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Pages 15 & 16



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AMIR RECEIVES GRAND WELCOME DURING U.A.E. STATE VISIT Summit talks strengthen bilateral ties



Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed bestows the Zayed Order upon His Highness the Amir, the highest honor, in acknowledgment of their 'deep fraternal relations' and HH the Amir's tireless efforts in fortifying the bonds between them.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives an elaborate welcome at Qasr Al-Watan, the UAE Presidential Palace, upon his arrival in the UAE capital.

Opinion

Too many captains will sink the ship

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THERE is a proverb in our Gulf folklore, which is "Too many captains will sink the ship". This is similar to the common proverb "Too many cooks spoil the broth". This means whenever there are many opinions, the decision will be spoiled.



Al-Jarallah

This is due to the fact that if any country seeks development and progress, it requires one leadership that does not hesitate to take decisions or actions, even though sometimes the leadership's opinion might err, but not overlooking the fact that accepting and amending the error is a virtue.

As for the chaos of opinion and decisions, it means ruin, because every captain will navigate as he sees fit. In this age of technology and the tyranny of "social media", each of these captains has his own audience that influences others. That is how "the broth gets spoiled".

History is filled with many leaders who left cultural imprints in their countries because their mission was clear, which was to achieve the interest of the nation and not their personal interest, and to bring the boat to safety without losses either in lives or in goods.

However, if there are many leaders, and each of them has his own supporters, this puts the leadership in the wind, which is not always what the ship desires.

In the past decades, we have experienced many abnormal situations due to the overlapping of powers between the executive and legislative authorities.

It seemed as if the boom of Kuwait was left at the mercy of the wind.

Continued on Page 5

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable to Bahrain King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, congratulating him on the 25th anniversary of his accession to the throne.

His Highness the Amir praised the development and the achievements witnessed by the Kingdom of Bahrain in various fields during the King's leadership. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will patronize and attend the official opening of Abdullah Al-Salem University Wednesday morning, March 6, at Abdullah Al-Jaber auditorium in Shuwaikh district. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: A Swiss ship was hit by a ballistic missile launched by the Houthi militia in the Gulf of Aden, according to the US Central Command (CENTCOM).

"On March 4, Iranian-backed Houthi terrorists fired two anti-ship ballistic missiles at a Swiss-owned Liberian-flagged ship in the Gulf of Aden, injuring the ship with one of the missiles," a statement from CENTCOM released late on Tuesday read. (KUNA)



UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan bids farewell to His Highness the Amir.

Honors exchanged

ABU DHABI, March 5, (KUNA): A squadron of UAE military aircraft accompanied His Highness the Amir's plane across the UAE airspace. Upon arriving at the UAE capital's airport, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was warmly received by UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

The welcoming committee at the airport included UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairperson of the Presidency Diwan Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Advisor of Special Affairs at the Presidency Diwan Sheikh Mohammad bin Hamad bin Tahnoon Al-Nahyan, the State of Kuwait Ambassador to the UAE Jamal Mohammad Al-Ghunaim, and the UAE Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Matar Hamed Al-Nayadi.

Accompanying His Highness the Amir were Sheikh Dr. Salem Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Nawaf Abdulaziz Humoud Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mubarak Fahad

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait to revoke citizenship for 11

KUWAIT CITY, March 5, (Agencies): The Cabinet received a presentation from Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, who chairs the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Citizenship, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef outlined the committee's recommendation to revoke Kuwaiti citizenship from 11 individuals who obtained it unlawfully through fraud, false statements, or forged documents, as well as those who acquired it through dependency or individuals against whom final rulings have been issued.

The Cabinet expressed profound gratitude for the diligent work and dedication of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and the committee members in uncovering these cases.

This action aligns with the vision outlined by His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to safeguard national identity and promote unity within Kuwaiti society.

Continued on Page 5

Former MPs join election race

28 register as candidate list grows

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Twenty-eight citizens – all men – on Tuesday filed their candidacy for the parliamentary election that will be held on April 4, 2024.

Following are the number of candidates who registered on the second day of the registration period per constituency:

First Constituency: seven candidates

Second Constituency: five candidates

Third Constituency: two candidates

Fourth Constituency: six candidates

Fifth Constituency: eight candidates

This increases the total number of candidates to 70 including two women. The last day of registration for candidates will be on March 13, 2024.

Former MP Hamad Al-Elyan, who filed his candidacy for the Third Constituency,

pointed out that allowing the people to choose their legislative representatives has never been bothersome. "Nevertheless, this is the third parliamentary election in almost one and half year, leading to the disruption of development and slowing down of achievement. Some parties are keen on prompting the people to give up, but the people always prove they are fully aware of the situation as reflected in the election results; considering pro-reform candidates win in every election while those known to be corrupt are rejected," he asserted.

He thinks the 2023 National Assembly was exceptional as 13 bills were ratified in less than 20 sessions, compared to its predecessors that did not ratify even half of this number of bills within a full parliamentary term.

Continued on Page 5

125 years of Kuwait-UK relations

London hosts Kuwait investment conference

LONDON, March 5, (KUNA): Kuwaiti investment conference launched in London on Tuesday, as part of celebrations of 125 years of bilateral diplomatic relations and 70th anniversary of Kuwait Investments Office in London inauguration.

Attending the conference are Kuwaiti Minister of Finance, State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs, Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf, and Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Sadeq Maarafi, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Britain Bader Al-Awadhi.

From the British side, State Minister for Middle East and

Continued on Page 5



The Kuwait investment conference commences in London.

KUNA photo

Day by Day

WHEN the count of individuals violating residency laws nears approximately 130,000, it indicates that they were unable to renew their work permit, often due to exorbitant demands from human traffickers for renewal fees. Consequently, sponsored individuals are left homeless on the streets unable to collect money for renewal of their work permits.

The prevalence of human trafficking is evident to all, prompting the expectation for governmental intervention to counter these traffickers. The state is anticipated to supplant

these illicit actors, charging a nominal fee to facilitate residency renewal, either through the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) or the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

It is commonly said that 'where there is a will, there is a way', and all Gulf countries have managed to navigate this issue, with the exception of Kuwait, which has fallen prey to the manipulative tactics of human traffickers.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:51 Asr 15:20
Sunrise... 06:10 Maghrib... 17:50
Zohr 12:00 Isha 19:06

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Warm with light variable wind, with speeds of 06-22 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather cold with light

Weather

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

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	26	16

Kuwait Airport	25	11
Abdaly	25	11
Jahra	26	14
Salmiyah	24	17
Nuwaisib	26	12
Wafra	26	09

Diversify 'lingos' in programming, let languages to flourish – expert

By Zaina Al-Ayoub

KUWAIT CITY, March 5, (KUNA): A linguist, at a Linguistics Studies Biennial Conference (LSBC) at Kuwait University Tuesday, called for diversifying languages in programming field to make room for other languages to flourish.

Dr. Teresa Lynn, of Mohammad bin Zayed University, UAE, was giving a lecture on "Safeguarding our languages in the AI revolution" examining "the role of linguistic studies in ensuring that our languages are not forgotten" during the emergence of Generative AI platforms.

Dr. Lynn pointed out English as being the predominant language used in programming systems, labeling them as "Anglo-centric."

"In bilingual societies, the priority and preference go to digitally supported languages," English, she added.

English would be receiving the most attention, while other languages would be threatened. Dr. Lynn championed the idea of diversity in programming fields.

In order to safeguard other languages from the risk of neglect and underdevelopment, Dr. Lynn recommended "moving tech companies away" from English majority speaking countries. She championed the idea of diversity in computer programming.

Dr. Karim Ibrahim (Kufu University of Science and Technology, Kuwait) talked about "Using AI classifiers to identify AI-assisted plagiarism: The Terminator versus the Machines," a comparative study on the detection of AI-generated texts with plagiarism detection platforms.

Plagiarism checker websites and programs cannot differentiate between what is written by humans and what is generated by AI, which "is becoming more humanlike in generating texts," according to Dr. Ibrahim.

He mentioned the integration of AI-Detection software into plagiarism checkers to "effectively discriminate between human-written texts and AI-generated texts."

Dr. Ibrahim stated that the use of Generative AI in academia is a violation to academic integrity.

AI cannot be rejected, therefore proper training in generative-AI is the key for ethical and responsible utilization in classrooms and other workspaces, concluded Dr. Ibrahim.

AI-Detection software programs vary in detection accuracy, with the highest degree of accuracy being 89 percent (OpenAI), while other programs are as low as 40 percent accuracy in detecting AI-generated texts.

The two-day event was organized by Kuwait University and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), featuring lectures and workshops by visiting professors and local researchers.

'Prepare schools for elections '24'

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, has emphasized on the collective effort for the smooth conduct of the upcoming National Assembly elections, slated for April 4, reflecting Kuwait's vibrant democracy, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Speaking to KUNA during her meeting with sanitation officials to discuss election preparations, Al-Mashaan underscored the collaboration with the Ministries of Education, Interior, and Justice to ready the designated school premises for polling stations.

Al-Mashaan outlined the municipality's role, which will commence a week prior to the elections and extend until the following day when the election results will be declared.

She urged the daily for deployment of automated sweepers across Kuwait, covering main roads, markets, beaches, and other high-traffic areas.

Furthermore, she urged sanitation officials to conduct on-site inspections of cleaning companies to ensure adherence to contracts with emphasis on executing cleanliness campaigns in commercial zones and addressing neglected areas such as farms, chalets, markets and shunning street vendors.



The Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Suleiman Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah receives a prayer mat as a gift from the Azeri ambassador.



The Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Suleiman Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah in talks with the Azeri ambassador.

Arab Times Deputy Editor receives Azerbaijan envoy

The Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Suleiman Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah received in his office the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kuwait Emile Karimov.

During the meeting, they enjoyed a friendly conversation concerning mutual interests, especially in relation to press and media aspects.

Ambassador Karimov was accompanied by the First Secretary Mirdavud Sultanov. Also present at the meeting was the Deputy CEO of Al-Jarallah Group Dr. Ayman Bader Jasseem Al-Buloushi.

Gulf Arab experts seek tourism boost amid Kuwait-hosted talks

Over 8,000 Kuwaitis were issued multiple-entry visas: Indian envoy

Other Voices

Maria fish without head or tail & prayer during travel

By Ahmad alsarraf

Iraqi thinker Hussein Saadoun wonders: Why did Greece relapse, since the end of the era of its ancient civilization? Why did a country like America emerge, which is no more than 400 years old, and become the first in the world, while Greece lagged behind? Why did all the non-Arabic-speaking Islamic countries advance, relatively speaking, and why did all the Arab countries lag behind?

He answers that heritage has shackled Greece and hindered it from progressing; absence in the lives of Americans, and to the same extent, the entire developed new world, facilitated its movement, so it took off and advanced.

As for Islamic countries, they were in the same situation as America! More than 90% of the books of the Islamic heritage were not translated into their languages, or at least they did not spread among their peoples, who were content with the Qur'an as a holy book, with its semantic and metaphorical texts.

While heritage played a dangerous role in the Arab world, contributing to the rooting of its differences as a result of its multiple interpretations of the text and our preoccupation with it, unaware that heritage is a product of human thought, and is incapable of solving the problems of the era. Likewise, heritage books do not speak, but rather humans are the ones who "speak" them.

A well-known academic made a comment on the application for traveling on airplanes, in a cultural symposium held a while ago in a Gulf country. A colleague objected to the academic's remark, and considered it a violation of heritage.

Her criticism reminded me of a real-life story that I had previously mentioned about the American Maria, where a guest in her family noticed that she was careful to cut off the tail and head of the fish before putting it in the oven. He asked her why, and she said

that this is what she learned from her mother. When asked by her mother, she said that she learned that from her mother. When the grandmother was asked why, she simply answered that the oven in her house was too small to accommodate the tail and head!

The colleague, who criticized our great academic friend for his objection to the prayer for traveling or riding, would not have objected to him, if she had known the truth behind broadcasting the prayer on planes, which over time became "a sacred ritual that cannot be criticized!"

The whole issue has nothing to do with heritage or lamenting over it. Kuwait Airways was established seventy years ago, and remained for half a century or more without the "travel supplication." Suddenly, it occurred to one of the pilots to recite the travel supplication through the loudspeakers of the planes that he was piloting, and the situation continued like this for a while, and between push and pull and criticism, the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways decided to circulate the broadcast of the recorded prayer throughout the company's fleet!

This is the story of the Kuwaiti woman's travel prayer, and it is clear that the matter is not related to heavenly instructions or religious texts, but rather to a personal decision taken by an airplane captain, and with time it became a followed ritual, like a Maria fish, without a head or a tail!

I do not know why the supplication was limited to airplanes, which are the most comfortable and safest means of travel of all, and not generalized to include ships, trains, cars, bicycles of both types, and even travel animals?

Supplication is not intended to prevent accidents, and it certainly did not prevent them from occurring. Rather, it is intended to bring reassurance to the heart of the traveler, especially in an environment full of dangers.

Therefore, it is better to print the supplication on cards, in more than one language, and put them in the seat pockets, so that its moral benefit will spread to the passengers of the plane, both Arabs and non-Arabs.

□ □ □

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KUWAIT CITY, March 5, (KUNA): Officials from across Gulf Arab countries assembled in Kuwait on Tuesday for talks aiming to prop up the region's tourism industry, agreeing on the need for concrete steps to usher in growth in the crucial sector.

The gathering is a testament to the "significance" of the tourism industry and its link to sustained economic development, said Kuwaiti information ministry undersecretary Dr. Nasser Mheisen, addressing the event on behalf of Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

On the primary objective for the talks, he said that officials and tourism experts alike would discuss the measures needed to bring growth to the tourism industry around the Gulf Arab region, saying that development in the sector is inextricably linked to economic prosperity.

Kuwait could potentially morph into a hot spot for tourists given the attributes the country possesses, which could ultimately lead to a flow of foreign investment into the country, he said, expressing hope that the main objectives for the gathering would come to fruition.

In her speech, the UN tourism organization's regional director for the Middle East Basma Al-Maiman expected a "bright future" for tourism in the region, recalling a time where Kuwait was among the most attractive destinations for visitors around the world, a distinction the country could easily reclaim if the necessary measures are taken, she underlined.

The wider Middle East region, as well as the world as a whole, has slowly begun to emerge from the detrimental effects of the COVID pandemic had on the tourism industry, she said, pointing out that as a member of the UN body, Kuwait is eager to witness tourism growth as a focal point of its 2035 development strategy.

Addressing the gathering, Kuwait Information Ministry Acting undersecretary for the tourism sector Osama Al-Mekhyal said the talks allow Gulf Arab countries the chance to share their experiences in the tourism industry, allowing participants the chance to learn from such success stories, he said.

The tourism industry is not a mere marketing ploy, rather, it represents a crucial pillar in any nation's economic development plans, the Kuwaiti official emphasized, citing the private sector as a key contributor to tourism growth and development.

Over 8,000 visas issued

The Kuwaiti interest and demand for Indian tourism continues to rise; considering that more than 8,000 multiple-entry tourist visas were issued to Kuwaitis in 2023 and this number could increase in the future, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Adarsh Swaika.

Swaika told the daily that India offers integrated tourism through its cultural diversity, availability of stunning natural environments, and a large number of hotels and resorts.

He made the statement during the opening of an exhibition to promote India's tourism entitled 'Explore, Experience and Enjoy Amazing India' at the Avenues Mall from Feb 29 to March 1, 2024. Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism Affairs Osama Al-Makhial and Sheikh Hala Badr Al-Sabah attended the event.



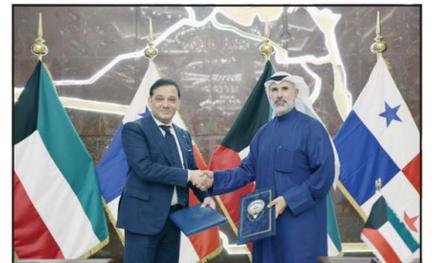
KUNA photo
Information Ministry Undersecretary Dr. Nasser Mheisen.

Condolences conveyed

KUWAIT CITY, March 5, (KUNA): Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya on Tuesday visited the Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania to Kuwait, conveying condolences of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the demise of the former Tanzanian president, Ali Hassan Mwinyi.



KUNA photo
Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Amina J. Mohammad.



KUNA photo
Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Musa Abdulhai Asfat Kaso.

Kuwait Deputy FM hosts 'banquet' for UN official

KUWAIT CITY, March 5, (KUNA): Kuwait Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah hosted Monday a dinner banquet in honor of Amina J. Mohammad, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and her delegation.

Enhancing bilateral ties and the latest regional and global developments were touched on during the meeting.

Meanwhile, Kuwait and the Republic of Panama signed on Tuesday at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the ministries of foreign affairs of the two countries on holding bilateral consultations.

The memorandum was signed by Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on behalf of Kuwait, and by the Ambassador of Panama to the state of Qatar and non-resident Ambassador to Kuwait Musa Abdulhai Asfat Kaso on behalf of Panama.

March 24 'hearing' set in poll '22 vote-buying case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: The Court of Appeals has set the session of March 24 to present the defense of the fugitive former MP Mubarak Al-Arro who was accused of buying votes for the 2022 National Assembly elections in the third constituency.

Earlier, the Criminal Court had sentenced the first defendant former MP Mubarak Al-Arro to two-year imprisonment with hard labor, and the second and third defendants who worked in Al-Arro's electoral campaign to one-year imprisonment each with hard labor, and imposed a fine of KD 2,000 each on the fourth and fifth defendants.

According to the case files, the concerned authorities, after receiving information about a vote-buying operation on behalf of Mubarak Al-Arro, began monitoring the home of Al-Arro, who was a candidate from the Third Constituency.

After obtaining permission from the Public Prosecution, his home was raided, and a number of his agents were arrested and referred to the Public Prosecution.

MoE specifies working hours during the month of Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Anwar Al-Hamdan has specified the official working hours during the holy month of Ramadan based on the flexible working hours system, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a circular on the Ramadan working hours, Al-Hamdan announced that the working hours in the offices of the minister, undersecretary and public relations will be from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm; and from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm for the financial, legal, and administrative sectors. He said the number of working hours from Sunday to Thursday during Ramadan will be four and a

half hours per day, without prejudice to the provisions on the grace period for the employees -- 15 minutes at the beginning of the work day for all employees and another 15 minutes prior to the end of the day for females.

She elaborated that working hours in the Financial Affairs Sector and its departments, the Legal Affairs Sector and its departments, and the Administrative Affairs Sector and its departments are from 9:00 am until 1:30 pm. She added the working hours in the private and special education sectors and their departments, the Information Systems Sector and its departments, the Educational Research and Curricula Sector and

its departments, the Educational Development Sector and its departments, the Educational Facilities and Planning Sector and its departments, the Public Education Sector and its departments, and the Educational Districts General Department will be from 9:30 am until 2:00 pm.

She said the Ramadan working hours for the Office of the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research; Public Relations and Educational Media Department; National Commission for Education, Science and Culture; Supreme Council for Education, and Office of the Undersecretary are from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm.

'Systematic destruction of UNRWA underway; renew supply of funds'

"IN A flurry of simultaneous coordination, 19 major Western donors suspended their aid to UNRWA at a time when Palestinians in Gaza were in dire need of urgent relief and humanitarian assistance," columnist, former PM of Lebanon **Fouad Siniora**, wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"In a statement issued, the World Health Organization stated unequivocally that withholding funds would have catastrophic consequences. Sigrid Kaag, the United Nations Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator in Gaza, also warned that there is no alternative for UNRWA to work to save the lives of people in Gaza.



Fouad Siniora

"It is true that there is no alternative to UNRWA, but it is also true that it is not an alternative to the establishment of a sovereign, free and independent Palestinian state.

"For 74 years, UNRWA has been providing education, health care and social services to Palestine refugees, who initially numbered approximately 700,000 in 1948 and now number more than 5.9 million.

"Incorrectly, it seemed that providing aid to these refugees was easier than finding a real and lasting solution to the conflict with Israel. Recently, the United States, Germany, and Sweden have suspended their financial support, which constitutes 50 percent of UNRWA's annual budget, while Arab funding remains scarce.

"Western donors to the Palestinian refugee crisis appeared to be motivated by concerns about the humanitarian ramifications of this catastrophe, as well as a sense of moral responsibility, which is essentially of their own making.

"Stopping financial support for UNRWA at a time when the Palestinians are suffering a disaster greater than that of 1948 is unjustified and unacceptable. Some, including the UN Special Rapporteur for UNRWA, Francesca Albanese, have called it unethical.

"In fact, one wonders about the timing of this action, especially in the wake of Israel's condemnation by the International Court of Justice, and at a time when many Western donors who withheld funds were publicly criticizing the International Court of Justice.

"The reasons cited by those countries for withholding aid to UNRWA are related to the fact that some of its employees are accused of participating in the October 7, 2023 attack against Israel, and the disciplinary measures taken by UNRWA and the promise to conduct a full investigation into these allegations did not succeed in dissuading those countries from their intention and decision to withhold. In addition to other stereotypical and incorrect accusations directed at the organization, including promoting anti-Semitism, which is not new.

