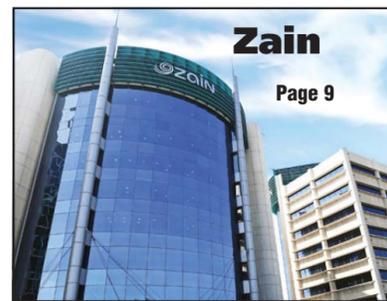




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State visits open new chapter in joint action, integration

HH Amir champions 'Our Gulf is One' vision in GCC tour

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): The state visits, paid by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council following his inauguration, laid the groundwork for a new era featuring a new national list of priorities and aspirations.

The tour reflected resolve to protect the rights and sovereignty of Kuwait, strengthen partnership and integration with sisterly GCC countries, and open new horizons of cooperation in such areas as economy, security and defense.

Building on the efforts to materialize the slogan of "Our Gulf is One" and the wise vision of His Highness the Amir for regional integration, the tour added a new dimension to Kuwait diplomacy in the political, economic and humanitarian fields.

Kuwait, UAE pledge cooperation boost

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) put much significance on the "historic brotherly bonds" and promoting multi-faceted cooperation, while exerting efforts to address regional and international challenges.

The aforementioned remark was part of a joint statement released on Wednesday after talks between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan during an official state visit to the UAE.

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Opinion

Your Highness the Amir, these visits are blessed

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

THE Constitution of Kuwait has made His Highness the Amir the father of power. He exercises his executive powers through the ministers he chooses. He also holds legislative power with the National Assembly. Based on all this, His Highness the Amir is considered the father of authorities. That is why he is the highest authority in the country.

When the people are frustrated with the Council of Ministers or the National Assembly, they turn to him to relieve their distress.

From this standpoint, we must read between the lines of the state's visits to the other five member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and we know from them the status of Kuwait among the rulers and people of those countries.

The first stop was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has today become a global station for progress and advancement, after decades of backwardness and the attempts by some to lead its people into obscurantism and hardship instead of ease. However, with the uprising of King Salman bin Abdulaziz and his young Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, those worn-out rags were removed, and the sun shone again.

It has become a source of joy, and a destination for tens of millions every year to visit and learn about this powerfully rising country, which is racing against time in terms of growth, economic prosperity, and openness.

People come to it from the blows of the earth's winds, its lights shine on the ocean, and its national product is much greater than it was years ago.

Secondly, the visit of His Highness the Amir to the Sultanate of Oman, the land of wisdom and love, brought the late Qaboos bin Saeed from darkness to light. His successor, Sultan Hatham bin Tariq, worked to complete the construction and prosperity of this country. Today, this country is the jewel in the crown of civilization and progress, and hard work at all levels, as well as an oasis of safety and knowledge.

His Highness the Amir's third stop was Bahrain, that land that God endowed with the gift of kindness to all brothers, and kept sectarian strife away from it, thanks to the wisdom of its King Hamad bin Isa, who made the homeland for everyone and religion for God alone. He was determined to advance his country to be among the countries that have a standing in the world.

As for the fourth stop, it was in the Doha of security and sophistication, Qatar, from which the rain of goodness flows. Because of it, nations became aware of the people of the Gulf and their generosity. Thanks to the wisdom of its leaders, led by its young Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad, who worked to make it the focus of the world's attention, it witnessed creative projects in a matter of years, and also became an example of Gulf fraternal solidarity.

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Arab FMs convene in Cairo

Kuwait reiterates its support for Palestinians at OIC meet

JEDDAH, March 6, (KUNA): Kuwait has reaffirmed its backing to the Palestinian people, and called for taking measures to halt the Israeli occupation bombing, Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs said Tuesday.

Minister Abdullah Al-Yaha delivered Kuwait's speech before the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) extraordinary meeting in the Saudi city of Jeddah.

"Kuwait calls on the international community to take all measures aiming to stop indiscriminate bombing

launched by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian people that claimed the lives of thousands of innocents," Al-Yaha, who is leading Kuwait's delegation to the meeting, said.

This is considered crimes of war and genocide, he stressed, demanding also the halt of displacing Palestinians that amounts to the crime of ethnic cleansing, in addition to allowing relief to the people of Gaza without restrictions or conditions.

Continued on Page 6

AMIR INAUGURATES ABDULLAH AL-SALEM UNIVERSITY



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah acknowledges the crowd as he attends the inauguration ceremony of Abdullah Al-Salem University (AASU) at the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Theater in Shuwaikh on Wednesday.

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended and patronized the inauguration ceremony of Abdullah Al-Salem University (AASU) at late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Theater in Shuwaikh on Wednesday.

His Highness the Amir was received upon arrival by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, Chairperson of the board of the Constituent Council of ASSU Dr. Moudhi Al-Humoud and board members.

The ceremony was attended by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council and President of the Court of Cassation Dr. Adel Bouresli and senior state officials.

Al-Adwani, in a speech, said the ministries' strategy aimed at honoring the vision of His Highness the Amir for quality education, which honor the demand of job market through investing in "sons of daughters of the nation who are Kuwait's sustainable wealth."

Al-Adwani said His Highness the Amir has always underlined importance of investment in human resources, reforming education and training youth for a competitive market.

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Ministry vows price stability, food availability in Ramadan

Markets monitored

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Khaled Ali Al-Wataid, the Hawalli Governorate Inspection Supervisor at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, affirmed to Al-Seyassah daily the ministry's commitment to surveying central and supermarkets across all governorates to maintain price stability and ensure food availability before Ramadan.

He highlighted the intensification of inspection tours and campaigns on markets, shops, and cooperative societies during this period to meet the needs of citizens and residents during the holy month.

During an inspection tour of the Hawalli Governorate's Control Department, Al-Wataid revealed that the Ministry of Commerce inspectors had closed 25 commercial stores in the governorate in January and February of the current year, while reopening 24 stores during the same period.

Additionally, the inspection teams issued 139 reports and 11 notices of license violations since the beginning of the year.

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NewsWatch

MANAMA: Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa affirmed on Wednesday that the Kingdom of Bahrain would continue to push forward to realize its potential through the efforts of its people and government.

This came in a speech delivered on the occasion of the silver jubilee of his accession.

According to the Bahrain News Agency (BNA), the Bahraini King indicated that Bahrain's progression was continuous and ongoing, and the duty to preserve it will remain a top priority and responsibility, to safeguard its advancement and progress as Bahrain upholds rights and freedoms, a bastion of security and coexistence, and a shining beacon of tolerance and cultural openness. (KUNA)



The architectural design of the Kuwaiti pavilion at the 2025 World Expo.

KUNA photo

Kuwaiti delegation unveils pavilion design at Expo Osaka 2025

The architectural design and exhibition of the Kuwaiti pavilion at the 2025 World Expo hosted by the Japanese city of Osaka was unveiled at a ceremony in Tokyo, highlighting the details of the ambitious project.

The ceremony was held in the presence of political, media, social and business officials, representatives of Kuwait and partner companies involved in the project.

In his speech during the ceremony, Kuwait Ambassador to Japan Sami Al-Zamanan said, "45 years ago, Ku-

wait was one of only four Arab countries that participated in the Expo 1970 in Osaka. Over the past years, we have witnessed significant milestones in bilateral cooperation, partnership, and solidarity between Kuwait and Japan."

"Our efforts aim to strengthen bilateral relations under the directives of our wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah," he noted. (KUNA)

Notable female representation in Third Constituency

32 parliamentary hopefuls register on Day 3

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Abder Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Thirty-two parliamentary election candidates, including one woman, registered on Wednesday.

Following is a breakdown of the number of these candidates per constituency:

First Constituency: nine men (Osama Zaid Al-Zaid, Jarrah Ali Noor, Sultan Mohammad Al-Ajmi, Abdulsamad Mustafa Zahid, Abdulaziz Yousef Arhama, Ali Hussain Jafar, Ali Hussain Mohammad, Ali Abdurrahman Al-Kanderi and Fahad Abdullah Mezel)

Second Constituency: six men (Ahmad Mohammad Al-Hamad, Bader Nashmi Al-Enezi, Bashar Kathem Ali, Falah Dhahi Al-Hajri, Fahd Abdulaziz Al-Masoud and Moussa Ashour Al-Majedi)

Third Constituency: three men and one woman (Jenan Mehzen Ramadan Bu Shehri, Khaled Jumaa Al-Yasin, Abdulrahman Saud Al-Furaj and Abdulaziz Tariq Al-Saqobi)

Fourth Constituency: five men (Buraikan Al-Sulaimani, Bakr Badi Al-Rashidi, Eid Al-Mutairi, Faisal Karam

and Muath Al-Duailah)

Fifth Constituency: eight men (Jaber Al-Muhaibli, Hamdan Al-Hamdan, Khaled Al-Mutairi, Saud Al-Hajri, Abdullah Al-Kanderi, Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi, Mohammad Al-Huailah and Hani Shams)

So far, the total number of candidates has reached 102 including three women, all of whom registered in the Third Constituency.

Former MP and First Constituency candidate Osama Al-Zaid intends to focus on the implementation of the legislative agenda of the dissolved Parliament. He said this agenda is not just a list of bills, as it is a model of institutional group work.

He pointed out: "We have been able to unify efforts and coordinate with the government. There must be an agreement to approve priorities."

Regarding the election of the next speaker, Al-Zaid underscored the need for a neutral and experienced speaker who is capable of conveying messages from the political leadership to the Parliament and vice versa. He added former Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun has most of these characteristics.

First Constituency candidate Jarrah Ali

Ghuloum revealed he is keen on "achieving goals in all fields for the development of the country's infrastructure."

Another First Constituency candidate Ali Hussein Ali stressed that the economic aspect is not clear in the country, as well as the results of improving the living conditions of citizens. He is keen on prioritizing the interests of citizens, especially in the fields of education, electricity, health and others. He added his electoral program includes solutions to many political, economic and development issues that he will present in the electoral symposium.

Dr Ali Al-Kandari, who is also standing for election in the First Constituency, stressed that reform of education, health and roads will be achieved through collective action, not slogans. He pointed out that "individual action does not create a political environment capable of providing what people are aspiring for. We must take a stand to ensure a solid start towards building Kuwait, similar to neighboring countries. We used to be a model of progress. Now, we have become a model of decline. This must change."

Continued on Page 6



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yaha meets with Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:50	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	06:09	Maghrib ..	17:50
Zohr	11:59	Isha	19:07

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind later on, with speeds of 10-42 km/h with a chance for mist

Weather

forming at night.

By Night: Rather cold and partly cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	25	16
Kuwait Airport	25	10
Abdaly	25	09
Jahra	25	12
Salmiyah	23	17
Nuwaisib	26	11
Wafra	26	09

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

'We need to restore public trust in government'

PM visits Kuwait University, says happy to visit my alma mater

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: His Highness the Prime Minister Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah says the biggest challenge facing the government is restoring the confidence of the people in the government's ability to reform.

In a speech on the sidelines of his visit to Kuwait University in Sabah Al-Salem University City in the presence of the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Adel Al-Adwani yesterday, he affirmed that the state is capable, through its children and its people, of correcting everything that has gone awry.

Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem said, "I am happy to be with you. The College of Administrative Sciences is the place where I became involved academically after I returned from studying abroad. Therefore, I am very happy to see that my colleagues worked together and went through phases, some of which were difficult and some of which were easy, especially with the difficult phases being immediately after the liberation.

I will mention how this university, particularly this college, rose and restored life, not only in Kuwaiti institutions, but also at the Arab and Middle Eastern levels. We are proud that Kuwait University is a pioneer in the field of education in the Gulf region.

Likewise, the reason for the leadership of Kuwait University are the distinguished faculty members who make very valuable contributions not only in the field of teaching but also in the field of research and development.

I feel proud to be at Kuwait University today. When I was studying in this college, I used to talk about the experiences of countries, because theory is one thing and applying it is another.

Country

It cannot be more eloquent than for a person to come up with a real life model of a country that was very rich in a depleted resource but the misuse of this depleted resource led to the country falling after having the highest per capita income in the world in 1991-1992. Today, it is said it leases its land as prisons for refugees around the world. To this degree the economic situation has declined, as it is the island of Nauru.

This is not a comparison with the State of Kuwait, praise be to God, but one can take lessons from the tragedies that countries and societies experience.

The American President Roosevelt, after the depression in 1929, gave his famous phrase - There is nothing that fears us except fear itself.

Therefore, we are not afraid, but we must take lessons, but not from a standpoint of fear, but from a standpoint of optimism in order to avoid the situations that other countries have fallen into.

Before I was assigned to head the Council of Ministers, I



HH the Prime Minister Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah with teachers, officials and students.

was one of you, listening, criticizing, and seeing, because I was outside the executive authority, so I had this luxury of "must, must" and other expressions that we always use.

It was perhaps the most noticeable and common thing in the previous period. Many citizens have questions about the situation in general, as they read about the level of corruption here and Kuwait's ranking rates in the global index. They viewed Kuwait as having a low position in the fight against corruption. They saw that there were a lot of forgery operations. For example, we in the university institution are talking about forged certificates, forgery of official documents, and others.

This was creating a kind of anxiety among the youth, especially about the spread of drugs, human trafficking, and many issues that our society talks about, especially the youth, and in scientific institutions and popular gatherings.

There are many theories stating that there is an inverse relationship between the degree of anxiety in a citizen and the time period in which it is achieved. If his anxiety increases greatly, the period that he plans for becomes short. If he becomes extremely anxious, he says, "Follow me today, I don't know what will happen tomorrow".

The first challenge for the government was to restore confidence in state institutions and the ability of this state to correct the deviations that occurred previously.

This country is capable, with its children and its people, of correcting everything that has gone awry.

This was the first challenge, which was to restore reas-

urance to the people of Kuwait about our ability to reform.

Therefore, it is reassuring that there is a real application of the law to everyone. The corruption file, for example, was the first action taken by the government in presenting the largest corruption case currently being discussed, which is the issue of the Army Fund.

The government submitted a new report on how military offices around the world used to attack public funds. We will not stop at this matter. The report was submitted and its procedures were taken to the Court of Ministers.

A group of young men, who are your children, were assigned to work to recover all the money that had been seized.

One of the tasks of this team that was assigned is to file cases in a group of countries to recover what was seized and the message from this is that we are serious about the issue of combating corruption. No matter his position, it is not a big deal in the face of justice and fairness, on which the values of Kuwaiti society were built over time and were framed in a constitution that we are all proud of.

Kuwait's score in the Corruption Perceptions Index rose 17 points, which was recorded by the Anti-Corruption Commission. It is a development that we are all proud of, as we were in one situation and moved to another situation such that we ended up on the ladder of the international anti-corruption index.

Regarding forgery, His Highness the Prime Minister highlighted the level of forgery in university certificates, saying

the Ministry of Education has been reviewing the certificates from the year 2000 until now and working to verify the certificates that have been submitted to the official authorities and approved.

He stressed that it is a practical, effective and legal measure in combating administrative corruption.

His Highness the Prime Minister said, "The most asked question at the present time is where we are going. This is what is repeated everywhere, so I am happy to tell you, with all confidence, that we are going to a better horizon, through the vision of His Highness the Amir of moving Kuwait to a better state.

The New Kuwait 2035 vision depends on building an economy parallel to the oil economy, because of our dependence on a vibrant resource, that is through our vision of the experiences of other countries that were dependent on it, such that they obtained the highest sources of income and then fell to the lowest at the present time, and reached the stage of poverty."

Awareness

Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem praised the Kuwaiti people's awareness about the need for building a new economy that does not depend on oil, but rather depends on human energies and the ability to innovate, adding that, "This matter is historic for the people of Kuwait and is not new".

He explained that the triangle that existed between Kuwait, India, and North Africa regarding trade routes was what protected Kuwait from famines.

There are also many immigrants who arrived in Kuwait as a result of famines in half of the Arabian Peninsula and Najd. Kuwait did not go through a famine the same as what other countries went through, because it is considered a supermarket for the Gulf countries, thanks to the trade in which the people of Kuwait were creative.

Kuwait has a distinct geographical location that is close to major human and economic centers such as Iran and Iraq. It is also considered a part of the Gulf system, and is the base that provides reassurance due to its proximity to the countries of the Cooperation Council. It is considered the link for the Gulf group and the broader expanse in the north of the Cooperation Council.

His Highness the Prime Minister revealed about the railway network between the GCC countries, explaining that the trains will start from Kuwait and head to the countries of East Asia, passing through the countries of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and linking all roads to India.

This road is also called the Silk Road and it is on railways. It is also possible that it will extend north from Iraq, passing through Turkey and then to European countries.

The aim of this network is to maximize the benefit from the geographical location of Kuwait. All of this network will be in the northern and southern regions of Kuwait, resulting in a new Kuwait, with the presence of a distinguished logistical center that provides necessary logistical services to countries neighboring the geographical area.

It provides financial, banking and capital markets services as well as distinguished services in the field of education by providing opportunities for international universities to open branches in Kuwait.

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'High time to adopt democratic principles ... failure death knell'

"OVER the past three decades, Kuwait has undergone a concerning erosion of democratic values. This erosion has led to a focus on destructive objectives that undermine both democracy and national integrity," columnist **Dr. Muhammad Abdulmohsen Al-Maqatei** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"These objectives include treating the homeland merely as a temporary vessel for exploitation, distorting historical facts and records; viewing nationality as a tool for personal gain and allegiance as conditional on material benefits and using instability as a means of political leverage and chaos as a substitute for order.

"This is in addition to employing identity manipulation as a method of social and political infiltration, devaluing education and employment, leading to the proliferation of forged credentials; cultivating a culture of perpetual discontent, disregarding the blessings of security, prosperity, and belonging and promoting a culture of intimidation, subverting the rule of law, and undermining rational discourse.

"This decline in democratic principles since 1992 has fractured the nation along these destructive lines, indicating ominous days ahead if this trajectory persists. This deviation from the democratic ideals set forth by figures like Abdullah Al-Salem and the founders of the Constituent Assembly, not to mention the principles of the 1962 Constitution, is alarming.

"Efforts to rewrite Kuwait's history in hopes of reshaping its narrative have failed thus far. Nomadic influences, unconcerned with the permanence of ties to the land, have exploited Kuwait for its spoils, reshaping nationality and fostering instability.

"Despite attempts to manipulate societal structures and institutions, Kuwait's strong social fabric and vigilant leadership have resisted complete infiltration. However, the proliferation of falsified credentials and the perpetuation of political blackmail threaten to unravel the nation's cohesion.

"The warning issued by the political leadership on June 22, 2022, served as a last chance to correct the course. However, subsequent failures to heed this warning have exacerbated the nation's decline.

"As the April 4, 2024 elections approach, there remains hope that they may serve as a catalyst for restoring awareness and rectifying the nation's trajectory. However, failure to seize this opportunity risks accelerating Kuwait's demise, necessitating drastic measures to preserve the homeland and its values."

Also:

"We spoke repeatedly in this column about the reasons for the disruption of development, and our lag behind the countries of the region in development and organization," columnist **Mubarak Fahd Al-Duwailah** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"We mentioned the lack of stability in government administration, and the frequent change of ministers, until every neighborhood has produced a minister!

"Today, we highlight a reason that confirms the country's indulgence in disrupting development institutions, to the point of completely paralyzing them, which is the lack of a body for managing tenders and awarding projects, as the term of the previous body has expired, and no members have been appointed to replace those whose appointment ceremonies have expired.

"Had the Ministry of Housing not been excluded from this body, and had its own committee for awarding its projects, we would not have seen the project south of Saad Al-Abdullah City and south of Sabah Al-Ahmad City.

"Imagine with me a road project whose completion was delayed beyond the contractual duration for force majeure reasons, then an extension was requested to complete the project.

"The project will stop because the body authorized to approve the extension has expired and the term for appointing its members has expired, and it does not exist today. Therefore, we see many projects stalled for several months due to the absence of the Central Agency for Public Tenders. Repairing and re-asphalting streets is perhaps one of the most famous projects, which was disrupted due to the failure of the administrative apparatus and the absence of a decision-making body.

"Today, the new Kuwait Airport is about to be completed, but the project will face a strange problem, which is that the tender for the roads leading to it has not been awarded to date, and its completion requires more than three years!

"Question: Why was a new device not set for tender when we know the expiration date of the previous one? The answer is poor planning and the instability of the administrative apparatus in the state, as changing a minister is faster than changing a member of the agency's board of directors.

"Recently, the director of a minister's office spoke to me and said, 'I have been appointed to this position for three years, and seven ministers have passed me by!'

"The country is completely paralyzed, and today we hope for His

Highness the Prime Minister that administrative stability be a major goal of the government, and that we rush to fill leadership positions, as it is unreasonable that 80% of these positions are vacant or managed by appointment!"

"Mr. Ahmad Al-Saadoun was nominated for the upcoming elections. This news made me happy and made many people happy. I recently met him in the National Assembly, and I found in him the Ahmad of the nineties in his understanding, awareness, and preservation of the Constitution and the firmness that we have known him.

"Therefore, the presence of this personality, despite his advanced age, is a major element for the stability of the National Assembly, and the continuation of cooperation with... The government is ideal and desired. You may ask: Why was he not present in the last council as well? And I say because the reason is greater than that ... and understandable."

"Useful summary ... ISIS preys on Kuwaiti youths to destroy the State. In June 2020, Al-Seyassah daily published news on scandals involving the 'Muslim Brotherhood' and their collusion with Gaddafi to overthrow the regimes in the Gulf when revolutions broke out in some Arab countries in 2011, with the leakage of audio recordings about their meetings with him," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawaas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The 'Brotherhood' organization in the Gulf has two leaders -- the religious leader that is in Qatar and the political leader that is in Kuwait. Former Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz said in an interview with the daily in November 2002: 'The Muslim Brotherhood is the root of the calamity.'

"Yesterday, the Kuwaiti security authorities proactively thwarted a terrorist operation. They arrested a Kuwaiti boy who communicated with ISIS via the 'Telegram' application. He received information on how to manufacture explosives from them. Therefore, the terrorist and extremist organizations penetrate the minds of young people in Kuwait through social media.

