Maxey added 24 and Philadelphia beat Dallas Mavericks 120-116 on Sunday.

Kelly Oubre Jr. had 19 of his 21 points after the four-minute mark of the third quarter to help the 76ers win consecutive games for the second time in the 14 straight games Joel Embiid has missed. There is no timetable for the reigning MVP's return after surgery on his left knee.

Luka Doncic had 38 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for Dallas his third consecutive triple-double. He also had seven of 17 turnovers for the sloppy Mavericks.

Spurs 117, Pacers 105

In San Antonio, Victor Wembanyama had 31 points and 12 rebounds to

lead San Antonio Spurs past Indiana.

Wembanyama added six blocks, six assists and a steal while going 3 for 4 on 3-pointers. Malaki Branham had 18 points, and Devin Vassell and Keldon Johnson each had 17.

T.J. McConnell had 26 points for Indiana. The Pacers have lost three of four.

Magic 113, Pistons 91

In Orlando, Fla., Paolo Banchero scored 29 points for a second straight game and Orlando beat Detroit for a four-game season sweep.

At 35-26, the Magic surpassed last season's victory total with 21 games left. Orlando has won 11 of 14 games.

Evan Fournier led Detroit with 17 points. The Pistons are 9-51.

Raptors 111, Hornets 106

In Toronto, Immanuel Quickley scored 22 points and matched his season high with 11 assists. RJ Barrett had 23 points and Toronto beat Charlotte.

Gary Trent Jr. added 17 points and Ochai Agbaji had 13 points and a career-high nine rebounds as the Raptors overcame the absence of All-Star Scottie Barnes after he broke his left middle finger Friday night.

Brandon Miller had 26 points and 10 rebounds for Charlotte.

Chevrolet remain undefeated on NASCAR season

Larson again wins at Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS, March 4, (AP): There's a tradition at Hendrick Motorsports to ring the winning bell throughout the North Carolina shop after every NASCAR victory.

As motivation to have the best year of his career, Kyle Larson's team decided to bring a bell on the road so avoid having to wait to return to Charlotte to celebrate every achievement he plans for this season.

The bell got its first ring Sunday when Larson won his second consecutive race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway to keep Chevrolet undefeated and give Rick Hendrick his second victory in the first three NASCAR Cup Series races of the season.

Hendrick Motorsports is celebrating its 40th anniversary this season and opened the year with William Byron winning the Daytona 500.

"That bell will travel with us every week and we'll be ringing it loud and proud," Larson said.

CAR RACING

Larson won for the third time in his career at Las Vegas, where in 2021 he got his first win driving for Hendrick following a nearly yearlong suspension in 2020. Larson also won in the No. 5 Chevy at Las Vegas last October in the playoffs.

Larson held off Tyler Reddick for his 24th career Cup victory. In a Toyota for 23XI Racing, Reddick chased Larson for the final several laps but could never find enough room to make a move for the pass. Larson's margin of victory was 0.441 seconds over Reddick.

"I knew Tyler was going to be the guy to beat from the first stage. He was really fast there," Larson said. "Cool to get a win here at Vegas again. Back-to-back, swept all the stages again. Can't ask for more than that."

Reddick was extremely frustrated after finishing second and believed Larson as the leader controlled the race because



Kyle Larson celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway Sunday, March 3, 2024, in Las Vegas. (AP)

of the rules of NASCAR's new car.

"Kyle did a really good job there taking away pretty much every option I had there to close the gap," Reddick said. "Second sucks, that is for sure. You have to run up front all day long, and when asked about what we need to do to get better, that's the very thing, and we didn't do it. We were pretty evenly matched, so I don't know if there was anything that I really could've done to get around him."

"He would have had to make a big mistake or had some traffic kind of knock his wind around. It's a solid effort for our team, that's how we need to run, but I don't like running second."

Chevrolet also has wins this year by Byron in the Daytona 500 and Daniel Suarez last week at Atlanta for Trackhouse Racing. Chevrolet has won eight of nine national series races to open the year.