"On the other hand, there were voices of opposition, including that, in the hearing held by the Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs of the US House of Representatives regarding UNRWA, Democratic Congressman Jason Crow expressed real concerns that stopping support for UNRWA would harm security.

"In addition, stopping its funding will have dire humanitarian effects not only on the Palestinian refugees in Gaza, but also on a number of countries hosting them, especially in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

"Most importantly, the deterioration of living conditions and social deterioration among refugees will have dire effects on the security conditions in those host countries, in addition to the escalation of anti-American sentiment and the West in general, and the deprivation of aid and the resentment that will follow will constitute a toxic recipe for more turmoil, recklessness, and extremism in those countries. And others, it is not a coincidence that the Hamas movement has flourished and its popularity has increased in the poorest Palestinian communities, including Gaza.

"It is puzzling to see the West, with its ill-advised actions, inflicting pain and misery on the Palestinians, under the pretext of combating anti-Semitism, while embracing generations of radical Islamists. Giving priority at this time to address the issue of anti-Semitism in UNRWA school curricula is naive, especially at a time when the Palestinians are facing the greatest catastrophe in their modern history, as most of the schools have either become destroyed or are sheltering tens of thousands of displaced refugees, who are suffering.

"In the midst of intentional killing, genocide, hunger, thirst and infectious diseases, one wonders how much time and money it will take for both sides of the conflict to restore a semblance of normalcy.

"Depriving UNRWA of support and funding from international donors will further deepen the pain of collective punishment to which the Palestinians are exposed and fuel hatred and violent extremism, because exchanging short-term considerations for long-term goals constitutes only one of the wrong methods that have guided American foreign policy in the Middle East on its adoption, and so on a long path of these wrong practices. Thus comes the cutting of funding for UNRWA.

"Unfortunately, someone may say that the organization needs to be rehabilitated and reconsider its educational mission for the Palestinian generations, but the answer is that the present time is

not appropriate to discuss this difficult and thorny task, especially in isolation from achieving serious and tangible progress, towards adopting the correct solutions to end... This is an intractable issue.

"The right issue of securing the necessary funding for UNRWA is a stark reminder of the catastrophic failure resulting from not resolving the Palestinian issue. It is true that the organization is still continuing due to Western sponsorship, but this sponsorship is not and should not constitute a substitute for making the necessary effort to end this long-standing conflict.

"The current crisis is more fundamentally related to the necessity of reaching a just solution that meets the legitimate aspirations and rights of the Palestinians, and not to perpetuate the situation of millions of refugees in this miserable condition. The indifference of some Arab and Islamic countries also contributes to perpetuating the misery of Palestinian refugees.

"It is interesting that the contribution of some Arab and Islamic countries in supporting UNRWA is still small, although some of them have taken the initiative to intensify their efforts in supporting it during the past few months. Iran and its other Axis of Resistance allies provide virtually no humanitarian aid, and none have offered any support to fill the gap in the organization's funding.

"In this regard, it is worth mentioning the miserable conditions experienced by the Palestinian camps in Syria and Lebanon, which impose additional and significant burdens on UNRWA as the sole source and provider of the basic educational and health needs of the large number of Palestinian refugees in these two countries. It is time for Arab countries to take the initiative to contribute to increasing their aid to UNRWA.

"In any case, the lives of Palestinian refugees should not depend solely on the kindness of strangers. The decision to stop funding the organization is not justified ethically, morally or politically. It appears that these sentiments have begun to resonate widely across the Atlantic, some dissenting voices in the US Congress and even at the highest levels of the European Union.

"In addition, the unfolding human tragedy in Gaza, including what happened over the past few days, must serve as an incentive to begin a political process that will give the Palestinians long-awaited rights. Likewise, the recent massacre that took place in Gaza City, which resulted in more than a hundred victims and nearly nine hundred injured innocent civilians who are starving and thirsty, and who are actually direct victims as a result of the continued brutal Israeli occupation.

"This is in addition to the systematic destruction of UNRWA with the aim of dismantling it. Therefore, these tragic events should prompt the countries that withheld funds and aid from the organization, and if they condemned the recent massacre, they should immediately reverse their unfortunate decision to cut off aid, in order to enable them to continue helping the Palestinians in Gaza and the Levant, who need all the relief and humanitarian support they can get from UNRWA."

Also:

"It is clear that there is a difficult situation facing the Gaza Strip, despite the American efforts to soften the situation and direct negotiations," columnist **Fakhri Hashem Al-Sayyid Rajab** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The most notable disappointment was after the secret visit of CIA Director William Burns to the occupying entity, which failed. Netanyahu publicly and steadfastly rejects the principle of accepting the establishment of a Palestinian state.

"Basing this on public opinion related to the Gaza war, since if we put aside the families of the prisoners, the general mood among the occupier's street has become inclined towards the continuation of the war.

"(The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin) Netanyahu certainly knows that stopping the war now and under current standards means the end of his political career, with the possibility of him going to prison.

"Therefore, he works hard to support (US) President (Joe) Biden and rejects the idea of a two-state solution, taking advantage of the embarrassment of the army, which has not yet succeeded in achieving its most important goal, which is the release of prisoners.

"He hopes that his next battle will be the final battle of victory in Rafah, which is an empty and naive thought because the missiles are still falling on the entity's army, while Khan Younis has not yet been decided, and he is very delusional if he believes that he will reach the resistance leaders and the prisoners.

"Here it must be remembered that finally liberating the two captives is a process fraught with question marks, especially after information was received that a family from the Abu Srour family was holding the two captives and the rest is known.

"Many questions are surfacing after today's events after the accumulation of displaced people in Rafah, whose population does not exceed one hundred thousand, and suddenly exceeded one million. Will Rafah bear this emergency burden according to the region's infrastructure?

"If the attack occurs, where will these million-odd people go? Will they return with a counter-migration to Gaza? Or will Egypt open the wall, even according to a pre-planned scenario, such as the enemy bombing the wall and entering Sinai?"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Decree issued appointing new Army Chief of Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 5, (Agencies): A decree issued Monday promoting Major General Pilot Bandar Salem Abdullah Al-Muzain to Lieutenant General and appointing him as Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army.

A decree was issued appointing Sheikh Lieutenant General Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior.

Moreover, a decree was issued appointing Major General Khaled Abdulhadi Rashid Al-Shanfa as Assistant Undersecretary in the Ministry of Interior.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, underscored the commitment to enhance the Kuwaiti Army's capabilities and elevate the performance, efficiency, and readiness of its personnel. This commitment was emphasized during his patronage and participation in the promotion ceremony of Major General Staff Pilot Bandar Salem Al-Muzain to the esteemed rank of "Lieutenant General" and his designation as Chief of the General Staff. This promotion and appointment were enacted in accordance with an Amiri decree issued by His Highness the Amir, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, reports Al-Rai daily.

In his address during the ceremony, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef congratulated the newly appointed Chief of Staff on earning the esteemed trust of His Highness the Amir, recognizing it as a testament to his dedication and contributions across various roles and responsibilities throughout his career. He invoked the divine to guide and support the Chief of Staff in fulfilling this entrusted duty with excellence and integrity.

Furthermore, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior urged the Chief of Staff to focus on advancing the Kuwaiti Army's capabilities, enhancing its performance, efficiency, and readiness, while also nurturing and rewarding excellence among its members. He emphasized the importance of surmounting any obstacles that may impede the realization of the army's objec-



KUNA photo
Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah patronizes the ceremony of promoting Major General Al-Muzain to the rank of Lieutenant General and appointing him as Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army.

tives and aspirations.

The ceremony, witnessing the promotion and appointment, was graced by the presence

of Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense.

Guard arrested for attempting to smuggle drugs into prison facility

Magic tools seized from travelers destroyed

By Mansour Al-Sultan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Personnel from the General Administration of Correctional Institutions have taken into custody an unidentified trooper who works as a guard at the prison facility for attempting to smuggle narcotics into the facility.

The Al-Seyassah daily said the suspect has been handed over to the concerned authority for legal action.

A security source said the soldier was arrested during a random inspection campaign. The suspect reportedly showed signs of unease during the campaign and was promptly body searched.

During initial investigation, he admitted that he intended to smuggle narcotic drugs to a prisoner in exchange for a sum of money.

Magic tools destroyed: The General Administration of Customs announced that the Committee for Destruction of Magic and Sorcery Materials, formed by the Customs Search and Investigation Department and the General Administration of Criminal Investigation of the Ministry of Interior, destroyed a number of magic, sorcery and talisman materials seized from travelers, reports Al-Anba daily.

'Isnad One' drill unveiled

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Administrative Support Assistant Major General Issam Nayef attended the opening of 'Isnad One' exercise at His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Camp recently, with the aim of evaluating the readiness of administrative support units to carry out the tasks assigned to them and to deal with any incident according to the National Guard's 2025 Protection and Support Guide, reports Al-Jarida daily.

It is worth noting that the exercise is being held for the first time at the level of the Adjutant Command for Administrative Support to determine the capabilities of the members in supporting the National Guard units and the sites assigned to them.

This is in addition to determining the level of readiness to support the entities linked with the National Guard through joint cooperation protocols to support them in crises and emergencies in order to ensure the security and safety of the entire country.

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Airport project

Panel to probe tender

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan has formed a neutral investigation committee tasked to assess the procedures for awarding the tender for the stage three of the aircraft parking and service buildings project at the new passenger terminal in Kuwait International Airport, reports Al-Jarida daily.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

In a press statement, the ministry indicated that Al-Mashaan "expressed interest in the issues raised by oversight bodies regarding the tender; hence, the formation of an impartial investigation committee whose members include Kuwait University, the Legal Advice and Legislation Department, and the Ministry of Finance. This is in line with the principle of transparency, the law on protecting public money and Article 17 of the Constitution which states: 'Public property is inviolable and its protection is the duty of every citizen.'"

The ministry added that the committee has been instructed to submit its report immediately, including errors, if any, and the names of those who caused these errors, in preparation for holding violators accountable.

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An opportune moment to reflect on milestones achieved and promising future ahead

A legacy of partnership: 60 years of Kuwait-Germany diplomatic ties

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

For six decades, Kuwait and Germany have nurtured a robust diplomatic relationship, characterized by mutual respect, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. As these two nations commemorate their 60 years of diplomatic ties, it's an opportune moment to reflect on the milestones achieved and the promising future ahead.

proximately 17.4 billion euro. Kuwait holds shares in leading German companies, including Daimler AG and GEA, underscoring the depth of economic collaboration between the two nations. Additionally, private investments in companies like Weinig AG and Ricosta amount to around 14.6 billion euro, further solidifying the economic partnership.



Al-Hajeri

Moreover, cultural exchange has played a significant role in enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation between Kuwait and Germany. The exchange of students, artists, and professionals has enriched both societies, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and lasting friendships. Cultural events, exhibitions, and festivals have further deepened the

bonds between the peoples of Kuwait and Germany, celebrating their shared values and heritage. In addition to economic and cultural cooperation, tourism has also played a vital role in strengthening bilateral relations. Germany's rich history, vibrant cities, and breathtaking landscapes have attracted a growing number of Kuwaiti visitors each year. Whether it's exploring Berlin's historic landmarks, indulging in Bavarian cuisine, or experiencing the picturesque beauty of the

Black Forest, Kuwaitis continue to flock to Germany for leisure, education, and business opportunities. Statistics reveal a steady increase in the number of Kuwaitis visiting Germany annually, reflecting the growing interest and affinity between the two nations. This influx of visitors not only boosts tourism revenues but also promotes cross-cultural exchange and fosters people-to-people connections. As Kuwait and Germany embark on the next phase of their partner-

ship, there are boundless opportunities to further strengthen their ties. Collaboration in areas such as education, healthcare, technology, the environment, climate protection, and sustainable development holds immense potential for mutual benefit. By building on the foundation of trust and cooperation established over the past six decades, Kuwait and Germany can continue to chart a path towards prosperity and shared success for generations to come.

'KSH working towards integrating people with disabilities in society'

Society chief presents annual report for 2022

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: President of the Kuwaiti Society for the Handicapped (KSH) Sabika Al-Jasser has announced the provision of integrated treatment and rehabilitation services for people with disabilities, and ongoing work towards integrating them into society, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Jasser presented the annual report of the Society for the year 2022, during which the Society contributed to the removal of barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in society on equal footing with others. "We sought to integrate them into society in an optimal manner by securing their rights like education and employment. In 2022, the Society continued to achieve its mission and goals according

to its strategic plan approved by the Board of Directors. This is based on the commitment towards continuous improvement of services that we provide to people with disabilities and their families. We develop access to current services and offer new services, while increasing opportunities for partnership in the community and striving to create a healthy work environment for our children and employees to work, learn and grow. We are keen on implementing successful management practices to facilitate the provision of distinguished services, in addition to enhancing financial sustainability. In 2022, the Society provided educational, therapeutic and rehabilitation services to 442 people with disabilities in its educational centers and 26 in the Integrated Care Depart-

ment. The Society also developed the Rehabilitation Unit and appointed support medical staff specialized in physical, speech and language and occupational therapies. It also intensified its efforts for the benefit of those who need its services, raise its centers' absorption capacity, ensure the efficiency of their outputs, modernize their equipment and improve the capabilities of the workforce," she added. Al-Jasser stressed that these efforts would not have been successful without Allah's help and the support of partners in giving -- from the benevolent people of Kuwait and the efforts of the sincere members of the Board of Directors who made - and are still making - efforts to raise the name of the Society. She pointed out that for 51 years, the Society has been one of the pioneers of charitable work and it reflects the human face of Kuwait and the

authentic values and principles that its people are born with. She added the Society is also keen on achieving Kuwait Vision 2035 in terms of the care and integration of people with disabilities by contributing to the implementation of the National Policy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She affirmed that at the beginning of this year added, the Society received the vocational training and rehabilitation center in Granada at a cost of approximately KD5 million. "The project extends over an area of 15,000 square meters, which will be a private college for people with disabilities who are 18 years old and above and have completed their education in the three centers of the Society. It will contribute to integrating people with disabilities into society, increasing their employment opportunities, empowering them to have an effective role in society and enhancing their positive energy to contribute to the development of Kuwait," she stated.



Officials at the Kaifan Cooperative Society.

Aims to distribute 20,000 reusable bags

Gulf Bank launches 'A Step Towards Change' drive in partnership with Kaifan Cooperative

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Following a specified timeline, Gulf Bank has launched the "A Step Towards Change" environmental sustainability initiative, aimed at shifting societal habits by promoting the use of reusable bags, in partnership with Kaifan Cooperative Society. Over the course of a week, the initiative involves distributing around 20,000 reusable bags at Mishref Co-op, accompanied by various informative events.

Gulf Bank had earlier revealed the timetable for executing the initiative within the participating Co-ops, which include Al-Dahiya and Al-Mansouriah, Al-Shamiya and Al-Shuwaikh, Al-Rawda and Hawally, Kaifan, and Mishref. This disclosure took place in the presence of bank officials, representatives from the Environment Public Authority, and the Committee for Environmental, Food, and Water Security in the National Assembly.

On this occasion, Mr. Fahad Al-Sharah, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, stated: "We are pleased at Gulf Bank to have partnered with Kaifan Co-op for the fourth phase of our environmental sustainability initiative, 'A Step Towards Change,' which has been widely embraced and positively received by the members of the cooperative societies that have implemented it.

He continued, saying: "Our primary objective is to instigate a change in behavior within society, and we are working closely with Mishref Co-op to achieve this. Through the distribution of reusable bags and encouraging customers to reduce their plastic consumption, we hope to make significant progress."

Optimism

Al-Sharah conveyed optimism that this initiative would actively contribute to shaping government decisions and laws, compelling both institutions and individuals to minimize plastic usage. Ultimately, this effort is expected to contribute significantly to the protection of Kuwait's environment from the significant harm caused by plastic bags.

He further emphasized that this initiative is part of Gulf Bank's annual commitment to implement various initiatives aimed at reinforcing the principles of environmental sustainability within the community. Gulf Bank believes that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and they found it fitting to initiate this program with

selected major co-ops in Kuwait. Around 100,000 reusable bags will be distributed to the selected co-ops, marking the first step towards changing behavior, and becoming an integral part of their daily lives.

He added, "This initiative is rooted in Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, with the goal of establishing principles of environmental, social, and governance sustainability. It aligns with the country's environmental strategy under the vision of 'New Kuwait 2035,' as well as legislation related to the environment, laws safeguarding the environment, resource conservation, pollution reduction, environmental safety, ecosystem rehabilitation, biodiversity protection, waste management efficiency improvement, utilization of renewable energy, and building and developing national capabilities in environmental work."

Satisfaction

Mr. Musaab Ahmed Al-Mulla, a member of the Board of Directors at Kaifan Cooperative Society and President of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, expressed satisfaction with the partnership with Gulf Bank in the "A Step Towards Change" initiative, highlighting their commitment to driving societal progress towards decreased plastic consumption. Furthermore, he stressed the introduction of a "Fast Track" service by the co-op for shareholders who utilize reusable bags, with the aim of promoting their ongoing use.

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

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

CITRA hosts ITU workshops

Appointment of job applicants to continue

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: As the budget for fiscal 2023/2024 will end on March 31, some people have been asking if the appointment of successful applicants for jobs in the government sector will continue or it will be postponed until the 2024/2025 budget is approved, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

In an exclusive statement to the daily, sources confirmed the appointment will continue as usual, that is, according to the approved grades and for each authority to continue issuing appointment decisions in line with the powers granted to them.

Sources added the Civil Service Commission (CSC), government agencies and the Ministry of Finance have coordinated their efforts to cover the needs for job grades in order to appoint fresh graduates and those who registered in the recruitment system of the commission; confirming the approval of 23,732 job grades.

Sources said the job grades were allocated to each ministry, entity and government institution in accordance with their manpower needs; disclosing that the service ministries such as Education, Electricity, Health, Interior and Public Works received the largest share of the job grades. They added the job grades that some entities have not utilized so far were deducted since the current fiscal year will end on March 31.

Sources also stated that each entity was asked to list their manpower needs using the job requirement form, as the applicants will be selected to work for the entity in a manner consistent with the data recorded in the form, and that nominations will be made

based on the requests of government agencies.

CITRA holds workshop: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) is currently organizing workshops and meetings of study committees affiliated with the Standardization Sector of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) from March 4 to 7, reports Al-Jarida daily.

During the opening ceremony, Walid Al-Hassawi, Member of the Board of Directors of CITRA, underscored the authority's dedication to implementing projects and initiatives that harness modern technologies to enhance the quality of life and work in Kuwait.

Al-Hassawi highlighted CITRA's efforts to transition Kuwait into a smart country by leveraging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) to connect infrastructure, services, and citizens. Additionally, CITRA is focused on developing and applying artificial intelligence (AI) across various sectors, including health, education, security, transportation, and energy. The authority also utilizes big data for decision-making, performance improvement, and innovation.

In terms of resource management, CITRA is working to establish policies, laws, standards, and mechanisms to ensure the fair and effective distribution, allocation, and regulation of resources like frequency spectrum and numbering resources. Al-Hassawi emphasized the importance of implementing rules, conditions, and procedures for managing and regulating telecommunications services.

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LOCAL

Too many

Continued from Page 1

This was in light of the absence of an executive leadership that is aware of the sensitive circumstances that it has experienced, and continues to endure, affecting all paths - social, economic, and even security - as if we didn't learn anything from the Iraqi invasion.

On the contrary, while the countries that were founded by civilizations sought to have a single leadership, and when they completed the stages of their social and economic development, they moved towards democratic development with confident steps. This is because they realized that a building that is based on a defect quickly leads to its ruin, and the efforts of people and years end up in vain.

In any emerging country there were neither 20 captains nor 66 commanders of the construction battle. You did not hear the saying "I am the only one who can do this", as was the case in Kuwait for over the past decades in the name of democracy, from which we unfortunately took the negative side, which is the freedom to insult and slander, and left out the positive aspects.

As a result, the country experienced continuous decline, which made it appear in such a state of backwardness and social and economic turmoil.

In previous articles, we talked about a model country whose civilization was created by one person, and how, despite its small area and population, it became comparable to major countries.

It has reserved its place among nations as a model for law enforcement and urban, economic, social and political renaissance, after centuries of backwardness and poverty. When it was facilitated by a firm leader who knew what was best for his people and his nation, his state became strong.

For this reason, some Arab and Muslim thinkers said that "justice loses its content with the inability to implement it."

A state will not be established "unless it gets blessed with a strong and just person who rules over his people without monopolization of power and authority and who brings prosperity to his nation".

In Kuwait, it was said in the past that one captain is better than a million sailors.

28 register

Continued from Page 1

He went on to say that the government, headed by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, cut the way toward progress through the issuance of the decree on dissolving the legislature.

He confirmed his commitment to continue combating corruption and play his monitoring role.

Former MP Saleh Ashour also filed his candidacy for the Third Constituency. He intends to focus on raising the standard of living for Kuwaitis to be on par with that of the nationals of other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. He emphasized the need to address the salaries issue and push for economic development.

On the election of the next speaker, Ashour believes former Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun will emerge victorious; but he was quick to add that there have been many observations about the management of sessions in the dissolved legislature. He said Al-Saadoun should attend the coordination meeting to respond to the former MPs' observations.