"The aforementioned boy, who was investigated by the Juvenile Prosecution, is a high school student. He is accused of joining this terrorist organization, pledging allegiance to it in Iraq, and planning to bomb a Husseinia in Mubarak Al-Kabeer using a small drone.

"He told the prosecution that after long conversations and discussions, he agreed to join the ISIS and pledge allegiance to their leader, nicknamed 'Abu Mariam'. He asked them to teach him how to make explosives. He was referred to the explosives specialist, nicknamed 'Abu Mariam'. Thus, ISIS was encouraged to spread its ideas due to the presence of a fertile ground, such as the puritanical ideas of a movement in Kuwait.

"ISIS previously targeted Kuwait in 2015 by carrying out a bloody bombing in a mosque for our Shiite brothers in Sawaber -- an area in the country's capital, causing deaths and injuries.

"This rogue organization committed grave political crimes, including treason. The followers of criminal religious thought claim, in slander and ignorance, that we are not governed by Islam. They have forgotten that Kuwait leads the world in terms of the large number of mosques and charitable deeds.

"Some Arab and foreign analysts have claimed that the popular uprisings taking place in some Arab countries will affect the Gulf states, including Kuwait. We tell them that they have not read the history of Kuwait well. There has been a social contract between the authorities and the people of Kuwait for more than 300 years and it is still continuing. The Al-Sabah family is part of the Kuwaiti people and they did not come up at the back of tanks or a military coup like many other countries in the world.

"We also had, and still do, great balance of harmony and unity. The people of Kuwait have been united, and still are, throughout their history. There has been no coup, no military regime, no emergency or martial law imposed, while there is an impartial judiciary that rules among the people.

"We have lived under a tolerant religious approach, and in accordance with the good rule of the social contract between the ruler and the ruled. We have lived on barren land devoid of any economic resource -- no agriculture or river, but in a stable political situation that makes the individual feel dignified.

"As for these traitorous and ignorant 'Brothers', they are the fifth column, instigators of strife and a symbol of high treason. When their bellies were full, they began to reject grace. Are they not aware of the tragedies of peoples, their poverty, and the sectarian strife that has torn apart many nations and peoples?

"We repeat, the followers of the criminal religious ideology of the 'Brotherhood' and 'ISIS' claim that we are not governed by Islam, while Kuwait leads the world in the number of mosques and charitable deeds, which makes us wonder: Why was the State silent for so long. Why it did not consider extremist Islamic groups a terrorist organization, while it considered the Lebanese Hezbollah as such? Does the religious movement deserve courtesy at the expense of the nation?"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Biometrics for all senior staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Anwar Al-Hamdan has announced the activation of fingerprinting for general managers, instructors, school principals and their staff, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In a letter to Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani; Al-Hamdan stated that "it is not permissible for the government agency to exempt any category from fingerprinting, regardless of the level of supervisory or classified positions or length of service. Therefore, please advise us so we can asked the concerned sector to start the procedures for activating the fingerprint for general managers, instructors, school principals and their staff."



The blaze wrecked all the vehicles before the fire-fighters could reach the site.

Fire wrecks cars parked under shed

Firefighters successfully contained a major blaze, in which all the cars parked under the shed, belonging to a single family in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer area, were completely destroyed early Wednesday morning. The

diligent efforts of the firefighting teams swiftly brought the situation under control, averting any major injuries despite the intensity of the incident, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Two top officers jailed in torture of juveniles

Drug smugglers file appeal

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: In a deterrent ruling against the actions of security personnel, the Criminal Court sentenced an officer of rank Brigadier General, who holds the position of acting director of the Juvenile Investigation Department, and his colleague of rank Lieutenant Colonel, to four-year imprisonment each with hard labor on charges of torturing two juveniles and using cruelty on them.

The Public Prosecution charged the two defendants with torturing two juveniles to force them to confess and provide statements related to a crime that the two had allegedly committed.

The prosecution explained that the first defendant insulted, punched and slapped them several times. The second defendant took each of them separately to the office of the supervisor at his place of work, and insulted them, beat them on their legs with a wooden stick, and punched them several times.

Appeal on March 24: The Court of Appeals has set the session of March 24 to issue its ruling on the appeal submitted by

an officer, two citizens, and an Iranian who were accused of smuggling a quarter of a ton of drugs, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The lower court had sentenced the officer to 14-year imprisonment for using and possessing hashish and possessing psychotropic substances without the intention of trafficking, the two citizens to 15-year imprisonment each, and the Iranian to life imprisonment.

According to the case file, officers from the Drug Control General Department, with the cooperation of the officers from the General Department of Coast Guard, arrested an officer working in the Shuwaik Port Office for attempting to smuggle about a quarter of a ton of hashish into the country. He was referred to the competent authority to take legal measures.

In another development, the Court of Appeals adjourned to March 31, the appeal filed against the verdict issued by a lower court which sentenced to death a Kuwaiti citizen and an Egyptian expatriate for premeditatedly killing the citizen Mubarak Al-Rashidi. The Public Prosecution demanded that they be executed by hanging after it was proven that they had committed the crime with malice aforethought.

Car catches fire: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) stated that the Farwaniya Fire Station Fire Brigade recently put out fire to a car on the Al-Ghazali Road, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

No injuries have been reported. On the other hand, firefighting teams from Hawalli and Salmiya fire centers Sunday morning controlled an apartment fire in a residential building in Hawalli. No casualties have been reported.

'Kuwait seeks sustainable food security'

AMMAN, March 6, (KUNA): Kuwait Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resource (PAAAFR) Director General Eng. Nasser Taqi said, Wednesday, Kuwait aims to realize United Nations strategic development goals for lasting food security and national agriculture.

This came in a statement by Taqi to KUNA during the 37th session of the

Regional Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for the Near East and North Africa, in Amman, Jordan. Taqi emphasized investment in regional food security using modern methods in science and technology to improve the region's agriculture, and confront climate change, natural resources scarcity, and other challenges.

'Milestone'

Legal forum on civil & political rights set

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Khaled Al-Maghamis, member of the Board of Directors of the National Bureau for Human Rights and Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Civil and Political Rights, has announced the inaugural legal forum scheduled for Thursday at the Golden Hall in the St. Regis Hotel, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Held under the theme 'A Legal Perspective on Civil and Political Rights Practices in Kuwait', the forum signifies a significant milestone in the committee's mission to uphold human rights standards in accordance with national and international frameworks. Aligned with the internal regulations and strategic objectives of the National Bureau for Human Rights, the forum aims to scrutinize Kuwait's legislative landscape concerning civil and political rights.

Key issues such as freedom of expression, combating corruption, access to justice, and labor rights will be addressed, with a focus on identifying legislative gaps and proposing actionable solutions in line with Kuwait's commitments under international human rights conventions.

Emphasizing the legal nature of the forum, Al-Maghamis highlighted its relevance to both local and global contexts. Enriched with research papers featuring scientific and practical recommendations, the event will feature contributions from seasoned academics and experts in the field.

Diplomatic missions, public institutions, and civil society organizations concerned with human rights issues have been invited to participate, reflecting a collaborative approach towards addressing human rights challenges in Kuwait.

In conclusion, Al-Maghamis expressed gratitude to all stakeholders involved in organizing the event, urging attendees to actively engage with the discussions to maximize the forum's impact and promote advancements in human rights in Kuwait.



KUWAIT PHOTOS
Kuwait Army chief welcomes Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto at the airport.

Italy's DM in Kuwait

Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto and his accompanying delegation arrived Tuesday in Kuwait for an official visit.

Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwait Army Maj. Gen. Bander Al-Muzain and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah received the Italian minister and his delegation, Kuwait's (MoD) said in a news statement. (KUNA)

Municipality to fill key supervisory positions

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Sixty-four employees and engineers participated in written tests aimed at competing for 12 supervisory positions across crucial departments and branches within the Kuwait Municipality, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Spearheaded by Acting Deputy Director-General for Finance and Administrative Sector Affairs, Farhan Al-Ajmi, this initiative reflects the Municipality's commitment to filling vacancies with new talent in line with the directives of Minister of Public Works and Minister of Municipality, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, and Director-General of the Municipality, Eng. Saad Al-Dabbous.

The written tests, lasting 45 minutes each, focused on positions overseeing various municipal functions, including food and markets, procurement, advertising licenses, and municipal services licenses across different governorates. Additionally, positions related to maintenance control, tenders, and bids were also assessed.

Simultaneously, the emergency and rapid intervention team of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Municipality branch conducted extensive field tours to maintain municipal standards. Led by Nasser Al-Hajri, the team issued 19 violations against individuals involved in waste sorting and tampering in the Sabhan Industrial Area, underscoring the Municipality's commitment to enforcing regulations and deterring infractions.

Al-Hajri urged real estate and shop owners, as well as workers, to strictly adhere to municipal laws and regulations to avoid penalties, affirming the supervisory team's unwavering resolve in enforcing legal measures against violators.



Al-Dabbous

'Nat'l Science, Engineering Competition supports young researchers, innovators'

Award promotes culture of creativity: winners

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): Kuwait Science Club (KSC) Chairman Talal Al-Kharafi said on Wednesday that Kuwait Science and Engineering Competition was a strategic event to support young researchers and innovators.

This came in a statement to the press in the opening of the Competition in its 10th edition with participation of 83 scientific researches and engineering designs sponsored by His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and attendance of Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah.

"The scientific club has been able to achieve a qualitative shift to develop our children's capacities in the field of scientific research," Al-Kharafi said in a press release.

The KSC started its competition since 2012 where free workshops and courses are held throughout the year for teachers and students to prepare them for competitions and scientific exhibitions.

Al-Kharafi added, the competition offers seven months training program for students to participate in Arabic and international forums including International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) world's largest international science competition.

On his part, head of Development Sector and Competitive Programs Mohammad Al-Saffar said KSC keen on spreading the culture of scientific research and innovations between students except for college students.

Chairman of the Competition Jury Mohammad Al-Failakawi pointed out that the participants were evaluated by 50 judges in different scientific disciplines and all of them are Faculty members at Kuwait University, The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

The competition included 22 scientific and engineering fields as well as social and behavioral sciences and the projects have been integrated into 11 groups each with several specializations.

Youth creativity award

Several Kuwaiti youth winners of previous editions of the Kuwait Excellence Award and Youth Creativity, annually organized by the Youth Pub-



KUNA photo
Humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Aid for Syrian refugee families

The Kuwaiti Al-Najat Charity announced on Wednesday that it had provided aid to 670 Syrian families at Jordanian refugee camps as part of its humanitarian winter campaign.

Al-Najat Chairman Faisal Al-Zamel told KUNA that the campaign aimed to assist Syrian refugee families as it has done in previous campaigns to deliver necessary aid to Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, especially amid the current cold winter conditions.

He stressed the importance of this aid in the present situation by providing those families with blankets, clothes, medical supplies and food.

Al-Zamel stressed that Al-Najat Charity carries out its charity campaigns in cooperation with official charities aid societies. (KUNA)

lic Authority, underlined the significant role of the award in promoting a culture of innovation and creativity among a large segment of talented Kuwaiti youth in various fields and encouraging them to excel.

These creative youth, in separate statements to KUNA Wednesday, during the launch of the authority's registration for the sixth edition of the award, collectively expressed that winning this award was a significant milestone in their professional careers, propelling them forward in their respective fields and providing them with a strong incentive for further progress and

success.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Azemi, winner in the field of science and technology for the fifth edition, stated that he decided to participate in the award due to his belief in the potential of his invention, which involves manufacturing an antenna to increase data transfer speed in mobile phones by operating on three different frequencies with the ability to automatically change frequencies.

This win encouraged him to publish the project as a research paper in a highly-ranked scientific journal, he noted, considering his participation in the award had a positive impact, motivating him to work on further inventions and research in this technological and cognitive field.

Meanwhile, poet Aisha Al-Abdullah, winner in the field of culture and literature in the first edition, attributed her win to the publication of her debut poetry collection "Five Strings in My Hand," explaining the importance of such recognition for young individuals in fostering their creative development and pursuit of excellence.

She highlighted that her win widened her poetry's reach both locally and internationally, leading to nominations for the Gulf Cooperation Council's creative youth award and invitations to poetry events abroad, encouraging all young creatives to trust in their abilities and apply for the award for its supportive impact.

Additionally, Ahmad Al-Aloush, winner in the field of media, mentioned that his winning of the award in the third edition came through a documentary television work titled "Kuwait Tomorrow," which showcased the Kuwaiti government's efforts in implementing the country's development plan of New Kuwait and presented these efforts to the public.

On her side, literary translator Dalal Nasrallah, winner in the field of culture, arts, and literature in the fourth edition, for her translation of the book "Woody Allen" from English to Arabic, remarked that receiving the award was a deserving recognition for her diligent work in her field, enabling her to advance her goals.

This win encouraged publishing houses in Kuwait to trust Kuwaiti literary translators, opening up job opportunities for her across the Arab world as she became a member of the editorial board of an international creativity magazine and the director of the Kalamat Agency in Saudi Arabia, also being nominated for the Sheikh Zayed Award for Translation for a book in Italian, she mentioned.



KUNA photo
Deputy Secretary General of the UN and Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group Amina Mohammad.

UN official hails role of Kuwaiti women

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Deputy Secretary General of the UN and Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group Amina Mohammad praised the role of Kuwaiti women in building societies and advancing the development progress.

This came in speech at a dinner banquet on Tuesday with a group of Kuwaiti women leaders on the occasion of the country's national day. She stated that her visit was an opportunity to enhance dialogue and cooperation between senior UN officials and influential Kuwaiti women in their industries, ex-

pressing her aspiration in strengthening their relation with Kuwait.

She also expressed her appreciation to the State of Kuwait on their continuous commitment in supporting and empowering women.

For her part, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Affairs, Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah said that the government's plan for this year emanates from Kuwait 2035 Vision, which firmly believes in equal rights, affirming that the Constitution of Kuwait stipulates principles of equality, justice and full observance of human rights.

'Refuge providing treatment'

Minister Firas inaugurates child protection and listening centers

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Child Affairs, Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah, led the inauguration ceremony of the Child Protection Center and the Art of Listening Center at the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. Acting Undersecretary Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi and Acting Secretary-General Dr. Maryam Al-Azmi were also present at the event, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



Sheikh Firas

Speaking to reporters after the opening on Tuesday, Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah emphasized the vital role of the center as a refuge providing psychological and social treatments for children alongside various integrated services. He commended the

contributions of Kuwaiti youth in operating the center and announced plans to establish additional branches in accordance with legal mandates.

In a similar statement, Dr. Maryam Al-Azmi highlighted the significance of inaugurating the first child protection center, underscoring the leadership's commitment to implementing the Child Rights Law, which necessitates such facilities. She reiterated the ongoing efforts of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs to enhance family protection systems, recognizing the family as the cornerstone of society.

Al-Azmi further emphasized the fruitful cooperation and partnership between various institutions, as evidenced by the presence of representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Education, and Health, as well as civil society associations and the National Office for Human Rights at the opening ceremony.

Waste-diggers get 19 citations

By Enas Awad

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Emergency and Rapid Intervention Team at the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Municipality branch carried out field visits in all areas to shops, central markets and cooperative societies, monitoring plots of land that violate municipal requirements and encroachments on state property, as well as monitoring random advertisements in streets and squares and removing them, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In this context, the head of the emergency and rapid intervention team in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Municipality branch, Nasser Al-Hajri, confirmed

that the supervisory team was keen in its three shifts to ensure that shops, real estate owners and companies adhere to the conditions and controls in force in the municipality, explaining that the tour resulted in issuing 19 violations to workers who sort waste and tampering.

During the team's tour of the Sabhan Industrial Area, they were transferred to the competent authorities to complete the legal procedures against them.

Al-Hajri called on real estate and shop owners and workers to abide by the laws and regulations in force in the municipality to avoid violations and fines, stressing that the supervisory team will not be complacent in taking all legal measures against violators.

Other Voices

How to avoid rental problems?

By Ahmad alsarraf

Those who live outside their country prefer to buy a car instead of renting it, and they have their reasons, but with the complexity of life in many countries, leasing has become a solution to many of the problems of owning a car, as its owner is not required to perform any periodic maintenance on it, nor renew its ownership papers, nor insurance.

He/she does not have to face mountains of small problems if he/she is involved in a traffic accident, for example, or breaks down in the middle of the road.

Leasing a car instead of buying it is the practical solution to all ownership problems, and it is the general trend. Many individuals and companies have achieved their "traditional" wealth by leasing to huge industrial companies, such as the Kuwait Oil Company, Aramco, and others.

In recent years, I have begun to satisfy my passion for cars by renting them, instead of buying them, as this causes less headache, and I say this from experience dating back to more than 62 years. I am fond of owning and driving cars, and the first car I owned was a 1962 Volkswagen, for which my father paid for its agent, Murad Behbehani, 540 dinars. My second car was a 1965 Mustang convertible, and the obsession continues today.

Since the solution is in leasing, it is necessary to know some car leasing secrets:

We must first make sure that the place to pick up the car is convenient and close to the airport building. When

it is far away, the issue of handling luggage becomes very annoying. The reservation must be flexible, allowing cancellation at any time without any financial penalty. Therefore, experts advise booking the car early and then using the time before the trip to check prices from time to time. If prices decrease, the reservation can be canceled and reinstalled at a lower price. The same tactic can be followed with hotel reservations.

Also, when the car you reserved is not available when you arrive, most rental agencies will give you the second best available car without any additional fees, and this is the right of the renter. But some of them try to take advantage of the situation and offer a better car in exchange for paying an additional amount. Here you must insist on the original category of your car, and when it is not available, you have the right to get a car of a better category, without paying an additional fee.

What many car renters do not know is that the bank credit cards they carry often provide them with insurance coverage, especially if the car was reserved using the same card, which provides a significant saving on the rental cost.

Car renters must verify that there are no scratches or external or even internal damage upon receiving the car. If so, it is necessary to inform the company of this so that it can be officially installed.

It is necessary to return the car with a full fuel tank until the end, to avoid the company tampering with this matter. A picture of the tank's full indicator can be taken, as an argument against the company in the future, if it tries to tamper with it.

Finally, it is necessary to return the car to the company on time. Sometimes a delay not exceeding half an hour gives the company the right to charge a full additional day.



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As part of their efforts to support and empower youth

Gulf Bank renews its strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Gulf Bank has renewed its strategic partnership with the INJAZ, gearing up for another year of supporting and empowering youth, who play a central role in the bank's 2025 strategy and Kuwait Vision 2035.

Ahmad Al-Amir, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications, expressed pride in the continued partnership with INJAZ, spanning over 18 years. This partnership aims to support youth and the next generation of young entrepreneurs by equipping them with the skills needed for today's rapidly evolving job market

across various economic sectors. Al-Amir reaffirmed Gulf Bank's commitment to its social responsibilities towards youth, particularly those in secondary schools, universities, and recent graduates. This dedication includes offering fundamental business concepts, exploring interests, providing professional opportunities, and nurturing their professional skills through practical training.

Successful

He highlighted the successful partnership between Gulf Bank and INJAZ, resulting in the training of around 26,000 students throughout

the academic year 2022/2023, focusing on various educational levels. Volunteers from Gulf Bank actively engaged in diverse activities organized by INJAZ to support youth development.

Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ, Kuwait, emphasized the importance of private sector support for the organization's continuity and success. She highlighted the long-standing partnership with Gulf Bank, which provides vital support for the organization's activities by offering volunteers, and actively participating in student training programs, notably the Company Program. This program

offers youth the chance to establish and run a real company.

Al-Mutairi pointed out that INJAZ has provided training to more than 120,000 students since its establishment, emphasizing the refinement of youth skills for the workplace, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. The organization remains dedicated to equipping young individuals with the necessary tools for future success.

Educational

It is noteworthy that INJAZ Kuwait is part of the global network of Junior Achievement worldwide, a non-profit (NPO), non-governmental organiza-

tion (NGO) driven by Kuwait's private sector. Through strategic partnerships with Kuwait's business and education sectors, and with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers, INJAZ delivers both Arabic and English language educational programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills, to build successful careers.

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.



Ahmad Al-Amir and Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi after renewing the partnership contract.



Part of the discussion sessions held within the 10th conference of the Mamluk studies.



Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Archeology at KU and one of the conference organizers, Dr. Amna Abdel Karim, welcomes the attendees.



Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar.

Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah hosts event

Kuwait participates in 10th int'l conference of Mamluk studies

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): The 10th conference of Mamluk studies kicked off on Tuesday at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah with the participation of Kuwaiti and international archeological scholars and researchers specialized in the history of the Mamluk state.

The conference is conducted by the Middle East Documentation Center at the University of Chicago and under the patronage of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL).

In his speech in the conference, NCCAL Secretary General Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar said that translating and interpreting archeology could reveal more facts about that historical era than any individual effort.

Dr. Al-Jassar added that the importance of archeology reflects the culture and civilization of a certain society, such as the buildings that society builds, we can study

them, investigate and predict their way of living, patterns, and how they deal with their surroundings in the world.

He noted that this conference is an opportunity to exchange expertise, experience and researches, and to discuss the outcomes of those investigations of different archeological locations and shed the light on that important period of time in human history especially in the Middle East.

The conference over the course of two days will focus on the relationship between historical narratives and archaeological findings of the Mamluk period through more than 35 researches presented by scholars and academics from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United States and Russia. In addition to research centers and universities from France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Poland, Turkiye, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria and Japan.

Power ministry unveils ambitious strategy regarding clean energy

Contract signed to prep studies related to general water plan

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has revealed an ambitious strategy aimed at harnessing clean energy sources, including solar and wind power. With an approved plan in motion, the ministry aims to generate an impressive 4,710 megawatts from these projects, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Key projects within this plan include the Al-Shagaya complex project, spanning five phases, expected to produce 4,500 megawatts of electricity. Additionally, the Abdaliyah station project, with an estimated energy capacity ranging from 180 to 230 megawatts, is currently under study.