Ford and Toyota are both using new cars this year. The Chevrolet contingent right now is as tight as it's ever been, and the key partner groups and even outside of that are working really good together because we know we have very little margin here," said Hendrick team president and general manager Jeff Andrews. "We know we're up against a new car with Ford and Toyota. We have to do our best to work together and keep advancing this car."

"We're obviously early on in the season here, a lot of racing to go, and they will get there. Anything that you change a platform on those cars as much as they've had, it's going to take a little bit of time."

Reigning NASCAR champion Ryan Blaney was third for Team Penske in a Ford, followed by Trackhouse driver Ross Chastain. Ty Gibbs in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing and Las Vegas native Noah Gragson was sixth in his best finish since joining Stewart-Haas Racing.

Martin Truex Jr. for JGR was seventh, followed by teammate Denny Hamlin, Penske driver and pole-sitter Joey Logano and Byron. Suarez, last week's winner, was 11th.

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SPORTS

Kuwait Club reclaim Zain Premier League summit

Al-Arabi suffer another setback

By Hassan Musa
Al-Seyassah/Arab
Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: In the seventeenth round of the Zain Premier League, Kuwait enjoyed a triumphant 2-1 victory against Al-Arabi, reclaiming the top spot in the standings. This win served as redemption for Kuwait Club, as Al-Arabi had previously defeated it 3-0. The "White" team now leads the league with 40 points.

Defending champion Kuwait, under the guidance of Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul, expressed satisfaction with its "well-

SOCCER

deserved lead" and the return to their accustomed top position. On the contrary, Al-Arabi faced a setback, showing a dip in performance for the second consecutive match, following their less-than-stellar display in the Super Cup semi-finals against Kazma.

Al-Qadisiya, currently in third place, made gains in this round by returning to the winning form with a narrow victory against Al-Salmiya. The gap between Al-Qadisiya and the league leader narrowed to four points, presenting an opportunity for them in the upcoming rounds.

Al-Nasr emerged as a notable gainer, securing a 2-0 victory over Al-Jahra. With this win, they regained momentum after a series of modest results, secured a spot in the "Big Six," and occupied fourth place in the standings, capitalizing on Al-Salmiya's defeat.

Al-Fahaheel and Kazma (20 points) faced challenges in their quest, with one of them likely entering the Four-League (relegation competition). Their task won't be easy in the upcoming eighteenth and final round of the second division, where Al-Fahaheel faces Al-Salmiya, and Kazma confronts their Arab counterpart.

Al-Shabab (eighth with 14 points) continued to lose points, succumbing to a 1-2 defeat against Khaitan, who narrowed the gap between them to just two points. Al-Jahra, positioned at the bottom with 5 points, faces a critical situation and must secure a win against Khaitan in the next round to keep their hopes alive in the Premier League.



Kuwait Club player battles two Al-Arabi players for the ball.

The best team in the world: Ten Hag

City win against United provides reality check for Jim

MANCHESTER, England, March 4, (AP): Good luck trying to knock Manchester City off its perch.

With new investment and renewed hope, Manchester United fans have been encouraged to believe the good times will return. That great revival felt as far away as ever after a humbling 3-1 loss to City in the Premier League, which could have been even worse if not for a spectacular miss from Erling Haaland and a series of saves from United goalkeeper Andre Onana.

"This team is legendary," City

SOCCER

manager Pep Guardiola said afterward.

The same cannot be said for United after a 16th defeat in all competitions this season and its 11th loss in the league. The latest setback delivered another blow to Erik ten Hag's hopes of securing Champions League qualification, with his team in sixth and 11 points off fourth-place Aston Villa.

City, meanwhile, marches on in its three-pronged defense of the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup.

"Don't forget - City, at this mo-



Manchester City's Erling Haaland (centre), tries to score during an English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Manchester United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

ment, is the best team in the world," Ten Hag said.

Such words are likely to offer little comfort to United fans after another defeat to its cross-city rival. The 192nd Manchester derby is also likely to have been a chastening experience for Jim Ratcliffe, who recently bought a 27.7% stake in the club and vowed to end City's domestic dominance.