Former MP Abdullah Al-Turajji filed his candidacy for the First Constituency, stressing he is sure he will return to the legislature; thanks to his constituents who voted for him in the last three elections. He is hoping for more collaboration in the coming period, away from disputes.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Press, Publishing and Printing Affairs at the Ministry of Information Lafi Al-Subaie disclosed that the identification cards of two reporters were withdrawn because they interviewed candidates outside the tent allocated for this purpose. He affirmed that legal action will be taken against these reporters.

Summit talks

Continued from Page 1

Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Sheikh Hamad Salem Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Chief of the Government Performance Follow-up Apparatus Sheikh Ahmad Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and other ranking officials from the Amiri Diwan.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by a delegation of officials, arrived in the UAE capital on Tuesday and was accorded an elaborate welcome at Qasr Al-Watan, the UAE Presidential Palace. The reception included horse and camel riders, folkloric shows, and a dazzling formation of "Fursan Al-Emarat" aircraft depicting the Kuwaiti flag.

A 21-gun salute and a military band welcomed His Highness the Amir's motorcade at the stand of honor, where national anthems of both countries were played. His Highness the Amir then engaged in discussions with UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan at Qasr Al-Watan.

During the summit talks, His Highness the Amir expressed his eagerness to enhance bilateral relations and promote cooperation within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). He praised the warm welcome and hospitality extended by the UAE leadership and people, highlighting the strong historic ties and genuine fraternity between the nations. Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed welcomed His Highness the Amir and emphasized the significance of supporting common Gulf initiatives amid regional challenges. The leaders discussed economic, trade, investment, and development relations, emphasizing the importance of regional security and stability.

The visit culminated in a reciprocal exchange of Orders between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan at Qasr Al-Watan. His Highness the Amir was honored with the Zayed Order, recognizing his efforts in strengthening fraternal relations. In return, His Highness the Amir

presented Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed with the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Order for his contributions to the progress, stability, and prosperity of the UAE and the promotion of relations within the GCC.

A lunch banquet was hosted by UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in honor of His Highness the Amir and his delegation. Following the state visit, His Highness the Amir was seen off by UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, UAE Vice President Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UAE Jamal Mohammad Al-Ghunaim, and the UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Matar Hamed Al-Nayadi.

Upon departure, His Highness the Amir expressed appreciation to UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan for the warm hospitality and the conferred Zayed Order. His Highness wished the UAE President and the people of the UAE health and prosperity. The official delegation, including Sheikh Dr. Salem Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Nawaf Abdulaziz Humoud Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Sheikh Hamad Salem Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Chief of the Government Performance Follow-up Apparatus Sheikh Ahmad Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and other ranking officials, accompanied His Highness the Amir on his return home.

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's state visit to the UAE reflects the strong ties between the two nations, said Emirati media.

In remarks to KUNA, UAE media figures stressed that the Amir of Kuwait's visit reflects the keenness of the two states leaderships on further propensity and cooperation.

UAE News Agency (WAM) Director-General, Mohammad Al-Raisi, affirmed that the Kuwaiti-Emirati ties are deeply and historically rooted, adding that the bilateral relationship reflects the common history between the two nations.

In turn, the Head of the Media Department at UAE University, Dr. Ahmad Al-Mansouri, said that Kuwait Amir's visit to the UAE is a great opportunity to boost the historical ties that bind the two countries.

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

Al-Mansouri said that the visit is a great opportunity to shed light on the ongoing political developments, especially the genocidal war launched by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinians.

The CEO of Marketing and Communication Abu Dhabi Media Network, Abdulrahman Al-Nuaimi, affirmed that the visit of His Highness the Amir to the UAE is an authentic, inherited part of a series of mutual visits between the two ruling families since ancient times.

He also noted that statistics and trade between the two countries shed light on the distinguished economic cooperation between Kuwait and the UAE, adding that the non-petroleum trade between the two states in the last ten years reached 300 billion dirhams.

For his part, the CEO of Al-Eitihad News Center, Hamad Al-Kaabi, said the visit is conclusive evidence of the strength and stability of Kuwaiti-Emirati relations, which in turn reflected in the diplomatic positions in terms of the political approach in various circles.

Both countries are keen on supporting peace and stability in the region and worldwide, he added.

The state visit of Kuwait Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the United Arab Emirates, is marked by themes of deeply rooted ties, fraternal relations, strategic partnership and a mutual destiny.

Kuwait to

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Cabinet praised Monday the distinguished national opera concert (Qissat Watan), which was held Tuesday at the Bayan Palace under the patronage and presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

This came during the cabinet's weekly meeting headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

After the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Shereeda Al-Mousherji, said the cabinet was briefed on His Highness the Amir and his accompanying delegation visit to the UAE.

London hosts

Continued from Page 1

North Africa, Lord Tariq Ahmad, State Minister for Business and Trade Dominic Johnson and British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis.

It is set to handle three main axes, finance and investments bolstering bilateral relations, 125th year of Kuwaiti-British relations, as well as technological advancements and digital innovation.

The conference, overseen by Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, comes at a time where relations are undergoing continuous improvements, namely with facilitations of travel permits.

Kuwait's 45th

Continued from Page 1

These were urgent aid and shelter material that meet the needs of the people in the Gaza Strip, Al-Mari added.

Elswhere, Chairperson of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Palestine (DPAL) Manu Pineda on Tuesday called on the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell to reach practical measures to aid the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Pineda, in a statement said: "I strongly condemn the killing of hundreds of Palestinian civilians while attempting to obtain food from a humanitarian convoy. Shooting at civilians, seeking access to essential provisions is unacceptable."



A group photo from the 'Hearing to All' celebration.

Photo by Samer Shiqr

MoH marks World Hearing Day with 'Hearing for All' celebration

'50 to 60 cochlear implants being performed annually'

By Marwa Al-Bahawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: The Ministry of Health, represented by the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Center for Speech and Hearing Therapy, celebrated World Hearing Day under the slogan "Hearing for All" under the patronage and in the presence of Sheikha Awrad Jaber Al-Ahmad, and with the participation of a number of governmental and private bodies.

In a press statement, Head of the ministry's Ear, Nose and Throat Departments Council Dr. Mutlaq Al-Sihan explained that about 50 to 60 cochlear implants are performed annually. This number keeps pace with the population census in Kuwait. Zain Hospital and Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Center are constantly striving for development by opening outpatient clinics or providing sensitive micro-devices.

A nutrition clinic has been opened for patients who suffer from snoring or are overweight in order to follow up on them and provide advice to reach an ideal weight.

A specialized clinic for chest diseases has been opened at Zain Hospital with the cooperation of Al-Sabah Hospital, and there will be a multidisciplinary team to research cases in order to reach the optimal solution for them.

Specialized

Dr. Al-Sihan emphasized the keenness of the Ear and Nose Throat Departments Council to expand into specialized departments and clinics in public hospitals and primary health care centers.

Meanwhile, the hearing and balance consultant Dr. Maryam Al-Kandari highlighted the importance of raising awareness about hearing loss to avoid problems that may result from it, especially for young people.

She affirmed the availability of comprehensive medical services in the country to deal with the hearing impaired, including hearing screening, therapeutic clinics, hearing tests, and national programs for comprehensive hearing screening.

Al-Kandari affirmed that the percentage of people suffering from severe to very severe hearing loss ranges between 1 to 3 percent globally and locally. The rate increases to 10 percent when the degree of mild and moderate hearing loss is added.

She explained that the national program for comprehensive hearing screening at birth has been implemented in all hospitals in the country through maternity departments. If the child has a hearing problem, he is transferred to the Salem Al-Ali Center. The diagnosis of the child is completed within the first three months of birth. Assistance and treatments are provided to the child according to the degree of hearing loss. After six months, the child enters the cochlear implant program if treatment is not completed. About 1,500 cochlear implant operations have been performed at the center.

Dr. Al-Kandari stated that the most common hearing diseases in children are middle ear infections and middle ear fluid infections.

She stressed the importance of detecting and treating them early to avoid problems in the inner ear, indicating that 50 percent of sensory and neurological hearing problems are hereditary and result from consanguineous marriages.

4,307 hold bachelor's degree

CSC employment system registration hits over 10K

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: The number of citizens who registered in the employment system of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) reached 10,271 citizens — 5,291 females and 4,980 males, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the employment statistics; indicating 4,307 hold a bachelor's degree; 95 hold a master's degree and five have

a doctorate degree.

The qualifications with high number of applicants are as follows: 1,904 diploma holders; 1,141 intermediate certificate holders; 1,113 primary certificate holders; 692 secondary certificate holders; 315 secondary certificate holders who completed a two-year course or higher; 310 have no qualification; and 258 intermediate certificate holders who complet-

ed a two-year course or higher.

The qualifications with lower number of applicants include eight who went to the industrial secondary school, 11 in intermediate school, 36 in vocational education, 43 in parallel education, 18 in technical secondary school, nine in private intermediate school, two in secondary school and two in private primary school.



06 MARCH - 12 MARCH 2024

		
3,500 2,650	2,990 1,890	2,740 1,890
		
1,520 0,690	1,960 1,290	0,780 0,640
		
1,680 1,350	1,595	1,340 0,925
		
3,690	5,890	3,190
		
0,395 0,275	2,995 1,995	1,145 0,795
		
3,375 2,790	66,950 43,900	49,900 24,900
		
3,300 1,750	3,330 2,290	169,990

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World News Roundup

Europe

Top EU officials propose plans to boost defense: Top European Union officials on Tuesday outlined ambitious plans to boost its defense industry at an unprecedented pace as the bloc seeks to respond to the threat posed by Russia's war on Ukraine and a trans-Atlantic partner that could be wavering on its commitments to Europe.

For decades, EU nations have slumbered under the protective nuclear cover of the United States through the NATO alliance while their defense spending and crisis preparedness withered.

A first warning under Donald Trump's presidency highlighted a lack of coordination and supplies that would be needed if European nations would ever have to defend themselves without Washington's help.

Now, with an increasingly assertive Moscow, the need to beef up defense is becoming ever clearer.

"After decades of underspending, we must invest more on defense, but we need to do it better and together," said EU foreign policy chief **Josep Borrell**. "A strong, resilient, and competitive European defense industry is a strategic imperative."

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has exposed glaring weaknesses in Europe's arms manufacturing capacities that were neglected in the wake of the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the promise of a peace dividend in Europe.

So when Kyiv was badly in need of the most elementary ammunition to stave off Russian forces, European nations were caught out, unable to deliver what was asked and even promised.

The realization that former President Trump might return to the White House and undermine support for Ukraine has also focused minds in Europe. EU heavyweights France and Germany have warned that the bloc must do more to protect itself. (AP)

Ukraine claims it sunk another Russian warship: Ukraine claimed Tuesday it has sunk another Russian warship in the Black Sea using high-tech sea drones as Kyiv's forces continue to take aim at targets deep behind the war's front line. Russian authorities did not confirm the claim.

The Ukrainian military intelligence agency said a special operations unit destroyed the large patrol ship *Sergey Kotov* overnight with *Magura V5* uncrewed vessels that are designed and built in Ukraine and laden with explosives. The patrol ship, which Ukraine said was hit near the Kerch Strait, reportedly can carry cruise missiles and around 60 crew.

The Ukrainian claim could not immediately be independently verified, and disinformation has been a feature of the fighting that broke out after Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022.

Kyiv's forces are struggling to keep the better-provisioned Russian army at bay at some points along the largely static 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line, but are also taking aim at targets deep beyond the battlefield.

In the Black Sea, Ukrainian successes against enemy warships have pushed the Russian fleet away from the coast, allowing Ukraine to set up a grain export corridor.

The Ukraine defense ministry posted on X, formerly Twitter, a video of what it said was the nighttime attack on the *Sergey Kotov*. (AP)

Poland probes 3 balloons found near border: Polish media reported Tuesday that three unidentified objects looking like weather balloons have been found in the country's northeast, and some of them had Cyrillic inscriptions.

The objects were in Poland's Mazury lake district, between 20 kilometers and 100 kilometers (12 miles and 60 miles) from the border with Russia's exclave of Kaliningrad.

Private radio RMF FM said none of the balloons had any special devices attached to them.

Emilia Plawska of local police in Szczytno told the media that the military had been notified and would inspect the objects.

A spokesman for the regional police, Rafal Jackowski, said there have been "many" incidents with meteorological balloons in the area.

Poland supports neighboring Ukraine in its war against Russia and accuses Moscow of waging a hybrid war against Poland. (AP)

Polish soldier killed in vehicular accident: A military tracked vehicle ran over two Polish soldiers, killing one and seriously injuring the other, at an army test range in northwestern Poland, officials said.

The accident took place Tuesday at the Land Forces Training Center in Drawsko Pomorskie, said Maj. Tomasz Zygmunt from the military police.

The injured soldier was airlifted to a hospital in life-threatening condition, he said.

Officials said the accident was unrelated to NATO exercises taking place in Poland. (AP)

Tusk criticizes Hungary and Slovakia FMs: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on Monday sharply criticized the Hungarian and Slovak foreign ministers for meeting with their Russian counterpart during a regional forum in Turkey.

Tusk said that meeting Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the same day that Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was buried in Moscow was "not just an expression of good or bad taste."

"The issue of feasting on the day of Alexei Navalny's funeral ... is just another sign of the Hungarian government, which we find difficult to accept for moral and political reasons," Tusk told a news conference.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto and Slovak Foreign Minister Juraj Blahar met with Lavrov on Friday during the Antalya Diplomacy Forum gathering. Szijarto posted details of their dinner on his social media profile.

"Colleagues in Bratislava and Budapest prove once again that our opinions on certain issues are too different," Tusk said. "Certainly regarding the attitude toward Russia and the attack on Ukraine."

Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte, who met with Tusk, called the meeting with Lavrov "a regrettable choice." (AP)

NATO starts drill in Finland, Norway & Sweden: NATO kicked off an exercise on Monday to defend its newly expanded Nordic territory when more than 20,000 soldiers from 13 nations take part in drills lasting nearly two weeks in the northern regions of Finland, Norway and Sweden.

With over 4,000 Finnish soldiers taking part, the Norway-led Nordic Response 2024 represents the NATO newcomer's largest ever participation in a foreign exercise, according to Finland's military.

"For the first time, Finland will participate as a NATO member nation in exercising collective defense of the alliance's regions," the Finnish Defense Forces said in a statement.

The Swedish Armed Forces said about 4,500 personnel from its air force, army and navy would take part in the drill, which is being conducted in demanding Arctic winter conditions.

Finland, which shares a 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) border with Russia, joined NATO in April 2023 in a historic move following decades of military non-alignment. (AP)

Norwegian King Harald V's health improving: King Harald V of Norway is improving but will need a permanent pacemaker after falling ill during a trip to Malaysia, the palace said Monday, as the 87-year-old monarch was transferred to an Oslo university hospital for medical tests.

Harald returned to Norway aboard a medical airplane late Sunday, a day after he was implanted with a temporary pacemaker in the Southeast Asian country after suffering from an infection while on a private holiday at a resort island.

The king arrived Monday at Oslo's Rikshospital in a vehicle marked "intensive ambulance" under police escort, and several members of the royal family visited him there. The palace said he will be on sick leave for two weeks, during which Crown Prince Haakan will assume the monarch's duties.

The king's infection "has come under more control," but he has "has too low a heart rate, and will need a permanent pacemaker," the palace said Monday. (AP)



Republican presidential candidate former US president Donald Trump greets members of the National Guard on the US-Mexico border on Feb 29, in Eagle Pass, Texas. Recent statements by Trump have fueled Democrats' sense that there's an opening among voters with strong military ties, and progressive veterans' organizations are working to bridge the gap with what has long been a reliably red constituency. (AP)

Politics

Dems aim to block Garvey from Calif senate race

Sen McConnell weighs endorsing Trump

WASHINGTON, March 5, (AP) — US Senate leader Mitch McConnell is the highest-ranking Republican in Congress who has yet to endorse Donald Trump's bid to return to the White House — having once called the defeated president "morally responsible" for the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol attack.

But that's potentially about to change.

McConnell's political team and Trump's campaign have been in talks over not only a possible endorsement of the former president but a strategy to unite Republicans up and down the party's ticket ahead of the November election, according to a person familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it.

Legitimate

How, when or where McConnell would endorse Trump is less head-spinning than the idea that it could happen at all: A stunning rapprochement for two men who have not spoken since McConnell enraged Trump by declaring Joe Biden the legitimate winner of the 2020 presidential election.

But a fast-moving series of events ahead of Super Tuesday's elections have been set in motion by McConnell's own sudden announcement he would step down as leader next session and as Trump is on track to move closer toward the GOP nomination.

Taken together, it lays bare the lengths that McConnell, the longest-serving Senate leader and an ever calculating politician, will go as he works to win back Republican control of the Senate in what could be among his final acts in power.

"I still have enough gas in the tank to thoroughly disappoint my critics, and I intend to do so with all the enthusiasm which they have become accustomed," McConnell said last week in announcing his decision to step aside as leader for the next session.

Not long ago, it appeared Trump would have few fans politically lining up behind his bid to return to the White House, particularly from the halls of Congress.

In the aftermath of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, key Republicans,

SAN DIEGO, March 5, (AP) — A 53-year-old union of immigration judges has been ordered to get supervisor approval to speak publicly to anyone outside the Justice Department, potentially quieting a frequent critic of heavily backlogged immigration courts in an election year.

The National Association of Immigration Judges has spoken regularly at public forums, in interviews with reporters and with congressional staff, often to criticize how courts are run. It has advocated for more independence and free legal representation. The National Press Club invited its leaders to a news conference about "the pressures of the migrant crisis on the federal immigration court system."

The Feb. 15 order requires Justice Department approval "to participate in writing engagements (e.g., articles; blogs) and speaking engagements (e.g., speeches; panel discussions; interviews)," Sheila McNulty, the chief immigra-

tion judge, referred to a 2020 decision by the Federal Labor Relations Authority to strip the union of collective bargaining power and said its earlier rights were "not valid at present."

The order prohibits speaking to Congress, news media and professional forums without approval, said Matt Biggs, president of the International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers, an umbrella organization that includes the judges' union. He said the order contradicted President Joe Biden's "union-friendly" position and vowed to fight it.

"It's outrageous, it's un-American," said Biggs. "Why are they trying to silence these judges?"

The Justice Department and its Executive Office for Immigration Review, as the courts are called, did not immediately respond to requests for comments on McNulty's order, which was addressed to union leaders Mimi Tsankov and Samuel B. Cole.

including McConnell, signaled unequivocally they were done with Trump.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Several prominent House Democrats are jostling to fend off Republican former baseball great **Steve Garvey** in the yearlong battle to fill the US Senate seat once held by the late Sen. **Dianne Feinstein**, with two slots on California's November ballot at stake.

In a state where a Republican hasn't won a Senate race since 1988, Democrats are expected to easily hold the seat in November, a relief for the party as it seeks to defend a fragile Senate majority. But first-time candidate Garvey, a National League MVP and former star for the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres, reordered the contest that

also features Democratic Reps. **Barbara Lee**, **Katie Porter** and **t**.

California puts all candidates, regardless of party, on one primary ballot, and the two who get the most votes advance to the general election. For months, Schiff has had the fundraising and polling edge, but it's possible Garvey could claim the second spot on the November ballot, ending the congressional careers of Porter and Lee, two prominent progressives.

It would be a blow in particular to Porter, whose 2018 upset win was among Democratic breakthroughs in Orange County, once a Republican stronghold.

"Polls are predicting we're going to lose and my time in Congress will come to an end for good," Porter wrote in a fundraising plea in the election's final days.

bond. His attorney declined to comment Monday. (AP)

Air Force employee charged: A civilian US Air Force employee has been charged in federal court in Nebraska with transmitting classified information about Russia's war with Ukraine on a foreign online dating platform, the Justice Department said Monday.

David Franklin Slater, 63, who authorities say retired as an Army lieutenant colonel and was assigned to the US Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, was arrested Saturday on charges of illegally disclosing national defense information and conspiring to do so. (AP)

Pentagon leaker pleads guilty: Massachusetts Air National Guard member Jack Teixeira pleaded guilty on Monday to leaking highly classified military documents about the war in Ukraine and other national security secrets under a deal with prosecutors that calls for him to serve at least 11 years in prison.

Teixeira, of North Dighton, Massachusetts, pleaded guilty to six counts of willful retention and transmission of national defense information under the Espionage Act nearly a year after he was arrested in the most consequential national security leak in years. (AP)



German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius gives a press statement on the status of an investigation into the German military audio that was leaked by Russia, in Berlin, on March 5. The German government has vehemently rejected allegations that Russia's leak of a conversation by high-ranking German military officers was an indication Berlin was preparing for war against Russia. (AP)



Aaron Cramer

America

Detroit industrial fire hurts 2: A fire raging at a building that supplies novelties, phone accessories and other merchandise to discount stores caused multiple explosions that injured at least two people and rocked suburban Detroit, sending debris shooting far into the air.

The debris fell Monday night as far as a mile (1.6 kilometers) away, the Clinton Township Police Department said on Facebook. Authorities said they didn't know exactly what was burning or the potential health effects, but said the business was "known to stock combustible materials" and urged people in the area to stay inside.