Innovative approaches are also being explored, such as installing photovoltaic systems on the roofs of Subiya ground water tanks, targeting a capacity of 30 megawatts. This project is currently under evaluation by the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

In addition to these large-scale initiatives, the ministry is actively pursuing smaller projects to enhance renewable energy technology. Ongoing projects already boast a combined capacity of 5,045 megawatts, with future endeavors set to contribute an additional 93.46 megawatts.

Projects

Upcoming small-scale projects include plans to install photovoltaic cell systems on car awnings, buildings of power stations, and ministry facilities across various sites, with a total installed capacity of 8 megawatts and 34.6 megawatts, respectively, pending approval by relevant authorities.

Proposals for projects like the Doha Water Complex Project, the Shuwaikh Water Complex, and the Hawally Water Complex are underway, expected to yield a production capacity of 37 megawatts.

The latest addition to this ambitious portfolio is the Al-Matlaa High Reservoirs Project, projected to generate 45 megawatts of electricity. With these endeavors, the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy is making significant strides towards a sustainable energy future.

Meanwhile, the ministry has signed a consultation contract with Aldar Engineering Office to prepare studies and documents related to the general water plan of the country in the presence of acting Undersecretary Eng Maha Al-Asousi and officials from the Water Projects Sector, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Asousi disclosed that the contract covers eight strategic water projects, including studies on connecting the northern and southern water networks. She said these projects include the establishment of two water distribution complexes -- one in Wafra (South) and the other in Naeem (North); as well as the development of Ahmadi and Subhan water distribution complexes to increase their storage, transportation and distribution capacities. She explained the rate of increase in storage capacity for both projects will be linked to the technical aspects of developing the tanks site.

Preparing

She stated that the basic project for preparing the general water plan, which will be carried out by the consultant, will determine the additional capacity that the ministry needs in each of the sites that will be developed. She said the ministry will first focus on developing the Subhan distribution complex, given the need to upgrade its stations. "Through the general water plan, we will be able to identify the future water needs of the country; that is, until 2040," she revealed.

She added the benefits of linking the southern and northern water networks include flexibility in supplying water to all parts of the country while ensuring ample water supply; indicating the above-mentioned contract also stipulates training of the local staff to acquire the necessary expertise in all stages.

The ministry has announced significant advancements in water projects within the residential city of Wafra, reports Al-Jarida daily. Valued at approximately 14.289 million dinars, these projects entail crucial infrastructure developments, including the installation of a main water line with an 800 mm diameter connecting the Wafra reservoirs to the residential city.

Additionally, there is a project underway to construct a 1200 mm diameter water line from the Al-Zour Water Complex to the Al-Wafra reservoirs, as reported by Al-Jarida daily, citing ministry sources. The ministry has reiterated its commitment to completing all energy and water projects, particularly those catering to new cities, within the specified timelines. This dedication is reinforced by ongoing collaboration with various government agencies to ensure the prompt and effective implementation of these vital initiatives.



The four Kuwaiti students that won first place in GCC Robots Olympics.

MoE expresses pride

Four Kuwaiti students 'win' first place in GCC Robots Olympics

MUSCAT, March 6, (KUNA): Four Kuwaiti students won on Tuesday, the first place in the GCC Robots Olympics' 'Installation-Programming-Application' challenge, which was held in the Omani capital Muscat.

In a press release, the Ministry of Education expressed their appreciation and pride in the achievement of their students,

wishing them further success.

The ministry added that the GCC Robots Olympics aims to exchange experiences in the robotic educational field and stimulate the enthusiasm of the participants towards creativity.

The ministry also added that the preparation of the competition started on December 10th 2023, and ended on March 5th, 2024.

27th Endowment Forum kicks off today

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Amidst eager anticipation and under the esteemed patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, the 27th Endowment Forum is set to kick off today (Thursday). The forum will focus on highlighting the significant milestones achieved by the General Secretariat of Endowments over the past three decades across various domains, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Amal Al-Dalal, Deputy Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of Endowments, unveiling details of the forum during a press conference held by the Awqaf Secretariat under the "Thirty Years of Leadership," said the forum aims to delve into the societal and developmental roles of the Awqaf Secretariat, including its investment sector, endowment banks, and the promotion of endowment initiatives.



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Abdullah Al-Salem University opens door for mission assistant applicants

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Abdullah Al-Salem University has announced it is receiving applications for the position of mission assistant for the academic years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. The application period will run until March 15, inviting candidates from various specializations across the university's faculties, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a groundbreaking move, academic sources have revealed plans to extend scholarships for mission assistants to include public universities. This initiative aims to attract professors with modern expertise, aligning with the university's vision to keep pace with educational advancements.

This marks the first such announcement by Abdullah Al-Salem University since its establishment in 2019 and the admission of its inaugural student cohort in 2023. The university aims to strengthen its teaching staff through scholarship opportunities, with this announcement mark-

ing the initial application phase, to be followed by subsequent announcements in accordance with regulations.

As Kuwait looks to Abdullah Al-Salem University as its second public university, following Kuwait University, there is a growing inclination towards establishing additional public universities. Plans are underway to conduct a study to determine the geographical distribution of public universities and their branches, emphasizing the role of private higher education in meeting the demand for modern specializations in the labor market.

The establishment of Abdullah Al-Salem University was notably swift and cost-effective, facilitated by the issuance of the Public Universities Law in 2019. Following the partial relocation of Kuwait University to Sabah Al-Salem University City in September 2019, Abdullah Al-Salem University was established using Kuwait University's former premises, minimizing financial expenditures.

'Shift to using digital solutions is accompanied by many security risks'

Confab stresses necessity of building cybersecurity infrastructure

Your Highness

Continued from Page 1

As for the fifth station, it was in the country of glory, the House of Zayed and Rashid, which in the last two decades has become like an ode to progress and civilization, and an icon of what countries striving to achieve developmental miracles can be like.

This was possible through the efforts of its president Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, and his supporter Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, by executing urban projects, relying on young people to manage the helm of the ship, embracing international universities and hospitals, and creating entertainment places of all kinds. It does not hurt that 90 percent of its population are expatriates.

In fact, it made these expatriates an added value at all levels, and opened its embrace to all creative people. No one used the demographic structure as an excuse, which is a slogan of truth intended for falsehood.

In the Emirates, the distinguished reception of His Highness the Amir was an expression of the extent of the love that its people have for Kuwait.

This was the conclusion of those blessed visits, after His Highness the Father of Kuwait was briefed on what those countries had achieved in a few years. Perhaps Kuwait will follow the footsteps of its Gulf sisters and move with confident steps towards progress.

Time is racing for it to return to being "The Pearl of the Gulf" and the icon of the Arab world.

Our leader is no less ambitious than the leaders of those countries, and our people are no lesser than their people. If the doors are opened to him, he, through self-initiative and determination to perform miracles, will be able to turn the page on the three decades that surrounded Kuwait with a wall of backwardness and depression.

Ministry vows

Continued from Page 1

Emphasizing the ministry's dedication to monitoring market preparations for Ramadan, Al-Wataid stated that they conduct two to three rounds per week to various markets, associations, and shops in the capital's areas, including Hawalli, Al-Shaab, Salmiya, and others, to monitor goods availability and price control.

Regarding consumer complaints, Al-Wataid reported receiving about 16,941 complaints and reports in Hawalli Governorate last year and 4,633 complaints from the beginning of this year until the end of February.

He assured that the ministry is accessible to consumers around the clock through the Sahel application portal, WhatsApp messaging service (55135135), and (135), and that all complaints are promptly addressed, covering various issues such as contractual violations, financial discrepancies, and delays in procedures.

Amir inaugurates

Continued from Page 1

The political leadership's continuous support contributed to the establishment of Kuwait University (KU), the nation's first university, during the reign of late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, he said.

KU marked the beginning of higher education in Kuwait, he added, becoming a beacon of science and knowledge. Then there was a need to establish a new government university, Abdullah Al-Salem University, he said, offering new majors to contribute alongside KU to the development of science, knowledge, progress and advancement, and to produce generations helping in the process of development.

Addressing the students, Al-Adwani said they would be responsible for building the nation. "You are the pillar and main driver of development, I urge you to exert efforts in your educational life, to contribute to boosting process of the state's progress and sustainable development, participate in the building of knowledge economy, which would be your gate for a bright world."

Dr. Al-Humoud said ASSU was receiving the first batch of students for 2023-24.

Al-Humoud expressed gratitude for His Highness the Amir for paying close attention to process of establishment of the university, addressing challenges and giving the Council enough time to assess and follow-up.

"We hope this university be amongst distinguished universities offering high-quality academic level to match scientific and technical level of renowned universities, regionally and internationally," she added.

She recalled late Amirs Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who began this journey when a decree was published in 1919 to establish government universities, and another decree to create the constituent assembly in 2021.

"This shows how our wise leadership has always supported education, science and knowledge," she said.

Al-Humoud said the ASSU was named after Kuwait's 11th ruler, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah who set the foundation for modern education.

Al-Humoud, who thanked all those who contributed to establishment of ASSU, said members of the constituent council collaborated with Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, economic institutions and international universities to have first-hand account of the most important majors to be offered by ASSU.

She said the ASSU has three Colleges: Business and Entrepreneurship, Computing and Systems, and Engineering and Energy, in addition to integration studies.

Al-Humoud said these specialties would match the fourth industrial revolution which revolved around data, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, energy resources, innovation and business administration.

She said the relevant committees were studying requirements to establish the College of Health and Medicine, and launch post-graduate program and scientific center.

A documentary clip was displayed about the identity of ASSU, and then His Highness the Amir unveiled the curtain to mark the official opening of ASSU.

32 parliamentary

Continued from Page 1

First Constituency candidate Abdul Samad Mustafa asserted: "Once again, we return to participate in the National Assembly election and go to the ballot boxes after less than eight months of participating in the previous election. This has plunged the country into a major crisis that reinforces instability of the political scene, which delayed us greatly."

He added everyone expected the dissolution of the Assembly, pointing out this is a dangerous indicator "because we have lost confidence that the Assembly is capable of continuing its full role for four years. It is necessary to search for the reasons for the dissolution and the solutions that we need, so that we do not return to square one."

Former MP Ahmed Al-Hamad filed his candidacy in the Second Constituency, after which he released a press statement stressing the need to amend the Constitution in order to increase the number of MPs. He pointed out that when the founders of the Constitution specified the number of MPs at 50, the population of Kuwait was only 250,000 while the current population is about 1.4 million. He emphasized the need for political stability, which is absent now as a result of the repeated dissolution and nullification of parliaments.

HH Amir

Continued from Page 1

His Highness the Amir started his first overseas trip with a visit to the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and then proceeded to the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

During the trip, His Highness the Amir was given red carpet receptions by leaders of GCC states with air parades, 21-gun salutes, and camel and horse shows as expression of high esteem for him and for the State of Kuwait.

His Highness the Amir reaffirmed commitment to Kuwait's long-standing foreign policy based on close relations with the sisterly GCC states and regional cooperation in the face of external challenges.

The trip materialized the content of the speech by His Highness the Amir at the oath-taking at the National Assembly (parliament) on December 20, 2023, regarding continuing the trailblazing course of Kuwait in working with sisterly and friendly countries on regional and international issues of common concern.

On their part, the foreign ministers of the GCC member states spoke highly of the outcomes of His Highness the Amir's trip, during their meeting in Riyadh on March 3.

The visits reflected the strength of the deep-rooted bonds among the leaders and peoples of the GCC states, according to the final communique of the ministerial meeting. The ministers expressed confidence that His Highness the Amir, thanks to his wise leadership, would enhance Kuwait's effective role in promoting the GCC march towards realization of the noble objectives.

GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi, in a statement to KUNA, said His Highness the Amir's Gulf tour reflected Kuwait's firm and active role in boosting the GCC action and promoting cooperation.

The tour, he said, would contribute to the achievement of GCC objectives for the sake of prosperity and stability of the member states and their people.

Kuwait, UAE

Continued from Page 1

In their talks, both sides discussed ways to boost bilateral ties and ways to enhance them, remembering the leading role of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and former Kuwaiti and Emirati leaders in building those relations.

On economy, trade and investment, His Highness the Amir and the UAE President collectively praised the growth of commercial relations, as non-oil trade between the two countries have grown 2 percent in 2023 compared to 2022, reaching USD 12.2 billion.

They both, according to the statement, emphasized the importance of expanding cooperation horizons and seizing opportunities between the neighboring countries by welcoming Kuwaiti and Emirati investors to expand their businesses in vital fields in light of achieving "Kuwait Vision 2035" and "We the UAE 2031" vision.

On politics, both sides praised the close political, diplomatic, economic, financial and commercial relations. In addition to the fields of communication, energy, cyber security, maritime transportation and other fields of cooperation.

Kuwait reiterates

Continued from Page 1

He noted that Kuwait also emphasized "our role" as Muslim countries in formulating clear visions to implement the decisions issued by the extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic summit.

The OIC ministerial meeting is held in light of the escalation of military operations launched by the Israeli occupation forces against "our brothers" in the Gaza Strip and intense targeting of Rafah City, the final resort of civilians in the Strip, Al-Yahya said.

The Israeli occupation, through its heinous acts, has caused a new catastrophe of violence and injustice, he added, elaborating that dead people are under the rubble of buildings reflecting the apparent brutality of the occupation.

Also:

CAIRO: Arab foreign ministers held a consultative meeting in Cairo ahead of the 161th ordinary session of the Council of the Arab League at the ministerial level to look into issues put on the council's meeting agenda. Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul-Gheit was present at the meeting.

Arab permanent representatives met at the Cairo-based bloc on Monday to discuss the session's issues, under chairmanship of Mauritania.

LONDON, March 6, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Investment Conference held in London, on Tuesday, touched on the importance of building infrastructure for cybersecurity systems and digital solutions in banking, education, and health, said Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment,

Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf. In remarks to KUNA, Minister Al-Mudhaf noted that the conference also discussed investing in cybersecurity, adding that the shift to using digital solutions is accompanied by many security problems and risks, which require full awareness.

The minister praised the role

of the Direct Investment Promotion Authority in organizing the conference, which witnessed the presence of two British ministers and representatives of prominent economic and investment bodies.

He also stressed Kuwait's interest in enhancing the role of cybersecurity in protecting the govern-

ment, individuals and businesses from cybercrimes.

On Kuwaiti-British relations, the minister said that the conference is being held in conjunction with the 125th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-British partnership, stressing that the relations between the two countries are deep-rooted.

British minister praises Kuwait's investment-encouraging reforms

'Kuwaiti-UK investments ties unmatched in strength'

By Marwan Baltrush

LONDON, March 6, (KUNA): Minister of State in the British Department for Business and Trade Lord Dominic Johnson commended Tuesday the steps taken by the State of Kuwait under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for encouraging and facilitating investments to diversify its income sources.

"The government of Kuwait has been far-sighted and I congratulate (His Highness) the Amir of Kuwait for his vision of how to move Kuwait from being one largely dependent on petrochemicals to one that has diverse routes," Lord Johnson told KUNA on the sidelines of participation in the Kuwait Investment Conference which kicked off in London Tuesday.

Johnson stated that the memorandum of understanding between the UK and Kuwait which was signed during His Highness Sheikh Mishal's visit to London last year focused on what's next in the economic relations between the countries.

He noted that the MoU has given a momentum to mutual investments and is expected to take them to broader new horizons soon.

Lord Johnson described the Kuwaiti-UK investments relations as unmatched in strength and longevity.

"I think this relationship genuinely is the longest financial relation in the world, I am not exaggerating here because this is a 70 plus-years relationship with a single financial entity and I can not believe actually there is many similarities in the world with this kind of longevity," he argued, referring to the crucial role played by the Kuwait Investment Office in London in this regard.

Lord Johnson noted the Kuwaiti investments in the UK have remarkably expanded in the recent years to include important new fields such as clean energy, artificial intelligence, financial services, technology and insurance.

He stated that Kuwaiti investments are of extreme importance to the British which needs continuous investment flows to achieve its ambitions.

He pointed out that Kuwait also benefits from the British experience and technology that can be transferred to develop the Kuwaiti economy and create job opportunities for future generations.

Earlier, Lord Johnson participated in the conference session themed "125 Years of the Kuwaiti-British Partnership" where he highlighted the depth and long history of relations between the two friendly countries and their positive development over the past decades.

The session, in which the Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Britain, Bader Al-Awadhi, and the British Ambassador to Kuwait, Belinda Lewis, participated, also touched upon the future of the two countries' relations and ways to strengthen and develop them.

The role of the Kuwait Investment Office in London and its importance in consolidating the economic partnership, in addition to the role of the private sector in boosting this partnership, was tackled during the conference, especially in the last two sessions entitled "Finance and Investment: Strengthening Bilateral Relations" and "Technological Advancement and Digital Innovation".

The Kuwait investment conference is held as part of celebrations of 125 years of Kuwait-UK bilateral relations and the 70th anniversary of the opening of the Kuwait Investment Office in London.

It witnessed large participation by ministers and officials from the two countries, led by the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf, and the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for European Affairs, Ambassador Sadiq Marafi.

On the British side, Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, Lord Tariq Ahmed, and Minister of State in the Department of Business and Trade, Lord Dominic Johnson, participated, in addition to experts, businessmen, and representatives of the private sector from both countries.



Lord Johnson and Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister Sadiq Marafi during the conference.

AI reshaping region's landscape

Exploring the frontiers of AI Law in Middle East

By Lawyer Abdulaziz Abdullah Alhusainan

In the dynamic realm of technological innovation, the Middle East stands at the forefront of embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to drive progress and development. From smart cities to healthcare advancements, AI is reshaping the region's landscape. However, alongside this rapid advancement comes the critical need for regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible and ethical AI deployment.

Across the Middle East, governments are recognizing the urgency of AI regulation and are taking proactive steps to implement robust frameworks. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the 'UAE Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2031' outlines ambitious goals for leveraging AI while prioritizing ethical considerations. Similarly, the 'Dubai AI Ethics Guidelines' aim to foster transparent and accountable AI deployment. Saudi Arabia, through initiatives like the 'Saudi Data and AI Authority (SDAIA)', is prioritizing AI integration, focusing on data privacy and security. The country's 'National Strategy for Data and AI' underscores its commitment to promoting AI innovation. Qatar has also embraced AI with its 'National AI Strategy 2020-2022', emphasizing



Lawyer Alhusainan

ing responsible deployment through ethical guidelines and regulatory frameworks.

Despite progress in AI regulation, challenges persist, requiring nuanced approaches to address emerging issues. Data privacy and security are paramount, given AI's reliance on vast datasets. Middle Eastern countries must enact stringent data privacy laws to safeguard sensitive information. Algorithmic bias poses another challenge, potentially leading to unfair outcomes. Addressing bias requires comprehensive audits

and transparency measures.

Ethical dilemmas surrounding accountability and liability in AI decision-making highlight the need for clear guidelines to mitigate risks and foster trust. Amidst challenges, collaborative efforts present opportunities to shape the future of AI governance in the Middle East.

Public-private partnerships can facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building in AI regulation, balancing innovation with ethical considerations. International cooperation is essential to address regulatory gaps and harmonize standards, leveraging partnerships with international organizations and peer nations. Stakeholder engagement, including civil society organizations and the public, is crucial for ensuring inclusive AI governance.

As the Middle East continues its AI-driven transformation, robust regulatory frameworks are essential. By proactively addressing challenges and embracing collaboration, the region can lead in shaping responsible AI deployment that aligns with ethical principles and societal values. In navigating the frontier of AI law, the Middle East has the potential to emerge as a global leader in technology governance.

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Development remains cornerstone of UN system: Al-Banai

KFAED backs nations, eyeing broader co-op with Latin America, Caribbean

By Abdullah Al-Enezi

NEW YORK, March 6, (KUNA): Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Tareq Al-Banai confirmed that Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) is a key tool for the country's contribution to the development of nations and global well-being.

During an event held at the Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the UN yesterday evening, Tuesday, Al-Banai addressed attendees, including the Acting Director General of KFAED Waleed Al-Bahar, and accompanying delegation, along with various parties concerned with developmental affairs in Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Development remains the cornerstone of the UN system, Al-Banai stated in a speech, considering this event as an integral part of fundamental foreign policy to enhance cooperation among Southern countries.

KFAED, since its establishment over the past 60 years, and just six months after Kuwait's independence, has financed developmental projects in over 100 countries, he

added.

He pointed out KFAED's recent contribution to financing the construction of hospitals, educational institutions, roads, and infrastructure projects, as part of national implementation of goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals concerning partnerships.

Meanwhile, Al-Bahar looks to broaden bilateral cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean nations.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Bahar discussed cooperation with parties in Latin American and Caribbean developmental affairs.

This event provides regional countries with an opportunity to engage with KFAED, understanding the nature and funding requirements of developmental projects it supports, which can drive development in the region, Al-Bahar mentioned.

He emphasized the contributions of Kuwaiti private sector towards completing numerous developmental projects in Latin American countries.

Over the past decades, KFAED has expanded its geographical scope to encompass over 105 countries, with these nations benefiting from over 1,000 loan agreements totaling

over USD 22 billion, he noted.

Al-Bahar underlined that as Kuwait's development entity, KFAED has funded projects for Arab and other developing countries for over 61 years, supporting their efforts to enhance social and economic plans.

The Director General of KFAED aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation with development funds of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to attract and cover costs of developmental projects through an integrated financing plan.

During the event, the Operations Department Supervisor for Latin American and Caribbean Affairs reviewed KFAED's contributions globally and specifically within the region of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Pacific Islands, explaining the loan application process for financing developmental projects.

KFAED's activity in the Latin American and Caribbean region began in 1992, covering approximately 15 countries with 52 developmental projects.

Established in 1961, KFAED is considered the first development institution in the Middle East aimed at assisting developing countries in financing their projects by providing loans and aid.