Despite leading at halftime through

a stunning goal from Marcus Rashford, United had no response when Phil Foden struck twice in the second half and Haaland made amends for an earlier miss from point blank range to seal the win.

This had been a chance to make an early statement under the regime of British billionaire Ratcliffe whose investment has secured him control of the club's soccer operations. Instead it highlighted the gulf be-

tween the rivals.

Ratcliffe's mission statement to knock City off its perch was a nod to former United manager Alex Ferguson's vow to do likewise to a once dominant Liverpool.

United has fallen a long way behind both City and Liverpool since Ferguson's retirement in 2013, having failed to win the title since then.

By contrast, City, which is backed by the ruling family of Abu Dhabi and guided by Guardiola, has gone on to become one of the most powerful teams in world soccer. It has won five of the last six league titles and last year won the Champions League for the first time.

City looks well-placed to defend all of its trophies, with victory against United extending its current unbeaten run to 19 games in all competitions.

If United had hoped to dent City's pursuit of a record fourth-straight Premier League title, instead it only served to boost its rival's morale ahead of next week's top-of-the-table clash at leader Liverpool, which beat Nottingham Forest 1-0 on Saturday to stay out in front.

Ten Hag has a job on his hands just to try to salvage the season after losing for a fourth time in five games against City since being hired by United in 2022.

Mexico into Gold Cup last 4

US shake off loss, advance to semis

LOS ANGELES, March 4, (AP): Jenna Nighswonger and Jaedyn Shaw scored in the first half, and the United States rebounded from its loss to Mexico with a 3-0 victory over Colombia on Sunday night to advance to the semifinals of the CONCACAF Women's Gold Cup.

Lindsey Horan also converted a penalty in the opening minutes for the Americans, who shook off the embarrassment of their 2-0 loss to Mexico last Monday in the final game of group play. The U.S. was back in dominant form against an impressive Colombian team that reached the quarterfinals of last year's World Cup.

The U.S. will face Canada in the Gold Cup semifinals in San Diego on Wednesday. Mexico takes on Brazil in the other semifinal after



Colombia midfielder Marcela Restrepo (right), heads the ball next to United States midfielder Sam Coffey during the second half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup women's soccer tournament quarterfinal in Los Angeles. (AP)

sion of the Gold Cup.

Both teams had a physical edge in the first half, with Morgan and Maria Usme getting matching yellow cards for a scrap during positioning. Rodman got a another yellow a few minutes later for kicking at Daniela Arias in frustration over the Colombian defender's cagey play.

Nighswonger boosted the lead to 2-0 in the 22nd minute with a strong strike resulting in the Southern California native's second career international goal. The 23-year-old Gotham FC defender graduated from Huntington Beach High School.

Colombia increased its pressure, but Naeher made two impressive saves on shots by Real Madrid teenager Linda Caicedo.

The U.S. went up 3-0 in first-half injury time when Shaw banged home Rodman's centering pass for her third goal of the tournament and fifth in eight career appearances. The Americans' attack has been markedly more impressive in this tournament when the speedy, creative Shaw - who plays for San Diego's NWSL team - is on the field.

Lizbeth Ovalle scored two goals and Mexico advanced to the semifinals.

Karen Luna also scored and Esthelfanny Barreras saved a penalty for Mexico, which followed up its landmark victory over the U.S. on Monday by outlasting Paraguay in a thrilling second half featuring four goals and many more chances for both teams.

Mexico will face Brazil in the semifinals in San Diego on Wednesday.

Mexico conceded its first two goals of the Gold Cup, but still hung on with the backing of an unsurprisingly supportive crowd of 13,229 in the U.S. city that's considered the second home of Mexico's national teams.

Green sinks 30-foot putt to win LPGA event

Niemann wins in Saudi Arabia for 2nd LIV Golf title of year

KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY, Saudi Arabia, March 4, (AP): Joaquin Niemann won his second LIV Golf title in three starts, closing with a 4-under 66 on Sunday at LIV Golf Jeddah for a four-shot victory over Louis Oosthuizen and Charl Schwartzel.