White smoke and an orange glow could still be seen above the remnants of the Select Distributors building on Tuesday morning in Clinton Township. Earlier, news helicopter videos showed a massive, bright orange area of fire with bursts of flames within the blaze that looked like explosions. A bystander suffered injuries and was taken to a hospital. (AP)

Small plane crash kills 5: A single-engine plane crashed near a highway in Nashville, Tennessee, just a few miles short of the airport it had tried to reach for an emergency landing, killing five people aboard, authorities said.

The pilot made an emergency call to John C. Tune Airport around 7:40 p.m. Monday, reported engine trouble and was given clearance to make an emergency landing, Metro Nashville Police Department spokesman **Don Aaron** said. A short time later the pilot radioed that the aircraft would not reach the airport, he said.

The plane burst into flames when it crashed in a grassy median just off Interstate 40 and behind a Costco on the city's westside. The crash scene was about 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) south of the general aviation airport. "It appears that everyone on board perished," Aaron said. (AP)

Cramer's son pleads not guilty: US Sen **Kevin Cramer's** 42-year-old son has pleaded not guilty to charges related to the

events that preceded the pursuit and crash that killed a North Dakota sheriff's deputy in December, but he still hasn't entered a plea on the main homicide and fleeing charges.

Ian Cramer appeared remotely in court Monday to face allegations that he stole

a family vehicle and crashed it into a Bismarck hospital's ambulance bay garage door on Dec. 6. He'll be asked to enter a plea at a later hearing on homicide, reckless endangerment, preventing arrest and drug possession charges in Mercer County. Cramer remains in jail on a \$500,000 cash



In this frame grab taken from video provided by WXYZ, firefighters battle an industrial fire in the Detroit suburb of Clinton Township, on March 4. A fire raging at a building that supplies novelties, phone accessories and other merchandise to discount stores caused multiple explosions that injured at least two people and rocked suburban Detroit, sending debris shooting far into the air. (AP)

Lat/Am

Van crash kills nine

Panama bars Martinelli candidacy in May polls

PANAMA CITY, Panama, March 5. (AP) Panama's Electoral Tribunal has disqualified former president **Ricardo Martinelli**'s candidacy in the country's May 5 presidential election because of a 10-year prison sentence for money laundering he received last year, the tribunal's presiding magistrate said Monday night.

Martinelli, a supermarket tycoon who was president of Panama from 2009 to 2014, was convicted last July of money laundering in a case involving the purchase of a media conglomerate with public funds.

Panamanian authorities last month ordered Martinelli's arrest and the former president has been held up in the Nicaraguan Embassy since receiving political asylum there.

Magistrate Alfredo Juncá said the tribunal's decision to disqualify his candidacy came after his sentence was upheld on Monday.

The 71-year-old Martinelli is the presidential candidate of his party even though Panama's constitution bars anyone sentenced to five years or more for a crime from holding elected office.

Martinelli's running mate, former Foreign Minister José Raúl Mulino, was authorized by the tribunal to continue alone on the ballot as the presidential candidate. Martinelli was also disqualified from running for a legislative seat.

Martinelli has denied wrongdoing and maintains he is the victim of political persecution.

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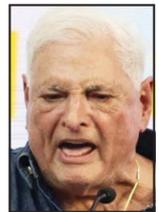
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Martinelli



Members of ASEAN pose for a family photo during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne, Australia on March 5. From left: Secretary General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Hourn, the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Pham Minh Chinh, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong, the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Samdech Hun Manet, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, the Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese, the Prime Minister of Lao, Sonexay Siphandone, the Indonesian President Joko Widodo, the Sultan of Brunei, Haji Hassanah Bolkiah, the President of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the Prime Minister of Thailand, Srettha Thavisin, and the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmao. (AP)

Asia

Philippine, Chinese vessels collide in disputed sea

Sea code of conduct will take time: Lee

MELBOURNE, Australia, March 5. (AP) Southeast Asian countries' quest to reach agreement with China on a code of conduct in the contested South China Sea will take time, with difficult issues yet to be resolved despite recent efforts to accelerate the process, Singapore's prime minister said Tuesday at a regional summit.

China's increasing military assertiveness in the busy waterway toward neighbors with competing territorial claims has been high on the agenda of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit. The three-day summit, which is being hosted in Melbourne to mark 50 years since Australia became ASEAN's first external partner, ends Wednesday.

Leaders of the 10-nation bloc hope a code of conduct with China would be key to reducing the risk of naval confrontations.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said a first draft of the code had been written but negotiations are still required.

"The issues are not easy to resolve and, really, negotiating a code of conduct inevitably raises issues of what the ultimate outcomes are going to be, and therefore, because the ultimate answers are difficult, so too negotiating the code will take quite some time," Lee told reporters said.

In the latest dangerous incident, Chinese coast guard ships blocked Philippine vessels off a disputed South China Sea shoal on Tuesday, causing a minor collision, the Philippine coast guard said.

Philippine security officials have accused the Chinese coast guard and suspected militia ships of blocking Philippine vessels and using water cannons and a military-grade laser that temporarily blinded some Filipino crewmen in a series of high-seas hostilities last year.

Leaders agreed at an ASEAN summit in Indonesia last September to accelerate the negotiation process with a goal of finalizing a code within three years. That summit was joined by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: Chinese and Philippine coast guard vessels collided in the disputed South China Sea and

North Korea threatens to take military moves in response to US-SKorea drills

SEOUL, South Korea, March 5. (AP) North Korea called the ongoing South Korean-US military drills a plot to invade the country, as it threatened Tuesday to take unspecified "responsible" military steps in response.

The North's warning came a day after the South Korean and US forces kicked off their annual computer-simulated command post training and a variety of field exercises for an 11-day run. This year's drills were to involve 48 field exercises, twice the number conducted last year.

In a statement carried by state media, the North's Defense Ministry said it "strongly denounces the reckless military drills of the US and (South Korea) for getting more undisguised in their military threat to a sovereign state and attempt for

invading it."

An unidentified ministry spokesman said North Korea's military will "continue to watch the adventurist acts of the enemies and conduct responsible military activities to strongly control the unstable security environment on the Korean Peninsula."

The spokesperson didn't say what measures North Korea would take, but observers say North Korea will likely carry out missile tests or other steps to bolster its war capability.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said later Tuesday that its drills with the United States is a regular, defensive training. A ministry statement said South Korea will make an overwhelming response if North Korea launches direct provocations against it during the drills.



A soldier patrols the outskirts of the international airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on March 4. Gang members exchanged gunfire with police and soldiers around the airport in the latest of a series of attacks on government sites that includes a mass escape from the country's two biggest prisons. (AP)



Kony



Mnangagwa

Africa

2 killed in plane collision: Two planes collided midair above the Nairobi National Park, sending the smaller plane crashing in the park and killing two people, police said Tuesday.

The bigger plane, a Dash 8 operated by Safarilink Aviation airline with 44 on board, including five crew members, was heading to the coastal resort town of Diani when crew reported a loud bang soon after take-off from Wilson Airport and decided to turn back, the airline reported.

A police report said the Dash 8 collided with a single-engine Cessna 172 operated by 99 Flying School with two people on board, who were in a training session. (AP)

Search for missing girl ramps up: The South African navy was brought in Monday to help with a search for a 6-year-old girl who has been missing for two weeks in a case that has captured national attention, forcing police to ask people to give them space to work and stop encroaching on the operation and recording it on their cell phones.

Joslin Smith went missing on Feb. 19 in the Saldanha Bay area on South Africa's west coast, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of Cape Town.

Police, firefighters and specialized K-9 dog units have scoured sand dunes and scrubland near the informal settlement of shacks and small houses where Joslin lived.

Search teams have used drones to view large areas of ground, police said, and personnel from a South African navy base in Saldanha Bay have now bolstered the operation. A team of top detectives was sent from Cape Town to help lead the investigation.

Community members have also been involved in the search. Some of them claimed this weekend to have found a knife and girl's clothing stained with blood, which they said they handed over to the police. Police said they had sent items found during the search to a laboratory for forensic examination but didn't give further details. (AP)

US sanctions Zimbabwe prez: The United States on Monday sanctioned Zimbabwe's President **Emmerson Mnangagwa**, his first lady and other government officials for their alleged involvement in corruption and human rights abuses.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control imposed sanctions on three entities and 11 people, including

the Mnangagwas, Vice President Constantino Chiwenga and retired Brig. Gen. Walter Tapfumananyi.

Mnangagwa is accused of protecting

gold and diamond smugglers who operate in Zimbabwe, directing government officials to facilitate the sale of gold and diamonds in illicit markets and taking bribes in exchange

for his services, among other offenses.



In this handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, a Chinese coast guard ship approaches a Philippine coast guard ship, (foreground), causing a minor collision, in the vicinity of Second Thomas Shoal on March 5. The vessels collided in the disputed South China Sea, slightly injuring four Filipino crewmen in a new confrontation that unfolded as Southeast Asian leaders gathered for an Asian summit where alarm over Beijing's aggression at sea was expected to be raised. (AP)

task force dealing with territorial disputes.

MANILA, Philippines: Former Philippine first lady **Imelda Marcos**, the mother of the incumbent president and widow of an ousted dictator, has been hospitalized with pneumonia.

President **Ferdinand Marcos Jr** said on Tuesday that his mother, who is 94, was suffering from a slight pneumonia and was put on antibiotics by her doctors.

Marcos, in a statement from **Melbourne, Australia**, where he is attending an Asian summit, said that his mother was "in good spirits" and has "no difficulty in breathing and is resting well."

Marcos' sister Senator **Imee Marcos** told reporters that her mother has had bouts of fever and coughing and was taken to the hospital for closer monitoring.

Imelda Marcos's lavish lifestyle amid her country's appalling poverty came to symbolize her late husband's authoritarian rule, which ended when a 1986 army-backed "people power" uprising toppled him and drove him and his family to U.S. exile.

for his services, among other offenses. President Joe Biden also Monday signed an executive order that terminates Zimbabwe's national emergency and revokes Zimbabwe-specific sanctions. Now, the administration is using a Trump-era executive order that implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act as its authority to issue the sanctions. (AP)

ICC to present evidence: International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors will present evidence to back up charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity against notorious fugitive Ugandan rebel leader **Joseph Kony** at the global court's first ever in absentia hearing later this year.

The court announced Monday it will hold a so-called confirmation of charges hearing starting Oct. 15 against Kony, the alleged leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, a brutal rebel group, nearly two decades after first seeking his arrest.

Kony faces 12 counts of crimes against humanity including murder, sexual enslavement and rape, and 21 counts of war crimes including cruel treatment of civilians, pillaging and enlisting child soldiers allegedly committed in 2003 and 2004 in northern Uganda.

The hearing is not a trial, but allows prosecutors to outline their case in court. Kony - if he is not arrested before the hearing -- will be represented in his absence by a defense lawyer. If he is captured after the hearing, Kony will face trial at the court based in The Hague. (AP)



Creditors meet- ing

TID company presents plan for its creditors

Under the guidance of the Bankruptcy Department, The Investment Dar (TID) Company convened a crucial meeting attended by a significant number of its creditors, as reported by Al-Seyassah daily. Alongside bankruptcy jurists and trustees, representatives from various regulatory bodies, both domestic and international creditors, as well as financial advisors from Houlihan Lokey and the principal financier Vedra, participated in the proceedings.

At the heart of the meeting was the presentation and thorough examination of the finan-

cial plan proposed by The Investment Dar to settle its obligations with its creditors. Deliberations centered around elucidating the various options and intricacies of the plan, meticulously crafted in collaboration with Houlihan Lokey Financial Consulting Company.

Throughout the session, creditors engaged in discussions regarding the plan's provisions and potential outcomes, aiming to comprehend its implications fully. Following the deliberations, creditors cast their votes on the proposed plan. However, in response to requests from several credi-

tors for additional time to review the plan comprehensively, the bankruptcy jurists opted to defer the announcement of voting results until after March 31, 2024.

This decision reflects a commitment to ensuring that all stakeholders have ample opportunity to scrutinize the plan thoroughly and articulate their final stance on its approval. The extension underscores the importance of a considered and informed decision-making process, crucial for navigating the complex landscape of debt restructuring and financial recovery.

Market Movements

05-03-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	+35.56	12,470.15	
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+126.56	30,668.89	
UAE	-	DFM	-80.82	4,245.80	
JAPAN	-	Nikkei	-11.60	40,097.63	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	-46.21	6,905.46	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-224.32	65,722.44	

Business

Emphasis on diversification strategy and digital transformation

NBK-Bahrain reports net profits of BHD 132.79 mln for FY 2023

MANAMA, March 5: National Bank of Kuwait-Bahrain (NBK-Bahrain) reported net profits of BHD 132.79 million (KWD 108.22 million) in 2023, compared to BHD 122.14 million (KWD 99.39 million) in 2022.

As of the end of 2023, NBK-Bahrain's total assets stood at BHD 7.08 billion (KWD 5.77 billion) compared with BHD 7.24 billion (KWD 5.89 billion) in 2022. Total shareholders' equity increased by 12% y-o-y to BHD 1.213 billion (KWD 988.33 million), whereas customers deposits stood at BHD 3.34 billion (KWD 2.722 billion) by end of December 2023.

Commenting on NBK-Bahrain's year-end financial results, Mr. Isam Al-Sager, NBK Group Vice Chairman and CEO said, "NBK-Bahrain realized good profits in FY2023, navigating through challenges posed by the operating environment, global geopolitical tensions, and heightened inflation levels. This underscores our resilient business model and robust financial standing."

"Our profits last year were driven by the expansion of the bank's operational activity. Moving forward, we aim to bolster this momentum by broadening our presence and operations in the Bahraini market, capitalizing on the promising growth opportunities and favorable outlook that this market offers," Al-Sager stated.

"Our international operations are key contributors to the Group's profits, which proves our resilient business model, and at the same time, the success of our regional expansion strategy in hedging against the risks and fluctuations, and its contribution to diversifying income sources," he added.

Al-Sager also emphasized that the Group's diversification strategy extends beyond products and services, encompassing the expansion of our business footprint within existing geographical regions, seizing new opportunities, and maintaining our leadership in digital transformation. These efforts position the bank for sustained growth and prosperity in the future.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ali Fardan, General Manager of NBK-Bahrain, said: "NBK-Bahrain's results for 2023 prove our focus on strategic goals, sustained business growth and leading position in the Bahraini market, despite the challenges faced during this year."

Fardan pointed out that the bank is moving steadily in strengthening its position in Bahrain by providing high-quality banking and financial services to its retail and corporate customers, noting that the bank has great potentials to achieve further growth in the Bahraini market in the future.

"Over the course of this year, NBK-Bahrain has been successful in providing various high-quality banking products and services that effectively helped meet customers' needs and enrich their banking experience," he highlighted.



Isam Al-Sager – NBK Group Vice Chairman and CEO



Ali Fardan – General Manager of NBK-Bahrain

Al-Sager:

NBK-Bahrain's profits reflect the success of our strategy to expand our footprint in the Bahraini market

We are committed to further expanding our presence in our operational markets while giving utmost priority to upholding our digital advantage and the seamless integration of our services

Fardan:

Our profits prove our focus on strategic goals, sustained business growth and leading position. We persist in achieving success by providing top-notch services and products that adeptly meet customers' needs and enrich their banking experience.

Fardan praised the Central Bank of Bahrain's efforts, in particular, and all government agencies, in general, for their continued support extended to NBK-Bahrain and the Bahraini banking sectors. He also highlighted that the great sup-



NBK headquarters

port extended by NBK Group has contributed to strengthening the Bank's performance, through capitalizing on NBK's high credit ratings, broad relationship network, and leading reputation as one of the top banks in the Middle East, and one of the safest banks in the world.

NBK is the largest financial institution in Kuwait with effective market dominance in the commercial banking market and has been consistently awarded one of the highest credit ratings among all regional banks from Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch Ratings. NBK also stands out in terms of its local and international network, which includes branches, subsidiaries and representative offices in many regional and global financial hubs including China, Geneva, London, Paris, New York, and Singapore alongside its regional presence in Lebanon, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

S&P forecasts favorable credit conditions for Gulf companies

Non-oil sectors to drive economic expansion in Gulf countries

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Standard & Poor's, the credit ratings agency, anticipates that companies in the Gulf countries, especially infrastructure firms, will experience favorable credit conditions in their respective local markets in 2024, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Despite challenges such as weak global economic growth, elevated interest rates, and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, the agency foresees resilient asset performance and the ability of these companies to manage their financing requirements.

The majority (over 95%) of companies and infrastructure firms in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are expected to maintain

a stable outlook, suggesting flexibility in their classifications throughout 2024, with a possibility of slight upgrades.

The ability of classified infrastructure companies in the Gulf to manage refinancing needs and high interest costs in 2024 is considered feasible.

Refinancing risks are deemed manageable, with a significant portion of debts due in 2024 held by highly rated entities associated with the government.

This optimism is underpinned by improved operational performance, particularly in sectors like oil, gas, and chemicals, as well as sustained growth in non-oil sectors. Additionally, both government and non-government issuers in the region have reported a relatively stable level of debt.

Standard & Poor's projects minimal changes in total reported debt for 2024 and 2025, despite substantial spending requirements. They antici-

pate a 5% to 10% increase in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization for rated Gulf companies over the next two years.

The agency will closely monitor interest coverage ratios, especially for highly leveraged companies or those needing significant refinancing in 2024.

The growth of real GDP, particularly in oil-related sectors, is expected to be bolstered by reduced OPEC+ cuts, supporting the overall economic environment in Gulf countries. Non-oil sectors are also anticipated to contribute to economic growth.

Gulf economies are forecasted to grow by 2% to 3% on average in 2024, supported by relatively moderate oil prices. Non-oil economic expansion, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, will be driven by substantial investments in diversification efforts and population growth across the region.



The 8th session of the joint Kuwaiti-Jordanian technical trade committee.

Jordan top choice for Kuwaiti investors: Official

Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ziad Al-Najem, said Tuesday that Jordan is a top choice for Kuwaiti investors due to its diverse investment opportunities.

Speaking during the 8th session of the joint Kuwaiti-Jordanian technical trade committee, Al-Najem highlighted its goal of enhancing bilateral relations and addressing obstacles, thus fulfilling both nations' aspirations. Increasing trade through information exchange, expertise sharing, and participation in exhibitions and conferences, especially in the private sectors, is a key focus of the committee's meetings.

On her side, Secretary General of the Jordanian Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, Dana Al-Zoubi, affirmed the strong ties between the two countries adding that Kuwait is a vital strategic partner. She also added that the committee's meetings show the eagerness of the two countries to increase investments and commercial trade in various fields.

Representatives from ministries and government agencies attended the meeting, while on the Jordanian side, participants included representatives from both government agencies and the private sector. (KUNA)

KIB unveils details of Kuwait's first bank-led digital marketplace

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) held a special press conference to announce the launch of Kuwait's first bank-led digital marketplace, the KIB PayTally App. A leader in Islamic banking solutions, KIB's pioneering initiative marks the first time a bank in Kuwait has created a platform to serve as a specialized digital marketplace, catering to the diverse needs of its customers' modern lifestyles by allowing them to access everything they need in one place across various categories, in addition to the exclusive KIB Store.

Commenting on the launch, Othman Tawfeq, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "This initiative represents a significant breakthrough in the field of digital Islamic banking solutions and serves as a testament to our dedication to offering exceptional products and services. These offerings are designed to meet our customers' needs comprehensively and align with their lifestyles. Furthermore, the KIB PayTally application will enhance the customer experience, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, by providing seamless and beneficial features."

Speaking at the press conference, Tawfeq added: "The launch of the new application, which adheres to Islamic banking principles, in conjunction with our Ramadan campaign embodies the holy month's spirit of generosity, and KIB stands proud as a community partner, offering financial solutions that are both accessible and advantageous. Our focus this Ramadan is not just on facilitating easy and convenient transactions, but also on fostering generosity and making



From left: Abdulrahman Al Bahar, Mohamed El-Shareef, Othman Tawfeq, Musab Al-Shalan

wishes come true, be it through purchasing a new car or building a dream home."

On his part, Mohamed Atef El-Shareef, General Manager of the Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence Department at KIB, stated: "The new app stands out as the first digital marketplace introduced by a bank in Kuwait, allowing users to shop, finance and track their applications in real-time with complete ease. It is crafted to bring about a significant improvement in how customers access financing services and enjoy a comprehensive browsing experience, without the hassle of visiting multiple websites or locations. The KIB PayTally application is user-friendly and equipped with distinctive features specifically designed to enhance the digital marketplace concept through exclusive deals not found at any other marketplace destination.

Moreover, it enables customers to compare products across various categories, ensuring accuracy and trustworthiness in their choices before making a purchase."

Meanwhile, Abdulrahman Al Bahar, Assistant Manager of Central Sales in the Retail Banking Department at KIB, remarked: "We are confident that KIB's innovative app will ensure convenience and security by facilitating transactions through simple steps, anytime and anywhere. This eliminates the necessity of visiting branches, making the experience more efficient and effective. Notably, applying for financing via the KIB PayTally app does not require customers to transfer their salaries to the Bank." He pointed out that KIB provides a range of flexible financing options through the application with payment plans from 3 months and

up to 60 months, ranging between KD 300 and KD 25,000, to meet the needs of the widest possible customer base, including both customers and non-customers, as well as citizens and residents alike.