World News Roundup

Asia

'Resolve sea disputes'

Australia and Laos elevate bilateral ties

MELBOURNE, Australia, March 6, (AP): Leaders of Australia and Laos signed an agreement that deepens bilateral ties on Wednesday on the final day of a Southeast Asian summit.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Laos counterpart Sonexay Siphandone are co-chairing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' special summit being held in Melbourne to mark 50 years since Australia became the 10-nation bloc's first external partner.

The agreement elevates the relationship to a comprehensive partnership which will become the foundation for collaboration on defense, environment, climate, clean energy, agriculture and education.

Laos, the bloc's poorest nation, took over ASEAN's rotating leadership from Indonesia this year and is pursuing a theme of enhancing connectivity and resilience.

Albanese said the key themes of Wednesday's discussions would include trade, investment, climate change, clean energy and maritime co-operation.

These will be reflected in the leaders' communique to be adopted later on Wednesday.

China's increasing assertiveness in the region and the ongoing violence and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, as ASEAN state, have also loomed over the three-day summit.

Myanmar has been denied political representation at the meeting over its failure to stem violence in that country since a military junta seized control in 2021.

East Timorese Prime Minister **Xanana Gusmão** is also attending the summit after ASEAN agreed in principle to admit Asia's newest country.

The former independence fighter has called on ASEAN to do more to restore peace and democracy in Myanmar.



Gusmão

Recognizable

The Southeast Asian leaders attending the summit in Melbourne also had an opportunity on Wednesday to get up close with one of Australia's most recognizable native animals, the koala.

Albanese expressed concerns Wednesday over "unsafe and destabilizing behavior" in the South China Sea, citing the collision between Chinese and Philippine ships the previous day.

Albanese's remarks came as his country wrapped up a three-day summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that failed to explicitly call China out over a series of incidents in the disputed waters.

Instead, ASEAN leaders urged for disputes to be resolved through dialogue rather than threats, a day after Chinese and Philippine coast guard vessels collided near a disputed shoal in the South China Sea and four Filipino crew members were injured in the confrontations.

Chinese and Philippines officials traded blame for the incident. The disputed area has been site of several tense skirmishes between Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships last year.

"It is dangerous and it creates risks of miscalculation, which can then lead to escalation," he said.

Australia had backed the Philippines' push to have the ASEAN declaration adopted at the end of summit cite a 2016 arbitration ruling in The Hague, Netherlands, that invalidated Beijing's vast territorial claims in the South China Sea, which conflict with the claims of several ASEAN states. China did not accept the ruling.

External

The Melbourne Declaration, released late Wednesday, did not mention the 2016 ruling. The summit was held in the Australian city to mark 50 years since Australia became the first external ASEAN partner.

The declaration called for peaceful resolution of disputes through legal and diplomatic processes "without resorting to the threat or use of force" in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. "We encourage all countries to avoid any unilateral actions that endanger peace, security and stability in the region," it said.

Albanese said compromises had to be made to find words that ASEAN leaders at the summit could agree on.

"There is a general recognition that we need to make sure that activity in the South China Sea alleviates any tension and doesn't add to it," Albanese said.

Deakin University Southeast Asia expert Damien Kingsbury said the declaration's failure to explicitly mention China was a nod to countries that are close to Beijing - Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar - and also to Malaysia's more conciliatory approach to the Chinese.

It's "a veiled criticism of China, which is about as strong as consensus would allow," Kingsbury said.

Leaders agreed at an ASEAN summit in Indonesia last September to accelerate a negotiation process with China with a goal of finalizing a South China Sea code of conduct within three years. Such a code would aim to prevent risky and provocative behavior.

That summit was joined by Vice President Kamala Harris, Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Also:

ABOARD BRP SINDANGAN: The Philippines will not allow China to remove a Philippine military outpost in a fiercely disputed South China Sea shoal, a navy official said Wednesday, a day after four Filipino navy personnel were injured in a confrontation between Chinese and Philippine ships.

Philippine officials summoned a Chinese Embassy diplomat in Manila to convey a strong protest over the confrontation Tuesday off Second Thomas Shoal. A small Filipino navy contingent has stood guard on a long-marooned warship that has served as an outpost in the shoal since the 1990s.

Washington issued a warning after Tuesday's hostilities that it is obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under an armed attack anywhere in the South China Sea.

Philippine navy Commodore **Roy Trinidad** also said Filipino forces will not allow any structure to be erected in another hotly contested South China Sea area, Scarborough Shoal. China surrounded the vast fishing atoll northwest of the Philippines with coast guard and suspected militia ships in 2012 after a tense standoff between Chinese and Philippine ships.

"These are red lines for the Philippines, to the armed forces," Trinidad said at a news conference in Manila when asked what Chinese actions would be unacceptable to the Philippines in the disputed waters.

Trinidad said the administration of former President **Rodrigo Duterte**, who preceded current President **Ferdinand Marcos Jr.**, established those "red lines," which delineate actions by China and any other rival claimant state that would spark fierce Philippine resistance in the disputed sea.



US President Joe Biden speaks at the George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center on Aug 10, 2023, in Salt Lake City. Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump, romped through more than a dozen states on Super Tuesday on March 5, all but cementing a November rematch. (AP)

US

Rivals move closer to November rematch

Biden, Trump dominate Super Tuesday races

WASHINGTON, March 6, (AP): US President Joe Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump, romped through more than a dozen states on Super Tuesday, all but cementing a November rematch and pushing the former president's last major rival, Nikki Haley, out of the Republican race.

Their victories from coast to coast, including the delegate-rich states of California and Texas, left little doubt about the trajectory of the race. Haley won Vermont, denying Trump a full sweep, but the former president carried other states that might have been favorable to her such as Virginia, Massachusetts and Maine, which have large swaths of moderate voters like those who have backed her in previous primaries.

Hours after the last polls closed in Alaska, Haley scheduled a 10 am ET speech in her home state of South Carolina to announce she was suspending her campaign. Three people with direct knowledge who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly confirmed Haley's decision ahead of her announcement.

Caucus

The only contest Biden lost Tuesday was the Democratic caucus in American Samoa, a tiny US territory in the South Pacific Ocean. Biden was defeated by previously unknown candidate Jason Palmer, 51 votes to 40.

Not enough states will have voted until later this month for Trump or Biden to formally become their parties' presumptive nominees. But the primary's biggest day made their rematch a near-certainty. Both the 81-year-old Biden and the 77-year-old Trump continue to dominate their parties despite facing questions about age and neither having broad popularity across the general electorate.

Haley watched the election results in private. Her campaign said in a statement that the results reflected there were many Republicans "who are expressing deep concerns about Donald Trump."

"Unity is not achieved by simply claiming 'we're united,'" spokesperson Olivia Perez-Cubas said.

Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, mean-

while, was packed for a victory party. Among those attending were staff and supporters, including the rapper Forgiato Blow and former North Carolina Rep. Madison Cawthorn. The crowd erupted as Fox News, playing on screens around the ballroom, announced that the former president had won North Carolina's GOP primary.

"They call it Super Tuesday for a reason," Trump told a raucous crowd. He went on to attack Biden over the US-Mexico border and the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. After beginning the night with victories in Virginia and North Carolina, he wrapped Super Tuesday by winning contests in Alaska and Utah.

Warning

Biden didn't give a speech but instead issued a statement warning that Tuesday's results had left Americans with a clear choice and touting his own accomplishments after beating Trump.

"If Donald Trump returns to the White House, all of this progress is at risk," Biden said. "He is driven by grievance and grift, focused on his own revenge and retribution, not the American people."

While much of the focus was on the presidential race, there were also important down-ballot contests. The governor's race took shape in North Carolina, where Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson and Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein will face off in a state that both parties are fiercely contesting ahead of November.

In California, Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff and Republican Steve Garvey, a former Los Angeles Dodgers baseball player, advanced to the general election race to fill the Senate seat long held by Dianne Feinstein.

Despite Biden's and Trump's domination of their parties, polls make it clear that the broader electorate does not want this year's general election to be identical to the 2020 race. A new AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll finds a majority of Americans don't think either Biden or Trump has the necessary mental acuity for the job.

"Both of them failed, in my opinion, to unify this country," said Brian Had-

ley, 66, of Raleigh, North Carolina.

The final days before Tuesday demonstrated the unique nature of this year's campaign. Rather than barnstorming the states holding primaries, Biden and Trump held rival events last week along the U.S.-Mexico border, each seeking to gain an advantage in the increasingly fraught immigration debate.

Attempts

After the Supreme Court ruled 9-0 on Monday to restore Trump to primary ballots following attempts to ban him for his role in helping spark the Capitol riot, Trump pointed to the 91 criminal counts against him to accuse Biden of weaponizing the courts.

"Fight your fight yourself," Trump said. "Don't use prosecutors and judges to go after your opponent."

Biden delivers the State of the Union address Thursday, then will campaign in the key swing states of Pennsylvania and Georgia.

The president faces low approval ratings and polls suggesting that many Americans, even a majority of Democrats, don't want to see the 81-year-old running again. His easy Michigan primary win last week was spoiled slightly by an "uncommitted" campaign organized by activists who disapprove of the president's handling of Israel's war in Gaza.

Allies of the "uncommitted" movement pushed similar protest votes elsewhere, such as in Minnesota, which has a significant population of Muslims, including in its Somali American community. At least 45,000 voters in Minnesota selected "uncommitted," which won 19% with almost all votes counted. That exceeds the 13% of voters who selected "uncommitted" in Michigan.

"Joe Biden has not done enough to earn my vote and not done enough to stop the war, stop the massacre," said Sarah Alfaham of the Minneapolis suburb of Bloomington.

Biden also is the oldest president ever and Republicans key on any verbal slip he makes. His aides insist that skeptical voters will come around once it is clear that either Trump or Biden will be elected again in November.



Riot police detain demonstrators at a protest in Moscow, Russia, on Sept 21, 2022, after President Vladimir Putin ordered a partial mobilization of reservists for the conflict in Ukraine. Over the last decade, Putin's Russia evolved from a country that tolerates at least some dissent to one that ruthlessly suppresses it. Arrests, trials and long prison terms - once rare - are commonplace. (AP)



Kate



Grossi

Europe

IAEA chief arrives in Russia: The UN atomic watchdog agency's director has arrived in Russia for talks on nuclear safety in Ukraine, where Europe's largest nuclear power plant is at risk amid fighting.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly expressed alarm about the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant amid fears of a potential nuclear catastrophe. The plant has repeatedly been caught in the crossfire since Russia sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, and seized the facility shortly after.

The plant's six reactors have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features.

IAEA Director-General **Rafael Mariano Grossi** arrived at the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Tuesday evening, according to Russian state news agency RIA Novosti. Grossi announced the trip on Monday, the first day of a regular meeting of the agency's 35-nation board of governors in Vienna. (AP)

Leaders vow support for Ukraine: The Czech and French presidents said Tuesday their countries remain united in their support of Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression and are ready to look for new ways of helping the Ukrainians succeed.

"We agree that the only option for us is to continue supporting Ukraine," Czech President Petr Pavel said. "We've agreed that Europe has to play a bigger role in helping Ukraine."

Pavel said that all options had to be considered but ruled out deploying combat troops in Ukraine, an idea French President Emmanuel Macron floated last week, prompting an outcry from other European leaders. Later, French officials sought to clarify Macron's remarks and tamp down criticism while insisting on the need to send a clear signal to Russia that it cannot win in Ukraine. (AP)

'Kate to appear in June': Britain's government appeared to have made an embar-

assing mistake Tuesday after it advertised that **Kate**, the Princess of Wales, will attend a Trooping the Color ceremony in June, apparently before consulting palace officials.

The announcement on the UK Ministry of Defense's website drew attention because the June appearance would be the first major official duty confirmed for Kate, 42, since

she underwent abdominal surgery.

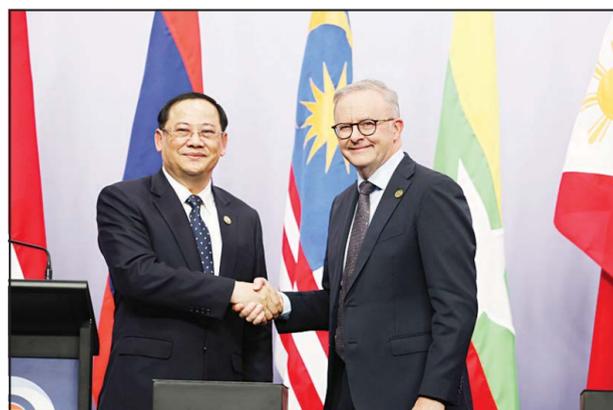
But army officials seemed to have jumped the gun because Prince William and Kate's office, Kensington Palace, hasn't confirmed any scheduled public events for Kate. It's up to palace officials, not government departments, to announce and confirm the royals' attendance at events.

The announcement caused confusion amid intense media attention on the state of Kate's health. The royal has been out of the public eye since January, when palace officials announced that she was admitted to a private London hospital for unspecified planned surgery. They didn't provide more details, but said she wouldn't return to public duties until after Easter. (AP)

Albanian mayor imprisoned: An Albanian court on Tuesday imprisoned a mayor from the country's Greek minority on vote-buying charges, a ruling that was expected to raise tensions with neighboring Greece. Greece had called on Albania's government to stop the process against Dhionisios Alfred Beleri, saying the case could negatively impact Albania's application to join the European Union. Albania is a candidate member negotiating full membership.

Albania's government has said it could do nothing while the case was in court.

The Special Court on Corruption and Organized Crime gave Beleri a two-year sentence. (AP)



Prime Minister of Laos, Sonexay Siphandone, (left), and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese shake hands following a joint press conference at the conclusion of the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne, Australia on March 6. Leaders of Australia and Laos signed an agreement that deepens bilateral ties on Wednesday on the final day of a Southeast Asian summit. (AP)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	+91.75	JAPAN	-	-6.85
UAE	-	12,561.90	EGYPT	-	-925.78
	-	4,248.30	PHILIPPINES	-	-26.92
			PAKISTAN	-	-116.12
					40,090.78
					29,743.11
					6,878.54
					65,606.31

Business

Kuwait's official reserve assets dip by 1% in 2023

Trade balance deficit narrows with Gulf countries

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: During the fiscal year 2023, the official reserve assets of the State of Kuwait experienced a decrease, declining by approximately 158 million dinars, or 1%, reaching a level of 14.620 billion dinars compared to 14.778 billion dinars in 2022. However, there was an increase in December, with reserve assets rising by about 531 million dinars, or 3.7%, reaching 14.620 billion dinars compared to 14.089 billion dinars in November.

Throughout 2023, the path of reserve assets exhibited fluctuations, with December marking the highest levels, followed by February with a value of 16 billion

dinars, and April with 15.7 billion dinars; May saw a value of 15.6 billion dinars, June at 15 billion dinars, January at 14.8 billion dinars, August at 14.73 billion dinars, September at 14.6 billion dinars, November at 14 billion dinars, and October at 13.9 billion dinars.

Two main factors influenced the monthly performance of the reserves. Firstly, foreign currency and deposits abroad decreased to 12.309 billion dinars by the end of October, a drop of 5.15% compared to the previous month, despite an annual increase of 1.07%.

On the other hand, Kuwait's trade balance deficit with Gulf countries in the third quarter of 2023 decreased to about 280.3 million dinars, down 48.1 million dinars, or 14.6%, compared to the same period in 2022. Kuwait's exports in the third quarter of 2023 amounted to approximately 168.2 million dinars, while imports reached 448.5 million dinars.

Export figures to specific Gulf countries include approximately 52.9 million dinars to Saudi Arabia with imports of 139.6 million dinars, resulting in a trade deficit of 86.8 million dinars.



Acting Group CEO of KFH – Abdulwahab Iesa AlRushood



Anwar Al-Mudhaf – Minister of Finance, Abdulwahab Al-Rushood – Acting Group CEO, Bader Al-Awadi – Kuwait's Ambassador to Britain at the event.



FINANCIAL RESULTS FULL YEAR 2023

215 Million KD
NET INCOME
↑ 10%

REVENUE ↑ 10%

1.9
Billion KD

EBITDA ↑ 5%

705
Million KD

EPS

50
Fils

CUSTOMERS

51
Million

The Board of Directors recommended a cash dividend of **25** fils per share for the second half of 2023, subject to Annual General Assembly and statutory approvals. This dividend follows the semi-annual dividend of **10** fils distributed in 2023, totaling **35** fils per share for the year 2023

KFH participates in Kuwait Investment Outreach event

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the Kuwait Investment Outreach event held in London to shed light on the finance and investment opportunities that are shaping ties between Kuwait and the UK while discussing the importance of technological advancement, and digital innovation in the banking industry.

In his keynote speech during the event, Acting Group CEO of KFH, Abdulwahab Iesa AlRushood said "The Kuwait Investment Outreach, celebrating 125 years of bilateral relations between Kuwait and the UK, presents a pivotal moment to enhance our long-standing trade and investment ties. With (KFH) standing as the largest Islamic bank, its participation can significantly amplify the scope of investment opportunities, steering the bilateral relationships towards new heights of cooperation and mutual benefit. KFH's commitment to innovation and digital transformation in Islamic finance aligns perfectly with the event's focus on emerging sectors like cybersecurity and AI."

AlRushood added that by leveraging its expertise and resources, KFH can play a crucial role in fostering discussions on tech-driven economic strategies, potentially leading to ground-breaking partnerships.

He pointed out that the involvement of ministers, ambassadors and leaders from both nations underscores the event's importance and the potential for substantial discussions on diversifying the economy, enhancing digital infrastructure, refining investment strategies, and expanding trade.

"The involvement of KFH in this significant event not only honors the longstanding relationship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom but also establishes the groundwork for a shared future of success and prosperity", AlRushood said.

He added that the bank's participation could set a new model for international collaboration in the financial industry, especially that KFH, after the acquisition of Ahli United Bank- Bahrain, operates in 12 markets across the world of which the UK is one of them.

He indicated KFH's new expansion in the UK is highly significant for KFH's global reach, and access to a wider range of international markets, investors, and business opportunities. KFH Group's presence in London can contribute to the development of the Islamic finance industry by offering its expertise and experience to a wider audience.

AlRushood explained that KFH is a key contributor to the economy of the countries it operates in as it is the largest bank in Kuwait by consolidated assets and the second-largest Islamic bank in the world. Total assets reached over KD 38 billion for the year 2023.

He said that KFH ranked first among all listed companies in Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization, which is over KD 12 billion. KFH came first among Kuwaiti banks in terms of profits made, where it reported a record net profit of KD 584.5 million for the year ended 2023. KFH made its highest-ever profit in history, and the biggest in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

"Lastly, I'm sure that KFH's contributions could offer insightful perspectives on these discussions, drawing from its vast experience and successful track record in the financial sector. I hope this event comes out with several initiatives and fruitful results that help in further enhancing bilateral investments and pushing both Kuwait and the UK forward in the global economy," AlRushood concluded.

Oil prices resilient

Boursa stays neutral, slight declines noted

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Boursa Kuwait remained relatively neutral for the third consecutive session, with slight declines observed, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Yesterday, the general market index edged down by 0.05 percent, closing at 7428.57 points. Liquidity volume stood at 44.8 million dinars, with 167.6 million shares exchanged through 12,700 transactions. Of the 125 listed shares, 50 gained, 60 lost, and 15 remained unchanged.

Similarly, the Premier Market Index experienced a minor decrease of 0.01 percent, settling at 8,149.38 points, with liquidity totaling 32.3 million dinars. Trading activity involved 83.7 million shares across 6,801 transactions, with 33 listed shares. Among these, 17 gained, 11 lost, and 5 remained unchanged.

The Main Market index also saw a decline of 0.27 percent, closing at 6,062.89 points, with liquidity reaching 12.5 million dinars. Trading recorded 83.8 million shares through 5,899 transactions, with 92 listed shares. Of these, 33 gained, 49 lost, and 10 remained unchanged.

While the trading session began with promising liquidity, particularly in shares of Arjan, KFH, Wataniya Investments, and Nour, some stocks faced selling pressure, resulting in minimal losses.

Despite declines in heavyweight stocks such as KFH and NBK, overall losses were contained, with liquidity remaining above 40 million dinars.

Meanwhile, GCC market indices showed varied performance, with bullish trends observed in markets like Oman and Bahrain. Conversely, the Dubai index experienced increased pressure, registering a 2 percent decline. However, oil prices exhibited resilience, trading in the green and nearing \$83 per barrel.

Board recommends 25 fils cash dividend for H2 2023

Zain Group '23 revenue and net profit up 10% to reach USD 6.2 bln and USD 701 mln respectively

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, serving a customer base of 50.6 million, announces its consolidated financial results for the full-year 2023, and fourth quarter ended 31 December 2023

For the full-year 2023, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 1.9 billion (USD 6.2 billion), a Y-o-Y increase of 10%. Consolidated EBITDA for the period increased by 5% Y-o-Y, to reach KD 705 million (USD 2.3 billion), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 37%. Consolidated net income reached KD 215 million (USD 701 million), up 10% Y-o-Y and reflecting earnings per share of 50 fils (USD 0.16).

Board H2 2023 dividend recommendation.

The Board of Directors of Zain Group recommended a cash dividend of 25 fils per share for the second half (H2) of 2023. This dividend follows the semi-annual dividend of 10 fils distributed earlier in 2023, totaling 35 fils per share for the year and reflecting a 70% payout ratio, one of the highest among listed entities in the region and in line with the Board's previously committed minimum cash dividend policy of 35 fils in total, for three years that commenced in 2023.

For the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 494 million (USD 1.6 billion), up 8% Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the quarter amounted to KD 174 million (USD 565 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 35%. Net income for the period amounted to KD 43 million (USD 140 million), representing earnings per share of 10 fils (USD 0.03).