Niemann now has three wins in the last three months, starting with the Australian Open victory in December that allowed him to rejoin the European tour and eventually put him on the path toward getting invited to the Masters.

Niemann started his third season on the Saudi-funded league by opening with a 59 at Mayakoba and winning in a playoff over Sergio Garcia. Now he soars to the top of the points list with another win ahead of next week's LIV event in Hong Kong.

He finished third in an Asian Tour event in Oman last week. No one got closer than two shots of Niemann in the final round at Royal Greens. Oosthuizen was the

GOLF

last challenger until a bogey on the 16th hole. He shot 67, while Schwartzel had a 68.

Niemann also took a dig at the world ranking in his interview with LIV's broadcast team. He was asked if he was one of the leading favorites to win a major this year.

Hannah Green birdied her final three holes, the last one a 30-foot putt that gave her a 5-under 67 and a one-shot victory over Celine Boutier in the HSBC Women's World Championship.

Green finished at 13-under 275 in capturing her fourth LPGA Tour title.

Boutier (67), who had said Saturday she was attending Taylor Swift's Singapore concert on the eve of the final round, seemed destined to win as she pulled two strokes clear in the final stages only



Players in action during the Federation Cup match.

Al-Arabi prevail in marathon 'match' against Al-Tadamon

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Al-Arabi volleyball team overcame Al-Tadamon 22-25, 25-15, 21-25, 25-17, 15-13 in a gripping first-round match of the Federation Cup tournament.

With this triumph, Al-Akhdar is set to progress to the next round, where it will face Al-Qadisiya.

Simultaneously, Al-Shabab eased past Al-Sahel in straight sets, 25-22, 27-25, 25-20. Al-Shabab will play against the winner of the match between Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi on January 18.

for Green to produce some magic of her own to take the win.

Yuna Nishimura (66) matched the best round of the day and tied



Hannah Green of Australia poses with the trophy after the third round of the HSBC Women's World Championship at the Sentosa Golf Club in Singapore. (AP)

for third with Brooke Henderson (68), Mi Hyang Lee (67) and Nasa Hataoka (69).

Overnight leader Ayaka Furue of Japan closed with a 75 and finished six shots behind.

Jordan Gumberg closed with a 4-under 68 and holed a birdie putt from 15 feet on the second playoff hole to win the SDC Championship over Robin Williams for his first European tour title.

Gumberg played college golf at Arizona and came into the tournament at No. 669 in the world. He got into the playoff when Williams made double bogey on the 17th hole at St. Francis Links. Williams closed with a 69.

Gumberg has spent the last few years between the European tour and Challenge Tour.

Mason Anderson ran off five straight birdies on the back nine, closing with a sixth birdie for a 7-under 63 and then won the Argentina Open with a birdie on the second playoff hole against Kris Ventura of Norway.

Anderson, who played at Arizona State, won for the first time as a pro. The victory moved him to the top of the Korn Ferry Tour points list and earned him a spot in the British Open this summer at Royal Troon.

Ventura closed with a 68 and had to settle for par on the par-5 closing hole three times, once in regulation and twice in the playoff.

They finished at 17-under 263. Dalton Ward (68) and Brian Campbell (67) finished one shot out of the playoff.

Takahiro Hataji won his first professional tournament and became the first Japanese player to win the New Zealand Golf Open when he closed with a 4-under 67 for a one-shot victory over Scott Hend of Australia. ... Chisato Iwai closed with a 5-under 67 for a two-shot victory over Mao Saigo in the Daikin Orchid Ladies, the season opener on the Japan LPGA.

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Juventus's Andrea Cambiaso, (left), and Napoli's Khvicha Kvaratskhelia challenge for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Juventus at the Diego Armando Maradona stadium in Naples, Italy. Napoli won 2-1. (AP)

Sports

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Kids display their prizes during the conclusion of sports activities for kindergarten.