Further discussing what KIB PayTally offers, Musab Al-Shalan, Deputy General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said "Through this new app, KIB will manage to bring together a wide array of its partners in the KIB PayTally program under a single umbrella, creating a comprehensive market place destination. This will enable the Bank to offer its customers innovative and flexible financing solutions across various sectors, such as automobile financing, medical financing, financing for overseas treatment, educational financing, as well as financing for furniture, electronics and gaming, among other financing services. These offerings further solidify the Bank's leadership in pioneering digital banking innovation strategies."

Al-Shalan invited everyone to download the KIB PayTally application and explore the opportunities offered this Ramadan. With its user-friendly interface, comprehensive range of services, and exclusive deals, the new application is set to change the landscape of digital banking and financing in Kuwait. He also encouraged following the Bank on its social media platforms and visiting its website to find out more information about KIB PayTally.

It is worth noting that KIB is committed to providing the best banking and financing solutions to the largest number of people in the community, affirming its position as a leader in the Islamic banking sector, and stemming from its main slogan 'Bank for Life'.

Direct investment opportunities highlighted

KCCI hosts Japanese delegation

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted a delegation from Japan led by Takashi Omoti, Executive Director of the Japanese Cooperation Center for Middle East Countries (JCCME), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting was attended by the Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Yasunari Morino, in addition to representatives from various Kuwaiti government agencies including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Health, Food and Nutrition Public Authority, Direct Investment Promotion Authority, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, Ministry of Public Works, and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. Additionally, several business owners from Kuwaiti companies participated.

The Chamber began the meeting by extending a warm welcome to the Japanese delegation, emphasizing the strong and friendly relations between Kuwait and Japan.

They highlighted the crucial role of the private sector in economic development and fostering trade cooperation through investment projects and successful partnerships between Kuwaiti and Japanese entities. Japan stands as one of Kuwait's significant trading partners, with a trade volume reaching \$1.8

billion in 2022, excluding oil products and derivatives. The Chamber affirmed its readiness to provide comprehensive services to bolster economic ties between the two nations.

In response, Omoti expressed gratitude to the Chamber for hosting the meeting and acknowledged the substantial interest shown by Kuwaiti business leaders in exploring new economic opportunities with Japan. He underscored Japan's keenness in participating in Kuwait's development projects as a major trading partner and hoped the meeting would further solidify bilateral economic relations through the establishment of Kuwaiti-Japanese trade partnerships.

The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented a briefing on the Kuwaiti economy, followed by an overview of the Direct Investment Encouragement Law in Kuwait and the incentives it offers to foreign investors by the Single Window Department of the Direct Investment Promotion Authority.

Furthermore, Japanese companies showcased their services and products in water-saving technology, health institutes, medical devices, and meat through visual presentations, indicating their interest in contributing to Kuwait's economic growth and development.



A group pic of Zain's team and success partners



Waleed Al Khashti with Ahmad Al Enzi, Ali Shadad, Meshal Al Ansari, Abdulrahman Al Oun, Zainab Al Enzi, and Ahmad Al Majed.

Company holds press conference joined by public and private sector partners

Zain unveils annual Ramadan campaign's extensive program

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Zain held a press conference at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh to unveil the extensive program of its annual Ramadan social campaign, dubbed Zain Al Shuhoor. The conference was joined by six of Zain's strategic community partners from both the public and private sectors. This year's campaign promises a wide range of humanitarian, charitable, social, religious, health, and sports programs that will continue throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The press conference was attended by Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti, Public Relations Manager and Spokesman for the Ministry of Social Affairs Ahmad Al Enzi, Director of the Grand Mosque Administration Ali Shadad, Kuwait Food Bank Vice-Chairman Meshal Al Ansari, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Managing Director Abdulrahman Al Oun, Public Authority for Disability Affairs Supervisor Zainab Al Enzi, and Suffix General Manager Ahmad Al Majed.

During the conference, Waleed Al Khashti said: "At Zain, we're always proud to claim that Zain Alshuhoor is one of the biggest and most successful community campaigns during the Holy Month. Every year, we make sure to introduce a bigger, renewed version of the campaign that expands upon the previous year in its initiatives and programs."

Al Khashti added: "Without a doubt, such success has many key factors, most important of which is the presence of strategic partners whom we collaborate with to reflect the Holy Month's spirit of giving and kindness. After all, the success of any community program of this scale relies on close collaboration and a shared vision, and we're extremely proud of what we've achieved with our partners so far."

"It is also important to highlight the tremendous efforts of our media partners, who continue to shed light on the many programs and initiatives of our annual campaign. For this, I take this opportunity to thank them for being with us today and for their constant presence and great efforts in helping us create a bigger impact in the community." He added.

Al Khashti concluded by saying: "The main goal for this campaign will always be to share the blessings of this much-cherished month with the entire Kuwaiti people. We will always work hard to reflect this community's beautiful values in helping others and spreading love, peace, and togetherness."

Public Relations Manager and Spokesman for the Ministry of Social Affairs Ahmad Al Enzi said: "Zain has been a humanitarian and social partner of the Ministry of Social Affairs for 21 years. Throughout this period, we've worked together to support many of the communities that the ministry serves, including foster care children, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities. We urge other private sector institutions to follow Zain's example and present such community campaigns that bring socially impactful programs."

Director of the Grand Mosque Administration Ali Shadad said: "Our partnership with Zain started 28 years ago and has encompassed a plethora of charitable, humanitarian, and social contributions. This has effectively reflected the beautiful values of the Kuwaiti community in always being eager to help others. This year, Zain continues to be our main partner in many of the Grand Mosque's programs, including the main tent for Iftar meals, hospitality services for worshippers, the first Holy Quran Recital Competition from Zain, and more. All this and more reaffirms that the Grand Mosque is a leading cultural and religious center within the State of Kuwait."

Kuwait Food Bank Vice-Chairman Meshal Al Ansari commented: "The Kuwait Food Bank continues to carry out many charitable activities throughout the year, especially during the Holy Month season. We have an extended strategic partnership with Zain to implement several charitable projects, through which we work together to serve underprivileged communities by providing food supplies and other contributions."

- Campaign comes in collaboration with 6 of Zain's strategic partners: 'Social Affairs', Grand Mosque, 'Disability Affairs', KRCS, 'Food Bank', and Suffix
- Waleed Al Khashti: "The success of any community program of this scale relies on close collaboration and a shared vision. We're proud of what we've achieved with our partners"
- Campaign promises a wide range of humanitarian, charitable, social, and sports programs



Waleed Al Khashti speaking at the press conference.



Zain Alshuhoor 2024

Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Managing Director Abdulrahman Al Oun said: "Our partnership with Zain started over 30 years ago, and it is one of the very first private sector companies that encourage community

service both in and outside of Kuwait. The company has always taken initiative to partner with KRCS to serve our charitable, humanitarian, and social contributions, including providing food supplies, organizing donation campaigns, and much more."

Authority for Disability Affairs Supervisor Zainab Al Enzi commented: "The Authority serves nearly 65,000 people with disabilities, offering education, career, and rehabilitation services. Our partnership with Zain centers around humanitarian and social principles, and we thank them for their many contributions every year to serve our communities in the Social Care Centers with engaging programs, initiatives, social visits, and more."

Suffix General Manager Ahmad Al Majed said: "Suffix was founded in 2007, and Zain has been one of the first companies to support us throughout the past 15 years. This proves their well-established vision to support the youth and sports sectors. Ultimately, our main goal is to create impactful programs that promote health and sports awareness in Kuwait, and to put our nation on the regional and global map in these areas. Throughout our partnership with Zain, we presented tens of effective programs and initiatives that helped achieve this goal, and this year we bring back the Zain Ramadan Challenge for the third year running along with other programs to promote an active, healthy lifestyle."

Zain kicked-off its Ramadan campaign by delivering 'Ramadan Machla' (food supplies) in collaboration with three of its non-profit strategic partners: the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Social Care Centers, and the Kuwait Food Bank.

Zain's Iftar Hall initiative, which is a main pillar of the company's Ramadan campaign every year, comes back for its 17th year. Zain provides daily meals at the main tent in the Grand Mosque and through the Kuwait Food Bank via trucks that areas around Kuwait.

This year, Zain partners with the Grand Mosque to present daily Iftar meals, the first Holy Quran Recital Competition from Zain, the Holy Quran Recital Competition for Zain employees, hospitality services to worshippers during the last ten days of the Holy Month, facilitate transportation of worshippers with mobile carts, and more.

In continuation of its long-term partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Social Care Centers, Zain this year offers food supplies and sponsors the annual Girgeaan celebration to bring joy into the hearts of foster care children, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities.

Every Ramadan, Zain diversifies the content of its campaign to include cultural and recreational programs. This year, Zain partners with Kuwait TV for the highly popular 'Iftar Canon' program that receives wide interaction on a daily basis. The company also partners with Al Rai TV to sponsor the popular talk show with Kuwaiti star Nabeel Shuaib for the third consecutive season. Zain also partners with 360 FM to sponsor 'Mukhalat', the popular radio show offering daily prizes to listeners and winners all through the Holy Month.

This year, Zain invited all its employees to join its very own volunteer team to contribute to the campaign's many initiatives and programs with its strategic partners. Zain's campaign will also include many other contributions, such as hosting an Iftar banquet for employees of various ministries and agencies, Girgeaan celebrations and social activities with community members, in addition to many activities dedicated to Zain employees.

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BUSINESS

ICE trains are parked outside the central station in Frankfurt, Germany, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024. Two German unions on Monday again called on their members - German airline Lufthansa's ground staff and German rail operator's Deutsche Bahn train drivers - to go on strike this week following ongoing negotiations over wages and working conditions. (AP)



flights and trains will be canceled again this week in Germany

Thousands of flights and trains are expected to be canceled again this week in Germany after two unions on Monday called for more strikes over wages and working conditions. Negotiations continue for ground staff of German airline Lufthansa and German rail operator's Deutsche Bahn train drivers. German train drivers' union GDL and Ver.di called for the strikes Thursday and Friday.

Around 200,000 air passengers will be affected by the two-day strike, according to an initial estimate by the Lufthansa Group, meaning that around 1,000 flights per day will be canceled as during previous strikes, German news agency dpa reported. The strike on long-distance and regional train services begins at 2:00 a.m. (0100GMT) on Thursday and will affect

millions of travelers. According to GDL, the strike is set to last until 1 p.m. Friday. In freight transport, the strike will begin on Wednesday at 6 p.m. (1700GMT) and is scheduled to last until 5 a.m. Friday. In addition to pay raises, GDL has been calling for working hours to be reduced from 38 to 35 per week without a pay cut, which Deutsche Bahn has refused.

The Ver.di union seeks a 12.5% pay raise, or at least 500 euros (\$542) more per month, in negotiations for nearly 25,000 Lufthansa ground workers including check-in, aircraft handling, maintenance and freight staff. Coinciding contract negotiations have resulted in several recent walkouts in the rail, air and local transport sectors in Germany. (AP)

stc Kuwait's 5G RedCap FWA project will herald a new era in broadband services

stc Kuwait launches pioneering 5G RedCap FWA in the Middle East

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the Middle East's inaugural commercial deployment of 5G RedCap Fixed Wireless Access (FWA).

This announcement was made at the second forum of the ELITE FWA Club, held on the sidelines of MWC 2024.

The service represents a transformative advancement in high-speed, reliable internet access for both residential and commercial clientele.

The forum attracted founding members alongside an array of global telecom leaders and ecosystem stakeholders.

5G RedCap FWA heralds a new

era in broadband services, offering users unparalleled, seamless connectivity.

It stands out for its ability to provide stable, reliable speeds while ensuring cost-effectiveness.

This innovation is achieved through optimized hardware design, which includes extended battery life, reduced power consumption, and improved spectrum efficiency on 5G CPE routers, making high-quality 5G technology accessible at significantly lower costs.

Consequently, it not only enhances customer experience but also lowers the barriers to 5G adoption, encouraging the transition from 4G to 5G.

Key features of 5G RedCap FWA service include:

■ High-Speed Connectivity: Delivers robust and consistent inter-

net speeds, catering to the digital needs of today's lifestyle.

■ Unmatched Reliability: Ensures a stable and dependable home broadband connection, providing uninterrupted access to online services.

■ Innovation Leadership: Demonstrates stc's dedication to leading innovation in the region, introducing the latest technological breakthroughs to its customers.

Eng. Amer Atoui, Chief Consumer Officer of stc Kuwait, stated, "Launching 5G RedCap FWA ushers in a groundbreaking chapter for internet connectivity in the Middle East.

We take pride in being the region's pioneer, reaffirming our commitment to delivering innovative solutions that enrich our customers' lives."



Amer Atouii and Fahad Al-Ali during the second session of the ELITE FWA Club Forum.

AI pervades everyday life with almost no oversight

States scramble to catch up

DENVER, March 5, (AP): While artificial intelligence made headlines with ChatGPT, behind the scenes, the technology has quietly pervaded everyday life - screening job resumes, rental apartment applications, and even determining medical care in some cases.

While a number of AI systems have been found to discriminate, tipping the scales in favor of certain races, genders or incomes, there's scant government oversight.

Lawmakers in at least seven states are taking big legislative swings to regulate bias in artificial intelligence, filling a void left by Congress' inaction. These proposals are some of the first steps in a decades-long discussion over balancing the benefits of this nebulous new technology with the widely documented risks.

"AI does in fact affect every part of your life whether you know it or not," said Suresh Venkatasubramanian, a Brown University professor who co-authored the White House's Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights.

"Now, you wouldn't care if they all worked fine. But they don't."

Success or failure will depend on lawmakers working through complex problems while negotiating with an industry worth hundreds of billions of dollars and growing at a speed best measured in lightyears.

Last year, only about a dozen of the nearly 200 AI-related bills introduced in statehouses were passed into law, according to BSA The Software Alliance, which advocates on behalf of software companies.

Those bills, along with the over 400 AI-related bills being debated this year, were largely aimed at regulating smaller slices of AI. That includes nearly 200 targeting deepfakes, including proposals to bar pornographic deepfakes, like those of Taylor Swift that flooded social media. Others are trying to rein in chatbots, such as ChatGPT, to ensure they don't cough up instructions to make a bomb, for example.

Those are separate from the seven state bills that would apply across industries to regulate AI discrimination - one of the technology's most perverse and complex problems - being debated from California to Connecticut.

Those who study AI's penchant to discriminate say states are already behind in establishing guardrails. The use of AI to make consequential decisions - what the bills call "automated decision tools" - is pervasive but largely hidden.

It's estimated as many as 83% of employers use algorithms to help in hiring; that's 99% for Fortune 500 companies, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Yet the majority of Americans are unaware that these tools are being used, polling from Pew Research shows, let alone whether the systems are biased.

An AI can learn bias through the data it's trained on, typically historical data that can hold a Trojan Horse of past discrimination.

Amazon scuttled its hiring algo-



Chinese President Xi Jinping, left, together with Chinese Premier Li Qiang attend the opening session of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, Tuesday, March 5, 2024. (AP)

China sets an economic growth target of 5% but says it will not be easy to achieve

BEIJING, March 5, (AP): China aims to achieve 5% economic growth this year, Premier Li Qiang said Tuesday, acknowledging that it will be a challenging goal in difficult times.

In his address to the annual session of the National People's Congress, Li outlined plans to boost spending on developing advanced technology, fortifying China's military and supporting the economy, among other long-standing goals. But there was no big package of stimulus to help boost markets and reassure worried investors.

Li, presenting an annual report on the past year and future plans, said the government would continue with a "proactive fiscal policy and prudent monetary policy," suggesting no major change in the leadership's approach to the economy.

He did unveil a plan to boost growth by issuing long-term bonds over the next several years, starting with 1 trillion yuan (about \$139 billion) this year. The money would be spent to implement "major national strategies" and fortify security "in key areas."

Li said the government plans a "new development model" for the housing market, including building government-subsidized housing in a bid to ease a prolonged real estate slump that has been a major drag on the economy.

It also appeared to confirm reports that authorities plan to use public funds to buy up some of China's legions of unoccupied apartments and turn them into affordable housing.

"Achieving this year's targets will not be easy," Li said, referring not only to economic growth and other goals including raising incomes, creating 12 million jobs and making the economy more energy efficient in pursuit of climate goals.

China has set a 2.5% goal for reducing its energy consumption, after having failed to meet its target for a 2% cut in 2023.

Xi Jinping, China's most powerful leader in decades, heads the party and has installed loyalists like Li in top posts to strengthen its grip on the economy and society. Xi, 70, is in his third five-year term as party general secretary and may hold that post for life.

The meetings of the national congress run for about a week and are China's biggest political events of the year. The congress only endorses policies already set by top leaders, but it provides a platform to showcase the party's accomplishments and to build support for its aims.

Leaders have been emphasizing the need to raise consumer spending to help drive the economy. But the consumption-led recovery it was counting on after anti-pandemic controls ended in late 2022 has faded and most forecasts are for growth to slow this year.

China's economy grew at a 5.2% pace last year, but that was on top of just 3% annual growth rate in 2022, when millions of people were locked down for weeks and some businesses were ordered to close as the country endured the worst disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic. Replicating the same growth rate this year will be more difficult, because the economy is starting from a higher base.

Black woman, applied to rent an apartment in Massachusetts and received a cryptic response: "The third-party service we utilize to screen all prospective tenants has denied your tenancy."

When Louis submitted two landlord references to show she'd paid rent early or on time for 16 years, court records say, she received another reply: "Unfortunately, we do not accept appeals and cannot override the outcome of the Tenant Screening."

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Federal judge blocks deal

JetBlue and Spirit are ending their \$3.8 billion merger plan

JetBlue Airways and Spirit Airlines are ending their proposed \$3.8 billion merger weeks after a federal judge blocked the deal, saying it would hurt consumers who depend on Spirit's lower fares.

JetBlue said Monday that even though both companies still believe in the deal, they were unlikely to meet the closing conditions required in the agreement before a July 24 deadline.

JetBlue's new CEO, Joanna Geraghty, called the merger "a bold and courageous plan intended to shake up the industry status quo" and speed JetBlue's growth.

"However, with the ruling from the federal court and the Department of Justice's continued opposition, the probability of getting the green light to move forward with the merger anytime soon is extremely low," Geraghty said in a memo to employees of New York airline. She said uncertainty over the merger's fate was distracting the airline from its effort to return to profitability.

Spirit CEO Ted Christie said he was disappointed that the airlines could not combine and create a new challenger to the nation's four biggest airlines but said he is confident that Spirit - which has been losing money since the pandemic started - can succeed on its own.

The Justice Department sued to block the merger last year, saying it would reduce competition and drive up fares, especially for travelers who depend on low-fare Spirit.

In January, a federal district judge in Boston sided with the government and blocked the deal, saying it violated antitrust law.

On Monday, the Justice Department took a victory lap.

"Today's decision by JetBlue is yet another victory for the Justice Department's work on behalf of American consumers," Attorney General Mer-

rick Garland said in a statement. "The Justice Department proved in court that a merger between JetBlue and Spirit would have caused tens of millions of travelers to face higher fares and fewer choices. We will continue to vigorously enforce the nation's antitrust laws."

The airlines had appealed the ruling, and a hearing had been set for June in the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston.

The Biden administration's Justice Department, which has fought against consolidation in several industries, previously killed a partnership between JetBlue and American Airlines on flights in New York and Boston.

The collapse of the sale to JetBlue could leave Spirit in a precarious position, facing looming debt payments while a portion of its planes are grounded by engine problems.

Unlike bigger airlines that attract more upscale passengers - and now offer their own bare-bones fares to compete with budget carriers - Spirit has not recovered from the pandemic. It lost \$447 million last year and \$1.9 billion since the start of 2020.

A JPMorgan Chase analyst said in January that he couldn't see a viable path for Spirit on its own to return to profitability any time soon.

JetBlue has also been losing money - \$2.2 billion since 2020. But JetBlue's revenue is about 80% higher than Spirit's, giving it more of a cushion against a losing streak. Activist investor Carl Icahn bought nearly 10% of JetBlue stock last month and won two seats on the airline's board.

Spirit announced a \$2.2 billion merger with Frontier Airlines in early 2022. That deal would have combined two similar carriers that charge lower fares than the big airlines but add on fees that generate a large chunk of their revenue. (AP)

Apple gets fined nearly \$2 billion by the EU for hindering music streaming competition

LONDON, March 5, (AP): The European Union leveled its first antitrust penalty against Apple on Monday, fining the U.S. tech giant nearly \$2 billion for unfairly favoring its own music streaming service by forbidding rivals like Spotify from telling users how they could pay for cheaper subscriptions outside of iPhone apps.

Apple muzzled streaming services from telling users about payment options available through their websites, which would avoid the 30% fee charged when people pay through apps downloaded with the iOS App Store, said the European Commission, the 27-nation bloc's executive arm and top antitrust enforcer.

"This is illegal. And it has impacted millions of European consumers who were not able to make a free choice as to where, how and at what price to buy music streaming subscriptions," Margrethe Vestager, the EU's competition commissioner, said at a news conference in Brussels.