Key Operational Notes for 4th quarter and 12 months ended 31 December 2023

- Throughout 2023, Zain Group invested USD 994 million in CAPEX representing 16% of revenue, mainly on 4G and 5G rollouts, and expansion of FTTH infrastructure and spectrum license fees
- Consolidated data revenue grew 8% to reach USD 2.4 billion, representing 39% of the Group's revenue for the year.
- Agreement with Ooredoo Group and TASC Towers to create the largest tower company in MENA region valued at USD 2.2 billion with nearly 30,000 towers across six countries.
- Tower sales and leaseback in KSA, Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq boosting efficiencies and net profit
- Zain Jordan launches 5G services, making it the fourth Zain operation offering 5G
- Zain KSA launched the world's 1st zero-carbon 5G network in the Red Sea
- ZainTECH acquires STS, a leading regional digital transformation solutions provider
- Group wide B2B revenues inclusive of ZainTech grew 20% as a result of dynamic ICT services
- Zain Omantel International established a unique PAN Middle Eastern network, complemented by extensive global assets including AFRICA ONE, PEACE, and Blue Raman subsea cables
- Group wide FinTech customers grew 40% Y-o-Y, with revenue up 195% Y-o-Y, and total transaction volume tripling to reach \$11 billion.
- Launch of new FinTech brand 'Bede' in Bahrain offering microfinance services
- Digital services group wide witness revenue growth of 9% Y-o-Y, inclusive of Dizlee (API) platform offering 81 live services, and counting over 275 million API transactions since launch in mid-2018
- Best Telecom and Corporate Governance' company in Kuwait by International Finance Magazine
- Zain's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) program acknowledged with two awards at the SAMENA Council endorsed MEA Business Achievement Awards
- Zain maintains region's highest A- rating on the 'CDP Score Report-Climate Change 2023', among the leaders globally; commits to Science-Based Targets initiative emission guidance
- Zain brand valuation grows 11% to USD 3 billion according to Brand Finance 2024 rankings

Commenting on the 2023 full year results, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Mr. Osamah Al Furaih said, "It was a momentous year for Zain on multiple levels as the Board worked together with the executive management team on increasing shareholder value by evolving the business and implementing noteworthy ESG initiatives. Our focus on operational efficiency, network upgrades, driving enterprise revenues and the development of new lucrative business verticals were instrumental in achieving these 2023 impressive results."

The Chairman continued, "The Board is confident of the company's readiness to exploit the next phase of growth of the numerous technologies and digital services we provide across our footprint. I would like to recognize the government bodies in Kuwait and across our markets for supporting the telecom sector and empowering Zain to provide meaningful connectivity to the communities, businesses, and governments we serve."

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi commented, "Our Group-wide efforts in monetizing innovative digital services and enterprise solutions on the back of our state-of-the-art networks and technologies, combined with cost optimization initiatives and passive Tower infrastructure strategy, are driving strong operational and financial performance on all our KPIs."

"Accordingly, we are in a solid position to recommend a H2 dividend of 25 fils (following the 10 fils earlier in H1) that will result in the second consecutive total annual dividend of 35 fils, reaffirming the commitment we made at the beginning of 2023. This reflects an annual 70% payout ratio, one of the highest in the region providing a strong indication of our healthy balance sheet and financial solvency as the Board and management cooperate to grow the business in a sustainable manner."

"Across all our markets, our management teams are being very agile in dealing with the many socio-economic and competitive challenges and this is reflected in the overall financial results. In Kuwait, the operation delivered impressive results for the year on all levels and the marketing partnership with digital operator Red Bull Mobile is experiencing impressive growth, successfully targeting the youth offering appealing options for prepaid voice and internet services. Likewise, our other digital operators in KSA (Yaqaot) and Iraq (oodi) are witnessing robust growth offering the latest innovative technologies and services to customers."

"We are very pleased with the impressive operational performance of our operations in KSA, Iraq, Sudan, Jordan and Bahrain, all delivering year on year growth in their financials. The completion of the sale and leaseback



Mr Osamah Al Furaih — Zain Chairman



Bader Al Kharafi — Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO

- Chairman, Osamah Al Furaih: "Another momentous year for Zain in increasing shareholder value by evolving the business and implementing noteworthy ESG initiatives"
- Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al Kharafi: "Our strong balance sheet and operational performance allows us to reward shareholders with an attractive 70% payout ratio"
- Q4 2023 revenue KD 494 million (USD 1.6 billion), net profit KD 43 million (USD 140 million)
- Key operations in Kuwait, KSA, Iraq and Jordan deliver impressive net profit growth
- Jordan becomes the 4th Zain operation to offer 5G services
- Data revenue grew 8%, represents 39% of total revenue
- Digital services revenue up 9%; Fintech customer growth of 40%, revenue soared 195%
- Enterprise revenues up 20% as ZainTECH and local B2B teams target strategic clients
- Tower sales and leaseback in KSA, Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq creating value and efficiencies
- Zain maintains region's highest A- rating on the 'CDP Score Report-Climate Change 2023'
- Zain brand valuation reaches a milestone USD 3 billion, up 11% year over year



Zain Headquarter building



Zain Headquarter building

of our network towers in KSA and Iraq during 2023 are driving efficiencies on multiple levels and contributing to their financial performances, following the success we had in the pioneering tower sales in Kuwait and Jordan previously."

"In late 2023, Zain further solidified its position as the regional leader in the tower arena, with a pioneering agreement with Qatar's Ooredoo Group and TASC Towers, which aims to incorporate nearly 30,000 towers

across six countries, combining our respective passive infrastructure portfolios with a combined estimated current enterprise value of USD 2.2 billion. This value creative agreement for all parties is progressing in stages, and we are very appreciative of Ooredoo's management for raising the notion of collaboration and regionalization to an

entirely new level."

"Throughout the year, we continued to invest heavily in network expansions, upgrades and technologies that drove data and B2B related revenues. Notably, Zain Jordan became the first operator in the country to launch 5G commercial services in December 2023, becoming the fourth Zain operation to offer 5G technology, firmly placing Zain as the region's leading provider of this exclusive high-speed and reliable service."

"ZainTECH witnessed several milestones during the year, growing both organically and through acquisitions, notably that of STS in October 2023, a leading regional digital transformation solutions provider. This acquisition will further boost the 20% annual growth witnessed in B2B revenues across our footprint reflecting the sound cooperative business model between ZainTECH and our local operations' B2B teams in making Zain the connectivity and enterprise partner of choice."

"Early in 2024, we launched the Bede fintech brand in Bahrain which is set to be rolled out across our footprint. Bede stems from Arabic meaning of "in my hand", catering to consumers' lifestyles and emerging demands beyond basic telecom services. In Bahrain, this Shariah-compliant AI powered platform offers consumer micro-finance in minutes over a mobile app and will be developed in the future to offer a variety of financial services and products. The impressive and profitable growth of Tamam in Saudi Arabia, and Zain Cash in Iraq and Jordan has firmly established these FinTech entities as market leaders for the unbanked and underbanked in their respective markets. We will continue to foster their growth through innovation."

"Across our footprint, Zain is guided by the four pillars of our five-year corporate sustainability strategy, centered on Climate Change, Social Business, Inclusion, and Generation Youth. Notably, the A- score that Zain maintained in the latest 'CDP Score Report-Climate Change 2023', positioned us first in the region and among leaders globally with respect to climate control initiatives. Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) program continues to be a conducive force within, boosting the company's productivity and overall morale and much more. It's rewarding to see this initiative being recognized through various awards from organizations."

"On a final note, Brand Finance's recent valuation of the Zain brand that saw it increase 11% from USD 2.7 billion to USD 3 billion is a testament to the investment Zain has placed in establishing its name and identity over the past 17 years. The successful media campaigns, having 23 million social media fans and over 250 million video views annually, the many corporate sustainability, DEI initiatives we have introduced over the years, combined with our ongoing innovation and investment in network upgrades that result in quality mobile and digital services and exceptional customer experience, has made Zain one of the most inspirational and recognized corporate brands in the region and beyond."

Financial KPIs of key markets for the 12 months ended December 31, 2023

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation saw its customer base increase by 4% to serve 2.7 million customers. The Group's most profitable operation saw its full year 2023 revenue grow by 5% Y-o-Y to reach KD 360 million (USD 1.2 billion), with EBITDA increasing by 18% to KD 156 million (USD 509 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 43%. For the full year, the operator recorded net income of KD 104 million (USD 339 million) reflecting a 26% increase. Data revenue represented 37% of total revenue.

Saudi Arabia: The operator generated revenue of USD 2.6 billion up 9% Y-o-Y, with EBITDA amounting to USD 794 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 30%. Net income for the year soared 131% to reach USD 338 million. With its dynamic 5G network covering 54 cities, data revenue represented 40% of total revenue and customers served stood at 8.9 million, up 3%.

Sudan: Despite the ongoing conflict, the operator generated revenue of USD 558 million, up 14%, with EBITDA amounting to USD 269 million, up 7% and reflecting an EBITDA margin of 48%. Net income for the period reached USD 216 million. Data revenue grew by 22%, representing 35% of total revenue, while the operator's customer base stood at 14.2 million, maintaining its market leadership.

Iraq: Revenue reached USD 974 million up 20%, and EBITDA amounted to USD 375 million up 16% Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39%. Net profit reached USD 88 million compared to USD 15 million last year. The operator's customer base reached 17.9 million customers.

Jordan: Zain Jordan revenue increased 3% to reach USD 525 million, EBITDA reached USD 217 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 41%. Net income for the year increased 10% to reach USD 76 million. With the expansion of 4G and launch of 5G services across the country, data revenue grew 1% representing 50% of total revenue. Zain Jordan customer base grew by 3% to reach 3.9 million customers, maintaining its market leading position.

Bahrain: The operator generated revenue of USD 192 million, up 7% Y-o-Y. EBITDA increased 2% to reach USD 60 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 31%. Net income grew 2% to reach USD 15.4 million, with data revenue growing 6% to represent 47% of total revenue.

About Zain Group: Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across the Middle East and Africa, serving 50.6 million active customers as of December 31, 2023. With a commercial presence in 8 countries, Zain provides mobile voice and data services in: Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan. Headquartered in the UAE, ZainTECH, the Group's one-stop digital and ICT solutions provider, is playing a key role in the transformation of enterprise and government clientele across the MENA region. Also UAE based, Zain Omantel International (ZOI) is revolutionizing the international telecommunications wholesale landscape as the premier wholesale powerhouse serving regional operators, international carriers, and global hyperscalers. In Morocco, Zain has a 15.5% stake in "INWI", through a joint venture. Zain is listed on the Boursa Kuwait (stock ticker: ZAIN). We recommend the Investor Community to download the "Zain Group Investor Relations" Mobile App. For more, please email info@zain.com or visit: www.zain.com; www.facebook.com/zain; www.twitter.com/zain; www.youtube.com/zain; www.instagram.com/zaingroup; www.linkedin.com/company/zain

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the Full-Year 2023

Total Active Customers	50.6 million
Consolidated Revenue	KD 1.9 billion - (USD 6.2 billion)
EBITDA	KD 705 million - (USD 2.3 billion)
EBITDA Margin	37%
Net Income	KD 215 million - (USD 701 million)
EPS	50 fils - USD 0.16

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the Fourth Quarter of 2023

Consolidated Revenue	KD 494 million - (USD 1.6 billion)
EBITDA	KD 174 million - (USD 565 million)
EBITDA Margin	35%
Net Income	KD 43 million - (USD 140 million)
EPS	10 fils - USD 0.03

Egypt's central bank raises interest rate to 27.75 pct

The Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) raised Wednesday the overnight deposit rate, overnight lending rates, and the main operation rate by 600 basis points to reach 27.25 percent, 28.25 percent, and 27.75 percent, respectively.

The CBE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) also increased the discount rate by 600 basis points to 27.75 percent, the bank said in a press statement, carried by Egypt's official

news agency (MENA).

The move came as the domestic economy has been recently weighed down by foreign exchange shortages resulting in the existence of a parallel exchange rate market and constraining economic growth, coupled with the impacts of global inflationary pressures, it said.

The resulting exchange rate movements and significant pass-

through of international commodity prices, associated with domestic supply shocks, have resulted in persistent inflationary pressures driving headline inflation to record levels, it added.

Despite recent slow annual inflation rates, they are expected to exceed the central bank's targeted and announced rate of seven percent on average by the fourth quarter of 2024, it said. (KUNA)

QatarEnergy acquires shares exploring block in SA

QatarEnergy Company announced on Wednesday the acquisition of shares in exploration of Block 3B/4B off the western coast of South Africa.

QatarEnergy revealed in the statement that along with TotalEnergies, they have signed an agreement with Africa Oil Corporation, Ricocure, and Eco Atlantic Oil & Gas to acquire the block.

Following the agreement, QatarEnergy will hold a 24 percent

interest share in Block 3B/4B, TotalEnergies will be the operator and hold 33 percent in shares, while the rest will be held by existing license holders, Africa Oil Corporation (17 percent), Ricocure (19.75 percent) and Eco Atlantic Oil & Gas (6.25 percent).

The Minister of State for Energy Affairs, the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, Saad Al-Kaabi stated that acquiring exploration Block 3B/4B enhances their pres-

ence in the prolific Orange Basin. Al-Kaabi also expressed his pleasure on partnering with TotalEnergies, and looking forward to working together with them and the relevant government entities in South Africa. According to the statement, Block 3B/4B covers an area of more than 17,500 square kms within the Orange Basin offshore the western coast of South Africa in water depths ranging between 300m and 2,000m. (KUNA)

Interactive exhibition showcases women's leadership attributes

NBK marks graduation of inaugural NBK RISE global initiative empowering women leaders

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted a prestigious ceremony at its headquarters, graced by prominent guests, CEOs, and representatives from various companies and banks. The event marked the inaugural graduation ceremony for participants of the groundbreaking NBK RISE initiative. This initiative, the first of its kind, is dedicated to empowering and supporting women by equipping them with the essential skills to realize their full leadership capabilities.

Representatives from prominent organizations such as Alshaya Group, Commercial Bank of Kuwait, Burgan Bank, EQUATE Petrochemical Company, and Kuwait Telecommunications Company - STC were among the attendees. These organizations are partners in an agreement sponsored by NBK, aiming to enhance women's representation in regional and global leadership roles.

Representatives from participating universities in the initiative, such as IE Business School, INSEAD, and Franklin Covey, were also in attendance, alongside 21 program participants.

The event featured NBK's executive management honoring the participants with inspiring words, success stories, and acknowledgment of their hard work and dedication demonstrated throughout the program.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, the NBK RISE Leadership Exhibition was held, featuring an innovative interactive showcase inspired by the trainees' projects. It highlighted the varied attributes that women bring to leadership roles and underscored their potential to excel as leaders in various countries, organizations, institutions, and companies.

The exhibition utilized interactive models and inspirational messages to underscore the significant leadership qualities of women and shed light on the gender disparity in leadership positions. It also presented ideas and solutions aimed at bridging this gap.

The initiative, unveiled in 2022 by Mrs. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO at National Bank of Kuwait, signifies a stride towards consolidating efforts to empower women to realize their full potential. It reflects the Bank's belief in the pivotal role of diversity and inclusion as essential elements for ensuring the long-term prosperity of all organizations.

Spanning over a duration of nine months, the program featured training sessions conducted in Kuwait and Spain at prestigious business schools. It encompassed mentorship sessions led by industry experts, networking events, and comprehensive administrative assistance provided by the Bank. Additionally, participants engaged in group projects aimed at refining ideas and proposals.

In her speech at the ceremony, Al-Bahar remarked, "The success of the NBK RISE program underscores NBK's commitment to empowering women and fostering their leadership skills. As we celebrate the graduation of the inaugural cohort, this initiative sets the stage for a future where women wield greater influence on shaping the business landscape."

"As we commemorate the graduation of these remarkable women, we reaffirm our dedication to advancing diversity, equality, and inclusion within leadership roles. The strides made by the program's graduates signify our shared advancement toward a more inclusive and dynamic future, striving to ensure the presence of female leaders who leave a lasting impact on the growth trajectory of their respective institutions," Al-Bahar added.

"NBK Rise participants benefited from top-tier training and mentorship provided by industry leaders, exclusive networking opportunities, and their dedicated efforts in undertaking challenging projects poised to significantly influence their careers," Al-Bahar emphasized.

Al-Bahar also expressed her confidence in the program's graduates to perpetuate positive change and wield substantial influence in leadership positions in the years ahead. She highlighted that as these graduates embark on their next career endeavors, they not only bring along their acquired skills but also the determination to serve as catalysts, inspiring a trajectory of change.

Al-Bahar extended her gratitude to the program's organizers, mentors, trainers, and collaborating educational institutions for their collec-



A group photo of the NBK RISE program graduation ceremony.

Shaikha Al-Bahar:

- NBK RISE marks the initial step in our journey to empower future female leaders.
- The initiative sets the groundwork for a future where women take center stage in shaping the business arena.
- The program has instilled a culture that fosters a supportive environment for nurturing

women leaders and equipping them for leadership roles.

- The inaugural edition of the program yielded significant success in advancing women towards senior leadership roles.
- Graduates are poised to serve as catalysts for positive change and exert a meaningful influence on future leadership positions.
- While fostering a sustainable cycle of growth

for the program, graduates will have the chance to mentor upcoming candidates.

- The program will be offered every year, extending invitations to participants from Kuwait and beyond.
- NBK Rise was awarded the prestigious Best Initiative for Women in Business accolade at the MEED MENA Banking Excellence 2023.

KOC initiates digital Jurassic gas project with private contractor

Kuwait's oil fields embrace digital transformation

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Sources disclosed to Al-Seyassah that Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is set to commence the implementation of the technical support services project for the integrated digital Jurassic gas project. It was confirmed that KOC recently awarded the project to a private company at a cost of 26.5 million dinars, with the company securing the contract with the lowest bid after informing the Supreme Purchasing Committee of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

More than seven private companies vied for the project, demonstrating keen interest in KOC's initiatives to digitize its key fields. This move aligns with KOC's broader strategy to leverage digital transformation projects to reduce costs and enhance operational efficiency. Currently, over 93% of Kuwait's oil fields have transitioned to smart digital systems, in line with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's directives to digitize all oil fields to optimize production.

KOC had previously taken steps to acti-

ve efforts in ensuring the success of this groundbreaking initiative. She emphasized that the program has effectively disrupted traditional norms, paving the way for women's empowerment, and fostering a culture of equality.

Inspiration and Motivation

In a relatively short span, the program has significantly bolstered and advocated for women's leadership in Kuwait, the region, and globally. By engaging, inspiring, and motivating women across various regions, sectors, and fields of expertise, the program has made substantial strides. Additionally, it aimed to establish a community of women leaders to sustain the initiative's advancement and evolution in the long term.

The program was a remarkable initiative that went beyond the Bank's individual efforts. It involved collaboration with several leading institutions in Kuwait, who collectively signed a pledge to enhance the representation of women in leadership positions. This collective commitment underscores their dedication to working together towards the objectives of this global program.

NIC recommends cash dividends

National Investments demonstrates resilience amid market uncertainties

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Board of Directors of the National Investments Company has approved the company's consolidated financial statements for fiscal year ending on December 31, 2023, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Despite grappling with market uncertainties and global economic strains throughout the year, National Investments demonstrated resilience, maintaining a strong financial and operational performance.

This reflects the success of its strategic vision and diversification efforts aimed at delivering sustainable returns and maximizing shareholder value.

Badr Nasser Al-Kharafi, Chairman of the

Board of Directors, emphasized the company's ability to navigate economic challenges by aligning investment strategies with defensive stocks and maintaining a solid financial position. Despite adverse market conditions, the company's proactive measures, including mergers, acquisitions, and restructuring operations, fostered positive growth.

Despite a collective decline in performance indicators on the Kuwait Stock Exchange during 2023, attributed to rising interest rates, strict monetary policies, and geopolitical tensions, the latter months saw a notable recovery following the US Federal Reserve's decision to maintain interest rates, sparking optimism among investors.

Khaled Al-Otaibi, noting that the Saudi Arabian Chevron Company operates in the joint Wafra operations, while Aramco Gulf Works Company operates in the Khafji joint operations. This clarification aims to rectify any unintended misconceptions.

The nine-month program comprised various modules, each tailored to a specific aspect of leadership. These modules were crafted to equip female candidates for senior management roles, imparting essential leadership, strategic, and technical skills. The training units targeted the enhancement of leadership and strategic competencies, effective communication and interpersonal skills, and readiness for assuming top leadership positions within organizations.

Twenty-one participants from diverse professional backgrounds took part in the program. They represented NBK and its international branches and subsidiaries, along with partner organizations. Here's

an overview of the participants:

- 10 representatives from NBK Kuwait
- 6 representatives from NBK's international branches (Egypt, Paris, Singapore, Bahrain, London, UAE)
- 5 representatives from other regional companies (Burgan Bank, EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Kuwait Telecommunications Company - STC, Alshaya Group, and Commercial Bank of Kuwait)

Four modules were prepared for the program. Alongside these modules, participants received mentoring and attended training workshops. All participants in the NBK RISE program successfully completed the first two modules, outlined as follows:

- The first module, conducted in collaboration with IE Business School, emphasized technical development. Participants delved into various educational topics including key trends, growth strategies, creativity, innovation, and effective decision-making.
- The second module, in partnership with Franklin Covey, concentrated on enhancing personal skills and self-discovery of individual strengths through the application of

the seven habits of highly effective leaders.

- The third module, developed in collaboration with INSEAD, focused on leadership skills, effective change management, and addressed barriers hindering women's progress in leadership.
- The program encompassed approximately 64 training hours in total, covering topics such as growth strategies, creativity, innovation, and effective decision-making.

The Best Initiative for Women

NBK Rise was awarded the prestigious Best Initiative for Women in Business accolade at the MEED MENA Banking Excellence 2023. This recognition highlights the Bank's steadfast dedication to women's empowerment. It not only emphasizes NBK's commitment but also the joint commitment of various prominent organizations in Kuwait. Through collaboration, these institutions have pledged to enhance the representation of women in leadership roles, showcasing their united dedication to the goals of this worldwide initiative.