Kindergarten sports gala

Kuwait's educational institutions unite for athletic excellence

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: Under the banner "Nurturing Talents in our Educational Institutions," the Kuwait School Sports and Education Federation orchestrated the concluding sports ceremony for kindergartens at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Hall Complex in Sabah Al-Salem. The event saw the enthusiastic participation of approximately 500 male and female students hailing from all corners of Kuwait. The technical guidance and support for kindergartens were provided by dedicated supervisors, with key figures such as Faisal Al-Maqseed, President of the Federation, and Hamid Al-Hazeem, Deputy Director of the General Authority for Sports in the Sports for All sector, gracing the occasion. Walid Ayesh, General Director of Physical Education at the Ministry of Education - Vice President of the Federation, and Amani Al-Mukaimi, General Director of Kindergartens, were also present.

The festival featured a blend of sports and recreational activities

aimed at fostering the participants' skills and cultivating a passion for sports in both group and individual settings.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Hamdan highlighted the federation's comprehensive strategy, encompassing social, sports, and psychological dimensions, all geared towards effectively guiding children in embracing sports and showcasing their talents. He emphasized the pivotal role of the kindergarten segment in building the sports system, aligning with the global trend of prioritizing this category for creating a robust foundation contributing to sports development. The federation's current plan spans from kindergarten to university levels.

Hamida Arab, technical supervisor in the Farwaniya Educational District, shed light on the event's objectives, focusing on showcasing the motor and sensory skills of children and identifying gifted individuals in kindergartens. The aim is to nurture their talent in collaboration with the school union, channeling their discovered talents into supporting clubs, federations, and teams.

Simultaneously, at the Jaber International Stadium's sub-field, the semi-final matches of the Warba Bank grass football league for the secondary stage unfolded. Two exciting encounters featured the Hawalli region team facing off against the capital team in the first match, and the Farwaniya region team meeting the Al-Ahmadi region in the second match. The four teams were eager to secure victories, vying for a spot in the final match scheduled for the upcoming Thursday. The coveted title of the Warba Bank League, the strategic partner for the School Union's activities, awaits the triumphant team.



Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad

Kuwait Football Association ordered to pay Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad over KD 1.7m

KUWAIT CITY, March 4: The Civil and Commercial Department has mandated the Kuwait Football Association to disburse a sum of one million seven hundred and ten thousand three hundred and seventeen dinars to

specified as compensation for the moral damage incurred by Sheikh Talal.

This legal action stems from a complaint lodged by the Kuwait Football Association with the Public Prosecution against Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad. The association alleged that Sheikh Talal engaged in financial violations and inflicted harm upon the Kuwait Football Association during his tenure as the head of the federation from 2010 to 2016.

SOCCER

Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad. Additionally, an amount of thirty thousand dinars is

Nadal shows no sign of problems with injured hip in loss to Alcaraz

LAS VEGAS, March 4, (AP): There has been plenty of mystery around Rafael Nadal and his health because he has played just 12 official matches since the 2022 U.S. Open.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner played an unofficial event Sunday, losing to fellow Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz 3-6, 6-4 (14-12) in The Netflix Slam before a sellout crowd of 9,489. The 37-year-old Nadal showed no apparent sign of any issues related to his hip.

Nadal said during a court-side interview with Netflix while up 5-2 in the first set that his performance at that point was "much better than expected."

The match was also a bit of a physical test for Alcaraz,

who injured his right ankle Feb. 20 in the Rio Open. Like Nadal, he didn't show any noticeable signs of being physically limited.

The question facing Nadal now is whether he will be ready for the French Open in May. Nadal has dominated that event like no other, winning the major 14 times.

The match against Alcaraz was an encouraging sign, but Nadal said beforehand he wasn't sure what the future holds at Roland Garros and beyond.

Nadal withdrew from the Australian Open in January after suffering what he called a micro tear on his surgically repaired hip. He later skipped a tournament in Doha, Qatar.

Barcelona and Girona fail to take advantage of Real Madrid stumble

'A missed opportunity'

MADRID, March 4, (AP): Barcelona and Girona failed to take advantage of Real Madrid's stumble in the Spanish league.