Apple - which contests the decision - behaved this way for a decade, resulting in "millions of people who have paid two, three euros more per month for their music streaming service than they would otherwise have had to pay," she said.

It's the culmination of a bitter, yearslong feud between Apple and Spotify over music streaming supremacy. A complaint from the Swedish streaming service five years ago triggered the investigation that led to the 1.8 billion-euro (\$1.95 billion) fine.

The decision comes the same week new rules take effect to prevent tech giants from cornering digital markets.

The EU has led global efforts to crack down on Big Tech companies, including three fines for Google totaling more than 8 billion euros, charging

Meta with distorting the online classified ad market and forcing Amazon to change its business practices.

Apple's fine is so high because it includes an extra lump sum to deter it from offending again or other tech companies from carrying out similar offenses, the commission said.

It's not the only penalty that the tech giant could face: Apple is still trying to resolve a separate EU antitrust investigation into its mobile payments service by promising to open up its tap-and-go mobile payment system to rivals.

Apple hit back at the commission and Spotify, saying it would appeal Monday's fine.

"The decision was reached despite the Commission's failure to uncover any credible evidence of consumer harm, and ignores the realities of a market that is thriving, competitive, and growing fast," the company said in a statement.

It said Spotify stood to benefit from the EU's move, asserting that the Swedish streaming giant met over 65 times with the commission during the investigation, holds a 56% share of Europe's music streaming market and doesn't pay Apple for using its App Store.

"Ironically, in the name of competition, today's decision just cements the dominant position of a successful European company that is the digital market's runaway leader," Apple said.

Spotify said it welcomed the EU fine, without addressing Apple's accusations.

"This decision sends a powerful message - no company, not even a monopoly like Apple, can wield power abusively to control how other companies interact with their customers," Spotify said in a blog post.

Savour spirit of season with heartfelt traditions and decadent dining at Forbes Five-Star Hotel

Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya prepares for a radiant Ramadan in collaboration with Genesis

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Glittering memory-making awaits at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya this Ramadan as the city's art-filled sanctuary unveils its celebrations for the Holy Month: dazzling Iftar and Ghabga feasting in the opulent surrounds of the Jawaher tent, kids' activities, spa treats, room offers, and more.

"It's always a privilege to celebrate the Holy Month of Ramadan with our guests in Kuwait City," says General Manager Martin Kipping. "Whether it's creating culinary magic for a Ghabga spread, decorating the opulent Jawaher Tent, or entertaining the little ones at Kids' Corner, our dedicated team consider it a great honour to help make special memories for guests of all ages."

"We are also excited this year about our cooperation with Genesis Cars and its authorized dealer in Kuwait, Northern Gulf Trading Co.," added Kipping. Northern Gulf Trading Group, the exclusive authorized dealer for the Genesis brand in Kuwait is the exclusive sponsor of Jawaher Ramadan tent this year. "We are glad about this partnership with Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait to showcase Genesis luxury cars to the elite Kuwaiti market", commented Raed Turjuman, CEO, Northern Gulf Trading Co.

Divine Dining, Decadent Setting
The combined vision of a global team of interior designers, the Hotel's Jawaher Tent is the ultimate location for Ramadan dining. Up to 600 guests can savour its sparkling, gold-hued ambience and Arabian elegance, while six private majlis and VIP Lounges seating allow for exclusive evenings.

Executive Chef Thierry Papillier and his team of culinary artists pour heart and soul into abundant Iftar and Ghabga feasts. Traditional Kuwaiti and Arabic fare such as jareesh, harees and machboos are joined by Asian delights from Sinto and Italian creativity from Dai Forni. The tent features a brand new section of Indian food, featuring all the favourite classics of



The combined vision of a global team of interior designers, the Hotel's Jawaher Tent is the ultimate location for Ramadan dining.

this loved cuisine.

Concluding each celebratory meal, an artful selection of desserts and bite-size treats includes a free-flowing chocolate fountain, while the Hotel's Al Soor Lounge offers boxes of handcrafted chocolates for take-home treats and Ramadan gift giving.

Live performances from traditional musicians set the auditory scene for joyful connection, while an elegant shisha area continues the festivities well into the night.

Fun for all the Family

Ensuring adults get some well-deserved downtime, a dedicated Kids' Corner showcases plenty of inspiring activities to keep younger guests entertained. During Iftar and Ghabga, children aged six to eleven dine for just half the price, while kids

aged five and under are welcomed free of charge.

On Ramadan 13 and 15, special Gergean celebrations channel the sweet and jubilant warmth of the occasion, inviting families to savour time together.

Available for the first three days of Eid, the 21st floor brunch—available for lunch and dinner—unites flavours from the East and West as Sinto and Dai Forni join hands to create a dazzling feast, complete with live music and DJ, interactive cooking stations and spectacular 21st floor views.

Ramadan Stay, Your Way!

For the first time in Kuwait, embrace the spirit of Ramadan with our 24-Hour Stay offer. Check in at your convenience and savour a full day and night of luxury, with your departure a full 24 hours after ar-

rival. Room Offers start at KWD 80 with the option to include a decadent Iftar dining at Jawaher tent, with prices from KWD 95.

Elevate Your Wellness at Our Five-Star Retreat

Dive into relaxation with our Moroccan Hammam and Recovery Experience, a 90-minute journey for KD 110. Enhance your well-being with membership access to our Forbes Five-Star Spa and Wellness Centre, featuring state-of-the-art equipment, diverse fitness classes, personalized training, and luxurious pools. Discover the pinnacle of tranquility and health in one elite destination.

For bookings or more details of the Ramadan celebrations at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya, please contact +965 2200 6000 or visit: www.fourseasons.com/kuwait

Collaborative training program shapes Kuwaiti youth for career success

Agility and Engineering Systems Group join forces to train Kuwaiti youth

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: Agility Logistics Parks (ALP), a leading owner and developer of warehousing and light industrial parks in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, joined Engineering Systems Group (ESG) to provide intensive facility management training for over 35 Kuwaiti youth and university graduates for the second year-in-a-row.

The intensive training program by ALP and ESG ran from November 5 to December 7 2023, and was a critical part of a greater capacity building program by Kuwait's Youth Public Authority.

ALP and ESG partnered to provide training on industrial zones, real estate management, facility management, contract management and other essential skills.

The program also featured on-site sessions at ALP's industrial and warehousing facilities, offering participants an opportunity to observe and assess ALP's operations. All trainees were mandated to attend the program's lectures and workshops and pass a final exam to earn their facility management certification.

Nader Sakeen, CEO ALP Kuwait and



Gulf, said: "Nothing pleases us more at Agility than supporting Kuwaiti youth, especially equipping them for successful careers in the private sector. We are delighted to collaborate for the second time with the Public Authority for Youth and our colleagues at Engineering Systems Group.

"As the leading owner and developer of warehousing and light industrial parks in the Middle East, Agility always welcomes such opportunities. Our doors are always open to support all our youth."

Ahmed B. Al-Eisa Chairman and CEO of ESG, said: "Drawing from our experience at Engineering Systems



Photos from the event.

Group, and guided by our mission to implement an integrated approach to

project development and management, we recognize the importance of training and qualification in facility management, security, safety, and environment as a fundamental part of any successful project.

"We are pleased to collaborate with Agility and the Public Authority for Youth to train and qualify our national workforce, enhancing their practical skills and serving the aspirations of both public and private sectors by fostering a new generation of competitive Kuwaiti youth."

The industry program is designed to expose the youth and graduates to various professional sectors.



Group photo during the first IDAK Activity Club event.

IDAK inaugurates activity club with sunrise drive

The Indian Dentists' Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK) organized the first IDAK Activity Club event on March 1st. Members drove to the highest point in Kuwait, Mutla Ridge early in the morning to witness the beautiful sunrise over the Kuwait skyline.

The drive was flagged off by IDAK Vice President, Dr. Roshila Mathew and Treasurer Dr. Srikanth Reddy.

About 40 SUVs participated in the early morning drive which started at 4.00 am.

The fun filled event organised by the Event Management Committee of IDAK was the brain child of the new IDAK Council.

Families enjoyed the group drive, cool weather, beautiful sunrise, hot snacks and live music organised by the Event Management Committee led by Dr. Aju Wilson and ably supported by Dr. Vinod Sam, Dr. Nithin Mathew, Dr. Sudhin Thomas, Dr. Rahul Puthalath, Dr. Anju Samuel and Dr. Reena Vinod.

President Dr. George P Alex said, such fun events help the members and their families to unwind from their busy professional life and help to build camaraderie and bonding among members in the association. General Secretary Dr. Jijan Sam Thomas congratulated the organising team and promised

that the Council will continue to bring such innovative events which help the members mentally as well as physically. Joint Secretary Dr. Asheel Mohamed thanked all the members for their active participation in the event.

2nd Joint Secretary Dr. Amrita Geevarghese pointed out that the next highly anticipated event in IDAK calendar is the Volleyball & Throwball Tournament, which is the first event of IDAK - KDD Sports Championship 2024-25 and will be held at ArganBedaya in Sabah Al-Salem on 8th March. She welcomed everyone to attend and support the players.

Community gathers for reflection

TMA embarks on a 'spiritual journey' with Marhaban Ya Ramadan program

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: In the Name of The Almighty, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

Tamil Nadu Muslim Association (TMA) Conducted Marhaban Ya Ramadan (Welcome Ramadan) special program on 29.02.2024 (Thursday) evening, in memories Hall, Mangaf.

The Program started with the recitation of Noble Quran by Br. Javeed followed by an Islamic Nashed sung by Br. Mydeen which made the program more enthusiastic.

Then before giving the keynote speech by Br. Abdul Wahab president of TMA, has put forward some 12 questions to the audience for the Introspection.

In his main speech he made an interactive session with audience by asking, How we are going to spend the upcoming Ramadan?

Or it will be just like every year passing by or we are going to plan and utilize it productively? Which triggered the audience for an exercise of self-assessment.

After his speech, Questions were asked on the topic and prizes were distributed to the ones who answered correctly.

TMA activities and works are



Photos during the event.

presented by Br. Zahir (Advisory member) with his slide presentation to enlighten the audience to join hands to do better work for the society.

Over 170 people, including women and children participated in this auspicious event and the food packets were distributed.

The convener of the program Br. Mydeen hosted the event in his majestic style.

Various arrangements were made outside the venue such as the IFT Kuwait book stall, where the participants purchased the books.

We pray to Allah the Almighty to accept our work!

People & Places

Lifestyle

Luxury meets tradition

Discover Ramadan Essences at Waldorf Astoria Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: In a unique collaboration, Waldorf Astoria Kuwait is proud to present the grand opening of Kubbar Tent, an exquisite Ramadan experience, generously sponsored by Lincoln Alghanim. The holy month of Ramadan approaches, guests are invited to immerse themselves in a culinary journey filled with authentic flavors and cherished traditions within the luxurious confines of Waldorf Astoria Kuwait.

"We are excited to welcome our guests to our Ramadan Kubbar Tent. We're not just creating an unforgettable moment; we're curating an atmosphere of opulence, indulgence, and genuine hospitality. From the lavish buffet spread featuring the most exquisite delicacies to the service, every detail is meticulously designed to exceed expectations for our guests during the holy month of Ramadan," says Kemal Sirtikirmizi, General Manager of Waldorf Astoria Kuwait.

An Exquisite Culinary Journey Under the Stars
Nestled within the luxurious embrace of Waldorf Astoria Kuwait, Kubbar Tent invites guests to a culinary haven where Middle Eastern and international flavors seamlessly come together. Executive Chef Gurkan Gozyilmaz and alongside his expert culinary team has thoughtfully crafted a menu that transcends traditional norms, presenting a flavorful adventure that captivates and tantalize your taste buds. From traditional dishes to exciting global flavors, each culinary craftmanship served at Kubbar Tent reflects the dedication and skill that defines the dining experience. As part of this enchanting culinary journey, guests are invited to enjoy the unique ambiance of this outdoor venue beneath the night sky.

Here, amidst the stars, guests can savor a variety of Ramadan favorites, with live cooking stations offering a delightful array of freshly baked bread, tasty kebabs, mouth-watering Wagyu beef shawarma, and more. This promises not just a meal but an immersive and memorable dining experience for everyone.

As part of this enchanting culinary journey, guests are also invited to enjoy the sweet side of the season with a delectable array of desserts and drinks complementing their Iftar and Ghabga experiences. From handpicked Ramadan beverages like Qamar Al-Deen and Jellab to essentials such as tea and coffee, Waldorf Astoria Kuwait ensures a perfect conclusion to the dining experience with oriental desserts, including homemade baklava, special mastic ice-cream and freshly baked kunefe. This immersive dining experience beneath the night sky promises not just a meal but a delightful journey for everyone.

Kubbar Tent goes beyond being just a dining destination; it caters to little guests with curated activities such as games, face painting, and a selection of cartoons, ensuring an enjoyable experience for the whole family.

Throughout the month of Ramadan, Kubbar Tent extends its warm welcome from sunset until midnight, offering both Iftar and Ghabga experiences. The pricing for these unforgettable dining moments is set at KWD 27 per person for Iftar and KWD 25 per person for Ghabga. Children below the age of six can indulge in complimentary dining, while children aged six to 12 years old can enjoy a 50% off on both Iftar and Ghabga meals. With a family-friendly atmosphere and a range of activities, Kubbar



Tent ensures that every member of the family has a memorable and enjoyable time.

Host Your Ramadan Event
Waldorf Astoria Kuwait extends an invitation to create enduring memories with family, friends, or your guests by selecting our exquisite venues for your Ramadan Iftar or Ghabga event. With a commitment to exceptional service, meticulous attention to detail, and offering special group pricing for gatherings accommodating up to 600 guests, your occasion is guaranteed to be extraordinary. Choose Waldorf Astoria Kuwait as your hosting destination and let us ensure that your Ramadan celebration becomes a truly special and memorable experience.

Purifying Hammam Experience at Waldorf Astoria Spa

Immerse yourself in the traditional grandeur of our Turkish Hammam, where time-honored traditions seamlessly blend with luxury. Following a thorough consultation with your therapist, a dedicated hammam space tailored to your needs awaits. This rejuvenating treatment features

24kt gold for cellular renewal, Vitamin C for brightening, and Micro-Cellular actives for toning and firming, revealing beautifully rejuvenated skin. Priced at KWD 85 for a 75-minute session, guests can also enjoy extended relaxation with a 15% off on a 90-minute massage of their choice, ensuring a remarkable and unforgettable journey to rejuvenation. At Waldorf Astoria Spa, we are committed to pampering our guests with exclusive offers, making each visit an unforgettable journey of bliss and tranquility.



Waldorf Astoria Kuwait unveils the Kubbar Tent for an unforgettable Ramadan experience, sponsored by Lincoln Alghanim.

The Month of Giving

In celebration of the spirit of giving, Waldorf Astoria Kuwait presents thoughtfully crafted special gifts Executive Pastry Chef Can Mergen and his team. Delight in an array of indulgences, from luscious chocolate truffles to timeless traditional Arabic sweets, ensuring a treat for every palate. Revel in the pleasure of gourmet delights with your family and loved ones, all from the comfort of your home, throughout the month.

A Luxurious Eid Celebration

Celebrate Eid Al-Fitr in style with our celebratory brunch at Waldorf Astoria Kuwait. Immerse yourself in a luxury dining experience in a harmonious atmosphere. Delight in both traditional Kuwaiti delicacies and international cuisine picks, comprising of a selection of delectable main courses such as Lamb Ouzi and Chicken Machboos, and more.

For reservations and more information, please contact the hotel on +965 2477 4414 or emailrestaurantreservations. email:kuwait@waldorfastoria.com

Ballet

Timeless classic

Acosta infuses Cuban blend in 'Nutcracker'

LONDON, March 5, (AP) — Carlos Acosta, the Cuban-born ballet star, has danced "The Nutcracker" countless times in his glittering career. Now he's giving the ballet a twist by putting the culture and music of his homeland at the heart of the holiday classic.

Acosta is choreographing and directing his new show, "Nutcracker in Havana," which reimagines the traditional story by setting it in Cuba and fusing classical ballet with the street dances of Havana. It will be set to a new version of Tchaikovsky's familiar score, mixed with vibrant Latin jazz, bossa nova and Cuban folk.

"It's the ballet I've most performed in my entire career ... but this is going to be a Nutcracker completely different to all the rest of the Nutcrackers out there," Acosta told The Associated Press Monday in London as he launched the new production. "It's going to be joyful, it's going to be happy just like Cuban people are."

The show, which is set to tour U.K. cities from November, will be performed by some 20 dancers from Acosta Danza, the Havana-based dance company Acosta founded in 2016 after retiring from classical ballet.

It's something of a journey back in time to Acosta's humble beginnings in Havana, where the dancer grew up as the youngest of 11 children in a deprived neighborhood. As a young boy, Acosta was into disco and break-dancing with his friends; he didn't start ballet training until about 9 years old, but he soon advanced to the very top of the dance world against the odds.

At 18, he became the youngest principal dancer at the English National Ballet, and he later became the first Black principal at London's prestigious Royal Ballet, where he was based for 17 years.

Stephen Crocker, chief executive of eastern England's Norwich Theatre, where the new ballet will open, said having a Black artist recreate the classic European story is key to the project's goal of reaching as wide and diverse an audience as possible - including those who would not otherwise have considered going to the ballet.

"A lot of versions of Nutcracker look the same, you see people who look the same in every production," Crocker said. "This has always been part of the vision for this telling of Nutcracker - that it should speak differently."



Acosta



In this July 10, 2019 file photograph, singer Taylor Swift performs at Amazon Music's Prime Day concert at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York. (AP)



Principal dancer Laura Rodriguez performs at a presentation for media about the brand-new production 'Nutcracker in Havana' at the Carlos Acosta Dance Studios in London, Monday, March 4, 2024. (AP)

Film

SANTA FE, N.M.: An ammunition supplier testified at trial Monday that he only provided inert dummy rounds to the Western film "Rust" where actor Alex Baldwin fatally shot a cinematographer in 2021, though he also was handling live rounds from another production at that time.

Albuquerque-based movie firearms and ammunition supplier Seth Kenney took the stand at the trial of "Rust" movie armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, who is charged with involuntary manslaughter and evidence tampering in the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins.

Kenney told a jury he cleaned and repackaged ammunition to

Music

Trump's use of 'Nothing Compares 2 U' denounced

O'Connor's estate urges music ban

LONDON, March 5, (AP) — The estate of Sinead O'Connor on Monday asked Donald Trump not to play her music at campaign rallies, saying the late singer considered the former president a "biblical devil."

Trump has played O'Connor's biggest hit, "Nothing Compares 2 U," at events as he campaigns for the Republican presidential nomination.

In a joint statement, O'Connor's estate and her record label, Chrysalis, demanded Trump "desist from using her music immediately."

It said the Irish singer, who died last year aged 56, "lived by a fierce moral code defined by honesty, kindness, fairness and decency towards her fellow human beings."

"It was with outrage therefore that we learned that Donald Trump has been using her iconic performance of Nothing Com-

paring 2 U at his political rallies," the statement said.

"It is no exaggeration to say that Sinead would have been disgusted, hurt and insulted to have her work misrepresented in this way by someone who she herself referred to as a 'biblical devil.' As the guardians of her legacy, we demand that Donald Trump and his associates desist from using her music immediately."

Fiery and outspoken, O'Connor was a critic of the Roman Catholic Church well before allegations of sexual abuse were widely reported, and was open about her mental health struggles.

She was found unresponsive at her London home in July and pronounced dead at the scene. A coroner ruled that she died of natural causes.

"Rust" that was previously supplied to a production in Texas, handing off a box of 50 inert dummy rounds containing no gunpowder to the "Rust" props supervisor on Oct. 12, 2021.

Kenney also said he scrubbed the exterior of the rounds and cleaned out residue inside in each of them to ensure the telltale rattle of a metal pellet inside dummy rounds could be heard for safety purposes.

The outcome of trial may hinge on testimony about the source of six live rounds discovered on the "Rust" set - includ-

ing the one from Baldwin's gun. Live ammunition is expressly prohibited on movie sets by the industry and union guidelines.

Prosecutors say Gutierrez-Reed is to blame for unwittingly



Baldwin

Reed

bringing live ammunition on set and that she flouted basic safety protocols for weapons handling. She has pleaded not guilty.

Defense attorneys say their client is being smeared and unfairly scapegoated for problems beyond her control, including Baldwin's handling of the weapons. On Monday, they highlighted images of Kenney's "cluttered" business, a storage system without written inventories, and Kenney's "hazy" recollection of his timeline for receiving live rounds for another production. (AP)

Music

S'pore defends Eras

Swift steals show at 'Asian summit'

MELBOURNE, Australia, March 5, (AP) — Taylor Swift stole the show at an Asian summit Tuesday when Singapore's leader defended his tiny country's lucrative concert deal that could cause bad blood with neighboring nations.

Singapore is a key member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a 10-nation bloc known as ASEAN. Its three-day summit was expected to focus on member Myanmar's humanitarian crisis and conflicts in the South China Sea.