Continued on Page 11

CMA hosts workshop on regulated tech services

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Financial Technologies Unit at the Capital Markets Authority organized an awareness workshop titled 'Financial Technology Services Regulated by the Capital Markets Authority', reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The aim of the workshop was to educate the public about financial technology services, including their regulatory framework, objectives, benefits, risks and details of the initial application phase of Book Nineteen (Financial Technologies).

Zahraa Al-Mousa, Acting Director of the Financial Technologies Unit, who led the workshop with unit employees Abdullah Al-Shammari and Altaf Al-Faraj, covered various topics, starting with an overview of the Authority's project to establish a regulatory framework for financial technologies related to securities activities.

This effort led to the issuance of Book Nineteen (Financial Technologies) as part of the Authority's executive regulations. The session then delved into a detailed explanation of the first package of financial technology services regulated by the book.

One of the highlighted services was securities-based crowdfunding, facilitating direct channels for investors interested in supporting small and medium enterprises, thereby increasing market liquidity and providing investment opportunities for small investors and entrepreneurs.

Another service discussed was the automated investment advisor, also known as robot advice or digital advice, which aims to enhance financial advisory services accessibility to a broader segment of society.

The workshop also outlined the requirements for providing these services, including the qualifications and ongoing compliance obligations for financial technology service providers.

Delta Airlines hiking checked-baggage fees by 17%

In case you needed yet another incentive to cram all your travel items into a carry-on, Delta Airlines just boosted the cost of your first checked bag by 17%. The increase adds \$5 to the previous, and not-exactly-insignificant, \$30 fee for domestic flights.

Delta is the third major U.S. carrier to hike bag fees in the past several weeks.

Its move follows similar increases that American Airlines and United Airlines announced in February, three days apart; those high fees themselves followed fee hikes by smaller carriers Alaska Airlines and JetBlue Airways. Major

U.S. carriers often copy one another's pricing changes, a move that behavior analysts sometimes refer to as herd instinct.

Delta said Tuesday that the first bag checked on a domestic flight will now incur a \$35 fee. The charge for a second bag rose from \$40 to \$45.

Delta last raised bag fees for domestic flights in 2018. The airline said the increase will help it keep up with unspecified rising industry costs. Customers with status perks can still check their first bag for free; those with first class tickets can check two free bags. (AP)

Sri Lanka seeks to defer loan payments

Sri Lanka's president said Wednesday that he is seeking a loan repayment moratorium until 2028 as the debt-ridden country tries to emerge from bankruptcy.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament the government is asking lenders to accept a plan to defer payments for five years and then pay down the debts from the beginning of 2028 through 2042.

Sri Lanka declared bankruptcy in April 2022 and suspended repayments on some \$83 billion in local and foreign loans amid a severe foreign exchange crisis that led to a severe shortage of essentials

such as food, medicine, fuel and cooking gas, and hours-long power cuts.

"Our goal is to obtain temporary relief from debt defaults from 2023 to 2027. Subsequently, we plan to diligently work towards repaying the loans in the period from 2027 to 2042," Wickremesinghe said.

By 2022, Sri Lanka had to repay about \$6 billion in foreign debt every year, amounting to about 9.5% of GDP. The government aims to reduce debt payments to 4.5% of GDP through a negotiated debt restructuring, Wickremesinghe said. (AP)

'Fired without a reason'

Former Twitter executives sue Elon Musk over firings

NEW YORK, March 6, (AP): Former senior executives of Twitter are suing Elon Musk and X Corp., saying they are entitled to a total of more than \$128 million in unpaid severance payments.

with him."

Representatives for Musk and San Francisco-based X did not immediately respond to messages for comment Monday.



Musk

Twitter's former CEO Parag Agrawal, Chief Financial Officer Ned Segal, Chief Legal Counsel Vijaya Gadde and General Counsel Sean Edgett claim in the lawsuit filed Monday that they were fired without a reason on the day in 2022 that Musk completed his acquisition of Twitter, which he later rebranded X.

The former executives claim their severance plans entitled them to one year's salary plus unvested stock awards valued at the acquisition price of Twitter. Musk bought the company for \$44 billion, or \$54.20 per share, taking control in October 2022.

They say they were all fired without cause. Under the severance plans, "cause" was narrowly defined, such as being convicted of a felony, "gross negligence" or "willful misconduct."

According to the lawsuit, the only cause Musk gave for the firings was "gross negligence and willful misconduct," in part because Twitter paid fees to outside attorneys for their work closing the acquisition.

The executives say they were required to pay the fees to comply with their fiduciary duties to the company.

"If Musk felt that the attorneys' fees payments, or any other payments, were improper, his remedy was to seek to terminate the deal - not to withhold executives' severance payments after the deal closed," the lawsuit says.

X faces a "staggering" number of lawsuits over unpaid bills, the lawsuit says. "Consistent with the cavalier attitude he has demonstrated towards his financial obligations, Musk's attitude in response to these mounting lawsuits has reportedly been to 'let them sue.'"

Because he didn't want to pay their severance, the executives say Musk "made up fake cause and appointed employees of his various companies to uphold his decision."

The lawsuit says not paying severance and bills is part of a pattern for Musk, who's been sued by "droves" of former rank-and-file Twitter employees who didn't receive severance after Musk terminated them by the thousands.

"Under Musk's control, Twitter has become a scofflaw, stiffing employees, landlords, vendors, and others," says the lawsuit, filed in federal court in the Northern District of California. "Musk doesn't pay his bills, believes the rules don't apply to him, and uses his wealth and power to run roughshod over anyone who disagrees

Bitcoin briefly hits an all-time high, less than two yrs after FTX scandal

Regulators point to persisting risks

NEW YORK, March 6, (AP): Bitcoin has hit an all-time high less than two years after the collapse of the crypto exchange FTX severely damaged faith in digital currencies and sent prices plunging.

The world's largest cryptocurrency jumped 4% this week and briefly surpassed \$68,800 Tuesday, according to CoinMarketCap. That's just above bitcoin's previous record set in November 2021.

The volatile asset soon fell some, standing at just under \$62,000 as of 3 p.m. ET, but the price is still up more than 175% from one year ago.

Gains in recent months have been fueled by the anticipation, and eventual U.S. approval, of bitcoin exchange traded funds earlier this year, which provided access to a much broader class of investors. The price for bitcoin has surged about 60% since the approval of bitcoin ETFs in January, an easy way to invest in assets or a group of assets - like gold, junk bonds or bitcoins - without having to directly buy the assets themselves.

Also driving prices is what is known as bitcoin "halving" which is anticipated in April. Halvings trim the rate at which new coins are mined and created, thus lowering the supply.

Here's what you need to know.

In January, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission approved the first spot bitcoin ETFs from asset managers including Blackrock, Invesco and Fidelity. These newly approved ETFs hold actual bitcoin - unlike previous bitcoin-related ETFs that were invested in contracts related to future price bets, but not on the cryptocurrency itself.

While regulators have pointed to persisting risks and maintained reluctance around January's decision, the greenlight marked a major



An advertisement for Bitcoin cryptocurrency is displayed on a street in Hong Kong, on Feb. 17, 2022. Bitcoin briefly hit an all-time high Tuesday, March 5, 2024, with the world's largest cryptocurrency surpassing \$68,800, according to CoinMarketCap. (AP)

win the crypto industry.

Institutional demand for bitcoin show "no signs of slowing down," H.C. Wainwright's Mike Colonnese and Dylan Scales wrote Tuesday - adding that bitcoin's popularity "is likely to accelerate in the coming months as more wealth management platforms make spot (bitcoin) ETFs accessible to their clients."

Using data from crypto platform BitMEX, Colonnese and Scales estimated that the 10 bitcoin ETFs averaged \$302 million in net daily inflows for the month of February. Last week alone, these spot ETFs booked record inflows of \$1.7 billion - bringing total net inflows to \$7.5 billion since their Jan. 11 launch.

Increased demand is also aligning with bitcoin's next halving event, which is expected at the end of April.

Bitcoin halving, which occurs every four years, is when the reward for bitcoin mining is cut in half. This reduces how fast new coins are created - making supply scarcer.

While analysts say that constrained supply in a time of high demand can push bitcoin's price

higher over time, others point to significant volatility that has resulted before and after halving events - and the possibility of sizable declines.

"Past history may not be a reliable guide to predict how the upcoming halving of bitcoin will influence its value," Rajeev Bamra, senior vice president of digital finance at Moody's Investors Service, noted. "Various external factors, market sentiment shifts, and regulatory developments can influence the trajectory of Bitcoin's price."

Bitcoin has a history of drastic swings in value - which can come suddenly and happen over the weekend or overnight in trading that continues at all hours, every day.

Bitcoin rocketed from just over \$5,000 at the start of the pandemic to its November 2021 peak of nearly \$69,000, in a period marked by a surge in demand for technology products. Prices crashed during an aggressive series of Federal Reserve rate hikes intended to cool inflation, slow money flows and make risky investments potentially riskier. Then came the 2022 collapse of FTX, which significantly undermined confidence in crypto.

At the start of last year, a single bitcoin could be had for less than \$17,000. Investors, however, began returning in large numbers as inflation started to cool. And 2023's collapse of prominent tech-focused banks actually led more investors to turn to crypto as they bailed out of positions in Silicon Valley start-ups and other risky bets.

Despite the recent excitement around bitcoin, experts still maintain that crypto is a risky bet with wildly unpredictable fluctuations in value. In short, investors can lose money as quickly as they make it.

"It's essential to exercise caution and acknowledge that the road ahead for the digital finance ecosystem, particularly the crypto markets, is expected to navigate through a period marked by volatility," Bamra noted - pointing the importance of "cautious optimism."

Part of Biden's campaign against junk fees

Regulator would cap credit card late fees at 8 dollars

WASHINGTON, March 6, (AP): The Biden administration announced a rule Tuesday to cap all credit card late fees, the latest effort in the White House push to end what it has called junk fees and a move that regulators say will save Americans up to \$10 billion a year.



President Joe Biden speaks during a meeting of his Competition Council to announce new actions to lower costs for families in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, Tuesday, March 5, 2024. (AP)

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's new regulations will set a ceiling of \$8 for most credit card late fees or require banks to show why they should charge more than \$8 for such a fee.

The rule would bring the average credit card late fee down from \$32. The bureau estimates banks brought in roughly \$14 billion in credit card late fees a year.

"In credit cards, like so many corners of the economy today, consumers are beset by junk fees and forced to navigate a market dominated by relatively few, powerful players who control the market," said Rohit Chopra, director of the bureau, in a statement.

President Joe Biden planned to highlight the proposal along with other efforts to reduce costs to Americans at a meeting of his competition council on Tuesday. The Democratic president is forming a new strike force to crack down on illegal and unfair pricing on things like groceries, prescription drugs, health care, housing and financial services.

The strike force will be led by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission, according to a White House statement.

The Biden administration has portrayed the White House Competition Council as a way to save people money and promote greater competition within the U.S. economy.

The White House Council of Economic Advisers produced an analysis indicating that the Biden administration's efforts overall will eliminate \$20 billion in annual junk fees. The analysis found that consumers pay about \$90 billion a year in junk fees, including for concerts, apartment rentals and auto dealers.

The effort appears to have done little to help Biden politically ahead of this

year's presidential election. Just 34% of U.S. adults approve of Biden's economic leadership, according to a new survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Sen. Tim Scott, R-South Carolina, criticized the CFPB cap on credit card late fees, saying that consumers would ultimately face greater costs through higher interest rates and less access to credit.

"It will decrease the availability of credit card products for those who need it most, raise rates for many borrowers who carry a balance but pay on time, and increase the likelihood of late payments across the board," Scott said.

Rob Nichols, the CEO of the American Bankers Association, said the CFPB "relied on flawed assumptions and a mischaracterization of the important role late fees play in promoting responsible consumer behavior."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce said it will file a lawsuit to try to prevent the federal agency from capping late fees at \$8.

"The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has exceeded its authority," said Neil Bradley, the chamber's executive vice president and chief policy officer. "The agency's final credit card late fee rule punishes Americans who pay their

credit card bills on time by forcing them to pay for those who don't."

Americans held more than \$1.05 trillion on their credit cards in the third quarter of 2023, a record, and a figure certain to grow once the fourth-quarter data is released by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. next month. Those balances are now carrying interest on them, which is the highest it has been since the Federal Reserve started tracking the data back in the mid-1990s.

Further, more Americans are falling behind on their credit card debts as well. Delinquency rates at the major credit card issuers such as American Express, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Capital One and Discover have been trending upward for several quarters. Some analysts have become concerned Americans, particularly poorer households hurt by inflation, might be taking on too much debt.

"Overall, the consumer is credit healthy. However, the reality is that there are starting to be some significant signs of stress," said Silvio Tavares, president and CEO of VantageScore, one of the country's two major credit scoring systems, in an interview last month.

The growth of the credit card industry is partly why Capital One announced it would buy Discover Financial last month for \$35 billion. The two companies, which are two of the largest credit card issuers, are also two companies whose customers regularly carry a balance on their accounts.

This is not the first time policymakers have weighed in on credit card fees. Congress in 2010 passed the CARD Act, which banned credit card companies from charging excessive penalty fees and established clearer disclosures and consumer protections.

The Federal Reserve issued a rule in 2010 that capped the first credit card late fee at \$25, and \$35 for subsequent late payments, and tied that fee to inflation. The CFPB, which took over the regulation of the credit card industry from the Fed after it was established, is proposing going further than the Fed.

NBK marks

**Continued from Page 10
Special Visit To Spain**

The inaugural edition of the program featured a visit by the participants to IE Business School headquarters in Spain. Additionally, NBK Deputy Group CEO visited IE Business School in Spain during the final phase of the 9-month training journey for the first cohort of the NBK RISE program.

During her visit, Al-Bahar met with the President of IE University, Mr. Santiago Iñiguez, and toured the campus. Ms. Sheikha Al-Bahar also hosted a dinner attended by members of the

university administration, His Excellency Kuwait's Ambassador to Spain, Mr. Khalifa Al-Kharafi, Kuwaiti students at IE University, and NBK RISE participants. The visit also featured a panel discussion with the IE Women in Business Club and Kuwait's Women in Business Club.

The Bank boasts a workforce where females constitute 44.3% of total employees and hold 29.7% of senior management positions and above as of 2023. Furthermore, NBK upholds pay equity, ensuring parity between male and female employees' salaries.

In collaboration with leading international universities and training centers, NBK consistently offers tailored programs and workshops aimed at nurturing women leaders and fostering understanding of gender disparities.

These initiatives focus on leveraging diversity to enhance productivity and foster innovation. Furthermore, we are extending our dedication to diversity and inclusion within our client base. By introducing specialized products and services for female clients and entrepreneurs, we aim to further promote financial inclusion. Our commitment to this endeavor remains steadfast as we continue to develop and expand our efforts in this area.

Furthermore, NBK reaffirms its steadfast commitment to fostering a culture of empowerment for women throughout the organization. This includes endeavors to enhance their representation in leadership roles by offering guidance and facilitating suitable opportunities for career advancement.

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We remain keen to develop and keep pace with changing needs of younger generation: Marafi

ABK reveals new A+ Student account benefits catered to youth's lifestyle

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to introduce the new benefits of its A+ Student account catered to the unique needs of young customers.

The account comes with a host of exciting benefits and exclusive discounts including 30% off on Tala-batapp orders during the weekend, 25% off on Trolley throughout the week at Mubarak Al Abdullah and Eqaila stores, and an exclusive 'Buy 1 Get 2 Tickets Free' offer from VOX Cinemas. This is in addition to a free prepaid card for two years and other special promotional discounts from renowned brands.

Furthermore, customers who transfer their educational allowances will enter a quarterly draw to be one of several lucky winners. Six individuals will each win KD50 worth of purchases from Trolley; two will each win KD250 worth of petrol from Oula fuel station; one will win a bundle of Apple gadgets worth KD700; and one



Ms. Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK.

will a dream vacation to their preferred destination.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "We remain keen to develop the A+ Student account to

keep pace with the changing needs of the younger generation. We endeavor to forge various strong partnerships to provide exclusive rewards, offers, and discounts from a series of entities. This is in an effort to increase their banking confidence and help enhance our competitive position in the Kuwaiti banking sector."

ABK strives to consistently study the various needs of its diverse segments to ensure that it provides worthwhile products, services, and solutions that offer a simpler and more convenient banking experience. To engage students, ABK confirmed that it will continue to have a presence in various universities across Kuwait to promote the A+ Student account's benefits and encourage students to take advantage of its exclusive offerings.

Marafi concluded with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to



ABK A+ Student account flyer

benefit from the current promotional campaigns and offers throughout the year.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of per-

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

This is in addition to ABK's three

branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services. Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

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

Strategy aimed at enhancing innovative banking solutions and products

KIB showcases benefits of its Multicurrency Prepaid Visa card designed for safe and exceptional travel experience

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) held a press conference to unveil the array of benefits offered by its innovative digital product, the Multicurrency Prepaid Visa card. The launch of the new product aligns with the Bank's overarching strategy to deliver innovative banking solutions and products designed to ensure convenience and ease for all its customers. It aims to enhance the quality of services provided, guaranteeing a secure and comfortable payment and shopping experience during travels and upon conducting international transactions.

Commenting on KIB's newest product, Othman Tawfeq, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department, said: "We are thrilled to introduce the Multicurrency Prepaid Visa Card, a digital payment product designed to simplify international transactions like never before. The card is designed to cater to the evolving needs of today's travelers, online shoppers, study abroad students, and others, offering an array of features that are set to transform the way people manage their finances across borders in a manner that fits their modern lifestyles. More importantly, KIB customers will be able to digitally issue the card and start using it within minutes through the App."

Mohamed Atef El-Shareef, General Manager of the Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence Department at KIB, said, "At KIB, we persist in our efforts to pioneer new and contemporary solutions in the realm of digital banking. This progressive initiative underscores our dedication to offering products and services that are not only flexible and secure but also efficient and in line with the highest international standards."

He highlighted that this card would be a significant addition to customers' travel experiences by saving time and effort in online payment transactions. Additionally, the card offers security and peace of mind as it is supported with a 3D Secure feature, ensuring the trustworthiness of online purchasing processes. Moreover, cardholders can add their cards



Left to right - Ali Hinnawi, Mohamed El-Shareef, Othman Tawfeq, Laila Naserallah.

to their digital wallets, such as Apple and Samsung Pay, and use the card instantly without the need to request a plastic card.

Discussing the new card's details, Laila Naserallah, Products Manager of the Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence Department at KIB, said: "A single prepaid card with multiple currencies, this card is a game-changer. It can hold up to six wallets and allows customers to choose from 12 different currencies. With the main wallet holding KWD, customers can choose five different currencies for the remaining wallets. The card offers the choice of USD, EUR, GBP, TRY, SAR, AED, BHD, QAR, OMR, EGP, and JOD.

With highly competitive rates, customers can easily exchange from the KWD wallet to a foreign currency wallet, and vice versa."

Naserallah added: "Offering a daily top-up limit of up to KD 3,000, customers can reload the card quickly and efficiently, with accessibility and support offered through all KIB's physical and online channels. Even more, customers can secure their exchange rate before traveling to ensure their peace of mind, then pay in any country with no additional fees from the selected currencies, making international travel hassle-free."

From his side, Ali Hinnawi, Visa's Business Development Lead in Kuwait, said: "This innovative solution leverages Visa's global network of 130 million merchant partners, providing KIB's Visa cardholders unparalleled access and convenience when abroad. Moreover, cardholders can transact with the peace of mind that their payments are secured by VisaNet, our advanced global processing network. This is a testament to our commitment to enhancing cardholders' travel experience, and we're delighted to partner with KIB to launch this new multicurrency prepaid Visa card."

Issuing the Multicurrency Prepaid Card is a smooth process. At a small annual fee of KD 12, anyone aged 18 and older with an active KIB account, and who is a registered user of the Bank's Mobile App, can easily apply, issue and start using the card within minutes. They also receive 50 Reward Points from KIB Rewards for the first card issued. Moreover, the card is accessible at all of KIB's branches, ATMs and ITMs, as well as through the IVR service and OnlineBanking.

It is worth noting that KIB constantly strives to meet the requirements of its customers and enhance their modern lifestyles by providing them with high-quality services and products. Also, as part of its digital banking vision and in line with its slogan "Bank for Life", KIB remains committed to delivering excellence and convenience to its customers.

Stronger trade relations

Canada showcases its premium beef at 'Taste of Canada' event in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Embassy of Canada in Kuwait, in collaboration with United Supply Food Services and Certified Angus Beef, concluded its prestigious 'Taste of Canada' event recently at the Argan Albida'a Hotel and Resort.

This event brought together executive chefs, key figures from the food industry, and representatives from leading Kuwaiti companies to highlight the excellence of Canadian beef products.

The event aimed to promote the superior quality of Canadian beef to Kuwaiti consumers by presenting a variety of prime cuts, including strip loin, ribeye, short ribs, and briskets, which were expertly prepared at live interactive cooking stations.

Highlights

Notable highlights included a barbecue showcase by Chef Mario Aoun, Founder of BBQBros and Director of the World BBQ Association, along with the participation of renowned food authority and influencer, Mr. Anthony Rahayel, also known as No Garlic No Onions.

Canada's Ambassador to Kuwait HE Aliya Mawani, expressed pride in introducing the finest Canadian beef to Kuwait through the 'Taste of Canada' beef promotion.

She emphasized that the event not only showcases the premium quality of Canadian products but

also strengthens the economic and cultural ties between Canada and Kuwait, positioning Canada as a key partner in meeting Kuwait's food security objectives.

The Canadian envoy described the event as a celebration of Canada's rich agricultural tradition and the shared passion for exceptional food.

Kassem Atoui, Managing Director of United Supply Food Services, announced the company's exclusive sourcing of premium quality Canadian beef to meet the growing demand and refined taste of Kuwait's culinary scene and highlighted their commitment to delivering the ultimate dining experience to customers.