Defending champion Barcelona was held 0-0 at Athletic Bilbao, while Girona lost 1-0 at Mallorca. The Catalan clubs missed their chance to make up ground on league leader Madrid, which drew 2-2 at Valencia on Saturday. The weekend's results meant that Madrid increased its lead over second-place Girona to seven points and stayed eight points ahead of third-place Barcelona.

Fourth-place Atletico Madrid cut into Madrid's lead with a 2-1 win over Real Betis, though Diego Simeone's team remained in fourth place and 11 points behind its city rival after 27 matches.

Barcelona lost two of its top players because of injuries, with Pedri and Frenkie De Jong having to be replaced before halftime in Bilbao.

Athletic remained in fifth place, five points behind the last Champions League place. Before the match, the club paid tribute to a fan who died after suffering a stroke during the Copa del Rey match against Atletico on Thursday.

SOCCER

It was an even match at San Mames Stadium, with each team having only two attempts on target. Joao Cancelo and Robert Lewandowski had some of the most significant chances for Barcelona.

The coach said the early injuries affected his team. De Jong left the match in the 26th minute after twisting his ankle, while Pedri appeared to hurt a leg muscle in the 45th.

Atletico rebounded from being eliminated by Athletic in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey to strengthen its grip on fourth place.

It was only the second win in eight

Al-Rayyan loom in the final

Kuwait Club stay on 'course' for back-to-back titles in Gulf Cup Winners' Club Championship

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, March 4: The Kuwait Club handball team is on a mission to defend its Gulf champion title as it faces off against Qatar's Al-Rayyan in the final match of the 40th Gulf Cup Winners' Club Championship. The much-anticipated showdown is set to take place at six in the evening today at Al-Duhail Hall in the Qatari capital, Doha.

HANDBALL

Prior to the final clash, at four in the afternoon in the same venue, a match will unfold to determine the third and fourth places between the host, Al-Arabi Qatar, and Bahrain's Al-Dair.

The reigning champion, "Al-Abyad," clinched its first Gulf title in the previous edition, triumphing over Bahrain's Al-Najime in the final with a score of 29-27 in Manama last

matches for Diego Simeone's team, which also lost to Inter Milan in the first leg of the round of 16 of the Champions League, and to Sevilla in



Frankis Marzo is defended as he goes for a goal.

March. The team secured its spot in the championship final by overcoming the host Al-Arabi, Qatar, in a nail-biting encounter that went into extra time, concluding with a score of 39-36. Al-Rayyan earned their place in the final by defeating Al-Dair Al-Bahraini with

a score of 30-27.

In the second group of the tournament, it triumphed over Al-Shabab of Bahrain and Maliha of the Emirates, suffering only one loss to Al-Rayyan.

The "Sons of Kaifan" aspire to achieve a dual victory by avenging its previous loss to Al-Rayyan and securing the Gulf title for the second consecutive time. The technical prowess of the Al-Kuwait team, led by coach Haitham Al-Rashidi, is anchored by Frankis Marzo, Angel Hernandez, and Brazilian club player Vinicius.

The team also boasts local talents, including Abdullah Al-Khamis, Saleh Al-Moussawi, Abdullah Al-Gharabally, Mishal Taha, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Mishari Siwan, Saif Al-Adwani, Muhammad Amer, and goalkeepers Ali Safar and Muhammad Boyabas.

In league matches, Kazma secured a victory against Al-Fahaheel with a score of 33-28, while Al-Sulaibikhat dominated Al-Tadamon with a score of 38-19, and Yarmouk triumphed over Al-Sahel with a score of 37-23. With these results, "Orange" elevated its score to 8 points, while "Red" maintained 4 points. Yarmouk now holds three points. Al-Sahel remains scoreless, and Al-Sulaibikhat raised its score to three points, leaving Al-Tadamon without a score.



Barcelona's Fermin Lopez, (right), duels for the ball with Athletic Bilbao's Dani Garcia during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Athletic Bilbao and Barcelona at the San Mames stadium in Bilbao, Spain. (AP)