Instead, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was grilled on the summit's sidelines about an exclusive deal his city-state struck with Swift that prevents the singer from taking her Eras Tour to any other stop in Southeast Asia.

Swift is performing six concerts from March 2 to 9 in Singapore, and some Southeast Asian neighbors complain that the Singapore deal deprives them of the tourism boom her concerters bring to hosts. Her Eras Tour shattered records when it reportedly surpassed \$1 billion last year, and her film adaptation of the tour quickly took No. 1 at the box office and became the highest-grossing concert film to date.

The Singaporean leader confirmed Tuesday that Swift was provided with "certain incentives" in exchange for making Singapore her only Southeast Asian destination on her Eras Tour. Lee defended the deal at a joint news conference with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, a self-professed Swiftie whose Spotify Wrapped list boasted Taylor Swift as his second most streamed artist of 2023. Albanese is hosting the summit in Melbourne, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Australia becoming ASEAN's first external partner.

Lee did not reveal the cost of the exclusive deal, which was paid for from a government fund established to rebuild tourism after COVID-19 disruptions. He also did not directly answer when asked if he had encountered bad blood among other leaders due to the deal, instead suggesting that if Singapore hadn't struck an exclusive deal, a neighboring country might have done so.



Lee

Crucial connection between weight and well-being

Obesity and cardiovascular diseases: A global health crisis

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: In a recent interview with **Dr. Rajesh Rajan**, we delved into the impact of obesity on cardiovascular health. Dr. Rajan, senior cardiologist and an esteemed figure overseeing various clinical research registries focused on heart failure, has played a pivotal role in this field.



Dr Rajan

Introduction:
Obesity has become a pressing public health challenge that affects countries worldwide. Over the past three decades, obesity rates have steadily increased, surpassing underweight rates in almost every region. By 2025, it is estimated that 1 billion adults, or 12% of the global population, will be living with obesity. Furthermore, projections indicate that by 2030, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men globally will be affected by this condition.

The Global Obesity Crisis:
While obesity was once predominantly seen as a problem in high-income countries, it has now become a growing concern in low- and middle-income countries. These regions are ill-equipped to effectively manage and treat obesity and its consequences. Alarming, the number of individuals with obesity is predicted to double by 2030. The rise of obesity is particularly pronounced in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), adding pressure to countries already dealing with malnutrition.

Regional Disparities:
The highest rates of obesity are currently found in the WHO Americas region for both men and women. However, Africa is expected to experience a threefold increase in obesity rates by 2030, surpassing the Americas. Similarly, Asia and Africa are home to nearly three-quarters of all overweight children globally. In Africa, the number of overweight children under 5 has risen by almost 24% since 2000, with Asia accounting for a significant portion of overweight children as well.

The Link Between Obesity and Cardiovascular Diseases:
Obesity and cardiovascular diseases are interlinked health concerns that have seen a simultaneous increase in prevalence worldwide. Scientific research has established that the rise in obesity rates significantly contributes to the burden of cardiovascular diseases. Understanding the connection between excess weight and cardiovascular diseases is crucial for promoting a healthier lifestyle and mitigating the impact of these conditions.

Cardiovascular Diseases: A Leading Cause of Death:
Cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure, are the leading causes of death globally. Numerous studies have demonstrated that overweight and obesity substantially increase the risk of developing these conditions. Excess weight places additional strain on the heart and blood vessels, leading to various cardiovascular problems.

The Role of Atherosclerosis:
One of the primary mechanisms through which excess weight contributes to cardiovascular diseases is the development of atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis occurs when fatty deposits, known as plaques, build up in the arteries, narrowing them and impeding blood flow. This process can lead to the formation of blood clots, which can block blood flow to the heart or brain, resulting in heart attacks or strokes.

Other Risk Factors:
Overweight and obesity are often accompanied by other risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, such as high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, and insulin resistance. These factors

further increase the risk and severity of cardiovascular problems. Additionally, excess weight can contribute to the development of metabolic syndrome, a cluster of conditions that heighten the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

The Impact on Children and Adolescents:

It is essential to recognize that the impact of overweight and obesity on cardiovascular health extends beyond adults. Children and adolescents who are overweight or obese are also at a higher risk of developing cardiovascular diseases later in life. This underscores the importance of addressing weight-related issues early on and promoting healthy habits from a young age.

Promoting a Healthier Lifestyle:
While the global obesity crisis poses a significant challenge, there are avenues for change. By adopting a healthier lifestyle and managing weight, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular diseases. Regular physical activity strengthens the heart muscle, improves blood circulation, and helps maintain a healthy weight. A combination of aerobic exercises, such as brisk walking or cycling, and strength training can provide numerous cardiovascular benefits.

The Role of Diet:
Adopting a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, while limiting the consumption of saturated and trans fats, can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Seeking guidance from healthcare professionals or registered dietitians to create a personalized diet plan is essential in achieving optimal results.

Medical Interventions:
In some cases, medical intervention may be necessary to manage weight and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Weight loss medications or, in severe cases, bariatric surgery may be recommended by healthcare professionals. However, it is crucial to undergo these interventions under the guidance and supervision of medical experts.

Conclusion:
The undeniable link between excess weight and cardiovascular diseases highlights the urgency of addressing the global obesity crisis. Excess weight increases the risk of conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure. Understanding this connection is vital for promoting a healthier lifestyle and reducing the burden of cardiovascular diseases. By adopting a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and managing weight, individuals can significantly improve their cardiovascular health and reduce the risk of these life-threatening conditions.

Dr. Rajan is a renowned Indian cardiologist at Al Amiri Hospital Kuwait and Chairman of the Indian Association of Clinical Cardiologists. Dr. Rajan also holds prestigious positions as the current President of the Association of MD Physicians and the Managing Editor of the esteemed Annals of Clinical Cardiology Journal by Wolters Kluwer. His contributions to the medical community are highly regarded, with notable achievements that include the invention of the RHF Risk Score calculator for heart failure patients and the development of Rajan's and Kotevski's modified Lipton's classification. Beyond his groundbreaking research, Dr. Rajan has garnered recognition through various Fellowships from esteemed institutions such as the Royal College of London, Edinburgh, Ireland, and Glasgow. Moreover, he has been honored as a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, the European Society of Cardiology, and the American Heart Association, further highlighting his expertise and commitment to cardiovascular health.

Medicine, inequality, and resilience

'Spanish Inquisition' linked to US hispanic health disparities

By Margaret Boyle
Bowdoin College

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

Many of the significant health disparities and inequities Hispanic communities in the United States face are tied to a long history of health injustice in the Hispanic world.

The health landscape of early modern Hispanic societies, particularly from the late 15th to 18th centuries, was a complex interplay between professional and nonprofessional providers shaping health care. The convergence of Indigenous, African and European practices, both in Spain and the Americas, affected how clinicians treated their patients.

This all played out against the backdrop of the Inquisition and colonization, when the Catholic Church prosecuted heresy. Consolidating religious norms promoted health care through charitable activity, such as the creation of hospitals, but also created challenges between the authority of the Catholic Church and competing health care initiatives.

My research focuses on how health and medical practices in early modern Latin America and Spain are represented through cultural artifacts, including literature, recipe books, the Inquisition and convent records. In our book, my colleague Sarah Owens and I explore how gender norms affected medicine and health care. We also consider how popular representations of health and medicine in culture inform widely held beliefs and biases about these experiences.

Understanding the historical roots of health disparities in Hispanic communities can help address them both locally and globally today.

Latin America and Spain in the late 15th to 18th centuries were home to a number of medical practices, including traditional medical knowledge and remedies and the professionalization of medicine through new universities and licensing systems.

Early modern medical humanists, or Renaissance clinicians, took up medical treatises by the ancient Greek and Roman physicians, including those of Galen and Hippocrates, and revived them in the context of "learned" medical instruction through European universities. The study of Paracelsianism, or the theories of Swiss physician Paracelsus, though more contested among practitioners because of its connections to the supernatural and occult, also affected a variety of health practices across early modern Spain and colonial Latin America. With the publication of anatomical treatises at the start of the 16th century, including the work of Renaissance physician Andreas Vesalius, the study of anatomy slowly and dramatically changed medical practice.

Traditional healing practices varied significantly but often provided accessible and culturally compatible care, including reduced language barriers. Many people in Hispanic communities still rely on these practices today. Discussions about the legitimacy and health effects of folk remedies in Latin



A container with frozen embryos and sperm stored in liquid nitrogen is removed at a fertility clinic in Fort Myers, Fla., Oct. 2, 2018. (AP)

Alabama lawmakers push IVF immunity

Alabama lawmakers, who face public pressure to get in vitro fertilization services restarted, are nearing approval of immunity legislation to shield providers from the fall out of a court ruling that equated frozen embryos to children.

Committees in the Alabama House of Representatives and the Alabama Senate on Tuesday will debate legislation to protect providers from lawsuits and criminal prosecution for the "damage or death of an embryo" during IVF services. Republican Sen. Tim Melson, the sponsor of the Senate bill, said Monday they are hoping to get the proposal approved and to Gov. Kay Ivey on Wednesday.

"We anticipate the IVF protections legislation to receive final passage this week and look forward to the governor signing it into law," Ivey spokeswoman Gina

Maiola said.

Three major IVF providers paused services in the wake of an Alabama Supreme Court ruling last month that three couples, who had frozen embryos destroyed in an accident at a storage facility, could pursue wrongful death lawsuits for their "extrauterine children." The ruling, treating an embryo the same as a child or gestating fetus under the wrongful death statute, raised concerns about civil liabilities for clinics.

The court decision also caused an immediate backlash. Across the country, groups raised concerns about a court ruling recognizing embryos as children. Patients in Alabama shared stories of having upcoming embryo transfers abruptly canceled and their paths to parenthood put in doubt. (AP)

Dasman Diabetes Institute holds workshop on diabetic retinopathy

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: The Dasman Diabetes Institute, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, conducted an advanced workshop on diabetic retinopathy aimed at primary healthcare doctors within the Ministry, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The primary objective of the workshop was to enhance health awareness and elevate the quality of medical services offered to patients grappling with diabetes and its associated complications.

Tarek Aleryan, Director of Public Relations at the Institute, highlighted that the workshop spanned across two days and drew participation from a diverse array of primary healthcare doctors.

The workshop aimed to underscore the significance of early detection of diabetic

retinopathy, a prevalent complication among diabetic patients, emphasizing that neglecting this condition could result in severe risks, notably vision impairment.

Aleryan emphasized the Institute's steadfast commitment to hosting such workshops regularly due to their pivotal role in advancing ophthalmology services, improving patient care, and raising the standard of therapeutic services.

Key topics covered during the workshop encompassed risk factors associated with diabetic retinopathy, symptoms of the disease, diagnostic methods, stages of retinopathy progression, interpretation of retinal examinations, and the latest recommendations pertaining to this condition.

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Islamabad move to third on the six-team table

Shadab, Shah brothers lead Islamabad past Peshawar in PSL

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, March 5, (AP) — Islamabad United thwarted Aamer Jamal's rapid-fire half-century to beat Peshawar Zalmi by 29 runs in the Pakistan Super League on Monday.

Islamabad put up 196-4 thanks mainly to captain Shadab Khan's 80 off 51 balls.

Brothers Naseem Shah, 1-26, and Hunain Shah, 2-25, then sliced through the Peshawar top order in the power play and reduced it to 18-5.

Jamal drove the comeback by smashing 87 off 49 balls to lead them to 152-6 in the 18th over when he was clean-bowled by leg-spinner Shadab, who

finished with 3-41.

Islamabad moved to third on the six-team table, ahead of Peshawar on net run-rate.

Peshawar's chase was in early trouble when skipper Babar Azam was needlessly run out off the first ball he faced. Babar failed to beat Alex Hales' direct throw at the non-striker's end.

Saim Ayub was caught in the slips in an eventful first over and it became 3-3 when Imad Wasim took a well-judged, sharp two-handed catch at short fine leg to dismiss Mohammad Haris. Hunain's double-wicket maiden ex-

tended Peshawar's collapse.

Jamal counterattacked in the middle overs, sharing a 107-run stand with Paul Walter, who contributed 33. Jamal smashed six sixes and eight fours before he misread Shadab's googly in the same over he launched a 102-meter six.

Earlier, after being put in to bat in chilly weather, Hales' middle stump was knocked back by Ayub's first delivery, a carrom ball. But Shadab shared two valuable half-century stands with Salman Ali Agha (37) and Jordan Cox (26). Azam Khan's unbeaten 29 off 14 provided a late flourish.

Paris unveils art deco-style posters

Only anti-doping lab in Africa suspended for testing faults

MONTREAL, March 5, (AP) — Less than five months before the Paris Olympics, the World Anti-Doping Agency suspended work at the only approved testing laboratory in Africa late Monday.

WADA said accreditation for the lab in Bloemfontein, South Africa, was removed for up to six months because of faults with a testing method to detect use of steroids by athletes.

Samples from Bloemfontein now "must be securely transported to another WADA-accredited laboratory," the global watchdog said.

OLYMPICS

"This is in order to ensure continued high-quality sample analysis, which also helps preserve athletes' confidence in this process and the wider anti-doping system," WADA said.

The nearest of WADA's 30 approved testing labs to South Africa are in Qatar - a 6,600-kilometer (4,100-mile) flight from Bloemfontein to Doha - India, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.

Collecting samples from remote athlete training centers and transporting them long distances to labs increases the risk they will degrade and be unusable for testing.

Those labs also can be involved in testing all future samples collected from athletes in Africa, including as part of a global anti-doping program ahead of the Paris Olympics that open on July 26.

WADA said restrictions on just the IRMS analytical method of testing were first imposed on the South African lab in September.

"Multiple nonconformities" in Bloemfontein's work were then noted last month by an expert panel advising WADA, the Montreal-based agency said.

The suspension of all testing in Bloemfontein took effect last Friday, though it can be lifted ahead of the six-month limit if the lab meets required international standards.

Vibrant colors and striking landmarks illuminate posters for the Paris Olympic Games in an art deco style inspired by the city's flamboyant past.

The posters were unveiled on Monday at the Musée d'Orsay - a former railway station transformed into an imposing museum stretching along the Seine River - in the presence of Paris 2024 director of design Joachim Roncin and the artist behind them, Ugo Gattoni.

"I don't want it to be something dull like only a poster with only a logo and a date on it, which they usually are. I want to tell a story," Roncin told The Associated Press in an interview from the artist's studio prior to the unveiling. "I want it to be something very happy, because it's going to a huge party. I want it to be very joyful. Hopefully people will be inspired by these posters."

There are many eye-catching images to absorb.

Among the most striking is the Eiffel Tower piercing through the Stade de France. As if forming a giant cake mixing together two crucial ingredients: Paris' most famed landmark and its national stadium.

Spectators on the posters have expressions on their fresh faces that are perfectly captured. It's like they are frozen in time, enjoying a giant and timeless party somewhere: On a balcony admiring ballroom dancers, or guests at a grandiose fête thrown by the Great Gatsby himself.

"It's the art deco style," Roncin said. "I wanted something very flamboyant, very rich, very colorful. It's typical of Paris, when you look at various restaurant styles, you can see the art deco style. When you look at the entrance on the subways, you can see the art nouveau style."



Los Angeles Lakers forward Rui Hachimura (28) shoots over Oklahoma City Thunder forward Chet Holmgren during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, March 4, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Gobert, Conley lead T'wolves to 119-114 'win' over Trail Blazers

Lakers drown Thunder

MINNEAPOLIS, March 5, (AP) — Rudy Gobert had 25 points and 16 rebounds for his 43rd double-double of the season, Michael Conley added 19 points and seven assists, and the Minnesota Timberwolves completed a four-game season sweep of Portland, beating the Trail Blazers 119-114 Monday night.

With the win, Minnesota (43-19) moved into a tie for first place in the Western Conference with Oklahoma City. The Timberwolves are an NBA-best 30-9 against Western Conference opponents, 20-5 against teams with a less than .500 record and 23-8 at Target Center, for the league's fifth-best home record.

BASKETBALL

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 14 points, Anthony Edwards had 13, and Naz Reid added 12 points on 4-for-4 shooting from 3-point distance for Minnesota, which was playing its fifth game in seven nights and completed a seven-game homestand with a 4-3 record.

Anfernee Simons had 34 points, 14 assists and five rebounds, and Duop Reath shot 5 for 6 from long distance and scored 26 points for Portland, which was playing its third game in four nights.

Lakers 116, Thunder 104

In Los Angeles, D'Angelo Russell hit five 3-pointers while scoring 26 points, and Anthony Davis added 24 points and 12 rebounds in Los Angeles' victory over Oklahoma City.

LeBron James had 19 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists in the Lakers' 10th victory in 14 games. Austin Reaves added 16 points while hitting four 3s for the Lakers, who won their third straight meeting with the Western Conference-leading Thunder to take the season series.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 20 points - ending his streak of eight consecutive 30-point games - for the Thunder, who lost for only the second time in nine games. Lu Dort and Chet Holmgren added 15 points apiece.

Bucks 113, Clippers 106

In Milwaukee, Damian Lillard scored 41 points and Milwaukee overcame the absence of Giannis Antetokounmpo to rally past Los Angeles for their sixth straight victory.

Antetokounmpo missed just his third game of the season.

The Bucks are unbeaten since the All-Star break as they get ready to begin a four-game trip to California.

Bobby Portis scored 14 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter and finished with a season-high 16 rebounds. Patrick Beverley added 12 points and sparked the winning rally.

James Harden and Paul George scored 29 points each for the Clippers. Kawhi Leonard added 16 points.

Bulls 113, Kings 109

In Sacramento, Calif. Coby White had a career-high 37 points and DeMar DeRozan scored 19 of his 33 in the fourth quarter as Chicago rallied from 22 points down to beat Sacramento.

White added seven assists and five rebounds, and Chicago outscored Sacramento 36-18 in the fourth quarter to snap a four-game losing streak against the Kings.

Ayo Dosunmu scored 20 points and Nikola Vucevic had 10 points and 13 rebounds.

De'Aaron Fox led the Kings with 20 points and 10 assists after missing two games with a bruised left knee.

Domantas Sabonis had 18 points and 21 boards for his 43rd consecutive double-double before fouling out late in the fourth quarter.

Jazz 127, Wizards 115

In Salt Lake City, Jordan Clarkson scored a season-high 38 points, including a 12-0 run down the stretch, to boost Utah over Washington,

which extended its losing streak to 15.

Collin Sexton scored 29 points and John Collins added 17 points, 15 rebounds and a career-high six blocks for Utah, who had lost eight of nine.

Clarkson made 5 of 6 shots in his game-deciding surge and now has the most 30-plus point games as a reserve in team history. He also tallied 10 rebounds and seven assists to lead the short-handed Jazz.

Jordan Poole scored 32 points, Kyle Kuzma had 23 and Tyus Jones added 21 for Washington. Kuzma passed 8,000 points in his career.

Grizzlies 106, Nets 102

In New York, Luke Kennard scored a season-high 25 points and Memphis snapped a five-game losing streak by beating Brooklyn.

Jake LaRavia added 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Grizzlies, who out rebounded the Nets 50-33 and piled up 25 second-chance points to make up for all the offense they are missing because of injuries. Lamar Stevens chipped in 13 points.

Nic Claxton had 21 points for the Nets, who were coming off consecutive victories over Atlanta that had allowed them to pull within two games of the Hawks for 10th place in the Eastern Conference and the final spot in the play-in tournament. But leading scorer Mikal Bridges, who had 38 points in Saturday's victory, was 4 for 14 Monday and had just 14 points.



Chicago Bulls guard Coby White (0) scores over Sacramento Kings guard Malik Monk (0) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Sacramento, Calif., Monday, March 4, 2024. The Bulls won 113-109. (AP)

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SPORTS

Inter continue march to Serie A title

Nerazzurri edge Genoa to go 15 points clear

MILAN, March 5, (AP): It's becoming more and more a matter of when and not if Inter Milan will be crowned Serie A champion.

Inter beat Genoa 2-1 and extended its lead to 15 points over second-placed Juventus, which lost to Napoli the previous evening.

It was a 12th straight win for Inter - a run dating to December and a draw at Genoa. The Nerazzurri also have the best attack and defense in Europe's top five leagues.

Genoa had lost only one of its previous 11 matches and was also one of only four sides not to have lost to Inter this season.

In an end-to-end match, Inter broke the deadlock on the half hour mark with a great team move. Nicolò Barella

picked out Alexis Sánchez, who sent the ball through to Kristjan Asllani and the Albania midfielder fired powerfully into the roof of the net for his first Nerazzurri goal.

SOCCER

Sánchez got on the scoresheet himself eight minutes later when he converted a penalty, which was con-

troversially awarded for a foul by Genoa defender Morten Frendrup on Barella.

Referee Giovanni Ayroldi was told to look at the incident again by the VAR, as it appeared Barella had already taken the shot and hit the side netting before Frendrup's sliding tackle, and the official confirmed his decision after reviewing it on the pitchside monitor.

It was Sanchez's first Serie A goal

since the Chile forward returned to Inter from Marseille in August.

Genoa got back into the match nine minutes into the second half. Inter defender Stefan de Vrij headed a ball clear but only as far as Johan Vázquez on the edge of the area and he volleyed into the bottom right corner.