This initiative signifies a significant step in promoting Canadian agri-food products in Kuwait, providing an opportunity for Kuwaiti consumers, restaurants, and businesses to experience the outstanding quality of Canadian beef.

The 'Taste of Canada' event series, initiated in February 2023, aims to showcase Canada's culinary heritage and the exceptional standards of its beef and agri-food industry.

These events serve to raise awareness of Canadian products, underscore Canada's dedication to quality, sustainability, and flavor, and foster stronger trade relations between Canada and Kuwait in this vital sector.



Photos during the 'Taste of Vietnam' promotion at LuLu Hypermarket.

Fusion of flavors and cultural charm

LuLu Hypermarket offers shoppers a 'Taste of Vietnam'

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait provided customers a singular experience with their most recent promotion, a 'Taste of Vietnam', which ran across all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait. The culinary celebration offered a unique opportunity for shoppers to explore decadent delights and the rich heritage of Vietnamese cuisine.

The event, which was launched on 5 March at the Jahra outlet of LuLu Hypermarket, was graced by the presence of the Ambassador of Vietnam, H.E. Thanh Tuan Ngu, who toured the outlet accompanied by ambassadors of Cambodia, Honduras, Laos, Serbia, Indonesia, and Thailand, & other diplomats as well as top officials of LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait.

A special ceremony was also held on the occasion to launch an outlet of Coffilia, the renowned Vietnamese cafe brand offering



Group photo from the event.

specialty coffees. The cafe was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Vietnam and the ambassadors touring the hypermarket with him, along with the Director of LuLu

Hypermarket Kuwait. Throughout the 'Taste of Vietnam' promotion, shoppers enjoyed a variety of offerings, attractive discounts and special deals on a wide

selection of Vietnamese branded products, encompassing groceries, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

Dedicated food counters and free food sampling kiosks showcased authentic Vietnamese cuisine, allowing customers to savor exotic Vietnamese dishes and experience its sensational flavors firsthand. The atmosphere was permeated with the delicious aroma arising from traditional Vietnamese spices, with decorations and displays adding to the excitement of the event.

The 'Taste of Vietnam' promotion proved to be an appetizing journey, leaving a tantalizing taste and a lasting impression on customers. LuLu Hypermarket remains committed to fostering cultural understanding and providing shoppers with one-of-a-kind enriching experiences.



Photo from the event

Attended by the winners of the 'inspireU' accelerator

stc sponsors 'Inventors and Artificial Intelligence' workshop

Preparation is key to staying safe

Five expert 'fitness guidelines' for exercising safely during Ramadan

CLEVELAND, March 6: There are several measures fasting individuals can take to make physical activity a more comfortable experience during Ramadan, and a few warning signs to heed, says an expert from global health system Cleveland Clinic, who works with young athletes regularly.

"We don't always have control over when or how we exercise, particularly in the case of competitive athletes, full-time employees and school children, but we can focus on making the right food and drink choices in non-fasting hours, taking breaks, staying cool and knowing when to stop," says Jennifer Dix, ATC LMT MSc, an athletic trainer at Cleveland Clinic Sports Medicine, who works with many young athletes as part of the health system's outreach program.

For those individuals who can choose when to exercise, Dix says there are no hard and fast rules. "It's a matter of finding out what works best for you. In general, it is a good idea to exercise before sunrise or close to sunset so that there is time to refuel and rehydrate afterwards. However, exercising late at night might impact on an individual's sleep cycle, and not everyone can wake up very early."

Here, Dix shares five guidelines that can help everyone who is keeping up their fitness routine this month.

1. Focus on quality, not quantity
Dix says, "Be kind to yourself and remember that the body takes time to adjust to new eating and sleeping patterns. I always tell athletes to focus on quality rather than quantity. Take plenty of breaks when needed, and don't push yourself too hard." She adds, "Ensure that you get adequate rest at night, and if needed, take a nap after a strenuous exercise session."

2. Eat a balanced diet
"It is very important not to skip suhoor, and to ensure you eat balanced meals. Both suhoor and iftar should include complex carbohydrates, lean proteins, and healthy fats," says Dix. "You could also consider taking a good multivitamin to ensure you are getting all your nutrients. Potassium, calcium, sodium, and magnesium can help to prevent muscle cramps, while B vitamins are energy boosters."

Dix emphasizes that it is important to focus on rehydrating foods at meal times. "Avoid salty foods and include those with a high water content, for example fruit such as watermelons, apples, pears, and vegetables such as cucumbers," she says.

For athletes who need to consume large amounts of protein and calories, Dix suggests adding energy bars or protein supplements, but not to have these as meal replacements. She points out that it is important to read the labels carefully and avoid highly processed products that contain artificial additives, excessive sugars and refined carbohydrates.

3. Rehydrate sufficiently
Dix says individuals should drink more liquid than usual to prevent dehydration during the day, suggesting

consuming up to a liter of liquid in the mornings with suhoor. In addition to water, drinks containing electrolytes can help to address imbalances caused by exertion, and milk and fruit juices are acceptable choices too. Caffeinated beverages, including teas, coffees and sodas, however, are diuretic and should be avoided as far as possible.

"For people who are playing sports or working out heavily, the guideline is to replace 100% of sweat lost during exercise with liquid. During warmer weather or more strenuous workouts, it's a good idea to weigh yourself daily to get an idea of how much sweat you lose during practice so as to determine how much fluid you need to replace this. The guideline is to drink around one liter of water for each kilogram lost," she says.

4. Keep cool and rest up
Strategies for keeping cool while exercising outdoors, especially in humid conditions, include taking frequent breaks in the shade or indoors, says Dix. "During breaks, you can pour cold water over yourself, or hold ice towels or an icebag against your neck, stomach and upper legs."

After training, take a cool shower or bath as soon as possible, says Dix. "It's also a good idea to pack extra clothes so that you can change directly after exercising, rather than staying in gym clothes that cling to you and retain the sweat."

5. Know the warning signs
"The risks of exercising too intensely during Ramadan include heat cramps, where the muscles can feel tight and painful, as well as heat exhaustion and heat stroke," says Dix. "Ensure that people such as your coach or trainer know that you are fasting, and don't dismiss any symptoms. If at any time you are cramping up, feel overheated, lightheaded, weak or nauseous, or have hot, dry skin, you need to stop your activity immediately, and seek help if needed."

Dix points out that it is particularly important to keep a close eye on young children who are exercising and might not be as self-aware as older children or adults.

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, sponsored the "Inventors and Artificial Intelligence" workshop in a strategic collaboration with the GCC Intellectual Property Training Center. The workshop was attended by the winners of the 'inspireU' accelerator designed to support start-ups and SMEs in Kuwait, which falls under stc's 'Weyak' umbrella.

The workshop, titled "Who is the inventor in the era of artificial intelligence?", led by Dr. Noura Al Mutairi, Assistant Professor in the Law Department at Kuwait University, aimed to explore the importance of intellectual property in the age of Artificial Intelligence and the evolving digital landscape. Aside from its sponsorship role, stc continuously focuses on various ways to educate the community on the latest technological tools that are available today within the digital world. As a digital enabler, the Company believes in the value of knowledge and knowhow in understanding the advancements of the tech scene today, and how these tools can be utilized in day-to-day activities.

The collaboration between stc and



Dr. Noura Al Mutairi and Dana AlJassim with the workshop participants.

the GCC Intellectual Property Training Center in delivering this workshop comes as part of the 'inspireU' initiative, a program launched by stc as part of its commitment to fostering entrepreneurial talent and innovation. InspireU offers a comprehensive support system for emerging businesses and entrepreneurs, aiding in the transformation of innovative ideas into actionable business plans. This includes providing mentorship, targeted training, network-

ing opportunities, and financial support to ensure these nascent businesses can bring their visions to fruition.

Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "We are proud to sponsor this workshop in collaboration with the GCC Intellectual Property Training Center to educate participants from the 'inspireU' incubators on the importance of intellectual property when it comes to artificial intelligence and some of the

advanced technologies we have today. By facilitating a platform for learning and exchange, we aim to inspire the current and next generation of inventors and entrepreneurs, contributing to the digital transformation and economic growth of our region. We look forward to hosting similar initiatives in the future that can educate and empower the community in various ways, especially when it comes to technology and the rapidly developing digital world."

Scientists use cells from fluid drawn during pregnancy to grow mini lungs, other organs

Amniotic fluid breakthrough enables targeted treatments

LONDON, March 6, (AP): Scientists have created miniorgans from cells floating in the fluid that surrounds a fetus in the womb - an advance they believe could open up new areas of prenatal medicine.

Miniorgans, or "organoids," are tiny simplified structures that can be used to test new medical treatments or study how the real organs they mimic work, whether they are healthy or diseased.

Researchers from University College London and Great Ormond Street Hospital in the United Kingdom collected cells from amniotic fluid samples taken during 12 pregnancies as part of routine prenatal testing. Then, for the first time, they grew mini-organs from cells taken during active pregnancies. They envision their approach could eventually help doctors monitor

and treat congenital conditions before birth and develop personalized therapies for a baby in the womb.

"We're really excited" about that possibility, said Mattia Gerli of University College London, an author of the study published Monday in the journal Nature Medicine.

The tissue-specific stem cells Gerli and his colleagues collected were shed by the fetus, as normally happens during pregnancy. The scientists identified which tissues the stem cells came from, and found cells from the lungs, kidneys and intestines.

Previously, mini-organs have been derived from adult stem cells, which more closely resemble adult tissue, or fetal tissue after an abortion.

Collecting cells from amniotic fluid gets around regulations about taking stem cells directly from fetal tissue, allowing these scientists to get cells from fetuses into the latter part of pregnancy. In the U.K., the legal limit for terminating a pregnancy is generally 22 weeks after conception. Scientists can't get fetal samples after that, limiting their ability to study

normal human development or congenital diseases past that point.

In the U.S., abortion restrictions vary by state. It's legal in most to use fetal tissue for research, said Alta Charo, an emeritus professor of law and bioethics at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Fetal tissue is defined by the National Institutes of Health as coming from a dead human embryo or fetus after a miscarriage, abortion or stillbirth - and the use of tissue from an abortion has long been controversial.

Charo, who wasn't involved in the study, said the new approach doesn't raise the same ethical issues. "Obtaining cells from amniotic fluid that is already being sampled for standard clinical purposes does not appear to add any physical risks to either fetus or pregnant woman," she said in an email.

Dr. Arnold Kriegstein, who directs the Developmental and Stem Cell Biology Program at the University of California, San Francisco, and also wasn't involved in the research, said getting cells this way has "the potential of giving you some information about that individual fetus as it's growing."

And since growing mini-organs from cells in amniotic fluid takes about 4 to 6 weeks, Gerli said, there's enough time for prenatal therapy to fix problems doctors might find.

To examine one practical use of their approach, the U.K. team worked with colleagues in Belgium to study the development of babies with a condition called a congenital diaphragmatic hernia, in which organs such as the liver and intestines get displaced into the chest because of a hole in the diaphragm. The lungs don't develop the way they should, and about 30% of fetuses with the condition die. If doctors detect the hernia, they can operate on the fetus while it's still in the womb.

Researchers grew lung organoids from the cells of fetuses with the condition before and after treatment and compared them to organoids from healthy fetuses. Dr. Paolo de Coppi, an author of the study from University College London and Great Ormond Street Hospital, said they were able to assess the affected child's condition before birth using this method. Doctors are now unable to tell families much about the outcome of a prenatal diagnosis because each case is different, he said. The ability to study functioning prenatal miniorgans, he added, is the first step toward a more detailed prognosis and more effective treatments.

Kriegstein said more research is needed. "It's in the very early stages," he added, "and we'll have to wait and see how useful it'll be in the long run."

DDI conducts awareness outreach at Al Shuhada Co-op Society



Photo taken during the Dasman Diabetes Institute's awareness outreach at Al Shuhada Co-op Society.

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Dasman Diabetes Institute, founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, recently organized an awareness outreach at Al Shuhada Co-op Society, in collaboration with Al Shuhada Polyclinic.

On this occasion, Tarek Aleryan, Director of Public Relations and Media Services at Dasman Diabetes Institute, stated that the Institute participates with its mobile clinic, to conduct various preventative medical testing such as blood glucose, pressure, and other vital signs. Furthermore, medical and pharmaceutical consultations were offered to the public, as the Institute believes in the importance of conducting early checks and spreading awareness on diabetes to contribute to the prevention of this disease and its complications.

In addition, booklets, leaflets, flyers, and other material on educational topics such as Ramadan and diabetes, how to prevent diabetes, insulin doses and several other subjects were distributed to the public. Aleryan added, "The Institute spares no effort in spreading awareness among all segments of society, noting the importance of the role played by the Institute through these awareness outreach".

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SPORTS

Peshawar snatches 4-run victory over table-topper Multan

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, March 6, (AP): Ifikhar Ahmed's blistering 60 off 27 balls went in vain as Peshawar Zalmi snatched a four-run victory over table-topper Multan Sultans in the Pakistan Super League on Tuesday.

Peshawar is the only franchise in Pakistan's premier domestic T20 tournament that has beaten Multan twice this season.

Multan has already qualified for the playoffs with six wins from eight games and Peshawar moved closer to a place in the final four with nine points and two games in hand.

Peshawar required 58 off the last three overs when Ahmed and Chris Jordan (30 not out) countercharged against seamers Aamer Jamal, Naveen-ul-Haq and Salman Irshad before falling short at 200-5.

CRICKET

Earlier, captain Babar Azam continued his sublime form after winning the toss and smashed 64 off 40 balls. Left-handed batter Saim Ayub made 46 off 22 balls in Peshawar's strong total of 204-5 as both batters put on season's highest total of 71 runs in the power play.

Babar and Ayub smacked Multan's pace and spin as they raised a rapid 84-run stand at 12-an-over.

Ayub was ruthless against pace with his trademark big shots on the on side as he hit five sixes and three fours before he was trapped leg before wicket by tournament's top wicket-taker Usama Mir (3-32) in his first over.

Mir leads the bowling chart with 18 wickets, but his team-mate Mohammad Ali, who has 14 wickets, had a forgetful day at the Pindi Cricket Stadium against Ayub and Babar as he returned with expensive figures of 0-46 off his three overs.

Mir pulled back Peshawar with his sharp leg-breaks as he dismissed Tom Kohler-Cadmore (5) and then got the key wicket of Babar in his last over by clean bowling the premier batter before Rovman Powell (23) and Jamal (12) played little cameos in the last five overs.

Multan's top-order struggled against rookie left-arm spinner Mehran Mumtaz, who bowled with lot of confidence in the power play and had Reeza Hendricks (5) caught off his own bowling in his debut PSL over.

Captain Mohammad Rizwan (32) couldn't beat Jamal's throw off his follow through while Asif Ali timed his jump to perfection on the edge of the boundary and plucked a brilliant catch to dismiss Dawid Malan (19) in the 12th over.

But Ahmed and Jordan nearly pulled off a victory for Multan with their blazing 75-run stand off just 28 balls before Peshawar pacers hung in the last three overs.



Houston Rockets' Cam Whitmore goes up for a dunk against the San Antonio Spurs during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, March 5, 2024, in Houston. The Rockets won 114-101. (AP)

Cavs rally past Celtics, ending Boston's 11-game win 'streak'

CLEVELAND, March 6, (AP): Dean Wade made five 3-pointers and scored 20 points in the fourth quarter, and Cleveland won a replay review in the final second to stun Boston 105-104 on Tuesday night, ending the NBA-leading Celtics' winning streak at 11 games.

The Cavs overcame a 22-point

deficit in the fourth quarter without All-Star Donovan Mitchell, who missed the game with a knee injury, as well as forward Evan Mobley, who went out with a sprained ankle in the third.

Wade finished with a career-high 23 points and his putback dunk with 19.1 seconds left put the Cavs ahead 105-104.

Darius Garland was called for a foul on Boston's Jayson Tatum with 0.7 seconds left, but the Cavs challenged and officials overturned the call, ruling that Tatum had initiated the contact.

Suns outpace Nuggets

Tatum scored 26 points and Kristaps Porzingis had 24 for Boston, which lost for the first time since Feb. 1.

Suns 117, Nuggets 107, OT

In Denver, Kevin Durant scored 35 points, including eight in overtime, and short-handed Phoenix rebounded to beat Denver after blowing a 22-point lead in the second half.

After managing just 12 points in the fourth quarter, the Suns scored 15 in OT, led by Durant and Bradley Beal, who had five of his 16 in the extra period.

Grayson Allen hit eight 3-pointers and scored 28 points to help the Suns snap a two-game slide.

Jamal Murray had 28 points and Nikola Jokic added 25 points and 16 rebounds, but the Nuggets had their six-game winning streak halted.

Pacers 137, Mavericks 120

In Dallas, Myles Turner scored 20 points, Tyrese Haliburton had 19 points and 11 assists, and Indiana beat Dallas despite Luka Doncic's fourth consecutive game with a 30-point triple-double.

Doncic had 39 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds. Russell Westbrook is the lone player in NBA history with five straight 30-point triple-doubles, and Oscar Robertson is the only other player with four.

Nine players scored in double figures for the Pacers, including five reserves as Indiana's bench outscored Dallas' 69-32.

Benedict Mathurin had 19 points off the bench for the Pacers. Starting forward Pascal Siakam added 13 points, 13 rebounds and six assists.

Nets 112, 76ers 107

In New York, Dennis Schroder and Dorian Finney-Smith each scored 20

points and Brooklyn beat Philadelphia.

Lonnie Walker IV added 19 points and Nic Claxton had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Nets, who bounced back quickly after a poor performance Monday in a 106-102 home loss to Memphis. They took advantage of a short-handed Philadelphia team that was missing both its All-Stars in Tyrese Maxey and Joel Embiid. Maxey was scratched early Tuesday because of a concussion.

Pelicans 139, Raptors 98

In Toronto, Trey Murphy III scored a season-high 34 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 10 points and 10 rebounds against his former team, and New Orleans beat short-handed Toronto.

Murphy matched a career best by making 10 of 14 3-point attempts as the Pelicans handed the Raptors their worst defeat of the season, eclipsing a 38-point drubbing they gave Toronto in New Orleans last month.

BASKETBALL

The Pelicans made 24 of 49 attempts from 3-point range.

Herb Jones scored 17 points, Zion Williamson had 16 and Brandon Ingram 12. New Orleans has won three of four.

Rockets 114, Spurs 101

In Houston, Alperen Sengun had a career-high 45 points and a season-best 16 rebounds as Houston beat San Antonio.

Sengun, who is in his third NBA season, also set a career mark with five steals and had three assists and a block. Jalen Green added 23 points and 10 assists for the Rockets, and Fred VanVleet had 21 points.

Devin Vassell scored 22 points for

San Antonio. Rookie Victor Wembanyama had 10 points, 11 rebounds and seven blocks for the Spurs, whose two-game winning streak ended.

Heat 118, Pistons 110

In Miami, Jimmy Butler scored 15 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, Bam Adebayo and Duncan Robinson each scored 18 and Miami beat Detroit.

Terry Rozier scored 17 points, Caleb Martin had 15 points and Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 11 for the Heat, who improved to 11-3 in their last 14 games.

Hawks 116, Knicks 100

In New York, Jalen Johnson scored 26 points and Atlanta beat New York, which played without the injured Jalen Brunson.

De'Andre Hunter had 22 points off the bench and Dejounte Murray finished with 21 for the Hawks.

Donte DiVincenzo led the Knicks with 21 points and Bojan Bogdanovic had 19. The Knicks attempted a season-high 52 3-pointers, but only made 16 (30.8%).

Magic 101, Hornets 99

In Charlotte, N.C., Paolo Banchero had 22 points, Cole Anthony scored 12 of his 14 points in the second half and surging Orlando beat Charlotte for its ninth win in 11 games.

Wendell Carter Jr. had 12 points and nine rebounds for the Magic (36-26), who moved 10 games above .500 for the first time since April 18, 2012.

Vasa Micic, who got the start at point guard with LaMelo Ball and Cody Martin out with injuries, had a career-high 21 points for Charlotte, which lost its fifth straight. Tre Mann and Brandon Miller each scored 18 for the Hornets.

Paris won't allow tourists free access to the Olympics opening ceremony

PARIS, March 6, (AP): Tourists won't be allowed to watch the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics along the Seine River for free, the French government announced Tuesday, as it grapples with security concerns about the unprecedented open-air event. Free access will be invitation-only instead.

Organizers had planned a grandiose opening ceremony July 26 for as many as 600,000 people, most watching free of charge from riverbanks. But security and logistical concerns - and an outcry from booksellers along the city's picturesque quays - have led the government to progressively scale back ambitions.

Earlier this year, the overall number of spectators was reduced to around 300,000. On Tuesday, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said that 104,000 of them will be paying ticket holders with spots along the lower riverbanks, with another 222,000 watching for free from the upper banks.

But he said that the free tickets will not be available to the public via open registration as earlier envisaged, and will be invitation-only.

"To manage crowd movement, we can't tell everyone to come," Darmanin said. "For security reasons that everyone understands, notably the terrorist threat of recent weeks, we are obliged to make it free but contained."

This means that tourists from France or elsewhere, as well as ordinary Parisians, won't be able to sign up for free access. Instead, access to the ceremony will be allocated via quotas to select residents of towns or regions hosting Olympic events, local sports federations and others chosen by organizers



French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin sits between lawmakers as he attends an Olympics security hearing at the Senate in Paris, Tuesday, March 5, 2024. The French government announced that tourists won't be allowed to watch the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics for free as initially promised, the government announced Tuesday, as it grapples with security concerns about the unprecedented open-air event along the Seine River. Screen reads, Olympic and Paralympic security. (AP)

or their partners, said two Interior Ministry officials. The officials weren't authorized to be publicly named according to ministry policy.

OLYMPICS

Those invited will then need to undergo security checks and will receive QR codes to pass security barriers.

Local town councils can invite "their employees, kids from local soccer clubs and their parents," for example, Dama-

nin said. One of the Interior Ministry officials said that sports federations could invite foreigners as part of their quotas, and towns could offer spots to people with disabilities or in a situation of need, to "diversify" access.

The official said the change was not aimed at punishing tourists, and that the Games remain more open than any Olympics in several years. Another 200,000 people are expected to watch the opening from inside apartments or buildings overlooking the river, and about 50,000 from fan zones, Darmanin said.

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'Athletes will participate in an individual and neutral capacity'

Paralympics organizers bar Russians and Belarusians from opening, closing ceremonies

BONN, Germany, March 6, (AP): Russian and Belarusian athletes were barred Wednesday from marching in this year's Paralympics opening ceremony in Paris, even if they are approved to compete as neutrals.

The International Paralympic Committee set limits on athletes

from the two countries which are stricter than those detailed by the International Olympic Committee for the Paris Games that open one month earlier. The IOC in December decided against a blanket ban of Russian and Belarusian athletes over the invasion of Ukraine.

"As the athletes will participate in an individual and neutral ca-

PARALYMPICS

capacity, they will not march in the Opening Ceremony on Aug. 28 or have a flag bearer at the Closing

Ceremony on Sept. 8" the IPC said.

At the Paris Olympics, Russian and Belarusian athletes approved as neutrals - first by governing bodies of individual sports, then in further vetting overseen by the IOC - can take part in the July 26 opening ceremony. That ceremony is set to

be a parade of boats on the River Seine toward the Eiffel Tower.

The Paralympics and Olympics have broadly the same criteria for athletes to be approved as neutrals - that they have not actively supported the war, and are not tied to the military and national security agencies in Russia and Belarus.

The IPC has previously taken a tougher stand on Russia than the IOC.

The Russian team was excluded from the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympics in fallout from a scandal of state-backed doping and cover-ups. The IOC let almost 300 Russians compete at the Rio Olympics.

Mitrovic on 'target' as Al-Hilal edge Al-Ittihad in ACL quarterfinal 1st leg

Kante gets red card

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, March 6, (AP): Aleksandar Mitrovic and Salem Al-Dawsari scored for Al-Hilal in a 2-0 win over Al-Ittihad, which saw midfielder N'Golo Kanté sent off in the first leg of their Asian Champions League quarterfinal match.

Mitrovic converted a penalty six minutes before the break to become joint top scorer in the tournament with eight goals. Three minutes later, Al-Dawsari doubled the lead in the all-Saudi Arabian matchup.

SOCCER

Kanté was dismissed in the 66th minute for a dangerous tackle on former Chelsea teammate Kalidou Koulibaly. Kante will miss the second leg in Jeddah next Tuesday.

"We got two goals in the first half and then we tried to control the game but it was difficult with their counter-attack," Koulibaly said. "To win 2-0 at home is a good result and we will wait until the second game."

Karim Benzema, who had right leg muscle soreness this week, was not in Al-Ittihad's squad.

The winner of the tie could meet Cristiano Ronaldo in the semifinals if Al-Nassr can overcome a 1-0 first-leg deficit against Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates in the return game in Riyadh on Monday.

In the eastern zone, Jeonbuk drew 1-1 with Ulsan in the first leg between two South Korean teams that have lifted the trophy twice.



Al-Qadisiya captain controls the ball during Zain Premier League match.

Al-Fahaheel lock horns with Al-Salmiya

Al-Qadisiya aim to close in on league leaders

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Al-Qadisiya is in pursuit of a crucial victory that could bring them closer to Zain Premier League leaders, Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi. The team is set to face Al-Shabab today at 7:40 pm in the eighteenth round, following a pivotal match between Al-Fahaheel and Al-Salmiya at 5 pm at Al-Shabab Stadium.

Currently holding the third posi-

tion in the standings with 36 points, the "Yellow" team is eager for a second consecutive win. They hope that leaders Kuwait (40 points) and second-placed Al-Arabi (36 points)

SOCCER

will face setbacks in the upcoming round to narrow the gap.

Despite a recent string of declining results, Al-Qadisiya managed to secure a challenging victory over

Al-Salmiya in the previous round with a lone goal, reigniting their competitive spirit. However, their performance fell short of expectations, prompting criticism. Coach Dr. Mohamed Al-Mashaan and the team aspire to deliver a convincing performance, addressing recent critiques and entering the "Six" League competitions on a positive note, aiming to contend for the title absent from their grasp for several years.

On the other side, Al-Shabab,

with 14 points, seeks a victory to distance itself from the "danger zone." The team is motivated to secure a win before entering the four-league competitions, aiming to avoid relegation. Additionally, they are keen on rectifying their situation, particularly as the winter deals have yet to yield the desired results.

In the concurrent match, Al-Fahaheel (20 points) faces Al-Salmiya (24 points). "The people of the tenth region" are determined to secure a victory to maintain their position among the Premier League teams (League of Six). However, a win alone may not suffice, as they also require Kazma to either draw or lose against Al-Arabi tomorrow to achieve their goal.

Meanwhile, Al-Salmiya plays without pressure, as a victory would bring them closer to the leading teams and secure fourth place, as Al-Nasr (24 points) faces difficult match against Kuwait tomorrow.

Spain 'fines' soccer federation for not having harassment protocol in place at Women's WC

BARCELONA, Spain, March 6, (AP): The Spanish soccer federation and Barcelona soccer club have been fined an undisclosed sum by Spain's labor ministry for not meeting workplace regulations regarding gender equality.

The ministry said Wednesday that the federation, along with Barcelona and two second-division clubs, failed to meet regulations obliging workplaces with at least 50 employees to have "equality plans" in place.

The ministry said in an email to The Associated Press that it ordered an inspection of clubs with women's soc-

Spain's players boycotted their national team for a month after the World Cup until the federation agreed to overhaul the way it ran the women's team. The ministry did not disclose the sum of the fines. But the maximum fine for not having an equality plan or a harassment protocol is 7,500 euros (\$8,100) each.

Of the 16 clubs inspected, Barcelona and second-tier Catalan clubs Espanyol and Europa were found to not have proper equality plans. They did have harassment protocols in place.

Barcelona said that it "rejected any statement that put in doubt the historic commitment that the club has with gender equality policies." It said that it has had an equality plan in place since 2013, and that at the time of the inspection by the ministry it was working on updating its plan.

Barcelona's women's team won the Champions League last season and provided the backbone of players to Spain's World Cup-winning side, including Ballon d'Or winners Aitana Bonmatí and Alexia Putellas.

cer teams and the national soccer federation after the federation president caused an international uproar when his action against forward Jenni Hermoso during the trophy presentation at last year's Women's World Cup. He has since lost his job and now faces trial for assault.

The inspection found that the federation had also failed to have a working protocol to handle cases of harassment, as required by law, at the time of the incident.

"We sent our world champions (to the World Cup) without an equality plan and without harassment protocols, which is very serious," Labor Minister Yolanda Díaz told Spain's National Radio. "(With these fines) we are sending a strong message that this has to change. There is no place for sexism in sports."

SOCCER



Players vie for the ball during the volleyball league.

Leaders Kuwait Club face off against Al-Tadamon in the volleyball league

Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Three rescheduled matches are set to take place in the second division of the Kuwait Volleyball League. Al-Kuwait will face off against Al-Tadamon at 5:15 pm, followed by the match between Al-Qadisiya and Burgan at 7:15 pm. Both contests will be held at Al-Ittihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah

VOLLEYBALL

Complex. Simultaneously, the third match will unfold between Kazma and Al-Sahel at 6:30 pm at Youssef Al-Shaheen Al-Ghanem Hall in Adailiya.

The league standings ahead of today's matches showcase "White" at the summit with 45 points, a three-point lead over Yellow with 42 points. Al-Arabi, Kazma, and Burgan each hold 35 points.

The League still has one more round of rescheduled matches, scheduled for next Sunday. Yarmouk will face Kazma, and Al-Sulaibkhat will compete against Al-Qadisiya.

The postponement of matches occurred due to the participation of Al-Kuwait and Al-Qadisiya in the West Asian Championship in Oman and the involvement of Kazma and Burgan in the Arab Club Championship held in Jordan.

Following the conclusion of the postponed matches, the top four teams will advance to the golden square, taking place from the 24th of this month to the 5th of next April. The first team will face the fourth, and the second will play against the third in a home-and-away format. The winners will then proceed to the final, while the losers will contend in the third and fourth rounds of the league using the same system.

Quetta still among the top two with 9 points

Hasan's 4-wicket haul leads Karachi to thumping victory

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, March 6, (AP): Fast bowler Hasan Ali grabbed 4-15 as Karachi Kings kept alive their slim hopes of a playoff spot in the Pakistan Super League with a thump-

ing seven-wicket win over Quetta Gladiators on Wednesday.

Hasan intelligently varied his pace to bowl out Quetta for this season's lowest total of 118 in 19.1 overs after captain Shan Masood won the toss and elected to field.

Karachi cruised to 121-3 with more than four overs to spare with opening batter Tim Siefert (49) notching the top score of the game.

Quetta are still among the top two with nine points from seven matches while Karachi are at No. 5 with six points from three wins and four defeats.

Blessing Muzarabani (2-27) gave Karachi an early breakthrough when Jason Roy (15) top-edged the tall Zimbabwean fast bowler to Hasan at third man in the third over.

Hasan then struck twice in his first over when Saud Shakeel (33) and Khawaja Nafay (17) holed out in the deep as Quetta slipped to 3-68 in the ninth over.

Former Quetta captain Sarfaraz Ahmed's struggling season continued as he was run out for 7 in a mix-up with new skipper Rilee Rossouw while going for a tight single.

Sarfaraz, who was relieved of the captaincy after Quetta failed to get beyond the league stage in the last four seasons, had scored only 22 runs in five innings.

Rossouw also couldn't accelerate against pace and spin in the middle



Hasan

CRICKET

overs before holing out in leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood's (2-25) return spell. Hasan then disguised the lower order with his change of pace and claimed two more wickets in his last over.

Masood's run of poor form continued in his first season as the Karachi skipper edged Mohammad Amir in the second over when on 7.

But Karachi's overseas signings Seifert and James Vince (27) played confidently against pace and were hardly troubled by mystery spinner Usman Tariq. Quetta was also wasteful in the field with Sherfane Rutherford and Amir dropping sitters in the outfield. Seifert smashed six fours and two sixes before he missed out on the half century and was stumped but veteran Shoaib Malik carried Karachi to a convincing victory with an unbeaten 27 off 20 balls.

Also:

DHARAMSHALA: England batter Jonny Bairstow is set to play his 100th game in test cricket after being included in the team for the series-ending test against India that starts Thursday.

The 34-year-old Bairstow will become the 17th player to reach a career century of test matches for England.

He needs to score just 26 runs to reach 6,000 in tests, also as the 17th England player to reach the milestone.

Bairstow's father, David, played four tests for England as a wicket-keeper from 1979-81.

The England team to play in Dharamshala includes bowler James Anderson for his 187th test - second on the all-time list behind the 200 played by retired India batting great Sachin Tendulkar.

Best of the Rest

Tel extends contract: Bayern Munich's teenage forward Mathys Tel has signed a contract extension through 2029 despite having three years left to run on his current deal.

The 18-year-old French forward has played regularly for Bayern since joining from Rennes in July 2022. He's considered one of European soccer's top young talents.

Tel's contract had been due to expire at the end of the 2026-27 season.

"This contract extension means a lot to me. I've already learned a lot at Bayern, both on and off the pitch. Munich has become a home for me and my family, and the fans are also very important to me," Tel said in a club statement.

Tel has scored seven goals in 31 games for Bayern this season, mostly as a substitute, and scored Bayern's winning goals in games against Manchester United and Copenhagen in the Champions League group stage.

The announcement came a day after Tel came off the bench as Bayern overturned a 1-0 first-leg deficit to beat Lazio 3-1 on aggregate in the Champions League round of 16. (AP)

Toby fronts campaign: The chilling messages left an indelible mark on Toby Alderweireld.

The former Tottenham player is now the face of Belgian soccer's campaign against hate speech this week, after authorities reported a surge of racist or discriminating online messages aimed at players.

Alderweireld was targeted online last season after his club Antwerp beat Genk in the Belgian league's playoffs, when the center back scored his team's first goal in a come-from-behind victory.

A few weeks later in another game against Genk, Alderweireld hit a long-range strike in the final minutes to give Antwerp the league title. In return, the former Belgium international was hit by a storm of insults online.

"You can tell yourself it's online, that it was quickly written, so it must not mean anything," Alderweireld said in a video released Wednesday. "But there are limits. (AP)



PSG's Kylian Mbappe scores his side's second goal during the Champions League round of 16 second leg soccer match between Real Sociedad and Paris Saint-Germain, at the Reala Arena stadium in San Sebastian, Spain. (AP)

Sports

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Fostering talent: KBA commitment to developing women's sports

Kuwait Basketball Association honors 3x3 team for historic achievements

Kane 'steers' Bayern into Champs League quarters

Mbappé scores twice as PSG return to CL last 8

MUNICH, March 6, (AP): He's done it again.

Harry Kane scored twice to steer Bayern Munich into the quarter-finals of the Champions League with a 3-0 win over Lazio.

Kane's 32nd and 33rd goals this season for Bayern ensured the Bavarian powerhouse recovered from losing the first leg of the last 16 tie 1-0 in Rome to win 3-1 on aggregate over two legs.

The win will ease the pressure on Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel, whose premature departure at the end of the season was announced by Bayern after the team's three-game losing run - including the defeat in Rome.

Bayern's new sporting director Max Eberl said before the game that Tuchel would remain in charge afterward even if the team lost, but there had been a feeling defeat would bring forward the coach's exit.

Bayern, which is 10 points behind Bayer Leverkusen in the Bundesliga, was facing the prospect of just its second elimination in 12 appearances at this stage of the Champions League.

SOCCER

Kane broke the deadlock in the 38th minute after Ciro Immobile had gone close for Lazio at the other end.

Thomas Müller headed Aleksandar Pavlović's cross back for Raphaël Guerreiro to mis-hit it, and Kane threw himself at the ball to just head it past Ivan Provedel in the Lazio goal.

There was still time before the break for Müller to score in first-half stoppage time with a glancing header to Matthijs de Ligt's shot after a corner.

Kane sealed the result in the 66th by firing in the rebound after Leroy Sané drew a save from Provedel. It was the England captain's sixth Champions League goal this season.

The 19-year-old Pavlović kept Bayern ticking from midfield with probing passes and measured play, while Joshua Kimmich dropped back to right back to help ease the team's injury-hit defense.

Sané had recovered enough to start after a knee problem kept him from playing in the 2-2 draw with Freiburg over the weekend.

Bayern forward Serge Gnabry entered in the last minute for his first appearance since December as he made his comeback from a thigh injury.

Bayern's Club No. 12 fan group organized an impressive choreography before the game to show Munich's heraldic figure over a banner saying "In the name of the city."

Kylian Mbappé led Paris Saint-Germain back to the Champions League quarterfinals, scoring both goals in a 2-1 win over Real Sociedad that kept alive the French club's hopes of winning the European title in its last season with the France forward.

PSG advanced 4-1 on aggregate, with Mbappé also scoring one of the goals in the 2-0 win in the first leg in Paris three weeks ago. Mbappé has already told PSG he will not stay with the club after this season.

Despite huge spending to try to win the Champions League for the first time, PSG had been eliminated from the last 16 five times in the last seven seasons, including the last two. It had made it to the semifinals in 2021 and was runner-up in 2020.

Mbappé was the difference-maker again on Tuesday, opening the scoring with a beautiful goal in the 15th minute after a couple of nifty moves inside the area to cut back from near the touchline and fire a firm right-footed shot into the far corner. The shot broke the netting by the far post, prompting a short stoppage in play so it could be fixed.

Mbappé's second goal came in the 56th with a run that started from near the midfield line. He sped to the open space to collect a long pass by

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The President of the Kuwait Basketball Association, Dhari Burgess, along with the Secretary, Thamer Al-Shanfa, Assistant Secretary, Owaid Al-Anazi, and Mishal Muhammad, a member of the Federation's Board of Directors, warmly welcomed the delegation of the national under-18 women's 3x3 basketball team at Kuwait Airport's ceremony hall. The reception followed their outstanding achievements of securing the gold medal in the Gulf Championship and a bronze medal in the Arab 3x3 Basketball Championship, which concluded in Muscat. The event also saw the presence of

Fatima Hayat, a member of the Olympic Committee and the Head of the Women's Sports Committee, along with Ruqaya Al-Kandari, Head of the Comprehensive Clubs Department in

BASKETBALL

the General Sports Authority.

Dhari Burgess, the President of the Basketball Association, emphasized that the recent success of our under-18 women's team did not happen by chance. He highlighted the Association's dedicated efforts in promoting women's sports, including

active participation in tournaments and the organization of a women's league. Burgess expressed pride in the achievements, underscoring the importance of continuous efforts to realize future aspirations. He also acknowledged the abundance of young talents within the Federation and pledged to refine and develop them in the upcoming period.

Burgess pointed out the significant progress achieved in global rankings, moving from 148 to 96, owing to the 3x3 basketball Committee's efforts to organize numerous tournaments in the current season. He called upon the sports authority to enhance support for the Federation's programs and urged the Olympic Committee to extend unprecedented interest in this remarkable accomplishment.

Thamer Al-Shanfa echoed Burgess's sentiments, emphasizing the unprecedented nature of the recent achievement in basketball. He affirmed the Association's commitment to fostering women's sports and hinted at a broader focus on women's sports in the coming period, fueled by the momentum of young talent.

Fatima Hayat, a member of the Olympic Committee and Head of the Women's Sports Committee, commended the under-18 women's basketball team's historic victory, recognizing a new generation of champion players. She expressed hopes for more achievements in the future, acknowledging the players' exceptional performance and the groundbreaking first-place win in the Gulf Championship in this age category.

Hayat reiterated the Olympic Committee's unwavering support for basketball teams during the upcoming period, underscoring their commitment to nurturing and advancing the sport.



Officials pose with the basketball team after the honoring ceremony.

Kuwait and Al-Qadisiya Clubs to get state-of-the-art stadiums

General Authority for Sports signs a milestone deals for stadium designs



The Director General of the General Sports Authority, Yousef Abdullah Al-Baidan signing the milestone contracts for the stadium designs.

seven matches in all competitions, and has only one win in its last nine games.

The Spanish club had outplayed PSG during most of the first leg before conceding twice in the second half.

Sociedad had a goal by Ander Barrenetxea disallowed for offside in the 63rd.

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Director General of the General Authority for Sports, Yousef Abdullah Al-Baidan, has officially inked contracts for the design of a football stadium at Al-Kuwait Club and Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium at Al-Qadisiya Club, both without a track. This strategic move aligns with the Authority's comprehensive plan to modernize sports facilities within various clubs, aiming to revamp structures that have stood for over 50 years in line with contemporary standards and the stringent requirements of international federations.

The contract signing took place in the presence of key figures, including Engineer Hussein Taqi, Director of the Projects Design Department, Engineer Noura Al-Othman, Head of the Major Projects Department, Engineer Rania Al-Dawla, Head of the Small Projects Department, and Hiyam Al-Daham, Director of the Legal Affairs Department.

Yousef Al-Baidan, the Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, emphasized that these contract signings mark the initial step in an overarching plan to upgrade existing sports facilities, ensuring they adhere to international standards for hosting Asian and global championships.

Al-Baidan further explained that the new designs prioritize essential infrastructure elements, encompassing parking facilities beneath the stands, VIP areas, private family cabins, player service areas, training halls, and dedicated spaces for media. Each club will also boast two well-equipped training fields suitable for both matches and training sessions.

Highlighting the Authority's forward-looking strategy, Al-Baidan revealed plans to replace and enhance the Friendship and Peace Stadium at the Kazma Club and the Sabah Al-Salem Stadium at the Al-Arabi Club in the upcoming period.

Real coach accused of alleged tax fraud

BARCELONA, Spain, March 6, (AP): Spanish state prosecutors have accused Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti of alleged tax fraud, claiming he used shell companies to hide parts of his income during his first stint at the club a decade ago.

Prosecutors in Madrid said in a statement Wednesday that they are accusing Ancelotti of two accounts of tax fraud and are requesting a prison sentence of four years and nine months. They accused the Italian coach of having defrauded 1 million euros in 2014 and 2015 by only declaring the income he received from Real Madrid while omitting his income from image rights.

Prosecutors claimed he set up a "confusing" system of shell companies to hide his extra earnings. Ancelotti allegedly used companies "lacking any real activity" based outside Spain "so that neither he nor the mentioned companies had to pay taxes on the large sums earned in Spain or outside our country," the prosecutors said.

The 64-year-old Ancelotti coached Madrid from 2013-15 before rejoining the club in 2021. Ancelotti is one of soccer's most successful coaches. He is the only coach to have won the Champions League four times, twice with Madrid and twice with AC Milan, and the only coach to have won domestic league titles in England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France.

He is the latest in a string of major soccer profiles to face a crackdown by Spanish authorities over unpaid taxes, although none have actually been sent to prison so far.

Former Madrid coach Jose Mourinho received a one-year suspended sentence after reaching a guilty plea for tax fraud in 2019. Star players Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo - among others - have also been found guilty of tax fraud in Spain. Similar to Ancelotti, Mourinho, Ronaldo and Messi were also accused of using shell companies outside Spain to hide revenue from image rights.

Ronaldo agreed to pay a fine of nearly 19 million euros (then \$21.6 million) in 2019, and was handed a two-year suspended sentence that he didn't have to serve.

Messi and his father were found guilty of defrauding tax authorities of 4.1 million euros (then \$4.6 million) but also avoided a jail sentence by paying hefty fines.



Ancelotti



Bayern's Thomas Mueller (left), attempts a shot at goal in front of Lazio's Alessio Romagnoli during the Champions League round of 16 second leg soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Lazio at the Allianz Arena stadium in Munich, Germany. (AP)