The visitors thought they levelled in the 66th but Mateo Retegui's strike was disallowed for offside.



Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez controls the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Genoa at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)



Genoa's goalkeeper Josep Martinez stop the ball by the Inter Milan's Carlos Augusto (right), during a Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Genoa at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

'We are proud to contribute to a carbon neutral society'

TGR secures podium finish on Swedish snow

STOCKHOLM, March 5: TOYOTA GAZOO Racing (TGR) World Rally Team (WRT) has ended 2024 Rally Sweden on a high note with Elfyn Evans and co-driver Scott Martin scoring a strong haul of points towards the championship in the No. 33 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 Hybrid Electric Vehicle and claiming second overall.

Nobuyuki Takemura, Chief Representative of Middle East & Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "I would like to congratulate the team on their unwavering determination and performance, which has once again allowed them to claim a podium position."

"At Toyota, we believe that our active participation in motorsports such as the World Rally Championship is an opportunity to not only test the mettle of our performance machines and leading technologies, but also to guide the future development of Toyota vehicles."

"We are proud to contribute to a carbon neutral society by developing 'ever-better cars' through motorsports to ensure no one is left behind."

RALLYING

"I'd like to thank our fans from around the world for supporting us as we strive to provide them with incredible experiences both on and off the racetrack."

Based in northern Sweden's Umeå city, the rally's proximity to the Arctic Circle ensures extreme winter conditions in what is considered one of the fastest stages of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) season.

The action kicked off across fast forest roads and concluded in a more technical spectator arena, followed by a day of heavy snowfall who's final two stages were conducted in darkness. Evans made a strong recovery against all odds after he was forced to run first on the road and plough through.

Evans climbed the ranks throughout the rally, advancing from sixth to second place by the start of the final day's opening stage.

The fastest in its subsequent second pass, he finished a close second in the rally-ending Power Stage.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race.

Toyota's participation in these

'Battle' for Zain Premier League survival as Al-Jahra face Khaitan

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



A file photo of players in action.

events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established TGR, to consolidate all of its motorsport activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' TGR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars.

Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme

conditions of various motorsports events, TGR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

The upcoming Safari Rally Kenya on 28-31 March is the next competition of the season and the WRC's only African round. Since its return in 2021, this event has challenged racers the world over with its rough and rocky roads and high speeds across open plains.



Elfyn Evans and co-driver Scott Martin in action.

KUWAIT CITY, March 5: The spirited clash between Al-Jahra and Khaitan is set to kick off at 6:15 pm today at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium, marking the opening matches of the eighteenth round in the Zain Premier League. The action will continue tomorrow, featuring Al-Fahaheel against Al-Salmiya and Al-Qadisiyah against Al-Shabab. The round will conclude the day after tomorrow with two exciting matches: Kuwait facing Al-Nasr in the first, and Al-Arabi battling it out with Kazma in the second.

Post this round, the ten clubs will be divided into two groups. The top six will enter the "Championship" League, vying for the prestigious title, while the remaining four will engage in the survival battle, aiming to avoid relegation to the First Division. Two clubs will face relegation, while the other two will secure their place in the Premier League for the upcoming season.

SOCCER

Kuwait Club, Al-Arabi, Al-Qadisiyah, Al-Salmiya, and Al-Nasr have already secured their spots in the "League of Six," leaving Kazma and Al-Fahaheel to compete for the last ticket. This particular ticket determines whether a team will contend for the title or battle to avoid relegation.

In today's match, Al-Jahra, currently at the bottom of the standings with 5 points, seeks a victory to keep its survival hopes alive. The team is aiming for its second triumph in the competition after a convincing win over Al-Shabab in the sixteenth round, coupled with two draws against Al-Fahaheel and Khaitan.

The "Sons of the Red Palace" are fully aware that anything less than a victory significantly reduces their chances of remaining in the Premier League, potentially pushing them towards relegation. On the flip side, Khaitan, standing ninth with 12 points, aims to maintain positive results and intensify the pressure on eighth-placed Al-Shabab, with victory offering a chance to distance themselves from the bottom and secure a spot among the Premier League clubs.

Tierney not selected

Singh Gill set to become first ref of Indian descent to control EPL game

LONDON, March 5, (AP): Sunny Singh Gill is set to become the first referee of Indian descent to take charge of an English Premier League game on Saturday.

The 39-year-old Singh Gill was appointed referee for Crystal Palace's game against Luton at Selhurst Park in London.

"He will become the first British South Asian to referee a match in the competition," the league said.

SOCCER

Singh Gill is following the lead set by his father, Jarnail Singh Gill, who remains the only English league football referee to have worn a turban. Jarnail Singh Gill was born in India and moved to England with his mother and sister when he was 3. After taking charge of Bristol Rovers vs. Bury Town on Aug. 10, 2004, he went on to officiate nearly 200 matches across divisions until 2010.

Sunny Singh Gill's brother, Bhupinder, is also a referee.

The Premier League said Bhupinder Singh Gill was "the first Sikh-Punjabi to serve as a Premier League assistant referee" when he officiated during a game between Southampton and Nottingham Forest in January 2023.

"Football has always run in the family," Sunny Singh Gill told the English Football League website last year. "Me and my brother grew up loving the game and, like most young kids, we just wanted to play

but in our household it was a bit different because when we were going to primary school, we knew our dad was going out to referee on a weekend. There were times he was a fourth official in the Premier League and our friends would say they saw him on 'Match of the Day.'"

Sunny Singh Gill took charge of his first Sunday League match when he was 17. In 2021, both he and Bhupinder became the first people of Indian descent to officiate in the same Championship match. The Championship is the tier below the Premier League.

Meanwhile, Paul Tierney has not been chosen to referee a game in the next round of Premier League matches, in the wake of his mistake in the Nottingham Forest-Liverpool game on Saturday. He will instead be a video assistant referee for Arsenal's home game against Brentford on Saturday.

Tierney stopped play after Liverpool defender Ibrahima Konate sustained a knock to the head at a Forest corner just before Liverpool's stoppage-time goal.

After Konate quickly recovered, Tierney dropped the ball to Liverpool goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher - even though Forest had possession on the edge of Liverpool's area at the moment play was halted.

Forest's players and coaching staff were furious after the final whistle, with club owner Evangelos Marinakis coming down to the touchline to express his unhappiness and later approach Tierney.

Ex-UFC star eyes another surprise vs. Joshua

Ngannou switch is no gimmick

RIYADH, March 5, (AP): It was one of the most striking sights in boxing for some time, Francis Ngannou dancing a jig of delight while leaning over a floored and clearly dazed Tyson Fury.

For boxing purists, a disaster was unfolding.

Was a UFC fighter, in his first ever boxing bout, really about to knock out a reigning world heavyweight champion?

Fury got up and wound up eking out a heavily debated and unconvincing split-decision victory but Ngannou had made a dramatic entry into the world of boxing.

On Friday, the French-Cameroonian gets another chance to upset the established order - and potentially set himself up for another shot at Fury.

Ngannou is back in Saudi Arabia for the second fight of his crossover career, this time against another Brit in former two-time world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua.

Much of the pre-fight narrative is presuming a win for Joshua that would put him in line to fight Fury, provided Fury - the WBC champion - beats Oleksandr Usyk - the WBA, IBF and WBO champion - in their rearranged May 18 bout that will crown the first undisputed heavyweight champion since 2000.

Ngannou is ready, though, to make more headlines in his fast-track bid to become a boxing champion so soon after dominating the UFC scene.

"I've exposed myself - the guy who is coming next time (Joshua) knows what to deal with," Ngannou said after arriving in Riyadh.

"I've lost that element of surprise. So how can I surprise him again? What can I pull from my sleeve once again?"

Ngannou is giving off a cool and confident air. He might be a novice in elite boxing but the sport was his first love during a tough upbringing in Cameroon, and he said it had been only a matter of time before returning to it.

"At the beginning, it was boxing. I wasn't aware of MMA. And for more than a decade, it was all about boxing, dreaming about boxing," he said.

"And then, even when the opportunity came around (in UFC), it was for me an opportunity to shine, to be a world champion, and then potentially switch to do the crossover and go back to boxing. I feel like it was something that I needed, I had to fulfill, in order to be at peace with myself."

Ngannou, 37, had a falling out with the UFC, and UFC President Dana White stripped him of his belt in January last year. Within five months, Ngannou signed with the rival Professional Fighters League.

BOXING



Ngannou

He hasn't fought in the PFL yet, though, while he focuses on boxing. He intends to continue his MMA career, but alongside - not instead of - boxing.

The big question heading into the Ngannou-Joshua fight - the latest high-profile boxing occasion in what is rapidly becoming the sport's new home in Saudi Arabia - is this: Did Fury simply not prepare well enough against Ngannou, thinking he would be an easy beat but instead finding himself sprawled on the canvas in the third round of a fight that unexpectedly went the distance? Or is Ngannou actually the real deal and a natural in all forms of pugilism?

The answer should come on Friday in the latest fight of Joshua's journey back to relevance after back-to-back losses to Usyk saw him lose his titles and leave his career at a crossroads.

He has won three straight fights since then, but none of them have been against elite opponents. A fifth-round stoppage of Otto Wallin in Riyadh in December was something of a throwback performance, displaying his strong jab and then his renowned power, and came after underwhelming victories over Jermaine Franklin and Robert Helenius.

Ngannou promises to be a much tougher challenge and the prize is huge, with Fury already calling out Joshua to be his next opponent should he deal with Usyk.

"This is the fast road to undisputed," said Joshua's promoter, Eddie Hearn, who is already plotting a money-spinning Joshua-Fury fight that he has failed to secure a number of times over the last five years.

As for Joshua, he is more focused on the present.

"Francis is a hell of a fighter," he said, "strong, big puncher and a lot better boxer than we all thought he would ever be."



In this file photo, England's Leah Williamson (center left) and Millie Bright lift the trophy after winning the Women's Euro 2022 final soccer match between England and Germany at Wembley stadium in London. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

World champions Spain pooled with Denmark

England draw France and Sweden in tough Euro 2025 qualifying group

NYON, Switzerland, March 5, (AP): Titleholders England landed in a tough group with France, Sweden and Ireland in the qualifying draw for the 2025 Women's European Championship on Tuesday.

England went from winning Euro 2022 as the host country to reaching the World Cup final last year where Sweden were a semifinalists and France reached the quarterfinals.

World champions Spain were drawn in a Euro 2025 qualifying group with Denmark, Belgium and the Czech Republic. Spain also won the Women's Nations League last week.

Germany, the beaten finalists at Euro 2022, will play Austria, Iceland and Poland in qualifying groups that start in four weeks and finish in July.

Netherlands were pooled with Italy, Norway and Finland in the other group in the top-tier section comprising of 16 high-ranked teams.

The top two teams in each top-tier group will advance to the 16-team finals tournament hosted by Switzerland in July next year. Those eight teams are the only ones that will qualify direct from the groups.

Seven more qualifiers will come through two rounds of playoff games scheduled from Oct. 23 to Dec. 3.

In the second-tier groups drawn Tuesday, Euro 2025 hosts Switzerland were drawn in a group with Hungary, Turkey and Azerbaijan though their place at the finals is assured.

SOCCER

Scotland were seeded in a group with Serbia and Slovakia which then could not accept Serbia's neighbor Kosovo, which was drawn next, for political and security reasons. Kosovo was moved instead to a group with Wales, Croatia and Ukraine.

Five groups of third-tier teams were drawn, and eight of those teams will advance from the group standings to the playoffs.

Euro 2025 is played from July 2-25 next year in eight Swiss cities.

Arsenal demolish Sheffield United in latest statement win in title bid



Arsenal's Kai Havertz (right), scores his side's fourth goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Sheffield United and Arsenal at the Bramall Lane stadium in Sheffield, England. (AP)

Qualifying groups for Women's Euros

NYON, Switzerland, March 5, (AP): Draw made Tuesday for qualifying groups for the 2025 Women's European Championship:

League A

Group 1: Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Finland.

Group 2: Spain, Denmark, Belgium, Czech Republic.

Group 3: France, England, Sweden, Ireland.

Group 4: Germany, Austria, Iceland, Poland.

League B

Group 1: Switzerland, Hungary, Turkey, Azerbaijan.

Group 2: Scotland, Serbia, Slovakia, Israel.

Group 3: Portugal, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, Malta.

Group 4: Wales, Croatia, Ukraine, Kosovo.

League C

Group 1: Belarus, Lithuania, Cyprus, Georgia.

Group 2: Slovenia, Latvia, North Macedonia, Moldova.

Group 3: Greece, Montenegro, Andorra, Faeroe Islands.

Group 4: Romania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Armenia.

Group 5: Albania, Estonia, Luxembourg.

Hopman Cup canceled because of Olympics

Grand Slam champ Halep 'wins' doping case on appeal, cleared to resume tennis

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, March 5, (AP): Two-time Grand Slam champion Simona Halep was cleared for an immediate return to tennis on Tuesday after sports' highest court accepted she was not entirely at fault for her positive doping test.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said its judges partially upheld Halep's appeal and reduced her four-year ban to just nine months. It was applied retroactively and expired last July.

The three judges decided Halep "established on the balance of probabilities" her positive test for a banned blood-booster substance "entered her body through the consumption of a contaminated supplement."

TENNIS

The judges also awarded Halep 20,000 Swiss francs (\$22,650) toward her legal fees from the International Tennis Integrity Agency which prosecuted her and asked CAS for a six-year ban.

Halep has not played since the 2022 U.S. Open, where she tested positive for the banned blood-booster roxadustat.

She had been serving a ban that would have exiled her from tennis until October 2026 after she turned 35.

The agency banned Halep last year after an investigation that was prolonged by detecting alleged irregularities in her biological passport, which can reveal abnormal blood values measured over several years.

The investigators also appealed to CAS and asked for a more severe ban of up to six years, said the court, whose judges dismissed the charge against Halep relating to her blood values.

The former top-ranked Romanian

denied wrongdoing for the positive test and blamed contaminated nutritional supplements. Athletes need to prove the source of contamination to show they were not at fault for doping.

"Although the CAS panel found that Ms. Halep did bear some level of fault or negligence for her violations, as she did not exercise sufficient care when using the Keto MCT supplement, it concluded that she bore no significant fault or negligence," the court said.

Halep challenged the ban at CAS and attended a three-day, closed-door hearing one month ago in Lausanne.

She won Wimbledon in 2019, beating 23-time major champion Serena Williams in the final, and the 2018 French Open.

The Hopman Cup in France was canceled on Tuesday to avoid a clash with the Paris Olympics.

The mixed team tennis event was scheduled to take place in the southern city of Nice at the end of July. The Olympic tennis tournament takes place from July 27-Aug. 4.

The Hopman Cup will return in 2025, the International Tennis Federation said.

"With both the Hopman Cup and Olympic Games due to take place in France this year, hitting pause on the Hopman Cup until 2025 is a sensible decision," ITF president David Haggerty said. "The players who had committed to this year's event have been informed and we look forward to seeing them in the Cote d'Azur next year."

The Hopman Cup, named after Australian great Harry Hopman, started in 1989, and was played annually until 2020. It resumed last year in France and was won by Croatia's Donna Vekic and Borna Coric.

SHEFFIELD, England, March 5, (AP): Arsenal delivered another statement win in its English Premier League title challenge by thrashing last-placed Sheffield United 6-0.

Some home fans left their seats and were seen heading to the exits inside Bramall Lane after 25 minutes when Kai Havertz made it 4-0, adding to strikes from Martin Odegaard and Gabriel Martinelli either side of an own-goal by Jayden Bogle.

With supporters in the away end singing "We're gonna score in a minute," Declan Rice slotted home a fifth in the 39th minute. It meant Arsenal scored five goals in three straight away league games - after West Ham (6-0) and Burnley (5-0) - and tied the record for most goals scored in the first half of a league game.

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The visitors weren't finished there, with right back Ben White becoming the sixth different scorer when lashing a left-foot shot into the far corner in the 58th.

At that stage, Arsenal looked a good bet to threaten the most goals scored by a team in a league game and the competition's biggest margin of victory, with three clubs - Liverpool, Leicester and Manchester United (twice) - having won 9-0 down the years.

However, Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta's decision to make a raft of substitutions - including removing Bukayo Saka at halftime and others like Rice and Jorginho later on - broke his team's rhythm and Sheffield United's players could breathe slightly easier.

Still, it was a good night for Arsenal's goal difference, which is now far superior to that of title rivals Liverpool and Manchester City. Arsenal stayed in third place, two points behind Liverpool and a point adrift of City, and has won seven straight games in the league.

Villa report loss of more than \$150 million

Kuwait's Jumaa secures triathlon gold in UAE

DUBAI, March 5: Champion Mubarak Jumaa secured the top spot and clinched the gold medal at the Oceanic Khor Fakkan Triathlon Championship within the UAE Triathlon League. This accomplishment followed a robust showing from elite athletes across the Emirates, the Gulf, and the Middle East.

The Club's Chairman, along with the Board of Directors and the Kuwait Triathlon Federation, extended heartfelt congratulations to Mubarak Jumaa for his outstanding performance, securing the gold medal in the UAE League. His achievement proudly elevated the Kuwaiti flag on this prominent stage, featuring a significant number of participants.

Expressing his sentiments, Rashid Al-Kandari, the president of the club and the Kuwaiti Triathlon Federation, emphasized that Jumaa's success comes as no surprise, given the consistent excellence displayed by Kuwaiti players in winning such tournaments and delivering positive results.

TRIATHLON

Al-Kandari highlighted the continuous efforts of the Board of Directors in adequately preparing players for international competitions, ensuring they overcome challenges and uphold Kuwait's reputation by achieving championships abroad.



Mubarak Jumaa with other winners on the podium.

prior to that of title rivals Liverpool and Manchester City. Arsenal stayed in third place, two points behind Liverpool and a point adrift of City, and has won seven straight games in the league.

The only negative on the night was the sight of Martinelli being helped off with a right ankle injury in the 64th.

Sheffield United, which has already lost 8-0 to Newcastle and 5-0 to Brighton at home this season, stayed in 11th place, 11 points adrift of safety with 11

games remaining.

Meanwhile, Aston Villa insisted the club is operating within the financial rules of the English Premier League despite reporting a loss of 119.6 million pounds (\$151 million) in its latest accounts on Tuesday.

Those accounts are up to May 31 last year, covering a period when the team finished seventh in the league to qualify for the Europa Conference League.

Valencia's Diakhaby to undergo knee surgery

MADRID, March 5, (AP): Valencia defender Mouctar Diakhaby will travel to France for surgery to repair his dislocated right knee, the Spanish club said on Tuesday.

Diakhaby sustained the gruesome injury on Saturday in the final minutes of the 2-2 draw against Real Madrid. He was carried off on a stretcher after Madrid midfielder Aurélien Tchouaméni crashed into him inside the area.

Players from both teams immediately called for help and looked distraught after realizing the seriousness of the injury.

The 27-year-old Diakhaby showed up on crutches at the Valencia training center and visited with his teammates on Tuesday. He spent 48 hours under medical observation in a hospital.

Diakhaby said, "Unfortunately, injuries are a part of the game."

On social media, he added, "The battle will be long but I am ready for it and I will do everything possible to return to the field as soon as possible and even stronger."

violent conduct. The former Manchester City defender will miss the second leg.

"We are only halfway through, and while going to the next round is going to be difficult, we still have 90 minutes at home," Al-Nassr coach Luis Castro said.

The winner of the tie is guaranteed a semifinal against Saudi opposition. Al-Itihad and Al-Hilal meet on Tuesday in the second quarterfinal in the western zone - the tournament is divided into two geographic halves until the final.



ATP Supervisor Roland Herfel (left), disqualifies Andrey Rublev during his semifinal match with Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Friday, March 1, 2024. Rublev appealed his default and the ATP ruled, he will be allowed to keep his rankings points and prize money from the tournament. (AP)

Ronaldo's Al-Nassr loses first leg of Asian CL quarters

AL AIN, United Arab Emirates, March 5, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo returned from suspension and could not prevent Al-Nassr losing to Al-Ain 1-0 in the first leg of their Asian Champions League quarterfinal.

A first half goal from Moroccan forward Soufiane Rahimi was enough for one-time champion Al-Ain to have the advantage in the return leg in Riyadh next Monday.

Ronaldo was fresh after missing a Saudi Pro League match on Thursday as punishment for making an alleged offensive gesture during the previous

game against Al-Shabab.

Video appeared to show Ronaldo cupping his ear and repeatedly thrusting his hand forward near his pelvis in a gesture that seemed to be aimed at Al-Shabab fans who were chanting the name of Lionel Messi, Ronaldo's longstanding soccer rival.

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Al-Ain's fans did the same but were almost silenced in the sixth

minute when Ronaldo went close with an overhead kick. In the final moments, he attempted a lob from the halfway line that was just wide of the post. Another shot from close range was saved by Al-Ain goalkeeper Khalid Eisa.

It could have been worse for Al-Nassr as Al-Ain, coached by former Argentine striker Hernan Crespo, had two goals disallowed for offside.

The game ended with Al-Nassr down a man after Aymeric Laporte was sent off in stoppage time for